

COBBLESTONE PRESS PRESENTS



# *Tryst* SHIFTERS

AJ Hampton



*Harnessing the Moon*

*By*

*AJ Hampton*

## **Harnessing the Moon by AJ Hampton**

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### **Harnessing the Moon**

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**Dedication**

To Ky for listening to my ideas and helping me make them better. I heart  
you.

## **Chapter One**

It wasn't the musky, rich smell of sex that captured Jade Delaney's interest. No. It was the intoxicating scent of an alpha prime. She drew in a deep breath and trembled. A gust of howling wind whipped, blowing shoulder-length curls against her cheeks. Despite the way her thick wool coat grazed her calves and danced upward to let the chill move under her dress, everything around her seemed motionless. A cold, very distinct, sweetness hung in the air.

Looking up, she watched heavy clouds spin in front of the moon. Strange how something so far away could command her body the way it did. Her blood sped, nipples tingled. A knot tightened her stomach, and the ache between her legs became unbearable.

The yearning was fierce. Desire surged, stole her breath. Thin trees rustled against one another, deepening the ache in her bones. She longed to run through the woods and feel the ground beneath her feet. Three more nights until the moon became full. The choice to remain human or to transform into a tigress would no longer be hers.

Despite the countless times she had shifted, the exact moment when her feline counterpart broke free couldn't be described. The change didn't happen in a flash of blinding light. Her animal didn't tear through skin with razor claws and blinding pain. No, her shift was graceful, effortless. When the power rode her it was a sensual merging that turned the world upside down with colors, sights, and smells.

An engine revved, switching her attention to the gentle vibrations

of the waiting car. She pulled the lapels of her jacket closer around her throat, trapping the warmth next to her skin. A small wave and a forced smile let the driver know she was staying. Everything inside of her told her she should go. The need to mate was overwhelming, something that happened every few months. Most times she got by with safe, one-night stands that had absolutely no potential to become more. Her feline craved more, translated the earthy smells around her, and knew a mate was near.

The sex wasn't what frightened her. Her utter lack of self-control was the culprit. The tigress demanded a mate and had been wreaking havoc in her very controlled human life. For almost a year she'd ignored the need, had gotten by with quick fucks that left the deeper part of her unsatisfied. Human trysts appeased the hunger, but didn't cure the longing. She'd moved from her territory in Colorado eight months ago to protect herself from a making an irreversible mistake. There were too many alphas waiting to pounce, to claim her when she was under the influence of the moon. One bite from another prime was all it took to bind her destiny.

Tonight she'd stumbled blindly into an alpha's trap. Was it fate or dumb luck? Rationality cleared the fog. She could still leave. The choice, at this point, was still hers. She could go home, lock herself in a cage she kept hidden in her basement, and bury a thick vibrator into her pussy until the lure of the moon passed and her cycle abated. *Or*, the naughty part of her brain whispered, she could stay and give in to the need. As the cab pulled away, her gaze locked onto the trailing lights of the car. Despite her trepidation, she didn't move a muscle to hail him back.

Heavy flakes rained from the sky in a blur, distorting the red glow when the car rounded the circle and disappeared around the bend through the trees. Her breathing sped, quickening with her heartbeat, until the car was completely out of sight. She turned, her gaze taking in the beautiful stone and wood mansion that sat in the middle of the forest.

The house was pressed against the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. The trees surrounding the multi level structure created a cloak of privacy. Large, open windows glowed with soft orange light and the silhouettes of moving bodies.

Three stone chimneys of various heights piped curling smoke into the air. The diluted scent of burning wood reminded her of home. Above the wide, covered porch was a round room with four ceiling to floor windows. Drawing from that were several other balconies and a-frame roofs that made up the different levels of the massive house.

She blew out a cloud of breath and listened to her heels clicking across the symmetrically broken slabs of concrete leading toward the single, mahogany door. There was no bell, only a brass tiger with a heavy ring hanging from its mouth. She wondered if Kerry, her best friend and the one who had invited her to this party, had known the host was a shifter. Impossible. Most people were ignorant to the effects of the moon. She'd been damn careful to keep her secret from her friend.

Before she could raise her hand to knock, the door swung open and released a jumble of scents, sights, and heat. The rush was overwhelming. God, what had she been thinking? *A sex party*. This was either the worst, or the best, idea she'd ever gone along with.

"Jade, right? Kerry asked me to keep an ear out for you. Come on in!"

Leave it to her friend, one of the most beautiful women she knew, to surround herself with gorgeous company. The man before her was tall, thin, and had the most amazing pair of blue eyes she'd ever seen. His hand was warm against her arm, and before she could back away, he pulled her inside and slammed the door shut.

Heat tickled her skin, puckering it for all the wrong reasons. She wanted to tell him to let go, but couldn't find the words. He wasn't holding her tight, but the feel of his fingers digging against her flesh gave her a head to toe quivering feeling. There was nothing subtle about her surroundings. This was the alpha's home. His scent moved throughout her and woke the beast. On top of that was the sex she'd smelled when she'd first exited the cab. Inside, trapped, it was a potent mixture.

Slowly, holding her breath, she looked around. The inside looked just as amazing as the outside. The foyer was wide, generous, and had an open curved stairwell to the right. Deep, rich wood finish and trim accented the interior and gave a warm, rustic feel. The air smelled like the

woods, something she thought all shifters held dear to their hearts. This was no doubt a trait the host would have liked to keep close to him. A small spark of admiration started to grow; at least he had taste.

"I'm Derek," the man holding her hands said, breaking the trance she'd drifted into. "I've heard all about you!"

How much was 'all about you' she wondered. Stumbling, she pulled gently on her arm. He didn't release her. "Nice to meet you. I'm just ah—"

"—a little nervous?" he finished at her pause. "It's okay. The first time is always like that."

She really hated when people finished her sentences. Nervous wasn't the word she was going to use. It was difficult finding the right words to describe how cruelly aroused by the moon's influence she was. Tugging with a little more force, she gained control of her limbs and flashed Derek an unstable smile.

They stood looking at each other for a moment, and she could feel the wheels spinning in his head. Sweet, bitter, every time he breathed she tasted the whiskey on his breath. That was strike two. His gaze passed over the curve of her mouth, the slant of her jaw. Lower, his sights passed over the bulk of her jacket, and she knew he wanted to see what was beneath.

A couple trotted down the stairs, and their voices carried on the other sounds of the house. As she focused her senses everything became sharp. She could smell the sweat on their bodies, the salty hitch of cum that lingered on the woman's skin. Looking at their faces, the way they carried on a conversation about the stock market... It was a strange combination of normal and erotic.

Derek made a sound in the back of his throat and before she could stop herself, she turned her attention back to him. Slowly, like unwrapping a present, she drew her gaze over his entire body. One click of her heel brought their bodies just an inch apart. The urge to throw him to the ground, rip off his black slacks, and impale herself on his wanting cock was disturbing.

"Can I take your coat?" His voice was eager, promising. *Damn it!*



Kerry's invitation had been more of a demand; something she had to experience once in her lifetime. When Jade asked what one wore to a sex party, the only hint she'd been given was a smile full of blinding white teeth and a sassy, 'something with easy access'. Kerry's acceptance of anything and everything sexual was liberating. It was just one of the many things Jade admired about her.

Derek went to take her jacket, but she was quicker. She could take it off herself, thank you. Like pulling a band-aid from a wound, she made quick work of the large, black buttons and pulled her coat free. Her dress was simple, yet revealing. The bodice split in a v that ended just below her belly button. The silk covering her breasts was kept in place with a halter-style tie around her neck. Her back was completely exposed. She walked toward the sound of the bar and ignored the suffocating surge of lust Derek gave off.

She wasn't a beautiful woman. Not in her eyes. Then again, in her experience men didn't seem all that picky when it came to sex. It wasn't *her* that Derek was interested in; it was the curves of her breasts, the flair of her hips. Even if he didn't realize it, he was attracted to the pheromones she was giving off. Everyone, including humans, had animal instincts. Shifters were just more in tune with them.

Kerry had told her parties like this were about letting go, about experiencing guilt free passion and lust. Tonight that had been her plan. Feed the need and walk away temporarily sated. At the time it had seemed like a good idea. Now that she had sensed the prime, felt his energy pulsing through her, she knew he was the only one she needed to concern herself with. It was stupid, risky, something that would alter the entire course of her life if she wasn't careful. It was no longer her choice.

She glanced over her shoulder and caught Derek staring at her ass, almost as if he was trying to see through it. She wondered if he knew she hadn't bothered with panties. He wasn't going to find out.

"Know where I can find Kerry?" Her voice sounded strained.

Oblivious to her disinterest, the warmth of his hand started at the base of her spine and moved up until she could feel the tingles at the base of her neck. Her body was betraying her. Walking deeper into the house,

they passed a large, spacious bathroom with a mosaic floor. As they passed the door she caught sight of herself in the stretched, oval mirror hanging above the sink. The heat in her green eyes made her cringe. *Disinterested, her ass.* Wide pupils, parted lips, rosy cheeks...her signals were all wrong.

When they entered the great room, Derek's hand moved low enough so the tips of his fingers touched the curve of her ass. She sucked in a breath. He pressed against her back, trapping heat between them. His cock was hard against the line of her spine, and it sent a jolt of desire straight to her core. Laid out on an over-sized beige sofa in front of them were two writhing women, their blonde and black hair tangled together.

A fire crackled, bringing her focus to the hearth and the vibrant colored rug in front of it. On it were several couples, some hetero, others not. The group moved together, pushing, pulling, fucking. A glow of light played off their sweat-slicked bodies, and she wished she could be in the thick of it. Mouths met; hands caressed.

The passionate haze they created was so thick she could taste it. Total abandon. A man drew his tongue down the slender column of a woman's neck. Jade couldn't look away. His lips stopped at her breasts, and he used his hands to guide one into his mouth. Behind her, someone thrust, making her cry out when two men began to simultaneously pleasure her. The group rolled, some switched partners, and the tangle of flesh grew even more convoluted.

"You can join in if you'd like, they won't mind." Derek's voice was low, seductive in her ear.

His hand curved over the crest of her hip, and her stomach jumped. His fingers were smooth, too soft. Moving under the material of her dress, he took advantage of the expanse of exposed flesh and began stroking her stomach. The way she arched her back, grinding her ass against his erection, betrayed what she really wanted. What she needed was to get the hell away from Derek before her hormones took over.

She played a dangerous game. Alphas were possessive, arrogant. Knowingly endangering someone would be cruel.

"Jade!" Kerry's familiar, husky voice sounded from across the

room. She jumped. The motion jerked Derek's hand away from her skin.

If Kerry hadn't been bi-sexual, Jade would have kissed her. Her friend crossed the room, smiling, waving, working the crowd like she normally did. The short, tight red dress she wore clung to her curves. It made her mocha skin look flawless.

"We need to talk," Jade blurted and grabbed her hand. There were no pleasantries like hello or how good to see you. There wasn't time for that. Tugging, she dragged her toward the powder room she'd passed.

When they came to a stop and Jade rested her back against the closed door she finally took a deep breath. Kerry didn't just smell like sex, she reeked of it. This was a very bad idea.

"Hey, JD, are you okay?" Kerry said the nickname she'd given her the first day they met with an affectionate smile. "You look a little flushed." Pressing a cool hand against her forehead, she frowned. "God, you're burning up!"

Burning up was an understatement. Jade sighed, gently moved her friend's hand, and crossed the six feet to the free standing, mosaic sink. She placed her hands on either side of the basin and dipped her head. She arched her back, stretching in an attempt to loosen the tight sensation consuming her. The heat of Kerry's gaze moved up the length of her legs.

Jade looked up into the mirror and caught her friend's reflection. She was going to ignore the lust sparking in their depths. "Do you know the guy who owns this house?" Jade blurted.

A puzzled look moved over Kerry's heart-shaped face. She lifted a dark eyebrow in question that normally indicated Jade was doing something that made her look crazy. "Of course I do, silly. I told you that already."

No, she hadn't. "When?"

"The moon makes you wacky, you know that, right?" She made a rude sound in the back of her throat. "Yesterday I gushed for almost twenty minutes about Hunter and how excited I was about this party and that you'd decided to come. Remember, he's the one who designed my house?"

"His name is Hunter?" His parents had a sense of humor.

Sashaying across the room, Kerry stopped an inch away from her back and looked into the mirror. The devious smile she flashed made Jade's anxiety level raise a notch. Uh oh. Her friend traced a line down her arm. A trail of fire lit in its wake. What the hell was she doing?

Jade turned around as Kerry drew closer. Her eyes darted to Kerry's throat. The vein there pulsed in a tempting, seductive lure that made her mouth water. A throaty laugh jiggled her friend's breasts before she backed away and smiled. Kerry liked to play games.

"I wasn't going to tell you this; I swore I wouldn't but..." She let the sentence hang in the air.

Typical, Jade thought. "Cut the theatrics, just tell me." Her hands made the gesture to continue with her story.

"You're no fun! Hunter came by my house a few weeks ago. You had just left; I think he must have seen you pulling away. He started asking all kinds of questions. I'd never seen him so interested in anything before. I told him what I knew, and then he told me to invite you."

"You didn't think that was strange?"

"Why? Look in the mirror. You're thin, stunning, and that mess of brunette curls you have is to die for! I knew you liked to party, thought you might have a good time, so I told him I'd arrange it."

"*I like to party?* Are you calling me a slut?" She tried to keep a straight face. It wasn't working.

She couldn't be mad; Kerry had no idea what she'd done. Hunter had manipulated the situation and lured her in. *Bastard.*

"Of course I am!" Kerry's laugh echoed. "And is it really that big of a deal if some handsome, millionaire bachelor wanted to meet you? He's damn picky. Has these fancy parties every few months and just strolls around, mingling, showing off his eight-pack. He's got back muscles that'll make your mouth water! And don't get me started on his eyes." She gave a throaty moan. "They lure you in and pin you down. I came on to him once, got shot down. He was very polite about it, though."

Men didn't turn Kerry down. It wasn't a good sign. An alpha looking for a mate didn't screw around. They were focused, determined. Kerry would have been just an appetizer for what he really needed.

"Now, come on. I'm missing the party. There are these Norwegian twins I've got my eye on. Can you imagine how great I'd look sandwiched between them?"

Jade chuckled. "I'm sure it will be a sight they will cherish for the rest of their lives."

When they exited, Jade made a move toward the door, ready to call it a night. Kerry wasn't drugged by the moon and was quicker on the draw. How'd she even know she was going to make a run for the exit? Kerry tugged on her hand, interlocking their fingers before pulling her toward the bar.

"Just give it a chance." Kerry blinked her big brown eyes and gave a mock pout. It was damn hard to resist. "Oh!" She changed directions. The sensation made her into a life-sized rag doll being dragged around the house. More than ever, Jade was convinced her friend had ADD.

"There is a BDSM dungeon downstairs; you've got to see it. It makes my basement look like a walk in closet," Kerry gushed.

Jade followed with a shake of her head. She didn't know if she should be terrified or excited. "Who *is* this guy?"

## Chapter Two

Hunter Davis was going to tear someone's head off. He pulled his feet from the smooth, glass surface of the desk, and they fell to the ground one thump at a time. The chair he'd been leaning back in sprung upright and launched him forward. He brought his laptop an inch from his nose, and his jaw clenched. He'd hoped by looking closer at the screen the images would change. They didn't. Derek was still being a douche, and Jade...she was stunning. Her dark russet curls graced the back of her neck and rested just above her shoulders. The color was a beautiful contrast to her pale skin and light green eyes.

The tight, uncomfortable sensation inside him was suffocating. The second he'd picked up the unique aroma at Kerry's house he had felt it. *Mate*. He'd stumbled, forgotten to breath. Everything became hypersensitive: sounds, smells, and the prickling sensation of goose bumps tightening his skin. He had tightened his fists until his nails cut into his palms. The pain had kept him from shifting. He knew, just as his tiger did, that whoever Kerry's friend was, she needed to be his.

Deep inside of his soul the gut wrenching need began. It was unlike anything he'd experienced before. It wasn't just lust, no, that was a simple fix. His tiger thrashed, paced, fought to be free, so it could seek out his mate and claim her. His world became diluted and foggy. Nothing was clear except her. It was strange to feel so intimately about someone he'd never met before. Eating, sleeping, work, everything was immaterial except bonding with his mate.

Waiting for her to come to him was torture. He'd known Jade was a delicate creature. Attacking her at home, pushing her up against a wall, sliding her dress up, and fucking her until she came, screaming his name, wasn't an option. Not yet. All he could do was fantasize about the taste of her skin. Think about how it was going to be when her blood spilled into his mouth and her pussy clenched around him. He had dreams of binding her, tying her arms high over her head when he spread her legs and drew his hand over her ass.

Hunter trailed his hand across his cock through his pants and growled in response. He was harder than he'd ever been. When Jade had pulled up to his house the pain at having her so close, yet so far away, was devastating. The tension was clear in her eyes from the second she stepped foot from the cab. It wasn't just the desire she felt in the air. She'd sensed *him*, his hunger. There had been a moment, eyes darting from the moon to the black and yellow car, that she'd contemplated running. It was the reason he was sulking in his office watching her on a seventeen-inch screen instead of screwing her into oblivion.

It had to be her choice. Unlike his father, he would never force a mate. He was the unfortunate result of that coupling, and he'd seen how the marriage came to destroy his mother. No, he'd earn Jade's respect. He would prove not just to the feline, but also to her human side, that they belonged together. A low, untamed growl echoed throughout the room. Every second he secluded himself away, giving her space, was another moment he had to watch someone else touch her.

On screen he watched Derek, his business partner, give her a wide smile with sparkling eyes. His casual touches were deceiving. Hunter knew the game better than most. He stared at the computer, anger morphing into rage, as his protégée bent and took a deep breath of Jade's hair. Her eyes fluttered shut when his nose touched her neck. She drew in a shaky breath. The moon, the need to mate, was riding her hard. It was only a matter of time before she lost control. When Derek's mouth moved against the shell of her ear, Hunter studied the motion of his lips until he could decipher them. *'You can join in if you'd like, they won't mind.'*

"The hell she can," Hunter hissed and slammed his laptop onto the

desk.

Being the best at everything he did was what had helped him to break away from his father's territory, start his own business, and secure his fortune. From a young boy he'd been cocky and controlling, struggled to find the balance in blending his two identities. It wasn't until he laid eyes on his mate that the underlying possessiveness in him came to a peak. The sensation forced him to his feet. As much as he wanted to, he couldn't tear his eyes from the screen, or the way Derek trailed his fingers over Jade's hip. She trembled. He could see the tension brimming under the surface of her skin. That was supposed to be him. Derek moved his hand under the flimsy material of her dress, fingers disappearing until they peaked out the v that ran down the front of her chest. Slowly, back and forth, he stroked her stomach.

I'm going to kill him.

It was the last lucid thought he had before his tiger leaped. Razor sharp claws split from his fingers. His pupils changed, shifting the room into a multitude of colors. The smells of the house became so real he could taste them. Wood, sex, blood—they rushed at him and amplified his hunger. He heard everything at once. A whip snapped through the air; a glass shattered to the ground. Ice cubes tumbled across the hard floor. Wet flesh slapped together. Someone moaned, and he heard the distinct sound of nails scratching across skin. His eyes pulled tight, curving up toward his ears. As a single spark of coherency flashed to life inside him, he panted. He had to get himself under control. Slowly, one feature at a time, he concentrated on pushing his cat back. Forcing a 400-pound tiger to do anything wasn't easy, especially when he *was* the tiger.

The room dulled; the smells faded. He could no longer hear the rattle of chains from the basement. He had to have her now. The office door slammed against the wall when he crossed through the master suite toward the stairwell. Palm sliding over the smooth, rounded banister, he descended each floor with a determined stride. The look on his face must have been a warning, because the few people he passed gave him a generous breadth. He expected to find her in the great room, right where the screen had left her. The only thing he found was a sweaty mass of



beautiful bodies. He took a deep breath and confirmed quickly she wasn't in the pile. Somehow, that didn't make him feel better.

What had he been thinking when he'd invited her to one of his parties? His pride assumed she'd seek him out. He hadn't counted on having to drag her upstairs before she found another. Stupid. His gaze moved through the entranceway, and from where he stood he was afforded a clear view of several other connected rooms.

A rumble vibrated his chest when he spotted Derek, his hip and elbow pressed against a beige wall. A simmering fire flickered beside him and cracked as the log collapsed. When Derek lifted his finger to move a lock of hair off a brunette's forehead, Hunter curled his fists and blew out a breath through his nose. It wasn't until he was half way across the room that he realized it wasn't Jade.

"Don't worry, she's in the dungeon." He recognized the sound of Kerry's sweet, honey voice.

Kerry came up behind him and pressed her breasts against his side. They were too hard to be real. He turned his head and watched the contrast of their skin when her fingers trailed up his arm. Her desire was rich, potent, but the only thing he could focus on was the scent of his mate lingering on her. Turning, he grabbed Kerry's hand and intertwined their fingers. He bent and placed a soft, gentle kiss on her cheek in lieu of a greeting before pulling away. Appearances were everything in the human world. It was hard to be gentle when everything inside of him was a raging inferno of rage and desire.

"Is she alone?"

Kerry's cheekbones shot up with her smile. When she chuckled, the breasts spilling from her dress swayed with the motion. "Jade likes to party, but she's not into the hard stuff. She's fascinated though. God, you should have seen her face when they stretched Gloria up on the St. Andrews cross. She kept asking if they were hurting her. I kept telling her that was the point. I only left her alone down there to get her a drink. Poor thing looks like she's about to pass out."

The soft, endearing tone she used soothed the beast inside him. There was something special about Kerry, something he hadn't figure out

yet. She wasn't a shifter; he would have smelled her animal. Something though, lurked inside of that pretty head of hers.

A cold, slippery bottle of water was pressed into his hand.

"She's waitin' for you, tiger," Kerry said with a wink before sashaying off.

That was a joke, right? He shook his head, too distracted to dwell on it. His hand closed around the bottle, clutching it when he turned toward the stairs. He couldn't screw this up.

When he stepped from the last stair it was like he'd stepped into a medieval torture room. The temperature dropped, and the soft light of electricity disappeared. Here, it was cool, damp, and dark. The only light came from flickering torches placed strategically throughout the hall of the dungeon. Aged gray bricks made up the walls and chunky concrete slabs fashioned the floor. Each step he took echoed. Each scream and moan reverberated through him.

There was one main hall and from it cells had been designed to allow each space a unique theme and the players inside privacy. Ten on each side, every chamber had shackles bolted into the concrete, along with different instruments meant for punishing and arousing. Some rooms had spanking benches, others cages. One was designed for electro-stimulation.

He found Jade sitting alone on a long, concrete slab bench he'd made for spectators. His stomach dropped. She looked so out of place, yet at the same time she looked completely at home. Her lips were parted, her eyes wide. Every few seconds she would tuck an errant piece of hair behind her ear. When she did, her finger would slowly trail over the shell of her ear and down the pulsing vein in her neck. She was the most beautiful thing he'd ever seen. When choosing a mate, the animal instinct took over. The physical didn't matter. The fact that she was gorgeous was just a bonus. She wasn't the conventional super model type, though. No. Her beauty was unique, fresh.

Her legs were crossed at the knee so her short dress rode up her thigh. The gaping neckline rewarded him with the tantalizing silhouette of her breasts. There was just enough fabric to leave the color of her hard nipples to his imagination. A loud, snapping crack of a whip sliced

through the air, and the scent of blood drowned everything else out. She gasped.

Her arousal hitched, danced around him, and drew him toward her. Leather. Blood. Sex. The intense scent of fear was like a heavy blanket. Despite the chilled temperature of the basement a bead of sweat curled down his back. Above all that was Jade. An erotic mixture of fascination and arousal painted her cheeks and neck red. Moving with silence and grace, he slid next to her. The closer he got, the stronger he felt her tigress straining to get to him.

At his approach, she turned to look at him. His stomach tightened when she passed her gaze over his mouth, down his neck and lower across his chest. He hadn't bothered with a shirt. The hungry look that filled her eyes let him know his appearance please her. She lifted her sights and met his eyes dead on.

"You tricked me." She said it in a soft, breathy whisper.

She lifted her hand and a finger rasped down his cheek, reminding him he'd forgotten to shave. Where they touched, heat spread outward and enveloped him. She traced his lower lip, and he couldn't resist temptation when he sucked her finger into his mouth. Her eyes fluttered closed, and her back arched. Her heartbeat hiccupped. He swirled his tongue around the finger, nibbling it so he could get just a faint idea of what the rest of her body would taste like.

He threaded his hand through her hair, needing to know if the curls were as soft as they looked. It was odd, how someone he'd never met could feel so familiar. Closing his fist, he gently tugged and brought her chest against his. The second their skin touched everything inside of him exploded. When he had her, there was going to be no finesse. Her finger fell from between his lips.

In a similar caress to the one she'd given him, he drew his nose down her cheek. As he nuzzled against her neck, her heart sped. He passed the back of his knuckles across her arm and watched the goose bumps rise under the caress.

"You knew what I wanted, and yet, you still came through the door. You had your chance to leave," he whispered against her ear. Before

his lips could graze her throat, she pulled back. Lust danced in her eyes, but she wasn't lost completely.

Her hand trailed down the line of his chest. Rolling her eyes upward, she gave him a sexy smirk. "Who says I'm staying?"

They both knew she wasn't going anywhere. The cool bottle he picked up felt like ice against his overheated skin. "I brought you water."

The hand she rested on his stomach moved dangerously low. "That's not what I'm thirsty for."

A whip cracked through the air, followed by a shuddering moan. The sound snapped him back to reality. Jade cocked her head to the side and gave him a mystified expression. Moving closer she pressed her lips against his ear. Her breath echoed inside of his head and tasted like mint. She pointed to one of the dungeons and whispered, "Tell me why anyone would subject themselves to that."

Arms stretched out to the side like a t, the man she pointed to was attached to a specially made spanking bench. His wrists hung from the shackles, and his head was captured in a wooden stockade. He was gagged, his face covered in a black leather mask that had holes for his nose and mouth. His Dom stood behind him, her long ebony hair curled up. Black fish net stockings covered her legs and ended at a garter. A too tight black and green corset pushed her breasts out the top. The whip she held at her side acted like an extension of her hand. She lashed out again. The sub jerked, but didn't make a sound. Like magic, a thin crimson line appeared across his back.

The Mistress smiled. She bent and ever so delicately licked at the wound she'd inflicted.

"That's a good boy," she whispered as she ran a soothing hand down his back. A second later, she hit him, this time not as hard. Now it was Jade who flinched.

"That's a complicated question." He traced his finger over the delicate bones of her clavicle. He dipped lower, tracing her sternum. Her skin quivered beneath his touch.

The unsatisfied look on her face made her nose scrunch up. She opened her mouth to speak, but he was quicker. He was running on pure

adrenalin, his anger and passion fueling a raging fire deep inside. The feline inside of him pounced, made him move with more speed and grace than was normal. One second they were sitting, the next, she was flat on her back, his hands pinning her wrists to the cold stone bench. He felt possessed. The pain in his body at not having her faded and for the first time in weeks he could breathe.

Her legs parted on instinct, allowing him room to move between her thighs. A needy gasp left her lips as his cock pressed against her pussy. She wasn't wearing panties. All he felt was the warmth of her arousal against his pants as he thrust against her. Bucking off the bench, she fought the sudden change in position. He tightened his hold with purpose, silently letting her know he was the stronger one.

"It's a complicated answer because it's not something I can explain," he whispered against her ear. His hand slid up her thigh until he cupped her round, firm ass. "But I might be able to show you."

### Chapter Three

Jade felt the warmth of Hunter's mouth close around her ear lobe and couldn't stop the moan that came deep from her gut. He could show her; she bet he could do a lot of things for her. The first delicious tremors of pleasure swept through her. For the first time in months a deep satisfaction settled low in her belly. Hunter's cock was hard, thick against her clit. With every breath he took his body moved, teasing her sensitive parts with just a taste of what was to come. From her ear to her neck, he rained hot kisses across her skin that ignited the fire burning inside.

His palm moved from her ass to her knee and back. As he went, his grip tightened and released. The breath she inhaled was shaky. It pushed her breasts against the hard muscles of his chest. His tiger's scent wrapped around her, invaded her until it caressed the beast fighting to be free inside of her. Mate. The second he'd stepped into the dungeon he stopped being an alpha male and became *her* alpha male.

"Would you like to play a game?" Hunter asked in a husky whisper. He transferred his caress to the inside of her thigh.

It was hard to think, to speak, when all she wanted to do was push him on his back and bury her face in his neck. She didn't just crave his cock moving inside of her; she craved him—his tiger. For the first time in her life she wanted to be dominated, to know how it felt to be at someone's mercy when they pounded into her with abandon. Like the subs she'd seen just minutes prior, she wanted to give in and lose control. She wanted to be naughty.

“Yes.” It came out in a needy sigh.

The closer it got to the full moon, the harder the blood surged in her veins. Every sense was razor sharp. Behind her were cries and deep moans of ecstasy. The subs craved the pain, the torment, and the soothing touch of their masters. Kerry had said the pain was the point. What did that mean? What she craved was relief, no matter what else happened. Hunter could give her that.

As he looked down at her, their noses touched. The soft, short strands of his hair brushed against her brow. Every time his chest rose and deflated, the warmth of his breath painted across her skin. He thrust against the juncture of her thighs, and the smooth leather of his pants against her sensitive sex was almost enough to push her over the edge.

“Bondage doesn’t have to be about pain or humiliation. I can show you how it can be, how it can create a bond between mates. That is, if you’ll let me.” His hand fell away from her thigh, and she whimpered at the loss.

Almost too light to feel, he began tracing the letters H and D, his initials she presumed, over her kneecap. It was a simple, yet possessive gesture that reminded her of what she’d be giving up—freedom.

She struggled, pushed her chest against his, and tried to free herself. Hunter was there, pushing back and holding her tighter. Trapped between the rock slab beneath her and the hard surface of his muscles made it hard to breathe. An abrupt spark of heat moved uncomfortably through her. Her breathing changed from an aroused pant to a panicked hiccup. The first sticky beads of sweat gathered at the nape of her neck.

“We aren’t mates,” she said through clenched teeth. It didn’t matter that her tigress disagreed with her.

Jade bowed her back, tried to push him off, but he was too strong. The only thing she accomplished was to further rouse her feline’s appetite to mate. It was a losing battle, one she didn’t even want to win. But the rational, terrified part of her wouldn’t let it go.

The soft material of her dress felt abrasive against her tender nipples. Every breath, every twitch, drew it against her skin. A fine layer of moisture lined her back where she was pressed against stone. Out of

breath from her efforts, the fight left her as she glared at the man on top of her.

He met her eyes. The hunger swirling in his depths told her how much her struggles had turned him on. She wasn't the only one fighting the moon's pull.

"We aren't mates *yet*. Give me time, kitten." The arrogance in his voice should have pissed her off. It had the opposite effect.

"Don't call me kitten." It was the first clear, precise thing she'd been able to get out. "Let me up."

Without question or reservation, he did what she asked. She hadn't expected him to really do it. Growing up she'd heard about stories about alphas in their prime. They were aggressive, selfish assholes with no regard for anything except taking and keeping what they claimed. The weight and heat of his body disappeared as he rose. Why did that disappoint her?

Before she could blink the thought away he was there, his hand in hers as he drew her away from the bench. It wasn't the firm grip he held on her wrist that assured her he wasn't giving up, it was the possessive gleam in his eyes. That look told her he'd fight for what he wanted—her.

He walked briskly, and the thud of his boots drowned out the delicate tap of her heels. Every few steps brought a new cell, a new morbidly erotic image into view. Chains, whips, cages, it was more than she was ready for. Instead, she focused on his back, the way the breadth of his shoulders tapered to a slender waist. His skin was tan. She had a strong urge to run her tongue along the indent of his spine and taste him, feel him strain beneath her. His skin was smooth and flawless, and she wondered how the marks of her nails would look crisscrossed across his back.

A bead of sweat dripped, moving down the curve of his neck. She concentrated on that, not on the man who was on his hands and knees in a puppy cage with a chain hooked around his neck. Attached to his nipples were clamps that made the buds look purple. Every time he moved, the clamps jerked on a string that disappeared between his legs. What amount of pleasure could possibly replace the amount pain and humiliation he



must feel?

Hunter stopped at the opposite end of the room and lifted a camouflaged panel. The keypad glowed blue in the darkness. His fingers danced along the numbers too quick for her to see the code. It was hard not to be impressed when a slab of brick opened to reveal an elevator.

Stepping inside, he turned and held out his hand. "I'm asking you to trust me."

This was it. Once she went with him, she knew there was no going back. Could she trust a complete stranger? The rational part of her screamed no, the animal inside of her said yes. Her instincts won. The warmth of his fingers slid between hers as she stepped forward. He tugged her close, skimming a hand up her spine before cupping the back of her neck. She was only faintly aware of the doors closing, sealing her alone with a man who was bound to have an irrevocable impact on her life.

She tilted her head up to meet his eyes. Passion. Lust. Need. The heat between them was suffocating. Jade ran her tongue across her inside of her lower lip and moaned at the tickling sensation. His muscles twitched as her hand trailed from his forearm to the knob of his elbow. The gallop of their heartbeats filled her head so loudly that even if she wanted to think, she wouldn't have been able to.

Hunter took one step forward and she took one backward, maintaining the slight gap between them. He growled low in his throat, and it sent a shiver down her spine. Another step and she had nowhere to go. The length of his torso pressed against hers until she was pinned between him and the wall. Closer still, he didn't stop pressing into her until his cock dug into her stomach and knocked the breath from her lungs.

The dam inside that held everything back threatened to crack as the tension grew. If he didn't take her soon, she'd just have to do it herself.

A look of longing passed through his eyes as he ran his fingers down her cheek and over her jaw. "I'll be as gentle as I can," he whispered.

The coarse golden hair that dusted his jaw rasped against her cheek

as he took her mouth in a kiss that sent them both spiraling. Demanding, rough, his hands moved over her body as he held her tighter. Mindless to anything except the male body in front of her, Jade lost all reason. She threaded her fingers through his hair, holding him against her as she stroked her tongue against his. When she tilted her head to the side, their embrace deepened. Teeth clanked as his hands dug into the soft flesh at her hips. It was a desperate attempt to get closer. He ground his body against hers, his swollen cock pressing against her stomach when he devoured her.

So intimately intertwined, she felt his tiger lurking inside of his mind. In perfect clarity she saw the orange, white, and black stripes that covered his fur. Her tigress lunged, chased after him until she hit the invisible barrier of her mind. She felt the metaphysical push like cool fingers dipping in warm water. As they joined spiritually, the silk of fur nuzzling against her feline's neck quieted the rush, the need to shift. It was like nothing she had ever experienced.

Never breaking the kiss, Hunter moved her bodice aside and cupped the tender weight of her breast. A sharp spike of need ran straight to her core. His hands were callused, the perfect texture moving across her sensitive nipple. The need pulsing through her was going to tear her in half.

When he released her mouth she gasped for breath, for sanity, as the sensations he was causing forced her nails into the corded muscles at his back. Feather light, such a contrast to the frenzied need to mate surging between them, his lips moved across her cheek toward her neck. He threaded his other hand through her hair.

The gentle touch turned forceful. Forming a fist, he tugged, eliciting another needy moan as her head snapped to the side allowing the access he desired. He nibbled against her throat, nipping her skin as she mewled against him. He slipped a knee between her thighs and guided her dripping pussy against the hard surface. A gasp followed the shuddering bolt of pleasure.

When his teeth clamped down around her windpipe, she lost it. Her body was wound too tight. Hard, blinding, an orgasm clenched her

muscles in bursts of pleasure that made her numb. Rolling her hips, she ground herself against him harder and rode out the aftershocks of her climax.

"You are the most beautiful thing I've ever encountered." The rough tone of his voice was the only indication that he was losing control. In a maddening slow pace his fingers trailed along her thighs. Where he touched, the muscles under his fingers quivered.

"Tell me what you want," he demanded.

Her nails scraped against his neck, and she whimpered when his knuckles graze the lips of her sex.

"I want you to touch me. To make me scream." Her voice lowered as she grabbed his hand and placed it on her slit. Enough teasing. The heat of his hand flowed up through her body. "Promise me one thing."

He blinked slowly, and for the first time she noticed how sinfully long his eye lashes were. He applied more pressure against her sex, cupping her flesh. She shivered against him despite the raging fire that entrapped them. A tremor of arousal coursed through her body, jagged, like a bolt of lightning.

"Anything." From the tone of his voice and the look in his eyes, she knew he'd get her the world if she asked.

She didn't want the world. She wanted him. "Don't hold back."

He slanted his mouth over hers. The urgency between them grew with each swipe of his tongue against hers. When he pushed, she pulled, and vice-versa until nothing remained—no thought, just sensation. He slipped two fingers inside her, his knuckles twisting in and out. Her body clenched around the invasion, and her nails left red welts on his back as he started to stroke another climax from the inside out. Her stomach jumped, coiled. The desperate plea for more came out as a whimper. Stretching her wider, he added a third finger.

His momentum increased as he tore his mouth away from hers. His dark brown eyes looked black. Through the layer of stubble that covered his jaw, she could see the muscle twitching there. His thumb brushed the tight pearl of her clit. The sensation forced her eyes closed.

"Look at me." he growled.

Her eyes snapped open at the command. She didn't dare look away from the stark hunger on his face. It was erotic to know he was watching her, waiting for her to fall over the edge. Harder, faster, deeper, it felt like the floor was disappearing out from under her.

"Hunter," she gasped, his name slipping from lips as her body tightened and flexed around his fingers. Forcing herself to look at him, to watch her orgasm through his eyes and not turn away, made everything more intense.

Before she could catch her breath, he withdrew his fingers and turned her. She gasped as her cheek collided with the wall. With strong hands he grabbed her wrists and placed her palms flat on the surface in front of her. The only thing she could feel were his hands biting into her flesh and the chill transferring from the wall.

Jade tried to move, to turn around and face the man who had so easily turned her body into a quivering abyss. She was stopped by the warmth of his hand pressing against the base of her neck, pinning her in place. He squeezed, and she found it hard to breath.

"Don't move, *kitten*." His voice was low and deep, setting off a wicked tingling. He stepped forward. His breath was hot against her ear and his cock hard against her spine. "I haven't decided if I want to tie you up, fuck you right here, or bury my face in that sweet pussy of yours."

The rich tenor of his voice sent a vibration straight to the center of her soul. The thought of him doing all three almost made her come again. His breathing was ragged and his erection painfully hard. It throbbed against her. She thought giving into an alpha would ease her ache. It only made it worse. Her fingers bent, nails scratching against the wall as the moon's desire rushed through her.

"Do you know how delicious you smell?" Hunter smoothed the material of her skirt up and over her hips, and the trailing feel of silk made her back arch. "I never imagined it could be like this."

Slowly, tenderly, his hand caressed the swell of her ass. He moved lower to trace the swollen lips of her sex. His grazing touch was such a contrast to what she wanted. Everything inside her was screaming to be fucked, to be taken hard and deep. It was far too early in the night for

begging.

The scrape of a zipper made the fine hairs on the back of her neck stand. She closed her eyes, hands slipping down the wall as the anticipation mounted. Using only his fingers, he teased and tormented her body until she was shivering. She braced herself, ass pointed high in the air like an animal in heat waiting to be rutted. That's exactly what she was. It was both humiliating and arousing to be exposed like this to him. He teased the tip of his cock against her inner folds but didn't enter.

"Hunter," she growled in warning as she tried to thrust herself onto him.

The grip on her neck tightened as he pushed inside her one slow inch at a time. It felt like he was penetrating her soul. There was no resistance; just smooth, hard flesh filling her. It was far from the relief she sought. He withdrew completely and left her empty, waiting. His hand moved over her ass, up her spine, back to her thigh before he repeated his torture. He did this a few more times, toying with her, giving her only half of what she needed.

"I need you to fuck me," she sobbed, struggling against the wall.

"No." His fingers tightened against her hips as he started a slow, smooth, assault. With each careful thrust it felt like he was memorizing the curves of her body, proving that she was his.

The few minutes that passed felt like an eternity. Her climax lingered in the distance but wasn't close enough to grasp. He was moving too slow, too erratic. Yet, with each careful stroke she inched that much closer. Never breaking rhythm, Hunter continued. With every stroke her body grew wetter. He sped up, his fingers digging deeper into her flesh as her back and shoulders stiffened. She was so damn close it hurt.

"I need..." He knew exactly what she needed and gave it to her.

His hand moved over her stomach, fingers slick from her arousal, and he flicked her clit. The rich flood of ecstasy was magic. Her back arched as she screamed. Her climax was more powerful than anything she had ever experienced. Hunter's control snapped. He took her hard and fast. Each thrust was punctuated with a grunt. Quicker still, hips slapped against her ass and the sound of wet flesh filled their tiny compartment.

His tiger attacked her tigress, pushing her to the ground and clamping his teeth at the tender nape of her neck. She felt power wash over them as they joined in both body and spirit. He was still human, still fucking her into oblivion, yet he moved with the speed and grace that was inhuman. He was finally giving her what she'd been longing for.

"Fuck. Harder, please. God yes!" she panted.

Each time he pounded into her, she saw stars. Bruises formed on her hips where his fingers bit into her skin, and she welcomed it. She wanted to see his marks, the evidence of their coupling. His body slapped against hers each time he thrust deeper and deeper. One hand abandoned her hip, and the fire of his skin moved up her spine as he traced his fingers there. His hand threaded through her curls as he pulled. The motion pulled her away from the cool wall and brought her against his slick chest. His heart raced, pounding against her back.

"I've never felt anything as good as this." His mouth found her neck, and she was too far-gone to tell him to stop. His teeth clamped around the back of her neck, but he didn't bite down hard enough to mark her. His thrusts became erratic. Her screams of pleasure got louder.

Shuddering, she felt him jerk as he came deep inside her. For the first time since the hellish routine of her cycles started the longing subsided. Hot, wet, his cum soothed her womb before she felt the sticky remains drip down her leg.

A few seconds later, Hunter stilled and let his hand fall from her hair. Gentle, almost reverently, he bestowed a soft kiss on the back of her neck where he'd clamped down. He'd bitten her, but didn't draw blood.

They were both panting, reveling in the aftermath of their joining, too stunned to speak. Her skin trembled as he traced his fingers over her the bruises he had left on her hips. She sighed, feeling a rush of relief swell from deep inside of her. She was sated. For now.

He stepped away from her, and she heard the rasp of his pants moving up his legs. He didn't bother with the zipper. Turning, she smoothed her dress back into place. They looked at each for a few seconds, eyes raw and emotions bare. Like a magnetic force too strong to resist they came together, his palm cupping her cheek as their lips met.

Renewed passion sparked almost instantaneously as their embrace deepened. She wished she could swallow his very essence and keep it with her forever. When Hunter placed both hands around her waist and lifted, she took the hint. Her legs wrapped around his waist, holding him against her. A wave of awareness passed through her as he walked them backward out of the elevator. Wood trim, large bay windows that looked out into the depths of the forest. Snow swirled, blanketing the trees. An over-sized bed sat directly under the window. They were in his bedroom.

Releasing from their kiss, she threw her head back and shook out the mess of curls falling in front of her face. Candlelight gave off a soft light. The room was rich with his scent. After tonight, she'd never be able to put that smell, the feel him moving inside her, out of her head. Whether he marked her or not, on some level they were now bound.

Her eyes found his as the never-ending lust jumped between them. The moon called out to her, whispered naughty things into her ear that made her pussy slicker still.

She felt drunk. "So now that you've fucked me, what comes next?" Her hand trailed across his shoulder and down his chest. Following the trail of hair, she moved between them and fingered the teeth of his zipper. She reached inside and circled his cock, squeezing until his eyes closed. Her mouth found his earlobe as she whispered, "Are you going to tie me up or eat my pussy?"

As she trailed her lips over his neck and bit down, his cock swelled in her hand. When she pulled back to meet his eyes there was a mischievous twinkle in the depths. The sinful grin he gave her made her stomach roll. He dropped her in the middle of the mattress.

"Bite me again, Jade, and I'll bite back."

She glided backward over the smooth, dark satin until she reached the crest of the wooden frame. The sound of his pants hitting the floor was the best thing she'd heard all night. His cock was long, slightly curved as it jutted out from his mass of dark curls. His weight wrinkled the sheets as he dipped first one knee then the other. He approached her on his hands and knees, and she watched the way his tongue passed over his lower lip. It reminded her of a cat narrowing in on its prey. Full moon or not, she'd

## **Harnessing the Moon by AJ Hampton**

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be his dinner any night of the week.



## Chapter Four

Hunter trailed his fingers over the edge of Jade's black heeled shoe and looked up the length of her body. Her breasts labored up and down with every strained breath she took. The rosy blush coloring her chest looked sexier than hell. Her dark curls were mussed, her green eyes vibrant. It made her look wild. Her gaze tracked his every move and when he looked up to meet her eyes, the hunger he found made it hard to stay in control.

Making quick work of the strap at her ankle, he teased her with a gentle stroke down the back of her heel before moving to the next one. Normally he would have made her leave her shoes on as she stood with her arms tied and bound behind her. Not tonight. Not for what he had in mind. The heavy clunk of her heels hitting his floor was second to the way her heart sounded beating in his ear.

He'd taken the edge off her need; he felt the same sated numbness, but it wasn't enough. When the moon called, dictated their passion, it was never going to be enough. He brushed his fingers over the tight muscle at her calf. When he looked into her eyes, he saw her soul and her vulnerabilities. She was nervous, aroused, holding onto her precious facade of control by a thread. When the night was over, he'd make her lose all semblance of control.

Parting her thighs, he watched the way the slinky material of her dress inched up her legs and exposed her slick sex to him. Her pussy was swollen, shimmering with his cum and her arousal. The tiger inside him

growled, paced back and forth in anticipation. It wanted blood. It demanded the feel of her tigress writhing against him once more. He'd never experience that level of intimacy before, feeling not just Jade, but her tigress at the same time. In three days, when the moon was full, his tiger could have her all to himself. Until then, he, the human side of him, was the one in control.

"Sit up," he ordered.

Her gaze moved over his chest then lower, to where his cock stood at attention. She licked her lower lip and obeyed his command. In response his erection bobbed in the air.

"Remove your dress."

Being just an inch away from her, he had to fight not to reach out and do it himself. A flash of hesitation narrowed her eyes as the defiance rose. He felt her stubborn tigress bristle at his attempt to dominate. He would be damned if he told her, but it pleased him to know she had a backbone, that she was capable of standing on her own two feet. His chest vibrated at her actions and the way her back arched toward him told him she felt it. Power. He was in control, not her. Slow, dangerous, he moved close. Instead of touching her, he let his breath move over her cheek.

His lips settled next to her ear. "Do not disobey me, Jade, you won't like the punishment. I'll bring you up and won't let you down. I can fuck you all night; it's my choice if I let you come or not."

He ran a finger down the line of her neck. Pulling back so she could see, he let the predator within fill his eyes. She gasped and it was reminiscent of how she sounded when he'd thrust inside her that first time. His cock twitched at the memory of her wetness enveloping him. Being inside her was the closest thing he'd ever felt to being home.

Without any further argument, she unfastened the tie at the back of her neck. The silk fluttered over skin and hardened her nipples into tight nubs. Dark, dusty, he watched the circles shrink and pucker. He moistened his lower lip.

Her breasts were absolutely perfect. Small and perky, they were just the right proportion to her slender figure. She pulled the dress over her head and let it fall to the ground. When she shook out her hair, loose

messy curls bounced against her neck. Lifting her chin, she met his eyes and waited for his next command. She learned fast.

"That's a good girl," he purred.

He pressed a hand down her stomach, rewarding her. His finger trailed lower, teasing their way to the dark patch of curls between her legs. Her muscles twitched, and the moment she parted her legs and leaned into his caress he backed away. He was calling the shots, not her. The loss of his skin against hers felt like a punch in his gut. He wasn't sure who this game was going to punish more, her or him.

"Have you heard of *Shibari*?" he asked as he reached beside her. The rasp of his of the nightstand drawer opening raised the hair on his arms.

His hand grasped a coil of rope. Its texture was familiar from the hours he'd spent treating it. Before he'd even met Jade, he knew she would be bound in front of him. He wanted the perfect compliment for that. Not too abrasive, but not too soft either. When the black dyed rope came into view, Jade's pupils grew wide. Her breathing changed. If he hadn't been so in tune with her, he might have missed it. She was afraid. Good.

There was a heady innocence about the way she tentatively reached out and fingered the twists. Back and forth she caressed it, familiarizing herself with the grain. He was going to take this as slow as his self control would allow.

"It looks like hemp." She looked up with a thoughtful look on her face. "It doesn't smell like it, though. What is it?"

The sexy rasp in her voice, the way she sucked her lip between her teeth, was almost his undoing. Lust danced between them like something he could touch. When he spoke there was a deep, almost gravelly, feel to his voice that showed how much restraint it was taking to not touch her.

"It's jute. Thinner, smoother, a little bit more comfortable. It requires fewer knots than the synthetic stuff but is much harder to find. I had this imported."

In the ten years he'd spent studying Japanese bondage he had come to love the old tradition of using wraps instead of knots. The visual appeal of how the ropes cut and enhanced a woman's body was only half his

enjoyment. The other half was the skill of knowing where to tighten, where to pull, and when to release. *Shibari* was an art.

The confusion on her face wrinkled her nose. Strange how he'd never noticed the faint dusting of freckles there. "Knots?" she asked. "I thought you were just going to tie me to the bed and have you wicked way with me."

He shook his head. He'd get to that, eventually. Closing the distance between them, he traced a finger across her clavicle. It was one of his favorite spots on a woman's body. The caress made her suck in a deep breath.

"I'll use the rope to bind you, to pleasure you. Instead of using knots, I'll use a wrap that lets me control how taut I want it to be. I know you think bondage is about control, this adds to that. It is about us, the Dom and the sub, building an innate bond of respect. *Shibari* isn't a bind em' and fuck em' type of a game. It requires skill, patience, self control."

Finding the small loop of string that marked the midpoint, he let the twenty-five feet of rope fall to the bed between them. He moved closer and placed the rope across her shoulders. He teased it against the back of her neck. She shivered and pushed her chest closer to his.

Forming an x with the two sides, he crossed them in front of her chest in the first step in making a *karada* around her torso. He pulled on one side and watched the way her nipples hardened when the texture rubbed against them. She blew out a soft moan that tightened his stomach. Clenching and releasing, he watched the strain it was taking to leave her hands down at her sides.

"It isn't just about punishment and pain either. It's about you, the bottom, gaining pleasure from the pressure and strain of the rope." As he said it, he tightened the X across her body and gave her a hint at what was to come.

She was breathless when she spoke. "If it gets to be too much and I want you to stop, will you?"

He hated that she had to ask him that, but he understood. Despite the way their animals called out to each other, they were strangers. He was betting she didn't even know his last name. Letting go of the rope, he

watched it fall against her skin. The black was a good contrast to her skin tone. He tilted her chin up with a finger until she met his gaze. The open, wide-eyed look she gave him touched something deep inside. He had never felt closer to anyone in his entire life.

"I would *never* force you to do anything you didn't want to. If you want to stop then I will. The ropes will be tight though. They are meant to be irritating and stimulating, but they aren't designed to hurt you. If something feels tingly or numb, you need to let me know so I can loosen it. I want you to know you can trust me."

Giving in, he pressed their chests together and captured her lips. Slow, soft, their tongues tangled against one another. Her hands moved over his arms and cupped his shoulders. The rope between them scratched against his cock as he pressed against her stomach. There was no way he was going to last if he kept kissing her.

He broke away and carefully removed her hands from his shoulders and placed them at her sides. He'd bind her hands last, let her hold onto her control for as long as she could. When the moon wasn't riding them, he'd experiment with the different techniques of binding. For now, he'd keep it simple.

His hands moved deftly as he started a pattern he knew well. Wrapping the rope around the back of her neck, he brought the two sides in front of her and twisted three times before teasing it between her legs. She trembled, gasping when he purposely let the length graze against her clit. He pulled up, bringing both strands against her anus and up her spine. He breathed against her neck, not touching, but enjoying the way her skin smelled as her arousal hitched. He handled the rope with purpose and created a new sensation as he spread the cheeks of her ass.

When the trembling inside her subsided he brought the rope around her hips, threading them through the loop he'd made in the front. Meeting her eyes, he pulled, cinching the first layer down to create a diamond that cut across her stomach. A mewling sound left her throat.

Adjusting the angle, he shifted the rope between her legs and applied just the right amount of pressure that caused her hips to gyrate in the air in a plea for more friction. He pulled back, careful not to give her

what she needed. The smell of her desire flared his nostrils and his control crumbled one brick at a time.

Wrapping the twine around her back, he moved up her spine. For each twist he'd made in the beginning, he threaded the rope through and pulled. One at a time, the ropes crossed her back, looped in the front. The end effect made a series of beautiful diamonds that cut into her skin and shifted the flow of blood.

When it was done and he'd threaded the ends of the rope down her back, he looked down in admiration. Her breasts were accented by the cut of the rope. Her nipples were hard, jutting into the air and begging to be touched. Beneath the jute her skin was already starting to redden. He knew when it was over, she'd have marks.

"Beautiful," he whispered.

"Will you touch me now?" Pure desperation filled her eyes.

He shook his head and trailed his hand over the piece of rope that ran between her legs. She moved and sucked in a startled breath when the motion increased the friction of the rope over her clit. He could see the evidence of her arousal, how much just the act of tying her up was turning her on.

"Lie down." His voice was hard, demanding.

She looked like a present waiting to be unwrapped. Carefully, she leaned back and her eyes fluttered shut at the sensations the ropes made with every move. The bed dipped when he moved to her sides and brought her arms over her head. He watched the rapid rise and fall of her chest as the panic set in.

"Hunter." It sounded like a warning.

"Trust me."

Using a quick, simple knot, he wrapped the rope around her wrist and pulled it taut enough so it would bind her, but not so tight that it would cut off circulation. He wanted to untie her when he was ready, not because he had to. The loose end of the rope was tied to the thick wood rail of his bed frame. He mirrored the actions on her other wrist.

He scooted back and took a second to admire his mate stretched and bound to his bed. He'd never seen anything so exquisite. Despite how

bad he wanted sink inside and claim her, he was going to take his time. He cupped the back of her neck as he pulled her closer to him. The ropes binding across her chest scratched against his skin and sent a bolt of desire deep into his gut. She arched her back, desperate for release. Not yet. She struggled for just a moment against her restraints and gave a breathless moan when the crotch rope teased her engorged clit.

He swooped down, slanting his mouth over hers. Swallowing her moans, he traced his finger over the diamond pattern of the harness. His lips drew from her mouth, down her heated cheek, before he sucked the vein of her neck into his mouth.

"Please..." she begged.

He could feel the rush beneath the skin and his teeth gently worked the flesh until he heard her small little pants of ecstasy become erratic. She was close to coming; he felt the tension in her body. It would have been so easy to claim her, to feel her skin break as he entered her. Not yet. There was not an inch on her body that he wasn't going to explore. She was his, and he was about to prove it.

From her neck to her breasts, he traced the rope with his tongue before sucking a puckered nipple into his mouth. Her hips bucked in the air, and the headboard she was tied to rattled as she pulled. Careful not to touch her where she wanted it the most, he used the ropes to his advantage. He tightened one, loosened another. The pressure mounted in her body, stole her breath.

"Please, just touch me. I can't..."

He was close to losing control. He wanted to feel her tightness pulsing around him as he pounded her into the mattress. He pressed lower, fingers trailing over her ribs and down her stomach as he nipped down her legs and kissed his way back up. Spreading her thighs, he took a second to admire her red, swollen pussy.

The dark rope lined either side of her labia and held her open. Cupping her hips, he held her against the bed and limited her movement even further. She sobbed, head thrashing back and forth as she tugged against the bindings at her wrists.

At the first swipe of his tongue she came unglued, coming hard

and long in his mouth as he sucked the tight pearl into his mouth. Her scream turned raw when he continued to lick and suckle the flesh of her sex. He didn't stop, didn't let her catch his breath. He drank her in, his tongue delving deeper to get more. She was exquisite.

"Fuck me, Hunter. Take me. Please. I need you."

He ignored her. His tongue flicked against her over and over as he slid a finger inside of her scalding depths. She came up off the bed, and the bed frame creaked as she tugged harshly against her restraints. Jute was strong, but it wasn't designed for shape shifters. If she tried hard enough, she could break them. Either way, she would leave his bed baring marks on her wrists, her body. The thought made him smile.

Curving his finger inside of her, he stroked the hard knot of her G-spot. He continued to lick and suck. He alternated methods, sensing from her screams and moans where she liked to be touched, where she liked to be nibbled.

A second finger joined the first, twisting inside of her wetness each time he thrust in. Everything in the world disappeared, and he was only aware of Jade. The way her back bowed, the way she chewed on her lower lip, making it full and swollen. Her pants became harsh and quick, as if she'd hyperventilate if the pressure deep inside of her weren't alleviated.

He added a third finger, stretching her wide. His balls tightened, clenching with the need for release. She was so damned tight it made his head spin, made his cock even harder. An ache clenched his jaw as he continued to work her into a frenzied mess, coaxing her body into another orgasm.

Her back curved off the bed as she came, screaming his name. Glancing up, he watched how the pleasure affected her body. Mouth parted, eyes closed, breasts tight and straining against the binds. It almost made him come. He smoothed his hand against her leg, rubbing her quaking muscles as he softly petted her folds with his tongue and brought her down. She writhed and winced, attempted to pull away from the intensity of what she was experiencing. He held her still.

"Concentrate on your breathing. You need to relax," he cooed against her sex, not ready to pull away. One more.



"It's too much," she panted, her chest and neck stained with sweat.

He brought his head up from between her legs to meet her eyes.

"Trust me."

She nodded and let her head fall into the cushion of pillows. This time he avoided her throbbing clit. Instead, he used his fingers to stroke her. He kissed her thighs and hips as he thrust gently into her. From deep inside he felt her submission, felt her very core open to him. Her breaths became pants when he stroked that special spot deep inside of her.

"Open your eyes, Jade. I want to see you when you come around my fingers."

His pleasure meant nothing, not if it meant he could do this to her over and over again. He wasn't kidding; he could fuck her all night and then some. The moon gave him stamina to keep up with his mate. Her eyes were wide, her mouth parted, and dried tears stained her cheeks. He brought her off tenderly this time.

Pleasure filled her eyes, and he watched as it washed over her. Slow at first, her breath hiccupped. She pulled tight, but the ropes were too much of a restriction for her to go anywhere. Moaning, she threw her head back when she was unable to keep his gaze any longer. He kept stroking her until he felt the last spasms inside of her recede.

Withdrawing his fingers, he drew them into his mouth and tasted the last of her pleasure. It was like honey. He wiped the moisture from his mouth and chin with the back of his hand before crawling up her body. She shivered, trembling under him as he trailed his finger one last time over the intricate design he'd bound her with.

She was boneless and weak, her eyes closed and arms strained above her. He undid the bindings at her wrists and admired the red marks that surrounded them. He kissed each one before using his thumbs to rub the muscles in her shoulders and back.

He got no resistance when he flipped her and pressed her tender breasts against the sheets. Gently, his hands stroked down the middle of her back, tracing the line of her spine and the dark rope that pressed against it. He was far from done. She waited with bated breath as he massaged the muscles of her thighs. He spread her, his hands parting her

legs as he pulled her ass up in the air. Jade jumped, her hands fisting against the sheets when she felt his hot breath against her skin. He hovered, his mouth seconds away from her skin, warm air blowing across her over sensitized sex that was open to his view.

She was beautiful, so fucking gorgeous in every aspect. He drew his hand from her ass as he smoothed his fingers up her back and then down again. Each time he drew down, traced the delicate fragile lines of her body, he let his finger draw closer to the crevice between cheeks.

A low gasp sounded from her throat. He growled and she was silenced with a cry as he wrapped a hand around her hair and pulled. Her back bowed, her neck straining as he tugged. He was on top of her, the heavy curve of his erection pressed against her ass as his chest lined her back.

"I'm going to fuck you until you scream, until you beg me to stop."

She turned her head and rubbed her ass against him. A sly smile curved her lips, and he knew she'd gotten a second wind. "Shut up and fuck me."

Trying not to laugh, he closed his eyes. He shook his head in a tisking motion. "Just for that, I'm going to make you wait."

He was at her pussy again, his long arm stretched as he continued to hold her head back with her hair. He delved into the gap between her thighs, his mouth everywhere at once. She cried out, his teeth closing over her hard clit as he tugged. Once, twice, three times before he sunk three fingers deep inside of her.

She shook, her scream silent as wave after wave of harsh, mind-bending pleasure flooded her. It wasn't just the pleasure he felt surging through her body, it was the relief. It was like a dam finally breaking through its barge. The tigress inside of her broke free, and he was there to catch her, to keep her from shifting.

She flooded his face with her climax, her body too wound to hold back as she thrust against both his fingers and his mouth. Hard, quick, he moved his fingers and rose to his knees. In one thrust, his cock slammed inside of her.

He grunted, his fingers blistering into the flesh of her hips as he

slapped his pelvis against her ass. He'd made a promise not to hold back; he intended to keep it. She cried out, fingers scrambling at the sheets as she tried to regain her breath. He pulled out, pushed in, and watched himself as he thrust within her. His hands moved under her hips and he pulled, lifting the slight weight of her body as he began pushing himself deeper than he ever remember going before.

His control finally broke. He'd always held back, fearful of hurting his partner. He wouldn't hurt Jade. She screamed in pleasure, screamed for him to fuck her harder and faster. He did. Her nails scraped against the bed as he filled her over and over. It was too much. If he didn't stop, he was going to prematurely come.

With a growl, he pulled out, his hand slapping against the fleshy mounds of her ass more to keep himself from sinking back inside than to hurt her. His palm made a rosy imprint on the white flesh of her left cheek. He panted, regaining his self-control as he watched her writhe on the bed.

"Take me." She had no idea what she offered.

His cock was inside of her again, and he felt his heart speed. Every time he touched her, felt her gripping him; his heart beat faster and faster. He pulled out, pushing her lower back into the bed as he admired her gaping hole, ready and so wet for him. She cried out again, a cross between pain and pleasure when he pushed back inside. He was lost in the sensation. He pulled out, his cock glistening in the pale light of the room. As he tugged her hips to the side, she took the hint and rolled underneath him. He looked down at her, watched the way the tight black ropes cut into her skin.

Her hands were no longer bound, but her body was.

She pushed her body against his as she drew her nails down his chest. His cock slid into her slowly, and they both watched the joining. The need to claim her was overwhelming. He grabbed her wrists and brought them over her head, stretching her body out before him. His chest moved against hers as he dipped his head and captured her mouth. Their kiss was hot, passionate, and violent. His hand left her arms as he cupped her face and moved his lower body against her. Every time he drew his

body upward, it tightened the ropes around her and put pressure where she needed it most. The jute scraped not just against his chest, but also against his balls with every thrust.

She pushed her chest against his, moving her pelvis in the perfect counter rhythm to his own. It was almost more than he could take. Her nails scratched down his back, drawing lines of heat that stung when the air lapped against them. The rich scent of blood filled the air. It only motivated him to fuck her harder. His fingers slipped between them to pinch her clit. He manipulated the small bud until her hips reflexively pumped against his.

"I fell asleep to this every night for the past two months, imagining myself inside of you, fucking you like this," he panted into her ear. "I could smell you, taste you, feel you—but I couldn't have you. You feel better than I could have ever imagined."

Hunter gasped and although he was in control he felt helpless as his body melted with hers. They were two souls connected. Channeling all of his will power, he managed not to fall over the edge with her time and time again. She was pulsing and moaning. There were no barriers between them. None.

Every muscle in his body flexed as he cupped her flesh at the hips and thrust inside of her faster. Wet flesh slapped as they let every ounce of frustration feed their frenzy. She was crying out, louder and louder, screaming for it harder and faster. And he did until his lungs burned and he could no longer breathe. She came, crisscrossed nail tracks marring his back as she bit into the tight flesh at his shoulder. Her teeth drew blood.

"You're mine, Jade."

He pressed his mouth against her neck, teeth nipping as he sucked on the flesh. He clamped down, felt her release a shuttering breath as one orgasm melted into the next. Her nails dug into his ass as she gripped him close and pushed her throat further into his mouth. One bite, one drop of blood, would bind them together. Until the day they died, their felines would find each other at the full moon and mate. He had warned her: if she bit him again, which she did, he was going to bite back.

## Chapter Five

With every bit of strength Jade had left, she pulled her neck from the allure of Hunter's teeth. Everything inside her body wanted her to let him claim her. She wanted it on her terms. The tigress surged, gave her strength, as she pressed her hands flat on his chest and pushed. He rolled off of her, a stunned expression on his face as he blinked up at the wood paneled ceiling. Confusion melted into ecstasy as she straddled him and sank down on his wanting cock.

A deep, throaty groan rumbled his chest. Slow, steady, she rode him. Each flex of her body moved the ropes, cutting into her skin. It heightened every sensation to the point of pain. She never knew anything could be so erotic. The helplessness he made her feel opened a door inside herself she never realized was there. She still didn't understand the point of humiliation and torture, but now she understood what trust could do for passion.

A slow grin curved his mouth. In his eyes she saw the respect he felt. That was what she wanted. His hands moved over her hips and cupped them. He made her feel tiny. When he tugged on the ropes, it pulled on the line running against her anus. Her back arched into the sensation.

"That's it, kitten. Come for me," he growled.

Panting, struggling to catch her breath, she sped her up-down gyration. He flexed beneath her, encouraging her to ride him faster. The pleasure started at the base of her toes, numbing her skin as a powerful

surge of bliss washed over her. Faster, harder, their bodies slapped together. Hunter moved his hands up her waist, holding her just as securely as the ropes did.

Of all the things she expected to feel bound in front of him, safe wasn't one of them. He sat up and pulled their chests together. The ropes between them prevented their sweat slicked skin from rubbing smooth against one another. His lips caressed hers, the faintest of pressure applying to her mouth as his hands skimmed over her heated flesh.

She couldn't take any more torment. "Make me yours."

Jade had never known anyone could move as fast as he did. He rose to his knees, his hands moving under her ass to lift her. Switching their position, the weight of his body pressed his cock deep inside of her and sent her stomach into a quivering mass of anticipation. She wanted him, needed him like she had never felt before.

Their kiss deepened as the rush of her climax paralyzed her. She opened her eyes and found him looking down at her. He was there, holding her, making sure she didn't fall. Just like that, in that one instant, things had shifted. Where their coupling had been frenzied, it was now tender and slow.

Jade gasped as he moved inside of her, the hard sculptured lines of his muscles flexing with his movements. Each thrust drew out her pleasure, milked her release until it melted into another climax.

"You are so amazing," he whispered against her throat, his tongue tracing against the thrumming vein there.

His hands cupped her head, holding her still as his teeth clamped down. She thrust her hips against his. Instincts took over. Hard, demanding, his teeth pierced her skin and she cried out. The sensation pierced all the way through her. Mentally, physically, she felt their animals mate. Her back bowed, forcing him to clench down harder on her skin.

He moaned against her neck as his muscles went rigid. He came, shuddering as he claimed her. For a moment, one single thread in time, the pain vanished and all she felt was the pressure of his teeth, the weight of his body, the heat of his skin.

Moving his hands down her arms, he laced their fingers together. He brought her arms over her head, her breasts flat against her chest. He looked at her, and she could see it in his eyes. She was his.

He was still hard inside of her, the moon's power giving him the means to sate her hunger. Each thrust that joined them together forced a soft moan from her throat.

"Tell me you're mine." He thrust harder.

Freeing her hands from his hold, she traced her fingers over his arms until she thread them through his short hair. She lifted and brought his face down, pressing her lips against his. Her hands trembled against him when she pulled away and cupped his cheeks. Euphoria began to consume her.

"I'm yours." Her voice was barely a whisper.

He nipped at the bleeding wound at her neck. The pain flashed through her and increased her pleasure. Quicker, his hips began to move against her as the passion between them exploded and he came again.

Her breath was stolen from her lungs. A powerful torrent of emotions rushed at her, held her under water until she felt like she was suffocating. The bliss was almost too much. He came inside of her as she dug her nails into the flesh at his back.

Hunter shouted her name, his flesh bruising hers as he poured every single drop of pleasure deep inside of her. They lay tangled in the bed, naked bodies slick with sweat, blood and tears. In tandem, as if one, their hearts pounded.

She buried her head in the crook of his neck, deeply inhaling his masculine aroma as she wrapped her arms around his back. Mine. Her arms tightened around his back as she held him quivering against her. She closed her eyes as she let her fingers slowly trace from his back to the indent at his lower spine. A deep feeling of contentment rolled through her. She sighed, her breath coming out across his moist skin in soft pants as they both caught their breath.

For the first time since she'd followed him in the elevator, she felt like she was human. Hunter pulsed inside of her, his cock softening as their hearts continued to hammer in their chests. After a few minutes, his

weight became too much.

"I can't breathe," she croaked, her voice raw.

"Sorry," he mumbled, rolling to the side. His arm hooked around her side as he pressed their bodies together.

She was grateful for the contact. His fingers danced along the ropes as he unraveled the wrap that kept it all secure. One handed, he untied her. She felt both relief and regret.

He threw the rope behind him and propped up on one elbow to look down at her. There was a deep calmness about him. She wondered if this was what he was like when the moon wasn't riding him. Her gaze followed the path of his finger as he traced the marks left behind. They were red imprints dug into her skin, the twisting pattern of the jute marring her.

"Thank you," he said.

It caught her off guard. Her eyebrows knit in confusion. "What for?"

He pressed a tender kiss to her lips. Smoothing her hair out of her face, he cupped the back of her neck and pressed their foreheads together. "For trusting me. For not running back to your cab when you first walked onto the grounds."

Oh. That. Snuggling against him, the lethargic aftereffects of really good sex started to kick in. It was hard to keep her eyes open. Her fingers scratched over his arm, back and forth.

"Now that we're mated, what changes?" she asked, her face pressed against his neck as she drew in a deep breath.

"Nothing has to. Aside from having to have you." He grinned. "I'm patient. I don't expect you to move in here and be my slave, if that's what you are afraid of."

"I'd heard stories..." Horror ones at that. God, what had she done?

He must have sensed the shift in her because he rolled her back on to her back and twined their legs together. His fingers moved up and down her stomach as he gave her a thoughtful look.

"I can't promise you I won't be a possessive bastard at times, but, I'll try my hardest to respect you, to show that you're my equal. Stay with



me this weekend; let me get to know you. When the moon rises, run through the forest with me and I'll show you how it can be."

Handsome. Rich. Thoughtful. "You're perfect, do you know that?"

She felt his laugh deep in her stomach. "I do try to be the best at whatever I do."

Three days with Hunter until the full moon. She had a feeling she was going to enjoy every second of it.

"So, is it my turn to tie you up now?" She grinned at the look that crossed over his face.

He growled, playfully nuzzling her neck as he grabbed her arms and pinned them in place.

"Alpha males aren't bottoms."

She pushed against his him and flipped their positions. Throwing her head back, the tickling dance of her hair against the back of her neck made her shiver. She straddled his stomach before leaning forward. Her hands clamped around his wrists as she mimicked his earlier actions. They both knew he could break free of her hold if he wanted to. The fact that he pretended he couldn't made her heart swell.

"I didn't hear any complaints the last time you were under me."

"No, no you didn't." His arms went limp, a sign of his submission as her breasts caressed his chest. Slowly, she pressed her lips against his and kissed him with the renewed passion that speared through her.

A knock rapped against the door and interrupted their kiss. Kerry. As she concentrated, she could taste her friend's scent lingering where it hadn't been before.

"It's Kerry," Jade said as she let go of his wrists and moved to the side of him.

"Probably wants to make sure I didn't kill you. I never pictured you as a screamer." The rich color of his eyes had a special twinkle as he got out of bed.

Naked as the day he was born, he padded across the hard floor. Firm, high, his ass was just as tight and perfect as the rest of him. Where his skin had been smooth, it was now welted from her fingernails. She'd wondered how it would look to have her marks on him. Turns out, it

looked good.

Hunter looked back at her, his gaze hot as he gripped the brass knob. Pulling on the sheets, she draped the silk around her shoulders and nodded. He might have been an exhibitionist, but she wasn't.

"My God, what have you been doing to her?" Kerry said in amazement as she strolled inside the door as soon as it was opened.

Dipping his head, Jade caught his smile before he pushed the door closed.

"As you can see, she is very much alive and well."

It wasn't until Hunter turned and made his way toward a mini bar that Kerry noticed he was naked. He bent, opened a small black refrigerator and got out a bottle of water. The man had not a single ounce of modesty. But, what did she expect from someone who threw sex parties? As he tilted his head back and took a long pull from the bottle, his throat flexed. A perfect imprint of her teeth bruised his neck.

A sense of pride welled inside of her. He was hers.

"Maybe I should be worried that she killed you!" Kerry looked between her and Hunter, smiling. "I didn't mean to interrupt the love-fest, but I just wanted to let you know me and the Norwegians are going home."

"Plural?" Hunter asked as he walked right by her and climbed back into bed.

He pressed the cold bottle against her neck and smiled when she jumped. Grateful, she took it. She hadn't realized how raw her throat was until the lust had cleared.

"Oh, yes." She turned to leave, something mischievous and wicked dancing in her eyes. Jade wondered just what went through her friend's head.

"And, just so you know," Kerry paused, "your secret is safe with me."

Sputtering, Jade inhaled when she should have exhaled. Hunter's hand came down on her back, patting as water clouded her eyes. What secret, exactly, did Kerry know? Hunter tensed beside her.

"Know what? Exactly."

A rich, bubbling laughter filled the air. "That's the same thing she was thinking. I knew you two were meant to be together."

Drawing in a deep breath, she and Hunter met eyes before they turned their heads back to Kerry, who was grinning like an idiot. How did she know what Jade was thinking?

Shaking her head, Kerri rolled her eyes. "I'm a telepath, silly. I know what you're thinking; I know what he's thinking. Hell, I can hear what everyone is thinking."

Blinking, Hunter's mouth fell open. He went to say something, and then stopped. He tried once more before he gave her a sheepish grin.

"For your information, they are real, jerk. And you, Jade, don't have to worry. Hunter's a good man; he'll take care of you. I wouldn't have let you come here tonight if that wasn't the case."

Jade was still stuck on the fact that Kerry could read her mind. Why it surprised her, she wasn't sure. After all, she was a shape shifter, why wouldn't there be other supernatural things out there? One thought at a time, things started popping into her mind. Had she thought something bad? Did Kerry know she thought her friend was gorgeous?

"Stop, JD." Kerry put her hands on her hips. "I never told you because of what you are doing right now. I can't turn it off, but I can block it. I do have better things to do than pick your brain all day! I can't understand half of it anyways when you start getting all grrr on me."

"Grrr?" Hunter gave her an affectionate look.

"All tigress leaping through the forest." She completed the sentence by lifting her hands in the air and swiping like a large kitten batting a ball of yarn.

*Get out of here, Kerry, I'll call you tomorrow,* Jade thought. It was hard not to grin when Kerry turned with an exuberant flash and gave them both a wave over her shoulder.

"By the way, your man has a fabulous ass!" Kerry said just before she shut the door.

"A telepath? Didn't see that coming." Hunter shook his head and trailed a hand down her arm. The simple gesture made her skin pucker. "But, in hindsight, it does make sense. She always had an uncanny knack

for knowing what I wanted, or was about to say."

"What were you thinking just before she left?" She grinned and started tracing her lips over his jaw.

He tensed against her and tilted his head so she could have better access. "I was thinking how bad I wanted her to leave so I could I do this."

His arms wrapped around her stomach as he pulled her close and smashed his lips against hers. Their tongues met as he tugged the sheet off her body and threw it to the ground. Rolling, he shifted their positions and guided her on top of him.

"I think we were in the middle of something." He lifted an eyebrow, and the challenge was clear in his eyes.

"Yes," her hands moved over his arms, gripping his tight muscles before she guided his hands to the head board, "like tying you up."

Against her stomach, his cock grew firm. "Do you worst, *Kitten*."

"You'll pay for that."

His laughter echoed throughout the room. "That's what I'm counting on."

The End

### **Author Bio**

Born and raised on the west coast, AJ has enjoyed the beach for more years than she can remember. A wife, a mother, and an office manager, finding time write is more challenging than creating the erotic tales she weaves.

Growing up on bad science fiction and popcorn, AJ has wanted to be a writer ever since she can remember. Also an avid reader, AJ fills what little spare time she has with paranormal romance books, movies, and visiting the beach where she is continually inspired.