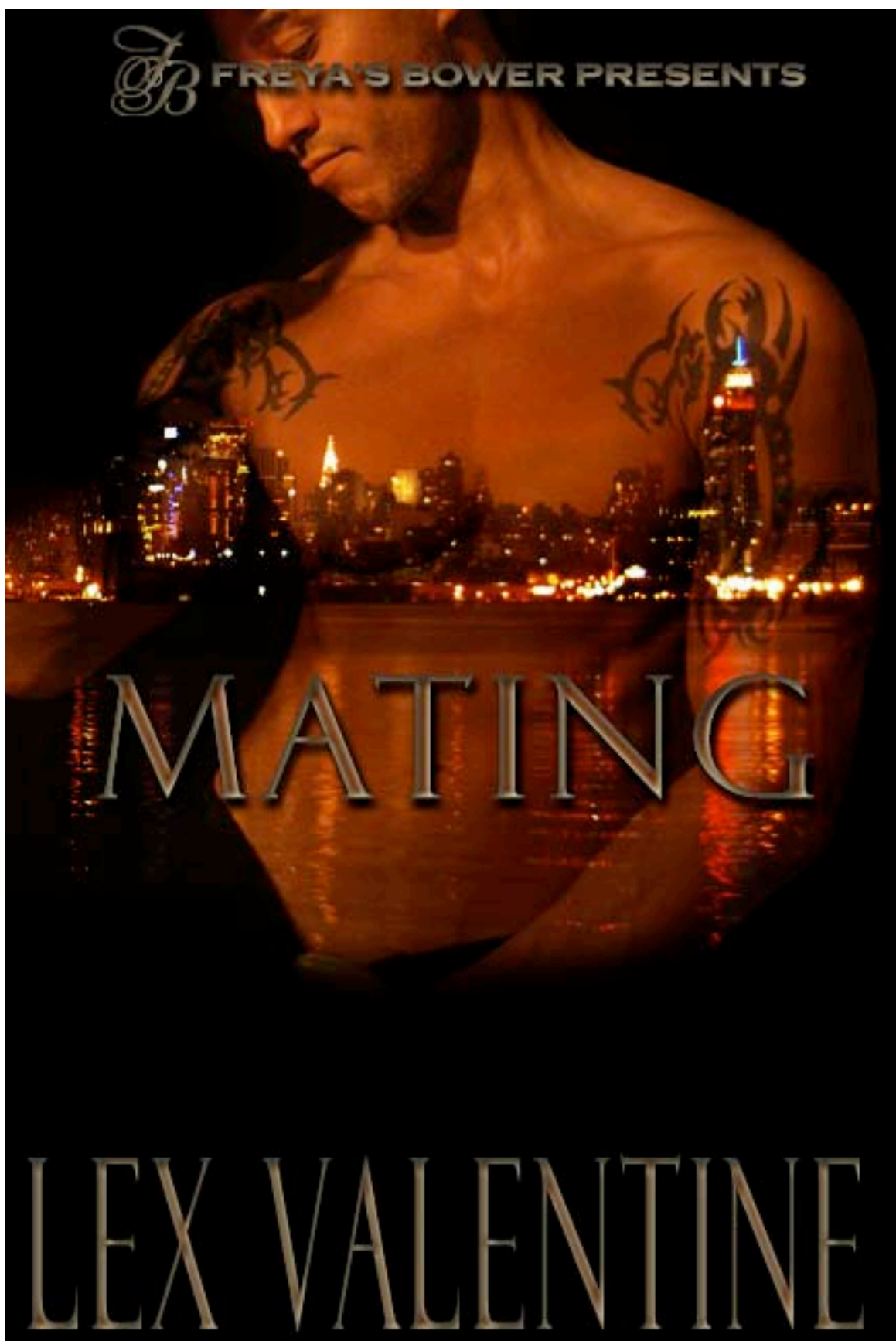




FREYA'S BOWER PRESENTS



MATING

LEX VALENTINE

Mating

by

Lex Valentine



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Culver City, CA

Mating

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“The danger of staring too long at a sigil is that it can leech away your control.”

The woman’s voice tore Roul’s gaze from the magical diamond-shaped mark that famous wizard artist Nick Diamond used to sign his paintings. A woman with long, blonde hair stood in the doorway. Her eyes met his easily, and he realized she must be at least six feet tall. Then her scent slammed into him like a Mac truck: rosemary . . . and lemon. Sweet, spicy, tangy . . . his mind and his cock reacted in the same millisecond to her scent.

Mine!

The woman’s elegant brows flicked up, and with a fierce growl, his wolf roused. Possessiveness filled every atom of his body, and he wondered briefly if the magic of the painting had gotten to him. Gods, he wanted her! All rational thought fled his brain, leaving behind only primal urges. Driven by his base needs, he promised himself that before dawn lit the sky, he would have her beneath him, moaning in supplication.

A sardonic expression settled on her elegant features, almost as if she’d heard his arrogant thoughts. “I can see I’m way too late with my warning about control,” she murmured, her lips curling in amusement.

Roul knew his hard cock blatantly strained the front of his jeans, but he didn’t care. His wolf wanted her to see how she aroused him. “I’m Roul Verlaine,” he said in a voice husky with lust.

The woman stepped toward him. “I know. I’m Morgan Kale. Welcome to New York.” She held out one elegant hand.

Shock rippled through him. He’d thought the head of the Watcher Agency was a man. Her eyebrows arched up, and she gazed at him. Again, her expression gave him the sense that she’d heard his thoughts. “Are you an empath? A telepath?” he asked abruptly, setting his suitcase down, and extending his hand toward hers.

Her polite smile became a wide grin. “I wish. It would make my work much easier.” Her palm met his and she shook his hand firmly, but briefly. Her fingers dropped away, and she gestured toward the office door. “Please come in.”

Her touch unnerved him even more than the persistent notion that she could read his thoughts. Despite her assertion that she was neither empath nor telepath, Roul’s instincts told him to shield his thoughts like he often did with his twin brother. A woman like this one—professional, capable—wouldn’t give him the time of day if she had heard his arrogant thoughts about having her beneath him before dawn.

Roul’s eyes followed the swish of her lush hips in black linen slacks as she stepped past him and around the corner of the huge executive desk. She sat down, and his gaze traced the full curves of the breasts that strained the black silk of her shirt. His wolf salivated, and his cock refused to go down.

Settling himself in a large, leather wingback chair, Roul surreptitiously adjusted himself more comfortably in his jeans and looked around the luxurious room. Like his attorney’s office, it exuded professionalism and a classic masculine style. His eyes returned to the woman who sat behind the desk. She watched him with pale, silver-grey eyes, her face impassive. His gaze shifted to her silvery blonde hair. He’d never seen anyone with such pale hair and eyes before . . .

Comprehension dawned and Roul sucked in a sharp breath. Instantly, he wished he hadn’t drawn the breath, because her scent made his senses tingle. “You’re a wolf,” he said, feeling off balance and more than a little out of control.

Morgan Kale nodded. “Does that bother you?”

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Her question told him that it must have bothered other clients. “Not at all,” he said. “It’s just that I’ve never met a white werewolf before. You’re not an albino? Just naturally white, like an arctic wolf?”

She nodded again and although her expression gave nothing away, Roul knew that talking about her status as a rare, white werewolf made her uncomfortable. “I share many of the same traits the arctic wolves do, but I am not one of them.”

Those six words told him everything he needed to know about her discomfort. “*I am not one of them.*” A lone wolf, with a rare genetic mutation, obviously an Alpha lone wolf. And although she didn’t flaunt it, Roul sensed her immense power.

Smoothly, she turned to the laptop on her desk for a moment, and then raised her eyes to his again. “Just to reiterate our email exchange, you were upset to discover your brother mated someone he just met. The suddenness of his decision to walk away from his life to be with her made you anxious about his motivations and the woman he mated. Your interest in having them watched is to ensure that your brother is happy and hasn’t been taken advantage of in some manner.”

Morgan handed him a leather portfolio, her eyes returning to the computer. “Based on the information you provided, we located your brother and his new mate. While it is unusual for werewolves to mate so quickly, it is not unheard of. There is nothing in either your brother’s past or his mate’s to indicate that either is mentally unstable. However, because we understand how unnerving your twin’s sudden actions are for you, as part of our service we compiled a dossier on Dante Allerton and her family.”

For a moment their eyes met, and then her jaw tightened and her gaze deliberately shifted back to her computer. “My best watcher is already in place. She will shadow your twin and his new mate until her shift ends at midnight. At that time, her partner will take over. Joey and Angel are a bonded couple, empaths, specially trained to shadow immortals. Ranulf and Dante will never know they are there.”

Her cool, businesslike tone made him yearn to leap over the desk and rip her clothes off so he could touch her skin. Her scent bombarded his senses until he could barely focus. Visions of fucking her played in his head like a movie he couldn’t shut off, and his cock just kept getting harder. Frustration ran rampant within him, and he wondered if the sigil really had done something to him because his usual unwavering control felt totally shattered.

Roul looked up from the closed portfolio. Morgan’s pale eyes met his . . . and held. She drew a deep breath; her nostrils flared, yet she didn’t look away from his gaze. Then a chink in her armor appeared. She bit her lower lip, her white teeth sinking into the rose colored flesh. Heat suffused Roul’s groin.

“You’ll receive an email report at the end of each shift detailing the couple’s movements,” she said softly, her tone distracted. She drew another deep breath, and a visible shiver went through her. Her eyes dropped from his. “I’ll show you to the guest loft now.”

Roul gathered up his things and followed her to an elevator. Morgan pressed the button. The door slid open and she stepped into the car. He joined her, and the door closed. He noticed that the building only had three floors. The elevator took them to the top floor. When the door slid open, exposing a beautifully decorated loft apartment, he wondered what was on the second level.

Morgan sounded like an impersonal tour director pointing out the amenities in the loft: fully-stocked kitchen and bar, maid service, concierge service, a small gym, a

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terrace, a sauna and Jacuzzi, an office with WiFi, a living room with a plasma TV, a luxurious bathroom, and a huge bedroom that offered a magnificent view of Manhattan.

Roul dropped his suitcase and laptop on a chaise near the bed and walked slowly toward her. Morgan stood with one hand on the bed's carved post, her slender body backlit by the lights of the city. He wanted her with a fierceness he'd never known before. It surprised him. The swift onslaught of his desire did too. One whiff of her unique scent had put his cock and his wolf in the driver's seat, relegating his logical brain to the backseat. He didn't know anything about her and yet, his senses pinged like an alarm going off the closer he got to her.

He reached up and threaded her long, silky hair through his fingers. "I don't know you . . ." he began, his voice low.

Morgan's fingers curled around his wrist, stopping the movement of his hand. "We don't know each other." Her eyes held his intently. "And I'll probably hate myself tomorrow for saying this, but my were-senses are going crazy. I don't know what kind of cologne that is, but—"

"I don't wear cologne," he interrupted her.

Her eyes went wide and he caught the faintest trace of fear before she quickly schooled her expression. "I have to go. If you need anything, please call the concierge."

She took two strides away from him before he reached out and caught her around the waist, hauling her back against his body. "I need you. If I call the concierge, will he deliver you to me?" he growled and lowered his head to hers.

The first taste of her mouth sent Roul's wolf into bliss-induced heaven. Even his logical brain was overcome with lust. His tongue teased the seam of her lips, and he fitted his hips to hers. Rubbing his erection against her lower belly, pleasure throbbed throughout his body. Her rosemary-lemon scent grew stronger as her mouth opened to the thrust of his tongue.

Everything in his life—every person, every responsibility—faded away until his only focus was the woman in his arms. Roul's wolf slipped the leash of his control and growled possessively, urging him to take her. His hands cupped her firm ass, pressing her closer to his body. She wrapped her arms around his shoulders: the tribal bands of his wolf clan markings came alive with sensation, making his skin itch to feel her touch. Quickly, without breaking the deep kiss they shared, he ripped off his jacket and shirt. The instant her fingers touched the tattoo-like marks on his shoulders he knew it wasn't the sigil that shattered his control. It was Morgan Kale.

* * * *

Morgan never did anything without investigating everything first. When she'd received Roul Verlaine's request, she'd dug up information on him. He apparently didn't have any secrets. Head of the renowned Verlaine wolf pack outside Paris, his life was an open book. She knew that pack leaders—bred, born, and raised to be the Alpha—often didn't have a life beyond the pack. Their responsibilities left no opportunities for secret lives. Roul's life fit that pattern to a tee.

Following Ranulf Verlaine and his new mate presented no problems for Morgan's staff. Despite the secrets the couple had in their separate pasts, what Roul wanted encompassed only the present; follow them, watch them, so he could be assured that his brother was happy in his mating. Since Ranulf met and mated Dante while on a train

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from Prague to Paris, Morgan could understand Roul's need for reassurance. If it had been her twin who'd mated so quickly, she'd want to know the truth too. While she prepared the dossier on Dante Allerton, she instinctively knew that the information it contained would help Roul come to terms with his brother's mating.

Despite her homework, and the fact that she'd seen dozens of photos of Roul Verlaine before he appeared in her office, she'd been unprepared for her reaction to the man. Angel, the operative who would follow Roul's brother later, picked up the Alpha wolf at the airport. The instant he dropped Roul at the front of the building, he called her with his impressions. By the time she hung up, she'd scented Roul in the corridor outside her office.

Spanish sage with a hint of citrus filled her nostrils. To her astonishment, her pussy clenched at his scent, becoming wet and swollen with lust. When she saw him, staring at the sigil on the Nick Diamond painting, heat enveloped her body. A couple of inches taller than her six feet, his shoulders seemed impossibly broad. She knew from photos that he had tribal wolf clan markings on his shoulders and arms. The dark lines looked like tattoos to anyone not versed in wolf pack traditions. In reality, the lines told a story of his heritage, and his position in his clan. They connected him metaphysically to his twin, who carried the same blood, and to his mate. Or they would, if he had a mate.

Mates and mating had been on her mind all day because of Roul Verlaine. Then he walked into her world and brought it crashing down around her ears. He obviously scented her arousal, but he didn't have a clue about the reason for his impact on her. While he knew a lot about being the Alpha leader, he apparently knew next to nothing about mating.

Morgan wished she knew nothing about mating. And she wished to hell she hadn't met Roul Verlaine, because his scent tipped her off that he was more than just her client. The first whiff of sage and citrus warned her. Stepping into the corridor and coming face-to-face with him, breathing in his scent more fully, told her more than she wanted to know. Then the capper came when she heard bits of his thoughts. Despite his arrogance, she couldn't deny all the signs pointing to Roul Verlaine being her mate.

She tried to keep their meeting on a business-like footing. She knew her face and actions gave away none of her inner turmoil. The man didn't know that he'd turned her world upside down. He'd acted like a horny, arrogant Alpha wanting a fuck. Blatantly wearing the bulge of his erection like a medal of honor, he made no effort to hide it from her, nor did he bring up his reaction to her. The flare of his nostrils told her he knew she felt the same.

The moment she'd stepped into the loft's bedroom, she knew he would kiss her. If her luck held, that was all he'd do, and she could escape to her own apartment on the second floor. If it didn't hold, well, there wasn't a whole hell of a lot she could do. She'd mentioned cologne, praying to the gods that he wore one and that she was wrong about his scent. When he denied wearing any, her stomach sank. He was her mate, and pretending otherwise would be next to impossible. When he grabbed her, she was almost relieved.

The feel of his hard body against hers melted any resistance that lingered. Despite his arrogance, her body craved his. His kiss seared her mouth. His scent drove her wild with desire. The feel of his flesh beneath her fingertips made her tremble with longing.

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The moment he ripped off his shirt and jacket, she reached unerringly for his tribal markings. Electricity sparked inside her. Oh, gods, how she wanted him!

Touching his clan markings told her what she needed to know. Her senses went completely haywire. She could feel them tuning to him. She heard his thoughts more clearly even though he blocked a good portion of them. Enough leaked through for her to know that he blamed her for his lack of control. He had no idea he was kissing his mate.

She stroked her fingertips along the lines that curved over his hard muscles. He shivered and deepened the kiss, his tongue swirling against hers. The dampness between her thighs increased. Part of her wanted to run from him, to hide and sob out her frustration at being given a mate when she didn't want one. Another part of her wanted to fuck him silly. She had no choice but to accept that he was her mate. However, acceptance and actually mating were two different things. Everything she'd worked so hard for would be lost, including her sense of self, if she mated him. If he didn't realize she was his mate, she would never tell him.

Roul's mouth moved from hers to lick along the curve of her throat. She shivered. Unable to resist his touch, she arched her neck. Her hard nipples pressed against his chest with only her thin shirt separating them. Roul's fingers deftly slipped the buttons on the shirt, baring her breasts. She hated bras and luckily wasn't so large that she needed to wear one. Her eyes drifted down, watching his long fingers circle her pale, pink nipples.

"Fuck! You have gorgeous tits," he growled, cupping one. "I love the way they're full on the bottom with these hard, little, pink candies pointing to the sky." He tweaked her nipple and it stiffened even more, sending spikes of painful arousal shooting to her groin.

Morgan shuddered. She'd never been so overwhelmed with lust. She needed to fuck Roul. Maybe, if she got the worst of the initial desire out of the way, it would be easy to let him walk away. At this point she figured in for a penny, in for a pound.

She caught his chin in her hand, feeling the rasp of his beard stubble against her fingers. "Are you going to take me to bed or fuck me standing right here?" she panted.

His turquoise eyes glowed. "I can do either. I've been ready to go from the moment I caught your scent, sweetheart."

Morgan suppressed a wince at his arrogant words. "Please, no endearments. You and I both know this is just a fuck," she said, her own arrogance coloring the words with a harshness she didn't quite mean.

He drew back slightly, his eyes meeting hers. A semi-serious light crept into the pale, blue-green depths. "You're Alpha, Morgan. If that's how you want me to play this, I'm more than happy to give you *whatever* you want."

The innuendo had her heart melting and her pussy throbbing at the same time. Damn the man. Why did he have to be so disarming? "Maybe it's better if we don't talk," she said gruffly.

"Whatever you want," he repeated and kissed her, hard.

Morgan felt him maneuver her toward the bed. Her tongue tangled with his and he moaned into her mouth. She reached to unbutton his jeans and then slid the zipper down. Jeans gone, she slipped her hands into his briefs, her fingers closing around his thick erection.

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He shuddered but managed to work her out of her pants. She kicked them away, wondering what he thought of her tiny, lace boy shorts. The wonder of finding her mate must have addled her brains because she wanted him to think she was beautiful despite the fact that she'd never been described as soft or feminine.

Roul hissed in a breath. *Fuck. She's incredibly hot.*

His thought popped effortlessly into her head in reply to her own thought. She pushed away his briefs, and then pressed him down on the bed, straddling his thighs.

This is my mate, my chance to know him and learn to love him . . .

She shielded the thought from him, trying to protect herself despite the emotional mating bonds that wound around her. She gnawed at her lower lip for a moment. Destiny decreed that this was the man she would love, who would be her mate forever. She'd used the word fucking to describe what would happen between them, but in her heart, with this man, it could never be so base, regardless of what he might think or feel. Already she could feel raw emotions for her mate beginning to rise within her.

Morgan's hands stroked over Roul's hard thighs. Her fingertips learned and committed to memory the slightly rough texture of his skin. She leaned over him, cupping his heavy balls in one hand while the other curled around his hard shaft. Stroking him lightly, her tongue darted out to flick over the swollen head. Roul moaned, his hands pushing her hair back. It excited her to know that he watched her take him into her mouth.

She sucked him slowly, teasing him with the pressure of her lips, the suction of her mouth, and the licking of her tongue. His hips pressed upward, forcing his cock further into her mouth, fucking her lightly. She hummed a little, letting the vibrations add to his pleasure. Her fingers traced the crease of his ass and he jerked, his fingers tightening in her hair. Her eyes met his questioningly.

"No, Morgan," he rasped, his voice uneven. "I don't want to come in your mouth. I want to fuck you."

Without thinking, Morgan released his cock, letting it slide from her mouth with a little slurping sound. Her wolf clawed at her, begging to be taken. Instinctively, she rose on her hands and knees, looking back at him, waiting for him to mount her.

Roul's eyes blazed with lust. He shifted onto his knees, his fingers reaching out to test her wetness. He stroked her swollen labia. She moaned, and pressed back against his hand. He sank two fingers deep inside her. She clamped down on them and he reacted with a feral growl. Bracing her knees further apart, waiting for him to fit his cock into her, it dawned on her that she had placed herself in a mating position.

Her train of thought disintegrated as Roul slid his cock along her wet slit. His fingers spread her open and his hips pressed forward, his thick cock sinking balls-deep into her. She whimpered, and fire erupted in her veins. She could hear his thoughts, but they were mostly incoherent fragments about her heat and tightness.

Roul pulled back and thrust into her again. Her wolf begged to be set free, to whine, growl, and howl her pleasure to the moon. Every thrust of Roul's hips pressed him deeper into her. He battered her cervix and the pain-pleasure combined with the delicious ecstasy of his cock head rubbing her G-spot with each thrust. She rocked on her knees, pushing back into his rhythm, feeling the heat within her spiraling out of control.

Morgan gasped out loud, shuddering as pleasure exploded within her. Roul leaned over her, his hands rough on her nipples, his breath harsh in her ears. The slap of his

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lean hips against her ass sounded loud in the bedroom. He licked her shoulder, and his thrusts intensified. A growl escaped him, and his body tensed. She felt his teeth sink into her shoulder and shock held her immobile.

Gods! Had she been wrong? Did he know she was his mate? If he drew blood, he would complete half the mating ritual!

Roul's body went rigid when his orgasm hit him. Morgan felt the hot gush of his seed within her. She shuddered, her emotions raw, and her body singing at his possession of her. Their orgasms waned, and the stillness of the bedroom felt fragile to her. She had the odd sense that, if she drew too deep a breath, the tableau around her would shatter. Shaking, holding back sobbing breaths that would surely give away her vulnerability, Morgan tried to wriggle out from beneath Roul's body.

Catching her around the waist with an arm like a steel band, Roul dragged her across the bed, under the covers, and wrapped her in his arms. "We need to talk," he said hoarsely.

For a moment, with her head cradled on his chest, Morgan thought her heart stopped. Did he know the truth? Had he figured it out?

Roul sighed deeply. "I didn't come here to get involved with someone," he said in a cautious tone that sent fear slicing through her. "You probably don't fuck your clients either. You have a spotless reputation in your industry. But now that this has happened between us, can we just enjoy it for a few days? No strings? No ties?"

He leaned over her, and Morgan saw the concern he tried to hide in the back of his eyes. His words made her want to laugh hysterically. Her mate wanted a fling with her. The irony slayed her.

She licked her lips, saw his eyes darken at the movement, and spoke the truth "I'm not looking for a mate." Despite being insane with lust over him, she feared mating him and having her hard-won serenity lost in the process.

Roul smiled. It lit up his handsome face, and Morgan felt something melt inside her. Her stomach sank. She had a gnawing suspicion that he'd just won her heart.

* * * *

The heat of the sauna had nothing on Morgan Kale, Roul thought, leaning back and watching her ride his thick cock. Her silvery hair hung in damp waves down her back and sweat dripped from the rigid, candy-pink nipples of her up-tilted breasts. He had one more day with her. One day to decide what to do.

Over the past forty-eight hours she'd dropped a few tidbits about her past. He'd learned that being different in a world of wolf packs made you an outcast. Alpha males wanted to dominate her. Betas fought her for control. Omegas feared her. And Alpha females wanted to kill her. He understood her feelings of isolation. He felt the same for different reasons. As the pack leader, he stood apart from his people. He had no equal in the clan now that his twin brother, Ranulf, had left. He was alone.

His time with Morgan showed him a life he never knew existed; companionship, warmth, and the comforting sense that someone understood his challenges, his failures, and his triumphs. If this was what Ranulf had been seeking by taking a mate, Roul could understand the draw. He didn't want to go home. He didn't want to leave her. The very thought clawed at his insides. For the first time in his life, Roul didn't know what to do.

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His attention shifted to the woman who'd turned his life upside down. She rose above him, her sleek muscles rippling as she twisted her hips, grinding against him more rapidly now. Heat that had nothing to do with the sauna flickered down his spine. His balls tightened painfully. With one hand, he stroked the soft, bare skin of her mound, his fingers slipping between her wet folds to flick her clit.

Morgan tossed her head, her throat arched back so far that her long hair tickled his thighs. She ran her hands up his arms, her fingers unerringly finding his tribal bands. Roul gritted his teeth, trying to hold back his suddenly imminent orgasm. He'd discovered that he had little control over his body when she touched his clan markings. He hummed like a tuning fork when she stroked them. He'd be damned if he knew why.

She leaned over him, her hard nipples grazing his sweat-streaked chest. Her panting made him blind with lust. Grasping her hips in his hands, he thrust up into her rapidly, roughly, his pelvic bone hitting her exposed clit with every thrust. She moaned loudly and shivered in his arms, her sweat-slick skin rippling. Her body convulsed in orgasm. Fierce pleasure rushed through his veins as he came, the sound of his name on her lips sending him over the edge.

In the aftermath, Morgan lay on his chest with her hands stroking his tribal bands, but thoughts of his newly-mated twin ate at him. Ranulf had seen what he wanted and had taken it. Roul had met an incredible woman who made him yearn for something more in his life, but he didn't know what to do about her. She didn't want a mate . . .

Morgan rubbed her face on his chest and sighed deeply. Roul's jaw clenched with frustration as emotions spilled over inside him. How had Ranulf been so sure? How could finding a mate have been so simple for his twin and so complicated for himself? And still, the answer to the most important questions eluded him. What did he really feel for her? And should he—could he—go home without her?

* * * *

For three days, they were lovers. The sweetness of it, the incredible sex, the sense of belonging, were all things that Morgan stored away in her heart for when Roul left. Reports came in twice a day on his twin, and Morgan had difficulty containing her emotions when she read them. Ranulf and Dante were blazingly in love and so happy to be mated. Juxtaposed beside her temporary status with Roul, their love and commitment ripped at the very core of her emotions . . . emotions that had grown swiftly and surely within her as each day passed. On the one hand, she wanted what the other couple had . . . on the other, it scared her to death.

Waking at Roul's side each morning filled her with a poignant longing. Doing little things with him like walking to the deli and teaching him to tune out the city noises, sparring with him in the gym, watching the sweat bead and roll down over the tribal bands on his smooth skin while they sat in the sauna . . . those hundred and one little things etched him onto her soul. The hours with him ticked by, and she realized she would never be the same. An essential part of her belonged to Roul Verlaine.

She wanted to tell him the truth, but fear held her in a steely grip. She'd been alone a long time. Her status as a white werewolf made her an outcast. Packs feared her strength and uniqueness. She couldn't bear to go home with Roul and have his pack repudiate her. To be ripped from him in such a manner would be a thousand times worse than letting him go now, while he didn't know who she was.

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The evening that Joey and Angel's final report landed in her email, a cc to the one sent to Roul, ice wrapped around her heart. He would go home now. Seventy-two hours. That's all she'd had. All she would ever have. Pain shot through her, its sharpness like a blade twisting in her gut and taking her down more swiftly than a hunter's bullet. She lay across her desk, her head cradled in her arms, fighting back sobs. Hazily, she fought for control. She would survive this. She'd survived so much in her lifetime. This was just one more thing to get through.

"Morgan? What's wrong?"

Stuffy from the tears she fought to repress, her nose hadn't picked up his scent. She couldn't lift her head and allow him to see the emotions that ravaged her. "You have an email," she said, her voice muffled by her arms.

"I know. I deleted it. I'd already decided Ran was okay, but I wasn't ready to leave you."

The simplicity of his confession shocked her, drying her tears. Her head jerked up. "What?"

She felt his eyes taking in her damp eyes and trembling lips. Emotion clouded his sea-colored eyes. "Are you crying because of me?" he asked.

"I'm not crying," she lied stiffly.

"Liar," he said and stepped around the desk to pull her up into his arms.

Morgan moaned in pain as his mouth settled on hers. Her fingers curled into fists at her sides, and she fought not to touch him. He deepened the kiss, his tongue sliding against hers. Heat flooded her body, and wetness pooled between her thighs. Her nails scored her palms, drawing blood.

"Touch me, damn you!" he whispered against her mouth.

Unable to resist any longer, her arms came up around his neck and she clung to him, kissing him fiercely. With a growl, not breaking the kiss, he caught her up in his arms and carried her out of the office. He stepped into the elevator. As it rose, he broke the kiss.

"I can't leave you yet. Something is holding me back."

A frustrated sound escaped him, and the elevator stopped at the second floor. He carried her into her apartment and went straight to her bedroom. He laid her on the bed and began stripping her clothes from her body. With a choked sob, she reached for him, tearing at the zipper of his jeans, pulling the cloth of his t-shirt. When they were both naked, she wrapped her legs around his hips, rubbing herself against him.

He kissed her with soul-drugging sweetness and fire. Her heart burned in her chest, the words she ached to speak caught in her throat.

Just love me, Roul. Love me one last time. Give me something to hold onto when you're gone.

Roul froze. His head jerked up and he stared down at her, his chest heaving, his eyes stormy. "What the fuck did you say?"

Morgan's eyes widened. Oh, Gods . . . he'd heard her.

His nostrils flared. "Yes, I did. And I'm not so stupid that I don't know what that means," he said roughly. "You're my mate."

She swallowed hard and nodded. His eyes blazed down into hers. "You knew." Reluctantly, she nodded again. He caught her head in his hands. "We need to talk." His words echoed the ones he'd spoke the night they met. He kissed her, and then pulled away, their lips clinging damply. "After."

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His mouth took hers in the most devastating kiss of her life. *Mine!* She felt his possessive thought slip easily into her head. It stayed there, feeling warm like the clasp of his hand in hers. *You are mine!*

* * * *

Roul wondered how long she'd known the truth, but since his wolf ached to mate her, the discussion would have to wait. What mattered now was that she belonged to him. He didn't have to leave her. For two days, he'd agonized about going home. He hadn't understood his possessiveness either. Women didn't come any more capable than Morgan Kale. She kicked his ass at martial arts and beat him at chess. She had incredible physical strength and amazing mental acuity. She fascinated him endlessly, and discovering that she was his mate filled him with profound relief.

When the last email arrived, he deleted it without opening it. Then he felt the wrenching waves of Morgan's pain. He'd been on his feet, running down the stairs to her even as his brain registered that he'd felt her emotions across the distance that separated them. Her tears unmanned him. Her thoughts broke his heart . . . and gave him hope. No way would he let her go now.

He flexed his hips, rubbing his cock against her smooth belly. She moaned, writhing against him, the scent of her arousal making his nostrils flare. For three days he'd fought the power of her attraction. One glance from her silver eyes made his cock hard. Her rosemary-lemon scent drove him insane with the need to be inside her. The touch of her hand made him want to sink his teeth into her flesh and mark her. His wolf wanted to mate her, but Roul ignored the signs.

Rocking back on his heels, Roul pulled her up, turning her and placing her in the mating position. Just like he had the night he'd met her, he tested her readiness, his fingers plunging inside her, coated with her slick cream. She moaned, her back arching.

Take me, Roul. Mate me.

I will. Don't be so impatient.

She tossed her head, a feral growl coming from deep within her. He knew her wolf demanded to be mated. His own wolf wanted the same. Taking her hips in his hands, he thrust into her. Her cry of pleasure turned to mewls of bliss, and he continued thrusting, feeling her hot, wet flesh clutch his cock.

The past three days played out in his head. He'd had the best sex of his life. Licking her clit until she came and not stopping until she came again. Watching her ride him in the gym, surrounded by mirrors, his cock deep inside her. The intense pleasure in her eyes while she sucked him in broad daylight on the terrace. The warm intimacy of waking with her in his arms, lifting her leg so he could slip his cock into her from behind and then thrusting slowly until they both were fully awake. He'd never felt so alive.

He licked his way along her spine and she moaned. Pushing aside her silky hair, he nipped at the back of her neck, his cock grinding into her. His knees pressed hers further apart and he shifted his angle. She shivered, and he knew he'd hit her G-spot just right. Her breathing hitched with each of his thrusts, telling him she would come soon. He pushed her head down, holding the back of her neck.

Roul's breath rasped harshly and he realized he'd hit the point of no return. This was his woman. His forever. His free hand slipped between her thighs to pluck at her swollen clit.

Mating

Roul!

Her cry rang out in his mind and satisfaction washed over him as her body convulsed, her pussy clamping down on his cock. Two more thrusts and his balls tightened, sending his cum gushing into her. His wolf howled and he bent to the crook of her neck, the spot where it met her shoulder. Fangs extended, he sank his teeth into her, sucking at her flesh, the metallic taste of her blood bursting onto his tongue.

Morgan whimpered beneath him, the sound a soft supplication. He licked the bite and let go of her neck. She turned her head to look at him, her body still shuddering from her orgasm, her eyes unfocused.

“Morgan.”

She blinked and he kissed her, his tongue giving her a taste of her own blood. “Mate me, Morgan,” he whispered.

The Alpha within her took control, her eyes gleaming with a feral light. Low growls rose from her throat. She twisted in his grasp, and her fangs extending as his cock slipped from her. She pushed him down and landed atop him, her hands stroking his tribal bands. In one swift move, she sank her fangs deep into his trapezius muscle.

Roul shivered. A deep pleasure welled within him. His tribal clan markings were on fire. He could hear the thunder of Morgan’s heart, feel the surge of her breath, and smell the satisfaction that seeped from every pore in her body.

Mine!

The thought could have been hers, or his, but since he couldn’t distinguish it, he chose to believe it was a single thought, shared by them both in the moment of their mating.

Morgan licked at his wound where she’d marked him as hers. When she raised her head, he saw the glow of love in her pale eyes. She collapsed on his chest, nuzzling him, her long legs tangling with his. He wrapped his arms around her, savoring the feel of her strong body against his.

I wish I’d had the courage to do this that very first night.

Her thoughts were languorous, unguarded in the sweet aftermath of their mating, making him smile. He kissed the top of her head, feeling happiness wrap around him. Then her words sank in.

Roul went still. *You knew that soon? The night we met?*

Morgan’s eyes opened warily, a flicker of fear lurking in their depths. *I knew almost instantly*, she admitted.

Anger began to replace the warm, soft satisfaction he’d felt from their mating. She’d known right away, but hadn’t told him. Her pain and tears came rushing back to him, and now he fully understood the reason for them. She would have let him walk out of her life without ever telling him that she was his mate. Fear over what had almost happened to them fueled an anger like none he’d ever experienced. How could she have done that?

* * * *

Roul stared at her with emotion-dark eyes that made Morgan shiver. “If I hadn’t realized who and what you are, would you have told me?” he asked grimly. The expression on her face must have given him the answer because he rolled over, pinning her to the bed.

Mating

"No," she said, staring up at him, unnerved by the depth of his fury.

"You would have let me walk out of here without a word." He didn't say phrase the words in a question. Morgan took them for what they were . . . a very angry statement.

"I'm sorry," she rasped.

"I can't believe you're such a coward, Morgan. I know you've been alone your entire life and that it's unnerving for you to be anyone's mate. I'm sure being the mate of an Alpha with a large pack is daunting to a lone wolf." His eyes bored into hers, never wavering. "But you're my mate, damn it! You're meant to be with me. Yet you would have let me walk away without telling me what I was too fucking blind to see. All because you're scared."

"Yes, I'm afraid! With good reason! If I go home with you, and your pack repudiates me for being the outcast that I am, there will be nothing left of my soul!" she cried hoarsely, tears spilling from her eyes. "I've been cast aside before, Roul. I survived it and it's made me stronger. But this is different. You're my mate and that's permeated every part of me. If we mated and then I lost you . . . it would kill me . . ." The growl that rose from his chest was the most feral sound she'd ever heard.

"Do you think so little of my leadership skills that you think I can't control my pack? That I would let them do such a thing to my mate?" He glared at her, his turquoise eyes flaring with suppressed anger. "And do you think I care so little for you . . . the woman who is my mate . . . the one who completes me? I would leave *them* before I would leave *you*!"

At his words, warmth began to return to her fear-frozen body. He meant it. She felt the truth within him. The pack he'd been raised to lead would lose him if they didn't accept her. "Would you really have walked away from me?" she asked, her voice hoarse with emotion.

Roul made a frustrated sound. "I didn't want to," he admitted. "No woman has ever affected me like you have and it confused me. Realizing you were my mate made my choices clear." His long fingers left her wrists and speared into her hair, cupping her head. "I'll never let you go, Morgan. I'll never walk away. We belong together."

She smiled at him, feeling the bonds between them strengthening. "Not 'you belong to me?'"

He shook his dark head. "You're Alpha. Arrogant as I can be, I fully realize that you're strong like I am, and fiercely proud and possessive. You're my equal. If you belong to me, then by rights, I belong to you."

Tears welled once more in Morgan's eyes, but this time they were tears of joy and relief. "I love you, Roul. I'm more than happy to let you be my keeper." She reached up and stroked her fingers over his tribal bands.

Roul shivered at her touch. "You can be my keeper too. I don't know of any werewolf I'd rather have at my back in a fight, sweetheart."

She cocked an eyebrow at him when he spoke the endearment. He groaned. "You're not gonna tell me I can't call you that, are you? You're my mate now."

She laughed out loud, throwing her arms around his broad shoulders and hugging him tightly. "I've always been your mate. Even when you didn't know." His eyes flashed at her, and she kissed him quick and hard on the lips. "You can call me whatever you want, Roul."

He rolled on the bed, until she straddled him. Then he leaned forward and licked her stiff nipples. "You're coming home with me, aren't you?"

Mating

Morgan nodded, her silvery hair spilling over her bare shoulders. Her fear of losing herself and her fear of losing him had been alleviated by his words and the warmth of his love. “Joey and Angel can run the agency here and live in my apartment. I think it’s time I expanded Watchers to Europe. What do you think?”

Roul’s hands pulled her down until their lips were only a breath apart. “I think I’m going to like being mated.”

Excerpt from

SheWolf

by

Teresa D'Amario

A Freya's Bower Paranormal/Werewolf Novel

Anna plunged the hypodermic syringe into the dog's thigh muscle and slowly released the vaccine into the animal. The large shepherd turned his head and glared at her over his shoulder, but made no move to avoid her ministrations.

That's what she liked about this dog. He was old, and while he didn't like getting his annual shots, he certainly didn't put up a fuss.

"Duke looks in great shape for his age, Mrs. Kelfy." She stood from her cramped position on the floor and picked up her pen to sign the rabies certification. A tap on the door drew her attention, and she turned toward it.

"Dr. Calloway, can I have a word with you?"

Jamie, her newly of-age assistant, stood in the doorway, an odd expression on her face.

"In a minute, Jamie. I'm almost finished here." It was unusual for her assistants to interrupt her with a patient, so it must be important.

"Here you are, Mrs. Kelfy. Give one pill twice per day for ten days and bring him back in a week so we can check on that cut to make sure it's healed up ok." Poor Duke had argued with a barbed wire fence and lost. A little unusual for the big guy, who was already thirteen years old. He was long past the days of dangerous curiosity that plagued young dogs.

"Poor Duke," the woman said.

"He'll be fine. Duke's strong, and even though he's getting older, he's still healthy. Just give him the antibiotics, and he'll heal up beautifully."

The dog's owner nodded and thanked her, then left to pay the bill. Anna headed to the back rooms to talk to her assistant.

"What's up, Jamie?"

Jamie bit her lip. "There's this guy, in room three..."

"Ok, where's the records?" Jamie's smelled sharp, edgy. Confused. "What's the problem?"

"That's just it, Doc. There's no problem. He didn't even bring a pet with him. He said it was for a consultation on his wolf, and he booked the entire afternoon."

"He did what?" The word wolf sent up red flags everywhere. Her assistant went on.

"He booked the entire afternoon appointment block."

Kieran. Who else would be so blatant? If he thought he was getting away cheap, he had another thing coming. "Thanks, Jamie. I'll take care of it."

She stormed to the room and opened the door.

He stood at the aluminum exam table, a magazine open in front of him, his weight propped on his hands as though engrossed in his reading. Though worn and faded, his jeans appeared in good repair. The seams in the shoulders of his black t-shirt stretched to accommodate his powerful chest and biceps. Then her gaze traveled to his face and the dark, hungry, blue eyes that watched her. She swallowed, trying to ease the sudden case of dryness in her throat.

She caught a glimpse of black, square-toed boots on his feet. She'd bet there was a motorcycle out in the parking lot. His scent wafted toward her, spicy and wild. Anna bit her lip. It wouldn't do to let him know just how sexy she found him.

Folding her arms in front of her, she glared at him. "What are you doing here?"

His gaze held hers, a slight quirk to his mouth.

"I'm here for a consultation. Didn't your assistant tell you?"

"Yes, she told me."

“Good. But before we get down to work, let’s have some lunch.”

She glanced at her watch. Lunch was normally at one o’clock, and it was now twelve thirty. “You can’t just blaze in here and take over my appointments, Kieran. I have patients, and they need me.”

“Not today, you don’t. I bought all your time, so you have nothing to worry about.” He spoke over her attempted interruption. “And if you have any emergencies, your very efficient staff can call you.”

Her eyes rolled, and she groaned in frustration. He’d left her alone for three days. Three long days to absorb everything he’d told her. Sometimes she still wondered if it was all a dream and she’d really been drugged after all. Yet the instant she saw him it all tumbled back. Every memory. The wolf, the fight, but most of all, every touch. That brief kiss still burned in her blood.

Realistically, there was no reason to fight it. Except he wasn’t human. For the first time in her life, she was truly attracted to someone. *And why shouldn’t I enjoy it?* Besides, the scientist was fascinated almost as much as the woman.

He waited while she debated in her head, his eyes filled with humor. There it was again, the strange feeling that he could read her thoughts. She certainly hoped not.

“Fine, let me just close up here.”

He nodded, and she headed into the back rooms of the clinic.

“Jamie,” she called, but the girl popped around the corner, a huge smile on her face.

“Right here.”

Anna raised a brow. “Eavesdropping again?”

Her assistant laughed. “What can I say? It’s my best talent.”

Anna chuckled. “Then I guess I don’t have to tell you I’m done for the day, thanks to Kieran. Call me if there are any emergencies.”

She took off her white doctor’s coat and hung it on the rack. Whoever’d chosen white for doctors had a vindictive streak. She went through lab coats faster than she went through dog treats. She snatched a roller with tape on it and cleared any dog hair from her slacks before heading back to Kieran. If she was going to investigate these feelings, she might as well look good.

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