

Everyday Spectres

Billy and Bear

Vic Winter



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by Vic Winter

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Chapter One

Billy stretched his neck from side to side as he waited for Wilson to get out of the way so he could punch out and get the fuck out of there. Eight fucking hours of overtime and he was done in. This made it four days in a row and tomorrow was Friday, damn it, he didn't want to be stuck working until nearly midnight. Management needed to give in and admit they needed more people on the second shift instead of forcing the morning shift to double up.

It was dark as he made his way out into the street, waving to the half dozen guys spilling out with him who were headed over to the west end busses. He was going east: the only one headed in that direction. Usually that didn't bother him, but it seemed pretty damned dark tonight, clouds hiding the nearly full moon. Billy frowned as he walked along. Several streetlamps were out as well, and the street in front of him seemed to close in like a tunnel.

It was a warm evening, but a sudden breeze had him shivering, goosebumps rising up on his arms. The shadows seemed full of eyes, his every step dogged.

He shook off the strange feeling of being watched and strode a little faster. It was just his imagination. He was tired and hungry and it was dark and his mind was playing tricks on him.

Of course, those footsteps didn't sound like a trick. In fact they sounded like more than one person following him, like maybe there were three or four pairs of feet to go with the eyes boring into him.

He sped up some more, letting his backpack slide off and into one hand. He wrapped his fingers around one of the straps, ready to heft it if he had to. He started to cut across the street. Southdown would take him home the long way round but it would be more populated this time of night than Franklin Road was.

He was about halfway across the street when the footsteps grew shadows, and had nearly made it to the corner when the shadows melted into men. Well, kids really, teenagers. A whole gang of them. They were all dressed alike, in jeans and black t-shirts, their shoes bright and shiny in the darkness. Fuck, those things were expensive, certainly way out of his own budget. They each wore a band around their left arm. He couldn't make out the color in the darkness.

"Hey man, you can't come this way unless you pay the toll." The speaker had a scar on one cheek and was a good head taller than Billy, probably had fifty pounds of muscle on him, too. A hand was laid flat on his chest and Billy was shoved back, right against another gang member.

"Watch where you're going, man."

"Oh, so now you're dissing us as well as trying to walk through without paying the toll?"

"Hey, this guy is dissing us!"

"Yeah. Get him."

Oh, this wasn't good. It wasn't good at all. He hadn't said a word, but that didn't seem to bother his attackers. Billy's whole body went tight as he got ready to swing, hoping to surprise them enough to make a hole in the ring of men surrounding him so he could break free and take off. He

wasn't very tall, and he wasn't very big, but he could run; and when it was six or seven on one, he knew pride made a very poor ally.

He ducked the first punch and swung out with his right arm, his knapsack catching the guy in front of him in the head. Before he could even try to make tracks though, the guy behind him grabbed hold of his arms and the next punch landed right in his gut.

Shit. He was just going to have to pray they left him alive. His whole body went tight as he waited for the next punch to land, his heart beating like it was going to explode.

A loud snarl sounded before a second punch could land and Billy watched as the guy about to hit him went down under the biggest fucking dog Billy'd ever seen. Oh, fuck, out of the frying pan and into the fire. He wriggled hard, kicking out with his feet, trying to get away from the guys holding him, trying to get away before he was next.

The dog took a chunk out of the guy's shoulder and then leapt for Billy, coming at him all teeth and snarl and drool, dark eyes wild. He screamed as the beast knocked him, and the guy who was holding him, down. Everything seemed to be moving in slow motion. Billy had time to see his potential death flash before his eyes as he fell, and then he realized he knew the beast. It wasn't a rabid or wild dog, not at all. His heart still pounding wildly, hands shaking, he swallowed his second scream; he wasn't going to die.

The fall loosened his captor's hold and as soon as the beast-dog with the enormous fucking teeth backed off, growling, Billy was up and running for Southdown, his

backpack still clutched tightly in his hand. He didn't look back, not at the shouts, not at the sound of running or the snarls of the big dog.

He was so out of there.

He didn't bother with the cops or with people, or stopping to make sure he was okay. He didn't slow when he hit Southdown with its well lit blocks and people making their way home from the late-closing shops. He'd been given a chance, rescued, and he just went, feet carrying him home just as fast as he could manage, even as his lungs started to scream that he needed to stop, to catch his breath.

It wasn't until he could see the converted three story building that housed his apartment that Billy slowed down. He looked around, over his shoulder, but everything seemed normal, the peonies were bobbing in the breeze, one of his neighbors fell into step with him on the last few yards to the door, a dog panting on his leash.

"Working late again, Billy?" Pete Warner asked, tossing a doggie poop bag in the trashcan.

Billy nodded. "Yeah. Four nights this week. So far."

"Well I guess the money's nice."

"Yeah. Yeah, it is. I miss the sunlight though, it seems like it's always dark."

"Full moon soon, though," Peter nodded up to where the clouds were parting, the huge globe of the moon making the night far brighter than it had been only moments before. Peter chuckled. "King here always howls on full moon nights. Well, I suppose you know that. Ever since we moved here. It's the strangest thing—it never bothered him before."

Billy unlocked the front door and held it open for Peter and King. "Maybe he doesn't like being cooped up. You said you used to have a big back yard?"

"Yeah, we did. That could be it. But those guys in 3B complained last month, so I need to find some way to make him stop."

"Try peanut butter."

Peter gave him a look and Billy shrugged and grinned. "Hey, I heard dogs love it. It can't hurt to try, right?"

"No, I suppose it can't. Night, Billy."

He nodded as they parted ways, Peter heading up to his apartment on the second floor.

It was dark when Billy let himself in, but the curtains were open and the moonlight streamed in from the big picture window on the other side of the room. The furniture was nothing but forms, shapes that were easy enough to see as crouching demons lying in wait.

He shook his head. He knew there wasn't anything, he was just spooked from earlier, starting to jitter with it in fact.

"You're safe." The voice came from the shadows on the wall, startling him, making him jump. Billy shook his head. Those kids had *really* spooked him.

"And so are you, no thanks to your little escapade." At least he had been where he was supposed to be.

One of the shadows detached itself and Bear's shape coalesced as he walked into the moonlight. Bear was tall and heavy-set, muscled chest and back blocking out a good bit of the moonlight. His café-au-lait skin seemed much darker in

the moonlit room, and the dark dreadlocks on his head looked like a great mane. "My escapade?"

"Yes! Do you know what could have happened to you? How many times have I told you not to go out at night, especially by yourself. Especially like *that*. They could have had guns! Or one of them might have gotten lucky with a knife and then what? You could have been killed, Bear."

Bear snorted and pounced, Billy's tirade swallowed by that hot, wet mouth as it descended on his own. Tongue sweeping through Billy's mouth, Bear kept moving, pushing him up against the wall, his back hitting it with a thump.

He grunted, breathless, fingers clutching at the broad shoulders. A groan was torn from him as he realized Bear was naked, hard muscles warm and solid beneath his fingertips.

"Want you," growled Bear and Billy nodded. Yeah, he was up for that. Very up for it.

Bear's fingers tore at his clothes, ripping the material of his work-shirt. God, that sound always made him shudder, Bear's need wild, feral. He reached for his jeans himself, knowing from experience that his lover wouldn't stop at just the shirt.

Bear's fingers met his, and then fell away, a low, deep chuckle sounding in his ear just before his earlobe was bitten. "They look better in pieces around your ankles."

God, Bear's voice did it for him. He'd bet he could come just from Bear talking dirty to him. Not that Bear would ever do it. Oh, Billy'd bet his lover would try if he asked, but Bear wasn't a talker, he was a doer.

Bear's mouth was on his again, tongue pushing in, owning him and he moaned, thoughts flying in all directions as one big hand wrapped around his prick and tugged it. Bear's thumb slid across his slit and spread the liquid there, hot and slick.

"I can smell you," growled Bear. "Oh, fuck, I can smell you."

Then Bear dropped to his knees and swallowed Billy right up, making him jerk and cry out, hands reaching to wrap in Bear's dreads. He held Bear's head in place and started rocking his hips, knowing his lover could take it, knowing Bear liked it hard and rough and wild.

Bear's big hands found his hips, holding them and pulling him harder into Bear's mouth. He slid deep, screaming as Bear's throat swallowed around the head of his cock. His hips kept pumping, spunk spilling from him.

Bear took it all in, took him all down and then started to clean him, licking and nibbling at his softening flesh.

Billy collapsed back, his head hitting the wall. "Ow," he complained, chuckling a little. Bear just growled softly and continued to lap at his prick. One of those big hands slid between his thighs and pushed, making him spread his legs. That gave Bear access to his balls, to the sensitive skin behind them. Shit, Bear's tongue was hot on him. Made him burn, inside as well as out.

"Gonna make me hard again."

"Good. I like it when you're hard while I fuck you."

Bear grabbed his hand and tugged him, encouraging him down onto the ground. "Hands and knees, Billy." His lips were

bitten and then soothed by that hot, hot tongue. "Gonna have you."

He chuckled, moving to accommodate Bear, glad for the carpet he'd put in, just as he was every time they did this. "Doggie style, Bear?"

Bear's hand landed on his ass, the smack loud, hard, making his flesh sting.

"Hey! Ow!" Of course his protest would have been more effective if he hadn't been laughing, spreading his legs farther apart and rocking back toward Bear in encouragement. Another slap, a finger inside him, that talented tongue—he wasn't picky, he just needed something.

Another smack was what he got and his cock jerked, growing heavier between his legs. "Fuck. Bear."

"Yes. Fuck."

God, that low growl had his cock jerking again and he pushed back insistently. "Come *on*. Don't tease. More. More."

He didn't know what it was, maybe the close call he'd had out there tonight, maybe the knowledge that the moon was almost full and Bear almost at his most feral, but Billy wanted it hard and wild, wanted the ride he knew only Bear could give him. "Come *on*," he repeated, growling a little himself now.

His words got him another smack, and then another. Then his ass cheeks were grabbed and Bear's thumbs pushed into him, spreading his hole wide. Bear's tongue joined them a moment later, pushing past them, hotter and wetter and fuck, enough to make him whimper.

Bear's hands pulled him back, thumbs and tongue going deep into him before he was rocked forward again. It didn't last long, the drag and glide of being penetrated, being opened and stretched and made wet for Bear's cock. It didn't last long at all, but when it was over, Bear pushed into him, slowly, but surely, not stopping until his ass was firmly seated in the cradle of Bear's hips.

He could feel the tremor in Bear's hands as they held tight to his hips, fingers digging in. "Billy..."

He nodded. He knew what Bear wanted, what Bear needed. He wanted the same thing, but he knew if they waited, if he made Bear wait until they both couldn't be still for a single second longer, that it would be so good, so wild and fierce and mind-blowing when it finally happened.

"Patience," he whispered, muscles clenching around Bear's thick cock.

Bear growled, fingers tightening on his hips. Bear slowly bent over his back, teeth coming out to worry at the skin of his shoulder. "Billy. Please."

He loved that, loved how Bear would wait for permission, wouldn't move even though he was strong enough, big enough to just take what he wanted.

"Beg so..." He groaned, body clenching around Bear again. Fuck, he needed this as much as Bear did. "So prettily. Okay. Do it now."

And Bear did, pulling nearly out of him before slamming back in again, cock pushing hard and deep into him, sliding past his gland and making him cry out. It happened again and again until he was covered in sweat and rocking with Bear,

meeting every last thrust with as much power as he could muster, until his screams had faded into exhausted whimpers, his body straining to find completion.

One of Bear's hands dropped from his hip to his cock, wrapping around it and pulling hard as Bear's teeth sank into the flesh of his right shoulder more than hard enough to break the skin.

He screamed, coming hard as Bear's head went back and his lover howled. Heat filled him, burning, so good inside him.

Bear pulled away and lowered him gently to the ground, curling up around him, face buried in his neck. The big arms tugged him closer, hands stroking his skin. "Did they hurt you?"

"I took a punch to the gut, but it's not too bad. You came before they could do anything else."

Bear growled softly. "If they have marked you I will—"

He put his fingers on Bear's lips. "Shh. I'm fine. You can't go around attacking people, Bear."

"But *they* attacked you first! They would have hurt you if I hadn't been there."

"Speaking of—why *were* you there?"

"Looking for you."

"I was working."

"It was *late*. And you had finished work and were busy being attacked."

"I could have handled myself."

Bear snorted. "They were a pack and you were isolated from yours."

He nodded and swallowed. It was true enough. He'd worried that he'd be killed—he was lucky Bear had come looking for him. "Well, don't do it again," he said softly.

Bear snorted once more. "You're welcome."

Smiling, he curled into Bear's warmth, safe and sound and home.

Billy grabbed the bread from the toaster and buttered it. He tossed it on a chipped blue plate and turned on the TV as he sat at the little table in the kitchen, his coffee finally cool enough to drink.

Bear padded out just as the commercials ended, naked and distracting, drawing Billy's eye as he ate his toast. Beautiful, beautiful man. He wondered, not for the first time, how he'd gotten lucky enough to capture Bear's attention. The caramel covered skin was surprisingly smooth, the heavy phallus and balls framed by narrow hips. Billy licked his lips, his own cock perking up at the sight.

Bear grinned at him, growling softly. Billy knew his lover could smell his arousal.

The voice on TV sent a shiver through him, though, and Billy turned with a frown, seeing one of the guys from last night on the screen, looking just the same except for the white bandage on his arm. "It attacked me and my friends down on Franklin Road. Dude—it was *huge* and I thought it was gonna kill us. Biggest fucking teeth ever. I had to have twenty-two stitches," he said.

"Is that all?" growled Bear, muscles tense as he watched the little television. "I thought I'd bitten him harder than that."

"Shush, I'm listening here." Billy leaned forward, watching as the TV switched back to the announcer and a drawing of the dog that had attacked the teenagers on Franklin Road.

"I don't look like *that*," complained Bear.

Billy tossed his second piece of toast at Bear. "It's close enough, Bear. I mean, shit—there's a drawing of you on television. They're saying you're extremely dangerous and if seen people should call the cops. You think they're going to take you to jail and give you a fair trial, Bear? You think they care that those kids attacked me first and you were just defending me?" Billy shook his head. "They're going to shoot you dead. You stay *inside* today. I don't care how late I am. I don't care if I don't come home tonight—you stay right here."

Bear whimpered softly. "It's full moon, Billy."

"All the more reason for you not to be out on the streets."

"I won't have to be if you come home." Bear was pouting, that thick lower lip pooched out, dark chocolate eyes sad.

Billy growled. "I'm not staying out late on purpose, Bear. I need that job. It's what keeps this roof over our heads, food in our bellies."

"I know. I *know*. But it's a *full moon*, Billy. I need you. You know I do."

He sighed and nodded. Yeah, he knew. Bear would go nuts if he was left to his own devices and on his own during the full moon. He needed to be distracted, needed somewhere for all

the adrenaline and sexual energy to go. Billy was more than happy to be that somewhere.

"I'll tell them I can't stay tonight. I'll be home before dark."

"You promise?"

"I promise."

Bear pounced him, arms going around him, mouth crashing against his own. Billy let the kiss go on, reveling in Bear's touch, in the heat and passion. Then he pulled away. "If I'm late, my coming home on time will be screwed."

Bear nodded and backed away, hand dropping to his hard cock. He started to slowly jack off, eyes on Billy.

Billy groaned and tore his eyes away from Bear. "You're not making it easy, Bear."

"No, I'm making it hard." He was given a wink and Bear spread his legs a little wider, hips jutting out.

"I have to go."

"So go."

"*Have* to have to."

Bear just nodded and kept stroking, squeezing the head of his cock and spreading the liquid that beaded at the tip down around the wide head.

Groaning, Billy fled, grabbing his backpack on his way.

Chapter Two

Bear was pacing when Billy got home, growling, deep rumbles coming from his throat. Those firm ass cheeks rose and fell with each step, Bear's skin glistening with a light sheen of sweat. The eyes that turned to Billy were wild, half-crazed.

"You're late."

Billy nodded. "I'm sorry. I came home as soon as I could. There's daylight left yet."

"Barely."

Billy felt Bear watching him as Billy turned and locked the door. "There. I'm home and we're both safe inside."

Bear nodded and started coming toward him. "I can feel it inside me, Billy."

"I know," he said gently, nodding toward the bedroom. "Let's go to bed."

Nodding, Bear growled a little, started backing up so those dark, heavy-lidded eyes could follow his progress, make sure he was coming, too.

"Lie down," Billy ordered softly, going to the wardrobe and pulling out the ropes made from silk, layer after layer of softness twined together to form an impossibly strong binding.

Bear's nostrils flared. "You're tying me down?" Billy nodded and Bear did as he'd been asked, lying on the bed, even spreading his arms and legs wide. "It's a good idea. I can feel it. I don't know if I can fight it—it's so strong, Billy."

"I know. That's why I'm using the rope."

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The first time they'd done this, he'd thought it was cruel, that it was hurting Bear. That first night had proved him wrong, Bear spending most of it writhing in ecstasy. Now he knew it was a way to distract Bear from the moon, from the other base need that thrummed through Bear's veins.

Billy tied Bear's hands first, the thick silk going around Bear's wrists and then the posts on their bed. The big four-poster had been bought for just this reason and every month the outrageously expensive piece of furniture proved its worth yet again.

His lover's ankles were next, Bear's legs spreading wide as Billy tied the other ends of the ropes to the bottom posts.

Bear tested the restraints as soon as Billy was done, the big body going tight, pulling. The wooden bed creaked, but the bonds held fast. Bear was beautiful, muscles straining, cock hard, bobbing, skin gleaming.

The dark eyes met his. "I am held."

Billy nodded, as the last rays of sunlight came in the window and painted Bear's body in gold and bronze.

Billy moaned at the sight, at the memories of being buried inside Bear, the tight heat grasping his cock and holding him so damned close, Bear hot and shining and golden beneath him.

"Too many clothes," growled Bear.

"But you aren't wearing any." It was a dangerous thing, teasing the bear, even more so during the full moon, but Billy knew Bear would never hurt him.

He walked slowly around the bed, working off his clothes, watching Bear as much as Bear watched him. By the time he

was naked, his skin had goosebumped up, and his cock was hard. Fuck, he wanted.

"You're teasing me." Bear snarled the words, the strain showing in the way his muscles bunched and flexed, in the way his voice sounded torn, cracked.

Billy nodded, fingers wrapping around his own cock. He pulled on it slowly, the heat of it burning his fingers, his palms. His pulse beat in his cock, rapid, heavy. He was teasing himself, too, making them both wait.

"You need to anchor me," Bear told him, pleading. "Billy. Please. Love."

He climbed onto the bed between Bear's legs, feeling the incredible heat pouring from Bear's body. "Are you ready for me?"

"Yes. Hurry."

"You prepared?" He was surprised. Bear was usually running mostly on instinct this close to the full moon and not prone to thinking things through.

He settled with his cock at Bear's hole and start to push, gasping as he breached the tight muscles. "You aren't ready!"

"I am ready—I don't need the slick. Not now. Not like this. Hurry, Billy." Bear looked toward the window. The sun was gone, the moon on her way.

Billy pushed the rest of the way in. Bear was so hot inside, and so tight, the muscles squeezing him, working him. "God, Bear, it's good. Perfect. You're always so hot and tight. I never want to pull away." He did though, pulling most of the way out before pushing back in again. And then again. And

again and again until he was crying out, eyes holding Bear's as his heat spilled into Bear's body.

He kept holding Bear's gaze, stayed buried inside Bear's body as the moon peeked over the horizon. He could feel the moment it happened—all of Bear's muscles going tight, Bear's ass squeezing his cock so hard. Bear's eyes went wild, feral for a moment as the battle was fought.

Fought and won, Bear holding onto his human form thanks to the seed and cock inside his body. Thanks to Billy.

The moon rose higher, a huge white disk hanging in the sky, making Bear's skin shine again with its silver light.

The biggest danger past, Billy collapsed onto Bear, rubbing their naked torsos together. He pushed a hand between them, tugging idly at Bear's cock. Leaning up, he brought their mouths together, playing with Bear's tongue, tasting the wildness that blossomed in his lover this night.

Bear growled softly, the sound almost gentle, despite the moonlight in his eyes. "Don't untie me."

Billy shook his head. "I know. I won't."

He knew from experience not to, knew that his seed and the bindings were all that held Bear in his human form and if either were removed, Bear would not be able to control the change and he'd go on a rampage. Such was the curse of the full moon.

With the news still abuzz about the rabid dog, they couldn't risk Bear going out at all, let alone while the bloodlust of the moon held him crazed.

He continued to slide his hand along Bear's cock, distracting his lover. His own cock twitched inside Bear's passage and he moaned softly.

Maybe he'd call in sick tomorrow.

* * * *

It was still in the news the next day, how a big, stray dog had nearly killed these kids, playing the 'victims' up like they weren't a bunch of thugs and it pissed Billy off, because if Bear hadn't shown up when he did, God only knew what would have happened to him. He showed the paper to Bear who shrugged and pointed to the third paragraph.

"It says the dog was black. My fur is brown, like my skin."

"I still think you should stay out of sight for awhile, stay human unless you're home. Just to be on the safe side."

It made Bear growl and glare, those big brown eyes begging as effectively as any dog's ever had. "You know I need to get out and run, Billy. Especially after a full moon."

"It isn't safe."

"You can use the leash—the paper says 'stray' dog."

It wasn't easy, resisting those eyes, the need in Bear's voice. Bear went to his knees and slipped between Billy's legs, eyes soft, full of need and desire and pleading. Bear's big hands slid along his thighs. "I'll be good. I promise. Walk on the leash all the way to the park and not try to run off the grounds once we're there."

Billy slid his hands over Bear's cheeks, Bear nuzzling against his palms, whiskers rough. "Okay, okay."

Bear all but barked, leaping up and kissing him, running to the coat stand by the door to get the leather leash from its hook. Billy had to hold back his laugh—Bear's ass was wagging.

"Go on. Shift."

Bear gave him another quick kiss, this one wet and playful, and then his lover did that magical thing where his body changed, grew fur, jaw elongating into that of a dog. A big brown dog with the most beautiful liquid chocolate eyes Billy'd ever seen.

Bear's tail was thwacking the table as Bear put his face in Billy's lap, looking up at him.

Billy nodded, fingers sinking into the magnificent fur.
"Yeah, yeah, we'll go out and you can run around."

Bear barked and licked his face, making Billy "ew" as he was slobbered on. Then Bear backed off and barked again, and Billy laughed, just grinning. It was impossible to be in a bad mood with Bear there to love him.

When he didn't get up right away, Bear came over and took his arm in that big mouth. His lover was so gentle, teeth not breaking the skin, not even threatening to as Bear tugged, trying to get him up. Bear growled softly and Billy could almost hear the words "Walk. Lets go walk. You said we'd go for a walk."

Billy got up and slid the collar, attached to the leash, around Bear's thick neck. It wouldn't stay on if Bear wanted out, but it was more for show than anything else, so it didn't matter that they both knew it wouldn't hold.

Bear walked sedately next to him for the first few blocks, for about as long as it took for Billy to stop feeling like everyone was looking at him and staring at Bear, pointing and whispering and knowing this was the dog everyone was looking for. Then they turned the final corner to the park and suddenly Bear was out ahead of him, tugging at the leash, pulling him along until he was almost trotting.

"You said you'd be good!" laughed Billy, trying to pull back on the leash.

Bear barked and bounded, coming back to him before taking off again with another eager bark that clearly said he was being good, Billy was just moving too slowly.

Shaking his head, Billy started to jog. Normally he would have let Bear loose at this point, but the recent media furor over the dog attack had him nervous. He needed to get a proper collar for Bear, with dog tags and everything. Then at least if Bear went out without him and got caught, Billy would get a call.

As soon as they reached the park's edge, Bear started really pulling at the leash, barking and growling, clearly wanting to be set free. Billy grabbed hold of the collar before Bear could work it off and unclipped the leash from it.

"Okay, go do your thing. I'll do the circuit." When they went for walks, Billy would walk through the park once while Bear ran around, getting rid of the energy that built up inside him, frolicking and running and chasing butterflies and the odd rabbit like he was any other dog.

Bear never seemed to get into it with any of the other dogs in the park, ignoring them and being ignored by them.

Billy figured it had something to do with him being human as well as a dog—he wasn't a real dog, so neither the bitches nor the males saw Bear as a player in the dominance game; he simply wasn't on their radar. It made their walks easier, not having to deal with that.

Billy had dreams of moving to the country, to a farm or something. He didn't mind hard work, but he wanted Bear to have the freedom to shift, to run and bark and howl. Billy knew the city weighed heavily on Bear sometimes, the concrete and asphalt and skyscrapers keeping Bear from the sky, the earth. Sometimes he wondered if it was fair to keep Bear here with him, if he was being selfish.

Billy figured if he had to ask the question, the answer was likely yes. But he didn't want to lose Bear; he loved the big lug.

Billy shook himself out of his reverie just in time to see Bear barreling down on him, tongue hanging out of what looked like a wickedly smiling mouth.

"Oh, no you don't!" he shouted, trying to side-step out of the way. Bear had anticipated him though and he found himself mowed down, lying on his back and laughing breathlessly as Bear licked him.

He reached up and ran his hands through Bear's fur, scratching Bear's neck as he grinned up at his shifted lover. "Okay, okay, let me up," he finally complained, pushing. Bear licked him again, slobbering all over his face, and then rolled over, lying on his back, trying to entice Billy to scratch the vulnerable tummy.

How could he resist? Honestly, Billy didn't try. He rolled up onto his knees next to the prone body, and used both hands to scratch, getting full coverage and laughing when he found the spot that had Bear's back leg jerking.

Eventually, he stopped and Bear rolled over to lie next to him, head on his thigh. Those big brown eyes gazed up at him and Billy tried to ignore them.

Yeah, right. He rolled his eyes at himself and stood up. "All right. Down to the end of the park and back here again, but that's it—just down to the end and back and then we have to go back home."

Bear barked once and then took off like a bat out of hell, strong legs carrying him quickly out of sight.

"He's so big. What is he?" A pretty girl about Billy's age sat on a park bench, her little black and tan King Charles Spaniel sitting at her feet.

Smiling at her, Billy sat on the other end of the bench. "He's a mutt as far as I can tell. I mean obviously there's some Saint Bernard in him, and I think some retriever, maybe lab."

"You don't know for sure?"

"Well I adopted him already fully grown. No one knew what his parents were." It wasn't an outright lie—Billy didn't like having to lie about Bear. He *had* taken Bear in fully grown and it wasn't like he knew who Bear's parents were. He wasn't even sure Bear knew.

"Oh, that was good of you. I bought Sir Lancelot here, but I donated an equal amount to P.E.T.A. and the S.P.C.A., too. I just really wanted a King Charles." She shrugged and leaned

down to pet the little dog, who preened beneath her hand.
"Do you two come here often? I haven't seen you before."

"I guess it's been awhile. And we usually come in the evening." After dark.

Bear came bounding back, totally ignoring the girl and her little dog in favor of slobbering all over Billy some more.

"He definitely has Saint Bernard in him." She laughed, blue eyes twinkling, blond hair shining in the sun. If he were into girls, he'd be in seventh heaven right now that she'd noticed him, was maybe flirting with him.

"Yeah, he does." He slipped the leash back onto Bear's collar. "We have to go now. It was nice talking to you."

"Oh, what a shame! I didn't even get your name." She held out her hand. "I'm Barbara."

He shook the beautifully manicured hand. "Billy. And this is Bear."

"Hi Billy. Bear. So nice to meet you. Maybe Sir Lancy and I will see you around sometime."

"Maybe." He stood up and tugged on Bear's leash. "Bye."

Well obviously Bear couldn't look *that* scary or a nice girl like Barbara would have been scared and she hadn't been. It probably helped that Bear and the King Charles had totally ignored each other.

Nevertheless, Billy walked a little quicker as a cop car went by. He was eager to get them back home where Bear could shift back.

Chapter Three

Billy was fucking pissed off. It was still all over the news, had been all anyone talked about for the last week, how the sightings were getting more frequent, the wild dog—graduated from stray dog—was attacking people. How it wasn't safe to be out walking.

The last two sightings had been during daylight, and coming home, Billy'd overheard a lady telling her neighbor how she'd just seen the rabid beast near Kelso's meat shop, scrounging in the garbage. She'd been really worked up, thanking God that the monster had been distracted, or she and her little angel wouldn't have stood a chance, the beast was that big.

Billy let himself in and called for Bear. He was early. Well, on time, but early for what had become normal over the last couple months, and it had only just gone dark. Maybe it was partly his fault—he was working so much and Bear got bored—but he couldn't afford to risk lose this job by refusing the overtime. Frankly, the extra money was coming in handy, too, paying down some debts, with the way Bear was always eating him out of house and home.

"Bear!" he called again, tossing his bag on the floor and locking the door behind him. The curtains on the back window were blowing gently and it made him growl. Fuck, Bear *was* out. God damnit, he was going to turn Bear into a rug.

He went to the window, muttering about how he was going to shut it and lock it and then what was Bear going to do? Get stuck outside and get caught by the animal police that were

out there looking for him and wouldn't that teach Bear not to listen and goddamn Bear anyway, Billy wasn't trying to be mean, he just wanted Bear safe, for fuck's sake.

"Who are you talking to?" Bear's sleep-rough voice came from behind him, making Billy nearly jump out of his skin.

"Bear!"

Bear's big head tilted, dreadlocks sliding on the bare shoulders. "You were expecting someone else?"

"I. No. I..." Had thought Bear had gone out. He turned and pulled the curtain aside, finding the window open but the screen in place. He closed it hard, the pane rattling. "Was just closing the window."

"What did it do to you?" Bear asked, stretching, arms up over his head, muscles all going tight and then releasing, and Billy's body reacted predictably.

"I thought you'd gone out," he snapped, tearing his eyes away from the show in front of him to meet Bear's gaze.

Bear's eyes narrowed. "You asked me not to."

"I know."

"And it's been days, Billy. A lot of them." Bear was growling, lips pulling up from his teeth. "But I've been good. I've stayed cooped up in this tiny place and you're hardly ever home, but I've stayed. Because you asked."

"Are you sure?"

"What?" Bear's head snapped up, his eyes glittering. "What did you say?"

Billy stood his ground, crossed his arms over his chest. "I asked if you were sure."

"I think I'd know if I'd gone out."

"But would you tell me?" Billy pushed. Bear looked sincere enough, but all those muscles were distracting and there were all those reports and articles...

"Are you saying I'm lying?" Bear stalked toward him.

"No. Not lying. Exactly."

Bear growled. "You do think I'm lying! You think I've been going out!"

"Well there's been a lot of talk lately, sightings." Bear had begun growling, fists clenched at his sides. Billy pushed on. "Everyone's up in arms and you haven't been out in ages and even that was barely a run and I know you wouldn't hurt anyone and that things get exaggerated, but..."

Bear advanced on him, grabbed his shirt and slammed him up against the wall. Billy's cock throbbed enthusiastically, out of habit, but even though Bear's face pushed up against his, there was no kiss and none coming and Billy knew that. At least his brain did.

"You asked me not to go out and I haven't. If you don't trust me ... Well." Bear let him go and stepped away. "I'll go."

"No!" Billy shook his head, fighting his body's natural inclination to sink against Bear, to rub up against all those muscles. "No, you don't just take off because we're having an argument."

"This isn't an argument. You accused me of lying."

"Bear, there're reports of daily sightings, daily attacks!"

"So it must be me. I must be lying to you and going out when you asked me not to. There's no other possible explanation."

"The dog is described as big. Shaggy. Dark colored. It appears and disappears, seemingly out of nowhere."

Bear crossed his arms over his chest, pectoral muscles bulging impressively. "You know people exaggerate."

"I know that! But where there's smoke there's fire and there's been too many reports since the night it was you for them to all be made up!"

"That still doesn't make it me!" Bear was shouting now. And so was he. "But it could be."

Bear backed off, glaring. "Except I said it wasn't."

"You were out without me that night!"

"I saved your life that night, asshole!"

"But why were you out? You don't go out without me after dark, but you did that night. So why should I believe this isn't a usual thing."

"It's not." Bear kept glaring.

"So why were you out that night?"

"Because you were in trouble."

"You didn't know that until you got there."

Bear shook his head. "I knew."

"How?"

Bear shrugged this time. "I just did. I could feel you needed me. So I came for you."

"That's crazy." It was. Totally crazy, and kind of hot, too.

"So now I'm lying about that, too?" Bear growled and pushed past him, opening the window and then the screen.

"What are you doing?" Billy demanded.

"Going out." Bear dropped to his hands and knees.

"What? But—"

"If you're going to believe I'm out there then I might as well be."

With that, Bear shifted, the beautiful, smooth skin giving way to lovely fur he knew was soft and warm to the touch. The only things that didn't change were the dark eyes, which stared accusingly at him for a long moment. Then Bear turned and went out the window, disappearing into the night.

Billy sighed and sat heavily on one of the hard kitchen table chairs. Damn it. If Bear got himself caught or killed, Billy was never going to forgive the stubborn beast.

Or himself.

* * * *

Bear didn't come home all night and Billy hardly slept a wink, every little sound making him jolt awake. Every time he heard a dog bark or howl in the distance, it made him shiver and pull the covers tighter around himself. He should have been toasty warm, Bear's furnace of a body wrapped around him, fast asleep, not cold and shivering and alone and worried sick.

His alarm went off and Bear still wasn't home. Billy's worry shifted, morphed, solidifying into anger and he muttered all through his shower and ate his cereal like it had done him some personal injury. In a fit of pique that he wound up regretting all day long, he slammed the back screen and window closed. Bear didn't want to come home? Then fine, Billy didn't want him there.

He fretted at work. What if Bear'd been caught? What if he was hurt and managed to get himself home only to find the window closed against him?

If Bear was fine, he could always morph and use the spare key to let himself in, but what if he took the closed windows as Billy's way of saying "don't come home"?

Oh, Billy was still angry, but he didn't want Bear gone. He never had. He was just worried for Bear's safety.

If he tried to look at it objectively he could see Bear's side of things. Bear had said he hadn't gone out and Billy hadn't believed him. Things for Bear tended to be very black and white and Billy could see how Bear would see his questioning and worry as lack of trust and how, for Bear, that could escalate into thinking Billy didn't want Bear around.

Billy decided to go home at lunch and get the back window open, leave a nice bowl of meat out for Bear in apology. If he was quick both ways he could do it and not be late getting back.

Of course a few minutes before the lunch whistle went, Gibbs, the foreman, informed them all they were working through lunch and then overtime on top of that—as long as it took them to fill this order—and Billy had no choice but to stay put.

He called home on his shortened break, worry settling like a heavy rock. The phone rang four times before clicking over to the answering machine.

"Pick up the phone, Bear. Come on. Don't sulk. Please? Just pick up." He hung up with a growl and dialed the number

again, listened to another four rings before the phone clicked once more over to the answering machine.

He hung up and dialed again. He would have done it again, too, but he was being glared at by Sam wanting to use the phone. He hung up the receiver with a sigh and nodded to Sam. "Sorry," he muttered.

Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. The word repeated in his head. Sorry, Bear. Sorry.

He was frantic by the time he was finally able to clock out, Gibbs glaring at him for leaving "early". He didn't care though; he was too worried about Bear.

Billy didn't run home, but he definitely made it in record time, his legs moving as fast as they could without actually running.

It was already dark, but the streets were busy, people coming and going, strolling to restaurants and bars, or going home. He pretty much ignored them all, his entire focus on getting home. He was sure Bear would be there, waiting for him to open the window.

Absolutely sure.

At least that's what he kept telling himself.

He was just barely out of breath when he got to his building, and he let himself in the front doors, happy he didn't encounter anyone, that he didn't have to make small talk. The light was out in the hallway, again, and he fumbled with his keys, taking several tries before he got them in the door.

The place was dark and stuffy, it felt closed up, felt like it had been closed up for days. He didn't even pull off his

backpack before rushing to the back window, pushing it and the screen open.

"Bear?" He called for his lover, and leaned out, looking for either dog or man, but finding neither. He squinted, trying to see into the shadows for movement, for a solid form. Something.

"Bear!"

Hands landed on his hips as a low voice growled. "What?"

Billy screamed. It was a girly scream at that, but Bear had startled him badly. He jerked and jumped, too, banging his head on the window. "Ow. Fuck."

Bear pulled him in, hand pushing the screen closed. Bear frowned at him. "Are you hurt?"

"Yes! I banged my head. Hard."

Bear grunted, pushing his hand away and rubbing his head with one big, warm hand. "What were you doing?"

"Looking for you!"

"I was inside."

"Yes. I see that now. I thought you were outside though."

Bear's eyes narrowed. "You closed the window when you left this morning."

"Yes."

"And you thought I was still outside."

Billy sighed. "Yes."

Bear glared at him, but Billy could see the hurt in those big brown eyes.

"I was upset!"

"So you locked me out."

"I thought you'd stayed out all night on purpose to show me."

"I was only gone a couple of hours. If that."

"So where were you then? You didn't come to bed."

"Closet."

"Oh." Bear would often make a bed of the coats in the hall closet and sleep curled up in the corner. "I'm sorry," Billy said softly. "I called from work—you didn't pick up the phone."

Bear shrugged. "I didn't hear it."

"I called three times."

"I was in the closet sleeping."

"Sulking," Billy suggested, starting to get angry again.

Bear's back went straight and a low growl sounded.

"You're treating me like a child. I'm not a child, Billy. I'm an adult."

Billy chuckled, suddenly tickled. Bear was standing in front of him, very large, very naked, very much a grown man. "I can see that, Bear. I can so see that."

"Yeah?" The low, angry growls turned into a softer, sexier sound vibrating deep in that massive chest. Bear's cock began to fill, and he stepped closer, eyes gone dark, hot.

Billy swallowed and nodded. "Yeah."

"You're wearing too many clothes. You're always wearing too many clothes."

Billy laughed and started stripping, dancing away from Bear. If he worked it right, he could be naked before the chase was over. Hell, if he worked it right, he could be in the bedroom when the pouncing happened.

Of course Bear was fast and horny, and Billy was lucky he was near the couch when he was pounced, his backpack and shirt gone, his pants halfway down his legs. Fuck, he loved how much Bear wanted him, it was damned sexy.

He landed face down in the cushions and he tried to turn, but Bear was having none of it. Two big hands wrapped around his hips and tilted him up, that thick cock rubbing against his hole.

"Oh, God. Bear."

The heat behind him stilled, froze. "Stop?"

Billy took a breath, and then another, forcing his body to relax. He shook his head. "No. No, don't stop. Oh, fuck, Bear, don't stop."

Bear grunted and started moving again, pushing that thick prick against him, into him. Billy groaned, a shiver rippling through him as his body stretched to accommodate Bear's girth. It ached, sent sweet heat burning up along his spine, right into his brain. Billy's hands curled into fists and he breathed heavily, working to keep from tensing up, letting Bear have him.

Bear pushed and pushed until he was all the way in, body bent over Billy's, chest hot against Billy's back.

"Oh, fuck, move. Bear, you've got to move."

There was no argument from Bear, just more of that sweet, burning friction as Bear pulled out and then pushed back in again, slowly, letting Billy feel every inch, every bump and vein. Bear moved slowly at first, almost gently, but he soon sped up, that low growl vibrating in his chest again, vibrating against Billy's back.

Whimpering, Billy started to push back against Bear's thrusts, meeting them, demanding more, harder, all without a word.

He could feel Bear's fingers on his hips, bruising his skin, and the only thing that could make that better was if Bear ... oh, yeah, bit down on his shoulder, just like that, marking him with hands and mouth. Marking him as Bear's.

Harder and harder, Bear thrust into him, shifting until the thrusts hit his prostate, making sparks flash behind his eyes. He cried out, letting Bear know and then he just let go, doing nothing but feeling.

Everything disappeared but Bear's cock, pushing into him again and again, making him fly. Time meant nothing, how long it lasted didn't matter, he just sank into the sensations until the pleasure flowed over him like a wave and he was drowning in it, in the heat of Bear's body, the heat of Bear's seed filling him.

Bear collapsed onto him, pushing him into the covers and panting in his ear.

"Bear."

A grunt was his only reply.

"I love you."

Bear's tongue slid on the mark on his shoulder, making him shiver, another low rumble vibrating against his back.

Billy smiled, melted and happy.

Chapter Four

"Hey, Billy, you coming out for a few beers and darts tonight?"

"What? Me?" Billy shook his head. Nah, I can't, Jack. Thanks anyway."

"I told him you wouldn't," Robert put in. "You never do anymore."

Billy ducked his head. It was true. He'd cut way back when Bear had first come into his life, and lately with the reports and the mandatory overtime keeping him away from home as it was, he felt too guilty to go out on top of that. "It's just with the overtime..."

Jack snorted. "It's not like you've got a wife to go home to."

Billy laughed. "No. No wife."

Jack chuckled and pushed on. "So, come on, then. Dan makes it every week and he's got a wife *and* a new baby."

Robert shook his head and headed out of the locker room. "He's not going to come, Jack, give it up."

"I..." Couldn't say no, not really, not without totally insulting the guys. It looked like Robert already was insulted; he imagined some of the others were as well. Jack was giving him a chance to catch up and make nice.

"Okay. Okay, I'll go." Billy gave in, and Jack pounded him on the back.

"Excellent! You can buy the first round, seeing as it's been so long."

Billy rolled his eyes, but let it go. He could afford a round of beer at least, and it had been a long time since he'd done anything with the guys at all.

"I'll meet you guys there," he said, shouldering his pack. He could get home first and let Bear know—promise his lover a late night run.

"What the hell for, man? You gotta take a leak? I'll wait on you."

"Yeah. Okay." It seemed Jack wasn't going to give him any wiggle room at all. Jack probably thought if he didn't come along, Billy'd pull a runner and disappear on them. Which wasn't going to happen, but he supposed he couldn't begrudge Jack thinking it.

He went into the bathroom, breathing a sigh of relief when Jack didn't follow. He wasn't exactly pee-shy, but he didn't actually have to go either. He ran the water, washing his hands and taking a minute to look at himself in the mirror.

His hair needed a trim, his brown curls down past his ears. Of course Bear liked it longer, liked having something to hold onto. He looked tired, too, he guessed, but otherwise pretty much the same as he always had. He felt different though, which he assumed had to show, so when Jack had first invited him tonight, he'd thought they'd wanted to take him out and grill him. Maybe all the guys really wanted to know was why he wasn't hanging out with them anymore.

He was going to have to come up with something though because it wasn't like he could tell them the truth.

"Hey, you remember the night we went out to celebrate Jason getting promoted and I got blotto and you guys let me walk home on my own? Well see it went like this..."

Billy was pretty proud of himself; he hadn't stumbled once. And there'd been lots of curbs and stuff to trip over, but he hadn't so goooo him!

He looked around, blinking a little. Why was he up at the big park? Because he'd taken the long way around instead of the quick way. If he'd gone right when they got out of the bar instead of left he'd be home already. It was all Jack's fault. Jack had insisted on walking him up to main street and that had thrown him. That was his story and he was sticking to it.

It didn't really matter anyway, after all, it was a nice night, even if he could see his breath, and he was going to walk around the park. Because he could, because his feet were not tripping. He had total control of his bipedals. Billy tilted his head. Was that the right word? Was it a word at all? Of course it was his brain and he was only talking to himself, so as long as he understood what he was saying...

A low growl and a bark distracted him from whether or not he was allowed to invent words and he blinked, looking for the source of the noise. Oh, man. That was a *big* dog. Like *really* big.

"Hey, poochy, poochy." He called to the dog, and took a few stumbling steps toward it. "Where's your owner, huh? Awfully late to be out walking you. Of course I bet you pee a lot. I mean you're a big dog, so you must have lots of..." He trailed off, blinking as the dog came closer.

It was big and mangy. It had dark brown fur that was mostly matted and all muddy and it looked pretty skinny for such a big dog, like maybe it was underfed. "As long as you don't want to eat me," he murmured. It didn't look like there was a collar on the dog. He couldn't be entirely sure, though, as it was pretty dark, and the fur was longish and matted.

Billy held out a hand. "Come say hi. Come sniff me. I won't hurt you."

It was like the dog understood him, coming up and sniffing cautiously at his hand. Just as the dog licked his knuckles with a huge, warm tongue, Billy felt the first drops of rain on his head. Oh, man, just what he needed—he still had a good walk to get home. After the dog licked him, Billy patted the big head, looking into liquid chocolate eyes. "Man, you're cute, I'll give you that. Even as filthy as you are."

The dog barked softly like he was answering Billy.

Grinning, Billy ran his hand back to the dog's neck. There was plenty of matted hair and dried mud—which wasn't going to be dry for long given that the few drops of rain were quickly turning into a torrential downpour—but there was no collar.

"You're out here all alone, aren't you?" He patted the dog's head again, quickly going over the reasons why he couldn't take this big beast home with him. It was filthy, it was going to be even more filthy and soaking wet on top of that. He was drunk and that was so not the time to be picking up stray pets ... Those big brown eyes stared up at him so sorrowful and pleading and how was he supposed to just turn around and leave?

"Oh, all right. Come on, before we both catch our deaths." Turning, he shoved his hands into his pockets, hunched his shoulders against the rain and started walking. The dog made a whimpering noise and he looked back, finding those eyes still watching him, still begging. Another whimper and a soft bark sounded and Billy rolled his eyes. "I said, 'come on'. That means let's go get out of the cold and rain. You and me. Go." He jerked his head.

The dog barked once and loped over to him, tongue hanging out. The big head bumped his thigh and he started petting the beast without thinking. His thigh was nudged again, and he nodded, shoving his hand back into his pocket, his fingers freezing cold. "Yeah, let's get out of here and into the warm."

Despite the rain, he bounced along as he headed home, the dog at his side, keeping up easily.

By the time he was home, he was soaked from head to toe, his feet freezing. It took him four tries to get his key in the front lobby door and he almost gave up and rang someone's bell. At the last minute, thanks to whatever god looked out for drunks and fools, he remembered the time and tried the key one more time. It worked, halleluiah, and he held the door open for the dog.

"I'm on the first floor, just over here. Hey!" He shouted and jumped to the side, nearly falling over, as the dog planted all four feet and shook, sending water and mud everywhere. "Jesus! I'm going to have to come back and clean this up tomorrow!"

Glaring at the beast, who didn't seem in the least concerned, he let them in. He had more luck with his own apartment key, getting the door open first try. All right. Go him.

"Don't sit there!" He shouted the words, hurrying over to his couch to head the dog off at the pass. "We both need showers before anyone can touch anything."

Man, those pretty eyes could *talk*, the dog looking at him like he was nuts and plainly saying that his new four-legged friend didn't care about things like furniture and mud and keeping the two of them apart.

"This way," he insisted, patting his thigh as he headed to the bathroom, figuring they'd just get in the shower together—he certainly couldn't think of a better, or faster, way to get them both clean. And he was starting to feel a little less giggly drunk and more woozy-gonna-fall-down-now drunk.

The dog trotted up to walk at his side as soon as he'd patted his own thigh and Billy was impressed. "Someone must have trained you, huh? I wonder why they didn't take better care of you?"

He made sure there were some extra towels and then closed the door, because he didn't want the dog going out and climbing onto the sofa soaking wet, either. He stripped, leaving everything from his jacket to his shoes in a pile on the floor. He could hardly see and he blinked, wondering if he'd had enough to drink to be 'blind drunk'. But he'd been seeing fine before.

He turned on the water by feel and stepped under the spray when he had it nice and warm—he didn't need to be able to see to shower. As his feet began to warm up he realized that maybe he should have turned on the light—he probably would have been able to see better, then. Giggling away at himself, he called for the dog to come on and get in with him. "Seriously, dog, it's nice and warm and we'll get you all clean. Soap is our friend—honest."

The shower door was pushed aside, a big body joining his.
A big *human* body.

Uh-uh.

Nope.

Even if someone had followed him and the dog in, the dog would have been all over barking at him. Unless it was a scam and the dog had been the way in his door.

Or he was just imagining things. Yeah, that made the most sense. He reached out, his hands connecting with impressive, muscled pecs. Billy squeaked and stepped back, nearly killing himself as he stepped on the soap and started going down. His arms windmilled, and he would have gone down, except his uninvited guest caught him, growling softly and tugging him up against a very impressive chest. Billy would have been turned on if he wasn't terrified at having a stranger in his home—in his shower!

Okay, so maybe he was a little turned on, anyway. It was after all, a very impressive chest if the feel of it was anything to go by.

"Who are you? How did you get in here?" Man, his voice had gone all squeaky.

"You invited me in."

"Um ... I don't think so." He'd have remembered that. He might be pretty darn drunk, but he wasn't *that* drunk.

"You did. You saw that I was cold and dirty and hungry and you invited me home."

Billy shook his head. No, no, that had been a dog ... He looked up into the man's face, and in the faint light from the frosted window chocolate brown eyes stared back at him. He knew those eyes, but it had been a dog he'd rescued, not a man. Hadn't it?

The man's face came closer and closer, their mouths pressing together and desire shot through Billy, the slight horniness he'd been feeling earlier suddenly exploding. He kissed back eagerly, pushing close and discovering that this guy was impressive all over.

Gasping, he pulled away. "I don't even know your name."

"Bear." The man tugged him close again, letting him feel the hard muscles, the harder cock.

Their mouths merged and Billy closed his eyes and went with it, rubbing his prick against a solid thigh. Two hands landed on his ass, encouraging his movements, bringing him up until he was on his tip toes, working hard to get off. Bear's huge prick rubbed over his belly, so hot and so big. Damn, it was sexy. Really.

It didn't take long before Bear's hands were moving him faster and faster against Bear's body, the water sluicing over them, drowning out the sounds of their heavy breathing as it slid over them, making skin slick and the sliding easy.

Billy cried out, hands landing on Bear's shoulders and clinging as he started to come, losing all control over his movements. The heat that splashed up over his belly and chest told him he wasn't the only one who'd come.

"Oh, man. That was ... yeah." He nodded, feeling all boneless. If Bear hadn't been holding him against the big, strong body, he would have probably sunk right down where he was standing.

"Bed?" Bear asked, hands moving over him, all slick and soapy.

Billy nodded absently, and waved his hand in the general direction of the bedroom while Bear manhandled him under the spray, turning him this way and that until he was rinsed clean. He just stood there, blinking slowly as the spray disappeared and the glass door slid open. Bear tugged him out and towed him off, strong arm going around his waist as Bear led him out of the bathroom and into his bedroom.

The last thing Billy remembered as he drifted off, Bear warm and solid around his back, was that this was the best dream ever.

He was still convinced it was a dream as he woke up, but when he rolled over there was a dark chocolate colored man with dreads and a beautiful face lying next to him. His gasp had the man's eyes fluttering open. The same liquid chocolate eyes the dog had had. Had there been a dog?

Bear smiled at him. "I guess you'd like an explanation."

He did indeed—and he got one, and Bear got to stay.

"So you see, guys, that's why I haven't been hanging around much anymore."

Oh, yeah, that would go over really well. Billy snorted and shook his head. He'd come up with something.

He wiped his hands with some paper towel and joined Jack in the hall, the two of them heading off together.

The Ferryman was halfway between the factory and his place, just off the main drag with its glittery signs and noise spilling out into the street. Broad Street wasn't like that, and it wasn't noisy either, just a couple of stores, already closed up for the night, and the pub.

He and Jack were the last ones to get there and a cheer went up from the big round table at the back by the dart board. Billy waved and grinned. Looked like everyone had made it—Dan and Robert, who was giving him an exaggerated look of amazement, along with Wills, Jamie, Brian and Peter. They all worked the line together. He'd heard that Jason had stopped hanging out with them after his promotion, and that thought made Billy wince, because he'd stopped hanging out with them about the same time, which made him look either like he'd only been there for Jason, or that he thought he was better than them or something, neither of which were true.

"Oh, hey," he said casually when he spotted the pay phone by the bar. "I just remembered a call I've got to make."

One of Jack's eyebrows went up, but Billy just pushed his backpack at Jack, like it was proof he wasn't going to take off or anything, and made his way to the bar, digging in his pocket for a quarter.

It was noisy enough he could barely hear the phone ringing on the other end, but he didn't expect Bear would pick

up anyway and he'd just leave a message for Bear to listen to. Sure enough, after four rings, the machine clicked on and he heard himself say "leave a message at the beep".

"Bear? You listening? It's me. Look, I'm going to be late. Well, later than usual. The guys cornered me into going out with them for a few beers. I'll try not to be too late and we'll go for a run when I get back, okay? Okay." He glanced around as he hung up, but no one had been paying him any undo attention.

He stopped at the bar and asked for a couple pitchers of beer and a plate of the house combo because he hadn't had anything since lunch, paid for it and then headed over.

There was good-natured grouching over his having missed out on beer night for the last few months, but all was forgiven when the beer and munchies arrived. He dug in as eagerly as any of the others, and the beer felt so good going down, he kind of wondered why he hadn't managed to come for at least an hour or so once in awhile. What could it hurt?

He started to relax after his first beer, figuring as he was here for a few hours before he could make his escape, he might as well enjoy it.

A couple of beers in had him feeling pretty damned good indeed. He was slouched, legs spread, belly nicely full, just a bit of a buzz on.

"So Billy, why're you suddenly so scarce?" Dan asked.

A chorus of "yeah!"s went up and Jack gave him an "I told you so" grin.

"You got a girlfriend?"

"Oh, ho! Do you?"

"You holding out on us, Billy?" Robert looked ready to forgive and forget for a few details.

He held up a hand and shook his head. "No, no. Nothing like that, trust me."

"No? Then what? We suddenly develop cooties or something?" Peter was the newest of them, though how any of them could still be new after three years he didn't know.

Billy took another mouthful of beer and figured what the hell. "Truth is, I've got a dog."

"A dog? No shit!" Jack set his chair back on all his feet and leaned in, looking interested. They all did.

"No shit, a great big hairy beast that needs walking and feeding and someone to make sure he doesn't eat the furniture." Which was all true. It just wasn't all of the truth.

"What kind?" asked Jack.

Peter went in a different direction. "When did you get him?"

The questions peppered at him right and left and Billy figured he'd just keep sticking to the true parts that he could share. It would be easier than trying to come up with lies he'd have to remember later.

"He's a stray mutt. I found him in the park awhile ago—no collar. He looked hungry and cold and I couldn't just leave him there."

"Billy Wiggins—canine softie, who knew?" Robert grinned and the rest of them laughed. "Weren't you scared he was rabid or something?"

"Well, he wasn't on a leash, so if he was going to bite me, he could have done it anytime, long before I'd fed him and

gotten him out of the cold." Billy shrugged. "I might have thought twice about bringing him home with me if I'd been sober."

"You hear about the recent dog attacks?" asked Jamie after the laughter died down.

"Yeah, but I'm betting they were provoked. Dogs are nice animals." Billy'd hoped to avoid this particular subject. Looked like he wasn't going to get his wish tonight.

"They say it's all the same dog. A great big mean mother." Jack didn't look happy at the idea.

"You really think it's the same dog?" Billy asked. "I mean the reports have the attacks spread out all over the city."

"A big stray dog. He could get around." Peter looked convinced.

"But surely they'd have found it by now. Where could it be hiding, where'd it come from?" Billy knew it would probably be better to just drop the subject and move on to something else, but he felt the need to defend Bear, given he knew the first attack had been in defense, and the subsequent ones, if there had been any, weren't Bear at all.

"Who knows?" Jamie shrugged. "You found yours just hanging around."

"True enough." He nodded and finished his beer. "Who's round is it?" he asked, figuring that would put them off the subject of dogs. Sure enough, the question brokered an argument and in the end Billy bought some more potato skins and Robert bought the beer while Jack got them set up for darts.

Billy was out of practice—both at darts and at drinking and being tipsy had not improved his arm any, that was for sure.

He wound up losing four in a row and waved off a fifth game. "I'm going to go broke if I keep playing!" So he drank beer while the other guys played a few more rounds.

By the time Dan started making "my wife'll kill me if I don't get home soon" noises, giving Billy his own out, it was well after midnight and he was pretty much drunk.

Damn.

He waved off offers to help get him home. It wasn't that far and he knew the neighborhood. Not only that, it wasn't deserted. There were plenty of stragglers like himself, leaving the bars and heading home.

He cut through the little park right down the street from home. It was just little with a couple of trees and lots of flowers put in during the spring and a statue of Heath Swan, the local poet done good who the town claimed as one of her favorite sons.

A shadow detached itself from the statue as Billy passed and his heart started trip-hammering. He tried really, really hard to walk like he wasn't mostly drunk.

Then the shadow solidified into a large, familiar dog.

"Bear! What the hell are you doing out here?" He was sobering up quickly.

Bear just grinned at him, doggie tongue lolling out of his mouth. Billy looked around but the street was quiet now and he patted his thigh. "Come on, then. Let's get home."

Bear whined and looked hopefully toward Bell Street, which would get them to the dog run park, but Billy shook his

head hard, regretting it as soon as everything sort of wavered for a moment. "It's too late and you don't have a leash on to get there. We're going home."

Bear gave an unhappy bark, but came and padded along at his side when he took off toward their apartment building.

"What the hell were you doing out?" he demanded as soon as they were inside.

Bear didn't morph though. Instead, he gave an angry bark and climbed onto the couch, circling in place a couple of times before curling up on one side of it.

"You can't be doing that, Bear! It's dangerous out there. We've talked about this!"

Those brown eyes just started at him.

"Damn it, Bear—that's not fair!" That fact didn't seem to be bothering Bear any at all. In fact those brown eyes closed, like was just going to go to sleep. "Fine! Be like that!"

He stomped off, muttering under his breath about stubborn beasts.

* * * *

Billy woke up with a hangover. A bad enough one he almost didn't notice the hot body next to his. It was the big hand curled around his hip that alerted him to Bear's presence. He was supposed to be mad at Bear, but he couldn't quite remember for what, or at least wasn't willing to right now, not with his head pounding and his mouth feeling like something had crawled in and died there. So he just turned onto his side and pushed into Bear's arms, forehead against the hot, smooth chest.

Bear rumbled and folded those arms around him, enveloping him in musky heat. With a soft moan, Billy relaxed and went back to sleep.

Several hours later, his mouth still felt like he'd eaten raw rats, but his head was better. And he could remember exactly why he was pissed at Bear and why he'd been surprised to find Bear in bed this morning.

Bear growled a little, hands moving on his back, one sliding down to settle on his ass. Billy stiffened. "Bear..."

"Look. I'm pissed off at you, too, but I'd rather do this, wouldn't you?" One of Bear's big, wide fingers pushed at his hole, hot and insistent. The slight burn felt so good—promised to ease into the glide he knew and loved.

"Lube," he gasped softly as Bear's finger pushed a little deeper. God, it felt so huge. Everything about Bear was huge.

"I won't hurt you," growled Bear, rolling him onto his back as Bear reached past him to grab the tube off the bedside table.

One finger got slicked up and played inside him until he was writhing, begging softly for more. More was Bear's lips closing around his nipple and tugging, tongue flicking. Billy whimpered, hands grabbing Bear's dreads and holding on, holding that mouth in place as his hips bucked.

Finally, a second finger pushed into him, Bear moving to his other nipple, sucking and licking and biting, making his skin so sensitive he was nearly screaming. He did scream when Bear's fingers found his gland, pegging it hard, pegging it over and over again.

Billy got lost in the sensations and just rode them, body moving with Bear's touches, lightning going through him again and again.

Then Bear bit just right, and hit his gland just right, and he was coming so hard he saw stars. Wave over wave of pleasure went through him, his cock pulsing tiny spurts of come until he was done, melted and empty and gasping for breath.

"My turn," said Bear, waiting until he'd opened his eyes to look up into Bear's grinning face.

Then he was turned, those big hands grabbing his hips and tilting them up. Billy pulled his knees up under his body, moaning as Bear got behind him, cock hard and hot and huge as it pushed inside him.

He felt like he was being split in half, like Bear was spreading him wider than he could go. Then Bear's cock hit his gland and fire shot up his spine and it went from too much to just perfect.

Bear set up a hard, fast pace, thrusting into him over and over and over again, catching his gland every time. Billy could feel his cock slowly hardening, could feel his body go from lazy pleasure to desperate need.

He started whimpering with every one of Bear's thrusts, the need riding him hard. Bear growled and moaned, hands holding tight to his hips. Billy shifted just enough to wrap his hand around his cock, only to have Bear's hand knock his away.

"Mine," growled Bear.

Billy and Bear
by Vic Winter

Oh, fuck. That growl did it for him, the huge hand swallowing his cock up didn't hurt matters either, and together with that fat prick filling him, they combined to send him back over the edge. He came with a shout, body going tight as could be around Bear's cock before turning once again into melted bone and flesh.

Chapter Five

Billy threw his stuff into his backpack, pulled on his running shoes and slammed his locker door closed. More overtime. Which was great for his wallet, but not so great for his relationship with Bear. It was well after dark and he was tired and was likely going to just eat and go to sleep. Maybe if he was lucky he'd be up to a snuggle.

Jack came in, looking more tired than he felt. "Hey, Billy, you want a ride home?"

"What? Oh, no, I'm good—it's not that far."

"Yeah, but it's after dark and the dog attacks are getting worse." Jack threw the newspaper at him, the headlines screaming about how there were now packs of stray or wild dogs roaming the city, menacing and attacking people.

Billy picked the newspaper up, frowning as he leaned back against his locker. "You really think all these dog attacks are happening? That it isn't just ... I don't know exaggeration or hysteria?"

"I don't know, Billy. If there wasn't something to it, you'd think the furor would die down, wouldn't it? I mean every time it looks like it's old news, there's a report of a new attack. People are scared."

This newspaper article talked about four dogs circling a couple and attacking together, working as a pack. It reminded Billy of the gang that had surrounded him. The gang who would have hurt him pretty badly if Bear hadn't shown up when he did to save the day. He'd originally thought that all the reports had stemmed from that one incident, but now he

wasn't so sure. Jack had a point, people didn't keep bringing the same thing up over and over quite as often as they were doing the dog attacks. Plus they kept getting more and more outrageous.

"Well, if the offer's still open, I guess I'll take the lift, Jack." Now that his own near miss was back in the front of his brain, he really didn't want to hit the dark streets all on his own.

"Sure thing. Just give me five to get my shit together."

"Thanks!" Billy wandered to the front, and made a quick call on the pay phone, leaving a message for Bear, letting the big guy know he was getting a lift home, so Bear didn't have to worry about his safety.

"Look, Bear, I know you don't like it when I tell you not to go out, but there's been more and more reports of dog attacks, and now they're saying it's whole packs and I just don't want you to be out there and risk coming across them, okay? Four on one, even as big as you are, is not good odds. Be home soon, k? Bye." He just hoped Bear was home to hear the message.

Fifteen minutes later, after dodging going for a beer with Jack before going home, Billy waved his thanks as his friend drove off, and headed in. His backpack felt like it had a ton of bricks in it and he was dragging his feet something awful. Nearly ten minutes in the car with the heater going full blast had almost put him to sleep, he was so tired. He was even considering skipping supper, though he suspected Bear wouldn't go for that.

He let himself in, a giant, happy, tail-wagging puppy bounding toward him as Billy closed the door and leaned back against it to brace himself. Bear morphed along the way, and instead of an armful of drooling dog, Billy found himself slammed up against the door by six-foot-four of hard, beautiful body.

Forgetting all about being tired, he wrapped his arms around Bear's neck as Bear's mouth descended on his. He gave back as good as he got, opening wide and playing with Bear's tongue, dancing with it, fighting it. His hands opened and closed on Bear's shoulders as his breath was stolen and his cock aroused to the point of painful rock hardness. Whimpering, he slid his hands over Bear's body, feeling the peaked little nipples beneath his palms.

He started humping against Bear, trying to get more contact, more kisses—more.

Bear grabbed his wrists and put them behind his back, staring down at him, breath coming in sharp, gasping pants. Billy was practically vibrating, his whole body straining, arms pulling against Bear's hold. But Bear held him fast, eyes never leaving his.

Billy licked his lips.

"I could do anything I want to you," Bear told him.

"So shut up and *do* it already."

Bear laughed, the sound cutting off abruptly as his mouth landed on Bear's again. The kiss was hard and sharp, Bear's teeth cutting his lower lip, and Billy groaned, hips pushing, searching for Bear's body. Billy opened his mouth wide,

inviting Bear in, feeding his lover soft groans and needy moans.

His hands were brought up over his head, both put in one of Bear's big hands. Billy might have taken a moment to feel a little bit the ninety pound weakling, but he was too busy being turned on beyond belief.

Bear grabbed his shirt in one hand and tore it off his body, Bear's growl satisfied, aroused.

Fuck, that was sexy, hot. He tried again to rub against Bear, but the big guy was right, Bear had him and could do anything to him.

"Please, Bear, naked."

"I am naked."

Billy rolled his eyes and tried to tug his hands free. "But I'm not. Come on, please?" He might have been whining a little bit, but he thought he was entitled, under the circumstances.

Bear's free hand slid along his chest, the touch light, almost teasing. He knew Bear was serious, though, he could see it in the heat in Bear's eyes as they stared into his own. There was almost steam rising up between them, which was such a stupid expression, but Billy had to admit it made perfect sense right at this moment.

"Please," he begged again, and Bear's fingers popped the top button of his jeans, hand grabbing hold in what was promising to be destruction to his clothes. "Wait!"

Bear just grinned at him, knuckles sliding against his belly as the fist around his waistband curled a little tighter.

"They're my only clean pair."

"They're not clean—you're wearing them."

"Yeah, but I change at work. So they only get worn to and from work, and they were clean out of the basket this morning, so really, they're clean." It was the worst kind of pillow talk and Billy hooked a leg around the back of Bear's, trying to tug him close, trying to get Bear back with the making like bunnies program.

Leaning in, Bear whispered, dreads sliding on Billy's skin. "If you don't want them torn, you're going to have to stop me."

Billy tugged, trying to get his hands free, but Bear had him, one big paw holding on and there was no way he was getting out of that grip. So he tried wiggling, seeing if he could maneuver the jeans off like that. Chuckling at him, Bear obligingly undid the zipper for him and as he wriggled and shook his ass, the jeans started to slide down his hips.

They both gave a shout of triumph as they slipped right past his hips, and he was laughing and breathless, and so turned on, his cock pushing hard at his briefs, a wide patch of wet where the head was.

"I can smell you," Bear told him, growling a little, hand tightening around his wrists.

"I want you." He had nothing to hide—Bear turned him on like nothing else ever had and a show of Bear's strength turned him on even more. He wrapped his leg around Bear again and tried to pull them close enough to rub against the strong body.

"You'll get me." Bear's hand grabbed hold of his underwear, tearing them in the hurry to take them off, and making him shudder.

Bear's body slammed him up against the door again, their pricks bumping and rubbing as Bear ground against him. Whimpering, he bit at Bear's lips, feeling the need going through him and settling in his balls, making them draw up tight against his body.

He got his other leg around Bear, too and Bear grabbed his ass, tugged him up so he was wrapped around the trim waist instead of Bear's thighs. All he had to do was tilt his hips a little, the offer clear, and Bear's prick nudged against his hole. "Oh, fuck, *please*."

Bear's gaze locked onto him and Bear pushed, making him gasp as that thick cock pushed against him, rubbed pre-come over his hole. Over and over again, Bear rubbed up against him. It was maddening, making his cock throb each time it passed across the opening. More than once Bear held the thick prick against him, stretching the ring of muscles before backing off again.

By the time his hole was slippery from the pre-come, Billy thought he was going to scream. He was going wild, trying to pull his hands out of Bear's hold, humping as best he could from his position, bearing down whenever Bear's cock was in position, but he didn't have the right leverage and couldn't get the thick cock into his body no matter what he tried.

He started banging his head against the door in frustration, little pleas and sobs sliding from his lips. "Bear. Please. I need it. I need you. Please."

Finally, Bear growled and pushed, spearing him in a single thrust. Bear's mouth swallowed his scream at the sudden and unexpected stretch, the sharp burn fading quickly to a feeling of pleasurable fullness. He whimpered and Bear started to move, thrusting into him over and over again.

He couldn't really help, so he didn't, and Bear fucked him so good, pinned and stretched out there against the door, their groans and moans filling the air, sweat and need potent, making him want even more. Bear's free hand found his cock, grabbing it and tugging hard.

Thank God Bear's mouth was still covering his, because he screamed loud and long, coming hard. Bear kept thrusting into him, making it last, making him whimper softly into Bear's mouth until he could feel the hot pulses inside him as Bear came, too.

Bear's head rested against his shoulder as they both panted, breathing hard.

After a time, Bear's head came up, the dark eyes meeting his and Billy smiled, kissed Bear softly. "Love you."

Pleasure lit up Bear's eyes and the hand around his wrists slowly let go, Bear's hands going to his ass as he stood away from the door, bringing Billy with him. Billy wrapped his arms around Bear and laid his head on the strong shoulder as Bear carried him to the bedroom.

His stomach growled, but they both ignored it. Who needed food when he had Bear?

* * * *

The news the next morning was full of the wild dog pack sightings. The attacks were becoming more frequent, and it didn't escape Billy's notice that they were getting worse the closer it got to the full moon.

"Did you see the news?" he asked Bear as the big man came wandering out of the bedroom, absolutely naked, stretching and rolling his neck. Billy was distracted for long minutes, appreciating the view. Bear didn't like wearing clothes and Billy didn't mind that at all.

Bear looked in his direction, eyes narrowed once he'd finished stretching and yawning and putting on a show that had Billy wriggling in his chair. The fact that his ass was pretty tender only served to make Billy harder.

"What are you saying?" Bear glared at him.

He held up a placating hand. "Only that there's been more attacks. It's not just one dog now—it's a pack. And the closer we get to the full moon, the worse it seems to get—more vicious and random. I think something's going on, Bear."

"Like what?"

"Like there's more dogs like you out there, maybe. Who're also people. Like that gang of kids that had me surrounded, do you think it's possible they..." Billy's words trailed off as Bear suddenly found something in the fridge very interesting. "It *is* possible, isn't it? You know something!"

Bear kept looking in the fridge, moving stuff around, and, tempting as Bear's ass might be—and it was damned tempting—Billy refused to be distracted. "Stop that and look at me, Bear."

"Looking for breakfast."

"No, you're not—you're looking for a way to avoid looking at me! Now shut the fridge door and come here."

Sighing, Bear did as he'd been asked, coming to sit down across from him. "There. I'm looking at you. Happy now?"

"No. What do you know about those gang kids that attacked me?"

Bear shrugged. "Not much, really."

"But you'd know if they were dogs like you, right? If they could change and had to at the moon?"

Bear looked at him for a long time, and Billy stared right back, the silence growing heavier and heavier between them. Finally, Bear nodded. "Yeah, I would know."

He waited, and when it seemed that was all Bear had to say, he rolled his eyes and kept pushing. "Well?"

"Well what?"

"Were they?"

"Were they wh—" He glared and Bear's words cut off, his very own wild dog nodding slowly. "They were."

He'd known that was probably the case, had figured for the last few days that there had to be some truth to all the reports, and that it was likely dog-men like his Bear who were responsible, not just because of the increased frequency of the attacks as they got closer to the full moon, but because the dogs seemed to evade capture despite the increased manpower out to get them. But still, to have it confirmed that there were more dogs like Bear out there. Or men like Bear. He was never completely sure which form was the original one, though he had to admit Bear acted a lot more like an

animal when he was human than he acted human while a dog.

Billy shook his head—he was confusing even himself.

"So there's more like you."

"There are. And the others don't have one like you to care for them, to keep them fed and housed and loved, to keep them ... civilized."

Billy sat forward in his chair. "So what you're saying is that you'd be like them if it wasn't for me?"

Bear nodded solemnly.

"But you weren't wild when I found you!"

"The moon was new, her pull was far away, and I needed help, I knew if someone didn't take me in, they'd find me again and take me back."

"The scientists who did this to you, you mean?" They'd talked about Bear's origins a little; Billy knew that Bear had been experimented on, given drugs and stuff to see what would happen, but it always made Bear twitchy so he'd never pushed.

Bear nodded again, brown eyes so serious, sad even.

"Did you know they'd made others like you?"

"We escaped together."

"Oh." He shivered suddenly. What if he'd run into one of the others instead of Bear that night at the park. He was lucky things had worked out like they did. "You're not the same, though, are you? Even without me, you wouldn't be as nasty as they are."

"No, I was a failure."

"What do you mean? There's nothing wrong with you!"

"Except for what you pointed out—I'm not vicious enough." Bear wasn't looking at him anymore, instead the big guy's eyes were on his hands, fingers folding together over and over again.

Billy's eyes narrowed. "Why did they make you and the others in the first place?"

"To make better guards—a combination of man and dog to protect perimeters. When they get it right, it'll probably make them millions." Bear looked up then, looked him square in the eye. "I volunteered, Billy. I could have made a lot of money if I'd been right—I would have been well-paid for the job."

"Then why did you run away?"

"Because when it was clear that I was a failure, they locked me up. They were going to run experiments on me once they had working prototypes."

"They can't just lock people up! Even if you did volunteer and sign stuff, they can't have had the right to lock you up and experiment on you."

Bear shrugged nonchalantly. "During the full moon I was an uncontrollable animal, they said that I'd sold away my humanity and my rights with it. So when the Dobermans' broke out, I ran with them. I split off from them just outside the city limits—they didn't want me hanging around, said I'd slow them down and get them all caught. I don't know where they went, but I hid in that big park where you found me."

Billy reached out and laid his fingers on Bear's hand. The big paw turned and Bear held on. "I'm glad I found you," Billy whispered softly.

"I am, too. I never would have survived on my own."

"Would you have joined the pack?"

Bear shook his head. "I wasn't wanted. And I'm not cut out to be a member of a pack."

"Where have they been all this time? Why are they just showing up now?"

"I don't know." Bear shrugged. "Making plans and biding their time? If they'd only been animals, they probably would have been recaptured immediately, but because they're also men like me..."

"I don't think they're like you at *all*." He should know—he'd been living with Bear for months. He caught sight of the clock and squeezed Bear's hand. "I have to go, Bear. I need to get to work."

"Don't be out after dark tonight."

"I'll do my best—the overtime hasn't been voluntary lately, though. I may have to stay late."

Bear shook his head. "No, it's too dangerous to be out there after dark this close to the full moon. If they don't want to let you go, tell them you're sick, anything. It's too dangerous."

"Okay, Bear. I promise. I'll leave by five-thirty and be home before six. That's a half hour before dusk. Okay?"

Bear met him at the door, backed him up against it, eyes very serious. "Billy, please. Don't just blow me off. The pack is as dangerous as the news stories say they are. And you know what happens as the full moon approaches."

He reached up and stroked Bear's cheek. "Yeah, I know."

Nuzzling into his touch, Bear turned and kissed his palm, tongue sliding on his skin and making him shiver. He saw the

heat building in the dark eyes and he shook his head, tugging at his hand.

"I have to go, Bear. If I'm late I won't be able to get out of overtime for sure. And if I call in sick, they'll just make me work extra when I go back. I have to go."

Leaning in, Bear kissed him, taking his breath away and nearly having him saying he could stay after all, that he could play hooky and the two of them could laze in bed all day making love. But then Bear pulled back, tongue taking one last swipe at his lips.

"Be home before dark." He was given one last look from those chocolate eyes before Bear turned, heading toward the bathroom and leaving him with the view of that amazing ass.

As he shouldered his backpack and headed out the irony of Bear now pleading for *him* to stay home and not go out was not lost on him.

* * * *

Even though he had managed to get out of work before dark, Billy was still nervous walking home. He thought he'd seen a group of older kids hanging around by the end of the factory, but when he got there, backpack in his hand again, ready to swing at anything that got too near, the shadows were just that, shadows.

Breathing a sigh of relief, he hurried up to the main drag where there were other people and more lights, fewer shadows with teeth. It was quieter than usual, though, and the people on the street were hurrying as much as he was, watching every corner and passer by with suspicion.

Billy had to stop and pick up groceries, and he did it at the closest store—the Fresh Mart. It wasn't his usual place, but the Bulk Express was well out of his way and even if he'd taken a cab home with the groceries, it would likely have been well after dark. As it was, by the time he'd finally gotten through the line in the Fresh Mart, paid for his groceries and made it out the door, it was nearly dark.

Bear was gonna be pissed. But then he had Chinese food from the Fresh Mart's ready meal section with him and enough steak to feed an army for a week. Or Bear for a day or two. Hopefully that would make up for his being a little later than he'd promised. And he only had about five more minutes to go and the street was busy, even if everyone was acting all weird and suspicious.

He was nearly home when he saw them, the same band of kids that had cornered him on the street by the factory that time. He didn't recognize their faces so much as the way they were dressed and the fancy, expensive running shoes they wore. They were on the opposite side of the street, but they seemed to be following him, had been for a few blocks.

Swallowing, he walked faster. He wasn't going to run. He wasn't. That would just give it away that he knew they were there and that might make them attack, despite the fact that they were out in the open and there were people around. He couldn't think of any reason why they'd be after him again, unless they just happened to be walking along the same street and they recognized him.

Or was it that they'd recognized the dog that had saved him, knew it was Bear and were out to get *him*?

Billy stopped in the middle of the sidewalk, the person behind him stumbling around him, and glaring. Billy barely noticed. If the pack had connected him and Bear, then they were following him on purpose and he was leading them right to Bear.

He couldn't do that.

Biting his lips, Billy looked around and then hurried up the half a block to The Black Unicorn pub. He'd never been in it before, despite the fact it was only a few blocks from home, but he figured he could duck in and see if the pack waited for him or moved on. And hopefully the place would have a public phone so he could call Bear who had to be getting worried now as it was pretty much dark out there.

He went in, a bunch of heads turning in his direction. He tried for a nonchalant smile and went up to the bar, asking for a dark ale from the tap. He paid up front and sipped at his brew for a few minutes before asking about a payphone. He was pointed back toward the front door, the phone just on the inside of it. Cool, he'd be able to check the street before he called Bear.

He stayed in the shadows as someone came in, checking the street before the door closed behind the guy. The gang were still out there, playing hackie sack on the corner across the street. Shit. They were following him, and while he was pretty sure he would be able to make it and let himself in without them getting him, he was worried that then they'd know where to find Bear. They might even try to get in if they knew that.

Biting his lip, he went to the phone and called home. He waited for the message to run its course and the machine to beep. "Bear? You there, man? Pick up, okay? I need to talk to you. Come on, Bear, pick up the phone. I know you don't like them, but I really need to ta—"

"Billy? It's after dark." He could hear the worry in Bear's voice, along with the low, animal growl. It wasn't full moon yet, but it was coming and Bear needed him at home, needed the distraction.

"I know. I'm almost home, I swear. I'm just down the street, actually. I left a little later than I'd hoped, and then I had to pick up some groceries, you know? I'm not going in to work tomorrow, and then it's the weekend, so I'll be home for a few days." He paused to take a breath, and watched as the door opened again, a couple coming through this time, the gang still hanging around in the same spot. They were watching the pub now, not even trying to pretend they were doing anything else.

"Look, the point is as I was walking, I realized I was being followed, so I ducked into the Black Unicorn, which is that pub about a block and a half down from the apartment building. Bear, it's the same guys who attacked me that day."

"Stay put. I'm coming to get you."

"No! You can't! Bear, I think they were following me because they recognized you when you came to my rescue and now they want to find you. I stopped in here because I didn't want to lead them straight to you. If you come get me, it'll defeat the whole purpose."

"Are they still there?"

Billy nodded, even though he knew Bear wouldn't be able to see him. "They are! The phone's right by the door and every time someone comes in or goes out I've checked and they're hanging out on the opposite corner. If they're not waiting for me to come out that's a hell of a coincidence."

Bear growled. "I need you to be home, Billy."

"I know, Bear. I know." He lowered his voice and murmured into the phone. "You could get the ropes out, get the bed ready."

"Won't need the ropes until tomorrow, but I need to know you're safe tonight." Which, if Billy interpreted that growl correctly, was going to include nailing him to the nearest horizontal surface. Billy approved.

Of course, he had to get there first.

"The pub doesn't close 'til one, which is hours and hours from now. Do you think they'll really stand out there that long? Or will they get too restless?"

"Hm ... The moon might drive them to search out other prey, to run."

"Well, then why don't I stay here for awhile longer and hopefully they'll get bored and leave before too long." He reached over and opened the door a crack. They were still there, damn it. He knew Bear was pacing and cranky, being stuck inside with nothing to do—why weren't these guys equally as affected? Maybe the moon just wasn't high enough.

"If you're not home in an hour, I'm coming to get you."

"I don't know, Bear..." But he was talking to himself, Bear'd already hung up.

Biting his lip again, Billy went back to the bar, sitting so he was facing the entrance this time, instead of with his back to it. You weren't paranoid if they were actually out to get you, right?

Shrugging off the backpack, he set it at his feet along with the bag of Chinese take-out which was smelling really good, and going cold. They'd have to put it in the microwave when he got back and reheat it. He'd gotten the Szechwan Beef for Bear—it was too spicy for him, but Bear seemed to like the bite, and of course the big guy always went for beef if he had a choice, preferably steak. A real meat eater, his Bear.

Billy realized he was babbling. Maybe he wasn't doing it out loud, but his brain was kind of running along over absolutely everything as he tried to forget the gang that waited outside for him. It would have been scary enough thinking that they were a gang of punk kids following him, but knowing they could become dogs and were known to be ferocious and wild as well was, well, frankly, scary.

Nursing his beer, he made it last forty five minutes. And yeah, he'd stood up to management and risked them being really pissed at him to get out of work before it got dark, and here he was cooling his heels two minutes from home. A part of him wished he'd never seen the guys following him—he'd be home already, fed and making out with Bear, making his lover forget all about the moon...

He shouldered his backpack again and grabbed his bag of take-out, ignoring the funny looks he was getting from the other patrons. He hadn't even taken off his jacket. As he made his way to the door, he tried to decide if he should just

go home whether or not the guys were still out there, or if he should call Bear and get his lover to come walk him home. He decided to just go—after all, just because he couldn't see the guys, didn't mean they weren't still out there waiting for him in the shadows.

Stepping out the door, he went for bravado, not hesitating for a moment. He didn't even look to see if the gang was still around at first. He just held his head high and marched home, legs moving him as quickly as possible without actually running. There were fewer people on the street now, those that were had their heads down and were hurrying as hard as he was.

What he didn't see anywhere was the gang. They were either hiding, or had gotten bored and taken off. He wasn't sure if he was relieved until he got home in one piece, no one jumping out of the shadows at him.

Bear was on him the minute he was through the door, the big body holding him up against the wall. He clung hard, relief flooding through him. He was safe. Bear was safe. His heart might not ever stop beating a thousand times a minute, but they were both safe.

Chapter Six

Friday night was the full moon and so Billy and Bear spent most of the day being lazy—they both knew what they'd be up to overnight, keeping Bear from changing by tying him to the bed and filling him with Billy. It was a hard job, but somebody had to do it.

The thought had Billy giggling and he rolled over into Bear, hands sliding on the dark, smooth skin. Bear looked at him, eyes already going wild, cock hard and leaking. "Oh! You should have told me, Bear, I would have started sooner if you needed it."

Bear shrugged. "It just sort of came up over me."

"Okay. Okay. Let's get the rope."

Bear was the one to go get it, bringing the silk bonds over to him. Billy got out and pulled the covers down to the bottom of the bed. He knew Bear needed to fight during the full moon and the bonds made a much better opponent than he did. But he could still help; he could make it more exiting, could drive Bear's need higher and higher.

So when Bear stretched out on the bed, Billy took his time, trailing the white ropes over the dark skin, loving the contrast. He got both wrists tied to the bedposts, and then he did Bear's ankles, making sure the rope was tight, making sure it wasn't biting into Bear's skin.

"God," muttered Bear, staring at him with hot eyes. "You're making me crazy."

"Nah, that's the moon."

Bear shook his head. "No. No, I can feel the moon in my blood, but it's not as strong as what you're putting in my blood."

"What's that?" He straddled Bear's body, leaning in to whisper the words against Bear's ear.

"Need. Want. Please, Billy. Don't tease."

"Oh, but I think I like the teasing." He dragged his fingers along Bear's chest and belly, ignoring the leaking cock and tracing hip bones instead. "I think you like the teasing, too."

Bear shook his head from side to side, but the gaze, that never left his, that look said that Bear was loving every second of it and wanting more. Bear's tongue slid out to lick the thick lips and then his lover bared his teeth and growled a little, making Billy's cock throb.

He stretched out on Bear, arms along his lover's bound ones, legs between Bear's outstretched ones. He shifted so that Bear's cock rubbed between the tops of his thighs, hot and solid. His own prick was caught between them, rubbing as he took kiss after kiss, tongue sliding along Bear's sharp teeth.

Bear fed him low growls and soft whimpering noises, each one dog-like, but made with a human throat. These were noises that no one else got to hear, Bear's pleasure his alone. It made him hard. Harder. And it made him need. Need more.

He held out as long as he could, and when Bear was panting and writhing beneath him, and he could barely hold on any longer, he grabbed the lube and slicked up his cock before settling on his knees between Bear's spread legs.

"You're gorgeous," he told Bear, one hand on his cock, the other on Bear's belly, feeling the muscles rippling and flexing beneath his touch.

Bear's answer was a growl, a snarled "Do it!"

So Billy did.

He lined his cock up with Bear's hole, and he pushed in slowly. Or at least he tried to push in slowly, but Bear had other ideas and enough leverage to push down and swallow his cock up faster than he'd intended. Once he was buried deep inside Bear, the tight walls squeezing and flexing around him, Billy was lost.

He started humping Bear with everything he had, slamming into the tight heat, Bear's need and urgency his own now. His hips snapped over and over, his back bowed as the pleasure rode him as hard as he was riding Bear.

The moonlight suddenly shone in through the window, sliding over his skin and he could feel it, what it did to Bear, he could feel its touch on his lover's body.

Hips snapping, Billy shouted out, his balls emptying into Bear's body.

Gasping, he grabbed Bear's cock and started jacking it, feeling each movement in his own cock as Bear's walls rippled around him. He held his lover's eyes, keeping Bear right there with him as the moon tried to work its magic. His hand and cock and eyes and heart had magic of their own, though, somehow, and Bear stayed right there with him, like he always did, coming in long sprays, voice rising in pleasure.

Panting, still breathless and shivery, Billy collapsed down onto Bear, his cock inside his lover's body, his come held there deep inside, keeping Bear with him.

He kissed Bear's skin, finding enough energy to turn his head and lick a nipple. Bear shuddered and jerked beneath him, body holding his cock deep inside.

"Billy." Bear's voice was ragged, still growly, his lover still on that edge.

"Uh-huh?"

"Again?"

Laughing breathlessly, Billy nodded. His cock throbbed, in total agreement with the plan.

He could do this all night. And he would.

* * * *

It was mid-day Saturday before Billy was up, bowl of cereal in front of him, newscast on. He wasn't really paying attention until they repeated their top story about the shooting of the pack of wild dogs that had been plaguing the city.

"Bear! You have to see this!"

Bear came out of the bedroom and stood behind him, hands on his shoulders, he could feel the warmth of the big body seeping into him, and almost without thinking about it, he leaned back, relaxing just from having Bear here with him. "The Dobermans," growled Bear.

Billy nodded, watching intently as the shot panned over a half dozen dead dogs, their black and brown bodies limp and broken, blood so dark as it pooled around them. The voice-

over explained that the dogs had tried to attack a couple out on a date walking in the park. Apparently they'd only been saved because an off-duty officer had been nearby and, hearing the screams had come running. He'd shot and killed the dogs before the beasts could rip the couple to shreds. The dogs were believed to be escaped from a junkyard just outside of town. The newscaster went on to give stats on the increase of attacks since the dogs went missing from the junkyard a few months ago, but Billy wasn't listening anymore.

"Do you buy it?" he asked Bear.

His lover shook his head, dreads moving over the beautiful skin. "It's a cover-up. They knew the moon would be affecting the Dobermans and waited for them. Hell, they've probably been trying to do exactly that since the first attacks were reported."

"What about you?"

"What about me?" Bear looked unconcerned.

"Don't play stupid—the people who did that to the Dobermans and who made you what you are—don't you think they're looking for you, too?" Just how far would these people go to get Bear back? Or kill him to make sure he didn't go wild like the Dobermans had?

"I think as long as I lie low I'm okay. I'm not a threat to them and I'm not the sort of successful experiment they want to keep around. They might even think I'm already dead as I haven't surfaced at all. It'll be okay, Billy."

"How can you be sure?" If it was him he'd be terrified. As it was, he was worried for Bear.

"Look—they didn't do anything drastic until the Dobermans got out of hand and started attacking people. That's when they took them out."

"Maybe because it's only then that they figured out where the gang was."

"I don't think so. I think they let the Dobermans get out on purpose. I think they wanted to see how they would react and interact in public. And when the Dobermans became a liability, they took them out the best way they could without giving themselves away. With the attacks on the news all the time, they had the perfect set up to kill the Dobermans and make it look like a good thing."

"And what about you?" Billy asked.

"I think my getting out was a mistake. But I don't think they cared enough to try to get me back. Or track me down. They might even think the Dobermans killed me when I escaped with them. Those dog-men were bred to be vicious and territorial."

"How can you be sure they aren't keeping tabs on you?"

"I haven't smelled them."

"Oh." Billy thought about that for a moment. "And you're sure you'd be able to smell them if they were coming for you?"

Bear nodded, face tight. "I'll never forget that smell as long as I live."

Standing, Billy went to Bear and wrapped him in a hug. "It's okay, Bear. You're out of there now. And I've got you. I won't let them take you." It might have been a silly promise for a guy like him to make—he was smaller than Bear and

Billy and Bear
by Vic Winter

just a factory worker who didn't know one end of a gun from another, but he would do everything he could to keep Bear safe. "I've got you."

Warm chocolate eyes smiled down at him. "Yeah, you do. Make sure you don't let go."

"I won't."

It was a promise.

Epilogue

Billy threw the Frisbee as far as he could, laughing and cheering as he watched Bear leap into the air and grab the Frisbee in his mouth. Turning as he came down, Bear launched himself back toward Billy, getting back in no time at all and leaving the battered green disk at his feet before taking off again.

Billy bent and retrieved the Frisbee, making a face at the drool. He waited for Bear to get back out near the end of the open area and threw the Frisbee again. Once again Bear caught it mid-air and came barreling back to him to drop the Frisbee at his feet.

"He's pretty good at that."

Billy turned and smiled at Barbara who was just letting Sir Lancelot off his leash. The small dog started barking and took off to play with Bear, who obviously was happier playing a tail chasing game with the little dog than another round of Frisbee.

"He is. Lots of energy to work off." Especially the day after a full moon. "You're late today, we're almost ready to head back home." They never risked being out after dark. Two years and not a peep of anyone looking for Bear in either human or dog form, and they wanted to keep it that way. They only ventured out together during daylight.

"Did you want to come over for supper someday next week? I've got this friend and he's *really* cute..."

He laughed and shook his head. "I don't mind coming to have supper, Barb. And new friends are cool—but I'm not looking for anyone, you know that, right?"

"Oh, come on, Billy, you have got to be lonely."

"Nope. I've got Bear and he's all I need."

He had his friends, and he had Bear who was companion and lover. And he might never be able to share Bear with his friends the way he would someone who was normal, but he didn't need to, what he and Bear had was special and worth protecting.

He whistled for Bear, both he and Sir Lancelot coming back to them. "We'll see you next weekend, Barbara."

"Sure thing. Don't work too hard."

"I won't." They had a union now and the company couldn't force them to take the overtime and had had to hire extra people for the second shift.

He walked quickly, Bear loping along beside him. He was eager to get home, eager to help Bear expend some more energy.

Big brown eyes met his, and Billy grinned. Yeah, he wasn't the only one.

End.

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