



**Roan's Fall**

Roxie's Protectors

Marisa Chenery

(c) 2009

## **Roan's Fall**

Roxie's Protectors

Marisa Chenery

Published 2009

ISBN 978-1-59578-625-8

Published by Liquid Silver Books, imprint of Atlantic Bridge Publishing, 10509 Sedgegrass Dr, Indianapolis, Indiana 46235. Copyright © 2009, Marisa Chenery. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Manufactured in the United States of America

Liquid Silver Books  
<http://LSbooks.com>

Email:  
[raven@LSbooks.com](mailto:raven@LSbooks.com)

Editor  
Devin Govaere

Cover Artist  
April Martinez

This is a work of fiction. The characters, incidents and dialogues in this book are of the author's imagination and are not to be construed as real. Any resemblance to actual events or persons, living or dead, is completely coincidental.

## **Blurb**

As a hair stylist, Ansley has seen and cut a lot of people's hair, but when Roxie shows up for her appointment with a very large, gorgeous man, Ansley can't take her eyes off him. Nor can she stop her body's reaction to Roan when Roxie asks her to cut his hair as well. But things seem to go steadily downhill when Ansley's curse, her ability to say the first thing that comes to mind when around a man she is attracted to, rears its ugly head. When Roan growls at her to hurry up, Ansley knows her mouth has done it to her again.

Even through the harsh chemical smells in the hair salon, Ansley's scent is like a punch in the gut to Roan. Knowing she is his mate, and a mortal, has him fighting the urge to claim her as his own. Hoping to ease into telling her he is a werewolf, Roan prays he has the control to take things slow. But when it comes to Ansley, he must fight the wolf inside him or risk scaring away the one woman that was meant for him.

## **Dedication**

To Devin Govaere, my editor, from whom I have learned so much. You help make my books shine.

## Chapter One

Roan pulled open the glass front entrance door and stood on the threshold. He scanned the large open-concept space. He so did not want to be here. However long he had to be here would be pure torture. If given a choice, he would rather face down a hundred armed men in battle than go inside this place.

“Well? Are you going to stand there all day or what? You’re going to make me late for my hair appointment.” Roxie gave him a hard shove from behind.

Reluctantly, Roan stepped into the hair salon and moved aside so Roxie could enter after him. He tried not to take many deep breaths. The smell of perm solution, hair dyes and other such chemicals assaulted his sensitive werewolf nose. Considering Roxie was a werewolf too, Roan had no idea how she could stand the harsh smells. If they bothered her, she showed no signs of it. She walked up to the front desk and gave her name to the girl who sat behind it.

Roxie crossed back over to him and led him to one of the unoccupied pansy-assed looking straight backed chairs that lined the wall. Roan sat down slowly expecting the chair to break once he settled his full weight on it. The spindly wood legs didn’t look as if they were made to support a man of his size. Being six foot nine and weighing over two hundred and sixty pounds, he was by no means a lightweight. As he planted his ass on the seat and leaned back against the backrest, the chair groaned ominously, but it held together.

Roan looked over at Roxie who had taken the empty chair next to his. She shook her head and sighed. “If you’re this uncomfortable you should have let me come alone like I wanted to in the first place.”

He scowled at her. “It’s my duty to protect you.”

And Roan took his duty seriously. Roxie was special. She was the foretold one, the one who now ruled over all the werewolf packs. For hundreds of years, Roan, along with his brothers and sister-in-arms, had trained to be the foretold one’s protectors. Even though Roxie thought she could take care of herself, Roan and the rest of Roxie’s protectors weren’t prepared to leave her unguarded. Even if it meant that he had to sit inside a mortal hair salon while the fumes from perm solution slowly burned the inside of his nose.

Roxie scowled back at him. “Since I’m stuck with you, would you at least loosen up a bit? People are staring. You look as if you’re ready to kill the next person who looks at you the wrong way.”

Roan did a quick scan of the room. Roxie was right. All eyes, all female, were turned their way. Some of the mortal females looked as if they were ready to run away if he so much as said boo, while a few gave him looks that said they liked what they saw.

The chair creaked as he shifted his weight and turned back to Roxie. “What’s the holdup?”

“Ansley is finishing up with another client then it’ll be my turn.”

“I thought you had an appointment.”

“I do. Sometimes Ansley gets a little bit behind. I don’t mind waiting.”

“Well, I do. The faster I can get the hell out of here the better.”

Roxie eyed him. "I'm guessing you've never been to a hair salon before."

Roan snorted. "This will be my first and only time."

"Then where do you get your hair cut?" Roxie looked pointedly at his shoulder-length hair.

"Saskia cuts it for me." Saskia who was his sister-in-arms and his leader tended to take care of things like haircuts and such.

Before Roxie could say anything more, the girl from the front desk came around it and called her name. "Roxie? Ansley is ready for you now. If you want to follow me back we'll get your hair washed."

Roan would have followed Roxie, but she shoved him back down on his chair and shook her head. "Park it, buddy. I'll be perfectly fine. You'll be able to keep an eye on me from here."

He watched Roxie follow the girl to one of the sinks at the very back of the room where another woman stood waiting for her. Roan figured the other woman had to be Ansley, Roxie's hairdresser. He let his gaze run over her. From what he could see of her from this distance, Roan thought her pretty enough. Her looks didn't compare to a female werewolf's, their race was known for their extreme good looks, but her looks appealed to him nonetheless. She wore her straight, brown hair down past her shoulders. He couldn't see the color of her eyes since she stood in profile as she motioned Roxie to sit down on the chair in front of the sink.

Roan spent the next half hour bored out of his mind while he watched Ansley cut Roxie's hair. The two women chatted away, sometimes laughing over something one of them had said. At one point, both women turned their heads to look directly at him. Roan crossed his arms over his chest and stared back. He gave Ansley a cursory glance before he focused on Roxie. There was something about her smile that said she had to be up to something.

He soon found out he hadn't been too far off on his thinking. Once Ansley finished with Roxie's hair, Roxie signaled for Roan to come over to where she sat. Feeling as if he'd made a mistake by volunteering to be the one to take Roxie here today, he stood up and walked to the back of the salon. Prepared for just about anything when it came to Roxie, Roan wasn't at all prepared when he caught the first faint whiff of Ansley's scent. Feeling as if he'd just been punched in the gut, he filtered her scent out from the many others in the building the closer he came.

He barely managed to hold back a growl of need as he drew even with the women. His eyes locked on Ansley—his mate. Even though the harsh chemical smells that hung in the air burned the inside of his nose, Roan couldn't stop himself from dragging in great gulps of Ansley's scent. His cock went instantly rock hard inside his jeans. He looked Ansley up and down. She really was a small thing. She couldn't be any taller than five-foot-three. Her hazel eyes locked with his light blue ones. Her lips parted slightly. She craned her neck to look up at him. Roan fought the urge to yank her to him and see if her lips were as kissable as they looked.

"Well, well. Isn't this interesting?" Roxie said with a chuckle.

Roan dragged his gaze off Ansley and turned to Roxie. "What?"

"I think you just got more than you bargained for by tagging along with me." Roxie wrapped her arm around Ansley's shoulders. "Ansley, this is my friend Roan Haver. Roan, Ansley ended up having her next client cancel at the last minute. She has kindly

agreed to let you take that opening.”

He shook his head. Even though he spoke to Roxie, Roan kept his gaze on Ansley. “I don’t need my hair cut.”

“It’s my treat,” Roxie said. “You can trust Ansley. She won’t shave you bald.”

Ansley chuckled. “God, no. It would be a shame to cut off all that great looking hair. I promise to be gentle.”

With a curt nod, Roan followed Ansley to one of the sinks. He knew he was in trouble, but he walked to his doom anyway. With the mating urge already riding him hard, he knew when Ansley laid hands on him it would be three times worse. He would have a hard enough time trying to hide the hard-on he sported, but it would take all of his self-control to hide what he truly was from Ansley. If he didn’t watch it, he’d be growling while his eyes mutedly glowed with arousal. Seeing how Ansley was mortal, Roan didn’t think she even knew werewolves existed. He found himself stuck in a catch twenty-two situation. He wanted Ansley to touch him even though he knew if she did he could very well lose control. Reluctantly, he sat down on the chair and pushed back until the back of his neck hit the sink. As Ansley leaned in to turn on the water Roan knew he was a goner.

\*

Ansley let the water run and tried to look as if she knew what she was doing. Normally she could wash a client’s hair without much thought, but that wouldn’t be the case this time. She had a hard time focusing on anything but the very large, exceptionally gorgeous man who waited for her to wash his hair. Her heart thudded against her ribs. She pushed Roan’s hair back so it fell into the sink. Much to her disgust her hands shook. It wasn’t as if she was afraid of him. Yes, Roan towered over her and probably could snap her in two without even trying, but those things didn’t cause her to shake. No, she definitely didn’t fear him. Quite the opposite in fact. Just the mere sight of him caused her body to go up in flames.

When Roxie had first pointed Roan out, Ansley had taken one look at him and felt her mouth fall open. After she had managed to stop staring at him as if he were a large piece of chocolate she wanted to savor, she’d tried to keep her attention focused on the task at hand. But she found her gaze straying over to where he sat more often than not. To say she was attracted to Roan would be an understatement. His male model good looks and large muscular body had her wanting to touch and lick every inch of him.

After Roxie had found out Ansley’s next client had cancelled, Roxie had asked if Roan could take that opening. Ansley had been quick to agree. Not that she thought she would have a shot at Roan. Guys who looked like him did not go for girls like her. But cutting his hair would at least give her a chance to have him up close and personal for a little while.

Now here she stood shaking like a teenage girl with her first crush. The way Roan had stared at her while he’d walked over to join them had taken her breath away. The intense way he’d gazed at her with what she had thought could be lust in his light blue eyes had sent her body into overdrive. Her breath had caught and her nipples tightened beneath her t-shirt. Her pussy had started to throb as wetness pooled between her legs. The way Roan had looked her up and down when he came to stand in front of her made Ansley think of hot, sweaty sex that lasted all night.

Ansley took a deep breath and she tested the water to make sure it wouldn’t be too hot, then proceeded to wet Roan’s thick light brown hair. As she washed his hair, her

thigh pressed up against his shoulder. That small contact was enough to send a wave of awareness through her body. Rinsing out the shampoo, Ansley let her gaze fall on Roan's face. He had his eyes closed. She traced his firm lips, straight nose, chiseled cheekbones and square jaw with her gaze as she shampooed his hair for a second time. She had to resist the urge to climb onto his lap, sprawl on top of him and kiss him until they were both breathless. With her luck, Roan would more than likely dump her on her ass if she ever tried such a stunt. Dragging her gaze away, she leaned in closer while she massaged his scalp.

A strangled noise that sounded pretty close to an animalistic growl drew Ansley's gaze back to Roan's face. Her hands went still as she caught the intense look in his now open eyes. Her mouth suddenly dry, she swallowed and licked her lips with the tip of her tongue. Roan made the same strangled sound and for a split second she swore his light blue eyes glowed.

Thinking her eyes had to be playing tricks on her, Ansley quickly finished washing Roan's hair. After she toweled it dry, she had him sit in her chair. His eyes followed her in the mirror in front of him as she draped a cape over his front and did it up at the back of his neck.

She picked up her scissors and a comb from the small counter in front of Roan before she turned back to him. "How would you like me to cut your hair?"

Roan's gaze locked with hers. "Just a trim."

Ansley nodded and moved to stand behind him. She went to work combing the snarls out of his long hair. "So you're a friend of Roxie's?"

"You could say that."

When he didn't offer anything more, Ansley tried to think of something else to say to keep the conversation going, a feat in itself considering she was so turned on she could barely think straight. After she rejected more than one likely subject, she blurted out, "Are you single? Considering how good looking you are, I can't picture you being single." She cringed inside. Real subtle. Not. Where the hell had that come from?

Roan stiffened his shoulders. The chair creaked. He seemed to be holding onto the armrests in a death grip. "Can you just hurry it up?"

*Way to go, dumbass*, she berated herself. *Now he thinks you're an idiot*. Her curse, at least she called it her curse, had just risen its ugly head. Whenever she became attracted to a man, especially a hunky one like Roan, her mouth spewed nothing but garbage. She'd driven away more than one man that way. Ansley kept her eyes focused on the back of Roan's head as she trimmed the ends of his hair. Now more embarrassed than aroused, she kept her mouth shut and made sure she didn't make eye contact with him in the mirror. Given the way Roan stiffened every time she touched him, she figured he couldn't wait to get away from her.

She didn't take any longer than she needed to finish his hair cut. When she went to pick up the hair dryer, Roan stopped her. "Let it dry on its own."

With a nod, Ansley moved back behind him and undid the cape. She was just pulling it off Roan when Roxie came over. Roxie looked from Ansley then to Roan. She scowled. "What did you say to Ansley, Roan? The tension between you two is so thick you could cut it with a knife." Roxie gave Roan a meaningful look. "I thought you would have used your time more wisely, if you know what I mean."

Ansley had no idea what Roxie meant by that last part, but she quickly jumped in

before Roan could answer. "It wasn't Roan's fault, Rox. I sometimes don't think before I speak." She turned to Roan. "I'm sorry. I should have kept my mouth shut. I'm sure you don't need someone like me asking about your personal life. You probably get enough women throwing themselves at you. Not that I was throwing myself at you. Okay, I'm going to shut up now."

Feeling her face heat, she blushed profusely. Ansley figured she couldn't shove her foot any further into her mouth than she already had. She snuck a quick look at Roan and felt her heart try to beat out of her chest as their gazes met. The way he stared at her as if she were the only woman in the room had her body once more going up in flames. A deep ache inside her pussy caused wetness to pool.

Unable to tear her eyes away, Ansley watched Roan's nostrils flare. He took a deep breath. He walked closer and crowded her with his big body. Ansley backed up until her butt hit the counter behind her. Roan didn't stop until their bodies were almost touching. She placed her hands on the edges of the counter to stop herself from pulling his lips down to hers so she could kiss him senseless.

Roan bent his head down until their noses almost touched. "You can throw yourself at me any time you wish." He pushed his hips against her so she could feel the large bulge in his pants. "I think it would be something we both would enjoy."

Ansley had to bite the inside of her cheek to stop the moan of need that threatened to push past her lips. The feel of Roan's hard cock pressed against her stomach made her pussy clench. She clutched at the counter behind her as he lowered his head even more. Her breath caught thinking Roan would kiss her, but instead of going for her lips he pushed his face into the crook of her neck and took a deep breath. If she didn't know better she would think he sniffed her. When he pulled away to meet her gaze once more, Ansley felt as if her legs had turned to rubber.

As Roan's gaze locked on her lips, he asked, "When do you get off work?"

"Ah ... ah six."

Roan gave her one last look that made her blood heat even more before he turned away and walked out of the salon. Ansley stared at the door and tried to force her body to cool down. The sound of Roxie chuckling brought her out of the daze Roan had put her in.

"I had better go catch up with Roan," Roxie said. She gave Ansley a wink. "Don't do anything I wouldn't do." Roxie then went over to the front desk to pay.

Ansley sat down in her chair once Roxie left the salon. She looked up at the large clock on the wall. She had another four hours to get through before she could leave. Ansley had a feeling it would be the longest four hours of her life.



## Chapter Two

Roan watched Roxie jump out of the car and hurriedly make her way to the front door of her house. He let her go inside before he slowly got out of the car. He figured he would let her tell the others about what had taken place between him and Ansley at the hair salon. It wasn't as if he was embarrassed about it, quite the opposite. He had always secretly longed to find his mate. He just hadn't expected the mating urge to hit him quite so hard when he did find her. With lust pounding through his body, walking away from Ansley had been the hardest thing he had ever done. Even now, he had to fight the urge to get back in the car and go to her. The only thing that stopped him from going back to the salon and claiming her as his mate was the fact she was mortal. If she had been a werewolf, he would already have had her under him by now, pounding inside her.

With a sigh, Roan headed up to the house. He wanted to take things slow with Ansley. He didn't want to scare her off. It would be a lot harder on him than her, though. Until he claimed her fully as his mate, the mating urge wouldn't loosen its grip on him. Even his dreams would be filled with erotic dreams of Ansley, of touching and tasting her.

Once inside the house he followed the sound of voices to the living room. He let his gaze skip over the occupants of the room. Roxie and her mate, Beowulf, sat on the loveseat while his two brothers by blood, Skylar and Jager, sat on the large sectional couch with his brother-in-arms, Leif. From the looks of pity all his brothers gave him, Roan knew Roxie had told them about Ansley.

Roan headed over to sit down on the sectional next to Leif, but Leif held out his hands to keep him away. He shook his head. "No way are you sitting next to me. I don't need you rubbing off on me. I'm quite happy without a mate, thank you very much."

He rolled his eyes and shook his head before he sat down on the large armchair across from his brothers. Roan expected as much from Leif. Leif loved women too much to want to find a mate, not that he would have much choice if the right woman came along. Roan only had to think of Eli, his sister's mate. Eli had felt the same way Leif did, but he fell hard for Saskia and couldn't be happier.

"It isn't as if I'm contagious, Leif," Roan said. "And I didn't plan this. You wait until your turn comes."

Leif gave him a look of abject horror. "That will be the day hell freezes over. I like that I can have my fun then walk away when I want."

Even with that type of attitude towards women, Leif still managed to get any woman he wanted—mortal and werewolf alike. "I'll have fun throwing that back in your face when you find your one and only." Roan turned to his other two brothers. "Well? I'm sure the both of you have something to say."

Jager spoke first. "As long as you can keep your dick in your pants long enough to help protect Roxie I couldn't care less."

That was Jager—always short and to the point. His brother wasn't one to mince words. "Thanks. I'll try not to turn into a sex fiend." He looked at his other brother. "What about you, Skylar?"

Skylar shrugged. "I'm happy for you. I'm just glad it's you and not me. I'm not

ready to take on a mate.”

Roxie drew Roan’s attention her way when she quietly cleared her throat. “So, Roan, are you going back this evening to see Ansley?”

“Yes.” Not that he had much choice in the matter. As it now stood, he would probably drive himself crazy thinking about her until he saw her again.

“I thought you would. I’m going to give you one piece of advice—tell Ansley what you are before you sleep with her. From personal experience,” Roxie gave Beowulf a hard stare, “it isn’t exactly easy to accept the whole mated thing if you aren’t told what to expect.”

Beowulf pulled Roxie under his arm. “I don’t see you complaining.”

“Not now, but I didn’t take the news of you being a werewolf all that well in the beginning, if you remember.”

Beowulf turned to look at Roan. “Roxie’s right. It’s best to be upfront right from the start.”

“I’ll take that into consideration. Now if you don’t mind, could we change the subject? Talking about Ansley is making me a little antsy, if you know what I mean.”

As Beowulf and Roxie started talking about Wulf’s Den, the nightclub Beowulf owned, Roan let the conversation wash over him. With half an ear, he listened to his brothers and Beowulf talk about who would be going to the nightclub with him and Roxie that night. At least Roan knew he wouldn’t be expected to go along with them. With the mating urge riding him, he doubted he would be any good to them anyway. The demands of his body would be a lot harder to ignore until he made Ansley his. Until then, he wouldn’t be good for much of anything.

\* \* \* \*

For the rest of the day Ansley found herself distracted by thoughts of Roan. She couldn’t help wondering if he would really show up when she got off work. He hadn’t exactly asked her out, just what time she got off. As the hours went by, Ansley felt more than sure Roan wouldn’t show up. Yes, he had looked at her with arousal in his eyes, but that didn’t mean he wouldn’t change his mind after he had some time to think about it.

By the time six o’clock rolled around, Ansley had herself thoroughly convinced Roan would be a no show. After cutting her last client’s hair, she cleaned up her workstation then headed out. Once she hit the sidewalk, she looked around. Like she had suspected, Roan didn’t seem to be anywhere in sight. Trying not to let it bother her, Ansley made her way to the parking lot behind the salon. She decided a large bowl of ice cream was in her future, along with a glass or two of wine.

She’d just reached the driver’s side of her Pontiac Sunfire when a heavy hand landed on her shoulder. With a shriek, she swung around to see who had come up behind her. Her eyes widened in surprise. “Roan? What are you doing here?”

“Why do you look so surprised? I told you I would be back.”

Ansley shook her head. “No, you didn’t. You just asked me what time I got off work.”

Roan looked down at her. His brows drew together. “You didn’t think I was coming back.” He said it as a statement not a question.

“Why would I? It isn’t as if you asked me out on a date.”

He crowded her back against her car. He put his hands on the roof on either side of

her, effectively caging her in. In his deep voice now gone husky, Roan said, “Well, I’m asking now.”

Ansley swallowed. “You’re asking me out on a date?”

Roan smiled. “Isn’t that what you wanted?”

With Roan this close she had a hard time thinking straight. “Are you ... are you sure you want to go out with me? You’re so good looking, and let’s face it, I’m no beauty queen. You could find someone much prettier than me. Compared to you I’m—”

He cut her off with his lips. At first, Ansley held herself perfectly still, but then Roan’s lips moved on hers. His tongue swept the seam of her lips. Ansley let her eyes drift shut and opened for him. He threaded the fingers of one hand through her hair and held her in place. He pushed his tongue inside. Her hands came up and fisted in the front of his t-shirt as he explored the inside of her mouth before he twined his tongue with hers. Roan tasted of sin and hot, wild sex.

Deepening the kiss, Roan ran his other hand down her side to her bottom and hauled her closer to him. Ansley moaned. The hard length of his cock nestled against her stomach. In response, her pussy grew wet. Her nipples went taut beneath her shirt. She wanted to strip her clothes off and rub her naked body against his. It had been so long since a man had kissed her. Her sex starved body ached to have his hard cock deep inside it.

Roan placed one of his hard thighs between her legs and pushed up against her pussy. Ansley moaned into his mouth. The pressure sent shockwaves of pleasure through her sex. Using his t-shirt to pull him even closer, she kissed him back hungrily, rubbing herself against his thigh. She arched her back as his hand came up and cupped her breast through her shirt.

The blast of a car horn out on the street jerked Ansley out of the sexual haze that had taken her over. She pulled back and looked up at Roan. She sucked in a breath when she saw his light blue eyes glowed mutedly. Ansley blinked in surprise.

At the sound of her sharp indrawn breath, Roan shut his eyes and rested his forehead against hers. “Just give me a second.” His voice came out in a half growl.

Ansley held herself still as Roan took a couple of deep calming breaths. “Roan? Are you okay?” When he continued to hold himself stiffly, she asked quietly, “Did I do something wrong?” Roan lifted his head to stare down at her. Ansley noticed his eyes no longer appeared to glow, making her think once again she had been seeing things that weren’t really there.

“Why would you think you did anything wrong?” he asked with a scowl. “You did nothing wrong. If anything you did everything right.” He palmed one of her cheeks. “The problem is I promised myself I would take things slow with you. Take the time for us to get to know each other better. Right now it’s taking all of my willpower not to throw you onto the hood of your car and take you until you scream my name.”

Ansley’s mouth formed a round O while images of what he wanted to do to her played through her head. She could easily picture herself laying on the hood of her car with her legs wrapped around Roan’s waist as he pounded into her. The images made her pussy ache and wetness leak into her panties.

With a half growl, Roan took a step back. His chest rapidly rose and fell as he dragged in deep breaths. His hands fisted at his sides. “Whatever you’re thinking about, stop it. I can smell your arousal and it’s playing havoc with what little self-control I have

left. This may have been a mistake.” He took another step back.

Afraid Roan would turn around and walk away, Ansley quickly blurted, “Don’t leave. Why don’t you come back to my place?”

In a blink of an eye Roan had her once again trapped against her car while he loomed over her. “I think I need to learn why you keep thinking I’m going to walk away from you. If I had my way I would take you to my bed and never let you out of it again.”

Ansley swallowed loudly. “So does that mean you want to come back to my place?”

Roan chuckled. “You do realize that by asking me to your place you’ll be playing with fire. Are you willing to risk the chance of getting burned?”

“I’m willing to risk it.”

God, she was more than willing to risk it. Just the idea that Roan wanted her made her knees go weak. Never in a million years would Ansley have thought she ever had chance with a man like Roan. He was every woman’s wet dream.

He dragged a finger down her cheek. “You may be willing to take that chance, but I’m not just yet. How about we go get something to eat first? Then we can see about going back to your place after that.”

Even though she hadn’t eaten since lunch, Ansley knew she probably wouldn’t be able to eat much with Roan sitting so near. He made her hungry for other things besides food. She nodded. “All right. There’s a great steak house on the way to my apartment.”

“Sounds good to me. I’ll follow you. My car is just over there.”

Ansley looked in the direction Roan pointed. Growing up with a very unfeminine-like love of sports cars that stuck with her to this day, she recognized his car. Roan’s was a Lexus IS F Performance car done in metallic grey. It had to have cost double what she made in a year working at the hair salon. It also made her Sunfire look like a dinky car when compared to his. Obviously he had money as well as good looks.

After telling Roan the name and location of the restaurant in case they became separated, Ansley got into her car. She watched Roan cross over to his and get in. As she led the way to the restaurant, Ansley had to wonder when the ball would drop. It invariably did when she found herself attracted to a man. Roan seemed to be perfect in every way. It would only be a matter of time before she said or did something to drive him away. When it came to men, she tended to be her greatest enemy.

\* \* \* \*

Roan let his gaze roam down Ansley’s slim, curvy body as she took the chair across from his at the restaurant. He wanted to strip her naked while he licked and kissed every inch of her. The kiss they had shared in the parking lot had just fanned the flames of his arousal to even greater heights. Her kiss had been better than the headiest wine. With the scent of her arousal swirling around them, Roan had had a hard time reining back the wolf inside him. The wolf wanted to claim her as his mate as much as the man wanted to. Somehow he had managed to hold himself back from acting on what his body screamed for him to do. He just hoped he would be able to do it again, because he had every intention of tasting every part of Ansley before he left her this night.

Ansley shifted on her chair. She stared at the menu that sat on the table in front of her. Roan watched her take her bottom lip between her teeth. It made him want to replace her teeth with his own. As if she sensed him staring, she met his gaze then quickly looked back down at the menu. Roan grinned. Ansley was such a contradiction in terms. At

times she seemed outgoing, while at others she came across as being shy.

When the waitress came they gave her their orders. Roan ordered the largest steak on the menu and asked for it to be as rare as he could get it. Ansley ordered a salad. After the waitress left, Roan said, "You could have ordered more than a salad, Ansley."

"The salad will be enough." She gave him a nervous smile.

He hoped she wasn't one of those mortal women who only ate enough to keep a bird alive. He would have to break her of that if that turned out to be the case. Roan liked his women slim, but not to the point of skin and bones.

Having never really been on a date before, Roan had asked Roxie for some pointers. Being an over thousand-year-old warrior werewolf, dating hadn't exactly been high on his list of things to do. If he needed a woman, he usually sought out werewolf females who were willing to give him a night or two of pleasure in their beds and nothing more. And he never slept with mortal women. He had wanted to avoid the hassle of having to hide what he truly was from them. The irony that his mate had turned out to be mortal, and he now had to somehow get her to accept him for what he was, hadn't been lost on Roan.

He cleared his throat. Roxie had told him at this point on the date he should be asking Ansley questions about herself so he could get to know her better. "How long have you worked at the hair salon?"

Ansley fiddled with her fork. "Two years. I've been a hair stylist for five. Where I work now pays more than the first place I worked. What about you? What do you do for a living?"

Roan had to think about that one. He didn't work per se. He'd spent hundreds of years training to be one of the protectors to the foretold one. The majority of his adult life had been spent training with a sword while he waited with his brothers and sister for the foretold one to be born. And it wasn't as if any of them needed to work. Being alive as long as he had, a person tended to accumulate more than enough money over the years. Plus it helped that Dirk, one of his other brothers-in-arms, had a knack for investing.

In the end, he said, "You could say I'm in the protection business."

Ansley's gaze skipped across his chest and shoulders before she looked back up at his face. "Let me guess, you're a bodyguard. You're certainly strong enough to be one."

"You could say I'm a bodyguard."

"Have you guarded anyone famous?"

"Ah ... no. No one famous. Right now I'm in between jobs." Roan hated having to lie to Ansley, but until she knew what he truly was, this little white lie wouldn't do her any harm.

At that point the waitress showed up with their food. Roan dug into his steak with gusto. It wasn't as rare as he liked his meat to be, but other than that, it tasted good. As all werewolves did, he liked his meat to barely touch a pan, and so rare it could practically get up and walk off his plate.

Roan lifted his eyes to see if Ansley enjoyed her salad. When their gazes collided, he felt his cock go instantly rock hard. Ansley hadn't touched her salad. She stared at him as if she wanted to eat him instead. Just like that he forgot about his food, almost forgot where they were. With her heated gaze locked with his, he wanted nothing more than to throw her on the table and sink his aching cock inside her.

Knowing if Ansley continued to stare at him in that way he would more than likely

forget himself, Roan decided the hell with the whole date thing. If he didn't get a taste of Ansley soon he would go insane. His wolf didn't like being restrained. Having his mate nearby and unable to touch her made the wolf throw back his head and howl.

Roan kept his gaze locked with Ansley's. "How about we take our food back to your place? I'm suddenly in the mood for some privacy," he said in a gruff voice.

Ansley licked her lips and nodded. The smell of her arousal washed over him, making his cock grow even harder. Pulling his gaze away, Roan caught the eye of their waitress and signaled her over. Ten minutes later he ushered Ansley out of the restaurant while he carried their packaged food in a plastic bag. He only took long enough to give Ansley a hard kiss before he left her and got into his car. As he followed behind her, he prayed she didn't live too far from the restaurant.

### Chapter Three

Ansley checked her rearview mirror to make sure Roan still drove behind her. He was. She tried to take a deep, steadying breath, but that did nothing to stop her heart from pounding with excitement. When she and Roan had locked eyes across the table at the restaurant, she'd known exactly what they were going to do once they reached her apartment. Her body had reacted in the most elemental way when he'd said he wanted some privacy in his gruff voice. Not usually one to hop in the sack with a guy she had just met, Ansley knew Roan would be the exception. Whenever around him, her body seemed to be in a perpetual state of arousal.

At her apartment, she stuck her arm out the car window and motioned for Roan to park his car in the visitor parking on the opposite end of the parking lot. She pulled into her space and got out of her car. She'd just closed the car door when two large hands landed on her shoulders. With a yelp she turned to find Roan standing behind her. For the second time that day he had been able to come up behind her without her hearing him.

She looked around him to see his Lexus parked at the far end of the parking lot. "How did you get over here so fast?"

"I ran."

He must have run pretty fast to get over to her so quickly. She let Roan take her hand and lead her over to the front entrance of her apartment building. Now that she had him here, Ansley started to have second thoughts, but not about sleeping with Roan. Her second thoughts stemmed from her inviting him back to her place. Her small one bedroom apartment probably didn't compare to where Roan lived. With her salary, Ansley had been lucky to afford this apartment and it could in no way be called fancy. More on the cheap side, it had no secured entrance or an underground parking garage. It didn't even have an elevator since the apartment building only had three floors.

If Roan noticed the lack of an elevator as Ansley led him up the stairs to her third floor apartment, he didn't say anything. Once she had her apartment door unlocked, she pushed it open and went inside. Roan followed behind her. Ansley flipped on a light and turned to find Roan locking the door behind them. His eyes did a quick scan of the apartment before his gaze returned to her.

She gave him a half smile. "I know it's small, and probably not what you're used to, but it's all I can afford right now. I'm trying to save money so I can to open my own shop sometime in the future."

Roan moved to put their food on her small kitchen table before he came to stand in front of her. "I didn't come here to check out your apartment, Ansley. I came here to be with you."

He pulled her into his arms. His lips took hers in a heated kiss. Ansley let her keys and purse fall to the floor before she wrapped her arms around Roan's neck. Her body liquefied as he licked and then gently bit her bottom lip before he pushed his tongue inside her mouth. Ansley went up on her toes and pushed closer to Roan. He was so much taller he had to practically bend over to kiss her.

As Roan increased the pressure of his lips, Ansley sucked on his tongue and threaded her fingers through his long hair at the back of his neck. Roan picked her off her feet and

continued to kiss her as he walked over to her couch. He laid her on it then followed her down. The couch barely accommodated the both of them. Roan positioned them so they both lay on their sides with him on the very edge.

Ansley threw her leg over Roan's hip. He let his hand trail down her side to the bottom of her t-shirt. He shoved his hand under it and cupped her breast through her bra. His thumb rubbed back and forth across her already taut nipple. When she moaned and pressed her breast closer, Roan took hold of her shirt then pulled it over her head. He threw it over his shoulder onto the floor. Her bra quickly followed.

Roan rolled her nipple between his thumb and index finger while he nibbled his way along her jaw. Needing to feel his skin next to hers, Ansley grabbed the bottom of his t-shirt and lifted it to his chin. Roan lifted his head only long enough pull it off before he made a trail of kisses down to her breast. Wetness leaked from her pussy into her panties, soaking them. He lifted her breast in his hand and circled her nipple with his tongue just before he sucked it deep inside his mouth. With each pull of his mouth Ansley felt a corresponding pull in her sex. She clenched her strong inner muscles as her body readied itself to be filled.

Ansley gasped. Roan alternated between sucking and flicking her nipple with his tongue. She felt the hard length of his cock pressed against the inside of her thigh. Wanting to feel just how big he was, she reached down and cupped him through his jeans. A low growl rumbled out of Roan's throat from deep down in his chest as she stroked him. He dragged his teeth lightly over her nipple. She undid his jeans and reached inside to wrap her hand around his thick shaft.

With another low growl, Roan quickly undid her jeans and pushed them down past her hips, taking her panties with them. Once he had them completely off her, he released her breast and trailed his hand to the part of her that ached to be filled. He claimed her lips in a hard kiss as he stroked her wet pussy with a finger before he pushed it inside her core.

Ansley pumped her hand up and down his cock in the same rhythm Roan pumped his finger in and out of her pussy. When a second finger joined the first, she moaned into his mouth. He pumped his fingers, harder, faster. She squeezed her pussy around them. Her hips bucked, her body coiling tighter. As if he sensed that it wouldn't take much to send her over the edge, Roan stroked her clit with his thumb while his fingers worked inside her. With a loud moan, she shattered. Her inner walls clutched at his fingers as she came.

She relaxed against Roan. The last wave of pleasure receded, but Ansley wanted all of Roan not just his fingers. She trailed her fingers up his hard shaft to the head of his cock. She rubbed the bead of pre-cum she found there into his skin. Roan left her mouth and buried his face into the crook of her neck as she fisted his erection in her hand. He pumped his hips against her.

Feeling the pleasure once again start to build inside her, Ansley shifted until her sex came into position with his cock. With her hand still wrapped around the base of his shaft, she moved forward until the head of his erection butted up against her wet opening. She flexed her hips and pressed down to take the tip of his cock inside her pussy.

Roan lifted his head and growled loudly. He placed a restraining hand on her hip to hold her still. "No," he said in a strained voice.

Ansley blinked open her eyes to find that Roan's glowed mutedly as he stared at her. Even though she knew what she saw couldn't possibly be real, his eyes continued to



glow, even after she blinked. She found it oddly arousing. Despite his large hand on her hip, she flexed her hips and took a little more of his cock inside her.

“Stop, Ansley,” Roan said between his gritted teeth. “You don’t know what you’re doing. I’m only hanging on to my self-control by a thread.”

She tried to take more of him, but Roan’s grip on her hip tightened. “I thought this is what you wanted,” she moaned. “I know I want it.”

With a growl that couldn’t be mistaken for anything but animalistic, Roan pushed her away as he fell back off the couch onto the floor. Not sure exactly what she had done to cause such a violent reaction from him, Ansley silently watched him pick himself up. He stood in front of her and ooked down at her. His chest rapidly rose and fell. His cock stood erect from the open front of his jeans. Ansley didn’t understand. It was obvious Roan wanted her.

She reached out her hand, but he shook his head. He shoved his cock back inside his jeans and did them up. He snatched up his t-shirt from the floor and yanked it on.

“Roan?” Ansley asked bewilderedly.

“This was a mistake. I shouldn’t have come here.” Without another word, Roan turned and let himself out of her apartment.

Feeling as if Roan had just slapped her, Ansley got off the couch and gathered up her clothes. Hurt, with no real understanding why Roan had run from her, she headed for the bathroom to take a shower. She’d thought things had been going well. Obviously she had done something wrong. It wouldn’t be the first time a man had changed his mind about her once things got intimate. Her last boyfriend, who had only lasted a couple months, hadn’t liked that she tended to be a bit aggressive in bed. But when she held herself back, he ended up dumping her because he found her too cold.

Ansley stepped into the shower and let the warm water run over her. As she washed Roan’s scent off her skin, she wished she could just as easily wash away the memory of how good it had felt to be held in his arms.

\* \* \* \*

Roan couldn’t get away from Ansley’s apartment fast enough. As he sped down the highway toward the Golden Gate Bridge, he tried to leash back his wolf. The wolf wanted to go back to Ansley and finish what they had started. Roan couldn’t believe how close he had come to giving in to his urge to claim Ansley as his mate right then and there. As she had come apart in his arms, with her moans filling his ears, he had told himself that would be enough until he felt ready to explain to Ansley what she was to him. But when she had taken the head of his cock inside her body, he’d had to fight both himself and the wolf to keep from sheathing himself to the hilt in her welcoming heat.

He drove his car across the bridge and headed for Marin County where he and his brothers and sister lived. The mansion was large enough for the seven of them, now eight since Eli, Saskia’s mate, had moved in with them. But in his current mood, Roan wished he lived alone.

When he arrived at the mansion, Roan drove up the long drive and parked his Lexus in the spacious six car garage before he headed inside the house. Feeling as if his nerves had been stretched to their limits, he went to see if anyone else was home. He found Saskia and Eli in the living room watching a movie on the large LCD screen TV. They were cuddled together on the couch. The sight of them together made Roan long for

Ansley.

Saskia turned her head in his direction when Roan walked into the room. She looked him up and down. “You look as if you’re about ready to snap. I take it your evening didn’t turn out like you had planned.”

He ran a hand through his hair. “I damn near fucked it up.”

“What happened?” Eli asked. “Did you tell her about you being a werewolf and she didn’t take it well?”

Roan shook his head. “I haven’t told her about that yet.”

“Then what’s the problem?” Saskia asked.

“I came pretty damn close to claiming her.”

“I thought you wanted to take things slow with Ansley.”

“I do, but it’s turning out to be a lot harder than I thought it would be. I think I may have screwed things up.”

“Why?”

“Let’s just say I pulled the same stunt you did with Eli when you found yourself mated to him—I ran.”

Saskia and Eli hadn’t known they were mates when they had first met. Eli being a mortal at the time, of course hadn’t shown the signs a male werewolf displays when he has found his mate. Unexpected as it had been, Saskia had run from Eli right after their mating bond had been formed.

Saskia cringed. “You didn’t.”

“Oh, but I did. It was either that or finish what we had started.”

“What are you going to do to fix it?”

“I haven’t got a clue. Right now, I need to work off my frustration.” He gave a Saskia a pointed look. “Time to return the favor I gave you when you came running home from Eli’s.”

Saskia smiled and got off the couch. “I’ll get my sword and meet you downstairs.” She looked down at Eli. “Are you going to join us?”

Eli gave her a heated look. “I’d better not. You know how seeing you swing that sword of yours turns me on. I don’t think Roan would appreciate it if I stole you away too soon.”

She bent and gave Eli a quick kiss. “Maybe later I’ll have to do a little sword practice of my own up in our room.”

Turning away, Roan said in a sharp voice, “I’ll be downstairs.” He walked away from the couple before he did something stupid like put his fist through the wall.

\* \* \* \*

Down in the basement, which they had converted into a training area, Roan watched Saskia cross the room with sword in hand to stand in front of him. She swung her sword in an arc in front of her to loosen up. Roan did the same. He knew Saskia wouldn’t take it easy on him. She never did, which he now counted on. He needed to do something that would distract him from thinking about Ansley. Something that would tire him out. And Saskia would be the woman to give him what he needed.

At first glance, Saskia didn’t look as if she would be a match for him, but looks could be deceiving. With her long light blonde, almost white hair, flashing violet eyes and slim build, someone would think he could disarm her and have her at his mercy in a

matter of seconds. That was so far off the mark it wasn't even funny. Saskia hadn't been chosen to be the leader of six large lone male werewolves for nothing. She could hold her own against any of them.

At Saskia's nod, they circled each other with their swords raised. While most werewolves their age had given up the sword long ago and chose to fight in wolf form if the need ever arose, the seven of Roxie's protectors still used the sword—their weapon of choice. Roan made the first strike, which Saskia easily blocked with her sword. Circling each other again, he waited for another opening then struck out at her. This time sparks flew when their blades met.

Saskia and Roan parried and thrust. The sound of their swords clashing filled the room. Neither one of them tried to hurt the other. This was for practice only. By the time Roan held up his hand to indicate that he'd had enough, both he and Saskia were sweating and out of breath.

"Feel better now?" Saskia asked while she panted for breath.

He wiped the sweat out of his eyes before he answered. "A bit. At least I now should be able to sleep."

"That bad, is it?"

"I'm sure it isn't as bad as when you and Eli are away from each other for any length of time." Once mated, werewolf couples couldn't stand to be apart for very long. The longer apart the more anxious they became until they were together again, which usually ended up with the mated pair having sex.

"Just tell Ansley what you are, Roan. You're not doing either one of you any good by holding off, especially you."

He snorted. "Yeah, I'll just blurt out that I'm a werewolf and that she's my mate and we'll live happily ever after. Ansley will think I need to be locked up with the rest of the crazies."

"You could always go wolf in front of her. She wouldn't be able to deny the truth then."

"No, but she could very well run away screaming. Or drop dead in a faint. I don't think she is as strong as you are, Saskia. She's a bit on the timid, shy side."

"I think you're second guessing yourself too much, Roan. How long do you intend to drag this out? How long do you think you'll be able to last before you break and claim her without telling her the truth?"

"To be honest, I haven't a clue. Right now seeing how long I can keep myself in control is the least of my worries. After the way I left Ansley, I wouldn't be surprised if she is more than a little pissed off with me."

Saskia closed the distance between them and gave Roan a hug. "I'm sure she'll forgive you. After all you two are meant to be together."

Roan hugged her back. "I can only hope so."

## Chapter Four

After a fitful sleep with his dreams filled with erotic images of Ansley in his bed, of her moaning his name as he took her over and over again, Roan headed over to Roxie and Beowulf's house. It was his turn, along with his two brothers-in-arms Dirk and Kye, to watch over Roxie. Not that she allowed them to do much more than sit around using up space. Even though Roxie didn't think she needed their protection, Roan knew Beowulf was more than grateful. Roxie might think they were overdoing it, but he knew it would only be a matter of time before someone made a move on her.

The person who worried them most was Miles—Saskia's brother by blood. At one time, he had been chosen to be the foretold one's protectors, but that soon changed when Miles decided he wanted to have control over the foretold one rather than be a protector.

Roan found his brothers with Roxie inside her second floor office. Even though Roxie didn't need to work, since Beowulf had more than enough money and then some, she still continued to work at her web design business that she had started before she had met her mate. As a self-proclaimed internet junkie, Roxie had told him she loved her job too much to give it up.

Kye sat in one of the chairs near Roxie's desk looking bored out of his mind. Dirk, on the other hand, stood behind Roxie's chair completely absorbed in what Roxie worked on as she pointed to something on the monitor of her desktop computer. Roan shook his head. Dirk and Roxie would be up here for hours. Dirk, the only one of them that had completely embraced the technological age, now did all his investments through the internet. Once Roxie had found out he was computer savvy like she was, she had taken it upon herself to teach Dirk everything she knew about web design. Something Dirk had been interested in learning.

Knowing the other two were too absorbed in what they were doing to have heard him come into the room, Roan caught Kye's eye. "If you need me, I'll be outside in the back. I have to make a phone call."

Kye covered a large yawn with his hand. "Sure, go ahead. Not as if much is happening here. I don't know how those two can stare at that computer monitor for hours on end and not get a headache. My eyes would be crossing by now, especially if I had to look at that gibberish Roxie calls HTML code."

Roan chuckled. "I guess it helps if you can understand what you're looking at."

"I guess." Kye settled down lower in his chair. "I think I'll catch some Zs until they have decided they've had enough."

Having been in Kye's place more than once, Roan couldn't blame him. He slipped out of the room and headed to the kitchen. He stepped through the sliding glass door and pulled his cell phone out of his jeans' front pocket. He closed the door behind him. He searched through his contact list until he found Ansley's work number, which he had programmed into his phone earlier.

Once someone picked up on the other end, Roan asked to speak to Ansley. Put on hold, he patiently waited for Ansley to pick up the phone. When she did, he said, "Hey, Ansley. It's Roan."

"Oh. What do you want?" Ansley asked in a clipped tone.

She was definitely not happy to hear from him. "I thought we could get together again tonight."

Ansley didn't reply right away. "Why? So you can run out on me again?"

"Ah, look, that had nothing to do with you. Okay?"

"Sure it didn't. You couldn't get away from me fast enough."

"I had my reasons for doing what I did. Let me see you tonight and I'll explain everything."

"I don't think so. Being humiliated by you once was more than enough. I have to go. I'm in the middle of cutting a client's hair. Bye, Roan." Ansley hung up before Roan could say anything else.

Knowing he couldn't leave things the way they now stood, Roan hit redial and once again asked to speak to Ansley when the other end picked up. This time the girl who answered told him Ansley wouldn't take any phone calls right now. After he hit the end button to hang up, Roan let out a low frustrated growl.

"Your soon-to-be-mate giving you a hard time?"

Roan looked up and realized he hadn't been alone out here. Beowulf sat at the patio table with a newspaper in his hand. Roan went over to Beowulf and sat down in the chair next to his. "You could say that. I have no one to blame but myself, though."

Beowulf folded the newspaper he had been reading in half and placed it on the patio table. "Having a mortal mate who knows nothing of our kind tends to make things a little more stressful."

"You're not kidding. By taking it slow, I now have Ansley not wanting to talk or see me. I know Roxie told me to explain everything to Ansley before I claimed her, but I don't know if I can keep this up."

Beowulf chuckled. "I know Roxie means well, but sometimes it's best to go with instinct. I may not have told Roxie I was a werewolf, and what it meant to be mated to one, but in the end it all worked out."

"But what about giving Ansley a choice?"

Beowulf gave him a hard stare. "If you explain everything to Ansley and she refuses you, will you just walk away?"

Roan ran a hand through his hair. The very idea that Ansley would refuse him made him want to throw back his head and howl. "No, I wouldn't walk away. She's mine."

"Then don't give her a chance to refuse you. I know Roxie would call me a Neanderthal if she heard me tell you this, but I'm going to say it anyway. Go to Ansley, throw her over your shoulder and take her some place where you two can be alone. Then show her exactly how good it can be being mated to one of our kind."

Beowulf got up and walked back into the house. Roan stayed outside as he thought over what Beowulf had said. He felt torn between doing what every fiber in his body demanded he do, and what he thought would be fair to Ansley. When he had finally reached a decision, Roan stood up and went back inside.

On his way to the front door he walked by Beowulf, who wished him good luck. Confident Beowulf would tell his brothers where he went, Roan walked out the door and headed for his car. Ansley was about to find out he wouldn't be so easily put off.

\* \* \* \*

Arriving at the hair salon, Roan parked his Lexus in the parking lot at the back of the

building and headed around to the front. More prepared this time for the harsh chemical smells that seemed to permeate the whole salon, he tried not to take too deep of breaths as he yanked open the glass door and stepped inside. Ignoring the stares of the staff and clients, Roan kept his eyes glued on Ansley as he walked over to her chair. Now so in tuned to her scent, he easily picked it out from the harsher smells around him. Her scent caused the wolf inside him to come to life.

Ansley had her back toward him. She was putting the final touches on the hair of the client she had in her chair. Using the element of surprise, he grabbed her shoulder, spun her around and brought his lips down onto hers. At first she didn't respond to his kiss, but when he threaded his fingers through her hair and hungrily slanted his lips across hers, she melted against him with a sigh. Ansley may be angry with him, but that didn't stop her from wanting him. More than satisfied with her response, Roan ended their kiss. Then doing what Beowulf had suggested, he bent down and picked her up over his shoulder.

As soon as he stood to his full height, Ansley started to struggle. Roan slapped her shapely ass. "Stop that or I'll do more than tap you on the butt." To show her he was serious, he turned his head and nipped her bottom with his teeth.

With a shriek of outrage, Ansley reached down and slapped him on the ass. "Roan, put me down this second. You can't just barge in here and haul me over your shoulder like a sack of potatoes."

He snorted. "I just did, babe. Now I'm taking you out of here."

"Like hell you are. I have other clients waiting."

Roan turned and met the eye of one of the other girls, a pretty brunette that worked in the salon. "Can you tell your boss that Ansley has to take the rest of the day off? For personal reasons." When the girl gave him a small smile and nodded, he said, "There, Ansley, you don't have any more clients to worry about today. Where is your purse?"

Ansley slapped him on the butt again, hard. "I'm not telling you."

The girl, who Roan had spoken to, came around him and pulled open the bottom drawer on the counter in front of Ansley's chair. She reached inside and pulled out what Roan presumed had to be Ansley's purse. "Here it is."

Roan smiled and he took it from her. "Thanks."

"Sherry, how could you?" Ansley wailed at his back.

Sherry gave Roan a wink. "Ansley, if a guy this good looking came into the shop, kissed me the way he did you and threw me over his shoulder, honey, I wouldn't fight him."

Spinning around, Roan headed out of the salon. He heard whispered comments as he walked by the other people in the shop. More than one woman whispered that she wished a man would come and sweep her off her feet as he had done to Ansley. Outside, he kept Ansley held over his shoulder and made his way to the parking lot.

"Put me down, Roan."

"I don't think so."

"All the blood is rushing to my head. It isn't exactly comfortable."

"We're almost at my car. I'll put you down then."

Obviously not satisfied with his answer, Ansley pinched his butt. "Put. Me. Down. Now."

Roan grunted, the only outward sign that showed he had felt her pinch. "No. You only brought this on to yourself when you hung up on me and then refused to talk to me."

You left me no other choice.”

At his car, he opened the passenger door and put Ansley inside. He buckled the seatbelt around her before he shut the door and hurried over to the driver’s side. She turned to glare at him as he settled in the seat and started the car. “What about my car?”

“We’ll come back for it later.” He pulled out onto the street and headed in the direction of Ansley’s apartment.

Ansley crossed her arms over her chest and stared out the windshield. “Why are you doing this?”

“I’m not letting you go that easily.”

“So says the man who said last night was a mistake? How else would you expect me to react? I let you do things to me and then you left me naked on my couch wondering what the hell I did wrong.”

Roan cringed. “I know it looked bad from your perspective, but I really did have a very good reason for doing what I did. Once I explain everything you’ll understand.” He shot a quick glance in Ansley’s direction to see she stared daggers at him.

“I’m sure that bullshit line works on some women, but it won’t work on me. I have no intention of listening to a word you have to say and you can’t make me.”

That was like waving a red flag in front of the wolf’s face. “We’ll see about that.”

They drove the rest of the way to Ansley’s apartment in silence. After Roan parked the car, she got out before he had even shut off the engine. He caught up to her just before she reached the front entrance. He smiled to himself as Ansley stomped up the stairs to her apartment. His mate may be on the shy side, but once riled, she had no qualms about standing up for herself. A trait that would hold her in good stead being a mate to a werewolf.

Ansley unlocked the door and walked inside. Roan closed it behind them. She then went and threw her purse on the kitchen table. “How about we sit down on the couch and I’ll say what I came here to say.”

She made no move to go into the small living room. Ansley leaned back against the kitchen table and glared at him. “I don’t think so. I’m not going anywhere near that couch while you’re here.”

He crossed the distance between them until he stood close, but not too close to make her uncomfortable. “Fine. We’ll talk here. About last night—”

She quickly cut him off. “I told you I don’t want to hear it. Just leave, Roan.”

“I’m not going anywhere.”

“This is my place, not yours. I decide who I invite over, and I didn’t invite you.”

“I can understand that you’re a little pissed off with me right now.”

“You think?” Ansley asked sarcastically. “Let me make this clearer for you. Get. Out.”

Ansley had no idea that the harder she pushed him away the more the wolf inside tried to take him over. With the mating urge still riding him, Roan had a harder time holding back the wilder side of his nature. “No.”

“Fine. You can stand there all day for all I care. It doesn’t mean I have to be in the same room with you.” Ansley walked by him and headed for her bedroom.

When she turned her back on him, what little control he still had over the wolf snapped. The wolf no longer could wait to claim Ansley as his mate, to mark her with his scent and make her his. Roan caught the bedroom door before she slammed it in his face.

He crowded her, forcing her to back farther into her bedroom. With a low growl of need, Roan cupped Ansley's face in his hands and brought his lips down to hers.

He pushed his tongue inside her mouth. The taste of her caused his erect cock to harden even more. Just like in the hair salon, Ansley didn't fight him. The heady scent of her arousal wafted around them as she moaned into his mouth and pressed her body to his.

Roan angled his mouth over hers. He dropped his hands to cup her bottom and haul her up against his erection. It was his turn to moan when Ansley shoved her hands up his t-shirt and dragged her nails down his back. He picked her up off her feet and crossed the room to the bed in two long strides.

Placing Ansley on the center of the bed, he followed her down to lie on his side next to her. Their tongues twined while he shoved his hand up her top and cupped her breast. He tugged at her already taut nipple. With his lips and tongue, he left a wet trail on her skin and he made his way along her jaw to the side of her neck. He lifted his head only long enough to pull Ansley's top over her head. Reaching under her, he undid the clasp of her bra and pulled it off.

Ansley arched her back as he swept his tongue along her collarbones and down to the tops of her breasts. Roan shifted lower on her body, then circled her tight nipple with his tongue. As Ansley threaded her fingers through his hair to hold him to her, he opened his mouth and sucked her nipple deep inside. His cock jerked inside his jeans as Ansley gasped and dug her fingernails into his scalp.

As he sucked on her nipple, Roan trailed his fingers down across her stomach to the top of her jeans. He made short work of undoing them. Hooking the waistband with his fingers, he pushed them down past her hips. Ansley kicked off her shoes. He yanked her jeans the rest of the way off.

Roan shifted lower on the bed. He released her nipple, then kissed his way down to the top of her panties. He settled his upper body between her spread thighs and kissed his way even lower. The smell of Ansley's arousal filled his head. A growl pushed past his lips as he dragged his tongue along her pussy through her panties. Ansley bucked beneath him.

Roan swirled his tongue inside her bellybutton as he tugged her panties down and off. Once again settling between her legs, he pushed on the inside of her thighs to spread her legs even farther apart and licked her from bottom to top. He moaned/growled at his first real taste of her sex. "You taste even better than you smell."

Dipping his head once again, Roan laved her pussy with the flat of his tongue. He lapped at her until Ansley's hips rose off the bed. He circled her clit with his tongue once before he sucked it into his mouth. Ansley moaned and gripped the sheets beneath her. As Roan licked and sucked on her clit, he pushed first one and then another finger inside her wet core. He pumped them in and out of her pussy as her inner walls clamped down around his fingers.

He continued to pleasure her with his fingers and tongue, taking her to the brink of her orgasm before he pulled back. Slipping off the bed he kicked off his shoes and pulled off his t-shirt. Ansley's hot gaze watched while he undid his jeans and pushed them down past his hips. Her eyes locked onto his cock, which stood erect from his body. Now naked, Roan got back on the bed and settled his hips between Ansley's legs.

Taking her hand, he led it down to his erection. He closed his eyes and moaned at the



feel of her fingers wrapped around his shaft. He allowed her to pump her hand up and down his thick length a few times before he pulled her hand away. Roan opened his eyes to find Ansley staring up at him. He knew what she saw—his eyes would be glowing mutedly. It wasn't something he could control when aroused.

Roan rested his weight on his bent arms and pressed the tip of his cock against her slick opening. Ansley gripped the top of his shoulders and wrapped her legs around his waist. With one thrust Roan sheathed his cock to the hilt inside her pussy. The feel of her wet heat wrapped around his shaft made him growl deep inside his chest. They were a perfect fit.

With their gazes locked, Roan pulled back then surged inside her body once again. He kept the pace slow and steady until Ansley lifted her head and dragged her tongue across his skin where his neck and shoulder met. He rode her harder. He cupped the back of her head to hold her in place. "Use your teeth instead of your tongue," he groaned.

Ansley did as he asked. He stiffened in anticipation. She dragged her teeth over the spot once before she latched onto him with her teeth. No longer able to hold himself back, Roan pounded into her. Ansley lifted her hips to match his strokes as he sank his cock inside her body over and over again.

As his release edged nearer, Roan felt a part of his soul reach out to Ansley. When he felt a part of her soul reach out for his and wrap around it, making them one, he lifted his upper body up onto his hands. His shaft rubbed her clit with each stroke. Ansley gripped his biceps as her release overtook her. Her strong inner walls clutched at his cock while she came. It was enough to send him over the edge into his own release. Roan moaned/growled. His cock pulsed, emptying itself deep inside her, filling her with his cum.

Still hard, Roan rolled them both to their sides with Ansley's leg over his hip. He tucked her head under his chin as he fought to catch his breath. She was now his. He held her close. Ansley relaxed against him. He had taken her choice away. Hopefully she understood why he had done it, because there would be no going back. For better or worse they were now mated.

## Chapter Five

Ansley lay curled around Roan listening to the sound of his heart beating against her ear. Ending up in bed together had been the last thing she had expected when he'd carried her out of the hair salon. She'd been more than a little angry with him, but then he had kissed her and she had forgotten all about her anger. One possessive kiss and the man sent her body into intense arousal. And Roan had known it, had used it to his advantage. The snake.

She shifted slightly on the bed and bit back a moan at the feel of his cock still buried inside her, thick and hard. Ansley had no idea how Roan had managed it. Even though he had come, he hadn't lost his erection. She didn't think most men could achieve that feat, not that she'd had a whole lot of experience. But making love to Roan by no means could be compared to the two other men she had slept with in the past. He blew them right out of the water.

It hadn't just been that the sex had been mind blowing, which it had been. It was a couple of other things that set him apart from the rest. For starters what had been up with the glowing eyes and animal sounding growls he had made? Ansley knew if she let herself think about those things too closely right now she could very well freak out. She pushed those two things aside. It was what had happened while they had made love that concerned her more. And *something* had happened. Ansley had felt it. It felt as if a part of her had reached for Roan, then joined with a part of him. *How can that be?* She knew she had to have imagined it, but it had felt so real.

Ansley pulled back in Roan's embrace so she could look up at him. His light blue eyes still had a slight glow to them. She didn't think any contacts existed that made eyes glow like that. Starting to feel a little freaked, she took a deep breath and said, "Roan, your eyes. They glow. Why? And I don't know if it was just my imagination, but something happened while we made love." When Roan moved to claim her lips, she placed her fingers on his mouth to keep him away. "You said you would explain everything."

Roan pulled her fingers away and kissed the tip of each one. "Later. Right now I want you again."

Ansley bit her bottom lip and watched Roan suck the tip of her index finger into his mouth. He swirled his tongue around it. "You're trying to distract me."

He flexed his hips to sink his hard cock a little deeper inside her. "The explanations can wait. Right now I want to make you to come while you scream my name."

Roan held onto her thigh as he pumped his hips between her legs. The feel of him moving deep inside her caused her arousal to build once again. This time when he went to claim her lips she didn't push him away. She sucked on his tongue. He growled into her mouth. The sound of his growl pushed her arousal even higher.

Ansley threaded the fingers of one hand through his hair and kissed with nothing held back. When Roan growled again and held her closer, she grew bolder. Pushing at his shoulder she got Roan to roll onto his back. With his cock still buried deep, she straddled his hips. She sat up, then slowly started to ride him. As she moved up and down on his shaft, his eyes once again started to glow, this time brighter.

Roan thrust up his hips to match her strokes. Reaching up, he cupped her breasts. She tightened her inner walls around his thickness as he lifted his head and sucked a nipple into his mouth. Ansley moaned. With each pull on her nipple she felt it deep inside her pussy. She rode him faster all the while her orgasm inched closer. Roan let one hand trail down her body to where they were joined. He stroked her clit as he rammed up into her. With a keening moan, Ansley let her head fall back. Her body climaxed around his cock.

When the last wave of pleasure receded, Roan lifted her off of him and placed her on the bed on her stomach. He moved behind her as he took hold of her hips and urged her up on her knees. He dragged the flat of his tongue up the curve of her spine before he kneeled between her spread thighs. Ansley rested her upper body on her bent arms. She felt the tip of his cock probed her wet entrance before he surged inside her.

Holding her in place with his hands on her hips, Roan rammed into her. He took her hard and fast. Ansley felt another climax build as he pumped his cock in and out of her. She clutched at the sheets and pushed back to meet each of his strokes. He grew even harder. She then fell over the edge moaning his name. Roan growled/moaned and rammed into her one final time. She gasped with pleasure as his cock pulsed deep inside her.

Sated, Ansley collapsed on the bed. Roan pulled his still hard cock out of her and moved to lie on the bed next to her. He lifted her off the mattress and placed her on top of him so she lay sprawled along him. Panting to catch her breath, Ansley placed a kiss on his chest. Roan's arms came up and wrapped around her. Totally relaxed, she snuggled closer and let her eyes drift shut.

\* \* \* \*

She hadn't realized she had fallen asleep until Roan gently shook her. Ansley blinked open her eyes and lifted her head off his chest to give him a half smile. "Sorry. I didn't sleep very well last night. I hope I didn't drool."

Roan stroked his hand down her back to her bottom. "You can sleep later. Why don't you get dressed and throw some clothes in a suitcase? I want us to be on the road in about fifteen minutes."

Her brows drew together. "Where exactly are you taking me? And why do I have to pack some clothes?"

Roan slid out from under her and got out of bed. "We're going back to my place. And you need clothes because you will be staying the night."

Ansley had a hard time trying to keep her thoughts straight with Roan standing there completely naked. The man had the body of a body builder. He was all muscle without an inch of fat on him anywhere. She sat up and ran her gaze across his thickly muscled chest, down to his washboard abs. She dropped her gaze even lower until she came level with his large cock, which was semi-erect. As she watched, it started to lengthen and harden.

A large t-shirt that smelled of Roan's scent smacked her in the face. Pulling it off, Ansley complained, "Hey. What did you do that for?"

Roan picked his jeans off the floor and put them on. Much to Ansley's dismay, he tucked his now erect cock inside and did them up. "If you kept looking at me like that, we'll never get out of here."

“And that would be bad because?”

He leaned toward her and braced his hands on the mattress. His lips hovered over hers. He then said, “I would much rather get you into my bed, which is a lot bigger than your bed. It will give me more room to lick every inch of your body before I take you over and over again.”

His deep husky voice went straight to Ansley’s pussy causing it to ache with arousal. “As long as I get to lick every inch of your body, I’m game.” She gave the large bulge in his jeans a pointed look.

Roan’s eyes glowed for a split second before he jerked away from her. “Ah, shit. Now I’m not going to be able to think of anything else but having your tongue on my body.” He gathered her clothes off the floor and threw them on the bed next to her. “Get dressed and pack a suitcase. And don’t take any longer than you have to. Just remember, the longer you take in here the longer it will be before you can do all those delicious things with your tongue.” Roan snatched his t-shirt off the bed and picked up his socks and shoes before he left her alone in the bedroom.

Ansley jumped off the bed and got dressed in record time. It only took her a few minutes to dig her overnight bag out of the closet. She shoved some clothes and hairbrush into it. She left the bedroom and went to the bathroom to get her toothbrush. When she came out she found Roan standing impatiently by the apartment door.

She picked up her purse from the kitchen table before she went over to join him. “What about my car? It’s still parked at the salon.”

“Do you have to work tomorrow?”

“No.”

“Then it can stay there for now. We’ll get it for you sometime tomorrow.”

With that said Roan opened the apartment door and ushered her out into the hallway. Ansley closed and locked the door after them. Roan took her overnight bag from her and laced the fingers of his other hand with hers. Ansley let him lead her down the stairs and outside to the parking lot. In no time flat, he had them inside his Lexus and driving down the street.

Ansley watched the scenery go by. She had no idea where Roan lived, but when they crossed the Golden Gate Bridge and headed for the North Bay area she realized he must live in Marin County. Marin County was known as a very affluent area with its share of ridiculously expensive mansions. If Roan lived here, he had more money than she had first thought.

When Roan pulled his Lexus onto a long private drive and Ansley got her first look at the mansion up ahead, she swallowed. Now she knew why Roan hadn’t wanted to stay overnight at her hole-in-the-wall apartment. Compared to his house, her apartment looked like a slum.

As Roan parked the car in front of a large six car garage, Ansley asked, “Do you live here by yourself?”

Roan pulled the keys out of the ignition and smiled at her. “No. I live here with my five brothers, my sister and her ma ... her husband.”

Ansley’s eyes widened. “Five brothers and a sister? And you can live together without killing each other?”

“Mostly,” Roan said with a chuckle. “Actually two of my brothers are my brothers by blood. The other three and my sister, we sort of adopted each other.”

“What about your parents? Do they live here too?”

“No. My parents died a long time ago.”

“Oh. Sorry.”

“It’s okay. Let’s go inside.”

Ansley got out of the car while Roan collected her overnight bag out of the backseat. She looked up at the large house. If Roan lived with his brothers and sister, there would be a good chance at least one of them would be inside. Somehow her relationship with Roan had gone from basically being non-existent to meeting-the-family stage in a matter of hours. Ansley didn’t know how she felt about that. Just because Roan and she had had sex didn’t mean they now had a commitment and would get married. Not that she wouldn’t mind being able to keep Roan as her own, but she knew realistically the chances that they would work out for the long haul were not very good. She didn’t have a very good track record when it came to relationships.

Roan came around to her side of the car and took her hand. Once they walked through the front door, Ansley heard the sound of more than one male voice coming from somewhere inside the house. “I take it some of your brothers are home?”

With a quick sniff of the air, Roan nodded. “All of them are.”

Considering Ansley had only heard two different male voices, it made her wonder how Roan knew all five of his brothers where home. She walked beside Roan as he moved farther into the house. The sound of male laughter fell away once she and Roan stepped through the entrance to the large living room. Ansley felt her mouth fall open when she got her first look at the five very large, very muscular men who sat inside the room. It looked as if an underwear model convention took place in Roan’s home. With their gorgeous faces and well muscled bodies they could have made a fortune off their looks alone. Ansley couldn’t stop staring at them. She’d never seen so many good looking men all in one place before.

Roan snarled beside her. “Maybe introducing you to them isn’t such a great idea after all.”

One of Roan’s brothers, one of the two that had their long hair pulled back in a pony tail, got up from the couch and walked over to where they stood. This brother’s features were very similar to Roan’s, right down to the same light brown hair and light blue eyes. Ansley guessed this had to be one of Roan’s true brothers.

“Don’t be a prick, Roan,” his brother said. He then looked down at Ansley. “Introduce us.” The other men got up and came to stand before them as well.

Roan stepped closer and pulled her under his arm. “The a-hole demanding I introduce you is my true brother, Jager. Our other brother, Skylar, is the other one with his hair in a pony tail.”

Ansley gave Jager and then Skylar a tentative smile. Skylar shared his brothers’ looks.

Roan continued. “Dirk is standing on Jager’s left. Next to him is Kye. And beside Skylar is Leif.”

She let her gaze settle on each of the men. Dirk had dark brown hair with blond highlights that fell past his shoulders. His eyes were dark green. Kye had dark blond hair that just touched the top of his shoulders. His brown eyes met hers. He nodded in her direction. Leif’s hair was the most conservative of the bunch. He wore his auburn hair short. When she met his blue-eyed gaze, he winked at her then proceeded to look her up

and down. Standing in the middle of these six men who all stood well over six foot six, Ansley felt awfully short.

Roan pulled her even closer to his side. "This is Ansley."

"She's just a little thing," Jager said. "I bet she weighs next to nothing too."

"You won't be finding out," Roan said through gritted teeth.

His brother Leif pushed Jager out of the way so he stood in front of her and reached for her hand. He quickly pulled it back when Roan snapped his teeth at him.

Roan gave Leif a pointed look. "You will keep your hands, and paws, to yourself."

Leif chuckled. "Just wanted to be friendly. With your scent all over her, and seeing that mark on your neck, I don't need to be told who she belongs to."

Ansley felt her face flush when she looked at Roan's neck and saw the bite mark she had left on his skin peeking out from under the collar of his t-shirt.

Leif chuckled again. "I think I just embarrassed her. Sorry, Ansley. There is no reason to be embarrassed about leaving your mark on Roan. It will just let any female wer—"

Roan cut Leif off before he could finish his sentence. He loudly cleared his throat. "Enough, Leif."

Leif looked from her then to Roan, who he gave a look of pity. "I get it. Your best intentions went out the window, didn't they? That's why you brought her here. Well, good luck with that."

Ansley only listened to what Leif said to Roan with half an ear. With all these hunky men around her, she had a hard time not staring at each of them. They all looked as if they had walked off a cover of a romance novel. Each one of them exuded confidence and sex appeal. She doubted any of them had trouble getting a woman. Not that she was interested in Roan's brothers in that way. Roan's good looks attracted her more than his brothers' did.

Noticing the room had gone completely silent, Ansley looked at the men who stood around her. From the scowl on Roan's face, she realized she had been caught staring. She gave him a sheepish smile. "Hey, as long as they're here I'm going look. I'm not dead you know." Ansley cringed when the last word left her mouth. That hadn't exactly been smart to tell the man she'd just slept with that she had been ogling his brothers. Her cursed mouth had done it again.

Instead of getting mad or berating her, Roan picked her up in his arms and walked out of the living room. Once they were out of sight, Ansley could hear his brothers' starting to make bets about when Roan and she would leave his bed. When Roan reached the bottom of the stairs that led to the upper level and hurried up them, Ansley felt her face flame red. As first impressions went, she had to say the one she'd made sucked. Not sure if she could face Roan's brothers again, she put her head on his shoulder and let him carry her away.

## Chapter Six

Roan didn't let her down until he had them behind the closed door of what Ansley presumed had to be his bedroom. She only managed to get a quick look at the very solid, masculine furnishings and large bed before Roan pulled her to him. He took her lips in a demanding kiss as he lifted her so he could grind his erection against her pussy. Just like that, her embarrassment slipped away to be replaced by an intense wave of arousal. Ansley even forgot about Roan's brothers downstairs. All that mattered was getting closer to the hard bulge in his pants.

When she squirmed against him, Roan let her slide down his body until her feet touched the floor. He took a step back and slowly started to take his clothes off. Ansley watched his every movement while she too started to strip out of hers. Once they were both naked, Ansley closed the space between them and ran her hands up Roan's chest to the tops of his shoulders. She went up on tiptoe, cupped the back of his head with her hand, and brought his lips down to hers. She nipped and licked at his mouth until he opened for her.

She swept the inside of his mouth with her tongue and brushed the tips of her breasts against his chest. Roan growled softly. She left his mouth and pressed her lips along his firm jaw to his ear. She swirled her tongue inside it before she took his earlobe between her teeth and gave it a small tug. Roan moaned when she left his ear and kissed a path down the side of his throat to where his neck and shoulder met. He stiffened and moved to wrap his arms around her as she dragged her tongue over the bite mark.

Ansley pulled back and shook her head. "Let me have my way with you this time. Remember, I said I wanted to lick and kiss every inch of you."

Roan let his hands fall away with a groan. "You make me want to howl, in a good way."

Moving closer again, Ansley licked and kissed her way along the thick muscles of his chest and down to his flat nipples. She placed her hands on Roan's sides and licked a nipple with the tip of her tongue before she sucked the small nub between her teeth. Roan ground his hard cock against her as she moved to his other nipple and did the same to it.

She continued her downward trail to his washboard abs. His stomach muscles quivered as she licked her way down even farther. Ansley went down on her knees before Roan and looked up at him. His light blue eyes glowed mutedly. Turning her attention to his erect cock, she rubbed the drop of pre-cum on the tip into his skin before she wrapped her hand around his shaft. Her tongue flicked out and she ran it around the head. Roan groaned and pressed his hips closer.

With a firm grip on his cock, Ansley stroked her tongue along Roan's full length. An ache built inside her pussy. She grew wet with desire. She swirled her tongue around the tip of him, then opened her mouth to take as much of his length as she could handle inside. Roan's hands threaded through her hair and moaned/growled deep inside his chest. He pumped his hips while she sucked on his cock. Pleasuring Roan in this way aroused Ansley even more. She sucked harder and brought up her other hand to cup the heavy flesh between his legs.

Roan's movements grew jerky. His cock hardened even more inside her mouth.

“Enough, Ansley. I need my cock in you. Now.”

He pulled her up on her feet. Roan lifted her in his arms as he took her mouth in a heated kiss. Ansley wrapped her legs around his waist and ground her wet pussy against his hard shaft. Roan switched his grip to her bottom. He positioned the tip of his cock at the entrance to her body. He flexed his hips and sheathed himself to the hilt inside her pussy with one stroke. She tightly held on to him as he carried her to the bed, keeping their bodies joined. Each of his steps drove his cock deeper inside her body.

Roan placed her on the center of his large bed so she lay on her back. Supporting his weight on his bent arms, he slowly started to thrust. Ansley moaned into his mouth at the feel of his thick, hard cock working in and out of her. Stretched and filled to capacity, she matched his strokes. She clutched his shaft with her inner muscles, increasing the pleasure she felt.

Angling his strokes higher up on her body so his shaft rubbed her clit, Roan pumped his hips faster. Ansley felt her release build deep inside her pussy. She knew it wouldn't take much to push her over the edge. She lifted her head and nipped the bite mark on Roan's neck. He moaned loudly before he turned his head slightly to the side to give her better access. Knowing how much Roan had found it a turn-on when she'd bitten him before, Ansley bit down on the same spot and held on with her teeth. She didn't break the skin, but she bit hard enough that she knew she would leave another mark on him.

Roan cupped her bottom in his hands and lifted her hips as he pounded into her. Ansley continued to hold him with her teeth until she felt the first flutter of her orgasm. When it hit, she let her head fall back on the bed and moaned. With her pussy clutching at his shaft, gripping his cock in a tight fist, Roan's moans joined hers as he too came deep inside her.

Ansley held Roan tight after he collapsed on top of her. His cock was still a thick, hard length buried inside her pussy. It made her wonder if Roan would always be able to sustain an erection even after he had come. If he could, she knew he would spoil her for other men. She would expect the next guy to be able to keep it up for just as long a Roan could.

Roan propped himself up on his arms and kissed the tip of her nose. “What are you thinking about?”

She smiled. “You.”

He smiled back. “I hope they're all good thoughts and not bad.”

“Oh, they're definitely good thoughts. I can't help but notice your little talent here.” Ansley gave his still hard cock a squeeze with her inner muscles. “I have a feeling the more I sleep with you the more the chances are I'll expect every man I take to my bed to be able to do the same.”

Ansley had kept her words teasing and light, so she didn't expect the kind of reaction she got out of Roan. His upper lip curled up on a loud growl. Ansley found her hands held over head and pressed to the mattress by one of Roan's before she had time to protest. He took her lips in a hard kiss that left her breathless once he lifted his head.

“The only man in your bed will be *me*,” he snarled softly. “There will *be* no others.”

She stared up at him, not sure Roan meant what she thought he had meant. “What do you mean? Are you saying that you already know I'm the one for you? That soon I can expect you to get down on bended knee and ask me to marry you?”

“I don't need to do that,” Roan said in a husky voice. He pulled back until his cock



was almost free of her body, then pushed back into her. "You're already mine."

Roan took her mouth in a hard kiss. This time he took her hard and fast. He hooked one of her legs over his arm and pounded into her. Swept away by the sensations that surged through her body, Ansley could only hold on to Roan. His thick cock plunged into her over and over again until she reached her release. Coming at the same time, Roan let his head fall back with a howl that Ansley would have thought sounded too animalistic to be human if she hadn't been limp and sated with pleasure.

Pulling his still hard cock from her body, Roan lay on his back and gathered her close so she lay on her side with her head pillowed on his chest. Beyond relaxed, Ansley let her eyes drift shut and snuggled closer to Roan.

\* \* \* \*

Roan and she ended up making love for most of the night. Inconceivably, Roan had been able to keep his erection for hours at a time. He'd also taken her in every position imaginable. Near dawn, he had finally allowed her to sleep for more than an hour. Not that Ansley had complained about the way Roan had kept her up for most of the night.

Ansley stretched and slowly came awake. She cringed a bit when she felt all the aches she had in the intimate places of her body. She smiled to herself. After the marathon of sex she and Roan had participated in during the night, she guessed it had to be expected. She hadn't ever had that much sex in one night.

Turning her head toward the other side of the bed, she found the spot where Roan had slept beside her empty. Ansley rolled to her side and pressed her face into his pillow. His scent still lingered on the pillowcase.

She rolled over onto her back and pulled the covers up to her shoulders. Not knowing exactly where Roan had gone, and not wanting to run into one of his brothers or sister if she went in search of him, Ansley decided she would just stay in bed until he came back. When the minutes ticked by and Roan still hadn't returned, she began to wonder if she shouldn't get dressed and go look for him after all.

About to get out of bed, the bedroom door slammed open. Ansley let out a small shriek and pulled the covers up to her chin when she saw Leif enter the room. He gave her a smile and lifted his arm to show her he carried her overnight bag, which she had left downstairs the day before.

"I thought I would bring this up to you," Leif said while he placed it on the floor next to the bed. He gave her a smile that Ansley felt sure more than one woman had found hard to resist.

Keeping a stranglehold on the sheets, Ansley gave Leif a tentative smile. "Ah, thanks."

Leif made no move to leave. "Did you and Roan have a chance to talk during the night, or did he keep you too ... busy ... for conversation?"

Ansley felt her cheeks heat as she blushed. How was she supposed to answer that question? No way in hell she was going to tell Roan's brother that Roan had been too busy screwing her brains out to have had any kind of conversation during the night. "Um ... well..."

Leif chuckled. "I'm going to take that for a no."

A loud growl suddenly filled the room. Much to Ansley's relief, she looked over in the direction the growl had come from to find Roan framed in the doorway. His brow

grew thunderous when his gaze landed on Leif. With two long strides, he crossed the room to his brother and grabbed Leif by the back of his t-shirt. Roan then took hold of the back of Leif's jeans and literally threw Leif out of the room.

Ansley cringed when she heard Leif hit the opposite wall outside in the hallway. Leif's loud cursing told her Roan had been far from gentle. Of course the sound of the ruckus drew the rest of the occupants of the house to Roan's bedroom door, which still stood wide open. Naked under the sheets, Ansley wondered if the situation could get any worse. It did. When Roan's brothers found out what all the commotion had been about, they all started telling Leif off. Somehow, while they talked loudly over each other, Jager, Skylar and Dirk ended up inside the bedroom with Roan, while Leif and Kye stayed outside in the hallway. Luckily for Ansley, they had their backs to her and hadn't noticed her in the bed.

A long, shrill whistle soon cut through the men's voices. The men fell silent. They covered their ears with their hands until the whistle stopped. From her position on the bed, Ansley watched a woman accompanied by another man walk into the middle of the gathered men. Ansley figured this had to be Roan's sister. She gave each of her brothers a look that said she'd heard more than enough. She then took charge of the situation.

Roan's sister pointed at Leif. "You should have known better. Going into Roan's bedroom while Roan wasn't there, you were only asking for trouble. And well you know it." She turned to Kye. "Make sure Leif goes downstairs and stays there until we come down for breakfast." Kye nodded then waited for Leif to walk past him before he too left.

She turned to the rest of her brothers. "Jager, Skylar and Dirk, get the hell out of Roan's bedroom unless you want to be thrown out the same way he threw Leif out."

Each man looked around as if they noticed for the first time where they were. None of them turned to look at her. They filed out one by one until only Roan's sister, the man who had arrived with her, and Roan remained. Ansley found herself in awe of his sister. She had managed to rein in all her brothers with very little effort on her part, which Ansley thought had to be no small feat. Even though Roan's sister was tall for a woman, her brothers still towered over her, and had three times the muscle mass.

His sister cinched the belt of her housecoat tighter around her waist. She walked into the bedroom and made her way over to the bed. Her long light blonde hair looked a little mussed as if she'd just gotten out of bed. She smiled at Ansley. "We haven't been properly introduced yet. I'm Saskia York." She nodded her head in the direction of the hallway. "Over there is my husband, Eli."

Ansley nodded at Eli, then returned Saskia's smile. "I'm Ansley Conry. Nice to meet you."

"Likewise. Sorry about that. Leif tends to be a bit of a knucklehead at times. He's harmless. He just wanted to yank Roan's chain."

"Which he succeeded in doing," Roan said drolly. He moved over to the bed and sat down next to Ansley. He turned to her. "I hope he didn't bother you too much before I threw him out."

Ansley shook her head. "No, he didn't. He just brought up my overnight bag and asked if you and I had a chance to talk yet." Roan and Saskia exchanged a meaningful look. Ansley could only guess what it meant.

"I'll go have a chat with Leif," Saskia said to Roan. "He had no right to ask that. I'll make sure he keeps his nose out of where it doesn't belong."

Roan got up and kissed Saskia on the cheek. "Thanks. Now if you don't mind, I'm sure Ansley would like to get up."

Saskia nodded. "I'll see the two of you downstairs shortly." She went back out into the hallway to her husband. Eli wrapped an arm around Saskia's shoulders. "Just don't take too long or you'll end up with nothing to eat for breakfast. The food supply is starting to get a little low. For punishment, I think I'll send Leif out to do the grocery shopping."

As the other couple walked away, Roan shut the bedroom door. He then came back to the bed and lay down on top of the sheets next to Ansley. "If I had known Leif would pull a stunt like that I wouldn't have left you alone."

Ansley turned to her side and brushed her lips against his. "No harm done, but I can think of a way for you to make it up to me," she said in a husky voice.

Roan chuckled. "After last night, I thought you would have had enough of me by now."

She lifted herself up on her elbow and let her gaze run down Roan's body. He only wore a pair of jeans and nothing else. "I don't think I'll ever get enough of you."

He reached over and slapped her on the butt. "Insatiable, aren't you?"

"Only when it comes to you."

"I'm glad you feel that way, but I think you'd better get up before I never let you out of here. For one thing you must be starved. I know I am. And Saskia wasn't kidding when she said we had better not take too long. There is a good chance my brothers will eat all the food before we get down there if we aren't lucky. You can have the bathroom first." Roan pointed to the en suite bathroom. "There's a shower in there too. So help yourself."

At first, Ansley thought maybe she could persuade Roan to change his mind, but then her stomach started to growl. Considering Roan and she had not once left his bedroom last night, not even to eat supper, Ansley knew she had to be running on fumes. With a sigh of regret, she slipped out of bed and grabbed her overnight bag on her way to the bathroom. She felt Roan's gaze follow her as she stepped inside and shut the door. Ansley decided she would satisfy her hunger for food, then she would satisfy her other hunger.

## Chapter Seven

After both she and Roan had showered, they went downstairs. Ansley still couldn't get over the size of the house, or the luxuriousness of it. She would never have guessed in a million years that Roan and his brothers lived in a mansion so tastefully decorated. From what she had seen of the house so far, it looked as if a professional interior designer had decorated it. Given the amount of money Roan and his family had to have to afford a house such like this, Ansley figured they probably had used an interior designer.

When they reached the large front foyer with its black and white checked marble floor, Roan led Ansley toward the back of the house. Even before they reached the kitchen, she smelled the scent of food cooking. Her stomach rumbled.

Arriving at the kitchen, Roan pushed Ansley toward the large kitchen table that sat in the middle of the big room. "Go sit down next to Saskia and Eli and I'll get us some food."

Much to her surprise, all of Roan's brothers sat at the table calmly eating. She had thought they would be rowdy here same as they had been upstairs earlier. Taking the empty chair next to Saskia, she looked down the table. The men nodded their heads in her direction when she met each of their gazes, except for Dirk who hadn't looked up from the financial section of the newspaper he read. Roan returned with two plates. Each held a very large omelet that completely filled the plate. He set a plate in front of her before he left to get the two cups of coffee she saw sitting on the counter. Ansley looked down at her plate. She was hungry, but she wasn't that hungry.

Saskia leaned over and whispered in Ansley's ear, "Don't worry about it if you can't eat all that. The guys tend to forget that not everybody can eat like they do."

"If I ate this much all the time I would be as big as a house," Ansley said laughingly. "Same here."

Roan came back to the table and handed Ansley a cup of coffee. "I hope the two of you weren't talking about me when I wasn't here."

Saskia rolled her eyes. "No. I just told Ansley that she didn't have to feel obligated to eat all that food you gave her. You must think she eats like a horse like you do."

"Sorry about that, Ansley." Roan pushed his plate closer to hers. "You can put what you don't want on my plate. I'll eat it for you."

Cutting the omelet in half with her knife, she pushed one half onto his plate. "That should be enough." After Roan moved his plate back in front of him and started to dig into his food, Ansley turned back to Saskia. "So how long have you and Eli been married?"

"Just a little over a month."

"So you're still newlyweds then?"

"You could say that," Eli said from Saskia's other side. He gave his wife a heated look.

A muffin flew through the air and hit Eli dead center on his forehead. "Knock off the goo goo eyes, Eli," Leif said. He sat across and a little down from Eli. "Take it to the bedroom so the rest of us don't have to be subjected to it. We are trying to eat you know."

Eli chuckled the muffin back at Leif. “You’re just jealous that you don’t have what Saskia and I have.”

“Hell, no. I like being a free agent.”

“Your time will come. Take it from someone who once thought the same way you do.”

Ansley started to eat her omelet while Leif and Eli bantered back and forth. It was obvious Eli had been accepted as another brother. As she ate, Roan moved his chair closer to hers so their thighs were pressed against each other. He placed a hand on the top of her leg and squeezed. Such a simple gesture, but it made her body respond to Roan’s touch. She reached under the table and put her hand on his hard thigh while she continued to eat. Ansley had just taken a sip of coffee when Roan moved his hand to the inside of her thigh and gently brushed between her legs with his knuckles. She had to quickly swallow the liquid before she choked on it.

Taking a quick peek at Saskia to make sure she couldn’t see what took place under the table, Ansley stroked her hand up Roan’s thigh and skimmed her fingers over the bulge in his jeans. He stiffened for a fraction of a second before he rubbed her pussy with the side of his hand. It took all of Ansley’s concentration to act as if nothing was going on.

With more boldness than she thought she possessed, Ansley cupped Roan’s cock through his jeans and gave him a squeeze. His sharp indrawn breath told her she had to be getting to him same as he was getting to her. Another muffin hit Roan square in the chest. Ansley quickly pulled her hand off Roan.

She looked up to find Leif staring at her and Roan. “Would the pair of you cut it out? It’s bad enough we have to put up with Saskia and Eli. If you want to make a move on each other, please take it somewhere where I’m not. I can smell the pair of you all the way over here.”

Ansley shifted uncomfortably on her chair. She had no idea what had come over her. She usually didn’t do things like fondle a man while in the company of his family, and where anyone could see what they were up to. Embarrassed at being caught, she jerked her gaze down to her plate and kept it there. It also acted like a bucket of ice water on her arousal.

“You’re walking a fine line, Leif,” Roan snarled. “If you don’t like the smell, you can always leave.”

Ansley resisted the urge to turn her head, lift her arm and give her underarm a sniff. Since she’d just had a shower she didn’t think she smelled bad. She kept her head down and concentrated on finishing her food. Everyone around the table suddenly went silent. Ansley didn’t have to look up to know they all had turned their gazes her way.

“Ah, shit,” Leif said, breaking the silence. “I’m sorry, Ansley. I didn’t mean to embarrass you. I only thought to give Roan a hard time. I know you and he don’t have any control over it.”

She had no idea what *it* was, but she decided it would be best to let it go. She looked up to meet Leif’s gaze. He wore an apologetic look on his face. “No need to apologize, Leif. To be honest, it doesn’t take much to make me feel embarrassed. I think I spend half my life being embarrassed, mostly from my own doing. My curse makes sure of that.”

“Your curse?” Roan asked with a chuckle.

Ansley turned to look at him. “Well, that is what I call it. You’ve already been

subjected to it. There are times when I say pretty much whatever happens to be on my mind at the time. I tend to say things that, if I'd really thought about them, should have been kept to myself."

Roan put his arm along the back of her chair and leaned in to kiss her cheek. "Then you and Jager should get along famously. He says whatever he has on his mind too. But unlike you, he doesn't give a shit how people react to it."

She turned her head in Jager's direction at the end of the table. He shrugged. "What can I say? I like to be direct and to the point. It's what makes me so lovable."

Everyone but Ansley broke out in laughter. Skylar, who sat closest to Jager, punched him in the arm. "Yeah, you're about as lovable as a rattlesnake when you're in one of your moods. You get pissed off and you make damn sure everyone around you knows about it and why."

Jager crossed his arms over his wide chest. "Nothing wrong with being out in the open about how you feel."

Roan pushed back his chair and stood up. He held his hand out to her. Ansley took it and allowed him to pull her up. He then spoke to the room at large. "Now that Ansley has finished eating, she and I are going out for a bit. I promised I would take her to get her car. We'll be back later." He turned to Saskia. "If you don't have other plans for me that is."

Saskia waved them away. "Go. Roxie will understand, not that she feels she needs us there anyway. Eli and I will go with Jager and Dirk."

"Then Ansley and I are out of here."

Ansley let Roan walk her out of the kitchen. Leif's words about her and Roan not having any control over *it* played through her head. She couldn't help but think this *it* would somehow be connected to the talk Roan had originally wanted to have with her before they had ended up in bed together at her apartment. Maybe if they kept their hands off each other long enough, Roan and she could have that talk sometime soon. But Ansley wasn't going to bet on it.

\* \* \* \*

After they collected her car from the salon's parking lot, Roan and Ansley went to her apartment. Determined to prove she could be around Roan and not think about hot, sweaty sex, Ansley threw her overnight bag on her bed and returned to the living room to sit on the couch next to Roan. She sat sideways so she faced him and crossed her legs in front of her. Roan put his arm on the back of the couch and turned his body toward her.

"You know you don't have to sit so far away," he said in a husky voice. "There's plenty of room over here."

"I'm staying right where I am. I thought maybe we would talk for a bit, get to know each other better. I know if I get any closer to you the last thing we'll do is talk."

Roan gave her a crooked grin. "I can guarantee it will be more fun than talking."

Ansley rolled her eyes. She shook her head. "Talk first then maybe I'll let you have your way with me."

"Fine. Have it your way. What do you want to talk about?"

Even though Ansley promised herself she wouldn't touch Roan until after they'd had their chat, she couldn't stop her gaze from running over his body. Telling herself to stop it, Ansley jerked her gaze back up to his face. "I don't know. There was something you

wanted to say to me yesterday before..." She let her words trail away. Ansley didn't think it would be a good idea to bring the subject of sex into the conversation. "Why don't we start there?"

Roan seemed to stiffen for a second before he inched a little closer. "How about we talk about you instead? You know more about me than I do about you."

"Okay. What do you want to know?"

He reached across the couch and started to play with the ends of her hair that fell over her shoulder. "Let's see. Something easy to start with. How old are you?"

Having Roan play with her hair like that, Ansley found it harder to concentrate. "I'm twenty-six. What about you? How old are you?"

"I'm a lot older than I look." Ansley wondered if Roan had been deliberately vague on purpose when he quickly added, "We're supposed be talking about you, not me. What about family?"

Ansley didn't usually like to talk about her parents, mostly because she never knew them. Since Roan had introduced her to his family she figured she might as well tell him why he would never be in a position to meet hers. "I don't have any family."

"How old were you when you lost your parents?"

She took a deep breath. "As far as I know, both my parents are alive and well."

Roan gave her a confused look. "I don't understand."

"Both my parents were teenagers when I was born. They both chose to give me up for adoption shortly after my birth. They also signed papers that they didn't want me to have any contact with them once I reached my maturity."

"What about adoptive parents?"

She shook her head. "I grew up in an orphanage."

Roan's hand shifted from her hair to the upper part of her arm. He rubbed it with comforting strokes. "So you basically have been alone all your life?"

"You could say that."

He gathered her close and put her on his lap. "Well, you don't have to be alone anymore." Roan nuzzled the side of her neck.

Ansley shivered when he pressed feather light kisses against her skin. She wrapped her arms around his neck. "We talked about me, now it's your turn. Are you finally going to tell me what you wanted to say, or do I have to force it out of you?" Roan pushed her off him so fast Ansley ended up on the couch in an undignified heap. "What did you do that for?"

He ignored her question, stood and turned to face her. "Why don't you pack some more clothes, then I'll take you out for some coffee or something before we head back to my place."

Given Roan's reaction, Ansley got the distinct impression he now wanted to avoid this talk he had wanted to have with her. She had no idea why, but she decided not to press the issue. She sat up on the couch and looked at Roan. "You want me to stay over at your place again?"

He gave her a sexy smile. "Of course I do. Actually why don't you pack enough clothes for the week?"

"Are you sure, Roan? Not that I'm complaining, but don't you think you're taking things a little fast? The last boyfriend I had, we didn't reach the stage of staying overnight at each other's places until we had dated for a month."

Roan picked her off the couch and kissed her until her toes curled. He pulled back and crushed her to him. "Let's get one thing straight here. I'm not like your other boyfriend. I'm much more than just a boyfriend. Never forget that." He kissed her breathless again. "Go pack your clothes. I'll wait out here for you."

He slowly let her slide down his body until she stood on her feet. Ansley tried to slow her rapidly beating heart as she went to her bedroom to pack. If Roan wanted her to stay at his place for the week, she would stay for the week. She just prayed to God that during that time she didn't do or say something to screw it up.



## Chapter Eight

The next morning, Ansley woke up at seven o'clock on the dot, a particular talent of hers. She never needed an alarm clock. Somehow, no matter the time, she managed to wake up when she needed to be awake. Quietly, not wanting to awaken Roan who snored softly as he slept next to her, Ansley slipped out of bed. She grabbed her suitcase and brought it with her as she softly closed the en suite bathroom door behind her.

In a matter of minutes, she washed her face, brushed her teeth and hair, and got dressed. Normally she would have taken a shower before heading into work, but she really didn't have time for it. She had a longer drive to get to work this morning than she normally would.

Slipping back out into the bedroom, she collected her purse and tiptoed across the room to the closed door. Roan slept on. Ansley smiled and blew him a silent kiss. She would let him sleep. He had earned it. They hadn't really slept much during the night. At least one of them should be able to sleep in.

Ansley closed the bedroom door slowly behind her, then tiptoed down the stairs not wanting to wake the other occupants of the house. At the front door, she unlocked the deadbolt and the lock in the doorknob. After she opened the door, she turned the lock on the doorknob so it would lock behind her. The deadbolt she wouldn't be able to lock again since she didn't have the key, but figured the one lock would be good enough.

Thankful her car hadn't been parked in the large garage, she started her car and headed out to the street. Ansley had only been on the road for ten minutes when she started to feel as if she missed Roan. She ignored the feeling and turned on her car stereo. The music helped distract her, but the need to be with Roan seemed to persist. Ansley told herself that she was being ridiculous. She'd just left Roan. How could she be missing him already? And it wasn't as if she wouldn't see him again. She planned to do her shift at work and then head back to his place afterwards.

By the time Ansley reached the salon, she felt as if a whole year had passed since she had last been with Roan. It just didn't make any sense. The real need to be with him, to touch him, to kiss him, threatened to override everything else. Her body ached for his. Turning off the car, Ansley gave herself a shake. "Get over it." Had she become so obsessed with Roan that he had become the center of her universe? She hoped the hell not. If she didn't stop it, she would end up more than devastated if he were to change his mind about how he felt about her and left. She would probably end up turning into his stalker, begging him to take her back. Not something Ansley ever wanted to see herself doing. She walked into the salon and hoped the inner turmoil she felt didn't show on the outside.

Sherry was the first person to see Ansley. She followed her back to her chair. "So? How was Mr. Tall and Muscular?"

Ansley put her purse away then turned to Sherry. "Who?"

"Oh, come on, Ansley. You know exactly who I meant. So how was he in bed?"

"Who says we slept together?"

Sherry gave her a stare that silently asked Ansley, *What do you take me for?* "Sure you didn't sleep together," she said sarcastically. "Give me a break. That hunk of a man

did not come in here, kiss you senseless, then carry you away over his shoulder just to say hello. I bet he screwed your brains out.”

Ansley’s lips twitched. “You do have a way with words, Sherry.”

“That’s why we get along so well.”

“So true,” she said with a laugh.

“Well? I’m waiting.”

“You’re not going to let this go, are you?”

“Nope. I want all the juicy details.”

“I don’t know about juicy details, but I will say Roan has the stamina of three men and knows how to use it.” Boy, did he know how to use it. Ansley didn’t think she could orgasm so many times until she slept with Roan. Thinking of how he had used his hard cock along with his mouth to make her come over and over again intensified the need to be with him. Ansley roughly pushed those thoughts aside before she completely lost it.

Sherry groaned. “It figures he would be a god in bed. I have only one piece of advice for you—don’t let him go. Men like that, they are damn hard to come by.”

Ansley smiled. “Oh, believe me I have no plans to let Roan go any time soon.”

“Good.” Sherry looked over at the front desk where a client stood waiting. “I’d better get back to the front. We’ll have to continue our talk about your new boyfriend later. I’ll have to see if I can get more details out of you.” She gave Ansley a wink before she left her.

The client turned out to be Ansley’s first client of the day. As she washed the woman’s hair, her thoughts wandered to Roan once again. Her need for him seemed to get stronger as time went by. Ansley didn’t know how much more of this she could take. Determined not to let it get the better of her, she clamped down on it and tried to ignore it the best she could.

\* \* \* \*

Roan came awake with a start. Something wasn’t right. All his senses went on alert. He quickly scanned the room. Nothing seemed to be amiss that he could see. What had caused him to wake up? He reached for Ansley and found the spot next to him empty. He sat up. The sheets felt cool to the touch.

Throwing back the covers, Roan’s eyes fell on Ansley’s suitcase that sat on the floor close to the bathroom door. He relaxed slightly when he saw it, but the feeling of wrongness didn’t go away. He stood up with his hands on his hips and tried to sort out what exactly he felt. It then hit him like a ton of bricks.

He quickly pulled on a pair of jeans while he swore up a storm. He hoped Ansley hadn’t done what he thought she had, but what he felt inside said she had done exactly that. Roan pounded down the stairs and headed for the kitchen just on the off chance Ansley would be there. Instead, he found Eli and Saskia sitting at the table sipping on coffee. It was still early enough that the others hadn’t gotten their asses out of bed yet.

“Did you see her?”

Saskia answered without having to be told who he referred to. “No, we haven’t seen anyone this morning but you.”

“Damn it.”

Roan ran his hand agitatedly through his hair. Now that he had claimed Ansley as his mate, being separated from each other were going to play hell with them. Roan had

known it would be bad, but he hadn't known it would cause this driving need to be with his mate.

He turned and hurried to the front door. Not surprisingly, he found the deadbolt unlocked. He stepped out only far enough to see Ansley's car no longer sat parked in front of the garage. Roan stormed back inside and almost collided with Saskia and Eli.

Saskia crossed her arms over her chest and stood to block his path. "You didn't tell her she was your mate, did you?"

"No, I didn't." Saskia arched a brow at him. "I chickened out. Okay? I was waiting for the right time to tell Ansley everything." He barely managed to bite back a growl. "Fuck. How did you and Eli survive this? And why the hell did you run from him in the first place if this was what you would have to go through? I either want to climb the walls or punch something."

"Don't bring me into this. This is all your doing. You could have avoided this if you had told Ansley right from the start. I'm sure she is suffering just like you. But unlike you, she has no idea why. Do you know where she would have gone?"

This time Roan didn't hold back the growl that built inside his chest. It wasn't directed at his sister though. He totally directed it at himself. Saskia was right. Ansley had to be suffering, and probably wondered what was wrong with her. "She mentioned yesterday that she had to work today. We got involved doing other things and it slipped my mind."

Eli laughed. "I'm sure it did. I know how self-involved Saskia and I were in the beginning." He then grunted when Saskia's elbow connected with his ribs. "Hey, it's true."

"Don't encourage him," she chastised her mate. "Well, Roan. You'd better go and fix this before it gets much worse. And for God's sake tell Ansley the truth. She deserves that much from you."

Moving faster than any mortal could, Roan ran up to his bedroom and finished getting dressed. A few minutes later, he was out the door and raced to his car. The drive back to San Francisco seemed to stretch his nerves to almost breaking point. Once he crossed the Golden Gate Bridge, he knew he was in trouble. The closer he got to Ansley the harder his cock became. He knew what would happen when he saw her again. He would be inside her in a matter of minutes, and Ansley would be just as needy as he. Roan just hoped he could get them somewhere private before he tried to rip her clothes off.

At first glance, the parking lot behind the hair salon seemed full, but Roan managed to slip into the last empty space when he found it. This did not bode well for privacy. He gripped the steering wheel until his knuckles turned white and took some deep breaths. It helped a little, but not by much. He finally got out of the car and made his way to the salon.

Roan yanked open the door and headed straight for Ansley. She looked to be in just as bad shape. Her hair looked mussed as if she had run her hands through it repeatedly. He spared only a glance at her chair to see no one sat there. He didn't stop until he stood in front of her. Roan could smell her arousal with each breath he took, which caused his to ratchet even higher. Through gritted teeth, he said, "Washroom. Now."

Ansley quickly spun on her heel and headed to the very back of the salon. Roan followed her into the small washroom, shut the door and locked it behind them. She

threw herself into his arms a second later, her lips seeking his. She pulled up his shirt and undid his jeans. He groaned when her hand wrapped around his aching cock.

Knowing he would have to make this quick, and quiet if at all possible, he undid her jeans and shoved them roughly down her hips, taking her panties with them. Roan lifted her off her feet once her jeans cleared her legs. Ansley wrapped her legs around his waist as he pressed her back against one of the walls. Pushing his jeans down only far enough to free his cock, he positioned himself between her legs and sank into her wet pussy with one thrust. Ansley moaned into his mouth.

The feel of her warm wetness closing around his shaft made Roan want to growl, but he kept his mouth sealed to hers. He reared back then slammed into her. Ansley tried to pull her mouth away. Roan didn't let her, knowing full well any sounds they made would alert everyone out in the salon to what was happening inside the washroom.

Cupping her bottom in his hands, he raised and lowered her on his cock. He plunged in and out of her body at a fast pace. Ansley dug her fingernails into the tops of his shoulders and squeezed his shaft with her strong inner muscles. Roan pumped his hips once, twice, and then they both came at the same time. Moaning into each others' mouths, Ansley's pussy milked his cock in a tight fist as he came deep inside her.

Once they could breathe normally again, Roan pulled his still hard cock out of Ansley and let her stand on her feet. She leaned against him for a few seconds before she bent down to retrieve her panties and jeans.

"Roan, what was wrong with me? Whatever it was, it's gone now. You had to have felt it too, because you were desperate for me as I was for you."

He shoved his cock back inside his jeans and zipped them up while Ansley dressed. "Not here. Do you think they'll let you leave?"

"I don't know. Gail, the owner, is already in. She's probably not impressed that I'm in here with you. She's kind of a hard woman to get along with."

"Tell her you have to leave, that an emergency came up. All I know is I can't stay here all day with you."

"Then go back home and I'll meet you there when my shift is over."

Roan ran his hand through his hair. "And go through what we just went through again? No fucking way."

Ansley's brows drew together. "Being apart is what caused this? Whatever it is?"

He placed his hand over her left breast. "We're a part of each other now, babe. Neither one of us will be able to stand being separated for long periods of time. The longer the time apart the worse it will get. Now, go talk to your boss so we can get the hell out of here."

\* \* \* \*

More confused than anything, Ansley left the washroom with Roan at her heels. All heads in the salon seemed to turn their way. She ignored the stares. She made her way over to the front counter where Gail stood. The older lady watched her with a scowl on her face. Ansley could tell Gail was already pissed off with her, and figured her boss wouldn't be inclined to let her go early.

Ansley took a deep breath. Roan came to stand at her back. "Gail, I need to leave. A bit of an emergency came up."

Her boss looked from Ansley then to Roan, and back to Ansley again. "An

emergency, huh? I think the emergency is standing behind you. You left early the other day because of him.”

“I really do need to take the rest of the day off.”

Gail sneered. “I don’t pay my employees to take time off whenever they want. You leave now, don’t bother coming back. There are plenty of other hair stylists that would be more than happy to take your chair.”

Before Ansley could say anything else, Roan said from behind her, “Then Ansley quits. She doesn’t need this job anymore. We’ll be by tomorrow to pick up her final paycheck.”

Roan would have led her away then, but Ansley refused to budge. “I can’t quit, Roan. I need this job to pay my rent and bills.”

He brushed a quick kiss against her lips. “No, you don’t. I have more than enough money to look after the both of us.”

Shocked speechless, Ansley let him walk her away a few steps before she found her voice again. “Wait, Roan. My stuff. I’m not leaving it behind, or my purse.”

Roan changed direction and headed for her chair. Ansley collected her purse then looked around for something to put her hairdryer, curling iron and the rest of the tools of her trade that she owned in. She turned to find Sherry standing beside her with an empty box in her hands. “Thanks.”

Sherry smiled. “No problem. Just make sure you call me.”

Ansley didn’t have many friends, but she considered Sherry one of her closest. “I’ll do that.”

Roan took the box out of her hands and started shoving her things into it. In a matter of seconds they had put all her belongings in the box and were walking out the door. Ansley looked back one final time and met Sherry’s gaze. Her friend waved then silently mouthed for her to call her. Ansley only had enough time to wave back before Roan pulled her out the door.

## Chapter Nine

Ansley sat in Roan's Lexus as she watched the large privacy gates swing open. Roan had only let her take her car back to her apartment before he ushered her into his. When she asked where they were going, he had only told her he was taking her to see Roxie. Ansley had no idea what the connection between what had happened between Roan and she had to do with Roxie, but she decided to wait and see what Roan had planned.

Once the gates opened all the way, Roan drove past them and up the long drive to the large mansion. She hadn't known where Roxie lived. Even though Roxie had been coming to her for the last couple of years, Ansley really didn't know much about her. So it came as a bit of a surprise to learn Roxie lived in a large house the same as Roan and his family did. It also made Ansley feel like the odd man out.

Roan parked the car at the top of the drive and got out. Ansley got out on her side and came around the front of the car to meet him. He took her hand and gave it a reassuring squeeze before he led her up to the front door. He rang the doorbell, then stepped back to wait for someone to answer it.

Roxie opened the door a few seconds later. She smiled and waved them inside. "Come on in. It's nice to see you again, Ansley." She closed the door and directed her attention on Roan. "I didn't expect you today. Jager and Dirk are already here. I thought you and Ansley would be a little busy."

Roan cleared his throat as if he had suddenly become nervous about something when Roxie led them into her large living room. "I brought Ansley here because I thought you would be able to help her understand when I tell her about me."

Roxie spun around and stared at Roan crossly with her hands on her hips. "Are you telling me you claimed her without explaining everything to her even after I told you not to do it that way?"

"Well, you see, things got a little out of hand." Roan then let out a squawk when Roxie reached up and grabbed him by his ear. "Rox, that really hurts. Let go."

"No. And it's supposed to hurt you, idiot. Now get over here and let's see if I can make this right for you."

Roxie didn't let go of Roan's ear. She kept hold of it as she led him over to the large sectional couch and forced him to sit down. Ansley had to cover her mouth with her hand to hide the smile that spread across her lips. It was really quite comical to see Roan, who stood much taller than Roxie, being led about by a woman half his size. Ansley wiped the smile off her face and went to sit down next to Roan who rubbed his abused ear.

Sitting on the couch so she faced them, Roxie looked over at Ansley and asked, "Okay, what exactly has Roan told you about your relationship with him?"

"Not too much really," Ansley said cautiously. Seeing the serious expressions on both Roan and Roxie's faces, she started to get a little worried. It didn't take a genius to guess Roan had kept something from her about himself. "He only said that we're now a part of each other and that we won't like to be apart for long periods of time."

Roxie leveled a hard stare at Roan. "You told her that much, but not the reason behind it?"

Roan sighed. "I had to tell her something. She went to work this morning while I

slept. When I woke up, she had already been gone for over an hour.”

Roxie put her head in her hand and shook it. “Yup, you couldn’t have messed things up any worse then you already have.” She looked up. “Roan, tell Ansley the truth.”

“Now? You don’t want to gently ease her into it?”

“No. Sometimes it’s best just to get it all out in the open at once. And it’s not as if she has much choice in the matter, now does she?”

Now really starting to worry, Ansley kept her gaze locked on Roan. He turned to her and picked her hand up in his. She didn’t know if she wanted to hear what he had to say now.

Roan took a deep breath. “Please try not to freak out when I say this, okay? I never meant to take your choice from you. I tried to tell you the other day at your apartment, but you were acting as if you didn’t want anything to do with me and my control snapped.”

“Just spit it out, Roan.”

“All right. Ansley, we’re mated. That’s why we can’t be separated for long without needing to be with one another. The mating bond, the joining of our souls, happened the first time we slept together. I knew you were my mate the first time I met you at the salon. I knew if we made love that would be the end result.”

“Mated? I don’t understand. Only animals take mates. The last time I looked, I wasn’t one.”

Roan’s eyes started to glow mutedly. He then made a very animal-like growl. “I’m not completely human, Ansley. There’s a part of me that *is* an animal.”

Ansley shot off the couch to stand in front of Roan. No longer could she try to talk herself into believing that his eyes didn’t really glow, or that he didn’t growl like a wild animal would. “That is not possible.”

“It is possible.” Roan reached for Ansley, but she crossed her arms over chest.

She narrowed her eyes. “If it’s possible, then what exactly are you?”

Roan stood up, but he kept his distance. “I’m a werewolf, Ansley.”

“A werewolf? There is no such thing as werewolves. Next you’ll tell me vampires, fairies and evil trolls exist too.” Roan gave Roxie a pleading look. Ansley started to chuckle. “Oh, come on, Roxie. Don’t tell me you believe this werewolf nonsense.” She gasped. Roxie’s eyes started to glow just as Roan’s did.

“Sorry, Ansley,” Roxie said. “I’m a werewolf too. Same with Beowulf.”

Ansley’s gaze shot back to Roan. “Your family? Are they werewolves too?”

“Yes.”

“Your eyes, it has to be some kind of trick you’re both playing on me. They aren’t glowing by themselves.”

“It’s no trick. I didn’t want to do it this way, but I can’t think of another way to prove to you that Rox and I are telling you the truth.”

She backed up a step. His body started to shimmer and blur. It all happened so quickly. One minute Roan stood in front of her and the next a wolf had taken his place. A wolf that had light brown fur and light blue eyes the same as Roan’s. Ansley shook her head and backed up even more until the back of her legs hit the coffee table. She flailed her arms to keep her balance. Her arm hit the crystal vase that sat on the table. It smashed on the hardwood floor with a loud crash.

The wolf moved to come closer, but Ansley held up her hands to ward him off.

“Keep the hell away from me,” she yelled. The wolf stopped dead in his tracks.

Jager suddenly ran into the room with a huge sword held in his hand. “What’s the matter? Are you okay, Roxie? I heard a crash and someone yelling.”

Ansley didn’t know who to keep her gaze on. Both the wolf and Jager with his sword seemed equally dangerous to her.

Roxie groaned. “Put the sword away, Jager, before you upset Ansley more than she already is. And of course everything is fine. I thought I told you not to come running with your sword drawn at the slightest noise. We discussed this the last time you did it.”

Jager lowered his sword slightly. “I apologized the last time. How was I to know you and Beowulf were fooling around? The noises you made, I thought someone was trying to kill you.”

“For the love of God, Jager, would you just shut up already?” Roxie said. “Now give me the sword. I don’t want you scaring anyone else with it.”

Jager lowered his sword even more and shook his head. “I am not giving you my sword. I told you, I feel naked without it when I’m not at home.”

Ansley felt her heart jump into her throat. Roxie’s body shimmered and blurred, but unlike Roan she didn’t shift into a wolf. She shifted into what could only be described as half wolf/half human. Her body was covered head to toe in golden brown fur. She now stood taller than Jager, and looked much stronger. With a swish of her tail, Roxie stalked over to Jager and easily took the sword from him.

In a gruff voice, Rox said, “You’ll get it back before you leave. Now out. We have a situation going on here. Ansley isn’t taking the news of Roan being her mate, or us being werewolves, very well. With your mouth, I think you’ll just make things worse.”

Jager looked around Roxie and gave Ansley a weak smile. “Sorry. I didn’t mean to make things worse.” He then left the room.

Roxie shifted back to her human form and came to stand next to Roan, still in his wolf form. She stroked the top of his wolf’s head. “Roan, why don’t you leave Ansley and me alone for a bit?”

The wolf nodded his head before he turned and padded out of the living room. Roxie put the sword she held down on the floor at her feet and at down on the couch once again. She patted the spot next to her. “Ansley, why don’t you come sit down and we’ll talk about this? I know it’s all very confusing, and a bit scary.”

Finally finding her voice, Ansley shot back, “How would you know? You’re a werewolf.”

“I wasn’t always one. I’ve only been a werewolf for the past year. I used to be a mortal just like you.”

Feeling more than a little overwhelmed, Ansley slowly moved over to the couch and sat on the far end of it, as far away from Roxie as she could get. “What happened? Did you get bitten by a werewolf?”

Roxie chuckled. “No. A mortal can’t be turned into a werewolf if bitten by one. You have to be born a werewolf.”

“But you just said you weren’t always a werewolf.”

“My case is a little different. A spell turned me, a spell that was written specifically to turn me. You see I’m special.” Roxie did air quotes when she said the word special. “A few thousand years ago it was foretold a werewolf with a special mark on his or her wrist would one day rule over all the werewolf packs—the foretold one. Well, it turns out I’m



the foretold one.” Roxie held out her left arm.

Ansley looked at the black Celtic styled markings that banded Roxie’s left wrist then glanced back up at her face. “Why are you telling me this?”

“I’m trying to give you a little more insight into Roan. He, along with his brothers and sister, has trained for hundreds of years to be my protector. Even though they all went lone wolves long ago, I have never met a more loyal bunch of people. Roan would never hurt you, Ansley. Nor would his family. They protect their own. They welcomed Eli into the family with open arms when he and Saskia mated, even before he chose to become a werewolf. They’ll do the same with you.”

More intrigued now than she would admit, Ansley’s brows drew together. “I thought the spell had been meant only for you.”

“Originally, yes, but like I said before, I’m special. Besides being able to shift into my half wolf/half human form, which no other werewolf can do, I have a little bit more magic inside me than they do. Only if I perform the spell can a mortal be turned into a werewolf.”

“You keep calling everyone who isn’t a werewolf a mortal. Are you telling me werewolves are immortal?”

“Not exactly. Our life spans are much, much longer than a mortal’s. We can live three thousand years. We also can heal much faster, and survive wounds that would kill a mortal.”

Ansley swallowed. “How old is Roan?”

“He’s just slightly over a thousand-years-old. I think 1,008 to be exact.”

She felt all the blood drain out of her face. Spots appeared before her eyes. “A thousand years old. That means he’ll live for another two thousand.”

Roxie moved to sit beside Ansley and rubbed her back. “Just breathe, Ansley. Don’t faint on me. Roan will get upset with me if you do. I don’t want him to accuse me of mistreating his mate.”

Ansley took a couple of deep cleansing breaths. Once her vision cleared, she gave Roxie a weak smile. “I’m okay now. Can you please tell me what it means to be his mate?”

“For starters it’s more permanent than marriage. As Roan said, your souls have joined. There is no undoing it. And, as you found out from first-hand experience, it isn’t pleasant being separated from your mate.”

Ansley fisted her hands on her lap. “So let me get this straight. The first time we made love we mated, and technically we’re as good as married. Roan knew he would tie me to him forever in this way when we first met, and still he went ahead and did it anyway. Without giving us the chance to get to know each other.” Her voice rose with each word she spoke. “Nor did he even try to tell me anything of his being a werewolf before he went ahead and made love to me.”

Roxie snorted. “That basically says it all. Beowulf did the same thing to me. I reacted about the same way you are now.”

“You two must have worked it out. You seem crazy about each other.”

“Yes, we did in a roundabout way. I’m going to say this even though it sounds kind of cornball, but deep down inside you must have fallen in love with Roan the first time you laid eyes on him. If you hadn’t, your souls never would have joined. I want you to think about that, because I’m going to offer you something that will bring you closer to

Roan.”

“The spell?”

“Yes. I don’t want you to give me your answer now. Hell, you can take as long as you want. Years even. My offer is open-ended. Now I’m going to get Roan back in here. I can hear him pacing in the kitchen.”

Ansley couldn’t hear any noise. If anything the house seemed as silent as a tomb.

Roxie smiled. “Werewolf hearing. We can hear, smell and see three times better than a mortal.”

After Roxie left her alone, Ansley prepared herself to face Roan again. Talking to Roxie had helped, but she still felt a bit overwhelmed by everything she had learned. It wasn’t every day a girl found herself married, mated, to an over-thousand-year-old werewolf. As for Roxie’s offer to turn her into one, Ansley didn’t know when or if she would be able to take that step. It all depended on how Roan really felt about her, and she about him. She would like to believe their souls joined because they fell in love with each other at first sight, but she was too practical to believe that could be possible. Neither one of them had declared their love for the other. To be quite frank, Ansley had no idea if she loved Roan. Her feelings for him were still too new. She hadn’t had the time to really examine them closely. Roan had barged into her life and she hadn’t been able to think straight since.

## Chapter Ten

Stepping into the living room, Roan found Ansley on the couch. She stared off into space lost in thought. He had no idea if that boded well for him or not. Cautiously, not wanting to startle her, he crossed over to where she sat and took the space next to her. "I'm so sorry, Ansley. I never planned to spring it on you like this. I wanted to take things slow."

Ansley kept her gaze fixed straight ahead of her. "I don't know what to think, Roan. What Roxie told me ... it's an awful lot to digest all at once."

"I know. Roxie told me to be upfront with you right from the start. You have to understand when a male werewolf finds his mate the mating urge sinks its claws into him and doesn't let go until he has claimed his mate. It's hard to ignore when the wolf inside is howling for you to take what belongs to you." When Ansley didn't say anything or look at him, Roan sighed. "I know it doesn't excuse what I did, but can you at least try to forgive me?"

"Do you love me, Roan?" Ansley's voice sounded flat, emotionless.

Roan blinked at the sudden change in topic. "What?"

"I asked if you love me."

No longer able to stand the distance Ansley had put between them physically and mentally, he pulled her onto his lap. He put a hand under chin and forced her to look at him. "Of course I love you, Ansley. You're my mate."

"Are you sure it's love and not lust? Are you sure it isn't this mating urge forcing you to feel what you think is love?"

Roan scowled. "It isn't just the mating urge. I love you. The mating urge never would have kicked in if you weren't the one meant for me. Do you have any idea how long I've waited to find my mate?"

"Roxie told me you were over a thousand years old. She also told me about the spell."

"And?" Roan held his breath, waiting to hear what Ansley's answer would be.

"I'm not ready for that, Roan. I don't know if I'll ever be."

He released the breath he had been holding. "What are you saying, Ansley?"

"You say you love me, but I don't know if what I feel for you is love or not. I've never been in love before. I have no idea what love is. I didn't exactly grow up knowing the love of a mother or father. I don't know if I'm even capable of it. I'm just so confused right now."

Roan pulled Ansley's head down to his shoulder and rubbed her back. "I won't ask anything from you that you aren't ready to give. Just know that I'm not going anywhere, ever. You're mine. For now, that's enough for me. We'll work out the rest as we go along."

Some of the tension he felt left his body when Ansley snuggled closer into his embrace. At least she hadn't rejected him outright. The way she had reacted when he had gone wolf, Roan had been pretty worried she would want nothing to do with him.

At that moment, Jager popped his head into the living room. "Sorry, never mind me." He walked over to the couch and picked up his sword where Roxie had left it on the

floor.

Much to Roan's surprise, Ansley lifted her head and shook her head in Jager's direction. "You better not let Roxie catch you with that. She may kick your butt instead of just taking it from you the next time. And given how big she looked in her half wolf/half human form, I would say she would have no problem kicking your butt if she wanted to."

Jager shrugged. "She can always try," he said with a smile.

He had just stepped into the hallway when Roan and Ansley heard him say, "Oh, shit."

The next voice they heard was Roxie's. "I thought I took that from you already."

Jager replied, "Well, I took it back."

"You know how I feel about it," Roxie said. "Now hand it over." Jager obviously didn't do as Roxie had asked, because she then said, "Give me that damn sword, Jager."

The next thing Roan and Ansley heard were the sounds of heavy footfalls taking off at a run and another much lighter set following behind them. Roxie's voice drifted to them as she chased after Jager. "You can run, but I'm still going to take that sword away from you."

Roan and Ansley looked at each other then burst out laughing. Ansley was the first to recover. "Are they always like this?"

"Not all the time. The sword just happens to be a bone of contention between them. Roxie's just afraid Jager will hurt somebody with it."

"Would he?"

Roan shook his head. "No. Jager can handle a sword better than most of us. He doesn't make mistakes like that. As you may have guessed, he's so attached to the thing you would swear he had been born with it in his hand."

Ansley's face grew serious. "You have a sword too, don't you?"

"Yes. All my brothers have one. Same with Saskia. That's our weapon of choice."

"I think I would like to see your sword, Roan," Ansley said softly. "I have to admit Jager looked pretty hot standing there with his sword raised like that. It made me think about other raised swords."

Roan growled low in his throat. "You had better be thinking about my sword and not Jager's. I would hate to beat the crap out of my own brother."

Ansley smiled. "It most definitely was your sword I thought about since you know how to use it so well."

With another growl, Roan kissed Ansley until she grew pliant against him. He then urged her head on his shoulder and wrapped his arms around her, holding her tight. He knew she would still need some time to come to terms with everything that she had learned today, but he felt more than pleased that the distance she had tried to put between no longer existed. Later he would show Ansley how much he loved her. And, if she made the decision to stay a mortal, he would show her that he would stand by it and wouldn't force her into becoming a werewolf. He had already taken one choice away from her. He wouldn't take this one away from her too.

\* \* \* \*

Ansley watched Roan cross swords with Jager down in the training area in the basement. After they had left Roxie and Beowulf's place, they had gone back to Roan's

house, actually her house now too. She and Roan had had a long talk. He had told her everything about him, even what it was like to be a werewolf. It had helped her to be more accepting of what he had done. And it helped her to understand the whole mated business. She knew she had strong feelings for him, the strongest she had ever felt for a man, but she still didn't know if she would call it love. She wished she could tell him she loved him in return when he told her he loved her, but Ansley wouldn't just say the words because he wanted to hear them.

During their talk, Roan had also explained why he and his family had trained so hard to protect Roxie, the foretold one. According to Roan, Roxie was more than just special. She could do things no other werewolf could, much more than just being able to shift into a half wolf/half human form and use a spell to turn mortals into werewolves. Since she also ruled over all the packs, it made her vulnerable. If another werewolf somehow managed to get control of her, they could use Roxie as a figurehead to rule instead. Roan had also told her about Miles, Saskia's true brother, who at one time had been trained to protect the foretold one alongside his sister. But that was before he decided to switch sides and covet the foretold one for his own.

The sound of swords clashing together brought Ansley out of her musings. She followed Roan's movements with her eyes. Shirtless, she could easily see the muscles in his arms and shoulders bunch when he swung at Jager. Each man's hits were controlled. Not once did they draw blood.

Soon Roan stepped back and held up his hand to Jager. "That's enough for one day I think."

"Are you sure?" Jager swung his sword in an arc in front of him. "I could do this all day."

Roan nodded in Ansley's direction where she stood off to the side. "Unlike you, I have something more important in my life than my sword."

"Since I'm no longer wanted, I guess I'll leave you two lovebirds alone. I'll tell the others that you and Ansley will be fooling around down here and not to disturb you."

Roan shook his head at his brother. "Jager."

"What? Isn't that what you want to do?"

"Would you get the hell out of here?"

With an unrepentant smile, Jager then headed up the basement stairs leaving Roan and Ansley alone. Ansley crossed over to Roan. "You definitely were right about Jager. He says whatever he wants and doesn't give a crap what other people think."

"We've tried breaking him of that habit over the years, but I don't think he'll ever change."

"Will he tell the others we're fooling around down here?"

"Of course, but Saskia will soon set him straight. She usually does."

"I still can't get over the fact that Saskia is the leader of you all."

"It wasn't on a whim that she had been picked to be our leader. She knows how to put each and every one of us in our place. She's also lethal with a sword. She's the only one who can best Jager in sword practice."

Ansley let her gaze run over the sword Roan held in his hand. "Can I?"

Roan moved to her side and put the pommel of his sword in her hand. "You got it? It's pretty heavy."

The way she had watched Roan swing it, Ansley didn't think it could be all that

heavy. She wrapped her hand around the pommel and nodded. "Okay, I got it." Once Roan let go, she soon found out how wrong she had been in that thinking. The tip of the sword thumped down onto the floor. It took both her hands to lift it back up to her waist. Her arms soon started to shake with the strain of holding the heavy sword. "I think you had better take it, Roan."

He easily took it from her and held it as if it weighed nothing. "I told you it would be heavy."

"The way you and Jager handled them you wouldn't think it would be that heavy."

Roan put his arm around her shoulders and steered her toward the stairs. "I've had years of practice. How about I go take a shower then we can watch TV or something?"

"I guess."

Instead of staying downstairs, Ansley followed Roan up to their room. Roan and she planned to start moving the things out of her apartment to the house the following day. She decided while he was in the shower that she would see where she could fit her dresser into the room. Most of her furniture she would have to either sell or give away to charity. Not that she cared. None of her furniture held any sentimental value.

Ansley sat on the bed after Roan went into the bathroom. Since he had left the door open, she easily heard him undress before the water turned on in the shower. It didn't take much for Ansley to picture what Roan would look standing in the shower, the water running down his naked body. His arms would flex while he ran the bar of soap all over him. Her pussy started to ache and wetness pooled between her legs as she pictured him running his big soapy hand up and down his cock as he washed it.

She stood up and walked over to the bedroom door and locked it. She stripped off her clothes and let them drop to the floor. She then crossed the room to the bathroom. After revealing what he was, Roan hadn't once tried to initiate sex. If Ansley didn't know better, she would think he held off, afraid she would reject him. Not that she would have. They were mates and nothing would change that. She may not be able to tell him she loved him, but she could show him with her body that he meant much more than what she could say in words.

Slipping into the bathroom, Ansley walked over to the glass enclosed shower. Roan had his back toward her with his head under the running water. She pulled open the shower door and stepped inside behind him.

Roan spun around. "Ansley?"

She gave him a smile. "I hope you didn't expect another woman to get in the shower with you."

"I thought you were going to wait out in the bedroom for me."

"I decided I would much rather join you." She stepped closer and pressed her lips to his chest.

Roan moaned. "Are you sure?"

She dragged her tongue across his nipple. "Why wouldn't I want to?"

His hands fisted at his sides. "I thought maybe you would need more time to get your head around what I am."

Ansley slid her hands down Roan's back to his ass. She then rubbed herself against his cock, which had grown thick and hard between them. "I'm over my initial shock. And right now all I can think about is making love to you."

As if that had been all he waited to hear, Roan threaded his fingers through her hair

and took her mouth in a hard kiss. Ansley pressed closer and rubbed her taut nipples against his chest. She sucked his tongue into her mouth. She reached between them and took his hard cock in her fist. She pumped her hand up and down his length.

Roan growled softly. He cupped one of her breasts in his hand and thumbed her nipple. The fingers of his other hand trailed down her body to her pussy. He found her clit and rubbed it before he pushed a finger inside her core. "You're already wet for me."

"What are you going to do about it?" Ansley asked coyly. She squeezed his cock even harder.

"First I'm going to taste you."

Roan pulled out of her grasp and went down on his knees. He nudged her legs apart and used his fingers to spread the lips of her sex. Ansley gasped at the first stroke of his tongue. Roan flicked her clit with the tip of his tongue before he sucked it into his mouth. She held onto his shoulders and rocked her hips. Waves of pleasure shot through her body when Roan pushed two fingers inside her. He pumped them in and out of her while he continued to suck and lick her clit.

Ansley's moans filled the shower as he continued to work her, pushing her ever closer to an orgasm. It was all she could do to keep upright. Her legs started to shake. She knew if she hadn't been holding onto Roan she would have fallen.

Roan spread his fingers as he moved them inside her, stretching her. "Come for me, Ansley," he half growled. "I want to taste you when you come."

He sucked on her clit harder. Ansley called Roan's name as her climax tore through her. He replaced his fingers with his tongue. He lapped and sucked until the last wave of pleasure receded.

Weak, Ansley sank to her knees in front of Roan. "My turn."

She bent and circled her tongue around the head of his cock. Roan sank his hands into her hair and groaned. She opened her mouth and took just the tip of him inside. Sucking, she wrapped her hand around his shaft and pumped it up and down. Roan's hips bucked. He growled deep inside his chest. The sound of his growls made her body liquefy.

Taking hold of his shaft at the base, Ansley took more of his length inside her mouth. Roan's cock grew even harder. He pumped his hips when she alternated between sucking and swirling her tongue around the head of his cock. She would have continued to pleasure him this way until he came, but Roan had other ideas.

He pulled away and turned her so she faced the glass shower door. Both still on their knees, Roan came up behind her. He took hold of her hips. His cock slipped between her spread thighs and probed the entrance to her body. Ansley rocked back against him, rubbing her wetness along his thick shaft. With a growl, Roan sheathed himself inside her to the hilt with one stroke.

Ansley placed her hands on the glass door. Roan pulled back until he was almost free of her body then rammed back inside. She clamped her inner walls around his shaft as he pounded into her. Moaning, she pushed back, matching his strokes. Her body started to coil tighter once again. The feel of his thick cock stretching her, moving in and out, pushed her ever closer to orgasm.

Roan surged into her harder, faster. With one hand still on her hip, he reached around her body and found her clit. He rubbed it as he bent forward, bit the top of her shoulder near her neck and held onto her with his teeth. Ansley cried out when she started to come.

Roan stiffened behind her when he too found his release. His cock pulsed deep inside her, filling her with his cum.

Ansley leaned her forehead against the cool glass of the shower door. Roan was still buried thick and hard deep inside her pussy. "You're still hard."

He pumped his hips once. "Of course I am. All male werewolves can keep an erection for hours, even after coming."

She pushed back until she leaned against Roan's chest. "It's a good thing that isn't common knowledge among mortal women or poor mortal men would never get laid."

Roan swirled his tongue inside her ear. "The only mortal woman I'll be sharing that information with is you."

"I'm not complaining. How about we go to bed and you can show me just how many times you can come. Maybe you can set a new personal best."

Roan pulled out of her, turned off the water and picked her up in his arms. He carried her out to the bedroom and put her on the bed. "Now that is one challenge I'm more than up for."



## Chapter Eleven

The next day, Roan and Ansley arrived at her apartment a little later than they had first planned. It was already going on late afternoon. Considering they hadn't gotten much sleep during the night, they had both slept in. Instead of taking his Lexus, Roan had taken the black Cadillac Escalade SUV that belonged to his family. He figured they would be able to pack most of her things into the SUV, and then rent a truck later to get the furniture.

The first thing Ansley did when she arrived was to go to the building's superintendent and give her notice. Even though she would have thirty days to clear out her apartment, Ansley knew she would be long gone before that deadline.

Glad she hadn't accumulated too much stuff over the years, Ansley started to pack her belongings in the boxes she and Roan had brought with them. With Roan's help, the packing didn't seem to take as long as it would have if she had been by herself. She hadn't forgotten how hard it had been for her to move most of her things into the apartment alone. She had only asked Sherry and her boyfriend at the time to help with the heavy lifting.

By the time they had packed everything in boxes, night had started to descend. Ansley stood up and stretched her aching back. She took in all the boxes stacked on top of each other in her living room. What had originally looked like not much at first glance had turned out to be more than just a little. Ansley hated moving and hoped this would be the last time she would ever have to do it.

Roan came into the room from the bedroom where he had been dismantling her bed. "All done?"

"I think I got everything. It looks as if we're going to have to make more than one trip."

He glanced over at the boxes. "I think you're right. At least we have lots of time. Why don't we just load up the SUV with the things you'll miss if you don't have and we'll leave the rest for tomorrow? I'll ask Leif or one of the others to come with us. I'm going to have to get help with moving the furniture anyway, plus we'll have the rental truck by then."

"All right. You can bring the SUV to the back of the building. The super doesn't like tenants to use the front entrance when moving."

Roan gave her a kiss. "I'll be back in a few minutes."

After Roan left, Ansley pulled out the boxes she wanted to take with her. She also decided they could just pull the drawers out of her dresser and take them too. It would make the dresser much lighter for the guys to move. Once Roan returned, he and Ansley started loading up the SUV. Roan seemed to be able to get up and down the stairs much faster than she did. Obviously this was one case where being a werewolf had the advantage over being a mortal. He also could carry a lot more than she could.

Her sixth trip up the stairs, Ansley had to sit down for a few minutes on the couch to rest. Her legs started to feel like lead weights. Roan didn't seem tired at all. While she sat he continued to take boxes downstairs.

One particular run, it took Ansley a few minutes to realize Roan hadn't come back

up. Usually he came back up in a minute or less. Wondering what could be keeping him, she got up and headed downstairs to the back entrance. She hoped the super hadn't decided to give Roan a hard time about them moving her things so late.

She didn't find Roan cornered by the super. What she did find had her frozen in place with fear. Roan stood by the back of the SUV while another man stood with a sword pointed in his direction. Roan stood with no expression on his face as he stared down his attacker. Ansley had to cover her mouth with her hand to stop herself from calling out to him. She didn't want to distract Roan. Neither man had noticed her standing on the other side of the glass door.

From one second to the next, the standoff ended. The man swung his sword at Roan. Even though he had no sword of his own, Roan avoided getting hit by jumping out of range. The man continued to swing at Roan, forcing him back until both men had disappeared around the side of the SUV. No longer able to see them, Ansley quickly bolted outside. She didn't go too close to where the two men fought. When she heard both Roan and his attacker growl at each other, Ansley realized Roan's attacker was a werewolf just like him.

Feeling powerless, not sure of what she could do to help Roan, Ansley searched for something she could use for a weapon. Her best bet would be to look in the SUV, but she knew if she distracted Roan now he could end up hurt. Just about ready to go back up to her apartment to get one of her kitchen knives, the attacker's sword skidded across the pavement not too far from where Ansley stood. Somehow Roan must have disarmed his attacker.

Her heart raced. Ansley went over to the sword and picked it up. She tiptoed to the SUV afraid of what she would find. She stuck her head around the back end of it and took a quick peek before she pulled back. Two large wolves were snarling and clawing at each other where Roan and his attacker had been. With the sword gone, they had switched to teeth and claws.

Taking a couple of deep breaths for courage, Ansley hefted the heavy sword in both her hands and moved around the back of the SUV to the side where the wolves fought. She easily could tell which wolf was which. She recognized Roan as the wolf with the light brown fur that matched his hair. The other wolf had dark grey fur. She focused on the dark grey wolf as she slowly stepped closer.

She tried not to think about what she was about to do. She focused on the fear she felt for Roan. He was her mate, her other half. No one would take him away from her. She loved him too much to allow anyone to hurt him. Ansley blinked. She loved Roan. Now that there was a chance she could lose him she knew without a shadow of a doubt she loved him, and had from the start. More determined to make sure she got a chance to tell Roan how she truly felt, she gripped the sword tighter in her hands.

Once she dared to get close enough to the wolves, Ansley used all her strength to lift the sword as high as she could. She then brought the flat of the sword down on the dark grey wolf's back, putting all the force she had behind it. The dark grey wolf yelped and went down hard on the ground. Roan took advantage of the situation and jumped onto the back of the dark grey wolf and took the back of his neck in his strong jaws. The other wolf yelped again and then went still when Roan growled and dug his sharp claws into the grey wolf's side. Defeated, the dark grey wolf whimpered and put his tail between his legs.

Roan released the other wolf's neck, but didn't move away. Both wolves shifted to human form at the same time. Roan rolled his attacker onto his back then cold-cocked him. Unconscious, his attacker went limp. Roan picked him up and carried him over his shoulder. He put the other man in the back of the SUV. He pulled out some rope from the back and hog-tied him. Ansley stood quietly by shaking as she waited for Roan to finish.

His attacker taken care of, Roan spun around and hauled Ansley to him in a tight hug. "What were you thinking, Ansley? You could have been seriously hurt. If anything happened to you..." He couldn't seem to finish his sentence.

"But nothing did." Roan squeezed her so hard Ansley could barely draw in a deep breath, but she didn't care. "If you think I would just stand by and let you get hurt you have another thing coming. You're my mate. I won't let anyone take the man I love away from me."

Roan went still. He released her enough so he could pull back and look down at her. "What was that last part?"

Ansley smiled. "I said I won't let anyone take the man I love away from me."

She'd hardly said the last word before Roan kissed her so thoroughly Ansley's legs almost gave out and she barely remembered her own name. When he lifted his head he said, "If I didn't have to get rid of this trash," he nodded to the back of the SUV, "I would haul you up to your apartment and show you how happy you've just made me."

Ansley shivered with pleasure. "What are you going to do with him?"

"He's one of Miles' men. I'm going to take him to Roxie. As the ruler of the packs she gets to decide his fate."

"What will she do to him?"

Roan chuckled. "To start with, he's going to learn his place. I hope he likes being stuck in his werewolf form while chained up in Roxie's backyard like the dog he is. If that doesn't make him inclined to talk, I don't know what will."

Ansley bit her bottom lip and looked up at Roan. "Since we're going to Roxie's, while we're there I think I'll ask her if she has time to use that spell of hers."

Roan cupped her face in his hands. "Are you sure that is what you want, Ansley? I don't want you to do it if you're only doing it for me. I want you to do it because it's what you want."

She stood up on tiptoe and brushed her lips across his. "I'm sure. I want us to have the thousands of years together the spell will give us. You're my mate. I want to be mated to you in every sense of the word."

As Roan kissed her tenderly, Ansley knew she had made the right decision. No longer would she ever have to worry about being alone. Her wolf would always be by her side.

## **The End**

### **About the Author:**

Marisa Chenery was always a lover of books, but after reading her first historical romance novel she found herself hooked. Having inherited a love for the written word, she soon started writing her own novels.

After trying her hand at writing historicals, she now also writes paranormals.

Marisa lives in Ontario, Canada with her husband and four children. Check out Marisa's website at [www.marisachenery.com](http://www.marisachenery.com). She would love to hear from you, so drop her an email while you're there.

**Meet Lsb Authors At The House Of Sin  
Lsbooks.Net**

**We invite you to visit Liquid Silver Books**

LSbooks.com  
for other exciting erotic romances.

**2007: Terran Realm**

Urban fantasy world: TerranRealm.com

**Featured Series:**

**The Zodiac Series: 12 books, 24 stories and authors**  
Two hot stories for each sign, 12 signs

**The Coven of the Wolf by Rae Morgan**  
Benevolent lusty witches keep evil forces at bay

**Fallen: by Tiffany Aaron**  
Fallen angels in hot flight to redeem their wings

**The Max Series by JB Skully**  
Meet Max, her not-absent dead husband, sexy detective Witt, his mother...

And many, many more!