



Lust Bites
SHADOW WOLF
Sable Grey

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Shadow Wolf

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

SHADOW WOLF

Sable Grey

Chapter One

Dean Rynes glanced back at the hotel room number with disgust. He could hear the sounds of sex on the other side of the door. It pissed him off.

"Jesus, how long is it going to take?" one of the other guards mumbled, leaning back against the wall. Another laughed. There were six of them in all. Dean made seven. They weren't wolves like him, but he'd worked with them for more than nine years, and they were the closest thing to a pack he'd ever known.

"If I were him, I wouldn't bother with these two bits," Goldman murmured. "Not with a wife like that waiting at home."

Dean pressed his lips together. They'd heard him trying to dissuade the senator from this rendezvous. They'd heard him on more one occasion. Now, they all looked at him, waiting for his reaction to Goldman's statement. He offered them nothing, glancing down the hall when someone stepped from the elevator. Mid-twenties male, almost white-blond hair, earphones perched atop his bobbing head. He smelled like burnt feathers. Dean watched him walk to a room and slide a card through the lock.

"He's going to end up being late for the convention," Goldman growled.

Dean's gaze slid to the guard once the hallway was empty again, checked his own watch then lifted a hand and rapped his knuckles against the door behind him. His signal went ignored as the sounds of fucking continued within the room.

He stretched his neck by tilting his head from one side to the other, watching the others fidget and yawn. They couldn't hear the sounds in the room like he could. It was one of the perks, or in this case curses, of being a wolf. And none of them knew his secret. In fact, only one person knew, and that one was on the other side of the door cheating on his wife.

At long last, he heard them finish up and lifted his hand to knock again. When the door opened, Dean turned and scowled at the Senator as he hurried to tuck his shirt into his trousers. His greying hair stood out in every direction.

"I hope she was worth it, John," Dean growled, glancing past the senator at the woman who remained naked on the bed. "We have forty-five minutes to get you to your meeting with the President."

"Just let me grab my shoes." John turned to step back inside without closing the door.

"You might consider a comb, as well."

One of the other guards snickered.

Dean turned his back to the doorway when John fished a few bills from his wallet and tossed it to the nightstand next to the bed. He was grateful John never dallied after he was done with his women. And in less than five minutes, they entered the lobby on the first floor.

"Stop scowling at me, Dean. It's just a hooker." John kept his voice low as they walked quickly through the lobby.

"They are all just hookers, John." As they stepped from the building, Dean retrieved a cigarette and a lighter. The end of his cigarette burned to life as John faced him.

"What the hell is your problem?"

Dean blew out a breath of smoke. "You are pissing away your career and your marriage, John, everything you've worked hard for." He shook his head. "And for what? Fifteen minutes of head?"

John winced, his grey brow furrowing. "I just need to unwind sometimes at the end of the day."

"Most men do that in their own homes with their wives." Dean glanced up at the night sky then tossed his cigarette to the side.

"Leave Belinda out of it."

"She's too good of a woman to lose."

"What would you know of it?"

Dean grunted. "Enough that if she were my woman hers would be the only bed I would *unwind* in."

"What is that supposed to mean?" John's voice rose slightly.

"It *means* that if you don't take care of her, eventually someone else will."

"You?" John poked a finger into Dean's chest. "I've seen how you look at her. I've not said a word, have I? You want to judge me and what I do, and you are no better than I."

Dean blinked and glanced at the others, but they quickly looked away, and his gaze slid back to John. "I have never... I would never..."

"No but you've thought about it, so don't give me this bullshit speech about how much of a bastard *I* am." John crossed his arms. "I know my own wife. And she knows me. She's not going anywhere. Besides, these women mean nothing to me."

"And that makes it better? That you would risk losing her over a whore who only cost you twenty bucks?" Dean shook his head. "And while they might not mean anything, how many fucking affairs have you been caught in, John. A woman can only take so much before she breaks."

"Maybe if you'd been doing your job, that mess wouldn't have been plastered all over the papers." John turned on his heel. "I don't pay you to..."

Dean reached out and grabbed John's arm, stopping his stride. "What did you say?" The other guards stared with wide eyes.

For a moment, John looked angry then his expression softened. "I didn't mean it like that."

"Fuck you if you did." Dean let his hand fall away from John's arm. "I don't do this because of the money. I do it because we were friends once, John."

John inhaled then exhaled loudly, nodding. "We still are. But this... Just leave Belinda out of it." John turned and reached forward to open the car door, without waiting for one of the others to do it for him. "I don't want to talk about it anymore. Take your nagging to someone else and give me a break."

The door closed behind him.

"Asshole," Dean murmured before walking around the car. The driver started the car, and an instant later, Dean heard a soft click.

Spinning around, he lunged for the door. "John!"

The air vibrated, and Dean was lifted off his feet and catapulted backwards as the car exploded.

Chapter Two

Dean stood in front of the window and tilted his head as his gaze swept the line of trees at the edge of the lawn. He heard the night sounds, but they seemed far away. His hearing had gradually returned over the two weeks since the explosion but was still not as acute as he was accustomed. The estate was crawling with secret service and security, but he could barely hear them out there.

Glancing around the room, Dean winced when his attention rested on the picture of John and Belinda. He didn't know why he was here, why she'd requested him personally. John was dead. Goldman was still recovering in the hospital. The rest had perished in the explosion.

Dean ran a hand over his face. It was his fault, and he'd have revealed that to John's wife except she'd barely said three words to him since he'd arrived. Instead, it had been her assistant who gave him instructions on where he would sleep and details of Belinda Boutwell's schedule.

Dean hadn't tried to approach her. She, as always, had had a frenzy of people around her for most of the day. But they'd all left after she'd retired. Now, the house was completely quiet. No, not completely, Dean amended and tilted his head. The soft pad of feet against the carpet found him.

For the public, Belinda Boutwell was picture perfect. Her honey-blond hair was always tied back from her pretty face. Her clothes were of the highest fashion, and she was a template of elegance and sophistication. But now, in her satin gown that slipped around her legs with every step down the stairs and with her hair hanging around her shoulders, she was close to godly in beauty.

He stood in the shadows and watched her every graceful move while she made her way through the room to the kitchen. She passed right beside him, and her natural scent wafted through the air. He inhaled it deeply.

The wolf smelled her, too, and Dean felt himself give in a little to hunger. He'd always had an appetite for sex. It couldn't be helped. The wolf was caged inside of him, seeking any

opportunity for freedom. Sex provided that. Dean tilted his head and breathed in again. He could smell her sex, soft and feminine.

It wasn't until she hit the kitchen light and the flicker interrupted the darkness that she jerked around to stare at him. "I didn't see you there. Why are you skulking around in the dark?"

John Boutwell had been a fool. Dean'd watched, as most of America had, as John had slipped in and out of affair after affair. The newspapers made excuses of his being a ladies' man with an addiction for the opposite sex, but there was no excuse for fucking around on a woman like Belinda.

She finally turned when he didn't answer, but after a moment, she glanced over her shoulder at him.

"What are you staring at?"

"You."

At first, she looked as if she might say something more then she turned away quickly and began opening and closing the cabinet doors one by one. She was looking for something. Dean moved forward, and she spun and backed against the counter. Leaning down, he opened the cabinet in the island revealing the bottles of liquor.

Lightning in the distance illuminated the windows for a moment, and thunder followed in the distance. Thunder sounded again, and he shifted his weight from one leg to the other. The wolf inside of him didn't like storms. It made him restless.

Their gazes met, and electricity buzzed in the air. It wasn't liquor she was thirsty for. He could smell it on her, taste it in the air between them. She'd been neglected for years, and now, need radiated from her in potent waves.

She swiped one of the bottles, and slowly, he closed the cabinet. Silently, he watched her pour some into a glass. She lifted the rim to her lips, and his attention slid momentarily to the ivory skin of her throat as it worked around the liquid. Her gaze peered over the rim of the glass at him as she drank the last drop. She retrieved a second glass and filled them both, sliding one across the surface of the bar towards him.

"Do you want some?"

He shook his head. "I'm sorry about John. I should have..."

She held up a hand and closed her eyes. "Please don't. It wasn't your fault. Paul Goldman told me what happened when I visited him in the hospital, of how you tried to stand up for me."

She opened her eyes and looked down into the amber-coloured liquid in her glass. "He told me it wasn't the first time the two of you had argued."

Dean glanced at the windows when lightning flashed again. *I've seen how you look at her.* John's words haunted him. It was true. He'd always felt something he couldn't explain when it came to John's wife, but Dean had never wanted those feelings to show. For the few years he'd known John before he'd become a senator, they'd been as close as brothers.

Dean turned from the window to find Belinda watching him. "Maybe I *will* have that drink." He reached out and swiped up the glass. In two swallows, he emptied it. The burn of the liquor didn't drown out the sorrow in his chest.

"Why did you request me for your bodyguard?"

A soft smile barely lifted the corners of her mouth.

"John always said you were the only man in the world he trusted. He said you would walk through fire for him." She looked again at her drink. "The police told me that when they arrived on scene, you were pulling away pieces of the car trying to get to him, that your clothes had been nearly burned off. I guess he was right about you."

"That's why you requested me?"

She shrugged her thin shoulders. "That and you are familiar. My alternative was to allow them to fill my house with strangers." She met his gaze. "You are the only man they've cleared as not being the person responsible for his death. All of that together makes me trust you too."

The way she looked at him was pure torture, and the last thing she needed to do right then was trust him. He was moments away from leaping on her, and her husband's body wasn't even cold in the ground. *I've seen how you look at her.*

Her hand lifted to the strap of her gown when he took a step towards her. "What are you doing?"

He grew still. What *was* he doing? The wolf inside pushed another step, and Belinda bumped into the counter behind her as she matched it. What was it about her? Something he

had no name for pulled at him as it always did when he was around her. He'd tried to keep it hidden but apparently had done a piss-poor job since John himself had noticed.

On the third step, she set aside her glass but didn't bolt, so he closed the distance between them with one last stride. Standing in front of her, Dean reached out to touch her cheek only to find his hand shaking. If she noticed, it didn't show as she gazed up at him, lips parted. He dropped his hand, realising that if he touched her, he would be done for.

"I think I'm going to kiss you."

She blinked, and her attention lowered to his lips then to his chest before returning to his face. "No."

Dean arched a brow, almost thankful for her decline. "No?" But the scent of her said *yes*.

"It would be wrong to allow anyone to kiss me. John has only been gone two weeks. If someone were to find out, it would look bad and..." She spoke quickly, and Dean could see her working through the media frenzy in her mind.

"There is no one here to see." Why was he pushing? It wasn't like him to push.

"I said no. It would be bad."

"Oh no. It would be good. I promise." He leaned closer, but she didn't move away and he inhaled beneath her jaw. He smelled the lingering flavour of her floral shampoo, her sweet perfume and, beneath that, her natural feminine scent. He didn't touch her —, he wouldn't.

"How can you even suggest a thing? You and John were friends." Her voice shook.

Dean straightened and gazed at her wide eyes. Her body reacted to him. He could smell that, but he'd not realised she might be frightened of him, too. He took a step backward.

"Of course, you are right. I don't know what I was thinking." He reached for the bottle of bourbon she'd left on the counter and looked at his glass. It wouldn't be enough to stifle the hunger in him. After a moment, he turned up the bottle and drank deeply. When he lowered it, she still stared at him.

"Go back to bed now."

She shook her head. "I can't sleep."

He winced. "You miss him."

For a moment, she said nothing.

"John and I rarely slept together. On the occasions we did, it was..." Her cheeks burned to life, and she looked away. "Over quickly."

Dean frowned. He'd not realised that she and John might not be intimate. He'd assumed that John enjoyed all the sex he had, including that with his wife.

"I don't know why I told you that. I shouldn't have." She waved a hand, seeming embarrassed with herself. "I just don't have anyone to—"

"Was he ever cruel to you?" Dean retracted the step he'd taken away from her. "He never forced you."

Her head snapped around so she could stare at him. "Of course not. His cruelty was indifference. He wasn't the kind to rape any woman."

Dean breathed out and nodded then lifted the bottle to his lips again. He hadn't thought John would do something like that, but he had to make sure. The shock in her eyes was enough to let him know she was telling the truth.

"How many?"

He lowered the bottle, licking the liquor from his lips. "How many what?"

"How many women did he cheat on me with?"

Dean started to turn but her hand on his arm rooted him. Her fingers pressed into him sending a flurry of heat through his veins. Slowly, he turned back and looked at her then dropped his gaze to her hand.

"You told me no, and I respect that, but unless you want me to ignore your words and do what I wish with you, you will remove your hand." Her eyes widened, but to his surprise, she didn't pull her hand back. Instead, her fingers curled in the sleeve of his shirt.

His heart hammering in his chest, he set the bottle back on the counter with one hand and reached for her with the other. With one pull, he had her thin body flush against him. Supple breasts moulded against his chest, her nipples hardening. Her free hand rested on his shoulder.

"I've never cheated on him. Never. Even this last year when he never came to me, I never..." It seemed important to her that he understand. "But I'm just so..."

"Lonely," Dean finished when her words faltered. He'd seen it in her eyes too often not to know what she meant. *I've seen how you look at her.*

"Yes." She bowed her head as if ashamed.

"John was a fool," Dean murmured as he slipped a hand along her jaw and turned her face upward. "A damned fool." He planted his mouth atop hers and kissed her hard, thrusting his tongue between her lips.

For a moment, she went still then her fingers tightened on his arm and shoulder, and she moaned beneath his mouth. That sound wove through him, a scorching thread of desire. The wolf wanted more. And so did Dean.

Stepping back from her, he removed his gun and placed it on the counter. Her whole body shook when she reached for him, and Dean lifted her to the surface then pushed up her gown and stepped between her knees.

She dropped her fingers to his shirt and began working the buttons while he slid her towards him so he could press his cock against her. Leaning forward he licked at her jaw then dropped his lips to her shoulder where he nipped her smooth skin.

The moment her soft fingers touched his chest, spreading out and raking down the dark hair there, Dean growled. He turned his head into her hair and breathed in loudly as the sky opened up outside and the rain began. Hooking his thumbs in the straps of her gown, he tugged the material down until her breasts were exposed. Leaning down, he took one perfect pink nipple into his mouth and sucked. She arched, a small whimper escaping her lips, one hand snaking up so she could thrust her fingers into his hair.

Wrapping his free arm around her, he pulled her cunt against him, tilting her backwards so he could continue to feed on her breast. Instantly, her legs wrapped around him, and he thrust against her. The scent of her sex wrapped around his senses, and another growl vibrated around her nipple.

Heat pumped within him. She felt good in his arms, in his mouth. He moved to the other breast and licked at her nipple. He wanted more. Need shook violently inside of him, and before he realised what he'd done, her panties tore away from her body with one jerk. Releasing her from his lips when she gasped, he watched her eyes darken as she gazed at him.

"I want in." His voice was thick and a half growl.

It should have scared her, but she reached for his pants. In moments, her fingers wrapped around his cock and released him from the constraints of his pants. The counter wasn't going to do, and he wanted her too bad to take her upstairs. Turning, he swiped an

arm across the island, clearing the surface in one sweep. Glassware crashed to the floor, but he didn't care. Grasping her, he whirled her around onto the larger surface and pushed her back.

He leapt like an animal, his knee lifting his weight to straddle her. Grasping her thigh, he pushed her knee forward and nudged her sex with his cock. Hunger ripped through him, and he knew from its intensity that she could probably see his eyes change to those of a wolf. She didn't scream. She didn't try to push him away.

"It's been so long. Hurry," she whispered.

He plunged into her, burying himself to the hilt. She came off of the counter, breasts arching into him as she cried out at the intrusion. Her reaction excited the wolf, and at last, he merged with the beast inside. He rocked back and thrust again, grunting at the way her body clenched around him. Good. She felt good. He pumped into her, unable to help the guttural noises in his throat when she gripped his hips and lifted herself to meet his thrusts. Her fingernails pressed into him as her hips lifted.

His pace quickened, and he leant forward, clamping his mouth on the soft skin of her throat and sucking. The salty taste of her skin, her body moving against his—while he wanted to slow down and take it easy, he couldn't. Instead, he pushed her other thigh forward so that her legs rested against his shoulders. Extending his legs, he drove into her like a madman starved for what she offered.

Tension knotted inside of him, his balls tightened. He allowed her legs to slide back to his sides, and he drew his knees up and gripped either side of the surface so he could continue rocking into her. He bit at her earlobe, his breath heavy and laboured, inhaling the scent of her skin and hair as if his senses craved the smell.

Her body shook, nails dug into him as she neared orgasm. When she lifted her voice, Dean lost himself completely, raging inside her, seeking his own release of tension. Her body arched, and her scream drove him over the edge. Releasing the surface at her sides, he grasped her hips and pulled her to his every assault. Her body clenched around him momentarily before jerking as she thrashed beneath him. He shouted as he came, baring his teeth and very nearly blacking out and allowing the wolf to possess him completely. He delivered several thrusts, unable to stop even after he'd emptied into her. Finally, his body

slowed, and he released her, planting both hands on either side of her as he slumped forward, panting heavily. The wolf retracted back inside of him sated for the time being.

* * * *

Turning away, Gabriel Martin clenched both fists in anger. Lashing out he struck at the trees around him, ignoring the pain when the rough bark tore at his pale knuckles. *First the husband and now the bodyguard.* It seemed everyone was against him.

Why had she let this bodyguard come in and ruin things? He hit a tree hard. Why had she allowed him to climb atop her and ride her like some rampant beast? He hit the tree again.

The devil is manipulative and tempting. His mother's words sounded in his head. *He lies to her and convinces her that he is not beast.*

"Yes." Gabriel nodded and looked back at the house, through the floor to ceiling windows and watched the guard climb down from the island and adjust his clothes. "That must be it."

She is weak because of her husband. She is still waiting for you.

Of course, she was. He'd seen the secret smile she'd given him when he'd watched her last fund raising event on the television. It was the smile she reserved just for him. It was how she'd always communicated her feelings when her husband had been alive. But Gabriel had taken care of that bastard. And he would take care of this one too. She was a lost lamb and only needed guidance.

You must let her know you've not forsaken her. You must let her know that you will come to her when the time is right, his mother's voice instructed.

"I will, Mother." Gabriel watched the guard help Belinda to the floor and carefully adjust her gown. He imagined it was his hand that brushed back her golden hair. "She will know."

Chapter Three

Belinda wanted to stay in bed, hiding under the covers. She was both ashamed and excited by what she'd done with Dean Rynes last night. It had been wild, primitive, and the best sex of her life. And he was the wolf.

That had been her suspicion all along. The wolf in her dreams that shadowed her husband's every move. Dean was the wolf. More than that, he was a werewolf. She'd known last night when his eyes had changed, from dark brown to bright yellow.

She'd not been afraid at all, though. Not like she'd imagined she might be of the man. In fact, it had made the attraction more intense. Her assistant knocked on her door for the third time in the last half hour. Belinda ducked farther under the covers. Maybe they would just go away today. Maybe everyone would just go away.

They treated her like a wounded bird since John's burial. Perhaps that's how she should feel. Instead, she was filled with guilt. They couldn't know it, but it was her fault he was dead. She'd had the dream. She'd known it was one that was real, but as always, she'd let her fear talk her out of opening her mouth.

"Belinda?" her assistant called.

Don't answer. She closed her eyes and found Dean there. He'd been so intense. There'd been no mistaking the lust in his eyes. He'd wanted her. It had felt good. So good that she'd been tempted to go to him again after she'd retreated back to her room.

As if conjured by her very thoughts, his voice echoed from outside her room. "That's enough. If she didn't answer the first three hundred times you called out, she won't answer this time. Go downstairs and make yourself useful. You are in my way."

Moments later, the door opened. Belinda peeked out from her hiding place beneath the covers to see him step into her room and pull the door closed behind him. He was gorgeous. Built like a bull but not clean-shaven like the other guards, he wore a layer of hair around his chin, and she remembered how it had tickled when he kissed her.

Damn. That kiss. She'd felt it in her toes. The man had been like an unkempt storm of passion. She closed her eyes and smiled as he reached forward and pulled the covers down to her chin.

"Should I send them away?"

She opened her eyes and sighed. "No. I can't hide in my room."

"You needn't hide. I'll send them away and tell them not to come back until tomorrow. It won't hurt for you to have a day to yourself, and no one will think poorly of you for it." He straightened when she said nothing. "I'll take care of it."

He started to turn then reached down and covered her head again. She laughed, but a moment later, she heard the door close.

Jumping up, she hurried to it and cracked it open, listening.

"Everyone out," his voice boomed over the familiar noise of voices that had been her life for the last five years. Every noise stilled. "I said out. Come back tomorrow."

No excuse. No explanation. She raced to the window when no one said anything more and watched them file out one by one.

After the last car had pulled away, she released a long breath and leant her head against the window pane. It felt good. One day, she decided. She would take one day.

Turning from the window, she dressed quickly and made her way downstairs. As she descended, her attention rested on Dean. He was large but moved with silence. Every step was confident and sure. His gaze swept around the room then up to her when she reached the bottom step.

"They're gone."

"Thank you." She wasn't sure what to say. Should she mention the night before? Should she pretend it didn't happen at all? Would it happen again? Her body warmed at the thought. And she didn't miss the flare of his nose as if he somehow sensed her body's reaction. His gaze locked onto her.

"I know it's rotten, but I just didn't want to deal with them today." She walked to the window. The other guards could be seen now and then, walking the grounds. Dean was the only one who came to the house. She'd wanted it that way when she'd requested him.

The FBI had said no at first, but after their investigation of the man, relented. In the middle of the investigation of her husband's death, they were taking no chances. It was a

horrible death, degrading. When the driver had turned the key, the car had exploded. Belinda had seen it in her dreams before the police had ever come to tell her that her husband was dead. As a matter of fact, she'd dreamed it three days prior.

She should feel more, she thought. John was her husband. But he hadn't been hers for years. He'd belonged to his voters and to the women he'd met wherever he went. Bitterness and regret were the worst she felt.

"Your guilt is suffocating."

She started and spun. Dean stood right behind her. He made her feel small when he stood so close. And she had a sudden urge to reach out and touch that hard chest. He'd not had an ounce of softness on his body – all hard muscle and bone.

"What happened was not your fault." His deep baritone voice was soothing. "In case no one has told you yet."

"I *knew* he was going to die." The truth spilled from her lips before she could stop it.

"You knew?"

"I had a dream. I've always had them. Since I was a kid." She turned back to face out the window. "And I stopped taking my pills two months ago."

"Did you see in your dream who did it?"

"No. It's a blurred face. I saw John's. But not the man standing in the shadows." She bowed her head. "John never believed my dreams before, but maybe if I'd told him this time...maybe..."

"No maybe. You know as well as I do, that nothing could sway John Boutwell from a piece of ass." His crude words caused the tears that had threatened to fall to ease back. He knew their secrets. But she knew one of his, too. She looked up at the grey sky of the morning.

"It's going to rain again."

"Yes."

"Yesterday, I used you, I think. I needed something to keep me from thinking." She shook her head. "I've never screwed around on him. And it's not like me to just jump in bed with –"

"There was no bed." He leaned so close that hot shivers caressed her body. "And we used one another."

She turned and faced him again. "How did you use me?"

"I think you know."

She bit her lip, afraid to actually say it out loud. "The wolf?"

His gaze searched hers. "Then you *do* know."

"In my dreams, you are usually there, a big grey wolf." She shrugged. "Last night I could see you were...different." She tilted her head. "Do you shift?"

"I don't transform unless there is a need to. The rest of the time, it just lives inside of me." He touched her arm, and she shuddered. "It doesn't scare you?"

"A little," she admitted. "But in the dreams, you were never a threat to my husband."

"Perhaps if I had been, he wouldn't have been in that place with that woman."

Paul Goldman had told her about the argument Dean'd had with her husband, how they'd yelled at one another. He'd told her it wasn't the first time that Dean had fought with her husband about her. Paul had confided that Dean was the only one of them who'd had the balls to say what they'd all been thinking. And the only one who'd been allowed to get away with it.

She reached up to touch his face, but his hand wrapped around her wrist, and he shook his head.

"Don't touch me unless you mean to invite me to do again what I did last night."

She blinked, but he didn't release her. Instead he looked at her hand as if he was surprised by it.

"You cannot touch someone without wanting to..."

"I can smell your arousal. And now, I can feel it." Slowly, he loosened his fingers and lowered his nose to the inside of her wrist and breathed in deeply. "Your pulse quickens when you're excited, and your body temperature changes. It's...intoxicating."

Her lips parted. Heightened senses. That was fascinating.

"I shall try to remember." She pulled her hand away and stepped around him. "I don't know what I'll do today. It was ridiculous for me to have you send them all away."

When he didn't respond, she looked back to find him gazing at her with much the same look he'd had the night before.

"Maybe I'll read a book or something. I used to enjoy reading but rarely have time for it anymore." She backed towards the stairs, her heart quickening when he advanced step for step. Good lord, he was sexy. And now, he stalked her like prey.

His nose flared, and his gaze darkened.

She turned and bolted up the stairs. As she reached the top and turned to see him halfway up behind her, an explosion suddenly rocked the entire house. Her shoulder hit the wall. Below her, Dean fell backwards but turned midair to land on all fours at the bottom of the stairs. In an instant he was on his feet.

"Are you all right?" His gaze yellowed as he looked up at her, and she nodded. Turning he spoke into his walkie-talkie when one of the other guards radioed in.

"I need all of you in the house. Mrs. Boutwell is to be protected." He looked up as the door opened and the guards rushed inside. "At all costs."

He pushed past them and outside.

Belinda made her way back downstairs as the guards positioned themselves around the room. "Ma'am, it might be safer if you went upstairs."

"What *was* that?"

The guard stepped forward and touched her arm, urging her to the stairs. "Please, ma'am. Back upstairs."

She frowned but climbed the stairs and retreated to her room. She walked to the window and looked outside, hand rising to her mouth. The limo was demolished, parts of it scattered about the front of the house burning.

Dean stood scanning the tree line, face lifted to the sky. What was he looking at? She leant against the pane and realised he wasn't looking at anything. He had his nose turned up and was sniffing the air. It would have been absurd and she might have laughed if her heart wasn't hammering in her chest. Her hands began to shake.

It came to her fast and hard, nearly causing her to stagger backwards. Not a vision as in her dreams but a feeling. The person responsible for this was the same responsible for her husband's death. He'd not been after John at all. It was *her* he was coming for. Opening her eyes, she backed away from the window as if he could see her there, around the bed and against the closet door. An overwhelming sense of danger and fear swept through her, so intense, she felt dizzy. Nausea threatened her stomach.

Coming for her. He was coming. Soon.

Chapter Four

Dean wove his way through the FBI agents and upstairs. She'd not come downstairs at all. The agents had gone up, spoken with her then returned to continue their investigation. Rapping on her door, he waited. He rapped again. Finally, he just pushed open the door and found her sitting in a chair against the wall.

"Belinda?"

She looked at him, her eyes red-rimmed. Stepping inside, he closed the door behind him. She was still visibly shaken. She had her hands wrapped around her shoulders.

"The area is clear. They've scoured every acre. Nobody's out there," Dean told her.

"No, he left hours ago."

"What?"

"I could feel him. He was close. Now, he's gone." She bowed her head. "He killed John to get to me."

Dean knelt beside the chair. "You can't know that."

"I do know it. I can feel it. It's me he's coming for." She shuddered, and Dean reached forward to take her by the shoulders, forcing her to look him in the eyes.

"I won't let anything happen to you."

A small smile crept across her lips. "Promise?"

"If he comes near this house again, I'll rip his throat out."

Dean meant it. It was seldom anyone accepted him as a wolf as she had. Perhaps because of her own differences it made it easier for her to accept. John had accepted, but his acceptance had come with conditions and special assignments. Belinda's came with no catches.

He pushed her hair from her face. "What else could you feel about him?"

"I think he's a fire starter. He can make the explosions happen without being close enough to be harmed."

"There was a bomb on John's car. I heard it just a moment too late," Dean argued.

"I don't know. Maybe for the public?" She shook her head. "What little I felt about him was very frightening. He's unstable."

"Well, I could have told you that without any psychic abilities."

She laughed. "No. I mean he doesn't know how evil he is, and that makes him all the more dangerous."

Dean heaved a heavy breath. "He wasn't far enough away that I couldn't pick up his scent. I'll know when he returns."

"That *does* make me feel better," she admitted then winced. "I didn't tell the agents about my visions and feelings."

"It's probably for the best." Dean nodded. "The ignorant can judge harshly." That was a fact he knew all too well himself, and one he also knew she was familiar with.

"It'll be in the papers tomorrow. I'll have to face the cameras." She lifted a hand to her forehead. "The reporters always paint me as the victim. I hate it. John's exploits were always forgiven because of the way he had about him, but I was always looked at as the poor little wife that must endure."

"Isn't that what you did?"

"Yes, but I am not completely a victim, either. I could have left him anytime." She tilted her head back against the wall. "The truth is, he used to me to reflect a nice family unit for his political appearances, and I used him for his popularity to raise money for my foundation."

"So you built an empire while he built a playboy reputation." Dean watched her hesitate then nod. "I still think he was a fool to chase those other women when he had you here all the while."

She smiled again. "You think you would have been different? Women threw themselves at him like they would a rock star."

"I *know* I would have been different." Dean rose to his feet and held out his hand. "You should come down. The agents are almost finished with their investigations, and it would make them feel better to see you moving around and able to function."

She took his hand and stood with a quick nod. "You'll stay by my side? I'll feel stronger if you are there."

"Right by your side," he assured her, opening the door then following her into the corridor. "So close, you'll think I'm your shadow."

* * * *

Gabriel crept closer to the house. It was after midnight. Most of the agents were gone. Those who remained, scouting the premises, were easy enough to get around. He'd wanted to see her. But she'd not ventured outside of the house. They must have forced her to remain inside. Otherwise, she surely would have known and come to him.

You've got to dispose of the bodyguard. He has too much power over her.

Gabriel nodded. His mother was right. They couldn't be together fully until the bodyguard was out of the way. He'd watched him earlier. There was something different about the man than others. It made Gabriel uneasy.

With him gone, you can get to her. She will accept you with open arms. Then we can be together again.

Tears stung his eyes. His mother would finally be able to join him again. Their torment ended. She and Belinda would become one, and they could start their life together. He wanted that more than he wanted air in his lungs. He'd felt empty when his mother's body had died. His only comfort had been when he'd begun to hear her voice again. Now, she would have a body and be with him.

Careful....

A twig snapped, and Gabriel turned. No more than a few feet away an agent stepped through the trees. He'd not spotted Gabriel. But at any moment, the beam of the flashlight would reach him.

Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

His mother's voice wrapped around scripture and echoed in his head. He knew what must be done.

Closing his eyes, he summoned the heat from within. Inside that heat, a ball of fury and hatred boiled. The fire would cleanse him and punish the wicked who stood in his way. It would make those who were not righteous fearful. His skin tingled as if kissed by burning

sparks from a campfire. When he opened his eyes, his vision tinted red, and he directed his focus to the agent who neared.

Do it.

A moment later, the man's scream pierced the night and echoed through the trees as he ran, his entire body ablaze. Shouts were heard from farther away. They would all come now. He smiled. They would come, and they would know. He turned and walked quickly away.

And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ullai, and it called, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision." Gabriel smiled, imagining his mother patting his head with pride at his work. He would make them all understand. And then she would be his.

* * * *

"What's happened?"

Dean turned and found Belinda standing at the foot of the stairs, but before he could speak, another agent stepped through the front door. "He's dead, Captain."

"Dead? Who's dead?" Belinda's hand rose to cover her mouth.

"One of the agents." Dean walked towards her. "They want to move you to a safer place."

"No." Belinda shook her head. "No, this is my *home*."

"Ma'am, I'm afraid you'll have to leave." Agent Murphy stepped forward. "It's no longer safe for you here."

Turning, she reached for the phone. She dialled a number, turned her back and spoke quietly. Then she held the phone out to the agent, a smug smile on her lips.

"The President of the United States would like to speak with you, Agent Murphy."

Murphy's face blanched as he took the receiver.

Dean would have laughed had the situation not been so serious. She hadn't lied. She wasn't a victim at all. He glanced at Murphy to find him glaring at Belinda.

"I understand, Mr. President." He held the phone back out to her. "You win, Mrs. Boutwell. You stay here. But so does every man I have available to me. You won't be able to wipe your ass without one of us taking note of it."

Dean instantly stepped towards the man. "Your men will remain outside of this house and use the guard's house to operate out of. My men will occupy the house. She's just lost her husband, Agent Murphy, and now, it's most likely that the same fucker who left her a widow is trying to help her join her husband. How about a little sensitivity when it comes to her wanting to keep something familiar in her life?"

Murphy looked as if he might say something then turned on his heels and marched away.

"Thank you," Belinda whispered when the other man was gone.

"And you." Dean faced her. "One of his men just burned to death. There was no need for you to pull strings. I could have talked to him."

Belinda's hand rose to her throat. "Burned to death?"

"Yes." Dean nodded. "Though, I'm not certain this guy is really trying to kill you. If he could slip around this easily, undetected, and likes fire so much, why hasn't he set fire to your house?" His brows bunched. "Something doesn't add up here."

"He's coming for me. I told you he was unstable."

"More like the wheel's spinning but the hamster's dead," Dean mumbled. "If he doesn't want to kill you then we have a better chance at catching him quickly. If he does want to kill you, he may be trying to terrify you first."

"He's succeeding," she admitted.

Dean frowned then turned to the guards who waited in the room. "I want a man at every entrance to this house on the bottom floor. Don't give him room to even get a leg in the window." They nodded and scattered.

"The man who died... He died because..."

Dean faced her again. "Because there's a sick fuck out there with little else to do. Don't you dare blame yourself."

She took a deep breath and nodded.

"Everyone here is dedicated to catching him and keeping you safe. If Murphy has half the men I think he's gonna bring in, an armoured tank couldn't get through them. One of his men is dead, and he's pissed off."

Outside, lights of an ambulance bounced through the windows and reflected against the walls. "I should go out there. You go upstairs and sit tight. I'll be but a couple of minutes."

She nodded and turned to retreat as he'd told her to.

Stepping outside, Dean's gaze swept the tree line, and his nose flared as he breathed in deeply. The scent of charred flesh drowned out any other hint of the fucker responsible. His gaze dropped to the blackened body laid out on the stretcher. Moving to Murphy's side, Dean frowned.

"What was his name?"

"Michael Kellers," Murphy answered.

"I'm sorry about your agent." Dean crossed his arms.

"I want to get this asshole."

"Me, too. We both have a score to settle. Now, it's just a race to see who gets to him first." Dean slanted a glance at Murphy. "I'd like to be kept on here and my men in the house. We don't know how dangerous this fucker is gonna get before we can get our hands around his throat."

Murphy looked at him. "You're asking *me* not to send you away? Ask her. She's the one running this show now."

Dean grunted. "She's just scared, Murphy. At least, she's not weeping in the corner. Otherwise, your men would be in the house, and I would be retiring to the guard house."

"We're getting your men hooked up with new radios. We need as many trained men out here as possible. I'm not taking any chances."

"I appreciate that." Dean started to turn. "And I am real sorry about Kellers." He returned inside when Murphy didn't answer.

Chapter Five

Belinda felt like she was smothering. Fear crowded all around her, choking off her attempts to sleep. Her skin crawled, and every shadow in her room seemed to be readying to leap out at her. He was coming. She could feel it. When the door opened, she almost screamed, but the large silhouette that filled the doorway could only be that of Dean Rynes. His presence chased away some of the paranoia and fear that coiled in the room.

"Are you asleep?"

"If only I could." She rose up on her elbows.

"Do you want me to leave?"

"No. I'd rather you stay. I'm so scared I can barely breathe."

He stepped into the room and closed the door, reaching to turn on the small lamp on the table near the mirror. He looked tired. She didn't know if he'd even slept in the past twenty-four hours. Removing his jacket, he draped it across the chair.

"I think he's still close," she whispered and saw his body stiffen. "I can't be certain though, if he really is, or if it's just me being afraid. It's just a feeling, not a vision or dream."

"The clearing around the house is crawling with agents, and I've got a guard at every door." He walked to the bed and sat down next to her.

"Can you smell anything?" She bit her lip as he shook his head.

"The scent of that agent...burned...is all I can smell. It's lessened now but still overpowers my senses." He reached forward and touched her cheek with the back of his hand. "I'm a pretty good guard without the wolf."

She smiled and nodded. "You will stay in here with me tonight?"

"Yes." He reached to remove his weapons and set them on the nightstand. "I don't think he'd be foolish enough to do anything more tonight."

That made her feel better. "I feel like the whole world is gone mad."

"Just one fucker. The rest of us are pretty sane." He leant back on the pillow next to her and tucked an arm beneath his head. She stared at his profile until he looked at her and arched a brow.

"Can you see better in the dark?"

The corner of his lips lifted. "As well as in the light. But I'd smell him long before I ever saw him." He held out his free arm, and she hesitated then scooted closer so he could curl her against him. "I told you, I won't let him get to you."

She closed her eyes and sighed. She *did* feel safer now.

* * * *

Startling blue eyes was the only detail she could see of the silhouette surrounded by flames. They looked at her. While she couldn't see the rest of his face, she knew he was smiling. Someone was beside him. A smaller figure. And a bit transparent. That figure danced in and out of the flames. The man turned and said something. No one answered, but he nodded. She squinted trying to make out the atmosphere outside of the flames. Only one thing showed itself. A picture...of her husband.

Belinda woke with a start. She sat up, and beside her, Dean's hand touched her arm. "It's okay."

"No. It's not okay." Her whole body shook. "Nothing about him is okay."

Dean pulled her back down beside him and rolled towards her, draping a thick arm over her. "He can't get to you."

Belinda began to calm down a little. He was right. It was a dream. While her dreams often revealed things to her, unless she saw something actually happen, it was most likely just her sensing Dean and being fearful.

Dean's mouth pressed against her temple. She closed her eyes and smiled. He was an easy distraction from fear. His presence was immense, and the faint brush of his lips set her heart to thumping. He'd chased away her guilt the first night. Now, just his kiss soothed her frazzled nerves.

When his hand slid back to touch her stomach, she sighed. His lips lowered to her cheekbone and feathered a kiss there. Turning her face towards him, she waited. When he kissed her mouth, he slipped his tongue along her lips. She felt it in her toes.

"You make everything disappear and feel normal again." She murmured against his mouth. She felt him still next to her.

"Normal?"

"Yes." She opened her eyes to gaze into his. He smiled softly before kissing her again. This time his mouth was hungry, and his hot tongue delved between her lips. She shivered when his fingers closed on her gown and knotted. She loved his intensity.

His hand released and slid down and beneath the gown to caress her through her panties. A spear of heat forked out from the contact. She lifted her hips, encouraging him, and when he released her lips, she watched him move so he could lean down and lick at her through the satin material that separated them.

"I want to taste you." His deep voice vibrated against her, and a moment later, his warm finger pushed aside her panties and his tongue connected. Pleasure twisted through her, and she hummed in response to his attention. When his finger probed and sank into her, she sucked in her breath.

She enjoyed the growl that sounded in his throat and vibrated against her sex. His finger thrust deeper, and he licked and sucked until she cried out with pleasure. But he gave her no time to ride it out, pulling her to her feet so he could jerk the gown over her head.

She stepped out of her panties as he quickly shed his clothes then surprised her by grabbing her and spinning her around. A hand on her back, he bent her forward so her hands rested on the bed. His cock nudged her sex from behind then pushed. He filled her completely, slipping one hand beneath her to pull her back against him.

He drew back then thrust into her. She cried out as pleasure, edged with sweet pain, caused her breath to catch. He felt good.

"I've wanted this from the first time I laid eyes on you," he murmured just behind her ear as he bent over her and rocked into her. "I hated John because he couldn't appreciate what he had, hated him because I wanted you for myself."

His words struck her hard. She'd been attracted to him, too—always. Over the years, she'd secretly looked forward to the few instances when he would accompany John to the house. When Dean would look at her, he'd seemed to look into her rather down at her like others. Like John.

"I want to see you."

He pulled out and flipped her over, leaning forward so his face was but an inch above hers. "I don't know what this is, but I don't want to let go of it. I feel something for you that I don't feel with other women. I always have."

She realised what he meant when he pushed inside of her again. "I'm your mate."

He stilled, staring down at her. "What?"

"Many wolves have only one mate. I'm your mate."

She saw the change. It was only slight, like something inside of him locked into place. His eyes changed to those of the wolf, bright and yellow. He leant forward, hands slipping beneath her to cup her shoulders.

"Mine." He rocked forward.

"Yes," she whispered, realising they'd both been lost until that moment. She *was* his. It felt right. A deep guttural growl crawled up from his chest as he began pumping into her. Her body reacted with equal hunger, and when he parted his lips, she saw that his canines had grown and extended down over his bottom teeth. He was claiming her. That realisation struck her hard and filled her with belonging. She lifted her hips to meet each thrust, accepting him and his secret as he had accepted hers, without question or judgement.

Her climax came quickly, tossing her into a shaking world of emotional and physical pleasure. When she came down from that peak of ecstasy, Dean quickened the rhythm of his thrusts. His hands pulled from beneath her to grasp her wrists and pin them above her, riding her frantically, those yellow eyes never leaving her face. When he came, he threw back his head and bared his teeth, the cords of his neck tightening. She was his mate. She was *his*.

* * * *

Dean smiled as Murphy led Paul Goldman into the room. Perched on crutches and moving slowly, Goldman looked as if he should still be in the hospital. Dean sensed the pain every step brought the man.

"Can't let you have all the fun," Goldman offered in explanation before easing down into one of the chairs.

"It's damned good to see you."

"Any ideas on who it is?"

Dean shook his head. "None." He sat across from Goldman, noting that Murphy remained. "I think he's after Belinda. The bastard is like a snake. He strikes then retreats back into the darkness. But he's going to slip up sometime."

"And when he does?"

"I'm ripping his fucking throat out."

Goldman stared at him for several long moments. "You've slept with her."

Dean blinked then glanced up at Murphy who didn't even attempt to pretend he wasn't listening. "I suppose they gave you enough drugs to tranquillise a horse."

"I can see a change on you."

Of course, he could. They'd worked side by side for nine years. Dean shifted uncomfortably.

"It's written all over your face. You've never been good at hiding your emotions."

"What's your point?" Dean didn't hide his irritation.

"Don't you think it might appear suspicious that you're fucking the widow of a man you were paid to protect? Now, he's dead, and you're here." Goldman held up a hand before Dean could speak. "We both know you and John were friends. If anyone else argued with him the way you did, we'd have been dumped on our ass. But, Dean, you've got to know that this might look bad."

"He didn't love her."

"No, he didn't."

Dean glanced at Murphy and then leant forward and lowered his voice. "I do."

"All the more reason..."

"You don't understand." Dean shook his head. "And I can't make you. But I don't give a rat's ass what anyone thinks. To hell with them. I love the woman, and I'll worry about the rest later. Right now, my sole focus is making sure that sick fuck out there doesn't get to her before I get to him."

"You know I'll follow you to hell and back. I'll keep your secrets. But it's like you always told us. Don't let your emotions get in the way of doing your job."

Keep his secrets. Goldman knew them now. Dean had wondered what would be said about what had happened and how long it would take Goldman to say it. When John's car had exploded, Goldman had been hurled backwards just like Dean. But he'd not lost consciousness right away. Dean had shifted midair before he landed next to Goldman, and Goldman's eyes had been open just for a few moments.

"John was my friend. I loved him like a brother. And if I could go back and change what happened, I would," Dean murmured. "Even if it meant not having her in my life."

He glanced up when Goldman nodded. *I've seen how you look at her.*

"But you and I both know how he was," Dean continued. "And as long as there is breath in my body, she will never feel alone like he left her again."

That night it took him hours to finally fall asleep, but his peace was short lived. It was the smell that brought him fully wake, and he sat up. Beside him, Belinda stirred slightly but didn't wake. The house was quiet. He couldn't trust his ears though. He could trust his nose. Burned feathers. Instantly, the face came back to him. Mid-twenties male, almost white-blond hair, brilliant blue eyes. Fuck! The bastard had been right there in the hotel. And now, he was here. The scent was strong. If he wasn't in the house, he was close.

Dean reached for his clothes and quickly pulled them on. Just as he reached for the door, the house shook and an explosion sounded from outside. He turned and leapt to the window to find the guard house on fire.

"What's happening?" Belinda cried out from behind him as he dashed for the door.

"He's here."

Chapter Six

Belinda paced her bedroom. It had been fifteen minutes, and still Dean hadn't returned. Fear had long begun to fill her chest when she heard a sound that stopped her in her tracks. It was a slow drag of metal scraping metal and it was coming from her closet. She couldn't move, paralysed with fear, as she listened to the hangers slide across the rod. She couldn't scream when the door started to open.

Dean! He's here! she screamed inside, but no words would form in her throat. All that came out was a whimper. And then she saw him, knew it was him instantly. He smiled as he stepped out and closed the closet door behind him. How long had he been there waiting?

"At long last." He sent her a boyish grin. "I knew you would wait for me. Mother said you would. And here you are." He reached forward and grasped her hands as if they were close friends, giving them a squeeze.

"I didn't like you taking up with that guard. But I know why you did it." He lifted a hand to her cheek. "He'll be to blame for all this while you and I start our lives together."

"What...what do you want?"

He tilted his head, the corners of his lips lifting. "You, of course. You didn't think I would come. You thought I'd abandoned you?" He suddenly pulled her into an embrace. "Never, my love. I know you've been waiting for me a long time, but that's behind us now."

Finally, Belinda found her strength and pushed him away from her. "You're crazy!" She saw the shock in his face followed quickly with irritation.

"I forgive you for what you've done with the guard, Belinda. I forgive you. As I said, we'll start fresh now...together. Mother and I have been patient. Mother more so than I. She just kept telling me, 'Gabriel, be patient' and now I'm thankful I listened her." He waved his hand as if indicating someone beside him, but there was no one there. Belinda began to realise just how deluded this man was.

"What happened to your mother?"

He winced slightly. "It was an accident. I was being bad. I didn't mean to push her so hard. She fell down the stairs like a ragdoll." He shook his head then smiled. "But she's forgiven me, and now, we can all be together at long last."

Belinda backed away from him, trying to step towards the door, but he moved lightning fast, grasping her hand again.

"Where are you going? We can't leave just yet. There's still the business of that guard. He'll get in our way if he's not taken care of."

"Like you took care of John?" Her voice shook, but he beamed and nodded.

"Exactly."

Her fear heightened, and the vision came to her fast. It was Dean, lying dead on the ground. Heartache tore through her.

"That's not what I want."

His smile faded. "What?"

"I don't want him harmed."

"He'll get in our way."

Belinda shook her hand. "I won't be with you if you hurt him."

Frantic madness flickered behind his eyes. He turned his head for a moment then shook it. "No, Mother!"

Gabriel. That's what he'd said his name was.

"Gabriel?" His head snapped around when she said his name. "Don't you understand? We can't be together if you hurt him."

He shook his head, and his hands started to tremble. "I can't do it, Mother!" He turned his head again. "I just can't."

"Can't what?"

He looked at Belinda again and heaved a breath. "Mother thinks your guard has brainwashed you. She thinks you should be reminded of our love." He pulled her forward then touched her cheek.

"But you know, don't you? You care for me, not him."

Belinda wet her lips and nodded. Anything to keep him from flipping out just long enough for Dean to come back. And then what? Would Gabriel kill Dean?

Her hand was suddenly jerked against the front of Gabriel's pants. She tried to pull away, but he held her there, rubbing himself against her. His other hand grasped her free hand and pulled it to join the other.

"I've waited so long for you, Belinda," he spoke softly. "You feel so good. I don't think I can wait." His hips thrust forward once before he pushed her down to the bed.

"No, we should wait," Belinda protested.

"I don't want to wait anymore." He worked the button of his trousers. "I won't."

Belinda desperately tried to think, but fear made it difficult for her to breathe. "No, Gabriel. It must be special."

"It will be." He pushed down his trousers then his underwear. He brought her hand to his cock and groaned as he ground against her fingers.

"What does your mother say?"

He stilled then released her hand. As he backed away, Belinda breathed out. If she could just get to the door, she thought. She could scream. They would hear her.

"Mother says you've become a temptress, a vessel of the devil. She says your guard must be dealt with, and you must be cleansed before she can come into your body, before we can all be together." Tears welled in his eyes. "Why did you try to bring me into your evilness?"

He stepped forward and touched her cheek, and in the next moment, the back of his hand snapped her head to the side and left a sting on her cheek.

Belinda screamed, but long cool fingers wrapped around her throat choking off the sound. "Don't do that, love. Don't."

She hit at him then tried to pull away his hand, but he squeezed harder as tears fell down over her cheeks. She tried to gasp for air, but his fingers allowed none to fill her lungs. Again she hit at him. *Dean, help me.*

"Belinda?" Dean shouted moments before the door slammed open. Gabriel released her, and a moment later, as she dragged air into her body, Dean slung him across the room. Behind him, Murphy drew his gun.

"He was in the closet the whole time." Belinda managed to sputter between gasps.

The room suddenly grew warm. And then warmer.

"You betrayed us!" Gabriel screamed, a sound filled with madness. The temperature heightened.

"He's going to set it afire," Belinda whispered as she realised what was happening.

A low growl started deep in Dean's chest. His shoulders thrust forward, and he crouched as his eyes yellowed. It wasn't like in the movies with bones popping and a long drawn out scene. In moments, Dean's skin was replaced with fur, and his muscles stretched his large form into that of the wolf. His clothes tore and fell to the side. It *was* him. It was the shadow wolf of her dreams.

"Holy Mother of God." Murphy staggered backwards, his gun dropping from his hands as he stared.

The hair on Dean's back stood up straight, and he bared his teeth. When Gabriel took a step forward, Dean lunged, his teeth tearing into Gabriel's neck. The force in which he hit sent them both backwards, flames shooting up around them as they both went tumbling through the glass of the bedroom window. Belinda screamed and leapt to her feet, rushing forward just as they hit the ground. Instantly, the flames were gone.

She waited, but neither of them moved. Behind her, Murphy's steps brought her spinning around, and she followed him downstairs and out the door. Still, they remained as they were when they'd fallen. Blood trickled from the corner of Gabriel's mouth, his neck torn open, and smoke curling up from both of them.

"Is he?" A sob rose in her throat as she stared at the wolf that lay still on the ground. A hand touched her shoulder, and she turned to find Paul standing there, leaned on his crutches. She turned her face into his shoulder.

"He's alive." At Paul's statement, she turned and looked back at the wolf. His leg moved. Then again. Then he opened his eyes and stood, shaking.

"What in the hell?" Murphy jumped back when the wolf growled at him. Then as smoothly as he'd transformed into the wolf, he shifted back into a man. Belinda rushed forward and embraced him.

"In my vision, you were dead. I thought..."

"Yeah, he didn't expect me, did he?" Dean kissed her temple. "Water. I need some water."

"You might consider some clothes, too," Paul suggested.

"What just happened?" Murphy stared at Gabriel, and Belinda smiled.

"Gabriel was in my room, he tried to kill me. You and my security guard stopped him. He jumped out the window only moments after confessing to the murder of my husband." She tilted her head. "Shall I make a call to the President to confirm it for you?"

Dean's hand tightened on her shoulder. "Give him a break, Belinda."

"And what do I get if I do?" She looked up at Dean. "You?"

"You've got me anyway." He smiled then and lowered his mouth to hers.

"Naked as the day he was born," Paul chimed, and Dean's deep laughter vibrated against her lips.

"And I am yours," she whispered.

"Mine."

About the Author

Sable Grey resides in the deep south of the United States with her wonderful husband, three very spoiled dog, and three crazy cats. She spends her time writing, designing cover art, watching movies, and reading.

With favourite authors like Stephen King, Piers Anthony, and Iris Johansen, it's no mystery where the inspiration to write tales of love, adventure, and mystery come from. An avid reader and storyteller at a young age, Sable began writing small stories as a child for her mother. However, it wasn't until she was well in to her twenties that she realised that her calling was sharing her stories with a larger audience than just family members and friends.

Now, Sable is dedicated to her craft and to bringing her readers quality fiction with unforgettable characters. For her, writing a story means writing a story meant to touch the mind, body, heart, and soul.

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Sable loves to hear from readers. You can find her contact information, website and author biography at <http://www.total-e-bound.com>.

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