



*Lust Bites*

**LAID IN SHOW**

**Tuesday Morrigan**

Laid in Show  
*by Tuesday Morrigan*

**Total-e-bound**

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A Total-E-Bound Publication

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Laid in Show

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**Warning:** This book contains sexually explicit content which is only suitable for mature readers. This story has been rated *Total-e-burning*.

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## **LAID IN SHOW**

Tuesday Morrigan

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## **Dedication**

To Piper, my beta reader, and my editors. You all make me want to be a better writer.

## Trademarks Acknowledgement

*The author acknowledges the trademarked status and trademark owners of the following wordmarks mentioned in this work of fiction:*

Westminster Dog Show: WESTMINSTER KENNEL CLUB CORPORATION

Madison Square Garden: MSG Eden Corporation

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## Chapter One

### Show Time

"You're sure—like three thousand percent sure—that I won't have any problems if I go to the dog show?" Lark followed the question with a look meant to convey the importance of her sister's response.

Robin simply glared back. Unperturbed, she replied slowly. "You have nothing to worry about."

Lark got the distinct impression that Robin believed if she said the words enough, Lark would stop questioning her declaration.

Lark snorted. She wasn't mentally handicapped. She was cautious.

Robin pointed to the computer screen behind her, all the while holding Lark's gaze. "Read it for yourself. Again. According to every credible biological experiment, homosexual males are not attracted to heterosexual female pheromones. There are several experiments that point to the fact that homosexual men and heterosexual females excrete the same pheromones. Thus, not a single one of the legion of gay men at the dog show will be attracted to you as a result of your pheromones. Plus, you must remember that as an Ipele descendant you are only going to be irresistible to men in their prime who are heterosexual." Robin smirked. "And from what I've seen of the pictures from the last few shows, the men are neither."

"Oh shut up, Robin. This is Marilyn Monroe Stone's time to shine. I don't care who or what those men are as long as they pin her with a ribbon."

"Here," Robin said as she handed Lark a small perfume bottle. "It's a pheromone blocker. It only works for a short period of time, but it should be enough to get in and out of the dog show."

"Have I told you how much I love you?" Lark asked with a smile.

Robin watched her for several moments. "You and that dog are sick," she declared before turning back to her computer.

Lark barely stifled the urge to stick out her tongue at her sister's back. There was something about her older sister that brought out the worst in Lark. "You just don't understand our relationship," she murmured as she grabbed her suitcase.

"You're damn right I don't. I do, however, understand that you need a man."

\* \* \* \*

Eight hours later, as Lark drove into the public parking lot with the outrageous per hour rate, she was still pondering her sister's comment. The fact was her sister had hit her biggest problem right on its ornery head. She did need a man. Desperately.

Big Willie, her vibrator, no longer cut it in the "getting Lark off" department.

The problem was she only wanted one man.

Almost immediately, a scalding vision of the male of her dreams flashed across her mind. With a honed force of will,

Lark pushed aside the nagging image of a tall man with dark hair and amber eyes.

"You can't have that one so don't even go there. It's not worth the agony," she murmured to herself as she opened the back door for Marilyn. The Great Dane bounded out of the car in one leap. She looked up at Lark as if questioning her.

And maybe she was. Marilyn knew all about *him*.

Lark couldn't help telling Marilyn about him when he called, right before he called, when he should have called. Lark had it bad. Hell, she'd had it bad for over eight years now.

"This friendship is not good for you," Lark muttered to herself.

Marilyn sat up and barked.

"Yes, you do understand, don't you, girl," Lark murmured absently as she scratched behind Marilyn's ear. The Great Dane also knew how scared Lark had been about coming to the dog show when she was going to be in heat and giving off very strong, alluring pheromones even the most determined young heterosexual male would have a hard time ignoring. Marilyn was Lark's best confidant. Unlike her girlfriends, there wasn't a chance in hell of Marilyn telling Lark's secrets.

Thankfully, everyone in her family had a Ph.D. in biology and specialised in fertility. *Correction, everyone but moi!*

Her mother and father were the co-presidents of a small, but highly influential, fertility clinic in western New York. They knew all that there was to know about female fertility, in both female humans and werewolves. Being one of the few descendant families of the ancient Ipele priestesses, the

Burtons were unique among werewolves. All of their females had the ability to mother female werewolf cubs that reached adulthood. An important rarity when only one out of a hundred female cubs made it to term, and more than seventy percent of those born didn't see their first birthday.

Lark was the only one in her family who had not gone into medicine. Always an original, Lark had gone down a different path and become an artist. *A paid one*, she thought with a smile and clicked the button for the keyless lock on her imported car.

Three hours later, inside the massive stadium housing the Westminster show, Lark turned with Marilyn's competition papers in her hand and came to a standstill. After several seconds, she found her voice. "River?"

"Hello, Lark."

She slowly slicked her lips. "Hi, River."

"Imagine this. You in my city and not calling to let me know you were here." River quirked one dark eyebrow and glared down at her.

Lark could feel the razor sharp scolding in his words. She chewed her lip as she tried to think of what to tell him. The truth was not an option. "I was going to call you ... later."

River stared at her with unblinking golden eyes, eyes that reminded her too often of the dark beast that lay inside both of them. His gaze roamed low, looking over her face, touching upon her breasts, her hips, her platforms, before returning to catch her gaze. She stood for his perusal, wondering if River liked what he saw. After a moment, his full lips flattened. Over the years, she'd learned what the act meant. River was

not pleased. *Guess that answers my question, huh?* Lark thought as a fissure of pain through her. River glanced away and looked down at the dog beside her.

"She's so big," he murmured as he leaned and petted Marilyn.

Lark decided to take the out he had given her. She knew River was ballsy enough to point out that she didn't really intend to call him. The fact that he didn't showed how far away they'd come from that comfortable relationship they'd had in college. *Eight years and we've come to this.*

Lark mentally sighed at the distance between them as she glanced down at the beauty beside her. "Of course she's big. She is a Great Dane," she said with a laugh.

River's golden gaze snapped to hers. "That is not what I meant."

Lark bit her bottom lip and looked away. Marilyn chose that moment to speak up. The midnight giant stepped forward and barked at River before nudging him. He petted her behind the ear and whispered several comments about her beauty.

"She's not normally so friendly. I guess she recognises her father."

River's body stilled as his golden gaze snapped to Lark's. "I didn't know you thought of me in that way."

"You're the one who gave her to me."

River watched her face for several seconds before speaking. "Where are you staying?"

"The family loft."

"The same one you stayed in while we were at Columbia?"

"Yes."

"Are you free for dinner tonight?"

Lark shook her head. There was no way she could go to dinner with him. That much time near a straight male in his prime would be asking for trouble. "No. I ... already have plans."

River took two steps towards her, his eyes glowing so brightly they resembled gold. He was riled. "Cancel them."

"I ... I can't. I'm preparing Marilyn for tomorrow."

The amber light in his gaze darkened, becoming a burnt gold. He had passed the riled point and was simply angry. "You keep pushing me away despite the fact that I'm supposed to be your friend."

Her gaze snapped to his. River's jaw was set, and he emitted a low, dark sound. Lark had not only pissed him off, she'd angered his wolf. From what she remembered that took a lot, as River had an iron grip on his bestial side.

"You're my friend," she said quickly, trying to placate both man and beast.

"Then, I'll see you at seven." He pivoted on his heel and strode away from her. "Seven o'clock," he threw over his shoulder as he walked away.

Lark stared at him dumbfounded. River was no longer the boy she remembered, and she didn't know how she felt about that.

\* \* \* \*

River had barely been able to control the rage and hunger that had come to the surface the moment he spotted Lark in

the cavernous lobby of Madison Square Garden. For one heart-stopping moment, he had feared that his beast would get the best of him, and he would embarrass them both.

The need to claim her had been strong, almost relentless.

His long, callused fingers tightened into a fist as he pushed down the desire boiling inside him.

River had always felt a pull towards Lark. From the first moment he saw her beautiful mocha face lit up with excitement, watching the homecoming game, he'd wanted to get to know her.

And he had.

He scented her out, recognised her as a shape-shifter and introduced himself. For a few months, they'd never discussed their similar history. Never talked about the fact that they were both werewolves.

And then, one afternoon, hours before a full moon, they had breached that barrier and talked about who they were. That was the night River admitted to himself that the emotions he felt for Lark were a little stronger than what most of her friends had towards her.

He could still remember the conversation he'd had with his father his sophomore summer. The old man had instantly recognised there was something different with his youngest son. As they'd ridden through their Montana property, his quiet father had questioned him about his feelings.

Apparently, the fact that River had not paid any attention to any of the young females in town had not gone unnoticed. Especially since the Stone men were known for their sexual prowess.

His father had been ecstatic about the idea of one of his sons mating with a Burke, one of the descendants of Ipele priestesses, and possibly fathering a female werewolf. But River had to admit to his father that Lark had never noticed him, a man that stood six three, as anything more than a girlfriend with facial hair.

She only had eyes for her art.

And the dog he had purchased her.

Marilyn Monroe Stone.

River smiled as he thought of his 'daughter'. He'd purchased the dog on a whim—a well-thought whim. Less than a week before their graduation, he'd caught Lark staring at a picture of a black Great Dane. In a voice that still haunted him, she'd told him how she'd always wanted one, despite her short height. She'd made a promise to herself that one day she would own a dog like that.

At that moment, River had realised just how in love with Lark he was. If he couldn't give her his affection, he could give her the dog of her dreams.

And now she was in *his* city because of *his* dog.

River would be damned if he'd let Lark push him away. From now on, he was directing the show.

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## Chapter Two

### River Bound

*"Are you up to your matchmaking again?"*

Lark could feel her mother's pause despite the fact that hundreds of miles separated them. "Uh ... what would make you say that?"

"How did River know I'd be at Madison Square Garden this afternoon?"

Her mother swallowed thickly. "He called your place and your cell, and you didn't pick up either. So he figured you were spending the weekend with the family and called here. I told him you weren't staying with us."

"Did you happen to tell him where I was staying?"

"It's not right the way you ignore that boy."

Lark closed her eyes as a groan slipped past her lips. She felt the beginning of a headache and placed a hand to her head. "There is a reason why I'm ignoring him, Mom. Or have you forgotten that he's a straight male in his prime, and I'm going into heat tonight." She glanced at her watch. River should be there any second. He'd called earlier to tell her he was bringing dinner with him.

She hoped he showed up late. Like a week late.

"So?" her mother's drawling voice cut into her thoughts. "Going into heat doesn't mean barricading yourself away from the rest of the world. I'm not too old to have noticed that River is an attractive wolf," she said with a chuckle.

"Christ, Mother!"

"What? It's not like I'm asking you to make pups with him. Although, to be perfectly honest, I wouldn't mind if you did."

"I'll get right on that, Mom," she said sarcastically. For the past few years, dear old Mom had been making it painfully clear that she wanted grandkids.

Her mother laughed. "What I'm trying to say is there is a thing called birth control for a reason."

Lark blinked at that statement as she grabbed her pheromone blocker from her purse. For a moment, her mind couldn't seem to catch up with the thread of the conversation. It was too busy imagining her and River with only a latex barrier between their slick skins.

Before she could respond, her mother continued. "It's our nature, Lark. I suggest you stop fighting it and go get yourself some of those condoms. The mega pack. River looks like he's man enough to handle a mega pack."

Lark's gaze snapped to the door. River had arrived. She could scent the alluring mixture of his Montana background and Manhattan studio. Then there was that raw sexuality that permeated every inch of his hard body.

"I've ... uh ... got to go, Mom," Lark said weakly as three sharp raps sounded on her door.

"Mega ... Pack," her mother yelled with a laugh just as Lark slowly placed the receiver on the base.

Lark simply sat on her sofa for several moments staring at the door. River knocked again, this time with more insistence. She chewed her bottom lip. *This is not good, this is really not*

*good*, she thought as she spritzed herself once again with the pheromone blocker.

"Lark."

She hunched her shoulders and marched to the door. She plastered on a grin she didn't feel and flung it open.

In response, River gave her a slow smile that made her heart flutter. And her knees weak. And her panties moist. He stepped forward. Lark's belly jumped as she leaned in for the feel of his lips against her cheek.

Instead of kissing her cheek, River's lush lips brushed against hers. It was just the slightest touch of flesh against flesh, but it was more than enough to spike her libido and send heat flashing through her sex. She gasped as her pussy tightened with desire.

She took a step back and stared at River in surprise. His gaze was glittering, his eyes a darker, deeper amber colour than she had ever seen before. He slowly lifted the large, white plastic bag in his hand. "I got Greek," he said roughly.

"I've never had Greek," she said as she stepped aside for him to enter. River caught her gaze as he entered the room. "Then we're both in for something new tonight."

Thirty minutes later, Lark was sure that she was getting something she never had before. Unfortunately, she just wasn't sure what it was. River kept her on edge throughout the whole dinner, but she couldn't quite figure out what it was he did that made her nervous. Every time she reached for something, she bumped into him. It was as though her anxiousness made her lose control of her body. Worst of all,

every time she moved, her hand brushed against his hard body.

Every touch, every unsuspecting caress, was turning her on. Forcing her to acknowledge the heat that burned between her thighs. Just as she brought her fork to her lips, River touched her, callused fingers moving down her shoulder. She flinched and dropped her food. She looked down and stared horrified at the creamy bits down her shirt, on her breasts.

"Um ... I..." She attempted to get up without dislodging the chicken. His strong fingers wrapped around her arm and held her down.

Her gaze snapped to his.

"No, let me."

The Sahara desert materialised in Lark's mouth as she stared deeply into his swirling golden gaze. The fingers around her arm slid down until they reached her wrist. She followed their movements even as they traced the erratically beating pulse there. River grasped the edge of her tank top and pulled it up her torso. Lark shivered as she raised her hands. He caught her gaze and held it for a moment. Without saying a single word, he told her there would be no going back once he undressed her.

He was going to make love to her.

Lark found herself unable to deny him. Deny herself. With the heat burning in her veins and the attraction she'd always felt for the man sitting next to her, it was too much to ask that she push him away simply because he was under the spell of her hormones.

She wanted him.

She needed him.

Her dark hair flew around her face as he whipped off her shirt. Their gazes locked on her breasts. The creamy sauce lay between the plump contours of her bountiful breasts.

"Like vanilla icing on a chocolate cake."

Lark's gaze snapped to River's face. She wondered if he understood what he had just said. Or maybe she was reading too much into the fact that his favourite dessert was chocolate cake with white icing.

"River," she breathed out.

His gaze lifted to hers. "Lie down." His voice was all at once rough, dark and seductive. It was the most intoxicating thing she'd ever heard.

Lark felt herself getting wetter at the coarse sound of his desire. She lay on her back.

He braced each of his hard thighs on either side of her hips. She could feel the heat rolling off his chiselled body. Her gasp of surprise and delight drifted through the air when his tongue, wet and scalding, lapped at the cream, licking and sucking until all traces of the sauce were gone.

"I got it all. But I'm still hungry."

Lark's eyes fluttered shut when his large, warm hand snaked beneath her sweatpants, under her panties, and brushed across the dark curls between her plump thighs. She spread her legs for him, allowing him more access to the deepest recess of her flaming body.

"River?"

He pulled her bra cup aside, exposing her. His tongue flicked against her nipple, once, twice, and a third time

before, she felt the tingling rasp of his teeth against the swollen bud. Her fingers tightened in his hair and she pulled him hard against her chest as she rolled her hips for his questing fingers. She keened when one thick, blunt digit slipped into her cunt.

"Fuck, Lark."

River wrapped his arms around her waist and lunged to his feet. He threw her over his broad shoulder and strode from the room. How he made it so quickly across the loft, she'd never know, but before she could catch her breath, River marched through her bedroom.

Lark groaned in irritation when she landed on the bed. Something poked her back. She glanced at the lump under her pillow. River's hands were faster. He pulled the small box out.

She groaned when saw what it was.

"Mega pack, Lark? You shouldn't have, but I'm glad you did," he said with a harsh smile. One that lit up his amber eyes.

*When I get my hands on Mom...*

Callused fingers wrapped around one small wrist and pulled her arm down. Her palm cupped the thick bulged between his thighs. "But it might not be enough."

Lark's heartbeat raced as brazen, decadent images of passion seared her mind.

Her.

River.

Their bodies intertwined.

Her desire must have shown on her face, because a low, deep sound, tinged with the slightest vestiges of the beast that lay deep inside him, rumbled out.

His lips pressed against hers, his tongue thrust into the recesses of her mouth, stroking, tasting, caressing her, leaving her burnt by his consumption. Reborn by his need.

Wide, long fingered hands drifted to her back and unsnapped her bra, releasing her breasts. They moved low cupping the full cheeks of her ass, palming her through the cotton barrier.

But before she knew it, the sweats were gone and so were her panties. His hands moved over her inner thighs, teasing the soft flesh, fanning the fires of arousal that burned in her belly. River spread the swollen lips of her sex and pressed his thumb against her engorged clitoris.

"Oh God."

"That's it, love. Feel it."

She groaned when his fingers left her slick flesh. The hand in his hair slipped as he moved down her body. Too late, Lark realised his intent. No man had ever desired to give her that kind of pleasure.

"Holy hell, River!" she screamed when she felt his moist, warm tongue moving over her clitoris, flicking over the engorged bud. He swirled his tongue around her nub, licking, sucking, and tasting her swollen flesh. He drifted down to her slit and thrust the velvet muscle deep into her pussy. Lights sparked behind her eyelids when his thumb brushed across her clitoris and flicked the sensitive head as he thrust two fingers into the hot well of her cunt.

"Yes. Yes. Yes!" Lark screamed as she dug her heels into the mattress and lifted her hips for his thrusting fingers.

"Shit! You're tight."

She gripped the comforter and shook her head as great, gasping gulps of air drifted in and out of her burning lungs. Sweat beaded her forehead and upper lip as pleasure pounded through her veins.

"Oh Lord, I'm coming." The awe in her voice was evident. No man had actually been able to make her come. Every orgasm Lark had experienced had been self induced.

But this one was different, and not simply because, this time, the orgasm was a result of her partner's efforts. The pleasure was stronger, deeper, more demanding. It left her heart burning, her lungs struggling for breath as heat poured through her body. This was the kind of orgasm her girlfriends had been telling her about.

As the last tendrils of her powerful release drifted through her, Lark blinked up at her ceiling, too drained to do anything more.

"God, you're beautiful." River's mouth crushed her lips, taking them in a soul-wrenching, torrid kiss. She sank into the pleasure of his tongue, tangling her tongue with his, touching and savouring him, devouring the addictive taste that was River. Need surged deep in Lark's cunt as her hands moved between their bodies, attacking his pants. She unbuckled them and slipped her hands beneath his dark wash denims. A slow smile lit her face when she found that River didn't wear underwear.

Tender, but determined fingers wrapped around his thick erection and slid up his length, measuring him with her touch. Her eyes snapped open when she realised just how equipped he was. *Holy Hell!* She wasn't sure he was going to fit, but she was more than willing to try.

He broke off the kiss and her gaze collided with his. Mischief lit his amber eyes when he leaned up off her. "You'll make me blush, love," he rumbled as he pushed his pants down his hips. Lark's eyes drifted low, below the hem of his simple black tee to the curling hair that bisected his flat abdomen down to the thick mass that cupped his heavy balls and finally back to the long, thick stalk of cock.

"All yours, love."

Her lips spread into a smile as she reached and flicked out her thumb over the ruddy head of his dick.

River jerked beneath her touch and stilled her inquisitive hand. "Too close," he groaned as he intertwined their fingers and pushed at her shoulders with his free hand.

Lark fell back to the bed as he reached for the box on her nightstand. He ripped it open and grabbed one slim foil. He quickly sheathed himself and pressed the thick length of his cock at the entrance to her womb. His fingers tightened in the dark strands of her hair, forcing her gaze to connect with his. "Look at me. Look at us."

River's gaze lowered to her sex. He grasped one thigh, leaving her more exposed. She sat up on her elbows and watched the slow glide of River's thick cock into her sex. Hard, French vanilla. Moist, soft chocolate.

His gaze lifted and caught hers. "Perfect," he whispered as he surged the last few inches, seating himself to the hilt.

Lark keened as her back bowed with the pleasure of his commanding stroke. Her nails scratch his corded arms as he pulled out, pushing past the tight walls of her sex, sending pleasure tingling through every one of her nerves.

River leaned low and wrapped his lips around one nipple and suckled it.

Lark groaned as tendrils of heat drifted from her breast to her pussy before they echoed throughout her body.

He pulled out of her until only the last inch of his long cock was sheathed in her heat. He released her nipple with a pop. She lifted her hips and grasped the firm cheeks of his perfect ass.

"Stop playing with me."

"Say it. Say it, Lark, and I'll give it you."

"Fuck me already."

His hands moved over her torso, and plucked her nipples, before skimming down her arms until he reached her wrists. He wrapped his fingers around them and lifted her arms until they were over her head.

Until his hard chest brushed against the peaks of her breasts.

Until the new position pushed him deep into her sheath.

"Tell me who's fucking this pussy?" River asked as he stared into her eyes. Her eyes widened and heat filled her face as stared up at him. She tried to look away, avoid the admission he demanded, but she couldn't tear her eyes away from his gaze. His eyes glowed in the barely lit room. The

beast was riding him hard. The man she knew was buried deep beneath the surface.

"Who's fucking this pussy?" he repeated.

She took a deep breath when he surged into her, pushing her higher on the bed, forcing pleasure through her body. "Oh God."

"Who, Lark? Who?"

She disentangled her hands and speared her fingers through the silky strands at his nape. "You, River. You are."

"Mine." The fingers on his free hand tightened on her hip. The other propped up his upper torso. He held her gaze as he thrust into her. She watched the light brighten in his gaze with every powerful, pleasure pounding stroke between the tight, moist muscles of her cunt.

In. Out. In. Out.

The slick sounds of sex echoed through the pungent air as he thrust into her, pushing her closer to an orgasm. In. Out. In. Out. River repeated the pattern and increased his rhythm even as she clawed at him, screamed his name, and climaxed beneath him.

"Mine."

"Yes. God, yes!"

"Mine. Mine. Mine." He tempered each declaration with a pounding thrust into her cunt, driving Lark higher onto the precipice of sexual satisfaction, drawing out the length of her orgasm until she was crying out a river of pleasure.

He fucked her until she thought her pussy couldn't handle another orgasm. When she felt depleted, incapable of feeling

any more pleasure, he thrust into her, sending her spiralling down into a seemingly endless orgasm.

"Mine," River declared one final time as he thrust into her. His dark head tipped back and he howled, the sound of a wolf finding his satisfaction, as he pumped rapidly inside of her, spilling his seed.

\* \* \* \*

Lark woke to the feel of fabric gliding along her wrist. For a moment she was too confused to do anything but blink at the darkness that surrounded her. Then River looped the cloth and made a knot, binding her to the scroll pattern headboard. With shocking clarity she realised what he'd done and where she was.

Her pussy moistened and an ache grew in her abdomen. The intensity of her need shocked her. He'd spent most of the night between her thighs. She'd come so many times, felt intense pleasure at his hands every way possible, yet she wanted him again.

"This time I'm going to take my time fucking you."

Her eyes slammed shut and her breath gushed out of her lungs despite her attempt to steady her heartbeat. She shivered as her body temperature spiked and the burn that lay between her thighs became a wild fire. One sentence and he made her hotter than any other man's touch ever had.

She turned her head to the left, to the area where he stood just beyond her bed. "River, this is..." her words were cut off when he bent over, wrapped his full lips around the distended tip of her breast and suckled her.

"Right," he groaned against her moist flesh. "Just the way it's supposed to be."

She shook her head as tears threatened to blur her gaze. River was under the effects of her pheromones. None of it was right. She wanted him to want her as she was.

Because of who she was.

Not because his feral nature dictated that he try and impregnate her by any means necessary.

"Please, River, we shouldn't. There's something ... I need to tell you."

He stepped from the shadows. His eyes glittered in the dark room. With her preternatural ability she could see every inch of him and his eyes. The heat. The desire, there in River's gaze seared her.

"River..."

One finger traced the circle of her dark, puckered areole. "No."

She stared at him.

"Talking. No. Love. Yes." He plucked her nipple and gave Lark a harsh smile when she gasped in pleasure. Two heavy thighs slid over hers, descending on each side of her hips. His heavy cock pressed her belly as he leaned over and licked her nipple. River held her gaze as his teeth scraped across her nipple, sending sharp bolts of heated lightning through her veins. Air rushed past her parted lips as her belly jumped.

It wasn't until several moments later she managed to catch her breath. "River, I'm..." Her words ended on a gasp when his thumb glided over her clitoris, strumming the bud until it was swollen, ready to burst.

"Oh God, River."

"Yes," he said as he plunged one finger deep into her sheath. Another finger joined the first. "No talking," he reiterated. River twisted his wrist and caught her gaze. His thumb pressed hard against her clitoris.

Lark gripped the ties binding her to the headboard.

"None."

She shook her head wildly in agreement. River was making it abundantly clear that he did not want to hear what she had to say. Lark wasn't sure she was actually ready to tell him that she was in heat. She wasn't sure she wanted to face the reality of his lack of feelings for her.

For years now, she had been hoping that he'd look at her with passion in his golden gaze. Now that there was desire in his eyes, she didn't want it to end.

"Good," River rumbled out as he leaned low and brushed his mouth against hers. His touch was sweet, almost painfully so. A slow glide of lips against lips made her belly clench with longing as heat swarmed her veins. Her tongue fluttered against the seam of his mouth. He moaned her name and captured her lips in a drugging kiss as his fingers withdrew from her cunt.

Slick with her desire, his fingers cupped her breast, shaping and moulding the mound. He caressed her nipple, spreading the evidence of her desire over the bud until it was wet. He pulled back, breaking off their kiss and moved down her body.

Lark's gaze followed him.

His bright amber eyes stared hungrily at her nipple as his fingers plucked at her second breast. Soon both nipples were covered with her juices. Her eyes slammed shut at the first glide of his tongue over her sensitive flesh. Slowly, with excruciating care River cleaned each nipple, licking off all evidence of her cream until she was writhing beneath him.

Lark moaned his name when he flicked her nipple. She cried out when he wrapped his lips around her breast, encasing both her areole and nipple in the heat of his moist mouth, and suckled her hard.

"Shit," she groaned when he turned to the other breast showing it the same affection and filled his mouth, licking and sucking her.

River slowly moved down her body, weaving a wet, scalding path with his tongue until he reached the mound of her cunt. He dragged the velvet pad of his tongue down her inner thighs, up the folds of her sex, over the manicured ebony strands that led to the opening of her sheath.

Lark waited, breath heavy in her throat, for his tongue to reach her clitoris, her leaking slit, any part of her that might put out the fire that burned so hotly. But he took his time, torturing her, teasing her, licking every inch of her mound, every inch but her nubbin and hole.

"Please, River." Lark groaned as she lifted her hips high, trying to force her cunt against his mouth, to get that talented tongue of his to give her the clitoral stimulation she needed. The hands keeping her thighs splayed and open for his unrelenting mouth pushed hard, forcing her legs against

her torso. His tongue swept a wet, hot path down her sex and between her cheeks.

Lark shrieked when she felt the first fluttering flicks of his tongue moving south. "River!"

When she realised he was teasing her rosette, she found she couldn't make a sound. Shock froze her limbs, clogged her throat.

But River didn't want her quiet and placid. He demanded, "Take it," low and deep. The sound vibrated along her sensitive flesh, stroking more heat onto her already burning body. She moaned and groaned above him as each kiss, each lick, sent her higher and higher, striding towards a plummeting orgasm.

He had yet to touch her clitoris.

His tongue thrust into her rosette one final time, stroking past the first ring of clenched muscles.

Lark sucked air deep into her lungs when something wet and hard slipped into her. "River?" she called softly, unsure of how to handle this new interaction.

His head peeked above her thighs. He looked into her eyes and held her gaze as he pushed his finger in deeper. Lark closed her eyes and shrieked as heat seared her, starting from the pleasure point his finger stroked, spreading towards her toes before blossoming throughout her whole body.

His tongue, wet and nubile, stroked over her clitoris, giving her that final push over the edge. She screamed his name as her orgasm tore through every inch of her body. Before the last flutters of her release had ceased, he pushed through the

tightly clenching muscles of her sex, imbedding himself inside her to the hilt.

"Good."

River's single statement washed over her. Her face heated with a blush at the compliment. It was good, so good with him, better than anything she had ever felt. Her pussy clenched around him as he pulled out, scraping along the walls of her cunt, sending pleasure ricocheting through her every limb.

"Yes," he rumbled as he stroked into her.

Heat washed across her skin as he plunged into her. Pleasure streaked through her nerve endings, singeing her skin, and her erogenous zones. Several of her manicured nails broke as she scraped the ties that bound her so tightly. As strong as the ties were, she was even more strongly bound to the man above her. Her body was tied to him.

Just as her heart was.

"Mine," River groaned as he surged into her one last time. Lark broke into spasms as her muscles tightened with release. She turned her head to the side as tears leaked from her closed eyes.

Lark couldn't help wishing that she really was River's woman.

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## Chapter Three

### Outside Looking In

The moon was high in the sky, and the night was as dark and murky as ink. It was late. Keeping still, River listened to the sound of Lark's bare feet as she discreetly moved about the room. When he heard the slight creak of a door opening, River glanced at Lark in surprise. Oddly, the sight of her nude body, silhouetted by the moonlight streaming through the window, comforted him. There was no way she would be going far without any clothing.

River considered going after Lark, getting another taste of the pleasure to be found between her thighs, but decided against it. Lark had to be tired. Hell, he was exhausted. She was probably on her way to the restroom. *Not exactly the best time for seduction*, he thought wryly, as he settled more comfortably on Lark's bed.

Sleep had just begun to claim him when he heard the second sound of a door being opened. He ignored it and focused on falling asleep. He wanted to be rested when he woke. There were a number of fantasies and desires he wanted to explore with Lark.

There was no telling how long River drifted between sleep and consciousness. He only knew that the part of his mind that waited for Lark's return was never appeased. Unable to truly fall asleep, River decided to stop pretending and sat up. The menacing sound of a wolf's warning growl cut through

the air when River realised that Lark was no longer in the apartment.

He could only scent traces of her distinctive aroma.

"Son of a bitch." He stood and grabbed his pants. Hopping into the slacks, he made his way to the bedroom door. A quick glance and sniff at the entryway confirmed his belief that Lark had taken off.

River's initial thought was, *she's afraid of what's happening between us*. She had a right to be scared. River had played the part of Lark's asexual male friend their whole relationship. He was tired of it. His second thought made him pause. *What if she's sneaking out to meet with someone?*

The need for Lark had been so strong, River hadn't bothered to check if the coast was clear. He didn't stop and ask Lark if she was seeing someone. He'd simply taken what he wanted, her, and to hell with the consequences.

Now he found himself wondering if Lark had a boyfriend.

*If she's running out to meet with another male...*

River threw the front door open with a bang. He was halfway down the hall when it slammed back into its place. No doubt the neighbours heard the booming sound, but he didn't care. River was consumed with the thought of Lark and some unknown male together. *His* Lark.

He followed her scent until it took him down to the hotel's rear exit where it was strongest. For a moment River simply stood on the final step drinking in the perfume of her scent. It was intoxicating. Lark's aroma called to his inner beast, brought his animal to the surface.

The crisp sound of a wolf's howl cut through the fragrant, midnight air. River turned, tracing the source of the call. He found it at the entrance to the alley. A lone female wolf stood there. River glanced around the dark alley, eyes seeing more than a man, seeing more than even he normally did. His beast was climbing to the forefront. He needed to let him free.

River filled his lungs with air, once, twice, until he had settled himself and the wolf that lived inside. Teeth gritted against the pain of transformation, River unbuckled his pants and stepped out of them. Then, with a deep groan, he let the animal free. Searing pain stripped him down to his basest level of awareness. For just one moment, he was simply a man fighting the agonising pain of shifting as his limbs shortened and muscles contracted. With a groan, the man became the beast.

The savage sound of a wolf's demanding howl rent the pungent city air. When River lowered his snout and peered down the narrow alley, he saw Lark glance behind her in response. Her coat was a gleaming silver tone that seemed to distribute the moon's eerie light.

River took two measured steps over to her and stopped. There was something in her eyes that warned him away. He didn't like the sight. It brought to mind painful images of solitude. His mind flashed back to his earlier fear, and River couldn't help wondering if he was going to lose Lark to some undeserving male.

*Mine*, the wolf barked as a low, warning rumbled forth. At the coarse sound, the air in the alley altered, becoming

denser and more dangerous. From across the chasm that separated them, River saw an answering change go through Lark. The pale grey hairs on her spine lifted in irritation for a split second. The reaction lasted long enough to give River a warning.

*She's going to run.*

No sooner had the words flittered through his mind than Lark took off. As he followed her out of the alleyway, the bestial side of his nature howled in pleasure at the thought of the chase. It seemed an eternity had passed since he was allowed to indulge the baser side of himself. The restrictions of city life had forced River to keep his wolf in check, but now, with the chase, River allowed the animal to roam free.

Ruthless need drove him. Muscles contracting and releasing, heart pounding with every step, River worked to close the distance that separated him and Lark. He had to conquer her, run her down and force her to acknowledge she belonged to him. The need to accomplish this was stronger than hunger, more savage than a sandstorm, and more relentless than a hurricane.

The wolf as well as the man needed to solidify that Lark was his female.

He followed her down the block, running past the sleeping bodies of the homeless, jumping over the trash that littered the street, and gaining on her with every moment. Instinct told River she wasn't running with all her might. She wanted him to capture her.

Lark turned and took a left. With a satisfied growl, River flew down the road. He already knew where she was headed.

In his wolf form, Central Park was like a beacon to him. He could never ignore its lure. No doubt, the clean scent of the land called to Lark as much as it did him.

He found her, standing beneath a canopy of trees. The moonlight and the shadows danced around Lark, placing her on centre stage. For a moment, he simply stood at the edge of the field, pawing the ground as he took in the sight before him. Whether in human form or wolf, Lark always managed to bewitch him.

Unable to ignore the call that pulled him to her, River walked forward. Lark turned and watched him move closer. When River was less than three feet away, she turned and ran. Pleasure burst through him at the act. Although she wanted to be his, she wasn't going to make this easy for him. Besides, he liked being able to prove he could make Lark his.

The chase didn't last long, but it was immensely satisfying. Lark took River down a ragged path that forced him to fully exert himself. Just when he thought he was going to lose her among the foliage, he took a turn and sighted her. He leapt and tackled her to the ground. They rolled around, nipping and growling at one another for several rounds. Just when River started wonder if he was wrong to think that Lark wanted him, she submitted and lay upon the mulched terrain.

*Mine.* The word was full of wonder and satisfaction as it exploded in River's mind. Wonder, because River hadn't really believed that he would be able to capture Lark. Satisfaction, because Lark was his. After years of hoping and praying, he was finally going to make Lark his mate.

A low growl, so deep and sensual it seemed to personify desire, cut through the air as Lark turned her head to the side, baring her throat. The area where her throat met her front leg caught his attention and held it captive. Blood roared in River's ears as he stared down at the region.

*Must mark. Must claim.* The words were a steady, deafening chant in River's ears as he lowered his head and sunk his incisors in her flesh. The moment his teeth pierced her, River felt a change go through him. Instinctively, he began the Prayer of the Claimed.

As the last words of the Prayer of the Claimed drifted through his mind, the change went through River. He pulled his incisors from Lark's flesh and licked the area, knowing the antibodies in his saliva would heal the tear quickly. Slowly, he felt his limbs lengthening and his muscles thickening. Once the transformation was over, he looked down to find Lark in human form. She'd shifted too.

River's gaze strayed to the marked flesh at the base of her throat. From now until the end of days, Lark belonged to him. She was his mate.

"River?"

The softly uttered sound of his name drew his attention to Lark's mouth. God, how he loved her mouth, he thought as he lowered his head. "You're my mate," River murmured before he slanted his mouth over hers. His tongue pushed past her parted lips to lave inside. River licked the succulent flesh of her inner mouth, roamed over her teeth before tangling his tongue with hers.

"Oh, River," Lark sighed as she broke off their kiss. She placed her arms around his neck and pressed her face to his shoulder. Tender kisses rained upon every inch of his exposed flesh her mouth could reach. A shudder of jagged need ran through him at the feel of her lips against his scorched skin. He wrapped his arms fiercely around her, pulling her as close as their naked flesh would allow.

"Lark." She turned her head to look into his face. Her eyes were luminous with the glow of the moon's light. Naked and pliant with only the night's shadows covering her body, she was the most beautiful sight he'd ever seen. His mouth came down on hers unable to ignore the hunger within.

Although River had shed his bestial form, something primitive and uncivilised fed his need. He had made Lark his mate. According to the rules of their respective packs, Lark belonged to him, yet something savage drove him. An unfed hunger blazed within River.

With a jolt, River realised he wanted Lark to love him as he loved her.

The tumultuous desire inside was transformed into a raging need to make her feel as he did.

His fingers tangled in her hair and clutched her head as his mouth moved over hers. He slid first one, then his other thigh between her legs until he was fully situated between her thighs. River rolled his body forward so his lower body moved against hers. Lark moaned into the kiss as his fierce arousal rubbed against her cleft.

"God, I need you," River admitted against her mouth.

"Yes." Lark placed tender kisses across his shoulder and lower throat as she rocked her hips against his. "I need you too."

With a husky groan, River placed his hands on her hips holding them. If Lark continued, the night would end sooner than either of them would like. Once he stilled her ardent movements, he pulled back slightly and slid one hand between thighs. She shivered when his fingers caressed her damp sheath.

"You're so wet," he murmured low as his excitement poured through him.

He moved his fingers over the folds of her sex, across the swollen bud of her clitoris, until Lark was writhing his arms.

"Oh God, yes," she moaned. She lifted her head and brushed her mouth across his as she lifted her hips for his touch.

Basking in the desire he'd ignited, River parted his lips for her kiss. She drank deeply of him, her lips hot and her mouth rough. River groaned at the nature of the kiss. Lark was as far gone as he was. It was a heady thought.

"I want to take it slow," he groaned against Lark's swollen lips. "I want you to feel the same. I need you to understand."

"Understand what?"

He didn't answer her. He couldn't find the right words to express what he was feeling—what he wanted Lark to know. So instead of explaining himself with words, River spoke with his body. One wide palm gripped Lark's left hip, and the other stroked his dick. Then, when he was no longer satisfied with staring at her sex, he pressed forward and moved his cock

against the moist folds of her sheath. She trembled as his erection teased the lips of her cunt and brushed over her clitoris.

When she began to roll her hips, silently pleading with him, River lowered his cock and thrust into her wetness. He drove himself into her in one thrust and groaned her name when she contracted around him. She was so snug, almost too tight, but he didn't care. She felt so good.

*Like home*, he thought.

And Lark was home. The other half of his soul. His mate.

*When you find that girl, no one else will matter.*

River finally knew what his father had meant. He'd always thought he understood his father's words, but it wasn't until that moment that he realised he'd simply assumed his father was talking about the fact that he would be bound to his mate. The truth was his father always uttered the words with love. Old Man Stone had been talking about the love of his life, about what happened when he'd discovered the one woman who completed him.

Lark was that woman.

River's gaze raked over her, taking everything in.

Her face flushed with the heat of arousal, her skin was slick with the moisture of her desire, and her limbs were pliant with the weight of her need. "Please," she moaned as she moved her hips against his, driving River further into her.

"Yes," he answered as he moved within her, pushing past the rhythmically clenching muscles of her sex. Holding Lark's glittering glaze, he lifted her thigh so he could sink deeper

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with each thrust. They groaned in unison at the new level of their loving.

He surged into her and felt the carnal energy within spike. He was going to come. At the last moment he withdrew and released his seed on her inner thigh.

Making love outside, on a moonlit night felt right, but there was something to be said about doing it inside. At least in Lark's apartment, there was a ready supply of condoms for whenever the mood hit.

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## **Chapter Four**

### Emotions Under Pressure

River ran an unsteady hand through his hair as he peered down at Marilyn. The dog looked up at him with understanding eyes. He gave her a wry grin. Lark was nowhere in sight, and for the last five minutes he had been mumbling to himself.

"I'm screwed."

She perked up, ears standing up at attention. His smile widened. "I guess I've been talking to you, huh?" Marilyn took a step to him and leaned low. He scratched the area behind her ear. "You're going to be great, Marilyn. Going to make daddy proud."

His grin became full blown when she lifted her head at the word, 'daddy'.

Lord, he couldn't wait until he had real children ... with Lark. He and Lark had been going at it for two days. They'd only left the loft studio to walk Marilyn and go through her routine. Otherwise, it had been two days of non-stop sex.

He wasn't even sure how he could walk.

Every inch of his body ached. Well, not every inch...

River jammed his hands into his front pockets and rocked on his heels as he pushed down the first stirrings of desire. He'd finished making love to Lark less than an hour ago. He'd caught her coming out of the bathroom wearing her bra, panties, and skirt. She had yet to decide on a blouse. Seeing

those gorgeous breasts in her see-thru black lace bra, plumped up until they looked like the most perfect chocolate chip tipped cupcakes ... He hadn't been able to keep his hands to himself. They'd ended up needing to take another shower. Separately.

He still couldn't believe how good it was with Lark. Yes, he loved her. Yes, he was sexually attracted to her. But the intensity of the rightness he felt when he thrust into her that first time they made love seared him to his soul. It was as though he'd come home after being away at war for years.

He couldn't wait to get back inside her.

He glanced at his watch. When he looked up he saw Lark heading towards him. He stilled as surging need enveloped him. A dark sound of need was torn from his throat. He could feel the wolf inside clamouring to get free. Fuck! He had it bad, and he had to get his beast under control.

Lark's gaze snapped to his. She came to a jagged stop and rummaged in her purse. She pulled out the floral scented perfume she had been carrying all day and sprayed herself head to toe.

River took a deep breath and calmed the raging desire inside. Yes, he was a werewolf, but he was a man too. He had to stop acting like an animal intent on fucking his way into history.

Lark slowly walked over to them. She stopped several feet away from him and snapped her fingers. Marilyn trotted over to her side. River caught sight of the large tremors that went through Lark's fingers as she petted the large, midnight-coloured dog. She was scared. The scent of her fear was

strong, the emotion so thick he felt as though he was the one afraid of what was coming.

"Lark?"

She looked up, caught his gaze, and held it for a moment. His heart lurched at the panic in her gaze. She turned and quickly walked away. Marilyn started to follow her. "Marilyn, stay," he commanded and pointed to the table they had been assigned. He passed the well-trained dog as he strode after Lark. He found her in the enclave leading to the restroom. She was heaving, taking deep, gasping breathes that forced her large breasts to bounce with every gulp.

She turned when he stepped into the nook. "Are you okay?"

She gave him a dry laugh. "River, do I look, okay?"

Her fear coupled with his own. He wasn't good with emotions. He was even worse when it came to a woman's emotions. *Shit!* He took a deep breath.

"Tell me what's wrong."

"I can't do this."

He smiled. "Yes, you can."

"I hope so, but I won't lie. I'm nervous as hell." She gave him a shallow smile. "You know me better than anybody does. I've never been really good at this. I don't know why I thought I could do this." She shook her arms around wildly to encompass the stadium.

He strode to her and grasped her shoulders. "You can do this. I know you can."

She stared up at him for several seconds with wide eyes. "God, I wish I had your confidence."

He smiled. "We just need to get rid of your nerves," he murmured as he placed his lips against hers. His kiss was sweet, his mouth soft against hers. He made sure to keep the kiss soft, sweet, slowly compelling Lark's full lips to open for him. "Oh, River," she moaned before parting her lips for his thrusting tongue. He swept in, touching, tasting, and devouring the sweet taste of her succulent lips. His fingers tightened in her hair, holding the sides of her head so she was unable to do anything but accept his plunging tongue.

He fitted his hips to hers and moved the already swollen bulge between his thighs against her cleft. Several moments later, he broke off the kiss. They were both breathing hard and heavy.

He stepped away from her and took a deep breath, trying to steady his raging arousal. This moment was supposed to be about Lark. About *her* nerves. About *her* needs.

He wasn't even part of the equation.

Lark took advantage of his actions, or lack thereof, and walked past him. He grabbed her around the waist before she could take her second step and pulled her against him. Back to chest, they stood for a moment, simply breathing.

His palm moved up her torso to cup one heavy breast. "When you get out there, with Marilyn by your side, I want you to think of me." He could feel her gasp as her breast moved in his hand. Her engorged nipple tickled the heart of his palm. River tightened his hold, moulding, teasing, and caressing the swollen mound.

Another hand moved under skirt, slipping between her stockings, past the French cut lace panties to touch her cunt. He gritted his teeth when he found she was already wet.

"When you're out there remember this ... the desire ... the attraction ... the passion."

His fingers slipped between the folds of her pussy to flick her clit. "Shit, River."

"Tell me what you feel?"

He thrust one blunt finger into her cunt while another pressed against her clitoris. "Good. I feel good," Lark moaned.

"What else do you feel?" He deepened his touch, plunging his finger past the tight muscles of her clenching sex.

"I can't ... shit, I can't think," she whispered as her body broke out in shivers. One finger withdrew from her cunt only for two to surge into her.

"I feel hot."

"When you get out there, when you and Marilyn do your routine, you remember this. Remember how much faith I have in you."

"Fuck," she grunted as her pussy tightened around his fingers with her orgasm.

He could feel every pulse of her orgasm as her sex fluttered around him.

"I love you because you're smart, beautiful, and talented. Remember that as you walk around that course."

With a slick sound River pulled his finger from Lark's sex. Her body continued to shudder with her orgasmic release as he righted her panties, her stockings, her skirt. He walked to

her front and cupped her face. "I love you, Lark. Don't you forget that." He pressed a soft kiss against her lips, pivoted and walked to the stands.

Twenty minutes later, River held his breath as he watched Lark and Marilyn do their routine. He had never been more proud. With every step Lark took, he got harder, more aroused.

River's speech had worked a little too well. With each move Lark made, she became more and more aroused. She was obviously remembering the words he had told her not to forget. Her desire was creating the most intoxicating perfume.

Several times during Lark and Marilyn's routine, he'd been forced to clench his fingers to keep from jumping from his seat and taking Lark right then and there—in the middle of the competition with no care who saw them.

"Be careful what you wish for," he murmured to himself. Every inch of her lush body exuded confidence. It also radiated enough heat to singe every one of his nerve endings.

Still, a slither of unease snaked down his spine as he watched them. He had to continuously force himself to push the emotion away as Lark coached Marilyn through the first round of events. But by the end of their routine he was genuinely nervous. She hadn't looked at him once, and he was sitting in the front row, right in her line of sight. It wasn't the fact that she hadn't caught his gaze that made him anxious. No, it was the fact that she was actively trying to avoid him as she walked Marilyn through the obstacle course that made him nervous.

He knew she was afraid, he could smell the scent of her thick fear. He assumed she was afraid of losing the competition. Only later did he realise how wrong he was. Even though there was a lead ball was in his gut, he yelled "That's my girls," as the two finished the first course.

Heart pounding, River watched Lark's beautiful mocha face as the judges gave their scores. They were good—respectable, but he was afraid they weren't good enough to get the duo to go onto the next round. Several minutes later, his fear was confirmed when the announcer said the names of the dogs and owners that would be going on to the competition's next level.

River couldn't make it behind the scenes fast enough. Every step he took felt as though he was walking through quicksand. Time slowed down as he ran through the empty hallways to reach Lark. He knew she was heartbroken. Although her face hadn't shown any emotion when the announcer said who was going to the next round, he'd felt her pain. Her disappointment.

And there was the rage.

He moved aside the curtain that hung over the edge of the canopy Lark shared with another contestant and strode to where she had been placed, and came to a halt. She was gone. The fold down table looked as though it had never been occupied. He took a deep breath and turned around, trying to figure out where she was. Shit! He growled as he headed to the car.

She was running scared.

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"Lark," River yelled just as she slammed the front door. She glanced at him as he ran towards her car, grimaced and started the engine. She drove away seconds before he reached her vehicle.

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## **Chapter Five**

### Homecoming

One week.

Seven days of hell. One-hundred-and-sixty-eight hours spent trying to forget about the man who had rocked her world and left her emotions in shambles. The morning after their mating, Lark woke, surprised to find that what she'd thought was a dream had actually occurred. River's amorous attention never gave her the chance to talk to him about their mating. The one time he did speak of it, he simply said, "We're mated. There's nothing to talk about."

Unable to talk to River, Lark ended up writing a letter. She'd left it at the table the show assigned her and Marilyn. The absence of River's presence told her he'd received it. River was a very possessive man. If she even considered running away from him, he would chase her. But the letter made it very clear that she didn't want him to chase her, they could not make it as a couple, there was only physical attraction between them. Nothing more.

She hadn't been able to tell him that she was in heat, but Lark figured he'd reason that out once he was away from her pheromones.

Lark glanced out her bedroom window as she thought of the last time she saw River. The look of pain and anger on his face was emblazoned on her mind. There were some

moments, the times when she missed River the most, when Lark regretted the letter.

"It was for the best," she murmured to herself.

For the past week, she'd been trying to do the one thing that always helped her exorcise her demons. But her art was part of the problem. Lark painted more in the week since she'd seen River than she had painted all of last month. Too bad she kept drawing the same thing.

Black hair. Amber eyes. Chiselled features.

And when she wasn't painting his face she was dreaming about it. And masturbating to it. Big Willie had never been the same. Neither had her shower.

She'd also been doing a lot of that lately. Cold showers, that is. She tugged the belt on her robe before running her fingers through her still wet hair.

She grimaced as the tangles caught her attention. She needed to go to schedule an appointment with her hairdresser. Too bad that required going into town. She'd tried that three days after she left River. She'd seen him everywhere during the short trip to the grocery store.

It was like her mind and body didn't want to let him go.

For the millionth time in the week since she had last seen him, his scent drifted to her nostrils and caught her heart in a tight grip. She'd scrubbed her whole house, thrown out everything she took to New York. Hell! She'd given Marilyn five baths, and she still smelled him everywhere.

It was like he was a part of her.

She supposed he was. In three days, River had managed to work his way deep into her system. Whereas before he had

simply been a part of her heart, now he was the very blood pumping through her veins.

He was her everything.

Fuck!

She blinked back tears as she leapt from her front couch and strode to her studio. Lark had only taken two steps when the doorbell rang. She wiped the tears from her eyes and pulled the door open, colliding face to face with the source of her tears. Well, that explained the scent.

"River?"

"Imagine that? Finding you right here, hiding away. Hiding from me." He stepped into the apartment and closed the front door behind him. Without breaking her gaze, he reached behind him and turned the lock. She felt the clink deep in her bones.

Lark licked her bottom lip slowly as she watched him. She took a step back. He followed, shaking his head slowly. "Uh uh uh. Running again, Lark? I know you're stronger than that."

She stopped in the middle of another retreating step, his words embarrassing her. "What are you doing here?"

"Why hunting you down, sweetheart," he said with a harsh grin. "I got your letter. I won't lie, I was pissed as hell when you ran away and even more angry when I read your letter. I got in my car and started driving. I was determined to bring you back then I started thinking, "Maybe she's right."

"Maybe I'm right?" she gasped in surprise. The part of her that was waiting for River to come for her died a painful death.

"I thought about it. I really did, Lark. We may be mated, but I don't want to force you to be with me."

"I—"

He held his hand, stopping her words. "After thinking about it, I realised you were wrong. There is more than physical attraction between us. A lot more." The last few words were spoken in a dense voice that caressed her skin.

She threw up both hands when he started towards her. "Wait! There's something I have to tell you."

He stopped in his tracks and folded both arms across his broad chest. Lark toyed with her belt as the sight of all those muscles moving stirred a fluttering in her sex.

He watched her nervous movements with glittering eyes. "What exactly is it that you have to tell me?"

She chewed her bottom lip and jammed her hands into her pockets. "I ... uh." She took a deep breath and focused on the picture behind him. "I was in heat two weeks ago. I was in heat while I was in New York. It wasn't me you wanted but the pheromones."

River chuckled, but Lark felt everything but amusement rolling off him. He was angry, livid actually, and aroused. The arousal made her breath hitch.

"I knew that," he said as he advanced.

"You knew!" she sputtered as she walked farther into the kitchen.

His smile widened. It had a hard edge that glided down her torso and settled in her gut. Remarkably, Lark felt herself getting wetter even as she took a step back. She blamed her reaction entirely on her heat cycle even though she knew it

wasn't true. Number one—she was no longer in heat. Number two—she had always responded to River's smiles. It was a large part of the reason she'd put so much distance between them.

She'd gotten tired of wanting a man she could not have.

"Let me rephrase that. I knew you were in heat. I scented it the moment I walked into the lobby. You sprayed just enough of that blocking perfume to keep humans from scenting you. But I'm no human." He bit out the words as he moved towards her.

Lark instinctively backed up, walking deeper into the enclave that led to the kitchen.

"Your pheromones were strong, thick and highly intoxicating. See, I've got your scent memorised. It's always been ... attractive. So I knew there was something different about it, and I figured out what that something was very quickly and used it to my advantage."

Lark stared at River in shock. "You knew, and yet you..."

"Damned right I knew. The thing is when you are in love with a woman, you want to spend your every waking moment with her, and live for the moment when you can slide into her. A few pheromones are nothing. All they did was take me from hungry to starved." He paused and his smile widened, becoming deeper, darker and more dangerously seductive. "Then again, it might have been the eight years you spent avoiding me."

Lark took another step back. She pushed aside the pleasure that blossomed in her heart at his words. Instead,

she focused on what she could handle. "I'm not avoiding you. We've both grown apart since college."

"Thanks to you." River advanced three steps, pressing his body against hers, crushing her breasts against the flat plane of his hard chest. "You're mine now, Lark. And I take care to keep what is mine. Don't ever think I'll let you go." River's lips descended upon hers, crushing her mouth. His tongue, warm and wet, slipped through her lips that had parted in surprise and stroked over the inner recesses of her mouth.

She moaned against his lips as he deepened the kiss, touching every inch of her, devouring the deepest corners of her soul.

River broke off their torrid kiss to press soft, sweet kisses against her jaw, her cheeks, and her neck. He swiped the velvet pad of his tongue down her neck until he reached the erratically beating pulse at her throat. He flicked his tongue against the beat and sucked the flesh into his mouth.

His palms drifted up her torso to cup the aching mounds of her breasts. Callused thumbs brushed the distended swollen tips until a cry was wrenched from her parted lips. Hungry hands grasped the belt of her robe and undid the tie. A shiver ran through Lark's body when his fingers pushed the fabric off her shoulders and forced her back against the cool refrigerator door.

Her eyes widened in surprise. Her breath was torn from her chest. She looked up and caught River's heavy lidded gaze. His palm glided down her torso, over her belly until it reached the nest of midnight curls that shielded her cunt. He

parted the swollen lips of her pussy and stroked one finger over her clitoris.

"Tell me you don't want this, that you don't want me?" he demanded in a voice darker than night and just as dangerous.

Lark's eyes slammed shut as one finger pressed deep inside her, stroking the hot walls of her sex. She lifted her hips, rocking his finger deeper inside her, silently answering River's question.

Her fingers tightened in the dark strands of River's hair as he pressed hot, opened mouth kisses against her flesh, trailing down her stomach to dip his scalding tongue into her belly button.

"Do you?" His tongue bathed a wet, hot trail up her torso until he reached the aching mounds of her breast. "Mine," he groaned before he wrapped his lips around the peak of one breast, suckling the nipple deep into the hot recesses of his moist mouth. The finger inside Lark's pussy thrust deep, and she keened as pleasurable heat streaked through her body. River withdrew but before she could voice her bereavement, he plunged two fingers past the tight walls of her rhythmically clenching cunt.

Lark came instantly, shocking herself with the power and quickness of her release. She had only received a scant seconds notice before her legs started shaking and her body imploded on itself. "River," she cried out as her pussy tightened and cream leaked from her sex.

Before she could catch her breath, he pulled his fingers from her sex with a slick sound, wrapped his hands around her waist and lifted her several feet in the air. He stepped

forward, brushing his naked cock against her cleft. Lark stared down at it in surprise wondering when he had unsheathed it.

Displaying his agility and strength, River held her up with one hand while the other roamed over her body, dipping between the splayed cheeks of her ass. It easily found the wet core of her centre. Unrepentant, River also attacked her from the front. His cock pressed against the moist area between the lips of her sheath. Lark groaned his name at that first touch of flesh against flesh.

He thrust his hips forward, forcing his cock hard against her clitoris, against her cunt that was almost painfully sensitive.

"Oh my God! River!" Her body broke out into a new bout of spasms and her head slammed against the refrigerator.

"Tell me you don't want this, Lark, and I will stop."

The arm across her back reached up and his fingers tightened in the silky ebony strands of her hair, forcing her to open her eyes and look at him. "Tell me," River murmured as his cock rubbed against her nether lips.

Lark dragged raspy air past her quivering lips as passion and panic assailed her. She couldn't tell him to stop. Yet, she couldn't find the strength to tell him to not only keep up his pleasurable torture, but to increase it and fuck her. Hard.

"River ... please."

He pulled away from her, cock no longer pressing pleurably against her clit, fingers no longer grasping and pulling her hair, callused hand no longer testing the depth of her moist desire.

"No," Lark moaned as she followed his departing body. "I need you."

His hard amber gaze caught hers. There was little compassion in his gaze. He wanted everything. "Say it, Lark."

"I want you," she whispered softly. "I want you to fuck me."

"No."

For one heart stopping moment, Lark was too shocked by his response to do anything but gasp open-mouthed at him. He was turning her down. After she had admitted how much she needed him.

"I won't fuck you, Lark. But I will make love to you. Making ... love." His rough words drifted over her seconds before his lips claimed her mouth in a punishing, torrential kiss. Lark clenched her legs around River's waist just as his cock pierced her, plunging deep into her cunt in one fulfilling thrust. She sighed.

He groaned when he was seated to the hilt inside of her.

One week! Just one week and it felt like she had been starving for years and only now was she been fed. Her fingers clutched at his shoulders, digging into the corded muscles as she held onto him. Held onto what little piece of self control she had.

It was always this way when she was around River. The man had the irritating ability to make her lose control of her every emotion.

"God, I missed you."

His rough words drifted over her, comforting her, leaving her feeling secure. Secure in his arms.

"I missed you, too."

"Don't you ever run away from me again."

Lark slowly opened her eyes to find him watching her, his hard gaze unyielding.

"No more running," she murmured as she wrapped her arms around his corded neck and pulled his face down to hers. His lips softly brushed against hers, totally at odds with the hard plunging thrusts into her cunt.

Running was useless, pointless as River's sensitive kiss proved. She couldn't run away from the feelings he stirred in her. The passion that was relentless whenever he came around.

"Mine," he said as he surged into her.

"Yes! Yours." Lark held his glittering gaze as he fucked her hard. Her eyes widened with every thrust, every plunge, but she couldn't tear her gaze away from him, even when her eyes started to water from the force of her impending orgasm.

"Shit! So good, so good, Lark."

Pleasure pounded at her with his every thrust. River was relentless, unwilling to take anything less than her total submission to his touch, to his kiss, to his desire. He pulled each and every one of her responses from the depth of her soul. His caresses were her undoing

Their breaths sawed in and out of their lungs in rhythm. The heated, starved look in River's gaze told Lark that he was feeling the same passion she felt. He was going to come soon.

She couldn't wait any longer.

Laid in Show  
*by Tuesday Morrigan*

"I'm coming, River. Lord, I'm coming," she shrieked as every inch of her body tightened with exquisite pleasure. His thrusts increased in speed and depth, and his grip on her hips tightened. Lights exploded in front of her eyes as her initial orgasm was immediately followed by a more powerful, more demanding release. One that left her gasping for breath as her lungs burned with the need for air.

"Fuck, Lark," River gasped a second before she felt the hot spill of his release.

Several minutes later, when her breathing had returned to a rate that was somewhat normal, Lark lifted her head from his shoulder and speared her fingers through his sweat-drenched hair. His gaze lifted to hers.

"I prefer it when you howl," she said with a laugh.

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## About the Author

Tuesday Morrigan began her love affair with romance at an early age. As a child she was always infatuated with the novels she snuck from her mother. Later, in high school, the public library became her sanctuary with an endless array of romance novels. Tuesday is still an avid reader of books. Thanks to shows like *Buffy*, *Angel*, and her latest infatuation, *Supernatural*, Tuesday prefers her stories to have a little more grit. Her favourite genres have always been fantasy, mystery, romance and erotica, so as a writer, she tries to blend the genres to create her own personal niche.

Email: [tuesdaymorrigan@gmail.com](mailto:tuesdaymorrigan@gmail.com)

Tuesday Morrigan loves to hear from readers. You can find her contact information, website and author biography at [www.total-e-bound.com](http://www.total-e-bound.com).

Also by Tuesday Morrigan

Heatwave: Beauty On Fire

Red Stone of Passion

Bite Me: Your Treat Or Mine

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