

*Love can drive you over the edge. It can also let you fly.*

*An In The Heat of the Night story.*

Pixie Parthon worked hard to make her music production company a success. Anyone who gets in her way gets the business end of her Fae magic. Her savvy business sense kept her family afloat for years, but now that her musician brother is mated and off on a world tour she's feeling left in the dust.

Maybe it was a faint wish for a little love magic for herself, but she didn't expect one night of cutting loose to leave her marked for life. A little love bite is one thing. Give up her hard-won independence to a pushy alpha werewolf? She'll pass.

Malcon is just as shocked as Pixie, but for a different reason. From the moment he saw her, his desire went far beyond getting into her pants. When she agreed—begged—to be bitten, he believed she also sensed their destiny to be mates.

Now it's too late. Nothing will convince Pixie that he has no intention of clipping her wings—not even a month's worth of orgasms on call. Crazy as it sounds, love is all he wants from her. Even if it means letting her go...

Warning: Dirty wolf on fairy love, semi-orgasmic dance scenes, fully orgasmic biting of mates, Alpha males and women who are willing to smack them with fairy dust when they get out of line. Oh, and some hot anal sex. You're welcome!

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Samhain Publishing, Ltd.  
577 Mulberry Street, Suite 1520  
Macon GA 31201

Crazy Little Thing Called Love  
Copyright © 2009 by Crystal Jordan  
ISBN: 978-1-60504-625-9  
Edited by Bethany Morgan  
Cover by Angela Waters

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First Samhain Publishing, Ltd. electronic publication: July 2009  
[www.samhainpublishing.com](http://www.samhainpublishing.com)

# Crazy Little Thing Called Love

*Crystal Jordan*

## Dedication

*The usual suspects: Loribelle Hunt, Jennifer Leeland, Eden Bradley, R.G. Alexander, Dayna Hart, Lilli Feisty, Robin L. Rotham and Bethany Morgan.*

# Chapter One

My brother crooned into the microphone on stage, and I think every female in the vicinity swooned. Oh, who was I kidding? Most of the men too. Stephen Parthon's appeal was pretty universal, and he had both a male and a female mate to prove it. A proud grin curled my lips, but I hid it by taking a drink of my margarita. As a ball-busting music company executive, I couldn't appear *too* much the doting big sister. I had my reputation to protect after all.

"Hey, beautiful." Some drunken troll staggered up, winked and flicked his fingers against my wings, which made my whole body jolt. "Wanna take me flying?"

And I really meant *troll*. Even for his race, he was an especially ugly one. I had to work hard not to wrinkle my nose or slap him with enough fairy magic to *really* send him flying. Attacking him, of course, would get me kicked out of the bar, which I didn't want. "No, thanks. Maybe some other time."

"Okay," he slurred, grinned, and staggered back the way he'd come. At least he was a happy drunk.

I twitched my wings to get the feel of his fingers off them, brushing a hand down my short, sparkly silver dress. Backless, as were most of my shirts and dresses. I loved my wings, so why not show them off? They looked like black and purple butterfly wings, with little inward curls at the bottom that framed my ass. Might as well showcase *all* my best assets right?

Shifting on the barstool, I crossed my legs and propped my elbow on the polished wooden surface that stretched along one side of the renovated warehouse that was the Eclipse bar.

It seemed fitting that my brother's going away show should be here, in a magical bar, where our journey had begun over a decade ago. Stephen's career had skyrocketed during the past year. We'd sold out the world tour within the first week and had to add tour dates. It was a crazy, crazy thing. Not that I was complaining, but I had to stay in L.A. and take care of the business. Someone else managed the day-to-day aspects of Stephen's career now instead of me. It was a good thing. It meant growth for us both. Money. Security. Stability. Independence. Things we craved.

Well, maybe not the independence for him, but definitely for me.

He got that about me though. He'd always had this *understanding* about him that people loved. That and the natural charm and charisma from his mother's siren side and our father's Fae blood made him an unstoppable ball of empathetic energy. People drew to him like moths to a flame. It had only gotten more powerful as his relationship with his two mates deepened. The magic that unfolded between them had

balanced him somehow, gave him the emotional stability to really soar. That kind of love, I couldn't give him. He was my *brother* after all.

But I had to admit, deep down in the soft, mushy center of my very cynical soul, that I wouldn't mind a little bit of that for myself. Especially now that he was leaving.

Loneliness was a totally foreign emotion to me. I *preferred* being on my own, and when our father died, I was a nineteen-year-old kid and my seven-year-old half-brother had come to live with me. It had been a rough adjustment for both of us. I don't care what the legal age of adulthood was. At nineteen I was still a kid raising a kid. Going through all the custody rigmarole meant there were so many people telling me what I should do and how I should do it and when and where and what the rules of parenting were and...and...and... It never stopped. I like going my own way and doing my own thing. I crave it, in fact. I need my independence, which is probably why, at thirty-nine, I'd never even had a twinge of desire for a husband or kids.

So, watching Stephen find so much happiness with his mates had been great, but it did remind me that having someone in my life might not be a bad thing. Then again, all the men who'd applied for the position had inevitably tried to control me and simply couldn't accept that I had commitments on my time that I couldn't ignore just because they were feeling needy. I don't mind ties with other people that keep me grounded, but I was born with wings—I *need* to fly.

But Stephen was the one about to spread his wings, and I was being left on the ground. He was poised to do great things and had a career he loved. I had been a part of all that, I had helped him become the truly amazing man he was. Hell, yeah, I was proud. Pixie Dust Productions *and* Stephen Parthon had both become a huge success.

So, now I just got to sit back and enjoy. I'd accomplished a lot and had a whole lot of money to roll in for it. But, Stephen? He was my pride and joy. If I felt a pang that he no longer needed his big sister to look after him, it was soothed by the knowledge that I raised him well enough to look after himself.

"Hey, Pixie." Someone spoke behind me, jerking me back to reality. Turning, I saw one of the owners of Eclipse setting a fresh margarita next to me.

"Heya, Jerrod!" I reached over the bar, clapped my hands over his oh-so-gorgeous face and planted a wet one on his kisser.

He cracked up. "Better watch out, Lena and Rachel are *both* pregnant. The hormones might make them react in ways you can't predict."

"You are a brave man, my friend." I mean, what guy in his right mind had *two* women he was fucking living under one roof with him? But he was a werewolf, and their race didn't get to pick their mates, did they? Fate or instinct or whatever did the picking for them. The fanged races were so odd. I twitched my wings again, just to feel them whisper against my back.

“The hormones also mean they can’t get enough sex to satisfy them.” Jerrod offered me a sly wink. “It’s good to be me, trust me.”

I cocked an eyebrow, but couldn’t hold back a wicked grin. “Nymphomania by pregnancy. Who’d have guessed?”

His broad, muscled shoulder lifted in a shrug. “Not me, but I find with women it’s best not to ask why. That saying about gift horses...”

“I’ve heard it.”

“I’ve got to run. Enjoy your evening.” And then the big werewolf was off serving more drinks.

Taking a deep swig of my drink, my gaze went to the other wolf I knew. My sister-in-law, Candy. As far as I knew, she was the only other wolf besides Jerrod to ever have two mates at the same time. It had caused some waves in the wolf pack, but they’d all gotten over themselves eventually.

Then again, neither Candy nor Jerrod was a stranger to controversy. Candy’s best friend was a vampire, which was totally *verboten* since the two races had hated either since the dawn of time. Jerrod and his mates had made Eclipse a neutral-territory business long before it was fashionable not to pick sides in the vamp-wolf war. I’d always known I liked Jerrod. The man had sense.

The two groups were pretty much on all the other magical races’ shit lists, but Eclipse was open to everyone, no matter whose shit list you were on. Anyone who wanted to start something here—even if it was just to blast some sense into an obnoxious troll—was shown the door. Or tossed out of it. Their choice.

That didn’t make Eclipse particularly safe for humans though. No one would try anything inside the bar, but take a walk out to a car or cab and all bets were off. Especially with vampires around, it was like throwing blood into shark-infested waters. The only human with the guts to be here was Stephen’s male mate, Michael. But surrounded by his werewolf wife, Candy, his vampire sister, Cyn, and Cyn’s enormous vampire husband, Andre, I figured he’d be just fine. I should probably go visit, but I wasn’t feeling particularly social tonight.

And since I wasn’t Stephen’s manager anymore, I didn’t have to fake it. There were a *few* perks to being in charge and delegating to others. I took a deep pull on my icy drink, forced myself to set it down before I chugged the last half of it, and winced at myself. I was wallowing just a teensy bit in my lonely self-pity, dreading the morning when Stephen would be gone for four months. This would be the longest kid brother and I had gone without seeing each other in two decades. His mates were going with him, and I was *not* going to play fourth wheel to their unconventional little threesome. So...for business and personal reasons, I was about to be left to my own devices. I knew I preferred my own company, but it was one thing to choose to be alone and another thing to have it forced on me. I’d be over it in a few days, but I wasn’t there yet.

What I needed was a distraction. Something to take my mind off the desire to wallow.



A cute Fae who looked only a year or two older than Stephen gave me a wink and a once-over. Not bad. I might have to chat with him later. My gaze moved on as I continued to scan the crowd.

“Well, hel-*lo*.” Okay, yum. *This* guy was maybe three feet from me, a little to the left, and facing the stage. The guy was hot enough to make a girl melt just looking at him.

A navy blue T-shirt hugged the heavy muscles of his shoulders and back. And the things his ass did for those jeans had to be illegal. Nice, very nice. I would seriously love to take that ass for a test drive. It would be an awesome way to end my dry spell.

He glanced back at me as if he’d sensed my gaze moving over him. Early to mid-forties, I would guess. Silver edged his dark hair and laugh lines bracketed his eyes. Why men looked better as they aged, I would never know. It was damn unfair. Then again, it did make the view a lot nicer for women than it did for men, so that worked for me. The young Fae was completely forgotten. A man with some experience who knew what he was doing when he fucked a woman would beat out an excited young puppy any day.

That’s when I recognized the face. Malcon. The werewolf Alpha. I’d only seen him on the news and in a suit before. He’d looked great, but I wouldn’t have guessed he was hiding a body that hot and hard under the Armani.

Good thing I was only looking for a bedmate for the night, because there was no way in hell I’d touch the *Alpha* with a ten-foot pole otherwise. But just for tonight... I offered him a slow grin, which made him lift an eyebrow. Stephen started a new song onstage, and Malcon faced forward again.

Not to be deterred, I plucked my margarita from the bar, swished my wings for a light landing as I hopped off my stool and casually sidled up beside the Alpha. “Hi.”

“Hello.” He offered me a quick smile, but kept his focus on the stage. Obviously, he’d come to enjoy my brother’s show, which meant he had good taste.

I didn’t know much about the Alpha other than he’d been pretty unobtrusive as an heir, unlike some of the wild hair-up-the-ass heirs in other wolf packs. He’d made waves when he first took the reins by making it clear that no wolf in his pack could engage in the war with the vampires. It meant that violence between the two species had ground to a halt in the short time he’d been in power, at least in our region of the world. I, for one, was in favor of peace.

A shiver slid up my arm when his fingers brushed my wrist. “Let me buy you a drink.”

Well, it wasn’t exactly a request so I tilted my head and considered. “No.”

“No?” His dark gaze flicked back to me and both eyebrows arched.

I motioned to his half-empty drink with mine. “I’ll buy the first round.”

A low chuckle rumbled from him and his white teeth flashed in a brilliant smile that made him even more gorgeous. “Fine, but the next one’s on me.”

“Deal.” I motioned at Jerrod, who nodded, set two fresh beverages on the bar in record time, and then flicked a wicked look between Malcon and me. I stuck my tongue out at him as I took Malcon’s glass, drew a hot little spurt of magic from the air around me, and *zapped* out our old drinks for the new ones.

“That’s a handy little trick.” Malcon slid one hand into his pocket.

“Thanks.”

He swirled the ice in the amber liquid in his tumbler when I handed it to him. “Your brother is amazingly talented.”

“He is, isn’t he?” I didn’t bother to hide the pride in my voice.

The Alpha dipped his chin in a nod and sipped his drink. Watching the muscles in his throat work was outrageously sexy. Jesus, I needed it bad if a man taking a drink was enough to get me hot. Or hotter than I had been already.

Then I grinned as something occurred to me. He shouldn’t know I was Stephen’s sister. Except for the green eyes, we didn’t look *that* much alike. Stephen was tall and muscular to my short and slim, and my hair was stick-straight blonde to his curly brown. “Well, you’re the werewolf Alpha, *Malcon*, and you’re on the news, but how do you know who *I* am?”

“I asked Jerrod when I saw you at the bar.” A little smile played at the corners of his mouth. Well, he was interested. Good. He glanced at me. “I thought it only polite to let you enjoy your brother’s show before I came on to you, Ms. Parthon.”

“I appreciate that.” And I did. How many guys would have even considered that? Nice to know the guy I was going to let take me home for the night was, well, *nice*.

The low beat of a drum drew my gaze to the stage. Stephen’s voice dropped to a husky purr, rolling out a love song that had every couple on the teensy dance floor.

Malcon’s hand slid into mine. “Dance with me, Pixie.”

“I don’t—” But he was already pulling me along with him. The Alpha had made a decision, and I got to fall in line. I seriously considered digging in my heels, but since I was the one who wanted to shag him tonight, I figured touching him some more wasn’t a bad plan. I rolled my eyes at myself as he dragged me into his arms. And then I didn’t give a damn who had decided what because I was plastered from the thighs up against all those hard muscles.

His palm settled at the small of my back, pressing me even tighter to him. If I’d had any doubts about whether or not he was on the same page as I was for how this evening should end, they were laid to rest when I felt the rigid length of his erection digging into my belly.

Heat slid through me like a drug, loosening my body so that I was all but lying on him. He gathered me closer with every turn on the dance floor. His thumb moved in slow circles against my back, edging over the material of my dress to slide across my skin. I arched into his touch a bit, loving the feel of the

slight callus on his fingertip. It was stimulating and unexpected in a man I knew worked in an office all day. His wolf's claws scraped ever so lightly against the flesh of my back, and my sex clenched tight.

I sucked in a breath and the hot, masculine smell of him made my nipples harden to aching points. With the next turn, he slipped his heavy thigh between mine. The flex of muscle in his leg when he moved made him rub against my clit. I had to bite my bottom lip to hold back a mew of pleasure. Burying my face against his warm chest, I tried to get a hold of the lust that wound tighter and tighter inside me. Wanting him was one thing, but we were in *public*.

"Oh God." I closed my eyes when that stroking hand on my back touched the edge of my wing. Fairy wings were so incredibly sensitive. A shudder passed through me, and moisture flooded my pussy. "Oh my God."

"Really? That good, huh?" His other hand splayed between my shoulders, his fingers spreading so that he touched the base of both wings. Still, he continued to trace the outline of my wing with one fingertip. My fingers bunched in his T-shirt, and I didn't know if I should push him away or pull him closer. His leg and his hands and his body against mine were going to drive me to madness if I didn't get some relief soon.

His finger swirled into the lower curl of one wing. This time I couldn't stop the whimper that bubbled in my throat. I arched mindlessly against him. "I'm going to come right here, right now, if you don't stop that."

"Let's get out of here." He dropped his hands and pried himself away from me with a low groan of protest.

Suppressing a shudder, I tucked my wings in so that they absorbed into my back. No need to tempt either one of us more than necessary. "I have to say good-bye to my brother."

A look that was equal parts desperation, annoyance and resignation flashed across his face. "How much longer is his show?"

I ran Stephen's song list for the night through my mind and heady relief swept through me. "This should be it. They'll want an encore, but I can sneak in if I go now."

Lust pulled the flesh taut across his high cheekbones and his dark eyes had burned to a savage icy blue. The wolf was fighting with the man for control. "Hurry, Pixie."

I turned on a heel, no longer giving a damn if he voiced everything as a command couched as a request. I wanted him tonight, and I was going to have him. The audience applauded wildly, screaming for an encore as I had predicted. I climbed the short flight of stairs on the stage to grab my brother while he and the band waved and sucked down some water before they started again. "Hey, baby bro. I'm going to run early."

“Okay. I love you, sis.” He didn’t ask questions, for which I was eternally grateful. Knowing Stephen, he’d probably seen me almost get down and dirty right there on the dance floor. He pulled me into a huge bear hug, lifting me off my feet.

“Love you too.” I turned my head to kiss his cheek. “Tell your mates I said good night, will you?”

“Will do.” Setting me back on my feet, he grinned at me. “You’re coming to the airport to see us off tomorrow, right?”

“I wouldn’t miss it.” I caught his face between my hands. “I am so proud of you. Don’t ever forget that.”

“I’m proud of you too.” His green eyes softened, and he squeezed my shoulders.

I got a little misty eyed, which was damn embarrassing considering I was headed off to bang a guy I’d met fifteen minutes ago. Ah, well. Shit happened. I wasn’t one to question which way the wind blew. I just let it carry me as high as it could and enjoyed the rush. Seizing the moment was what made me who and what I am today. I popped a final kiss on my brother’s cheek. “Let’s save the mushy stuff for tomorrow.”

A laugh that rose like a music scale rippled out of him, following me as I spun back for the stairs. I could see Malcon waiting beyond the edge of the crowd. His eyes had changed back to their normal ebony shade, but that didn’t stop the heat that sizzled between us when our gazes met.

When I’d thought he would be the perfect distraction, I had no idea how right I would be.

## Chapter Two

Malcon owned a metallic blue BMW Z4. I almost moaned when I saw it—I'd been talking myself out of buying one for months. Shooting him a grin, I waved my handbag at his car. "You realize you're parked in the owner's space don't you?"

"Jerrod's a good friend." He hit a button on his key ring, and the car doors unlocked. Opening the passenger side for me, his dark gaze moved down my bare legs like a caress. I slid inside and let the supple leather seat cup my body. I wanted Malcon pressed that close to me. Closer. I shut my eyes and pulled in a steadying breath, but the ache between my thighs hadn't subsided a single moment since we'd separated on the dance floor.

The car dipped when he got in and closed his door, cocooning us in silence. I opened my eyes to look at him, knowing he'd see my desire and not caring one bit. "How far to your place?"

"Too far," he growled and reached for me.

A laugh startled out of me. "You aren't worried about your Alpha reputation? Someone might see you getting hot and heavy in the backseat of a car like a horny teenager."

While we weren't out in the open, this wasn't exactly a secluded lot. Most people would be watching my brother's show, but there were no guarantees. Malcon grunted. "This car doesn't have a backseat. Come here." A self-deprecating smile curved his lips. "I haven't even kissed you yet."

"I—" His lips cut off whatever I was going to say, and they moved slowly and worshipfully over mine. The man could *kiss*. I slid my fingers into his hair, loving the silken texture of it. He licked my bottom lip, pressing for entrance. A shiver went through me, and I moaned softly. Taking the opportunity to slide his tongue into my mouth, he tilted his head to deepen the angle. Fiery need burned inside of me. His groan vibrated against my lips, and I fisted my hands in his hair, twining my tongue with his.

"We have to stop or I'm going to fuck you."

"I wasn't protesting." My body shrieked at the loss of contact. My sex ached to be filled, the emptiness almost painful. My voice was more a demand than a suggestion. "I want more. I want you inside me."

He dropped his forehead to the steering wheel, and I could see him wrestling for control. I had a feeling that he didn't have that problem very often, and it made me grin that I could push him so far, so fast. He'd done the same to me, so it was only fair. He sighed and straightened. "I can sense the people

inside Eclipse starting to move. Your brother's show must be over. I spend enough of my life in the spotlight. Some things *are* meant to be private."

Smoothing my skirt, I chuckled. Considering how reporters had crawled out of the woodwork when my brother had taken on two mates, I could sympathize. "Not an exhibitionist, huh?"

"Not even a little." He slanted me a slightly concerned glance. "You?"

What was he worried about? Did he think I was going to magically tie him down so people could watch us do the deed? Ew. I lifted my eyebrows, but shook my head. "Nope."

"Good." A relieved sigh made my brows arch higher.

He turned the key and flipped on the defroster to clear some of the fog from the windows. There was a lot of it. Our kiss had made it beyond steamy in here. The ride to his house was a complete blur as I tried to get a grip on the lust grinding through me.

We pulled into his garage, and he cut the ignition. I stepped out of his low-slung little bullet as the garage door slid shut. Hurrying around the hood, I met him at a door that fed into his kitchen. It was beautiful. I didn't care.

Dropping my purse on the counter, I shot into the living room and looked for a hallway or stairs that might lead to a bedroom. We needed a bed *right now*. He caught my arm, swinging me around to face him. Then his tongue was in my mouth, his hands cupping my head. I jerked at his shirt, pushing it up his chest until he had to break the kiss to pull it over his head. He dropped it without a second glance and had his mouth back on mine with blinding speed. My fingers found his nipple, flicking the flat little disc with my nail. He groaned, filling his hands with my ass to rub his erection over my pussy. Liquid heat flowed through me, and I wanted him inside me. I ached with the need. Wrapping one leg around the back of his, I opened myself as wide as I could in this dress and moved against him. "Malcon, please. I need you."

He froze at my words, and then a great shudder ran through him. I stepped out of my heels while he shoved my panties down my legs. Pulling my dress off, he stripped me quickly. My hands got busy with unfastening his jeans and soon he was as naked as I was. His palms slid over my bare flesh, making me shiver with painful need. His cock branded the lower curve of my belly like a hot iron. The soft hair on his chest rasped against my nipples, stimulating my too-sensitive skin until I cried out.

"Damn, Pixie." He spun me around to face the back of a low leather club chair in front of a huge fireplace. "Put your hands on the arms."

I did. The top of the chair dug into my waist, and I had to stand on my tiptoes, but it wasn't too uncomfortable to bear. At this point, I wasn't even sure I'd notice if it were. My body was close to the boiling point, and the supple leather warmed beneath my palms. Malcon's thigh nudged mine open. His palms slid up the backs of my legs until he reached my ass cheeks. Prying them apart, his finger swirled around my anus and I shuddered, my hips already moving.

“Later.” His voice held dark promise. He wrapped his hands around my waist and pulled me into a heavy thrust that seated his cock all the way to the hilt.

I sucked in a shocked gasp and my inner muscles flexed and stretched around him. “Oh my *God*.”

He worked his dick inside me slowly at first, but quickly picked up speed and force until his thighs slapped against mine. The hot drag of his flesh in mine made me dig my nails into the chair’s leather. I could feel my own moisture running in beads down the insides of my legs. A soft laugh spilled out because it felt so damn *good*. This is exactly what I’d needed tonight. Him.

His hand smacked my ass hard, and I heard the sound echo in the wide room. It made my lungs seize and my pussy clench. He groaned. “You’re so damn tight, Pixie. You’re killing me.”

“What a way to go, right?” I flicked a glance over my shoulder at him and winked.

A chuckle rasped out of him. His palms cupped my ribs, pulling me upright. The angle wasn’t quite as good as he thrust into me, but the feel of him pressed to my back was a sensual delight. His finger began to work my clit in swift, rough motions, and I decided I liked this angle just fine. My hips moved to shove back into his thrusting cock and then forward again to keep contact with that maddening finger. His mouth dropped to suck and kiss the side of my throat and heat whipped through me to dampen my sex even further.

Wrapping his arms tight around me, he froze with his thick cock buried deep inside me. His fangs scraped against my neck, making me choke in desperation. His soft lips brushed my skin as he spoke. “Tell me to bite you.”

I arched, the heat inside me hot enough to scald. My nails raked down his arm, but there was no way I could overpower a werewolf without hurting him with my magic. That would stop what we were doing and I only wanted him to *move*. “Please.”

“Please, what? Tell me.” He licked my throat before he dug his fangs in a little deeper, and the pleasure-pain almost made me come. God, I needed to come.

Twisting in his arms, I damn near sobbed. “Bite me, Malcon. Make me scream.”

His fangs sank deep, his cock hammering into my pussy as I came so hard my legs collapsed underneath me. He caught me in his strong arms, still working that thick cock inside me. My sex spasmed around his dick, milking the long shaft in hot pulses that made me moan loudly. He sucked and licked my throat again and again, the sensation enough to make my eyes roll back in my head. Jesus, the man could fuck like no one I’d ever known before. It was the last thought I had before I passed out from the overwhelming ecstasy.

## Chapter Three

I woke up sprawled face down on Malcon's bed. Bright sunbeams filtered in through huge windows, and I winced and rolled over to bury my face against his chest to block out the light. "Jesus Christ. Buy some curtains."

He grunted and sifted his fingers through my hair, making the tips brush against my shoulders. "Good morning to you too."

"What time is it?" I was *not* lifting my head to face the light of day until I absolutely had to.

There was a pause and the muscles in his arm and chest flexed under my cheek as he shifted to look. "*Shit*. It's almost nine. I have a meeting in an hour."

"Shit!" I bolted upright and scrambled for the edge of his mile-wide mattress. "My brother's plane takes off soon. I have to pick him and his mates up from their place and drop them off. Where are my clothes? Shit, shit, *shit*!"

He got a nasty glare from me when he snickered. "Scattered in the living room, I believe. I'll drive you home."

"You have a meeting." I looked back at him as I reached his bedroom door.

His broad shoulder lifted in a shrug, and he flipped open a closet door. "One of the few perks of being the Alpha is they can't start without me. I don't abuse the privilege, but that doesn't mean it's not there."

I chuckled on my way out the door, hustled down the stairs and stuffed myself into my dress and shoes. By the time I remembered I'd left my purse on the kitchen counter, Malcon was on his way downstairs, his jacket and tie draped over one arm while he fastened the cuff of his shirt on the other wrist. He was even better looking in the light of day, while I was pretty sure I looked like road kill. I was too afraid to ask if my hair was standing on end. He might tell me the truth.

His ebony gaze slid over me, lighting with appreciation, which was nice but probably not saying much about his taste in one-night stands. I preceded him out into the garage where he held the door open for me again. I could have protested, but that would have taken time I didn't have. He was on his side, in the car and backing down the driveway in under a minute. That's when I got a good look at his house. His palatial house. And I'd been in music stars' homes, so I knew how monumental they could be. I was usually uncomfortable in them—a throw back from growing up middle class—but I hadn't been in Malcon's home. Then again, he'd been distracting me just the way I'd hoped he would.

Braking at the light at the bottom of the hill, he flicked a glance at me. "Where to?"



“Take a left.” In a miracle I wasn’t about to question, L.A. traffic was obscenely light this morning and Malcon had me at the curb in front of my beach bungalow in record time. I might even be able to squeeze in a shower before I had to go pick up Stephen.

Malcon shot me another inscrutable look. “Do you like Italian?”

It took me a moment to process that, so I blinked at him stupidly. “Are you asking me to have dinner with you tonight?”

“Among other things.” He grinned wolfishly. “But, yes, I want to have dinner with you.”

Heat wound through me at the naked desire in his gaze. Okay, I’d only planned on a one-night distraction, but I was going to have some free time with my only family out of the country. What could it hurt to have a full-fledged affair with a man who made my toes curl? I wouldn’t mind a regularly scheduled orgasm that didn’t require batteries. Reaching into my purse, I pulled out my cell phone and flipped it open. “What’s your number?”

He rattled off the number, and I punched it in. His pocket vibrated, and he fished out his cell. “Okay, your number popped up on the caller ID. I’ll give you a ring when I get off tonight.”

“Great, then we can both get off.” His rich laughter followed me out of the car and I had to hustle to get ready, but I had to admit I was a hell of a lot more chipper about the coming months without my brother than I had been the night before.

I had chosen well when I picked Malcon over the young Fae at Eclipse.

I should have chosen the young Fae over the Alpha. What the hell had I been thinking? This was like some kind of sick, twisted joke. I’d walked Stephen, Michael and Candy into the airport for our little kiss and cry time, said good-bye, and been on my way out when one of the flat screen TVs they had constantly playing the news flashed my picture. That wasn’t completely unheard of, especially if they were discussing Stephen’s world tour, but the words that scrolled underneath my photo made my mind whirl.

*Local werewolf Alpha finds his mate, music producer Pixie Parthon.*

More words went by and Malcon’s picture flashed beside mine, but I’d seen all I wanted. More than I wanted, in fact. I was *no one’s* mate. I didn’t even want to get married. A few people turned to look from me to the screen and back again, so I spun on my heel and walked out to the parking garage, growing angrier and angrier by the moment. Why would Malcon release a statement like that to the press? This was ridiculous. I slammed into my car as a thought made ice water flow through my veins. Malcon had bitten me last night. Not unusual when fucking a fanged race, but those bites didn’t leave a scar like a mate mark would. My hand shook as I flipped down the mirror on my sun visor and pushed my hair aside to see the side of my neck.

There was a scar. He’d marked me. Rage exploded inside me and I closed my eyes, letting my hair fall into place. There was no way in fucking hell that I was going to give up my hard-earned independence

to be the queen of the wolves. And it was really sweet of him to mention he thought *we were mated* when he asked me to dinner. *Thanks so much, jackass.* I revved the engine on my car, left the parking lot in the dust and was a block away from Malcon's office before I realized where I was going.

I still hadn't managed to quell my anger. Oh, well. He was going to get it now.

Fifteen minutes later, my three-inch heels pounded a staccato beat on the marble floor of the huge building that housed the international organization owned by the wolf pack. It was a good thing I was wearing my usual backless blouse today because I was so pissed I couldn't have kept my wings in if I tried. The air crackled around me as I moved, and everyone in the vicinity either turned to stare at me or jumped out of my way. I somehow doubted I'd have that kind of effect on the Alpha, which just pissed me off even more. The wolf would be lucky if he didn't come out of this neutered.

A bony woman leapt to her feet when I entered the reception area of the pack leader headquarters. Her welcoming smile deflated when she got a good look at my face. "Ms. Parthon. What a surprise. Can I—"

I heard the low, sexy timbre of Malcon's voice coming through an open doorway and I walked toward it. The receptionist gasped and babbled some protest, but I ignored her. I was not giving Malcon a chance to refuse to see me. He was dealing with me right now. Period.

Storming into the room, I didn't even pause when I saw a huge meeting was taking place. Men ringed a long conference table with Malcon at its head. He had a look of calm control that reminded me how out of control I felt, which did nothing to improve my mood.

"Pixie." He was on his feet the moment he spotted me and every other person in the room leapt to follow suit. His gaze cut to the woman trailing in behind me. "It's all right, Martha." His gaze returned to me. "What can I do for you?"

I tilted my head to the side, widened my eyes and propped my hand on a cocked hip. "Gee, I don't know, but did you hear the local werewolf Alpha was mated last night? I saw it on the news. I wanted to come and congratulate you."

And that's when it hit him just how pissed I was. I watched the realization flash in his eyes, but not a flicker of emotion crossed his otherwise contained expression. He looked at me while he addressed everyone else. "Gentlemen, give us the room. Now."

I'd never seen werewolves scatter and scurry so fast in my life. It would have been more satisfying if it hadn't been Malcon who made it happen.

He sat back in his chair, steepling his fingers and pressing them to his lips as he regarded me for a long moment. I thought a small smile quirked his lips, but it was gone so fast I couldn't be sure. "You certainly know how to make an entrance."

"What can I say?" My smile was saccharine enough to send him into sugar shock, and I gave a delicate shrug. "I'm in show business."

He sighed and dropped his palms to the table in front of him. "I'm uncertain why you're upset about our mating. Want to give me a hint?"

"I had to find out about it on the *news*, Malcon!" I threw up my hands and started pacing back and forth in front of the table. My wings swished every time I turned. "You have to be kidding me."

"Why are you surprised? I asked you before I bit you." Standing, he approached my end of the table cautiously, as if I were some kind of rabid animal.

I snorted and folded my arms, which drew his dark gaze to my breasts. "I've been bitten by werewolves and vampires during sex before."

His eyes closed as awful realization crossed his handsome face. He swallowed hard. "You don't need to be having sex for a mate bite to work. It's not like a regular bite anyway. It's a magical marking."

"I got that when I saw the scar on my neck. That was definitely not something I've had before." Like a magical STD I would never be able to get rid of. I nearly snarled at the thought. He had no right to rope me into something like this. Being wolf queen had a million strings attached, and I'd only been looking for a one-nighter. How had *this* happened? "This can't be real. I'm going to wake up any moment, I know it."

He sighed and opened his eyes. "I thought you were willing, but...we *are* mated."

"According to you and your kind, maybe. Not to me and mine." I fluttered my wings for emphasis.

His gaze sharpened. "How do the Fae mate?"

"That's none of your damn business, but it sure as hell doesn't involve shoving your *fangs* into someone's *throat*." And my sex throbbed at the mere thought. I hated the consequences on a major level, but I'd had an amazing time. Damn it.

"You sure as hell weren't complaining about it at the time." His eyes narrowed as he propped his hip against the table ledge and folded his arms.

I arched an eyebrow at him. "At the time, I was more worried about the other part of your anatomy you were shoving into me."

He snapped back, "I can put that part back in if it'll make you happy."

Yeah, I was *not* letting my mind go there at all. That's what had gotten me into this in the first place. "No, what would make me happy is to undo this mess."

"We're mates, Pixie." Regret softened his gaze. He shoved his hand through his hair, sifting the light smattering of silver with the darker strands. "We're meant to be together. I sensed it."

Sucking in a deep breath, I tried to be reasonable about this. "Look, I get the whole mating instinct thing with wolves. In the abstract, yeah, but I get it. That doesn't mean I have to go along with it like some helpless little sheep."

"Does that make me a wolf in sheep's clothing?" He snorted.

I pointed to his jacket and smirked. "Well, it does look like you're wearing a wool suit."

"Ha. Ha." He rolled his dark eyes, and I had to fight not to laugh. This was not a laughing matter.

I paced another little circle in front of him. “Hey, you brought it up, not me.”

“Pixie—”

Stopping, I rubbed my fingers over my suddenly throbbing temples. This just couldn’t be happening. It was surreal. I shook my head at him. “Look, just stop it okay? This isn’t what I want, and Alpha or not, you can’t force me to want it.”

The look in his eyes gutted me. I wanted to take it all back, to soothe that heart-wrenching pain from his dark gaze. Instead, I forced myself to turn away. One night of sex—even *great* sex—did not obligate me to be his little woman. If I’d thought the other men in my life wanted to tie me down and control me, I could only imagine what an alpha male *Alpha wolf* would do.

Thanks, but no thanks.

## Chapter Four

I worked late that night, as if to prove to myself that I was not bothered at all by this Malcon issue. It was business as usual for me. A knock sounded on the front office door and I glanced at the clock, quarter to eight. My assistant had gone home hours ago. Who could possibly be at the door?

I really should have suspected Malcon, but I was stunned to see him when I exited my office and spotted him standing outside the big glass window that looked out onto the elevator bank and hallway. For a split second, I considered leaving him out there and ignoring him, but the Alpha was...alpha, stubborn and persistent enough to harass the building's maintenance staff to let him in. Or, hell, he was a werewolf. He could just break the door down if he wanted and not even break a sweat.

Damn fanged people. Damn alpha males. Damn it.

Flashing him a dirty look, I walked up to the door and flipped the big lock. His grin was nothing less than wolfishly predatory. Moving with that startling speed of his, he pulled the door open before I could change my mind and lock it. Smart man.

As soon as the door swung open, I smelled Chinese food. My stomach rumbled, reminding me I hadn't eaten since the bagel I'd inhaled on my way to pick up Stephen and his mates.

"You have food." My tone was almost an accusation, but it was annoying that the man was a walking temptation on every possible level.

"I thought I should come bearing gifts." Malcon shifted the jacket he had draped over his arm to reveal a black cloth grocery bag for me to peek into. His discarded tie was stuffed in there with the containers of delicious-smelling food.

I looked back up at him, crossing my arms. "How did you know I was still here?"

"Oh, come on. You don't really expect me to reveal my sources, do you?" The smile he gave was enigmatic.

I snorted and didn't bother to favor him with a verbal response. He stepped through the door, and I had to either end up plastered against him or get out of his way. Deciding discretion was the better part of valor, I moved aside and locked the door behind us. He followed the light from the reception area into my office and I trailed behind him, not really sure what to do at this point. I'd never had a one-night stand get out of hand before. That's why they were *one-night stands*. Not that I'd had that many, but enough to know this was *not* normal.

While I hovered near the door, he sat on my couch and set the little white cartons on the glass coffee table. Then he dug out a couple of sets of disposable chopsticks and offered one to me. “Have some lo mein, it’ll settle you.”

“I’m settled enough,” I grumbled, but my stomach was about to eat itself now that it realized there was food in the vicinity. I plucked the chopsticks from his hand without touching him, snagged a container of fried rice and sat cross-legged on the floor next to the low table, glad I’d worn slacks today. He slid off the couch and sat on the floor across from me. Our knees brushed, and I ignored the sizzle of awareness that went through me.

He speared a potsticker with one chopstick. “How was your day?”

“Fine, except everyone wanted to ask about my mating.” The smile I gave him was acidic.

Sighing, he winced. His voice was soft. “I’m sorry, Pixie. I thought you felt this connection too. Maybe not to the level that I did—*do*—but I hope you’ll believe I thought you were willing.”

“I believe you.” The expression on his face was beyond sincere. “That doesn’t mean I’m willing now or that I ever will be. I’m not even willing to consider it.”

“Why not?”

Because he sounded genuinely curious rather than pissed off or offended, I answered him. “I don’t do fetters. I don’t like to tie myself down. I did it for Stephen when our dad died, but that wasn’t a choice. Not really. He’s family. But *choosing* to tie myself to one man or one place for the rest of my life? I can’t imagine how that would make me happy.”

“There could be a guy out there who will give you the freedom to be yourself.” He offered me a carton of noodles and exchanged it for the fried rice. His gaze met mine for the briefest moment. “He might even like you just the way you are.”

We both knew he wasn’t talking about *some guy* in the abstract, but Malcon in particular. I swallowed, smiled and winked playfully. “Nah. Such a paragon of virtue and tolerance doesn’t exist.”

He laughed and let it go. A sigh of relief whispered out of my throat. The undercurrents running through this conversation were enough to drag me under, but I had to resist the pull. Sighing, I set aside the food, my stomach turning. Tension made knots of the muscles in my neck and when I rubbed them, I hit the mate mark and jerked at the touch on such sensitive flesh. My body reacted and it made my stomach twist tighter. I wasn’t afraid of Malcon, but I didn’t like the pressure to be something I wasn’t, to accept something I hadn’t chosen for myself. My business didn’t run itself, and I couldn’t afford to lose focus. *This* was the life I’d chosen for myself, not being some Alpha’s mate.

I looked over at him and saw that he’d stopped eating as well. I offered a weak smile and pushed to my feet. “Don’t stop on my account.”

“I’m finished if you are.” He rose with me, and I felt his gaze on me as I walked over to pack my briefcase and purse. “Let me walk you out.”

“That isn’t necessary, but thanks for dinner.” I glanced up to see that he’d approached while I wasn’t looking and was within arm’s reach. That made me nervous. “It’s not like this is a date or anything.”

Stepping well into my personal space, he lowered his head until his mouth was a hairsbreadth from mine. “Yes, it is.”

“And you’re not getting laid tonight.” I narrowed my gaze at him, but there wasn’t an ounce of conviction behind my words.

His breath brushed over my lips. “That’s a shame.”

“Malcon...”

“Pixie...” His voice was a low rumble that made my insides melt.

I tried to put a little more power behind it this time. “I’m not kidding.”

“You can’t blame me for trying to change your mind, can you?” He gave me a brilliant, beautiful smile and winked. “You would do the same.”

I cracked up because he was right, and he caught the sound of my laughter in his mouth. Pleasure crashed over me so fast I gasped, and he plunged his tongue between my lips. I quivered with indecision for all of a millisecond before I twined my fingers through his hair and met his tongue with mine. A hot rush of sensation swamped me tonight as it had last night. I hadn’t just imagined how good it had been, but this time it felt so much more meaningful.

Nothing and *everything* had changed since last night, and it freaked me out so badly I pulled back. My body screamed a protest at the loss of contact, and I squeezed my eyes closed. Malcon’s hands cupped my hips, and I could feel every impressive inch of his cock through our clothing. I wanted him inside me again, but my mind warned that it would just complicate everything. Lust sluiced through me in a hot wave when he moved one hand around to my ass and the other up to palm my breast. I whimpered and broke under the force of a need that was far stronger than my willpower to resist. Really, how much more complicated could it get?

He scraped a claw over my nipple and the additional slide of my silk blouse over my breast made me sway toward him. Moisture dampened my sex, and it clenched on an emptiness that I knew he could fill. My breath sped to little pants, and I stared up at him. “I want you.”

“I know. I can smell how wet you are. The scent of you is beyond intoxicating, Pixie.” He groaned and slid his palm around to the open V of my shirt. His mouth met mine in slow, drugging kisses that only whetted my craving for him. His fingers slid over my back where my wings would be if I let them out. I had to concentrate not to have them break free. Fire licked at my flesh everywhere he touched me and goose bumps shivered in the wake of the flames.

My hands slid over him, too, moving without direction from my mind. Up the ridges of his ribs, around his shoulders, down the muscles of his back until I cupped his firm ass. He jerked against me, shuddering at my touch. I felt his cock expand where it pressed into my belly. God, I needed him inside me,

needed the hot glide of his hard flesh within my wet flesh. He eased my blouse over my head and had his hands on my bare breasts before it hit the floor. I tugged his shirt out of his slacks. I wanted him naked *now*.

“*Off*,” I demanded, and the universe answered. A hum of magic and Malcon’s clothing lay in a wrinkled pile at our feet.

He blinked. “Holy shit.”

I didn’t bother responding, and instead busied my hands with touching as much of him as I could reach. I almost sobbed on a frustrated breath when he set his hands on my shoulders and held me away from him. “Now, Malcon. No teasing.”

“What do you think I’m trying to do? I can’t do that naked magic thing.” Hell, I wasn’t even sure *I* could do it again, but the naked magic he *could* do worked well for me. He spun me around and bent me over my desk the same way he had with his chair last night and relief wound through me. He didn’t bother trying to undo the complicated clasp on my belt, just used his werewolf strength to pop the thick leather in half. Then he reached around my waist and unfastened my pants. He shoved my slacks down and I stepped out of them and my heels.

“Damn.” He spun me around to look at me. His dark gaze burned my body as he took in my thigh highs and total lack of any other underwear.

I caught my lower lip between my teeth and shifted from foot to foot. Shyness wasn’t natural to me, but I had to admit I was a bit unnerved by the intensity of his stare. It was a little worshipful and a lot possessive.

He lifted me off my feet and set me on my desk, the cool glass against my overheated skin making me arch in reflex. “Lean back.”

I fell back on my elbows as he pulled my ass to the very edge of the desk. Grinning at me, he draped my ankles against his shoulders, and ran his tongue around the very edge of the lace on my stockings.

The lace rasped on my sensitized skin and his breath cooled the moisture his tongue left behind. I shivered and moaned, “Malcon.”

“I can’t wait, baby. I’m sorry.” He sank into me in one slow push, his fangs bared as he growled low in his throat. His dark eyes had burned to ice blue, the wildness within him peering out at me.

His gaze locked with mine, and I couldn’t look away. I felt more naked than I ever had in my life, my heart hammering. Some connection had snapped between us that hadn’t been there before. I refused to let my mind define it, but it made the sex deeper, more intense than it had been. He started moving inside me, his movements hard and fast and deep. The angle was perfect, the way he held my legs made him hit just the right spot inside me to have me quivering on the orgasm within moments. Still, I couldn’t look away from his eyes, and I could see the pleasure there, the way he savored my reaction, the way he didn’t hide anything from me. Gone was the cool man in the boardroom this afternoon. *This* was the real Malcon, half-



untamed and all wolf. It was a fucking turn on that he didn't play games with me. I loved it, wanted more of it, moving with him as he moved within me.

"I'm going to come," I gasped.

"Thank *God*." He slid one hand down my leg and stroked my clit in time with his deepening thrusts.

Sweat beaded on my skin, making me shiver. Contractions thrummed in my sex, building until I couldn't hold back any longer. My torso arched off the desk, and I cried out his name. My sex clenched around his cock so hard it was almost painful, the ecstatic rush obliterating everything except *him*.

"Pixie," he breathed, closing his eyes as he came in hard jets of fluid. He swallowed, leaned forward to brace his hands against the desk and let my legs fall to the sides. His gaze met mine, the irises ebony again. "How can you just walk away from this, Pixie? It's too good."

I sat up and cupped his jaw in my hands. He leaned into my touch, his gaze softening in a way that made my insides tremble even though I knew they shouldn't. I sighed and shook my head. "What am I going to do with you?"

"I'll tell you what." His hand slipped up my back to tangle in my hair. "Let me see you for say, a month, and give me the chance to change your mind about the mate thing. If not—no harm, no foul. It'll give me the opportunity to figure out what I'm going to tell my pack in the meantime."

"What do I get out of it?" I tilted my head, shivering as the movement made his fingers slide through my hair.

He pursed his lips as though thinking hard, then he smiled and arched an eyebrow. "Orgasms on call."

A giggle bubbled out before I could stop it. The thought of having an Alpha at my beck and call was laughable, but the thought of Malcon at my beck and call made the laughter fade as a throb of renewed heat went through me. It wasn't a bad deal. I knew he wouldn't convince me to be his queen, but I liked him enough to want to help him out with buying time to come up with a suitable explanation for his pack. It was startling to realize I did like him, even after so short an acquaintance.

I bit my lower lip and narrowed my gaze at him. "There's no crying foul in this offer, right? You won't consider me going out with you or sleeping with you as leading you on when I say no in the end?"

"If you say no, then no." He dropped a quick kiss on my mouth, sucking my lower lip between his teeth. "I'm going into this with my eyes open and so are you."

"Then you have yourself a deal." I leaned back, held my hand out for him to shake and watched that little smile of his play over his lips as he folded his fingers around mine.

Then he reeled me in until I was pressed flush against him, and we both groaned. His cock thickened and he thrust it to the hilt within me again, his mouth descending on mine.

I stopped worrying about the future to enjoy the moment with the sexiest man alive.

Three weeks later, Malcon was still on the campaign and gaining ground, I had to admit. I was nowhere near giving in, but every moment I spent with him made me like him more, want him more, *crave* him more. My heart jumped when I saw him each evening, and it saddened me to leave him every morning. I counted the hours to when I got to see him again like some teenager with her first crush.

It scared the shit out of me.

I should call the deal off, tell him no, and move on with my life. I knew it. I'd even tried to make myself say it more than once. So far, I was pathetically unsuccessful. I didn't *want* to stop seeing him, and that complicated the shit out of everything. That was exactly what he wanted. The problem was, things were going smoothly. Nothing had been tested and crumbled under pressure, so it was all shiny and pretty and new. I wasn't running from coast to coast like I had so often. Wolf pack politics and business were good. *We* were good. When the brown stuff hit the fan and splattered the way it inevitably did, he would try to fence me in the way every other male had. So, while I was letting myself enjoy the moment, it was with the slight dread in the pit of my stomach of waiting for the other shoe to drop.

Sucking in a deep breath, I refocused on the quarterly reports in front of me. I had a boatload of meetings tomorrow, so I had to get a bigger boatload of paperwork done tonight. I should be relieved by a break from Malcon, but I wasn't.

An hour later, my cell phone vibrated across the surface of my desk and made me jolt. My heart raced, and I pressed my palm to my chest. I pushed the button on my cell phone that transferred the call to the Bluetooth in my ear. "Hello?"

"Hey, Pixie."

A smile automatically curved my lips at the sound of his voice. "Hey, you. What's up?"

"Not much." I could *hear* an answering smile form on his handsome face. "How late are you working tonight?"

"Late." I looked at the stacks of paperwork that covered every available surface in my office. I sighed. "Very late."

He hummed sympathetically. "That's too bad."

"What are you doing?" I leaned back in my chair and kicked my heels up onto the desk, crossing my ankles.

He chuckled. "Working very late. We're taking a break for another forty-five minutes, but then I have to put in a conference call to Tokyo."

"Ouch. That's what, a seventeen-hour difference?"

"About that, yeah." There was a short pause. "So, I was thinking we should have dinner together."

"If we're both working madly on opposite sides of the city, how do you—" A knock sounded on the outer office door. "Hold on a sec."

My eyebrows arched. Was it him again? My sex clenched at the mere thought of what we'd done together the last time we were in my office. I hopped up to open the door. A courier stood there with a plastic bag from my favorite Italian place in one hand and a vase with a dozen purple roses in the other. I blinked for a moment, then flipped the lock and opened the door. "Hi."

"Pixie Parthon?" The kid offered a bashful smile.

I nodded. "That's me."

"Sign here, please."

I scrawled my name on the digital pad he held out to me, and then collected my booty. Locking the door behind the courier, I couldn't stop the stupid smile that spread as I smelled the roses.

Malcon's voice sounded softly in my ear. "Did you get it?"

"Yes." A little laugh spilled out, and I carried the heavy crystal vase and food to my office. Clearing off one of the piles of paper from my credenza, I set the roses in the middle where I could see them from my desk. I couldn't resist taking another lungful of their spicy sweet scent. "Malcon, the flowers are beautiful. Thank you."

His voice deepened the way it did when he was pleased. "So, like I said, I think we should have dinner together."

"You had Moretti's delivered to you too?" The stupid grin widened with delight. This was without a doubt the most creative non-date I'd ever had. Okay, so it was the *only* one, but still. It was nice of him to think of this.

I heard him shift the receiver against his ear. "They make the best veal parmigiana."

Plopping myself into my chair, I opened the bag and all the various containers inside. There was even a little bottle of Pellegrino. My stomach gave a rumble as I ripped open the packet of plastic silverware. "Mmm, I love their three-cheese ziti. How did you know?"

"The manager told me your favorites."

"Ha! Rosa is the best." I forked a bite of it into my mouth and moaned. "Oh man. This is so good."

His low growl filtered through the phone, and I moaned a little louder on the next bite to torment him. He laughed. "Minx. I'm glad you like it."

"I do." I sipped the fizzing water. "I was going to skip dinner, so this is fabulous. Thank you."

"You're welcome." I heard him chew a bite slowly and swallow. "So...how was your day?"

"Good. Busy." Settling back in my chair, I spent the rest of his break chatting with him about how our work had gone.

It was...nice. I really, really liked it. Almost as much as I liked *him*. I groaned when I hung up the phone, dropping my forehead to my desk. God, I was in so much trouble with this man.

## Chapter Five

After a quick dip in the ocean the next evening, I had to jog dripping wet through my bungalow to open my front door for Malcon. Huh. It was unusual for him not to call before he showed up. Shadows smudged under his eyes as if he hadn't slept well. I hadn't slept well without him last night either.

I sighed and shook my head. So. Much. Trouble.

Stepping back so he could come in, I locked the door behind him. Taking a deep breath, I said the words that were going to test this thing we had going on. "I have to tell you something that's not going to make you happy."

"Save it for later then." He pulled me into his embrace, mindless of my wet bathing suit but careful not to crush my wings, to bury his face in the crook of my neck. I sighed and relaxed against him, closing my eyes. It was nice having his arms around me, comforting and secure. I wasn't eager to have the coming confrontation, so I ran my hand down his back, turning my head to kiss his ear. His chest rumbled in a chuckle. "Thank you."

I smiled against his temple. "You can thank me for a lot more in about fifteen minutes."

"Honey, I've been better than fifteen minutes since I *was* fifteen." We both chuckled, but shock made my breath catch when his mouth latched onto the bite mark he'd left on me that first night. Heat flashed from the mark straight to my sex, and I was wet and aching in moments. He plucked open the strings around my neck and ribs that held my bikini top on, baring me to the waist. He cupped my breasts, chafing my nipples roughly.

I jerked at the buttons on his shirt, unfastening the first few. "Take this thing *off*."

"What, no naked magic today?" But he leaned back, grabbed the bottom of the offending garment, and ripped it over his head to toss aside. Then I had my hands all over that broad chest of his. I hummed with pleasure...the man was a tactile smorgasbord, all crisp hair, silky flesh, hard muscles, and soft, flat nipples that tightened under my fingertips. I flicked my tongue over one, just to show him I noticed his reaction. But I wasn't in the mood for teasing. It had been far too long since he'd thrust his sex into mine, and I wanted him desperately. My fingers fumbled with his pants, jerking open the belt and zipper until I could pull his cock out. My wings whipped through the air, lifting me off the ground so I could wrap my legs around his waist.

“Tuck these in,” he whispered, running a fingertip around the curl in one of my wings. I whimpered at the throb that went through my body at even that light touch. My legs tightened around him, and I ground myself against his hard length. A rough sound burst from his throat. “*Pixie.*”

I actually had to concentrate on the simple act of pulling my wings in, but the moment I did, he backed me up against the nearest wall. His claws shredded my bikini bottom and he ripped it away from my body, tossing it over his shoulder. Tilting my pelvis, I made it as easy as possible for him to slide that hard cock inside me.

He plunged into my pussy, stroking hard and fast until I was screaming out an orgasm. I’d never come so fast in my life, and my sex clenched around him so many times I thought I’d die. “Malcon!”

He groaned and went rigid against me. “*Jesus, Pixie.*”

“You didn’t come?” I whispered, then rolled my eyes at the stupid question. Of course he hadn’t. He was harder than blue diamonds inside me.

“Not yet. I didn’t want it over too soon.” He jerked out of me, panting hard, his arms so tight around me I couldn’t breathe.

I raked my nails down his biceps. “To hell with the fifteen-minute rule.”

“That wasn’t what I was talking about.” He laughed, the head of his cock rubbing against my slick flesh. I moved with him, trying to take him inside me. He lifted me higher against the wall, shoved his hips forward, and pressed against the recess of my anus. *This* we hadn’t done yet. My lungs seized and I had to fight to keep my wings from bursting out the way they sometimes did when I was this sexually stimulated. I didn’t want to do anything that might make him stop, and dark pleasure insinuated itself into every muscle of my body. He pushed into my ass slowly, but his width and length made the stretch sting so bad I had to bite my lip. My nails dug into his broad shoulders. To push him away or pull him closer, I didn’t know.

“Is this okay?” he murmured.

Yes. No. I didn’t know. I clenched my teeth. Jesus, it hurt. He was huge, but it felt amazing too. “Oh my God.”

He hadn’t moved a muscle, letting my body adjust to his thick cock. “Should I stop?”

“No.” My head rolled against the wall as I shook my head. “Don’t stop.”

He didn’t pull out, just nudged himself inside me. Tiny strokes made me shudder at the sensations that went rocketing through me. One of his hands braced under my thigh, hitching me even higher on the wall, changing the angle of his penetration. I moaned, a tear sliding down my cheek at the pleasurable pain. His other palm closed over my breast, brushing my nipple gently. It tightened under his touch, adding one more sensation to those swamping my system. Sweat beaded on our bodies, sealing us together. I wriggled against him, clenching my inner muscles around him. A snarling growl ripped from him and he thrust faster within me. “*Pixie, you feel so damn good. You always do. I love every second with you.*”

“*Malcon.*” Wrapping my legs tighter around his waist, I tensed my thighs to move with him. We both groaned at the additional friction. Soon he was plunging deep and hard into my ass, and agony and ecstasy blended into one unstoppable force within me. I could do nothing but close my eyes and *experience* it all. Malcon’s voice, Malcon’s hands, Malcon’s hot scent and Malcon’s cock stroking into my ass. God, it was so good.

My nails burrowed deeper into his shoulders, and I could feel how close I was to coming. Just a little more, just a few more thrusts, and it would all be over. My head fell against the wall, and my body bowed hard as an orgasm crashed through me. I screamed when his mouth closed over the mate mark on my neck, contractions holding me tight in their grip and each movement of his mouth sent another wave rolling through me. “Malcon, Malcon, *Malcon!*”

He hammered into me, all fetters letting loose as he sought his own orgasm. The look on his face was nothing short of savage, fangs exposed, eyes crystal blue. He threw back his head and howled when he came deep inside me. He collapsed against me on the wall and I held him close, rubbing a hand up and down his sweat-dampened back. I kissed the side of his neck and sighed.

Flicking my gaze to the clock on my living room wall, I smirked. “That was *not* more than fifteen minutes.”

He barked a laugh, wrapped me into a tight hug as he lifted us both away from the wall, but didn’t let me down. He nuzzled my neck and his bite mark, making that hot-sweet melting start in my muscles. “It’s not my fault you came so fast. *Twice.*”

“We need a shower and then a bed.” I arched and moaned as he sucked the mate mark, my sex fisting. “Hurry.”

He didn’t. He made love to me slowly, kissing, licking, and nipping every inch of my body until I begged for more. The man was relentless. All night long. And reminded me every time fifteen minutes went by. When he set out to make a point, he really dedicated himself to the task. I don’t think I’d ever come that many times in a single evening in my life.

It was to *die* for.

But the next morning, I knew I couldn’t put off the confrontation any longer. I had to get on a plane in a few hours. Sitting up in bed while he lay beside me, I propped myself against my headboard, tucked the sheet under my armpits, and folded my arms. “I have to go out of town.”

“Where to?” He didn’t so much as bat an eye, leaning on an elbow to kiss one of my crossed arms.

His lack of reaction confused me, but maybe he just hadn’t processed this yet. I braced myself, dread sinking like a lead ball in my belly. “To the New York office.”

“Okay.” He nodded, his dark eyes calm and steady when they met mine. “Give me a day, and I’ll have my assistant clear my schedule for as long as you need.”

Now I *knew* he didn't get it. Sighing, I tossed aside the sheet, climbed out of bed and jerked on a robe before I turned to face him again. "Don't be ridiculous. You're the L.A. pack leader, so you need to be in L.A. While I'm in New York, I'm going to be working flat out. I wouldn't be able to see you for more than a few minutes a day."

He sat up, the sheet pooling around his waist. "Pixie—"

"I mean it, Malcon." I wrapped my arms around myself protectively, knowing that we'd finally gotten to the part I always hated. This was why I didn't do complicated or committed when it came to men. It never ended well for anyone. "This isn't a vacation for me, and I'm not going to take you with me just to abandon you in a hotel room for days on end. You'd be pissed at me for ignoring you, and I'd be pissed because I told you so."

Emotions flickered across his face so fast I couldn't identify them. "You don't want me with you."

"It's not like it's forever. I'll be back." Some desperate, stupid little part of me prayed he'd understand, that he'd be *different*. "My work never ties me to one place."

"I didn't say a word about tying you to anything. I offered to come with you. And since when have I *ever* acted put out by your work? I have work of my own I could take with me. The pack can live without me for as long as I need it to, and, frankly, I'm an adult and I don't need you to entertain me. This is about trust, Pixie. No matter what I say or do, you don't trust me not to cage you. You don't trust me. You don't want me with you, and we're done here." His mouth opened as if he was going to say more, but he didn't. Instead, he left me gaping behind him, unable to take it all in as he shoved himself out of bed, strode into my living room, picked up his scattered clothes and disappeared.

Just as I'd thought, it was over. I don't know which shattered me more—that I'd never see him again or that it was my fault. Clamping a hand over my mouth, I refused to let myself cry and I forced myself to pack, get on a plane and leave him behind.

## Chapter Six

I ached. Every moment of every day for the next month. I had to cast spells over myself to make myself sleep. Still, I never felt rested and exhaustion pulled at my very bones. My soul bled every time I thought of Malcon, and no matter how often I'd told myself it was best that I not have someone tying me down, I couldn't make the pain subside. Whether I liked it or not, I was attached to him. Hell, if I was really honest, I'd admit I was more than attached. A few more days and my work would be done here, then I'd be back in L.A. But I knew without a doubt he would never settle for the easy arrangement we'd had before. I'd ruined that. He would want all or nothing. He would want my trust. Everything.

Could I do that? *Trust* that he would be what I needed him to be? I didn't know, but I also knew I didn't want to be without him. But what did *he* want? I wasn't the easiest person in the world to deal with, and most of the time I was okay with that. But was Malcon okay with that? Did he regret our time together? Did he wish he'd resisted marking me that first night?

Lying in bed, I stared at the ceiling of my hotel room. I was trying to catch a nap before I had to go to a party tonight and pretend to have a good time. Again.

My cell phone blared a loud version of one of my brother's songs. I rolled over and snagged it before it vibrated itself off my nightstand and onto the floor. The number on the display wasn't one I recognized, but had a California area code. My heart leapt. *Malcon*. Stabbing the connect button, I pressed the phone to my ear. "Hello?"

"Hi...Pixie?" A masculine voice that wasn't Malcon's answered. "It's Jerrod."

I frowned and checked the display again. "Hey, this isn't the Eclipse number."

"No, I'm not at the bar. I'm on my cell."

"Oh, okay." I kicked the blankets aside and crawled out of bed. "What can I do for you?"

A long pause fuzzed through the line and I could almost hear him wrestling with how he wanted to say whatever he had to say. "To be honest? You can get your ass back to L.A."

That startled a laugh out of me. "What?"

He sighed. "Look, I know you're Fae and not a wolf, but this thing with Malcon—"

"Jerrod, I adore you, but this isn't something you should stick your wolfy snout into."

He made a rude noise. "That's what Malcon said before I left his house."

I checked my watch. It was three in the afternoon on the West Coast. And it was only Wednesday. "Why isn't he at work? Is he sick?" My voice caught a bit as I asked it, and worry coursed through me.



"Not exactly. That's what I'm trying to tell you." I heard him take a breath before he launched into an explanation. "When wolves are mated, they can't go without their mate long term. A couple of days, maybe a week max. But you've been gone more than a month. I mean, if you die, it's different, the connection is cut, but you're alive. He's still bonded to you."

I thought about it. We *hadn't* gone more than a day or two without being together the entire time I was in L.A. "I'm assuming when you say 'can't go without' you're not talking about sex."

"No, I'm not. I'm saying Malcon is suffering on a level you obviously don't understand because I know you're not cruel enough to do this to anyone deliberately."

Closing my eyes, I felt a harsh pang ricochet through me. What a horrible gamble Malcon had taken when he only gave himself a month to change my mind about mating with him. It sounded as if he was paying an even more horrible price for losing. I forced the hardest question I'd ever asked out of my throat. "Is...is he dying?"

"I don't know." My belly cramped tight at Jerrod's answer. "I've never seen what happens if a wolf goes long enough without. Most of the time, I'd expect the wolf to track his mate down, but Malcon doesn't want to force you."

A breathy laugh escaped me, tears welling in my eyes. "Stubborn ass."

"I called him worse before I left a few minutes ago." I could all but feel the wolf's frustration vibrating through the phone. "He's not hearing it. I've never seen him like this. So, just come put him out of his misery, okay?"

Now it was my turn to sigh as I sank on the bed and dropped my face into my palms. My voice came out muffled. "It's more complicated than that."

"I don't doubt that." Jerrod didn't bend an inch, his tone steely. "But I *do* doubt Malcon's going to hold on to his sanity much longer unless you get on a plane to California and find a way to work something out between the two of you. He's not a bad guy, and he doesn't deserve what he's going through."

"This isn't my fault." Oh, yes it was. I hadn't made him mark me as his mate, but I had left him behind on principle. Guilt pounded through me. Guilt and pain and misery and loneliness that was crippling. What the hell was I *doing*? I didn't have to live like this. I could put *both* Malcon and me out of our misery if I wanted to. I could have him forever if I was willing to take a risk on him, *with* him. I imagined living every single moment with Malcon, and then I imagined living without him as I had for the last month, hording all my independence and sharing none of my life with anyone. No contest.

The truth hit me, and I realized that I loved him. And what *wouldn't* I risk for love? I closed my eyes and let the sweetness of that realization flow through me, soothing the ache in my soul.

Jerrod made an impatient noise. "It's not about blame or responsibility, Pixie. It's about species and biology. It's about a good wolf hurting a hell of a lot because his mate isn't here. Whether you want to be his mate or not, you *are*."

"Thanks for calling." And I hung up on him and whatever else he might have said. Jerrod wasn't who I needed to be talking to.

Malcon was.

He didn't answer my knock, but when I tried calling him, I could hear his cell phone ringing inside the house. He never went anywhere without that thing. He was as bad as I was about always having it with him. So, he was home and he just didn't want to see me.

My heart seized on the next thought. What if Malcon really was dying because I had abandoned him? What if I was too late? Pressing my palm over the lock on the door, I concentrated hard.

"Open," I whispered fiercely. The air shimmered around my hand, golden sparks of magic flashing. Fairy dust. It came from the world around me, flowing through me as I called upon it, manipulated it the way my kind did. I heard the lock click and smiled in triumph.

Pressing on the door latch, I stepped into his living room. "Malcon?"

He sat slumped in the chair where we'd made love that first night, staring into the crackling fire. Even though my heels clicked on the hardwood floor and I knew he should have been able to smell me from a mile off, he gave no indication he knew I was there. Concern pumped through me, making my heart trip hard against my ribs. I discarded my jacket on the coffee table and hurried over to kneel beside him. Still, he didn't move, but I could see his face. Shadows cast dark circles under his eyes and lines bracketed his mouth.

"Malcon?" I set my hand on his arm, and he jerked, finally looking at me.

He blinked slowly several times as though just waking up from a deep sleep. "Is this a dream?"

A tremulous smile curled my lips. "No, I'm really here."

"That's...good." His gaze returned to the fire.

I blinked, and my concern kicked up to real panic. I understood now what Jerrod had said about Malcon losing touch with reality. I had to get through to him. Just coming here hadn't done it.

Well, there was one easy way I knew to make a connection with Malcon. It had never failed us before. I stood, hiked my skirt up and straddled his lap. He startled, his palms cupping my hips automatically.

My hands balled in his shirt. "Malcon, look at me."

His gaze snapped to mine, his fingers bit into my flesh and the return of sanity sharpened his ebony eyes. "Pixie."

"Hi, there." I tried to make my smile bright, but it crumbled almost as soon as it formed. I swallowed, so relieved that I hadn't driven him crazy that tears welled in my eyes. Clearing my throat, I looked down. There was so much I needed to say, to explain, and as many times as I had practiced the words in my head on the plane ride from New York, my tongue just wouldn't work now that the moment was upon me.

He gathered me as close to him as humanly possible and buried his face in my throat. His big body shook, and I could feel his tremors running through me as well. “*Pixie*.”

“I’m here. Shh. I’m here.” I slid my fingers into his soft hair and rocked him, telling him over and over again that I was here. It was good to be back in his arms. Tears slipped down my cheeks, and I was shaking as badly as he was.

He groaned like an animal in pain, but eased his grip on me to look at me. “For how long?”

“As long as you need me.” I wiped my damp cheek on my shoulder. “I’m sorry I left you, sorry I hurt you. I’m here for as long as you’ll have me.”

A shudder rippled through him and his tone darkened, his eyes flashing to blue and then back to black. “You don’t want to make that kind of offer.”

I met his gaze, cupping his strong jaw in my hands. “Yes, I do.”

“Even though my answer is going to be ‘I need you forever, *Pixie*’?”

“Yeah.” I nodded to emphasize the word and grinned.

He sucked in a breath, closing his eyes. “*Pixie*, you’re killing me.”

“Literally.” My palms tightened on his jaw, and the grin died as guilt ripped through me again at the deep grooves bracketing his mouth, the hurt stamped on his face.

Opening his eyes, he searched my face. “I didn’t want...to be like all the other men. I didn’t want you to feel guilty about leaving, didn’t want to cage you or change you. I want you just as you are. I wanted you to be willing. I thought you were that first night, I really did. And I’m so sorry.”

“I know.” Stroking my fingers down his cheek, I leaned forward to rest my forehead on his and gave him the whole truth, gave him all of me, gave him what he deserved. “I love you. And loving you changed me, changed what I needed. You didn’t cage me, I did that myself by not recognizing what I felt for you. I locked myself into the same pattern I’ve followed with all the other guys. That wasn’t your fault, Malcon. You didn’t do anything wrong.”

“I marked you when you didn’t understand what I was doing. I should have made sure.” Regret darkened his midnight gaze, deepening the lines beside his mouth. “But I fell for you fast. Even without the mating instinct, I’d love you for the rest of my life.”

A laugh came sputtering out and it tangled with a sob. I was so relieved I hadn’t ruined this beautiful, precious connection between us that I had to blink back more tears. “Why? I’m pushy and rude and a pain in the ass.”

“You really can’t guess?” A smile lit his face.

“No.” I shook my head and shrugged. No other person I’d met besides my brother had ever managed to live with me for more than a few months at a time. “I like myself just fine, but why would you *want* to put up with it?”

“For so many reasons.” He pulled me tighter against him, and the passion that always sparked between us flared to life as the heat of his hard cock burned through our clothes. That little smile of his I loved played over his lips. “I’ll give you a list if you do the naked magic thing.”

“Does the list start with the naked magic thing?” The corners of my mouth twitched, but I pinched my eyes closed, set my hands on his chest, one palm over his heart and drew the magic into myself, forming a picture in my mind of what I wanted. Warmth flowed through my limbs, and suddenly I could feel his skin under my fingertips. When I looked at him again, we were both nude.

He laughed. Really, truly laughed, and the last of the shadows fled his face. I smiled at him and moaned when his long cock filled me slowly. He moved gently underneath me, as if to savor every moment. His palms slid up and down my back, his dark gaze caressing my face as though trying to memorize the contours. “You said once that you raised Stephen because there wasn’t a choice. He was family. That’s what being the pack Alpha is for me. It’s duty. I find it fulfilling, but it doesn’t bring me joy. *You* do that, Pixie. You’re funny and sweeter than you like to pretend. You don’t play games, and you have zero tolerance for bullshit. You have no problem getting in my face when you’re upset about something I’ve done. Do you know how refreshing that is for someone in my position? You’re like a breath of fresh air. I can be myself around you, and you like me that way. You like that I don’t play games either, that I don’t try to dick you around.”

“You think so?” Emotion banded my chest until I couldn’t breathe. This man understood me better than anyone ever had before, maybe better than I understood myself.

“I know it.” Fire burned through me as we arched together, his cock stretching my sex with each thrust. Still slowly, but we’d soon lose control and explode together. I couldn’t wait. His palms curved under my ass, pulling me tight to the base of his cock. “I can see it in your eyes when we’re together. We make each other laugh. I didn’t have anyone in my life like that before you.”

“What about Jerrod and his mates?”

“When push comes to shove, I’m still their Alpha.” He shrugged, rolled his pelvis to change his angle of penetration, and I had to work to keep hold of the thread of our conversation. I knew it was important, but *damn*, the things he could do to me with his body.

“T-true.”

He paused in his movements and I gripped his shoulders, snapping my gaze to his. “When I can feel my duty getting a little too heavy, you remind me to laugh. I *need* that. I need *you*. I don’t want to tell you how to live your life. I just want to be a part of it. I want you to *want* me to be a part of your life.”

“I do want that. I want you.” And I could prove it to him. Offering him a wicked smile, I sank on his hard cock and made him clench his jaw. “Remember when you asked me how Fae mate?”

“Yes. I remember every moment I’ve ever spent with you. Even when we were arguing.” His eyes widened as the implication of my question hit him, and his fingers bit into my flesh.

I gathered the magic to me, felt it skip and dance like golden lightning around my arms and down my body as it grew in strength and power. Then I pressed my palms to his cheeks. My wings burst from my back to flutter madly, and I could see in his eyes a reflection of the glowing magic in mine. His breath caught, but he didn't try to pull back. Instead, I saw wonder there, and he leaned into my touch.

God, I loved this man.

Pushing the magic forward, I arched my hips into his and he followed my lead. Our gazes locked and we moved hard and fast, his hard belly slapping against mine. The carnality of it was beautiful, left me gasping for breath. I could see love and trust in his eyes, and I let him see mine. The depth of emotion made the sex better for me than it ever had been before, even with him. His eyes burned ice blue, the wolf and the man giving me what I needed. Every time he entered me, my walls closed around him, and I could feel the Fae magic building higher and higher inside me until it was almost painful. I gave him a little more with every swift stroke, but I wouldn't be able to contain it much longer. I didn't want to. I wanted to bind him to me, meld our souls until he was mine and I was his. Forever.

He pulled me closer to him, ground his pelvis against my clit, and my control snapped. My power slammed into him full force, filling him as he filled me. A low howl issued from him. His hand fisted in my hair, jerked my head back, and he sank his fangs into my throat again, exactly where his original bite had been. I screamed and we came together, bodies and souls twining in the magic of both our races. My sex milked the length of his cock, but neither of us stopped. A sob wrenched from me as another orgasm exploded through me and another was right on its heels. It went on forever and ended far too soon. I collapsed against him, spent. His fingers stroked through my hair, pulling my head up until our sweat-dampened foreheads pressed together and we stared in each other's eyes. Tiny sparks of gold flickered in his eyes as my magic pulsed through him.

"I love you, Pixie. I love you so much—I have since the first moment I saw you." The naked vulnerability on his face was something I knew no one but I would ever see. "Fight with me, get mad at me, I don't care, but never leave me again. Never."

"I won't. I can't. I love you, Malcon." Tears slid down my face and I held him as tightly as he held me, needing to be as close as we could be. The connection that cycled between us, binding my soul to his, would grow stronger and stronger every day for the rest of our life together. And the craziest thing about it was that that sounded just perfect to me. There was nowhere in the world I would rather be than right here in his arms. I'd meant every word I said. Loving him hadn't caged me, it had set me free, free to fly as high as I could go, free to be myself as I never had been with anyone else before.

Free to love and be loved.

## About the Author

Crystal Jordan began writing romance after she finished graduate school and needed something to fill the hours that used to be eaten away by homework. Currently, she serves as a librarian at a university in California, but has lived and worked all over the United States. She writes paranormal, futuristic and erotic romance.

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*She loves them too much to change them. Until they turn the tables on her...*

## **It's Raining Men**

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*In the Heat of the Night, Book Three.*

Every one of Candy's werewolf instincts tells her that Michael is her mate. He's a lawyer—smart, sophisticated, and handsome. The catch? He's gay. There is no way she's going to try to change who he is. Then she meets his lover Stephen, a seductive Fae-siren jazz singer, and she's positive she's got a screw loose somewhere. Mates with not one, but two gay men?

She's definitely doomed to be single forever.

Michael and Stephen know that their unexpectedly flirtatious advances have thrown Candy for a loop. But there's method to their madness—they're both serious about her. And they plan to make sure she never spends another birthday alone.

*Enjoy the following excerpt for It's Raining Men:*

Fire flooded my system, and my hips moved in the kind of sensual rhythm I couldn't control. I clung to him, opening my mouth on his neck to suck and nip at his salty flesh. The wolf demanded that I bite down hard. I shuddered, holding back on my instincts to move against him in wild abandon. He pushed his pelvis into mine, working me in the hard, insistent tempo that took me right to the edge of orgasm but didn't allow me to fall over. "Michael, I'm so close. Please, I need more."

"Not yet, not yet." He froze, and I died a little. My claws slid forward and dug into his shoulders. He grunted and shrugged against my hold. I loosened my grip, stroking an apologetic hand down his back.

He startled when he looked at me, his mouth falling open in shock. I pressed my fingertip to my mouth, and I felt my fully extended fangs. My eyes would be icy werewolf blue, the wolf wanting her mate. And my appearance obviously scared the shit out of him. I expected to feel a pierce of regret, but the wolf was too much in control, and I was too far gone to care that he would reject me. Unwrapping my legs from around his waist, he set me on my feet. I nearly cried out again, for entirely different reasons. My clawed fingers flexed and I turned away, not daring to look at him. The emotional pain would come later, when only the woman was left to deal with the hurt.

"That was hotter than I imagined it would be." A strangled note had entered the siren's voice. When I glanced at Stephen, I saw he was stroking his cock through his pants. "And I have one hell of an imagination."

I looked him over, not bothering to hide the wolf this time. They'd come into the wolf's den willingly. If they wanted an apology for my nature, they'd be waiting a long time. Licking my lips, I stepped toward



the Fae halting and reached out to take over the stroking. A low growl soured from my throat, and the burn in my veins increased.

His hand covered mine, showing me exactly how he liked to be touched. Up, down, up, down. Slow torture. The musky scent of his desire caressed my sensitive nose, his musical groans kissing my ears. Moisture from his bulbous crest seeped through his pants. My other hand lifted to flick open his zipper. His breath caught when I pulled his hard cock out and sank to my knees before him. I wanted him in my mouth, wanted to taste his flesh. A shudder went through him as I slid my tongue along the underside of his dick, working my way up until I could take the head into my mouth. He buried his fingers in my hair, fisting tight as I sucked him deep. His flavor burst over my taste buds, and I knew I would never banish it from my memory. It was embedded in my psyche, and I would know his taste, his scent, his essence anywhere.

The heat that had never abated held me tight in its grip. Stephen's passion fed my own, and my hips rolled to the same rhythm that I sucked him. I closed my eyes and savored every moment of this chance to touch one of my mates. It was too sweet, made me burn too hot. I shivered, my nipples going rock hard. My eyes snapped open again when large hands cupped my breasts from behind. Michael. "You look hot with your mouth stuffed with cock. You know that, right?"

A moan escaped me, his words making lava flow through my veins. My breathing picked up speed, my heart pounding as excitement and anticipation flooded me. His palms slid down the front of my dress until he reached the hem. One hand tugged it up to my waist while the other slipped around to dip into me from behind. The first touch of his fingers on my slick pussy lips made me moan. He pressed them up into my hot channel, setting a fast, harsh pace. I grabbed Stephen's slim hips for balance, still sucking him so deep the head of his cock hit the back of my throat. I groaned, working Stephen with my mouth as Michael worked me with his fingers.

He rolled a fingertip over my clit. His hand angled, and the fingers inside me hit my G-spot. I screamed around Stephen's dick, my pussy convulsing. My sex clenched around Michael's fingers repeatedly, and he continued to thrust into me, to drag it out as long as possible until my breathing became little more than ragged sobs. Stephen's hard cock slid from my lips, and I rested my forehead against his thigh, shuddering and twisting my hips.

Michael's fingers withdrew, and I felt him stand, moving away from me. I looked up when Stephen stepped back to see Michael turning him by the shoulder to face the counter. Kicking Stephen's feet apart, Michael urged the siren forward until his forearms rested on the countertop. My eyes widened as I watched Michael grab the back of Stephen's belt and roughly jerk his pants down. He groaned as Michael stroked over the tight muscles of his naked ass, parting the cheeks to tease his anus. Using his free hand, Michael unfastened his slacks and pulled his long, hard dick out. I sucked in a shocked breath, insidious heat winding through me at the sight of my two mates together. It was the most erotic thing I'd ever seen.

Michael inserted one, then two fingers into the siren's ass, widening him to prepare him for penetration. Then Michael pulled his hand back to grasp his cock, nudging it into Stephen's tight pucker.

"Damn, Michael. I want it hard. I need it." He shuddered and groaned between clenched teeth as Michael drew back his palm to slap the siren's backside. I watched Michael's cock sliding in and out of Stephen's anus, and my thighs squeezed together as excitement tightened within me, flooding my core with fire. Even though I'd just come, witnessing them fuck had me right on the edge of orgasm. The scent of them and the musk of sex intoxicated me, clawing at my control. Biting my lip, I slipped my fingers between my legs to stroke the slick folds.

"Don't just watch, Candy. I didn't tell you to stop sucking him," Michael's voice growled, the tone harsh with unspent sexual need.

*Gliders and Wizards and Sex Droids... Oh My!*

## Not in Kansas

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Kansas Frayne has everything he needs. Except a life—and love. A freak storm changes all that when it hurls him into the darkness. He wakes up to find he's been thrust into a world of promiscuous and directionally challenged beings, sensually sentient water and servants created solely to fulfill any imaginable fantasy.

The sexuality he's long denied is tested to its limits, especially when a darkly erotic wizard issues the ultimate challenge. If Kansas wants to go home, he must fulfill one task. Resist the allure of the unbearably beautiful king.

Sounds easy enough.

Until he gets a look at the golden monarch. The chemistry between them is undeniable, and Kansas quickly realizes this is a challenge he is doomed to fail. Yet he has to try.

Before he loses his heart.

*Enjoy the following excerpt for Not in Kansas:*

The storm rolled in from nowhere.

Five minutes ago the sky had been a cloudless, nearly blinding blue. Now, angry black shadows skimmed the tall fields he'd been wandering aimlessly through, all on a collision course toward each other.

Toward him.

There was no time to run. No safe direction. The deafening roar of the Furies screaming his way had him covering his head and falling instinctively to the ground. For a moment, time seemed to slow. He thought about his empty house. The long line of days that had passed exactly as this one had. In silence. Alone.

He wished there were more exciting memories to flash before his eyes, and then he just wished for a chance to make a few more. A chance to live.

Thunder cracked and his eyes squeezed shut as the hot, angry breath of the tempest tore him away from everything he knew. His world went black.

Kansas was gone.

"I think it's dead."

"Don't be daft, Lenard. Would it moan like that if it were dead? And just think, if I hadn't gone left when you told me to go right, we'd never have seen it at all. Look, look. Its eyes are opening. Ooh, *pretty*. I've never seen eyes like that before."

Kansas took a breath. Blinked.

Blinked again.

His head was aching as if it had had a run in with the grill of a Mack truck. A concussion *would* explain a lot—the creatures hovering over his body for instance.

Certain he'd rattled his brain in the fall, he tried to play it cool. He didn't want to scream hysterically in front of what were probably normal, *human looking* paramedics and end up going to the wrong kind of hospital.

"I was...there was this storm and..." He slowly raised himself on his elbows and looked around. "It must have taken me farther than I thought. There aren't any woods like this on my property."

"His eyes are the blue of the Krentyn Sea. His hair is pale as the butter flower. And, Fenna, look. He's golden, but not all over like the King and his men. Parts of this one are pale. Like fresh cream." Kansas felt his eyebrows touch his hairline as the fine, reddish fur covering the young man in front of him rose and trembled, standing on edge like an agitated cat.

Kansas ran a hand through his hair, searching for the wound he was sure he would find. Nope. Not even a bump. Maybe he was still unconscious. This could be a dream, right? He *was* lying in the woods listening to a dainty bird-woman and a large, muscular male cat with humanoid features discuss his physical attributes as if he couldn't hear them.

Yes. Definitely a dream.

The female above him twittered. "You and your cream, Lenard. I can see you've already made up your mind to like this one."

She caught Kansas's gaze and inclined her head to a level below her companion's waist. Kansas swallowed hard. He wasn't altogether sure Lenard liking him was a good thing. Although he had to admit the engorged shaft rising aggressively from between the male's thick thighs was impressive.

That clinched it. He'd been alone far too long. He even felt his own cock stirring in response.

That's when he realized he was naked.

"Shit! What the hell?" He jumped to his feet, covering his partial arousal with his hands. A wave of dizziness washed over him and he stumbled, stubbing his toe. "Ow! This doesn't make any sense. It has to be a dream. But why can't I wake up?"

The beautiful angles of the female's face softened. "Be at ease, sea-eyed one. You say a storm brought you here?"

Her head tilted thoughtfully at his nod. "I haven't heard of anything like that since I was a flightless babe at my greatmother's knee. But it's obvious to anyone with eyes that you're no Crow Warrior. You definitely aren't from around here."

"Crow Warrior?"

She sent a telling look to Lenard. “Well, I suppose there’s nothing for it but to take you to the king. Lenard will like that, won’t you, Lenard? A chance to pay your respects to our king?”

“Yes, Fenna.” Lenard’s voice shook at the prospect. If his cock, jerking and growing even larger before their eyes, was anything to go by, he apparently *really* liked his king. Kansas forced his gaze back to the female.

“I can’t go anywhere with you. First of all, I’m pretty sure I’m hallucinating. Secondly, well, I have nothing to wear. And hallucination or not, I’m not moving from this spot as long as I’m naked.” He didn’t mention that the two creatures before him were naked as well, though they at least had *some* covering in the form of feathers and fur.

Feathers and fur. Another possibility struck him. Maybe there’d been no storm at all. Maybe he’d finally gone round the bend, the way his uncle had sworn he would when Kansas had left the world he’d known all his life for the solitude of the family farm all those years ago.

Five years alone, with only the bi-monthly trips into town to remind him that other people were still wandering the world. Still going about their lives without him. But he hadn’t wanted to know. Maybe his determination to hide from reality had finally driven him insane.

“We can fix that, sea eyes. But first, do you have a name? A people you belong to? I am called Fenna. I belong to the Glider Clan. This is Lenard. As you can see, he is a Felix.”

Lenard blushed at the mention of his name. The youthful excitement in his slanted ebony eyes did something to Kansas. Long forgotten memories he immediately and violently pushed down. What had Fenna asked him again?

“Kansas. My name is Kansas Frayne. I don’t belong to any clan. I mean, well, I’m just a regular guy from Iowa if that’s what you’re asking.” She continued to watch him, a blank expression on her face. “I’m human.”

He watched the two share a look at the word “human” and his stomach dropped. He had a feeling he wasn’t in Iowa anymore.

*This time, the creature under the basement is real. And dead sexy.*

## Phantom Desires

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### *Brotherhood of Blood, Book 3*

Computer expert Carly is tired, burned out and ready to downgrade her hectic lifestyle to something simpler. Her solution—pull up stakes and move to an old farm house in the middle of Wyoming. Her new house is full of old-time charm, and it comes with an unexpected surprise. Dmitri Belakov.

Dmitri, a Master Vampire, had an agreement with the former owners of the house to let him live peacefully beneath it in his hidden lair. Now there’s a new owner, and he may have to risk revealing his presence to negotiate a new contract. He moves cautiously because if she won’t deal, he’ll have to kill her once she knows his secret. Carly’s mind is unusually hard to influence, but he makes inroads when she is asleep.

Their shared dreams are more erotic than he ever expected, firing a hunger within him to know her feel and taste in the flesh. But doing so risks far too much. Even if Carly can’t deny the attraction arcing between them, loving him will force her to make a choice. An eternity in darkness with him—or life in the sun without him.

This book has been previously published and has been substantially revised and expanded from its original release.

### *Enjoy the following excerpt for Phantom Desires:*

On Friday night, after sleeping undisturbed for a week, a vivid dream once again assailed her. She was in a bedroom filled with lit candles, the spicy aroma of scented wax wafting sensually throughout the room. A strange man leaned over her naked body, caressing her with his eyes, followed by his strong, masculine hands.

“*Bella*, your skin is like warm satin.” His words whispered over her, thick with an accent she couldn’t place.

The stranger was handsome. Perhaps the most handsome man she had ever seen, but she knew this more from impressions than any real vision of his face. It was nighttime in the dream and shadows from the tiny flickering flames played about his angular features like a lover’s touch.

He had a foreign air about him, from the cut of his shadowy hair to the thickness of his accented whisper. He watched her with a fiery hunger, and he was one with the darkness. Strangely, he seemed to

know her, though she'd never seen him before in her life. She would have remembered him. Of that she was sure.

"Carmelita Valandro, you are a siren sent to tempt me." His whispers worked their way down her spine as his breath licked over her skin. He knew her full name. Nobody called her that anymore. How did he know?

"Your body is ripe and womanly, made to take mine." He praised her as his fingers delved between her legs, touching, torturing with pleasure. His lips moved down her body with leisurely deliberation, his teeth dragging at her skin, making her shiver with excitement. Slowly he repositioned her limbs, settling like a master between her legs, gazing his fill at her swollen folds as his hands drew nearer to her core, spreading her open for his touch.

His fingers were blunt tipped, long and thick. One speared into her, drawing a cry from her lips in the dream. She was ready for him and the feeling of his possession was like nothing she'd ever felt before. He knew her body and just how to play it. Like a master violinist with a Stradivarius.

He added another finger, twisting his hand like a corkscrew, using the blunt tips to arouse places within her she hadn't known existed. She whimpered in the dream, wanting more. He chuckled—a dark sound in the haze of the dreamplane.

"So responsive." His voice dripped with approval and made her even hotter. "I'm going to enjoy fucking you, Carmelita."

His harsh words made her jump. Dirty talk had never been this exciting, but this stranger made her want...so much.

"I will fuck you until you scream, little one. Then I will drink of you and fill you with my seed."

She could picture it as his fingers danced within her, stoking an intense fire in her body. She wanted it. She wanted to be possessed—fucked, as he so crudely put it—by this man, this shadow in the night.

"But first I want to taste you. I bet you're as sweet as cream and twice as addictive." His face loomed closer out of the darkness. A devilish smile graced his masculine lips and a sparkle twinkled in his dark eyes as he removed his fingers. She wanted to protest, but he moved closer, stilling her with his strong hands.

Leaning forward into the V of her legs, he gave her the most intimate kiss of all. His hot tongue slid inside her, a warm, wet invasion. Nothing had ever felt so good before. She convulsed in the dream and in reality with a gasping cry.

Shocked to wakefulness by a burst of pleasure so intense she'd never experienced anything like it in real life, Carly remembered the moment his tongue had touched her. The shock of it still coursed through her. It was familiar, yet as foreign as he was.

The feel of that unprecedented dream haunted her all day as she went about her chores, shopping, cleaning and putting the old farmhouse to rights. It puzzled her, excited her and heated her blood. But it made no sense.

Carly had been fondled by men before. She'd dated more than a few men in her life, but she had never once felt the instant flame of response her dream man had elicited. The echoes of the dream made her feel empty and that bothered her. Those few moments of dreamtime made her ache with longing for something she doubted she would ever find in the real world.

And it was just pitiful that the most exciting her love life had been lately were some vivid dreams. She was fast approaching spinsterhood, with no social life to speak of, but a very healthy bank balance due to her own hard work. She'd needed a change and moving out here to the middle of nowhere was the first step.

She could write the custom code for her computer software anywhere, so why not the wilds of Wyoming? She had a contract with one of the colleges near Laramie and a sturdy SUV to get her there when it snowed. She'd bought the old farmhouse on a whim, but it suited her.

She had her work and lots of quiet and open spaces in which to do it. She had her friends too. Earlier this year, she'd gone to Lissa's wedding in California. Her old college friend had found a hunk of a man who owned a vineyard and together they seemed happier than anyone had a right to be. The old study group had stayed close all these years and she spoke on the phone with Kelly and Lissa often, now that Kelly had gone to work for Lissa and her new husband at their vineyard.

Work kept Carly busy, even on this isolated job. Once a week or so, she would meet with staff at the college. She also had to go down to the campus more frequently to test, observe and fix any glitches that came up. It was a challenging job and one she enjoyed.

Up until a few months ago, she would have been overseeing several of these installations at once. Now she was delegating the other installations and overseeing just this one, which was the most complex her little company had on the table.

Professor Dmitri Belakov watched the small woman race from her car. The sky had darkened sufficiently but still held that just-after-sunset glow he loved. Dmitri had checked the installation schedule and knew tonight the young computer programmer would be performing a key part of the installation process that would take her most of the night. It was his perfect opportunity.

First, he would teach his evening course in history, then casually drop by the administration building where his office was located. It was also where the sexy woman would be working, probably until dawn. He would meet her then.

She would never know he had been watching her in her new home for weeks, biding his time for the opportunity to meet her legitimately and put her under his spell. If such a thing was possible. This woman



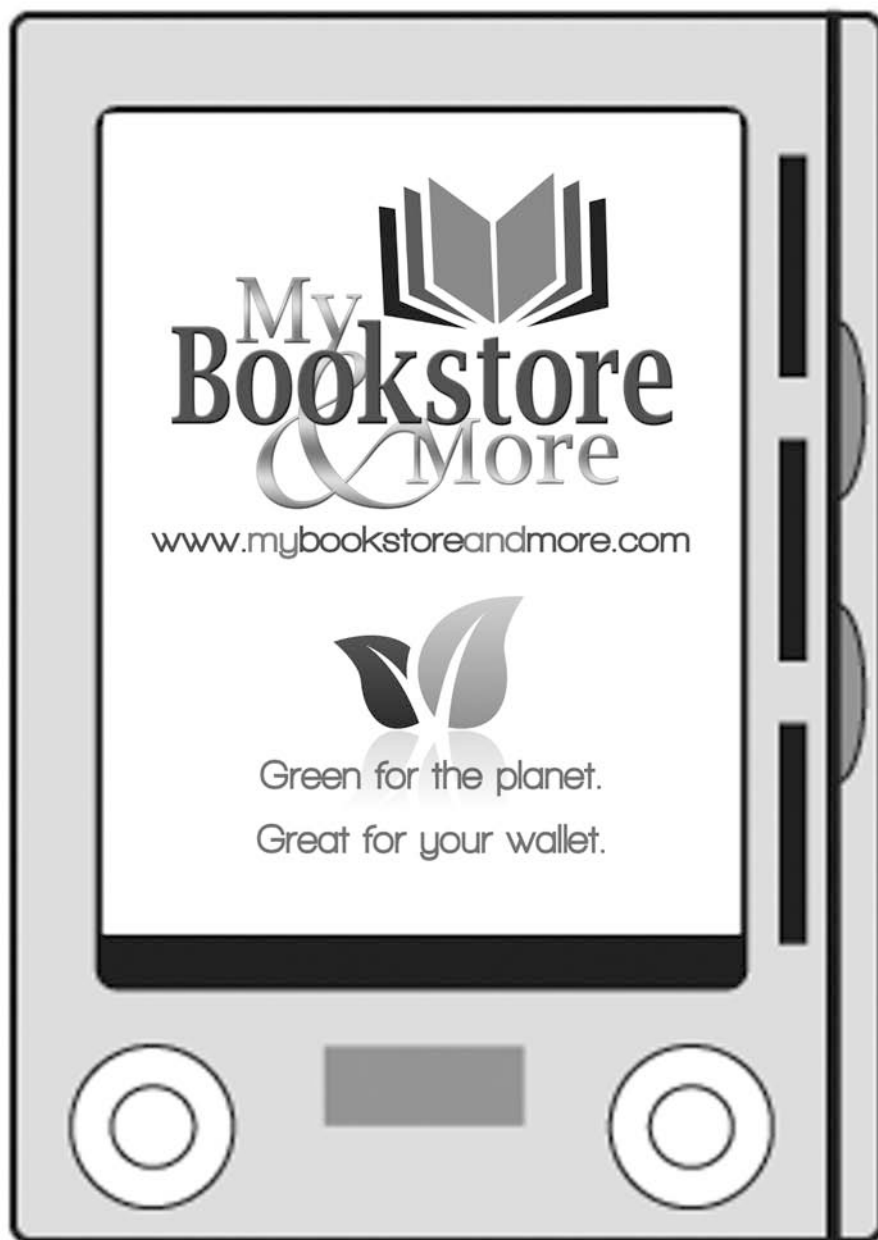
seemed to be immune from his more subtle abilities to an almost alarming degree. She had even caught him as he watched her sleep that first night. It was all he could do to overpower her strong mind and lull her back into a dreamless sleep.

She also had the disturbing ability to see him in her dreams. Several times, he had found his consciousness seduced into her dream. Each time, he was able to extricate himself only after some difficulty, leaving her none the wiser.

Except that one time.

In that particularly hot dream they had shared, he'd pushed her too far. He had wanted so badly to taste her—even if it was only in a dream. He'd brought her to a screaming orgasm with surprisingly little effort. The wave of pleasure had jolted her out of the dream before he could pull back and mask his presence. She had seen him that night, without a doubt.

But she was so sweet. He wanted to taste her in truth and perhaps he would, but first he had to work on seducing her mind.



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