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PolyAmour

Jennifer Salaiz

STALK ME



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With deep gratitude,
Jennifer Salaiz

DEDICATION

To Jinger, an amazing designer, friend, and artist, who, from the mention of this book, was just as excited as me to see this story's release. Love you, sweetie!

STALK ME

JENNIFER SALAIZ

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Chapter 1

Walking through downtown Corpus Christi, on what everyone considered “Club Street,” wasn’t originally what Nicole planned for her one-year anniversary with her boyfriend. The night was supposed to consist of candlelight, red roses, and intense make-up sex. A deserted apartment is what she got instead when she arrived home from work.

True, Michael and she had been in the middle of a big argument, but she decided to give in and move on. So much for that idea.

Nicole pulled herself from her thoughts and focused on her surroundings. There wasn’t a business along this street that wasn’t playing loud music or holding some type of light show.

The combination of both looked to be a strong aphrodisiac for the younger crowd, who were practically fucking in every dark corner they could find.

Nicole’s pussy ached watching them have that kind of freedom. Never could she imagine herself being able to let go to that extent. She’d been a good girl for far too long now. It was time to meet the woman who was trying to claw her way out of Nicole’s body.

After finding the devastating note describing how Michael couldn’t be with her anymore, she knew she needed someone, anyone. At age twenty-nine, this was becoming a common occurrence in her life. Now that she had come to terms with the fact that Michael wasn’t

coming back, she felt determined to find out who she really was.

Nicole knew she wasn't bad looking. She may not have been the most gorgeous woman alive, but she knew she was attractive, smart, and could entice a man with her curves. So why was everyone always leaving her?

Well, she decided she wouldn't worry about that now. All she needed to focus on was discovering her body and finding out what truly pleased her. Experimenting would help her discover exactly what that might be.

Since she always met men through acquaintances, Nicole never tried to have a one-night stand, but at this point, she didn't care. After going over everything, she needed to make changes. Most people lived very content lives as a couple. A part of her even longed for a connection to someone that would last, but another part pleaded for something more than traditional. She needed to have the overpowering sense of awe for her partner.

Stopping, she watched as a man walked under one of the lights, silhouetting his tall frame. A feeling stirred inside of Nicole and, for the briefest moment, she thought he looked right at her. From a distance, the stranger looked well built, and his height was a plus. She couldn't really see what his face looked like though.

Pulling down her tight, knee-length black dress, she quickly crossed the street and walked to the entrance. Flipping her dark hair over her shoulder, she took a deep breath. She could feel the adrenaline pumping through her at the curiosity to see this man. She wasn't sure what the criteria was for a one-night stand, but who cared? If he was fuckable, then she wanted him. After all, it was a start. It wasn't as if there wouldn't be other times for her to go out and find someone else, if this particular man couldn't satisfy her.

Walking into a club called Essence, she watched the stranger from afar. The tiny table for two she sat at hid her from his direct view. Through the darkness, Nicole stared at the white shirt that glowed brightly against the black light. The stranger's shoulders were wide,

displaying muscles through the thick cotton as he leaned forward to order a beer.

The minutes ticked by while she watched, looking for any reason why she shouldn't approach him. As hard as she tried to take the coward's way out, she couldn't find anything wrong.

A blonde woman in a pair of light denim jeans and a shirt that barely covered her large breasts slid off the tall barstool beside him and left. Nicole saw her opportunity. Clutching her shaking hands tightly, she walked over and sat down at the available stool.

Looking around casually, she tried not to make herself appear too obvious. The club was packed from wall to wall with college kids. Out of the corner of her eye, she could see him. He was definitely not a college guy, upper twenties, she was guessing. But she could be wrong. She hadn't got a close-up look of his face yet, which was starting to aggravate her.

Taking a deep breath, she tried to still her racing heart.

Just look, Nicole.

Out of her peripheral vision, she could see him looking at her, but it was the feeling she got when he turned in her direction that sent her heart racing even faster. His heavy gaze caused her whole body to shake.

"Can I buy you a drink?" His voice was deep and husky. The sound traveled through her body making her feel things she couldn't understand.

Slowly turning in his direction, she caught her first close-up of his features. They were proportioned perfectly. His eyes looked almost black in the dark setting, and his nose sat straight. The fullness of his lips held her captivated. They were the most kissable lips she'd ever seen.

His attractiveness was evident, but he wasn't normally her type. The stranger's gaze held a dangerous glint that any other day she would have run from, but now, in this moment, it definitely got her excited.

Nicole could feel herself growing wet at the possibilities the night held. But more than that, the longer she stared the more something pulsed through her body. This stranger opened a door, some new place she'd never been before. Caught in the stunned sensations and emotions, she answered him as best as she could.

"Yes, that would be great. Bud Light, please."

She smiled seductively at him, surprising herself at how calm she suddenly felt. It seemed her instincts were right. He was different and new, and exactly what she'd come looking for.

At her response, his eyes lit up even though his face never made any recognizable expressions. He ordered her drink and turned his focus back to her. Nicole pretended to look around the club once again but caught his gaze raking over every inch of her body, leisurely undressing her with those dark eyes.

"I didn't take you for a beer drinker. I figured you for a Cosmo girl. I'm glad to see you proved me wrong."

"Looks are sometimes deceiving." She could feel herself growing braver. She slid her index finger along his thumb, cold from the beer he was drinking.

"What's your name?"

The music made it almost impossible to hear him. If she hadn't been looking at his lips, she might not have heard his words.

"Nicole." She leaned closer toward his ear so he could hear her.

He shook his head as if assessing the name. Picking up her hand, he lifted it to his lips, lightly brushing the softness across her knuckles. The new feeling shot through her body. She stared at him, fascinated with the way he somehow silently called to her body. The unexplainable pull, just by his touch, left her wanting to wrap her body around him and promise him things she knew sounded insane.

"Ayden," he said, putting her hand down after a few seconds.

Nicole's stomach tightened at the gentleness of his lips. The gesture alone set her heart beating wildly again.

His wicked expression held her spellbound. The smile lighting his

face told stories beyond what she could understand. She almost reconsidered her plan. The dangerous feeling enveloped her again, and she let it engulf her body.

Something about him had her wanting to pull him through the door of the crowded club and take him home. Yet another part of her wanted to run away as fast as she possibly could. Regardless, she couldn't deny the connection she felt toward him. She couldn't place her finger on it, but the thought of leaving without him triggered something deep in her chest.

The bartender handed her the beer, and she brought it up, slowly letting the foam tickle her lips. The taste took over her senses, causing her to partially close her eyes. It had been a while since she drank beer. Michael only indulged on wine, so he always made her drink whatever he decided to have.

Ayden seemed to watch with interest. Something flashed in his eyes that made Nicole's nipples tingle.

"Do you come here often?" he asked.

She looked down. Months passed since she'd last been on this street. Even then, it had just been a bachelorette party for one of her friends.

"No, I haven't been here for a while."

Nicole leaned in closer to him. The music continually seemed to increase in volume, making it difficult to hear anything.

"What about you?"

He shook his head no.

"This is my first time, actually."

She looked at him with interest. He was extremely attractive, more so as every second went by.

There was something about him that seemed so familiar. She knew she didn't know him, but a part of her could swear she'd known him forever. Repeating his name in her head, she searched for some connection but came up blank. Who was she kidding? She'd never met nor ever known anyone with his name.

Endless minutes of silence went by while they just stared at each other. With one last drink, she finished off her beer and looked at him invitingly.

“I was thinking of leaving.” She left the invitation open, which seemed to give him pause for a moment.

Standing, she looked over at him, waiting to see if he’d catch her hint. He stood. Nicole inwardly sighed in relief and proceeded to squeeze between the crowded bodies. Trying to push the doubts from her mind, she inched forward. This was so unlike her, yet she couldn’t resist the excitement of the situation.

They suddenly came to a standstill after only a few steps. Warm air caressing her neck sent delicious shivers throughout her body. He rested so closely behind her. Knowing his presence resided mere inches away made catching a good breath almost impossible.

Everyone stood rooted, no one taking a step. Craning her neck, she couldn’t see anything causing the sudden stop.

Fire raced down her side as fingers gripped her hip. Scooting her ass against his thigh, she pushed for a closer union of their bodies. The need to feel him against her skin took over every thought that raced through her mind.

Turning, she looked up at his face. In four-inch heels, she reached close to seven inches over five feet, and he still towered over her a good six inches. His massive size caused her to wonder if she could possibly be making a terrible mistake. If these feelings proved to be nothing more than her imagination, she wouldn’t stand a chance trying to stop this guy if she changed her mind.

Ayden’s fingers squeezed her hip, pushing the tips into the sensitive spot of her lower stomach. Every fear vanished with his actions. Nicole wanted so badly for him to touch her, to caress her pussy with those powerful fingers.

As if the room itself suddenly became empty, she closed her eyes hearing nothing, seeing nothing. The only thing running through her at the moment was the liquid heat pouring over her body when she

felt his hand travel lower. Whether anyone watched them in that moment, she wasn't sure, but she truly didn't care.

Pressure pushed against the smoothness of her freshly shaved pussy. Pleasure so intense racked her body. She couldn't help wondering if he knew she wore no panties.

Ayden's body pressed against her. Hardness from his cock pushed against her lower back. She gripped his jeans, leaning her weight against him. The thickness made Nicole bite her lip in anticipation.

"Do you want me to get us out of here?" Soft nibbles inched their way down her neck.

Just the thought that he could get them out of the crowded club and into a more intimate setting caused her whole body to melt. For a moment she couldn't think of what to say.

"Please," she barely got out.

Air eluded her. She couldn't even talk, for that matter. All she wanted was to feel his contact once more. An aching took over every imaginable part of her being. She'd never reacted to a man this way before. The new feeling thrilled her and left her wanting more from this new experience.

"Fast," she whispered, thinking he wouldn't hear her.

Nicole was lifted up so suddenly that she grasped his neck. She couldn't help but stare in shock. There wasn't a moment in her life she could recall ever being lifted so easily.

Ayden effortlessly pushed people out of their way. It was as though he wasn't worried if anyone got angry or approached him. The lack of fear he showed made her feel protected. An emotion she hadn't felt in over a year. Before she knew it, the cool night air brushed against her skin. The heat pouring off his chest felt so inviting she snuggled in closer, smelling a hint of his cologne.

He didn't bother setting her down. He just held her tightly to him while he continued to walk. Noticing he headed for the hotel down the street, she gripped his shirt unconsciously. Something told her no, to stop him. Nicole wasn't sure why, but she did.

“Wait. Let’s go back to my place.”

He looked as taken aback by her words as she was. Where the declaration came from, she wasn’t sure. This sort of stuff was so foreign to her, everything she did felt wrong. She didn’t know the rules, but she knew it wasn’t safe to bring a stranger home. That was asking for trouble.

He sat her down and Nicole grabbed his hand, pulling him toward her car. It was best if she didn’t think about what she did. She was a new person now. That meant no more thinking about every move she made.

She had wanted experience with men, damn it, and she was going to get it.

Chapter 2

The silence inside of Nicole's Mustang was so thick she could have choked on it. Uneasiness settled itself deeply in her gut, causing her stomach to twist with anxiety. Rapid thoughts pushed into her mind until she wanted to scream. Should she take this man back to the club and just go home? Doubts of whether she could go through with this after all plagued her.

Ayden's fingertips brushed the outside of Nicole's thigh, and she fought not to close her eyes. It seemed the moment he touched her, she forgot everything. The fear disappeared, replaced with nothing but the unknown connection she felt with him.

Without hesitation, she slightly parted her thighs, needing to feel more of his touch. The aching returned tenfold to her pussy. She shifted in the seat impatiently. The apartment complex loomed ahead, but she wasn't sure she wanted to wait until they got there for further contact.

The closer he moved up to her inner thigh, the shallower her breathing became. Numbness ran through Nicole's fingers as she noticed her knuckles turning white from gripping the steering wheel so tightly.

Looking at him, she caught the lust filling his eyes. It took all her concentration to pay attention to the road. He wanted her as much as she wanted him. Something in that thought had her ready to fuck him right here on the side of the road, but they were so close. The lights from her building came nearer with each moment.

Just as he brushed against her clit, she pulled into the parking lot. There was no one around. It was close to midnight now. Everyone

was still out for the night or surely asleep.

They both unbuckled and looked at each other.

“I live up there.” Nicole pointed to the second floor of the building in front of them.

“Nice complex. What do you do?”

For the briefest moment her mind paused.

“I’m an accountant.” She didn’t elaborate. There was really no point in going into details. She probably wouldn’t see him after tonight, anyway.

“What do you do?” Nicole asked, climbing out of the car. She got her key while they walked up the steps. When they reached the top, he stopped and turned to her.

“I’m a cop.”

Surprised, she turned and looked at him. For some reason, she couldn’t picture him as a cop. He was clean shaven with the hint of a thin goatee showing. His appearance looked astonishingly different in the light outside her door than in the black light of the club. She started to wonder how she’d gotten so lucky. He was definitely the most attractive person she had ever been with. But a cop? More like someone who ran from the cops.

Nicole pushed the key into the lock and turned the knob. She opened the door feeling everything inside her shake from being nervous. Before she could step in, he lifted her off her feet and carried her over the threshold. Shocked, she once again clung to him. It wasn’t every day that she was picked up as if she weighed nothing. Now it had been twice in fifteen minutes.

Ayden looked around Nicole’s small apartment, nodding his head. For what, she wasn’t sure, but as soon as his lips touched hers, she was lost. Nicole no longer cared what he thought of her living conditions. His taste swept over her, drowning her in overwhelming sensations.

The sound of the door being kicked shut barely registered while he carried her toward the bedroom. Suddenly, nothing mattered. She

didn't care if he walked through the wrong door leading to the restroom or her bedroom. The fact that he was a stranger didn't even seem important anymore. All she knew was that when she was in his arms, everything terrible in her life disappeared.

"Tell me you want this as much as I do."

Nicole's pussy grew wetter by the second. He had no idea how badly she wanted him.

"I do." She slid her tongue back against his, needing to experience more of the spell he kept her under. Light reflected through her closed lids, but she pushed the thought away. For so many years she hid her body from men. Tonight, she didn't feel the least bit self-conscious. The change should have made something register, but it didn't.

The mattress sunk down as he fitted himself between Nicole's thighs. The friction from his weight caused Nicole to rub her wet pussy against the bulge she felt through his jeans. Before she knew it, he ripped the front of her dress, exposing her breasts. The pure shock caused her mouth to open just for a fraction of a second before the excitement hit, turning her wild.

"Yes." Nicole could hear herself whisper.

Her legs shifted, trying to get him closer. She felt herself tearing at his shirt with such urgency that the fabric stretched in her hands. If she didn't make skin contact soon, she thought she would die.

Ayden's white cotton shirt ripped under his powerful hands, exposing the muscles in his chest. Nicole couldn't help but stare in fascination. He was so defined every muscle aligning his stomach hardened while he pulled the rest of the torn shirt off.

"Unbuckle my belt," he whispered, bringing himself back down to kiss her again.

Shakily, her fingers fumbled against the metal. The erotic way he kissed her made it hard to concentrate on what she needed to do. His tongue massaged hers with such familiarity. She couldn't help but think their mouths had been fitted perfectly for each other.

She caught him off guard when she lightly sucked his tongue into

her mouth. He tasted divine, a hint of beer with something altogether his own. Ayden's groan filled their mouths, and the vibrations seemed to travel all the way down to her clit.

The pure pleasure finally motivated her to get his belt undone. He lifted slightly, half pulling, half kicking off his pants and boxers. Weight settled back over her, the hardness of his cock pressing heavily into her stomach. A moan poured from her throat at how electric it felt to have their skin against each other. Something about the way he affected her left her mind foggy. She knew it wasn't normal, but she couldn't think past having him filling her.

Two fingers traced her folds, causing her to shiver. The wet juices coated his fingers as they trailed around her opening. Teasing her, he pushed the tips in slightly, only to pull back the moment she started moving her hips to gain him farther entrance.

"Do you know how beautiful you are?"

Nicole's head shook back and forth, tormented with the heat burning inside her core. Slowly, he circled her folds, brushing past her clit. Tightening clutched at her lower stomach, causing her to squirm under his form.

"You're the most beautiful woman I've ever seen. I knew the moment I saw you, there'd never be anyone who could affect me the way you do."

She was positive he wanted her to never forget him. The words combined with his actions drove her crazy. Fire burned her stomach as if the memory of the two of them burned into her brain. Ayden seemed to know exactly what to do to get her right to the verge of an orgasm before taking it greedily back, prolonging the built-up sensations.

"Ayden, please. I'm not sure how much more I can take."

The character of her voice almost sounded unrecognizable. She sounded seductive, more like someone from a movie than the inexperienced, accountant type who enjoyed staying at home reading.

Two fingers slowly made their way deep inside her pussy. At the

built-up tension, she moaned against the side of his face. The hardness of his chest slid against her breasts while he began to thrust his fingers into her in a slow, steady rhythm.

“How bad do you want to feel my dick inside of you right now?”

His words brought Nicole into instant orgasm. No one had ever been so blunt with her before. The way he talked was dirty and forbidden. And she loved it.

Nicole’s pussy gripped around Ayden’s fingers, drawing him deeper while she arched her back.

“You must want my dick inside of you pretty bad.” He eased his way down between her thighs.

The thickness of his wet tongue buried within her. He moaned at her taste. Nicole couldn’t help but repeat his sounds. Deeper and deeper, he plunged his tongue until she knew she couldn’t take any more.

Wrapping her fingers in his soft, dark hair, she pulled him back up to her lips. She wanted to taste herself on him, to drink in exactly what he had.

Ayden’s sensual lips broke away from her while his dark eyes gazed into hers.

“Nicole, I need to tell you something.”

The intensity in his gaze made her nervous. She didn’t want to know anything that might possibly ruin the moment. It was too perfect to be messed up now. Internally, she fought what she should do versus what she wanted to do. Something told her to listen, pleaded with her, but the part that wanted to continue said waiting to hear what he wanted to confess might be better.

“Tell me later. Just please don’t stop.”

Ayden remained quiet for a few seconds before he nodded his head, agreeing. His mouth was back on hers, and blindly her hand searched for the drawer to her nightstand where she kept the condoms.

Nicole fumbled with the knob until she managed to get her hand

in and pulled out the wrapper. Her arms barely fit around the width of his chest to open the package. After two attempts at ripping the damn thing open, she brought her hand down to wrap around his cock.

A gasp escaped her lips at his actual size. Her fingers couldn't even fit around his width. Would she even be able to accept him? She tried sliding on the condom to no avail. It wouldn't fit.

"Ayden," she said uncertainly. Clueless, she wasn't sure what to do. He was a stranger. She had never gone unprotected with anyone before. There was no way she should start now, even though her pussy and some unexplainable pull begged for her to.

"Give me another one out of the drawer."

Not sure it was going to work, she reached for another one and handed it to him. After repeated tries, he finally slid it on.

Slowly, she could feel herself stretch around him. Nicole moaned, sinking her nails into his back. Even with his large size, something about their joining felt right. Trying to focus on the sensations running through her body, she tried to fight the thoughts pushing into her brain. At his cock entering her more, the questions vanished, leaving her dazed with pleasure.

* * * *

"Fuck," Ayden moaned. Tightness gripped around him with every inch he slid deeper into her wet pussy. Pulling out, he then eased his cock back in an inch more than his previous, half-length position.

Nicole moaned under him. Her full breasts rubbed against his chest. The hardness of her nipples caused his teeth to clench. Her body was perfect. She wasn't skinny like most women, she had curves, the kind a man wanted to caress in fascination.

"More, give me more of your cock. I want to feel you deep inside of me," she begged.

Ayden considered it. She was so tight, he was afraid of hurting her. Watching Nicole for the last few months, he'd seen her go

through so much. The last thing he wanted to do was hurt her.

“Please, I need this.”

Hearing the yearning and desperation in her voice, he plunged the rest of his cock inside of her. At the scream that escaped her mouth, he froze, but the tightness that clutched his cock, accompanied by her spasms, told him she screamed for a whole different reason.

He began to thrust faster into her. The excitement he felt from hearing her moan and beg for him to continue almost made him lose complete control. Since first seeing her, he dreamed of this moment. Just catching her scent outside made him painfully hard.

The feel of Nicole’s nails digging into his back nearly made him come right then, but he couldn’t do that to her. She would never forget this night. He wouldn’t let her. Nicole deserved the best, and he’d make sure she got it, no matter what.

* * * *

Pleasure shot down Nicole’s body. As turned on as she was, she felt Ayden advanced too slowly. She wanted it hard and fast. There was no way she would break, and she wanted him to know that.

“Faster,” she said with more authority in her tone.

Ayden slammed into her, and she produced another scream. Nicole’s body at once went into spasms. Bright lights blinded her while she clutched to him for dear life.

“That’s right, come all over my dick,” he whispered in her ear.

His dirty talk left her wanting more. Ayden scooped her legs over his arms and thrust into her repeatedly, just as she wanted. She couldn’t quit moaning with every bounce that her breasts made. The more he thrust, the tighter his stomach became. Nicole’s eyes raked over his body hungrily.

He let one of her legs down and put the remaining one over his shoulder, leaning forward. The feel of his fingers dug into her hip while he pounded into her harder.

Her teeth bit his shoulder against the pleasure of her tighten again. Ayden growled, easing her leg down and biting her back. Tremors rocked her body just as much as her screams rocked the walls. Slight pain shot through her skin at the bite mark, only to be replaced with a tingly numbness.

Nicole's back-to-back orgasms were so severe that she locked around him pleurably, feeling him join her instantly. In all the years she'd been sexually active, she could count the orgasms from previous partners on one hand. Ayden would never understand how much he opened her eyes or what he stirred in her by his actions.

"Holy shit," he mumbled as he collapsed onto her. She couldn't help but smile groggily. Indeed. Words couldn't express what she had just gone through. "Holy shit" seemed good enough for her.

The weight eased slowly from her body, and she stared at the ceiling, trying to keep her eyes open. Rubbing the bite mark mindlessly, she basked in the euphoria filling her. She knew there was something important she needed to remember about what just occurred between them, but the harder she tried to think, the heavier her eyes grew. Wet warmth licked over her finger and the wound just as darkness robbed her of a chance to process her thoughts.

Chapter 3

Opening her eyes, Nicole realized she was alone. She couldn't help but smile at the thought of last night. Grabbing the pillow Ayden had been lying on, she hugged it to her bare breasts. The torn dress was still on, hiked up past her hips.

Pulling the comforter up, she snuggled into the covers and remembered the events of hours earlier. A blush crossed her face as Ayden's dirty words filled her mind. If it wasn't for the dress, she probably could have convinced herself it was all a dream. Nothing amazing ever happened to her. How did she get so lucky last night?

The sound of the front door opening made Nicole sit up and clutch the pillow tighter.

"Hello?"

The thought that it might be Ayden caused her to bolt out of bed, excited. She ran into the living room, skidding to a stop at who she saw.

"Michael. What are you doing here?"

The look he gave her clearly said he thought the answer should be obvious.

"I came to get the rest of my stuff," he snapped. He looked her up and down. Remembering her appearance, she pulled the black dress to her knees and covered her exposed breasts.

"Everything's in a box in my room." She quickly led the way while he followed behind her.

"What happened to your dress? It's ripped." His voice grew quiet toward the end. It almost sounded like he cared, which maybe somewhere deep down he did, but after last night, Nicole was amazed

that she really didn't care what he thought.

"That doesn't concern you anymore." Turning to glance at him, she took in his reaction to her new attitude.

She handed him the box from her closet, removing her arms from her breasts for the brief exchange. She watched Michael pause for the box. The way his eyes took in her body caused no response in her whatsoever. A bit surprised, she studied the man who made her life miserable for the last year. Why did she ever feel she needed him when all he did was bring her down?

Nicole's eyes didn't leave his face while he continued to stare. He wanted her. She could tell. The thought of having sex with Michael again didn't appeal after the taste of pleasure she received from Ayden. Somehow with one act of their joining, no one existed on the radar anymore. The need to find someone to satisfy her vanished.

"Here." She shoved the box into his hands. "You know your way out. I'm jumping in the shower."

Grabbing her blue silk robe, she headed out of the door with Michael following closely behind. Before, she would have rejoiced knowing he wanted her enough to pursue her wherever she went. Now, all she wanted him to do was leave her alone.

"Maybe we could just do it one more time? For old times' sake, please."

Nicole laughed, rolling her eyes.

"No, I don't think so," she said, walking into the restroom. "Leave your key on the counter. There's no reason for you to come back now."

With one push of the door, she shut it in his stunned face, making her smile. She had catered to this man for the last time. No more nice Nicole. She was done trying to please men to make them want her. Suddenly, it occurred to her exactly why she continued to be left by men. She did cater and play the mother figure until she got walked all over. Then, after a while they just got bored. It was a cycle she planned on putting a stop to immediately.

After what felt like endless moments, the front door slammed. A sigh of relief broke past her lips. Michael could sometimes have a temper and she was glad she didn't push him too far.

Starting the shower, she stretched her limbs. Soreness pulled at her muscles from last night but not to the point of being uncomfortable. The dress slid to the floor and Nicole rubbed the bruise from the bite, which punctured her skin. The odd sensations she'd felt pulse through her body when his teeth were embedded in her burst through her mind. Now that she could process all the details, a lot of things were off about what happened between them.

She stepped into the shower and let the warm water caress her skin. As she washed her body, her thoughts kept drifting back to Ayden and the mystery surrounding him. Would she see him again? Was he thinking about their time spent together, too?

Ultimately, she guessed it didn't matter. The night unfolded better than she could have hoped. But still, a yearning she couldn't quite understand nagged at her. Wetting her hair, she tried to figure out why amazing sex would make her feel so...connected to him. It didn't make sense.

The smell of the salon shampoo Nicole used engulfed the room. She closed her eyes and massaged it into her scalp.

As she went over their pieces of conversation, she recalled his mention of being a cop. She couldn't help but wonder what he looked like dressed up in his uniform. The thought of handcuffs made her smile and instantly sent tightness to her nipples.

"Do you need help?"

A scream caught in the back of her throat. Nicole's eyes flew open to connect with Ayden's obsessive gaze. He smiled at her mischievously, taking in every inch of her naked form. From the shock of seeing him standing there, she was sure her mouth dropped completely to the floor.

"Ayden, I thought you left." Nicole's heart was making a tattoo in her chest from the pure exhilaration pumping through her. He came

back. The question, why, popped into her head, but vanished almost immediately.

“I went to get us some coffee.” She watched as he took off his shirt.

“Oh...thank you.” Nicole couldn’t tear her eyes away from his spectacular body.

My God.

He was sexy enough to make her start drooling.

“You actually thought I could leave you after last night? Come on, Nicole. Look at you. You’ll be lucky to get rid of me at all.”

She couldn’t help it. She laughed.

“Is that right? Why is that?”

“Why won’t you get rid of me? Hmm, well maybe because you’re beautiful, sweet, and an amazing lover. All three will have me worshipping you for the rest of your days.”

“Ayden, you definitely are a charmer. But tell me, how would you know I’m sweet? I could be a nightmare for all you know.”

“No way. My senses tell me you don’t possess a mean bone in your body. An amazing body if I do say so.”

As fast as she could, Nicole rinsed the shampoo out of her hair. The more clothes he took off, the more her nipples ached. They were so hard and sensitive that every drop of water falling over them sent currents to her clit.

Ayden’s cock was already growing hard as he stepped into the shower. She tried to look away, but she wasn’t having much success. His perfection proved too hard to look away from for long.

“So, tell me. Who was that man I passed on the stairs coming out of your apartment?”

Shocked that he would even ask, Nicole looked up at him. His eyes were bearing into hers. She almost felt guilty, yet taken aback by his question. It was a weird combination. Why should she feel guilty? She only just met this man.

“That was my ex-boyfriend, Michael. He came to retrieve the rest

of his things.”

Ayden wrapped his arms around her waist. Easily, he lifted her up to his chest. Nicole’s feet were inches off the ground as he kissed her. The weight of his cock pushed into her lower stomach, and she automatically wrapped her arms around his neck and pulled him closer. The wetness of her breasts compressed against his chest, causing friction as she slid against his smooth skin.

Large hands gripped the back of her thighs, making her fasten her legs around his waist.

“You want my cock inside of you again, don’t you?” he said breathily against her jaw.

“Yes,” she moaned, closing her eyes.

He lifted her hips and instantly began filling her pussy. Nicole let herself sink down, pushing him deep inside. Ayden let out a groan that shook her insides. He quickly turned her into the shower wall.

Warm water ran over their bodies while he held her stationary and thrust wildly. Nicole let out a loud moan while she sucked lightly on his shoulder. The orgasm that shook her made it hard to breathe with all the steam clouding around them.

* * * *

Ayden kept his cock buried in Nicole while he carried her to the bed. The tightness almost made it impossible for him to walk. He fell to the mattress holding her against his chest while his cock plunged into her farther.

Possessiveness gripped him while he held her. Nicole was as good as his. There was nothing he wouldn’t do for her. From the first time he heard her laughter on the phone, to the day he saw her get inside her car with a blackened eye, he’d seen everything. He vowed that moment to watch over her, to protect her from the asshole she stayed with.

He was all too happy Michael took his threat seriously. He needed

to. Now that Ayden marked Nicole as his mate, he could be sure of keeping her away from other werewolves, but humans were another story. If she didn't want to be with him, fine, he could wait until she was ready. But he *would* wait, no matter how long it took for her to decide.

* * * *

"I don't like your ex-boyfriend in your apartment," he breathed in Nicole's ear. Deep down, as she heard him, something sparked. She wasn't sure at the time what the strange feeling could be. Uncertainty ran through her, but that wasn't the emotion that stood out the most.

"Please tell me you won't let him back in here. I know this must sound strange to you, but trust me."

Nicole couldn't see his face. It was buried in her neck while he lay on top of her, thrusting.

"There's no reason for him to come back. I made him leave his key." She wasn't sure what else to say. Ayden seemed content at those words.

Confused, Nicole's mind raced, but her body responded to his perfectly. Her orgasm was so unexpected she clutched on to his hard biceps while screams erupted from her throat. Ecstasy like she never felt before took hold of her body and mind.

Not a minute later, Nicole felt his cock swell, and he pulled out in time to come all over her lower stomach. She lay there contemplating the words he had spoken to her. So that he couldn't see her thoughts, she kept her eyes closed. Never had she met a man this blunt with all his words in terms of sexuality or requests. The thought scared her yet somehow weaved its way into her conscience, assuring her she'd be all right. Would she? Suddenly, even with him beside her, she wasn't so sure.

Chapter 4

It seemed Nicole's one-night stand turned into something she hadn't expected. Ayden and she spent the entire weekend together. They did things she never even considered doing. He took her to a place with bumper boats and putt-putt golf.

At first she laughed at the idea, but then she thought what the hell and went for it. Afterward, they had a romantic picnic on the beach far from prying eyes. The sex was amazing. Anyone could have seen them if they approached, but that only added to the excitement.

It was now Sunday night. Nicole looked up at him from where her head rested in his lap. The sound of the television echoed in the background as they asked each other random questions..

"Favorite food?"

A laugh shook his body.

"Anything I can get my hands on, but mostly meat. I like steak. What about you? What kind of food do you enjoy eating?"

"Mostly meat, too, although I do like pasta. So tell me more about yourself. Does your family live here?"

She couldn't ignore how tense he grew underneath her.

"My parents died a few years back. Other than my sister, whom I don't see very often, it's just me. But none of that matters. I have plenty of close friends. I consider them my family. How about you?"

"No one. My parents also died a few years back. I was an only child so you could say my friends have become my family also."

"I'm sorry you went through that alone. It must have been hard for you."

Nicole turned to caress her face against his stomach.

“Yeah, at times it became very hard. But Tara’s always been there. She helped me a lot.”

“I’m glad. Your friend sounds like a great person.” Another laugh came from him while she nuzzled her face deeper into his hard abs. “You remind me of a kitten. You keep rubbing against me just like Peaches used to. I miss having my cat. I think I’ll look for another one. You can pick the name when I get her.”

“You’d really let me name your cat?”

“Of course, why not?”

Nicole laughed at his confused expression. “I don’t know. Maybe because if you ever decide you don’t want to talk to me anymore, you’ll have an animal that will remind you of me.”

Ayden looked at his watch. “Nicole, can I ask you something?”

“You can ask me anything.”

“Do you feel something between us? I mean, I’m not referring to the sex. That’s amazing, but I mean, a connection?”

Slowly, she sat up. “Yes, you mean you can feel it?”

He opened his mouth, only to close it.

“Yes, I can feel it. It’s the reason I haven’t left yet. There’s something you have to understand. From the moment I saw you...” Ayden ran his fingers through his hair. “Never mind, forget I said anything. I think I should be heading back to my place.”

Confused by why he didn’t continue, she nodded. They both rose from the couch and deep down Nicole sighed. It was so great having someone here who made her laugh and smile. He seemed to care about what she wanted to do and what she thought about things. Ayden was so much more uplifting compared to Michael, who only seemed to care about himself.

Nicole smiled. “All right, thank you for the great weekend.”

He paused, still looking at her. She tried reading his eyes for anything he might be thinking. There was nothing she could grasp. His face was a mask of unreadable emotion.

Slowly walking to her bar, Nicole grabbed her keys so she could

take him home. Wherever that might be. He still hadn't told her anything about where he lived. He always awoke before her, so she didn't have any idea what he did in that time. All she knew is he came back to her dressed in new clothes and freshly shaved.

"Where do you live? I'll give you a ride."

"I don't need a ride, Nicole. I live in the building across from yours."

Shocked, she stood rooted to the floor. Was he serious? And why was he telling her this now? Why didn't he mention it the night they pulled into the complex?

Hesitantly, she set down her keys. "Why didn't you tell me? You don't think maybe you should have said something?"

Ayden shifted his feet. "You never asked, and I was going to tell you, but you stopped me."

He ran his fingers through his short black hair, making it spike in the front. His nervousness made her nervous.

The memory of her stopping him from telling her the first night eased the situation just a little, but there was something else he wasn't saying. She could feel it. Trying not to make it too obvious, she played it off. Eventually, she would find out. In the mean time she'd have him at her disposal. Even after everything strange, she wasn't ready to give him up.

"I guess it's not a big deal. It just means I'll have better access when I want you." She pulled at his red shirt, tugging gently. Nicole walked him to the door, and he kissed her gently on the mouth.

"Remember what I said, no ex-boyfriend in the house. It's not safe."

She frowned not knowing how to take what he'd just told her.

"What do you mean, it's not safe? Mike might be rough at times, but he'd never seriously hurt me."

Ayden kissed her cheek. "That's not what I was implying. What I meant was it wouldn't be safe for him."

Nicole felt her eyes grow round and her lips part at his statement.

“What do you mean? Are you saying you would harm him?”

He smiled. “I would if his hands came close to touching you like I’ve seen him do in the past. I have to admit, I’m a very jealous person. That’s why it’s best if you don’t open the door if he comes to your apartment. Can’t you tell that I want you? I won’t share you, not with him. And if I ever see him raise his hand to you again, well, let’s just say it won’t be very pretty.”

Nicole’s heart raced. She shook her head numbly.

“All right. I won’t open the door.”

How had he known? Nicole couldn’t recall being anywhere where Michael raised his hand to her, not outside of this apartment. Her eyes caught the window and she cursed. Anyone could see through that. A curtain covered the space, but during the night, when her light would be on, anyone outside could witness what happened beyond the thin material, especially since she kept the blinds raised.

Ayden kissed her once again, this time with more passion. She grew breathless while he gripped her lower back and pulled her into his warmth.

Hesitantly, he stepped out of the door and she watched him climb down the stairs. He had two sides. One was caring, the other possessive. She knew this wasn’t the beginning of a healthy relationship, but after her continuous failures, she had to admit, she definitely wasn’t qualified to judge.

The door shut, and she dropped herself onto the couch, exhaustion taking over. The weekend seemed to go by way too quickly with Ayden keeping her occupied and happy. What was she going to do about him? The weird pulling feeling seemed to be getting stronger. Just the thought of him leaving made a strange pain shoot through her chest. What was it about him that kept her so attached? Even though the sex was amazing, she knew it wasn’t that. Not even close.

Chapter 5

Tara and Nicole sat at their regular table inside their favorite bar and grill. They came here every day for lunch for the last five months. It usually held peace for them, but not today. One of their co-workers ended up quitting this morning. After hours of having to go through her large stack of paperwork, they both felt headaches coming on.

“I heard she got a better offer from the company across town,” Tara said, rolling her eyes.

“She could have at least put in her two weeks. The amount of work we now have on top of everything else is fucking ridiculous.”

Nicole took a sip of her soda and lit a cigarette while she proceeded to massage her temples. She couldn't wait to go home and relax in a nice hot bath. Today could only be defined as a nightmare, and it wasn't over yet. Piles of work still sat waiting for her return.

“So, how are things with Mike? Did you both work through your argument?”

“No, he left me Friday. The majority of his stuff magically disappeared by the time I got home from work.”

“Are fucking serious? Honey, I'm so sorry. You're better off without him. He treated you like shit, and everyone knew it.” Tara grasped Nicole's hand, trying to be comforting.

Nicole laughed. “It's all right. Two words describe my weekend—mind, blowing. You wouldn't believe what happened.”

Her friend started to open her mouth when she stopped, looking across the packed room.

“I want every single detail, but it'll have to wait a minute. You have to meet my friend. He's gorgeous! There he is, right there,” she

said, pointing. Nicole looked over and was pulled up from her chair before she could see who caused a reaction this profound in her friend.

After squeezing between a few people, they approached a group of guys at a corner table. Nicole's breath caught as she looked down into Ayden's face.

"This is my friend, Jake," Tara said, interrupting Nicole's thoughts.

She looked over at the man her friend gestured to and put on a smile while shaking his hand. Her heart pounded at seeing Ayden dressed in his police uniform. He did not look like the man she spent the weekend with.

Jake stepped toward the table, wearing his uniform, too. They were all cops, Nicole noticed.

"Let me introduce my friends." He worked his way down the table. "This is Kevin, Harvey, John, and Ayden. We've all worked together for years. You're looking at the best cops Corpus Christi has to offer."

Nicole smiled and waved at all of them. Ayden smiled back with that same mischievous expression he seldom used on her. The blush running from Nicole's face to her toes burned her skin as it traveled the length of her body.

"Do you all come here often?" she asked, trying to give her mind something to do other than make it completely obvious how Ayden affected her. Jake let out a burst of laughter and shook his head.

"For the last month we have, thanks to Ayden. He insists we come here practically every day."

Nicole's eyes came back to Ayden with enough time to catch him tensing at the words. His smile was gone, and the only expression she could see when she looked into his face was pure panic. The smile slowly melted off her face.

"How odd. We come here every day, too," Tara said from beside her.

Nicole's chest felt heavy as things started to hit her. Was it pure coincidence that Ayden and she came to the same restaurant every day and never noticed each other before? To her that was highly unlikely. It got crowded here, but not too crowded.

"Pull up some chairs and join us," Jake said, already retrieving the chairs.

Nicole wanted to run away. She felt like a fool all of a sudden. Was their meeting at the club coincidental, too, a chance meeting? No, deep down she knew it wasn't. He planned it more than she did.

Looking up at him, she could feel the hurt and uncertainty filling her eyes. She fought the angry tears from him betraying her. Ayden stood right away causing the chair to crash to the floor behind him.

"Excuse me." Nicole turned and walking toward the door. He was behind her. She could feel his presence more than she heard it. A wall of pure energy emanated off of him, but he was completely silent in his approach. For a man so large, he walked light on his feet, too light, if she really wanted to admit it to herself.

"Nicole, wait. Let me explain." His breaths came in quick pants while he looked down at her.

She pushed open the door and headed toward her office located half a block away. Anger beat through her. She couldn't believe this was happening. Here she thought all along that he was a good guy, even in some twisted way convinced herself, and what was he doing, stalking her the whole time? Nicole stopped slowly as Ayden gently grabbed her arm and turned her around.

"You have to let me explain."

"Explain what, Ayden? That you've just happened to eat here for over a month, and we never saw each other? Or, maybe you want to explain living across from my apartment building and me not knowing? Or, of course, you can explain how we ended up at the same club at almost the same exact fucking time. I knew you were looking at me when you walked inside!"

Nicole pulled his hand off of her and glared into his eyes. "Go

ahead,” she urged. “I am dying to hear this. Enlighten me.” She stepped back, putting space between them. Ayden took a step closer to her, not letting her distance herself.

“The first time I saw you, you were getting out of your car. I never remembered seeing anyone so beautiful in my life. Your scent hit me like a tidal wave. I almost couldn’t control myself. My heart began to race and I couldn’t breathe. It took Trevor nearly an hour to talk me out of going to your door.”

Nicole rolled her eyes at him, half confused at the scent part, but he went on.

“I continued to see you coming and going with your boyfriend. The way he treated you,” Ayden spat out, running his fingers through his hair, “it took everything I had not to go over there and beat the living shit out of him. Everyone could hear him yell at you, clear across the parking lot. The day I saw him hit you, Nicole, I wanted to kill him. I’ve never been so out of control in my life.”

Nicole’s eyes narrowed. From the way he talked, he had known about her for a while now. Michael hit her over two months ago, but how did Ayden know where she ate or that she planned to go to “Club Street” that night?

“Go on,” she urged.

He breathed heavily, the look on his face so pained that she tried not to focus on what he might be feeling. But she wasn’t so sure she was succeeding. The pain shooting in her chest felt like razorblades.

“One day we came here, and I saw you eating. I couldn’t believe my luck so I insisted we come back the next day. Sure enough, you were here. I only wanted to see how you were doing. To watch you smile while you were talking to you friend. I thought about coming to say hello, but you were with someone...so I told him to get lost.”

Nicole froze but didn’t say anything. “And Friday?” she finally asked.

He took a deep breath. “As you can tell, I wasn’t dressed to go to a club. Jake actually expected me to go to poker night, but when I saw

you leave your apartment, I couldn't go and be miserable at his house. You looked absolutely amazing. There was no way in hell I could pass up the chance to meet you. So I got in my truck and followed you. I saw you eyeing the club, and I crossed my fingers praying you would follow me in. And I was right, you did."

"But you lied to me. You...stalked me. Not to mention ran off my boyfriend. Thank you for that, by the way. You did me a favor," she said, her breath short and her head spinning.

His head bent down, looking at the ground. Nicole's stomach turned at the sickness she felt. She wasn't sure what to think of the situation. Today was just getting better and better. Son of a bitch.

"I have to go. Don't come near me again until I decide what I want to do with you."

Ayden opened his mouth but shook his head and watched her walk away. Nicole only turned around once to confirm her suspicion. She was right. He never moved until she walked into her office building.

Chapter 6

Nicole watched the clock tick down while she went over the hell she'd gone through in the last two weeks. Nothing made sense anymore. Aching pain and loneliness all settled heavily in her chest, giving off the impression of a broken heart. For the life of her, she couldn't understand the cause. Sure, Ayden lied to her, stalked her even, but she couldn't let herself believe that feelings so intense could evolve over such a quick period of time.

Throwing the pen across her desk, she hit the calculator just as she intended. Things needed to change. She couldn't go on living in denial. Ayden somehow had touched something so unreachable that numbing her emotions towards him would be impossible. Even her two blind dates didn't help. All she could do was compare what wasn't even comparable.

After the failed attempts, she locked herself away in the apartment, refusing to leave. She went over whether she could possibly be losing her mind for wanting to walk across the parking lot to ask if he wanted to come over. Instead, she caught herself sitting at the window for hours, staring at his door. Anger raced through her each time she realized what she'd become. She was no better than him, and for some reason knew where a person had to be to drive themselves to resort so low.

"Are you okay? You've been really down lately. Tell me what to do? I've never seen you like this before?"

Tara's big brown eyes laced with concern only made the tears harder to fight off. Nicole quickly grabbed her purse.

"I don't want to talk about it right now. I need to call Ayden."

At the mention of his name, fluttering danced around her chest. How could the reference of someone's name seem to manifest love exactly where they needed to be the most? In her heart.

Nicole walked out of the door to the office with one thing in mind. She wanted Ayden back with her tonight, forever, as long as she could keep him. Just at the thought, the pain eased.

* * * *

Ayden sat in his police cruiser half a block away, watching the outside of Nicole's office. The two-story white brick building sat nestled between two identical businesses.

People flowed freely out of the doors while he waited for her to leave work. He knew he shouldn't be here. Nicole asked him to stay away, but after catching Michael's scent in the parking lot this morning, he wasn't letting her out of his sight.

She had gone out on two dates since she walked away from him. The men she left with hadn't bothered him too much. Just as long as it wasn't Michael, he didn't care. The only thing he wanted for her was happiness, preferably with him, but if not, then he'd have to learn to cope with what he'd done.

He royally messed things up with her, but he couldn't help the way he felt or his actions. Nicole's scent haunted his dreams. Her wellbeing overpowered every rational decision in his mind. It didn't help having everyone pressuring him either. The pack continued to do nothing but give their alpha a hard time about settling down already, and Ayden planned to do just that, once he had Nicole. The reality of that happening now seemed out of the question.

Thoughts about what he could do tormented him. But if he went to her would she tell him to leave or possibly call the department and file a report? He didn't care so much for the latter. It's not like he needed to work, but he loved his job. If she told them he was stalking her, he couldn't deny it, although he could hardly believe it himself.

Everything vanished the moment dark hair caught his attention. Nicole walked out of the double doors dressed in an outfit that was completely black, a pair of black slacks and a black turtle neck. With all the dark colors, he couldn't help but notice how ghostly pale her skin looked. Concern almost made him get out of his car, but he forced himself to stay.

She left the building and headed for her car, parked in the lot across the street. Ayden watched her carefully scanning the surrounding area. His window was cracked slightly, just to make sure Michael's scent wasn't lingering anywhere.

A frown set against her full lips as he watched her stop in the middle of the street. She turned so quickly, he froze. Shit.

* * * *

A feeling so overpowering consumed Nicole, causing her to stop. Without a shadow of doubt, she knew she was being watched. She turned quickly toward the end of the road and didn't see anyone she knew. Then she spotted the police car.

Conflicting emotions ran through her. A part of her was excited to see Ayden, and she felt her body react instantly. But another part grew nervous and a little angry. She told him to stay away, and even though now she didn't mean it, she meant it at the time. True, she considered calling him immediately, but still, if he couldn't follow one order, was she kidding herself about giving in?

Memories of their weekend together flashed across her vision. Repeatedly, Nicole woke up with an addictive need to feel him inside of her. Since their joining, if she wasn't thinking about him being with her physically, her thoughts revolved around him sexually. Images played throughout her mind while she locked eyes with him in the distance.

She was halfway to the cruiser before she realized she even left the middle of the street. Ayden's door opened, and he stood there,

fitted in his police uniform. Nicole's steps faltered. An overwhelming need to throw herself in his arms nearly crippled her. Even though she wanted to, she knew she couldn't. If she dove right in without putting up a wall, she'd be destroyed if he ever left. And with her track record, she wasn't willing to risk it. Seeing him was one thing. It would sedate the pain, but anything more than that she couldn't risk.

"I can explain," Ayden said, putting up his hand.

"You better hope you can." Nicole walked until she stood directly in front of him. The smell of his cologne made her knees weak.

"I just wanted to make sure you got home okay. Michael was at the complex this morning, and I just needed to make sure he didn't bother you."

"Is that a fact? Well, just so you know, not that it's any of your business, but he wants to come home. He swears he's changed."

Nicole watched Ayden tense. "Would that make you happy, truly happy?" he asked, pain flashing across his eyes.

At a loss for what to say, Nicole shrugged and then thought of something.

"I guess if he changed, it would make me happy."

He took a step back, clearly shocked by her words. "You would forgive him after what he's done to you. My God, Nicole, I'm not sure I can let you..." He took another step back, shaking his head back and forth.

"Well, as much as it would make me happy for him to change and be a better person to the next girl he decides to be with, I can't help him in that department. That's why I told him if he ever came to my door again, I knew the perfect cop to take care of him."

Slowly Ayden's face lifted to meet hers. He took a ragged breath.

"You did that on purpose." She watched as a smile slowly came to his face. "I can't believe you just did that."

"Yeah, well, you kind of walked right into that one. You should have known better than to think I would get back with Michael after..." Nicole trailed off. She was about to say, *after being with you,*

but she didn't need him to know that.

"So listen," she went on, "I was thinking that maybe you could come over tonight. Don't get the wrong idea. I'm not ready for a relationship, and I do plan on seeing other people, but I thought maybe we could watch a movie. If you don't want to that's fine. But I needed to let you know the option to come and see was available for you. You don't have to stay away if you don't want to."

Like stone, he was nothing more than a bump on a log. Why he had become stoic, she had no idea. Ayden stood there looking down at her as if he had all the time in the world to answer. Nicole's foot started tapping in impatience. Didn't he know how hard that was for her to say?

"I have a better idea. Instead of dating and coming across some weirdo, why don't you let me bring over one of my friends? If you want variety, he would be a great person for you to date. His name is Trevor. You'll enjoy him, great guy," he said, smiling.

Nicole wasn't sure what to say. Instead of answering, she went back to the original question.

"So, are you coming over tonight or not?" Her hands went to her hips as she tilted her head and waited for his answer.

Ayden laughed and took a step forward. "Do you miss me that much? Or is it my dick you miss?"

"I said for a movie, but yes, if you must know, I miss both." She continued to let her eyes penetrate his while her body screamed for attention. Standing still almost proved impossible.

There was no way she was going to back down from his gaze though. She would not act like a blushing innocent.

Nicole *did* want his dick. She wanted it pounding into her so hard she couldn't breathe. But more than that, she wanted his arms around her while they discussed the most random topics available as they had the night he left.

Ayden lifted his eyebrows, a look of surprise on his face. "Good, I want you to want me as much as I want you. Now get to your car so I

know you're safe, and I'll see you tonight." Ayden's fingers glided up the back of her thigh as he stepped back.

Nicole's body shivered at his touch. Heat replaced the area where his fingers had been. She nodded and turned, walking back to her car in a daze. Pleasurable daydreams of Ayden's hard chest sliding against her breasts were enough to distract her to almost getting into the wrong car.

With one last glance, Nicole watched Ayden get into his cruiser. She opened her Mustang door and got in, excited about the up-and-coming night. The last thing she expected when she pulled out of the parking lot was for Michael to ease up behind her. The scream didn't even have a chance to escape as he clamped his hand over her mouth.

Chapter 7

Ayden raced away from Nicole in the opposite direction, determined to beat her home. If he could sneak in through her second-story window in the back of the complex, he could give her what she needed right now. Fuck waiting for tonight. He'd waited long enough. If they hadn't been in the middle of the street in such a busy part of town, he would have bent her over the cruiser and buried his cock into her right then.

The sound of the siren echoed off the buildings while he raced through town. His werewolf abilities gave him the upper hand when it came to quick reflexes, so he wasn't worried about harming anyone.

The adrenaline pumped excitedly through his body while thoughts of Nicole raced through his mind. She missed him. He almost couldn't believe it. The declaration of her wanting to see other people stung quite a bit, but his plan to involve his best friend might work to his advantage. Trevor would know they were mated so a line would be drawn. In the end, if Nicole didn't choose him, then at least he knew she'd be in good hands and close by.

Within minutes he pulled into the complex. Hiding his cruiser behind another building, stealthily he made his way to Nicole's back window. Ayden surveyed the distance. He could jump high, but not that damn high. Using the air conditioning unit mounted into the ground, he jumped up, grabbing on to the windowsill.

Freeing one of his hands, he pushed the glass open and pulled himself into her room. There was no point in taking off his uniform, not yet. He had plans and every intention of playing police officer to her once she arrived.

* * * *

“Don’t scream, please. I won’t hurt you, Nicole. I tried to tell you this morning, but you wouldn’t let me finish. Yes, I want to come home, but that’s not the big part. This man you’re seeing, you have to stay away from him. He’s...not human. I can’t explain it. His eyes...”

Michael shuddered behind her and slowly he dropped his hand. Nicole could see that he looked just as drunk as he had this morning. It was one of the main reasons she’d run him off. Michael’s brown hair was sticking out at odd angles. His business suit was a complete mess, wrinkled with the tie at half mast, sitting sideways across his chest.

“Michael, I think I should take you home. You’re drunk. I can smell you from here.” The fragrance of alcohol clung heavily to the interior. He never drank liquor. Something was definitely wrong.

“Nicole, don’t tell me what I am!” he yelled, pulling her hair, and causing her head to hit the head rest. She tried her best to focus on the road while he went into one of his tirades.

“I’m telling you, the man’s a fucking...thing. He’s not human. And his strength. It’s unreal. Did you know he had the nerve to lift me over his head? The jerk threatened to throw me through the parking lot if I didn’t leave you alone.”

Nicole felt a chill go down her body. Hadn’t she thought the same thing about Ayden lifting her? She pushed it away trying not to think that her ex weighed twice as much as her.

“Michael, Ayden is strong, but that doesn’t make him a *thing*.”

“Then explain the way his face transformed, and his eyes began to glow, or maybe you can tell me why he suddenly grew claws. Tell me how that’s possible, Nicole!” Michael gripped her hair harder before letting go.

She almost laughed, ignoring the pain he caused. The pain, she was used to, but his words she couldn’t ignore. What he said was

impossible.

“I don’t know what to tell you.” As inconspicuously as possible, Nicole maneuvered her way down his street, trying to keep his focus on her so he wouldn’t suddenly freak out about her taking him home.

“Were you drinking when this happened?” Nicole glimpsed back at him in the rearview mirror, trying to keep eye contact.

“I was on my way to fucking work. I wasn’t drunk. It happened right in front of our apartment. It...” Michael trailed off, looking around at their location.

“Wait, what are you doing? I’m not going home. I thought we were going to go back to your place. I need to be there to protect you.” His words slurred as they sped up.

Nicole did laugh this time. Protect her from Ayden? *Sure*, like that was going to happen. Ayden would break him in two. Plus, she didn’t need to be protected from him. She needed to go and get ready to fuck him.

“Michael, get out of my car.” Nicole couldn’t help but laugh. “And please stay away from me. I’ll be fine. Even if Ayden was some *thing*, I’m sure I’ll be okay. He wouldn’t hurt me. Quite the opposite, actually.”

The pressure on Nicole’s arm caused her laughter to die off completely.

“Let go of me, or, so help me God, I’ll call the police this time. You’re not going to push me around anymore. Plus, I don’t think you want Ayden coming over here since he’s on patrol.”

Michael let her arm go. His body falling over the console caused his legs to flail wildly as his head ended up on the passenger floor board. Nicole helped to pull him up. She leaned over and opened his door, glaring at him.

“Damn it, Michael, get out and sober up. And do us both a favor, and stay away from me.” Pissed that he almost kicked her face in the process of his drunken maneuvering, it took everything for her not to push him out of the door.

“You’ll see, mark my words,” he said, getting out. The moment the door closed, Nicole hauled ass out of the parking lot. Clearly he was drunker than she expected, talking about glowing eyes and hands that looked like claws. Whatever.

She pushed the thoughts away and headed the five blocks to her house. If she was lucky, she’d be able to search through her clothes and try to find something sexy for Ayden to rip off.

Wetness seeped from her pussy at the thought. As if his cologne swept across her senses, she felt herself become increasingly turned on. She reached down, placing her fingers against her slacks. The urge to close her eyes while she teased herself was almost impossible to control.

Nicole gripped the steering wheel tighter as her hips began to rotate to the movement of her fingers. Faster and faster she rubbed around her clit until she pulled in her driveway and parked. The moment she didn’t have to concentrate on watching the road, she let the moans bounce off the interior as her stomach tightened and the delicious spasms erupted over her body.

Chapter 8

It took a few seconds for Nicole's vision to come back into focus. Her body still trembled while she made her way up the stairs to her apartment. The key slid into the lock, and she shut the door and stripped off her clothes, throwing them on the floor as she made her way to her room.

A yelp broke through Nicole as a hand clamped over her mouth. Whoever grabbed her stood behind, making it impossible for her to see who it was.

She opened her eyes wildly when she felt the large arms around her.

"Ayden," she muffled through his hand.

The nibbling that began to trace down Nicole's neck to her shoulder told her exactly who it was. Abruptly, Ayden pulled back, spinning her around. Off balance, she clutched him.

"You smell like alcohol." He began sniffing around Nicole's face. He reached her lips and shook his head. "But you haven't been drinking. What happened after I left you?"

She rolled her eyes at the thought of what occurred. "Next time you decide to watch over me, make sure you check my car. Michael was hauled up inside waiting for me. You should have heard some of the nonsense he rambled about. He was completely wasted."

Ayden went rigid. "He was in your car? I swear I'm going to..."

"Do nothing," Nicole finished, pulling against the belt around his waist. "I told him to stay away from me, but he's convinced you have glowing eyes and claws for hands. He's scared for me or so he says. I think he consumed one too many drinks."

Silence filled the room for a few seconds. “Fine, but if he comes around you again, I want you to call me or the station. Did he hurt you?” Ayden stepped closer to her.

Nicole reflexively covered her arm but shook her head. “No, not really. Can we just continue? I’m dying for you to use those handcuffs on me.”

Ayden was quiet but ultimately broke out of his thoughts. “Don’t you know cops don’t use handcuffs on bad girls? They hogtie them.” He pulled out what looked to be plastic zip ties.

“Oh, yeah, well you know I’ve been a very bad girl,” she said, playing along with him. Excitement poured through her as he removed her panties and bra. Ayden paused, his face even with her pussy.

“Oh, yes, you’ve been a very naughty girl. I can smell it.” He separated her legs, running the tip of his tongue across her clit. Nicole jerked from the sensitivity.

“What did you do after you dropped off Michael? Did you rub your fingers against your pussy? Did you think of my cock going inside of you while you did it?”

Nicole moaned while Ayden’s tongue explored her pussy further, separating her folds.

“Yes, I thought about you. I couldn’t wait.” The truth of her words hit her. She’d never done anything like that before. It wasn’t like herself. Nothing she seemed to be doing lately was routine.

Ayden stood, lifting her. He placed Nicole on the bed, stomach down. Her legs were suddenly bent backward, and the cold plastic clicked around her ankles and secured them together. Her hands were also pulled behind her back and secured. She whimpered while she separated her thighs as far as they would go.

“Fuck, you smell so good. I missed this more than you’ll ever know.” Ayden buried his face into her pussy again, inhaling deeply. The moment he shoved his tongue inside of her, Nicole screamed and instantly went into an orgasm.

Fingers slid deeper at her peak and pushed against her G-spot. The sensation prolonged the intensity of the ecstasy until she thought the pleasure was going to be unbearable.

“Ayden, please, I want you in my mouth. Please,” she begged.

“You want *what* in your mouth? Tell me, Nicole.”

“Your dick. Please put your dick inside my mouth. I want to taste you, to feel you against my tongue.”

Ayden took off the belt that was holding his gun and other equipment, and tossed it on the bed. Slowly, he unzipped his pants and pulled out his hard cock. Nicole moaned, licking her lips.

* * * *

Just the sight of Nicole’s tongue caused Ayden to nearly lose control. He reached under her arms and lifted her so she could sit on her knees. Her head instantly lowered as she took his tip inside of her mouth. As she swirled her tongue around his width, his eyes felt as if they were rolling back.

A groan left Ayden’s mouth without him realizing he made the sound. Suction pulled him deeper, and his fingers searched for something to clutch on to.

Gently pulling Nicole’s hair out of her face, he held on to it and watched her lips caress down his length. He stared, fascinated, while she took her time pleasuring him. Tracing her lips along the side of his cock, she began kissing the hardness until she reached back to his tip.

“Fuck, Nicole.” He closed his eyes as she began working his length back into her mouth. Her pace quickened until every thought in his mind vanished. All he could feel was the way her tongue slid against his thickness.

He rolled her nipple between his two fingers, pulling at the nub gently. Her moan sent vibrations rushing through his cock. Ayden felt them to the tips of his toes.

“Enough, I don’t have much time. I want to be inside of you. I *need* to be inside of you. Are you ready for me to fuck you?” he asked, pulling his cock out of her mouth.

“Yes,” Nicole breathed out softly. Pink covered her fevered cheeks. Knowing how badly Nicole wanted him made Ayden wild with desire. She was his. She just didn’t know it yet. She’d never be satisfied with fucking anyone else. He’d make sure of that.

Tonight, he planned to change things and make their bond stronger. She might like this, but what he wanted more than anything was to take his time and make love to her. He wanted to bask in her body and show her the difference between fucking and the passionate love he wanted to give her.

If all went well with his plan, she’d see the difference between the pleasure they shared now and the passion they, together, were both capable of.

* * * *

Ayden eased Nicole to the bed, resting her back on her stomach. With her knees bent and her thighs spread wide, she waited for Ayden’s cock to enter her. Heat poured from her skin. She’d never been this turned on or desperate.

Two fingers slid inside of her and pulled out, rubbing her folds and clit. The bed dipped down, and she bit her lip anxiously. At the force of Ayden’s thick tip pushing into her, Nicole lifted her hips, allowing him to enter deeper. Indescribable visions and thoughts swam through her mind. She knew that somehow the actions transpiring between them were so much more than she understood. Their chemistry, his touch, the feeling she got when he filled her, surpassed anything normal relationships or couples experienced.

Ayden wrapped an arm around her stomach and held her in that position as he plunged inside of her. Nicole screamed and tightened around him.

“Don’t stop, oh, please, don’t stop. Fuck me,” she said through her screams.

Ayden pounded into her continuously, running his hand down her back. The multiple sensations coursing throughout her body made focusing on just one thing impossible.

“Are you going to be a bad girl anymore, or am I going to have to come and repeatedly punish you?”

“I like being bad so I guess that means you’re going to have to punish me,” she said in a thick voice.

“Oh, I will. I’ll be back tonight. Do you want me to come back while you’re sleeping? Do you want me to wake you up with my tongue inside your pussy?”

Nicole screamed again. “Yes, oh, yes, please.”

Ayden’s cocked swelled around her tightness, and he thrust a few more times before he pulled out, shooting his cum all over her ass. With a strength that surprised Nicole, he pulled the zip ties apart with his hands. Time seemed to momentarily stop. Weren’t the ties designed not to be broken? He didn’t even put effort into freeing her from her binds.

Numb, her arms and legs fell to the bed. A stiff aching immediately took over. The sound of Ayden getting dressed barely registered to her while she went over her suspicions.

Unexpectedly, she felt herself lifted as Ayden carried her to the bathtub. In a daze she let him turn on the water and clean her off. The strength and power, almost everything about him, made her ex’s words repeat in her head. Pain racing up her arm broke the thoughts.

“Did Michael do this to you?”

Nicole looked down at the bruises beginning to circle her arm. “It’s not a big deal. Like I said, he was drunk. He really wanted me to listen to him about this ‘thing’ he thinks you are. What exactly happened when you met him?”

Ayden looked away and then back at the bruises. “It is a big deal. He shouldn’t be touching you. Will you please allow me to talk to

him again? I won't scare him. Michael just needs to know to keep away from you. That's all."

"Before I give you an answer, answer my question. What happened between you and Michael?"

Nicole watched him shift uncomfortably. The sound of the police radio echoing through the room made Nicole jump in surprise.

"I'll tell you everything tonight. I promise. I have to go. Are you going to be all right?" Ayden asked, standing.

"Of course."

The taste of Ayden's mouth swept over her senses. He smiled down and she watched him quickly take off through the door. For endless minutes she stared at the spot where he'd last been. If Ayden in fact wasn't human, which was ridiculous, what could he be?

Nicole shook her head and tried to laugh it off. She wasn't even sure why she dwelled on Michael's words. They were no doubt the ravings of a drunken man. But what if they weren't? What if, for once, her ex wasn't completely full of shit?

Standing, she grabbed a towel and headed for her room. The ties still sat in the place Ayden left them. Nervously, she walked forward, staring down at the thick plastic. Could any human break those, one possibly as built as him? If she knew one, she would have tested the theory, but she didn't know anyone with a body as perfectly sculpted as his.

Picking up the plastic, she made a new, smaller circle. Endlessly, Nicole pulled. Burning raced through her fingers while she put everything possible behind separating the plastic, desperate to prove and dismiss the growing anxiety.

"Fuck!"

Red welts already covered the expanse of her fingers, but she didn't give up. She couldn't give up. Throwing on some clothes, Nicole walked next door. A man in his early twenties answered.

"Hello, I know you just moved here, and we really haven't gotten to know each other, but I was wondering if you could do me a favor."

“Sure.” He smiled down at her while she tried to think of a story.

“Well, you see, I’m planning to help friends move soon and they want to use these ties to help secure their stuff. Since I know I’m not very strong, I wondered if maybe you could try testing your strength against them to see if they would be good enough for my friends to use. I would hate for something to happen to their stuff if one of the ties broke.”

The man grabbed the small circle and began to pull. Nicole watched his face turn red while he tried to break it. Repeatedly, he pulled at different angles.

“I think your friends don’t have anything to worry about. Their stuff isn’t going anywhere. Where did you find these?”

“I don’t remember. Thank you, I’ll be sure to tell them.”

Nicole raced inside her apartment and collapsed to the couch. How did Ayden do it? Not only once, but twice he pulled the plastic apart like paper. Fear settled through her. She wasn’t physically afraid of him but more scared of what he might be hiding from her. Was she jumping to conclusions? Based off her neighbor, she didn’t think so.

Chapter 9

The sirens wailed while Ayden headed to the crash dispatch reported. Car accidents were his least favorite thing to go to, especially major ones, but the thought of someone being hurt and no one there to help allowed him to put his emotions aside and do his job.

Needing to know the exact 10-20 of the accident, Ayden called back into dispatch for the location. The voice broke through laced with static. From what he could make out, he was only two blocks away, not far at all.

The cruiser flew past the stop sign, making a left. As Ayden slid around the turn, he saw the smoke billowing out of the two cars that hit head on. His heart raced. Visions of his sister's accident flashed into his mind. Pushing them away, he tried not to think about how he forever ruined her life. She hated him, feared him for infecting her. He never felt the cut from the broken glass, but she didn't understand that. Now she refused to see him, and Stephen, one of his pack members, took care of her a good twenty minutes away. He shook his head and focused.

One officer was already on the scene. The cruiser slowed down as he approached. He quickly radioed his arrival in to dispatch. Ayden got out, running toward the two cars.

Officer Valdez talked to a woman sitting dazed in the driver's seat of one of the vehicles. The two red cars were almost unrecognizable. Metal twisted together at odd angles. Glass littered the road up to fifteen feet away.

Ayden cleared his thoughts and focused on what Valdez was

saying. “The driver of the other vehicle, I’m almost positive is a DWI. He hit her head on. Go check on him. I’ll stay with her until EMS gets here.”

Ayden didn’t wait for him to finish. He jogged over to the vehicle. Brown hair rested against the deflated air bag on the steering wheel. When a man’s eyes met his, Ayden’s stomach dropped.

“Michael, are you all right?” He leaned toward the window.

The glass was completely missing, so he peered inside to see if he could survey any damage to his body. The smell of blood hit him hard. Michael was injured somewhere.

“I think I’ll be going now, officer. I’m late for my anniversary. My girlfriend is going to kill me,” Michael slurred.

“Head injury, probably a concussion,” Ayden said under his breath.

The EMS pulled up, rushing to get everything ready. Nicole would be upset. Ayden was sure of that. Michael might have been a shitty boyfriend, but they still lived together for a year. Feelings evolve over time, no matter what happened.

“Michael, after they take you, I’m going to get Nicole for you and tell her she needs to go to the hospital. Would you like me to do that?”

Blood caught Ayden’s attention while Michael turned more in his direction. He had yet to get a clear visual of the victim’s face. The way Nicole’s ex rested with his eyes looking towards his lap, made it impossible to assess him accurately. With a groan, he finally lifted his head off of the steering wheel, and what Ayden saw was enough to stop his heart and breath completely.

Michael’s face could hardly be recognized from the other side. Bone was exposed over his eyebrow and multiple lacerations looked to be along his cheek and forehead. He tried to see more but paramedics pushed him out of the way.

“Nicole, where’s Nicole?” Michael started saying repeatedly.

Ayden’s head swirled as he thought of the way Nicole would

react. More officers arrived on scene and the pandemonium only left him grasping to stay focused on his job.

A hand clamped onto Ayden's shoulder. Startled, he spun around. Trevor stood there in his fireman gear, his blond hair smelling of coconut, still dripping water from the shower he must have been pulled from.

"Hey, you okay? You look lost. This isn't like you."

Ayden relaxed a bit at seeing his second in command. "Yeah, I know the DWI driver. The woman I marked, my mate, Nicole. That," Ayden pointed toward the totaled car, "is the ex-boyfriend I threatened. He doesn't look so well. Michael hid in her car when she got out of work today. He was wasted, so she took him home." Ayden paused. "I have a pretty good idea of where he was headed. Our complex isn't blocks from here. She said he mentioned my half transformation. He seemed pretty persistent, trying to make her believe him. Fuck, I can't even think right now." Ayden nervously ran his fingers through his black hair.

"This isn't anyone's fault but the driver's." Trevor's eyes narrowed at Ayden. "Don't blame yourself. You didn't make him climb behind the wheel of that car. He had a choice and he made it."

Anger filled every inch of his body. "It *is* my fault. If I could have controlled my temper, then I wouldn't have shown him that side of me. He would have just thought I was some jealous guy or something. Not some...monster."

"You're not a monster. None of us are, Ayden."

"I know that." He turned to see them carefully lay Michael on a stretcher. His eyes darted toward him, and something passed through their depths. Ayden wasn't sure what. Deep down Michael still knew what he saw. It was only a matter of time before he remembered.

"I need to go and get Nicole. I'll see you tonight at the apartment. You are off tonight, right?"

"Yeah. See you later," Trevor said, walking back toward the fire truck.

Ayden took in the scene, letting every detail burn into his brain. He caused this. All of his actions led up to the moment they were in now.

Walking to Valdez, he explained needing to leave. Everything was already being taken care of. An abundance of officers littered the area, directing traffic and keeping pedestrians at bay.

He climbed into his cruiser, letting the weight settle on his shoulders. Guilt ate at him the whole way back to Nicole's apartment. No one would be able to convince him that this wasn't his fault. If he would have reacted differently to his jealousy, then Michael wouldn't have gotten wasted and felt the need to go to Nicole to warn her or protect her. Regardless, it didn't matter. The blame rested on him.

Chapter 10

The pounding on Nicole's door echoed throughout the apartment like a cannon. She placed the brush down on the bathroom counter, feeling herself begin to shake. Who would bang so loudly if it wasn't an absolute emergency?

Another set of panicked knocks thumped through her body as she approached the door. Fumbling with the dead bolt, she finally managed to open it. Ayden's face looked paler than his usual tanned skin. She knew immediately something was wrong.

"What's happened?"

His mouth opened and then closed. He walked past her and into the living room where he started to pace. She closed the door and slowly walked toward him. Unsure how to approach the subject that obviously left him shaken, she waited for him to proceed.

"I'm sorry, Nicole." He slowly turned to her. "Michael's been in a very bad car accident. He was driving and hit a lady head on. He's alive, but it's not good. I think he might have been headed over here. It happened only a few blocks away."

Nicole collapsed to the couch, feeling dizzy. "I have to get to the hospital. I shouldn't have left him like that. He didn't even make it to his apartment before I took off."

Trying to stand, Nicole gave up and sat down again. She bowed her head and placed her hands on the sides of her thighs to make her head stop spinning.

"This is all my fault," she whispered.

Ayden quickly sat beside her. "This is not your fault. This is my fault. I shouldn't have threatened him. If I wouldn't have gotten angry

and changed, then he wouldn't have been scared. Don't you see? I did this, not you!" Ayden yelled, getting back to his feet and pacing.

Nicole looked up. "What do you mean, changed?" Just the words placed the fear back into her head. But the more she looked at him, the more she knew she wasn't necessarily afraid of him compared to the overdramatic images her mind kept producing.

Ayden turned around slowly and faced her. His eyes connected with hers, glowing a golden brown color. The light illuminating through left her staring at him, stunned. She came to her feet, not sure of what to do.

"You see, I did this. He would have never gotten in the car if he didn't think I would hurt you. But I wouldn't do that, Nicole. I could never hurt you."

Nicole took a slow step forward, believing his words. "So he was telling the truth. What...are you?" she asked, taking another step cautiously toward him. A part of her wanted to know while another part wasn't so sure knowing was such a good idea. Ignorance seemed a pretty good option, but one she knew she couldn't take.

"You wouldn't believe me if I told you." Ayden rubbed his eyes, turning away from her.

"Try me. I'm pretty open-minded. Plus, what I just saw proves you're not entirely human."

Ayden took a deep breath. "What if I said I was a werewolf? Would you believe me then?"

Nicole hesitated. "A werewolf?" She picked up the tie and walked over to him. "After you left I tried to break this like you did. I even had the neighbor try his luck. We couldn't get it. Some part of me knew you weren't like everyone else. But, a werewolf...I never would have guessed or even imagined. I'm still not sure what to think." She paused and then lifted her hand. "Break it," she said, handing him the small circle.

His eyes never left her face while he lifted the plastic and broke it apart between their connected gaze. Something inside of her stomach

twisted at the confirmation. She felt like her heart literally dropped to the floor.

“We should get to the hospital.”

So many questions and emotions swamped her mind. Numbly, she shook her head.

“Yes.” Nicole walked over, grabbing her purse, and slid on a pair of flip flops. She wasn’t sure how to take the news of what he claimed to be any more than what she planned to do about their future.

Ayden grabbed her hand and pulled her to him. “This wasn’t how I wanted to tell you. But you need to know this *isn’t* your fault so please don’t worry. And I’m sorry I’ve made your life a mess. From the moment you’ve met me we’ve been through one thing after another. I should have just told you the truth from the beginning. Maybe things might have been easier.”

Nicole remained quiet while she held his hand. They walked down the stairs, and they both got in the cruiser. After a few minutes of driving in silence, Ayden turned to her.

“I’m going to drop you off and come back later. Will you be all right there at the hospital?”

“I’ll be fine. Michael doesn’t have any family. I should probably stay there with him until we find out something. If I need a ride home, I’ll call Tara. She’ll come to get me.”

Ayden nodded, and the car remained quiet for the rest of the drive. Slowly, Nicole leaned over and kissed Ayden’s lips tenderly while she looked into his dark eyes.

“Don’t blame yourself, Ayden. No one but Michael is to blame for getting in his car and driving while he was under the influence. I think we’re both going to have to accept that.” Nicole got out of the car and shut the door to the cruiser.

The pain lighting his face was evident. She felt her heart grow heavy at how hard he was taking it. Turning around, she looked at the large red letters spelling EMERGENCY. Slowly, Nicole made her way to the receptionist sitting behind the window.

“My...friend was brought here. He was in a car accident.”

“Name, please,” the older woman echoed through the small hole at the bottom of the glass.

“His name is Michael Jensen.”

The woman messed around with the computer while she picked up the phone. The words she spoke couldn't be heard no matter how hard Nicole strained her ears.

“If you'll have a seat in the waiting area, someone will be out to talk to you shortly.”

She looked around the room, already packed with people. A baby cried while a woman Nicole assumed was the mother tried to comfort it.

Nodding her head at the receptionist, she took the seat farthest away from everyone. Finally having the chance to go over everything she'd learned, she let her thoughts consume her. The question to stay with Ayden weighed heavily on her mind. Deep down, she knew she didn't want to lose him. But the thought of him being a werewolf scared the shit out of her.

What did werewolves do? How many existed? Surely, he wasn't the only one. Would they get past this accident involving Michael? And most of all, could the pain she'd been feeling have anything to do with what he was?

Two hours flew by and Nicole jumped the moment a man in scrubs walked out of the double doors. She rushed to him, not caring if he planned to come to her or someone else.

“Do you have news on Michael Jensen?”

“Yes, I'm sorry it took so long. Mr. Jensen is in surgery. He's suffered a broken arm and a severe concussion. We gave him a few stitches where the glass cut him, but ultimately he's very lucky. He should be fine in a few days.”

Adrenaline crashed through her, nearly causing Nicole's legs to crumble beneath her. “Thank you, doctor. Is there any way I can see him after he gets out of surgery?”

“Ma’am, visiting hours are over at eight. From the way things look, I don’t expect him out of surgery by then. It would probably be best to come back in the morning. He’ll be set up in a room by then.”

Perplexed, she went over her options. She didn’t want to leave until she knew what happened, but there was no point staying all night if she wasn’t going to be able to see him.

“Thank you. I’ll be back in the morning.” Nicole reached for her phone and walked outside. She called Tara and waited for her to come. Once again, she found herself lost in the decisions she needed to make. All she knew was she wanted to see Ayden. She felt lost without him, and the pain began to sink back into her chest, increasing as the minutes flew by.

The indescribable pull toward the werewolf left her crazily pacing. She didn’t know how or why, but something changed. Uneasiness gripped at her insides. She knew in that moment it didn’t matter what he claimed to be. She couldn’t lose him.

Chapter 11

Nicole had fallen asleep on the couch, waiting for Ayden, when a light tapping woke her. Groggily, she stood and walked over, opening the door and turning around to lie back down on the couch.

She bolted to a sitting position on the cushions when she noticed the man standing in her doorway was not Ayden.

“I’m sorry, I was still half asleep. Can I help you with something?” Slowly, she walked back over to the door. She didn’t want this man coming in any farther until she knew who he was.

“I’m Trevor, Ayden’s friend. He sent me over here to check on you.”

Confused by his words, Nicole waved him in and climbed back on the couch. She caught a glimpse of the clock on the cable box and blinked twice to adjust her eyes to see if the time she saw was right.

Two-thirty! In the morning!

Had she been asleep that long?

“Where is Ayden? Why didn’t *he* come to check on me?” Nicole asked, gesturing for Trevor to sit down.

“Well, it’s kind of complicated. He had...pack business to take care of.”

Looking deeply into Trevor’s eyes, she nearly gasped when the pain in her chest lightened and a feeling of electricity shot through her. Startled, she shook her head and focused on what he told her of Ayden.

“When will he be back? Did he say?”

Trevor sat down, facing toward her. He remained quiet for a few

seconds. The way he stared at her only intensified the tingly feelings coursing through her.

“Ayden made me promise to take care of you. He told me to tell you he’s sorry. Tomorrow, he wants me to take him off of the lease, and he’s already informed the station. I don’t think he’s coming back.”

Nicole bolted from the couch. “What do you mean, he’s not coming back? He’s just going to leave?” She began to pace. “Why? What did I do? Did he say anything else?”

Just when she thought everything was going to be fine between them, he leaves? Hadn’t she just accepted what he was? Now she was left to deal with knowing and not having him around? How was that fair? How could he just let all of this happen and run away to leave her to adjust to it by herself?

“I don’t know. He wouldn’t talk to me.” Trevor walked over to her. “I’m supposed to do whatever you wish. Is there anything you need?” He lifted her chin to look into his blue eyes.

If Nicole had been in the same frame of mind she was in when she found Ayden, she would have begged Trevor to take her to the bedroom and fuck Ayden out of her mind. But she wanted Ayden. She didn’t want to forget the passion they shared. She couldn’t believe he’d just leave and call it quits.

“If you talk to him, tell him to call me or come by. He doesn’t have to leave. I don’t want him to,” she whispered.

The tears were coming. Too much happened today. The last thing she wanted to do, though, was cry in front of this gorgeous stranger.

The rough fingers traveled from her chin down to her throat. She hadn’t even realized he still touched her until the trembling shook her body.

“Ayden did tell me to take care of you, in all ways. I would love to make your night better,” Trevor said, stopping at the junction between her neck and shoulder. Nicole fought not to close her eyes.

“Can you feel it? The connection we share? From the moment I

really looked at you, saw into your eyes, I knew. Tell me you feel it, the heat, the need to be close to one another. It's the pull. You can't escape it no matter how much you try. No one ever does. Ayden marked you, didn't he? Bit you somewhere on your body?"

Nicole's hand immediately lifted to where she remembered the bruise. "Yes."

"I don't understand. Do you feel this pull to Ayden? Surely, he wouldn't mark you if you didn't."

"Yes, I feel the pull. When we're not together, my heart hurts. I feel empty like I'm not myself at all."

"Tell me what you felt when you first looked into my eyes, Nicole."

She stared at the tall blond. His blue eyes touched something deep inside of her.

"I felt the pain ease a little and electricity."

"Impossible," he whispered.

Placing his body against hers, she felt her breathing quicken. The reaction he caused in her body felt just like the way Ayden's did when he neared. The need to touch his skin, to taste him pushed into her mind.

"Can I kiss you? I have to see."

Nicole couldn't speak, couldn't move past the thought of him placing his full lips against hers. Not only did it excite her, it left her needing to be touched.

He lifted his hands and cupped her cheeks. The heaviness of his breathing resembled hers. Placing her hands on his chest, she tried to process what exactly was happening. Hard muscle tensed under her fingers and he moaned pulling her impossibly closer.

Lips crushed into hers filling her whole body with a passion she only felt for one other, his best friend Ayden. It took every bit of her control to pull back.

"Stop, we can't do this. Nothing makes any sense to me."

"I know and I'm sorry. How about I let you go to sleep, but you

meet me for coffee in the morning before you go to the hospital? I'll try to fill you in more, then."

"You know about that?" Nicole asked, narrowing her eyes at him.

"I was on scene. Fire crew is always called in when major accidents are reported. I would love to go to the hospital with you. Maybe we can ride together?"

Nicole nodded mindlessly. "Sure. I was going to head up there around nine. Is that all right with you?"

"Sound's great. I'm afraid we're going to have to go in your car, unless you don't mind motorcycles."

"We can take my car. That's fine. Trevor, are you sure Ayden didn't tell you anything else that might indicate he was coming back for me? I just thought..."

Anger began to replace the hurt. It was always better to be angry than to feel rejected.

Trevor smiled sadly. "He just told me to take care of you in all ways. He said that you deserved to be happy, and he didn't think he could do it. He's marked you, and that makes you his mate. I'm the only one he's allowed the exception, unless, of course, you find someone who isn't pack."

Nicole bit her lip. "Why would he allow his best friend to sleep with the person he marked as a mate? It doesn't make sense to me. Wouldn't he be angry?"

Trevor laughed. "Ayden is a jealous person, but not of me. We've shared before. You're the only person he's hesitated with, but since he and I are blood tied, he feels what I feel. Maybe he felt desperate to feel you without feeling guilty for actually touching you. I think he blames himself for what happened, so I guess in some weird way, it makes sense."

"What is blood tied?" Nicole asked, curious.

"Well, it was Ayden's idea actually. I'm his most trusted man. To make sure I'm always loyal to him, he's bitten me three times, which links him to my feelings. Do you understand?"

“Yes, I believe so. You’re saying if we...had sex, he could feel it?”

Trevor’s face transformed into a smile so wicked she could almost see Ayden looking back at her.

“That’s exactly what I’m saying.”

A million thoughts rushed into her head. But most of all the anger overshadowed everything. Just from his smile she knew one thing. Ayden and Trevor were more alike than she first thought. She closed her eyes and prayed. She was going to need all the help she could get.

Chapter 12

Trevor placed both of his hands back around Nicole's face.

"I think Ayden would enjoy feeling you once again. But more importantly, I want to experience what it feels for true mates to touch each other. You may be linked with Ayden, but now you're link to me. Let me taste you."

The words sunk in Nicole's mind, but with everything else already there, she still pulled back. As much as she wanted to pleasure not only herself, but Ayden and Trevor as well, the thought suddenly wasn't as appealing as before.

She stepped completely away and looked into his eyes.

"I'm sorry, but Ayden leaving me doesn't gain him a reward and, sadly, makes you unfuckable. It's a pity, too. I'm sure we would have had a great time. Link, pull, mated or not, the three of us are now in a messy predicament. Until I can get things straightened out with him, he's sure as hell not going to have the pleasure of feeling what he could so easily leave.

"Now if you would still like to go to the hospital, be here at nine. If not, give Ayden a message for me. I don't need a fucking keeper. If he wants me watched over, he can do it himself. Please don't take this personally, Trevor, but it's time for me to find myself, and it's not going to happen if I have a bodyguard."

A streak of independence poured through Nicole. She didn't need a man. They might all be mated somehow, but that didn't mean she needed to give in to her cravings. Plus, maybe what she needed existed outside the walls of this apartment. Maybe she'd go out again.

Nicole walked over and held open the door for Trevor, who looked completely shocked.

“I’ll tell him. I’m sorry. I feel like an ass, I…” he laughed. “You’re something else. I’ll see you in the morning.”

Trevor walked over, kissed her cheek, and left. Nicole locked the door behind him. The tears were long gone with the anger that now took over. If she focused on anything but Ayden or her new pull for Trevor, she would be okay, she hoped.

Deciding to go back to bed, Nicole walked to her room and set the alarm for eight. Once this horrible night was over, she could start off tomorrow by keeping herself busy.

* * * *

A cloud of dust kicked up from behind Ayden’s truck as he headed down the dirt road to the ranch. The land had been in his family now for generations. Sandia, Texas was a small town. The one hundred and fifty acres gave him plenty of space to think. Plus, it wasn’t too far from Corpus Christi, so he could get back to town rather quickly if he needed to.

Just last year, Ayden contracted people to come in and build a house to replace the small one that was starting to fall apart. The pack met up here once a month during the full moon and bi-weekly for meetings. It was a safe way for him to watch over everyone. Now he escaped here to watch over himself.

Nicole would be better off without him. Trevor would take care of her. He knew more than anything his best friend could make her happy.

Why then did his gut twist every time he thought of them as a couple? The sex wasn’t that much of a big deal, but them together as a pair meant something completely different. They’d be paired, equivalent to marriage, in his opinion.

Trevor was irresistible to the ladies. The fact they weren’t already

being intimate surprised him. He'd feel it if they were, but he didn't feel anything but extreme happiness, which made him even more sick. Was something wrong? Did something happen?

Ayden parked his truck in front of the ranch-style house and got out. He pulled out his phone, dialing while he walked to unlock the door. At the sight of a black kitten sitting on his front door step, aching rushed through his chest. Flashes of Nicole nuzzling her face into his stomach while her black hair fanned across his legs crushed his heart. He wanted to see her, smell her. Just knowing he couldn't look out of the window and see her car suddenly made him feel their distance. This obsession with her had gone too far. He needed to break it right now. He hung up the phone after the second ring.

Picking up the kitten, he walked in and cradled it tenderly. Throwing the keys on the bar, Ayden tried processing his thoughts. He cursed when Trevor immediately called him back.

"Hello," Ayden said, irritated. He placed the kitten down while he paced the floor.

"Nicole is something else, let me tell you. Quite a temper inside there, feisty. I love it. You sure you want to hand her over? You know how I like a challenge, and she's definitely going to be a challenge."

Ayden growled. "Trevor, this isn't a game. Nicole won't be treated like one. If you're not going to take her seriously, then I don't want you around her. She deserves better than that."

"Yes, well I agree. You see, the thing is, something happened. Ayden, something passed between her and I that changes everything I've been taught about what we are. We're meant to be mated. She and I both felt the pull."

The knots returned in Ayden's stomach. The twisting held him immobile.

"But how? It's impossible. What did she say?"

"About everything in general? Well, she doesn't understand the process. I'm going to explain it to her in the morning over coffee. She did want me to give you a message though. She says she doesn't need

a fucking keeper, and that if you want that, you can do it yourself. And she needs to find herself, and she can't do that with a bodyguard, so basically she doesn't want me."

Ayden ran his fingers through his hair.

"Well you *have* to watch over her. I can't do it. Look what I've done already. She's not safe if you're not there, and I don't trust anyone else to protect her."

Trevor sighed into the phone.

"You know I can't leave her now that we've felt the pull. Just the thought is inconceivable. Don't get me wrong, I would love to be with her, but like I already said, you ruined my chances. I'm not sure what to do myself. The only thing I can think of is if you let her go. Isn't there a way for you to remove your mark from her so I can place my own?"

"No! I will not!" Ayden growled. "She's mine. I marked her. I can't just let her go. I..."

He collapsed to the couch. What in the hell was he going to do? He couldn't let her go. He wouldn't.

"Listen, Ayden. I think you should come back. She wants you, not anyone else. The way she talks, this 'finding herself,' do you really want her out there fucking lord knows who? Just come back. We'll all three try to work through this."

"No, you're going to watch over her. That is an order. Whether she falls in love with you or not is up to you. If you want her, then win her. She's worth it."

Ayden hung up the phone and threw it against the wall so hard it shattered into pieces, spraying the floor with broken plastic. He wouldn't go back. He couldn't. Nicole deserved better than him. Trevor would make sure she found it.

Chapter 13

Nicole swung wildly at the sound of the alarm clock. Something nagged at the back of her mind that she needed to get up, but she didn't want to. What could be so important? Something...

"You know, you should really learn to lock your window. Anyone could get in."

She bolted up to a sitting position and pushed the hair out of her face. Trevor sat at the bottom of her bed looking gorgeous in a tight, fitted blue T-shirt.

"Ugh, don't any of you werewolves know how to use a door? There are certain creep factors some people can't get over. Waking up to a stranger who broke into my apartment is one that I might not ever recover from. I'll never sleep soundly again, thank you," she said, falling back to her pillow.

"Aren't you a ray of sunshine this morning," he said, squeezing her ankle through the covers. "Come on, we'll go get breakfast before we head to the hospital. Of course," he moved his hand farther up her leg, "we could just snuggle in bed for a few hours instead."

"Oh, God, all right, I'm getting up," Nicole said, throwing the blankets off of her. Thank God she had put pajamas on last night.

"Am I that repulsive?"

She stopped and looked at him, feeling bad for the way she acted.

"No, of course not, quite the opposite, really. It's just that I won't give Ayden the satisfaction. Sorry, I thought I already explained this last night."

"So I get punished for his faults. Great." Trevor rose and walked out of the bedroom. Nicole stood staring at the empty doorway. He

couldn't seriously want to be with her after his best friend was, could he? She figured he was ordered. Were they really meant to be together as much as she and Ayden were?

Walking to the closet, she pushed away the thoughts. It was too soon to think about anything like that. She would keep her plans and get out of the house when she got the chance. Until then, anything linking her to Ayden would have to be put on hold.

Nicole grabbed a pair of jeans and a red turtleneck. The days were getting cooler, and hospitals were always cold. Without shutting her door and offending Trevor even more, Nicole went to the restroom to get dressed.

Brushing her teeth, she took her time getting ready. A knock sounded at the door after a few minutes.

"Just a moment." She pulled her long black hair in a ponytail and took a deep breath.

Tara pushed herself inside and stood gaping. Silence hung in the air while her friend gestured wildly at the door and then to Nicole.

"What?" she whispered, not having a clue what Tara was referring to.

"*Who* in the blue blazes is that hot-ass guy in your living room, and *why* haven't I met him before? If he's already staying the night, I should know who he is!" she whispered loudly.

Nicole rolled her eyes.

"Trevor did not spend the night. He merely came over to accompany me to the hospital to see Michael. He's a firefighter and was on scene at the accident. He happens to live in the building across from mine."

"Oh, my God, can you tell me why you're obviously not interested? You've told me about Ayden, yes, he's gorgeous, but so is he," Tara said, pointing to the door again.

"Tara, don't...mention Ayden's name, please." Nicole turned back to the mirror to fix her hair, trying not to let Tara see how his name affected her.

“What happened with Ayden? I thought after what you told me last night, I’d find *him* here instead of Mr. Gorgeous.”

Desperately, she forced the tears to stay put. There’s nothing like rejection to make a girl bawl her eyes out first thing in the morning.

“He left town, something about not being right for me or something.” Nicole waved her hand as if it didn’t matter.

“Oh, honey, I’m so sorry.” Tara grabbed Nicole and pulled her into an embrace. At the comfort of the one person she used to tell everything to, the damn tears came pouring out.

“What is wrong with me, Tara? Everyone always leaves. What am I doing wrong?”

“Nothing’s wrong with you, sweetie. It’s the men. You need to find you a nice man who’s ready to settle down, if that’s what you want. If not, then try not to get attached. I know that’s hard. You’ve done nothing but go from one relationship to another. Have fun for a little while.”

Nicole pulled back, sniffing.

“You’re right. I need to have fun.” Even though she knew it, she also knew it probably would already be too late. The way they mentioned the pull gave her the impression it stayed for life. Just the thought of being bound to one man who didn’t want to be with her and another that gave her passion away through a blood tie made her want to cry even worse. There wasn’t any winning in her situation.

Another knock came, and Nicole looked up from the toilet paper she used to wipe the tears from her swollen eyes. Tara opened the door to Trevor who stood there looking downright helpless.

“Listen, I’m not deaf. I can hear what’s going on in here. Are you okay, Nicole? Is there anything I can get you?”

Nicole laughed, which sounded more like a sob.

“Yeah, can we go get some coffee now? I think I’m done with the waterworks.”

“I’ll see you after work. Call me if you need anything,” Tara said, hugging Nicole goodbye.

“I’ll see you.” Nicole turned on the water to wash her face. The last thing she wanted was for Trevor to see her crying. Now that the tears were gone, she quickly gained composure.

“Trevor, please don’t say anything. I don’t think I could bear it if you did.”

He looked down angrily. “I won’t say anything, but he knows what I’m feeling even if he can’t see what’s going on. He’s going to know something is wrong. I turned off my phone in case he tries to call.”

“I doubt he’ll worry about it.”

Trevor remained quiet until they got into her car and headed to a local Denny’s. Nicole was surprised she didn’t feel awkward around him. He didn’t feel like a stranger at all. Whether the ease came from her connection to Ayden or him, she wasn’t sure. Whatever it might be, it comforted her.

They sat at a booth in the back of the restaurant. Nicole sipped her coffee quietly while he stared at her. With the raise of her eyebrow, he started laughing.

“What? I can’t be that interesting to look at. What’s on your mind, Trevor?”

He just shook his head back and forth until Nicole raised her eyebrow again.

“All right, all right. I was just thinking how odd it is that I hadn’t seen you before last night. We’ve lived close now for, what, months? How long have you been at the complex?”

“Two years,” she said, smiling at him.

“Wow, really. Well, Ay—I,” he corrected himself. Nicole knew he was going to say “Ayden and I,” but she let it pass. He continued, “I’ve lived there for about eight months and not once have I seen you. I would have remembered. Of course, I do stay at the firehouse quite a bit.”

Nicole rested her chin against her fisted palm and stared at Trevor while he launched into fire stories. His chivalrous rescues were

fascinating. Before she knew it, her plate sat empty, and she hadn't said one word. She was consumed with his mouth as she stared at his moving lips.

"And sure enough, Jeffrey lost the bet. But I knew he would," Trevor echoed in Nicole's ears. She shook her head trying to recall what bet he was talking about.

"I'm sorry, what?" Nicole felt herself blush.

Trevor smiled at her. "Nothing...I would ask what was so fascinating about my lips, but I'd rather show you what they're capable of instead."

The heat filled her cheeks even more. She quickly grabbed her purse.

"No, thank you. I don't think that would be a very good idea. We should really get going."

Trevor laughed and stood, grabbing the ticket. "I'll show you someday, Nicole. If I don't make it past the kissing stage, then I don't deserve to. But until then..."

"Until then, what?" She followed him to the counter. Watching him pay, she studied his face, trying to come up with what kind of answer he'd give her. Finally, he turned toward her.

"Until I fail, that means I'm still in the game. You're a challenge that I intend to win over. Before everything's said and done, I'm going to make you fall in love with me."

Nicole's eyes felt like they were as wide as saucers. "But... Ayden," she whispered.

Here was a man who was giving himself to her on a silver platter, and here she was thinking about a man who up and ran off on her.

"Ayden will be whatever you want Ayden to be. If you want him in our lives, then he will be. If not, that's completely up to you. He's the one who marked you. But you're meant to be my mate, too. It might take you a while to accept the fact, but I'm not going anywhere. You need to know that. Decide what you want to do with him. Either way, I'll be waiting because you do belong to me."

Anger pounded against her chest.

“I am not a possession. No one owns me, mark or no mark.” Nicole stormed outside and got into her car. If she’d been heartless, she would have left Trevor there to find his own damn way to the hospital, but that wasn’t like her, so she waited for him to get in the car.

Once again, silence. And once again, Ayden broke through her thoughts. Was there an end to all of this, she wondered.

Chapter 14

Nicole and Trevor sat in the silence of Michael's room. He was asleep, his arms and face bandaged up. The bruises and swelling around the white gauze were shocking.

They'd been quiet for four hours already, and still he slept. Lunch time quickly approached, but after seeing Michael, the last thing Nicole wanted was food.

The doctor informed her that if everything went well, he should be out in a few days. Knowing that, although he looked pretty bad, he would be fine, told Nicole she could finally wash her hands of him and move on with her life.

"Nicole," Michael whispered so low she barely heard it. Trevor took a step forward obviously hearing him, and he was clear across the room.

"I'm here," Nicole said, leaning over the bed and grabbing his hand. "Would you like some water?"

He nodded his head yes and took a sip. Michael lay back down, never opening his eyes. The minutes stretched on until they turned into hours. Nicole could feel herself drifting off to sleep in the chair when Trevor caressed her face.

"Visiting hours are over, and I'm starving. Are you ready?"

She yawned and stood.

"Yes, I think I could use something to eat, too." She squeezed Michael's hand goodbye knowing this was the last time she'd ever see him. He moaned but went back to sleep. With one last look, Nicole left.

Trevor's phone began to ring as soon as he turned it on outside.

She looked over curiously as he began to walk quickly.

“Everything’s fine. We’re leaving the hospital...No, I can’t do that. You’re the one who said you trusted me. Believe me when I tell you...not right now.” Trevor paused, the anger clearly expressed on his face.

Nicole walked faster to catch up with his increasing pace.

“Ayden!” he yelled.

Impatience and anger made Nicole pull the phone out of Trevor’s hands. She put it up to her ear and immediately caught herself trying to dodge Trevor’s hands while he reached to retrieve the phone from her.

“Trevor, don’t tell me no. I gave you an order, damn it, and you’ll follow it,” Ayden growled. “I told you to watch over her. I didn’t want her upset, and she clearly felt upset. I know because you responded emotionally from something that was wrong with her. I felt it. Now you’re going to tell me right now what happened, or, so help me God, I’m coming down there to find out myself! Do you know how many hours I’ve been waiting to hear from you?”

Nicole’s stomach turned. “There’s no need to check on me, Ayden. I’m fine now. Thanks for the concern, though. Just in case you haven’t heard, I don’t need a keeper. I’ve already said that before.”

“Nicole, I...you weren’t supposed to hear that. Listen, I’m sorry for leaving, but I’m no good for you. Trust me on this. You deserve better. Trevor will take great care of you. He’s a really good guy. I don’t want anything but the best for you.”

Anger returned. “Who are you to decide what I deserve!”

Trevor pulled the phone away from her and tried dodging the best he could as she began to jump for it.

“See now why I couldn’t tell you, damn it? She was upset at *you*, if you must know. She’s devastated that you left. You need to come back. We’ll all work this out together.”

“Damn it, Trevor, give me the phone. This is bullshit,” Nicole

said, making one last attempt. Unsuccessful, she got tired of waiting to bitch Ayden out and walked to the car.

If he thought she deserved better, fine. She'd go find better, starting tonight. Michael was in the hospital, but he was going to be fine. Nicole needed air, needed to go and do something to release all of this built up tension.

"Either you're coming or you can find a ride home," Nicole shouted out of her open window.

Trevor got in, still on the phone. Nicole pulled out of the parking lot, keeping silent while he carried on his conversation with Ayden.

"What do you mean your cell is broken? The number's private? Well, you're going to have to wait till I get home to give it to me. No, Ayden, I don't have a pen...Hey, Nicole, do you have a pen?" he asked quietly.

She snorted. "Glove compartment. Trevor, you don't mind drive-through, right, because I have plans, and I don't feel like waiting for seating at any of the restaurants."

"Drive-through's fine. Where are you going?" he asked, digging for a pen. "Shit, hold on, Ayden. I don't even know where she's going yet. I'm not a mind reader."

"I'll tell you when you're off the phone with *him*. No keeper, remember? And I'm only telling you as a friend and one that I expect not to follow me tonight."

"You're going out?" Trevor asked, breaking his gaze away from the glove compartment.

"Damn it, Trevor, not while you're on the phone," Nicole hissed.

"Oh, sorry." He placed the phone against his chest so Ayden couldn't hear.

"You're going out? Why? Couldn't we just hang out tonight? I thought maybe we could watch a movie or something."

Nicole took a deep breath.

"No offense, Trevor, but what I need you can't give me. At least, I'm not willing to take it, so it looks like we're going to have to call a

rain check on the movie.”

“But, why tonight? Is it because of Ayden? I promise I was trying to keep the fact hidden from you. The last thing I want is for you to be upset. But I had to answer the phone. He’s my alpha.”

“I’m doing this because I need it. I need the distraction, okay? Just promise you’re not going to follow me.” Nicole pleaded to him with her eyes.

“You know if he orders me, then I have to do it,” he said, pained.

“Fuck! I should have never mentioned it.” Nicole hit her steering wheel. Why in the hell was this happening? She pulled into a fast-food restaurant, not even feeling hungry anymore.

“Number five, no onions,” Trevor said, getting back on the phone. “No, damn it, she didn’t tell me. I covered the phone because she didn’t want you to hear.”

Nicole ignored them and ordered the same thing he was having. More than likely, she wouldn’t finish it, but she could nibble on the fries. Trevor let out a string of curses while he slammed the phone shut, bringing her attention back to him.

“Well, I’ve been ordered. You sure you want to go?” he said in disgust.

Just as she thought, she knew Ayden would order Trevor to follow her. Well, she wouldn’t make the same mistake with him twice. Tomorrow, she would go out, and, by damn, she wasn’t telling anyone. Tonight it looked to be just her and Trevor.

“I’m suddenly not in the mood to go anywhere anymore. Movie Night it is, I guess.”

Nicole paid the lady who appeared at the window. Handing the food to Trevor, she drove back to the complex in a daze.

If Ayden cared so much about what happened to her, why wasn’t he here? It didn’t make any sense. Obviously, a mate in werewolf society ranked highly or else he wouldn’t care enough to have her protected at all times. But why wasn’t he the one doing it? She wanted to scream from not knowing the whole story.

“If you need someone tonight, I would love to fill the position. I know you said you didn’t want to because of the tie I have with Ayden, but I’ll pleasure you. You don’t have to do anything to me.”

Nicole looked over at him, her eyes narrowed.

“Why would you do that?”

Trevor grinned. “Maybe because I love your scent, and I want to taste it.”

Nicole’s eyes grew heavy. She turned back to the road, focusing as best she could with the sensations taking over her body. The wetness that seeped from her pussy at just the thought of his tongue tracing her most private places was enough to tighten her stomach.

“No, I don’t think that’s a good idea. I…” Nicole cleared her throat, at a loss for what else to say.

“I think it’s a great idea.” Trevor leaned toward her. “God, your scent is amazing when you’re turned on.” He lowered his head to the middle of her thighs.

Nicole’s fingers dug into his blond hair while she pulled his head up to look at her.

“Regardless of whether I’m turned on or not, if you’re getting off on it, then so is he, so it’s not going to happen. Stop smelling me, and keep the dirty words to yourself.”

He laughed. “So, it’s the dirty words that turn you on, is it? I thought maybe it was my good looks,” he said, continuing to laugh.

Nicole tried not to smile, but failed.

“Don’t worry about what turns me on, and give me a damn French fry.”

“Mmm, yeah. I want to see how it looks going into your mouth. That way, I can imagine how it’s going to look the first time your mouth goes around my dick.”

Nicole burst out laughing.

“Forget it! I’ll eat when I get home. My gosh, Trevor, I swear. You’re absolutely horrible.”

“Oh, come on. One French fry, please,” he begged.

“No way. I can’t believe you,” she said, laughing.

Trevor laughed again and popped a fry into his mouth. Nicole suddenly realized how he completely took her mind off of Ayden and cheered her up. Had he done that intentionally? She liked Trevor. She couldn’t help but smile at his crude comments. He said them so differently than Ayden. With him, every word sounded more like a joke than seduction. But if he was serious, would it affect her the same way as before when he mentioned her scent? She wasn’t sure she wanted to find out.

Chapter 15

Four days quickly flew by, and Trevor kept her so occupied she didn't have time to think of much. For the last two days, he woke her in the morning with the smell of breakfast cooking. The first day she thought she dreamed the smell, but once he showed up at her bed with bacon and eggs something inside of her softened toward him.

His humor and jokes took some getting used to, but she quickly found herself joking back with him. He'd go into a big story about, "Did you know..." and have her enthralled with his words, only to turn around at the end and tell her he was kidding. She stared at him, shocked, and then burst into laughter.

Ayden wasn't mentioned and not once, since that night, did Trevor receive a phone call from him in her presence. The aching pull in her chest still left her feeling empty, but having her other mate around seemed to ease the pain slightly.

Pressure on the bed caused Nicole to stir. She opened one eye and smiled.

"What, no breakfast this morning?"

"No, I need you to get dressed. We'll pick something up on the way."

Sitting up, confused, Nicole tried to think of whether they made plans she couldn't remember.

"Where are we going, again?"

"There's a pack meeting, and I can't leave you here."

"A pack meeting? You mean, with Ayden?" The thought of seeing him again made her heart race. Could she do it? What would they say to each other?

“Yes, I’m afraid so. He doesn’t know I’m bringing you, but he’ll find out soon enough.”

“Trevor, I don’t know if I can.”

He softly kissed her forehead.

“I’ll be there. You have nothing to worry about. If things get too out of hand, we’ll leave. All you have to do is say the words, and we’re gone.”

Nodding, she brushed her teeth and walked to her closet to grab some clothes. When she noticed he still sat on the bed, she didn’t even attempt to leave the room. For the first time, she wanted to walk over and kiss him and touch him. The irresistible urge pulled at her until she took a step toward him.

“Trevor, why do you do this, stay with me, I mean?”

He laughed, standing. “Because, that’s what mates do.”

“Ayden didn’t.” The truth cut into her deeply, but she refused to look away from him.

“No, he didn’t. That alone tells me that he truly believes you are better off without him. My best friend isn’t one to run from responsibilities, Nicole. This isn’t like him at all. I’ve known him long enough to promise, he’s not doing it to hurt you.”

“But it does physically hurt. It’s more than missing someone or losing a loved one. It hurts like a raw wound. Every day the aching gets worse.”

“That’s what I’ve heard. I don’t like to see you go through pain. If you’ll allow me, I’d like to ask Ayden again to find a way to remove the mark. It’s probably impossible, but I think it would be best until he decides what he truly wants.”

“I think it might be best, too. Trevor,” Nicole walked until she stood directly in front of him, “would you kiss me again? Just a kiss.”

His lips lowered to hers while his fingers weaved through her hair. At his taste, Nicole wrapped her arms around his upper waist, desperately gripping his back. They both moaned into each other’s mouth. Her body screamed for more. The pain vanished completely

from her as Trevor deepened the kiss.

The sound of his phone echoed throughout the room, separating them.

“Well that didn’t take long. Get dressed. We’ll head out when you’re done.”

Nicole tried to catch her breath as he walked out of the room. The sound of his voice disappeared the moment the front door closed. Dressing as fast as she could, Nicole met him outside.

“Here, you drive. I’m not really hungry so don’t worry about stopping anywhere. Let’s just get this over with.”

Trevor nodded, taking the keys. They got in and Nicole drifted to her thoughts while he began to leave Corpus. She didn’t even care where they were going. The kiss they shared left her body desperately wanting to be touched. Not to mention, their separation brought the pain back.

Half an hour flew by and it wasn’t until the car pulled down a dirt road that she began to notice her surroundings. Trees, that’s all she could see. Trees and endless land.

“Where are we?”

“Sandia, at Ayden’s ranch. Some other people will be here, so if you don’t want to attend the meeting, that’s fine. But just so you know, your mate is Alpha, which means you have the right to be present if you want to.”

“I’m not sure. How long do you think it will take?”

“Well, they usually last around half an hour or so. The reports vary. But they’ve been known to last hours.”

“I think maybe I’ll go in.”

“Good.”

A large house came into view, and Nicole had to keep herself from dropping her jaw in shock. Four cars sat next to Ayden’s truck, and she fought for the courage to face everyone.

Trevor pulled in, and she quietly followed him to the door. The moment she walked in, the laughter died. Ayden stood from the

couch, his face full of what looked like pain.

“What’s she doing here?” he asked softly.

“Ayden, she’s your mate. She has the right to attend the meetings. Plus, you ordered me not to leave her alone.”

So many things went through Nicole’s head, but she couldn’t say anything. A hand grabbed hers and Nicole followed Trevor to the couch across from him to sit down.

He looked different. Clearly, he hadn’t shaved in days. The clothing he wore looked wrinkled as if he slept in them.

“I...” Ayden shook his head. She watched him run his fingers through his hair and look back towards her and his best friend. “You shouldn’t have brought her here.”

Trevor wrapped his arm around her shoulders, pulling her close to him.

“She’s my mate, too, Ayden, even if you won’t allow me to mark her. Did it ever occur to you that *I* didn’t feel safe not knowing how she was doing? Without the mark, we don’t share the connection the two of you do. I’m going to ask you this again. Take it off. You wanted me to have her, to take care of her. Let me. I can’t without the mark, and you know it.”

“You know I can’t do that.” Ayden turned to Nicole. “I can’t, I’m sorry.”

“You can’t or you won’t?” Nicole glared at him, angry that he would let her go through pain.

“I won’t.”

Tears of rage made it almost impossible for her to see.

“Do you know what I’m going through? You blame yourself for Michael. It’s why you left me, isn’t it?”

“Nicole, you don’t understand. Between Michael and my sister, I just can’t end up hurting you, too.”

“You already have, you just don’t know it. The physical pain you’ve brought me by marking and leaving me, I can learn to live with. But the hurt you’ve caused for not just me, but for my other

mate, that, I think hurts the worst. You've set us up for failure. We'll never fully be able to connect without the mark. At least give him your permission to mark me, too."

"No," Ayden said angrily.

Nicole jumped to her feet.

"Why not? Just take off the mark or let him mark me. You can't have me to yourself when you don't even want me."

"I can't do that. I can't let him claim you when my body and mind tell me you're supposed to be with me."

An aggravated scream came from Nicole's mouth.

"Then be with us, damn it! Grow up, Ayden. This isn't just about you!"

He got quiet and stared at her. She looked around, noticing the four other men staring at them. Heat rushed to her face as the embarrassment of what she just did registered. Trevor's hand gently pulled her to sit down. The moment she became seated a black kitten jumped in her lap. Her eyes looked up, but Ayden's dark eyes quickly looked away.

"Go ahead and get on with pack business, Ayden. I want to take Nicole home. You're right. I should have never brought her here. She doesn't deserve this."

Nicole listened numbly while he addressed a man, another cop, named Stephen, about a woman he was taking care of. Things would never be how she wanted them with Trevor if Ayden didn't let go or join them.

Fingertips traced over her palm while she stroked the kitten curled in her lap. Between her thoughts and controlling the pain, she hardly noticed what happened around her. Voices began to argue and still she didn't give it attention. It wasn't until Trevor spoke that she came to.

"No, I don't have anything to report. Can we leave now? You all have been arguing for the last two hours, and Nicole hasn't eaten yet this morning. I'm sure she's hungry."

“You didn’t feed her or make her eat something?” Ayden asked, shocked.

“He tried, but the moment he mentioned your name I lost my appetite. So, are we allowed to leave or not? I want him to help me start looking for a new place. I figure, since we’re mates, then we should maybe start searching for a house. What do you think?” She turned to Trevor. “Would you like to find a house and live with me? Having you around, it feels right. I’m ready now.”

He smiled, cupping her cheek.

“I think that’s the best thing I’ve heard all day. I’m ready, too.”

“A house for what? You both aren’t thinking about starting a family, are you? I mean, you just met. You can’t tell me you’re ready to jump into the whole shebang already. A house is such a big step.”

“Not really,” Nicole said quietly. “Funny thing, Ayden, is that with Trevor, I know from the bottom of my heart he’s never going to leave me. The trust I have for him runs deeper than I ever thought possible for ‘just meeting,’ as you put it.” She looked down, tracing her fingers down the black fur. “Besides, what we do is, truthfully, none of your business. If you’re not going to play the part of mate, then you don’t deserve to know what we do. Come on, Trevor. We have things to take care of.”

They both stood and headed for the door. Nicole cuddled the kitten into her chest.

“Hello, you adorable, little thing. You want to come home with me?”

“Now, wait one minute. You can’t take my cat. I found her, she’s mine.”

She turned looking at him. “What’s her name?”

Ayden opened his mouth, but closed it almost just as quickly. “Well, I haven’t actually named her yet.”

“Well, I have. Her name is Courage. She jumped on my lap even though we were fighting. I think she prefers me. Too bad her previous owner doesn’t. Come on, Courage. Let’s go home.”

“But...she’s mine.”

“Not anymore.” Nicole walked out the door, rushing to the car. If the cat was the only thing she’d have to remember him by, then damn it, the kitten would stay with her.

Trevor walked to the car while Ayden stared at her from the door. She prayed he’d find peace. As for her, she’d run out of everything she could think of to convince him. Placing the kitten on her lap, she prayed they’d reach a solution soon.

Chapter 16

Nicole and Trevor discussed locations to move to over fast food on their way back to the apartment. Both decided it might be best just to contact a real estate agent to find what they were looking for.

Lying down on her bed, she stared up at the ceiling. The feel of Trevor joining her made her turn in his direction.

“I really embarrassed myself at the meeting, didn’t I?”

“He needed to hear it, Nicole. I think you even hit something inside that thick head of his. Did you see the way he reacted when we were leaving? If I know my best friend at all, I’m betting he’ll be back by tonight. I still can’t believe you stole his cat. What’s the story behind that?”

“Just a conversation we once had about him getting a cat and me having the chance to name it.” She focused more on his previous statement. “Do you really think he’ll be back?”

Trevor’s fingers pushed the hair from of her face.

“I don’t bet unless I know I’ll win. How do you feel about him returning?”

She shrugged her shoulders.

“You know I love him. If I knew he definitely wouldn’t leave again, I’d be happy for him to join us. But if he can’t promise, I think I’d rather it just be us. I won’t tolerate a man who can’t commit.”

“I couldn’t agree more.” Trevor pulled her body closer to his. “I’m not sure if you’re interested or not, but I think I know a for sure way to make what we both want happen.”

Nicole rose to her elbow and looked down at him.

“What do you have in mind?”

“Well, Ayden says he’s okay with the two of us and it doesn’t bother him that we’re together. I say let’s test the theory. Let’s see how much of the future he can stomach. He’ll either come back or come to realize he truly can’t take it.”

Just thinking Ayden would give up knotted her stomach. “Kiss me, Trevor. I don’t want to hear anymore.”

Nicole pulled her shirt over her head and pulled off her pants. “Just make the thoughts stop. What happens, happens. If he comes back, then great. If not, it’ll hurt, but I’ll have you.”

Weight pushed her down as Trevor’s body settled over hers. His lips pressed into hers, immediately bringing her body to life. The taste of his tongue caressing hers made the outside world disappear. All she knew in that moment was her mate.

He lifted and tore the small piece of fabric resting between her breasts. Slowly, he separated the material of her bra, exposing the generous mounds. The feel of becoming unrestrained while he took in her appearance made her nipples tighten painfully.

“You are so breathtakingly beautiful.”

He lowered, sucking the hard nub into his mouth. Nicole moaned and slid her fingers into his blond hair. Switching to her other breast, he took his time sucking and gently biting her nipple between his teeth.

Trevor removed his clothing and she couldn’t help but stare in fascination. Defined muscle covered his lean body. She sat up, tracing her tongue along the indentions of his six pack. He immediately lifted her to her knees.

“I’ve waited too long to taste you. I don’t think I can wait anymore. You’re scent is phenomenal.”

He tore one side of her panties with a quick jerk. The feel of her body slightly moving from the pressure made wetness seep from her pussy.

“This is what you like, isn’t it, Nicole? I could tell when I tore your bra just how much you enjoy having your clothes ripped. You

once asked me not to talk dirty to you, but I can't help but tell you exactly the way I feel and what I want to do to you."

"Tell me."

"I'm going to tear the rest of your panties off, and you're going to stay just like this. Then I'm going to lie down, put my head between your legs, and eat your pussy until you come all in my mouth. When I can't taste you anymore, I'm going to fuck your pussy with my fingers until you come again. That way I can taste you some more."

Nicole moaned as his fingers wrapped around the other side of her panties and he pulled, ripping them completely off. The bed shifted while he lay down and nestled his face between her thighs. The brush of his tongue along her slit caused her to cry out with pleasure.

Seeing Trevor's hard cock in perfect reach, Nicole leaned forward and wrapped her hand around the long length. He moaned and grasped the outside of her thighs.

Lowering herself, she brushed his tip across her lips. Pre-cum made him slide easily back and forth. She licked it off and moaned at his taste. Using her tongue, she circled around his width, tasting every part of him she could.

Fingertips pressed tighter into her thighs while Trevor buried his tongue deep inside of her pussy. Nicole began to rock her hips, feeling her clit run across his chin with each movement.

Not being able to take it anymore, she took his length deeply into her mouth. The small taste of his pre-release drove her faster. She wanted more. She wanted him to fill her mouth with his flavor.

"Fuck, Nicole, slow down. This wasn't part of my plan."

Stroking his cock to meet her mouth, she applied more suction. He groaned loudly and began sucking on her clit. Spasms immediately took over her body, but she didn't stop. She moaned her way through them, never removing him from her lips.

His hands grasped her hips, pulling her farther down on his face. His tongue dove inside of her, licking around in circles and probing deeply.

Trevor's width swelled in her palm, and she applied a little more pressure. Hot cum shot into her mouth, intoxicating her. She drank in everything he offered, just as he did to her.

* * * *

Trevor sucked in air while he lifted Nicole to lie next to him. Looking into her eyes, he felt the need to kiss her, to hold her, but mostly to taste her again. He'd never experience anything like what they just shared.

"You know we're not done, right? We're just getting started. Now that I have you, nothing is going to make me let you go." He moved his fingers down to her wet pussy tracing along the folds.

"Tell me how bad you want me to fuck you with my fingers, Nicole." Trevor slid two of his fingers deep. She moaned and gripped his shoulders. He began to penetrate them into her so fast, a scream broke out with her orgasm.

"I don't think you showed me how bad you want it yet. One orgasm is not enough," he said, licking his fingers and moaning at the taste. "No, you have more. Let's see how many more."

His fingers slid back into her tightness while plunged into her again, hitting the G-spot with every thrust. Nicole reached for him, but he held her off. He wasn't ready to fuck her yet. He couldn't let her go through anymore pain, and if Ayden was going to come back, this was going to have to go on until something happened that he wouldn't tolerate. But what would that be?

Nicole writhed on the bed. Trevor used his other hand to play with her clit. The hoarse moans eased their way out of her throat. He moved down at the perfect time and captured her release the moment she convulsed with spasms.

With the tie that Ayden had to Trevor, and, with Nicole being mated to him, he knew without a doubt Ayden tasted Nicole just as much as he did. The thought made him want to smile. The sudden

realization of what it would take to bring Ayden storming through the door made him laugh.

* * * *

Nicole lay there fighting for air. She couldn't breathe past all the heavy moaning she'd been doing. Her throat felt dry and hoarse, but she knew the perfect thing to soothe it.

"How about we try for one more time?" Trevor said, smiling up at her as she rose on her elbows.

"I have a better idea," Nicole said, moving toward him. "Get up there and lay down, I need a break."

Trevor complied and rose to the pillows. Flicking her tongue over his hard nipple, she watched him close his eyes, groaning. Gently, Nicole bit the hard nub, sucking it into her mouth. With her hand, she began to stroke his cock. Slowly, she nibbled her way down until she was placing him back into her mouth. With slow strokes of her hand, she met her lips while she worked her way down.

The more Trevor moaned the faster Nicole's movements became. The need to taste him again only drove her to go faster. All Nicole felt was air until her back connected with the bed. She looked up at Trevor, feeling her eyes go wide.

"It's time."

Thickness eased deep into her while Trevor buried his length to the base of his cock. She wrapped her arms around his neck while he began to kiss her passionately.

With each thrust, he became more demanding, kissing her with more emotion and moving into her harder. Her nails dug into his back, driving him on.

* * * *

Trevor gathered both of Nicole's legs and placed them on his

shoulders. His cock plunged into her again, deeper this time. His fingers gripped her headboard as he brought himself down for another powerful thrust.

“Oh, fuck, right there,” Nicole moaned against his ear. He smiled and knew it was almost time. He began to pound into her while her pussy tightened around his cock.

Closing his eyes and lowering himself, he prayed Ayden wouldn't kill him for this. Trevor's teeth sank into Nicole's shoulder, the one Ayden hadn't marked. Blood coated the inside of his mouth, so rich with Ayden's bond for Nicole that he felt the tie electrically merge with his. Currents rippled through his insides at the intense joining. Now, they were three. The pure power overwhelmed him.

Nicole's moan vibrated against his teeth. He pulled his cock out just in time to shoot across Nicole's stomach. Then his phone rang.

Chapter 17

Nicole reached for Trevor's phone on the bedside table. The thought of them affecting Ayden at all made her excited. Had they succeeded? He quickly took it away from her before she could open the damn thing.

"We can't answer it. He's going to be pissed. We need to get him here, and the only way to do that is to ignore his calls. Nicole, I just marked you," Trevor said uneasily. "Ayden is going to think I've either, one, betrayed him, or two, challenged him. We have to let him believe both possibilities if we want him to get angry enough to show up."

"You're right. So, what now?"

"Now we get cleaned up, rest, and start all over again. Are you up for it?" Trevor asked, smiling at her.

"Absolutely."

* * * *

Ayden could only see red as he stared at the vehicles passing him from the shoulder of the busy highway. Rage and betrayal like he never felt before consumed his mind, his body, every part of Ayden that made him the person he was.

The moment Nicole's scent filled the interior of his truck, he had to pull over. Confused by the thoughts rushing into his head, Ayden couldn't concentrate enough to drive. After Nicole's heated speech, he was on his way to tell them he wanted to come home, how sorry he felt for leaving in the first place. Her taking his kitten felt equivalent

to her taking their child. As stupid as it sounded to him, he'd spent the last few days associating it with her memory. It broke his heart to have the only piece of her he held tight taken away.

When pleasure and love swept every inch of his body, he knew they were Trevor's feelings. The conflicting emotions tore at him again until he thought he was going to scream out in agony. If he wouldn't have left and handed her over, this would be what he'd be feeling. Nicole was his, but his best friend was also a part of him.

Over and over, Ayden felt and tasted Nicole's climax, which made Trevor more and more possessive over her. Trevor and Ayden were a lot more alike than he realized. Of course, they had never been in love or mated with the same person before. Ayden knew Trevor wouldn't give Nicole up any more than he was willing to.

Electrical currents and the most uncontrollable rage shot through him the moment Trevor's teeth sank into her flesh. For some reason, he knew it would happen. The possessiveness told him it was what he himself would do in the same situation, what he *had* done. So why did he feel so angry?

He let the question circulate around his brain and push its way through every lie that he continued to tell himself. Could he let her go, really let her go and never see her again? Leave her to be with Trevor forever? A man who had betrayed not only his best friend, but his alpha?

Ayden growled, slamming his fist into the stereo of his truck. It caved under his strength.

"She's mine, not his. Mine!"

* * * *

Nicole looked at the clock. It was close to three. Body aches covered her from head to toe. She rolled back over and looked at Trevor's sweaty body, which was sprawled out on the bed in the same position she had left him in.

“I don’t think I’m going to have to worry about Ayden. You’re going to kill me before he gets here to do the job himself,” Trevor said with his deep, hoarse voice.

Both of their voices were almost gone with the amount of moans and screams they’d been doing. Nicole wasn’t sure how much longer this could go on before she, herself, ended up useless.

“Why do you think Ayden’s going to kill you? He has no right to get angry. He’s the one who left.”

“Yes he did, but you heard how adamant he was about me not marking you. That is the biggest no-no a werewolf can commit. It’s basically like I came in and stole his wife.”

“That doesn’t make sense. He gave his,” Nicole put her fingers up to resemble quotation marks, “‘wife’ away, so to speak, so why should it matter?”

“It’s complicated.” Trevor grabbed his boxers off the floor and slid them on. “It’s just not to be done with any man’s mate. With Ayden being alpha, it only makes things worse. It’s like, not only am I stealing you, I’m challenging his authority. More than likely a few blows will be exchanged, I’ll cower down, and then, maybe we can get a few words in before he either storms out or stays.”

“A few blows?” Nicole stood, grabbing and putting on her blue silk robe.

“Well, that’s if I’m lucky. My luck, he’ll try to kill me, but I’m hoping that isn’t the case.”

“Oh, it’s the case all right,” Ayden said, practically flying through the window. Nicole looked into his glowing eyes and froze.

Trevor smiled, and Nicole wanted to wipe that smile off his face. This wasn’t the time for jokes or provocation. They needed to focus on why they brought him here and try to explain the situation.

“Is it? So, you’re going to kill me, and, what, leave Nicole alone again?” Trevor asked, taking a step toward Ayden.

“No, she’s mine. She’s coming with me. I trusted you, and you’re trying to take her away from me!”

“You can’t take something away that’s been given free and clear.”

Ayden began to shake with rage. Nicole ran to him. She needed to explain and calm him before this plan exploded in all their faces.

“Ayden,” she said soothingly. His glowing eyes didn’t break from Trevor. “Ayden!” she yelled, finally drawing his attention. “We only did this to bring you back. Trevor and I don’t want to lose you. We want you here with us, as a couple. Just the three of us. Do you know how lost we are without you? He’s your best friend. I’m both of your mates. Trevor and I can’t do this alone.”

Confused, Ayden shook his head. The glow in his eyes dimmed from a golden color to a darker brown.

“No, I felt what he felt. He thinks of you as his.”

Trevor took another step forward.

“No shit. Think about it, Ayden. If we were all three together, wouldn’t I think like that? You gave her to me and I’m her mate. She’s part mine, too, so of course I’m going to feel like that.”

Nicole pushed her body against his.

“Stay with us, Ayden. Let us all three together be the perfect couple. Where one of us leaves off, the other can pick up. No one’s perfect, but all of us together, we could be close. Think about it.” Nicole ran her hand down his hard chest.

The quivering beneath her finger told her he still felt affected by her touch.

“Me, you, and Trevor.” Nicole stepped closer, wrapping her arms around him. He moaned at her hard nipples pushing through the silk against his stomach.

“I was on my way here before all this happened to tell you both I’m sorry. Without either of you I’m just as lost. I’ve been stupid. A complete ass. Are you sure this is what you both want? I know I don’t deserve it, but will you both take back? I promise I’ll never leave again.”

“Yes,” both she and Trevor said at the same precise moment.

After a long pause, Ayden nodded.

“All right,” he said, pulling Nicole into a searing kiss.

Chapter 18

The heat infested Nicole from head to toe as Ayden pulled her up to straddle his hips. They fell to the bed in a tangle of greedily clutching limbs. Running her fingers over him frantically, she tried touching every part of him imaginable.

“Trevor, hold her arms over her head,” Ayden said, easing them from around his neck. “Baby, slow down. Fucking is good, but there’s so much more you need to see. You need to be shown how a woman should really be treated. I’ve wasted too much time rushing things, but not anymore. Let Trevor and I make love to you the way you were meant to be made love to.”

Nicole felt her arms lifted, but that didn’t stop her from connecting with Ayden’s mouth again. She needed to taste him, couldn’t get enough of the addicting flavor she thought she would never taste again. He was back and this time for good. A part of her almost couldn’t believe it. Sure, he needed help getting over what happened with Michael, but between her and Trevor, they could make sure he accomplished that. Together they’d try to erase every pain he ever felt.

Hot breath traveled down her throat while Ayden made his way to her breasts. The leisurely pace he’d settled upon while he ran his tongue across the surface of her skin caused the tip of her nails to embed in Trevor’s hand. The mischievous smile he flashed down at her told her one thing. They’d only just begun.

* * * *

Trevor looked into Nicole's heavy-lidded eyes while Ayden took his time at her breasts. The pink settling on her cheeks made her face glow with beauty. She was meant to look this way. If he could, he'd keep her in the moment for all time. Lowering himself, he pressed his lips against hers, teasing her tongue in slow, soft stokes.

Holding her hands firmly, he could feel her starting to push slightly against his restraint.

"Don't worry, honey. We're going to take real good care of you. There's no need to rush things. Close your eyes and feel us. The need to hurry will be there, but know you don't have to submit. If you wait, I promise, the pleasure we'll give you will not even be comparable to the other times."

Barely brushing her skin, he placed kisses along her face and over her eyes, causing them to close. He slowed the contact enough to see whether she'd listened to him about feeling. With her eyes still shut, he went back to kissing her face and neck. The scent of her skin made his mouth water. Running his tongue up her throat, he let her taste wash over him.

The swell of emotion Trevor felt settling into his chest could have been a combination of all three of them, but the feeling of love couldn't be denied. They all seemed to be experiencing it, and, for the first time, the legends and hype on the reasons for finding a mate became clear.

The last thing he would have ever bet on would have been a relationship involving his best friend and his best friend's mate. But somehow, something looked down upon him and offered a gift he'd never be able to repay. The only way he could think to show gratitude would be to treasure it always. And he would.

Nicole and Ayden would always come first, never do without, and forever hold his heart.

* * * *

Nicole's scent engulfed Ayden. He couldn't help but feel in heaven while he began to ease her thighs apart. Running the tip of his tongue against her wet slit, he collected all the wetness he'd made while taking his time on her breasts. The rewards were well worth the suffering his body continued to go through. But for Nicole, to show her how much she truly was worth, he'd suffer endlessly. But she never would. Not another day would he let her feel the pain he'd put her through, and he planned on spending the rest of his life making it up to her.

He felt drunk with her flavor as he continued to take her in. She was his and Trevor's forever. There wasn't any turning back now. He'd been stupid to leave. What he planned to accomplish still wouldn't come to him, but the more he thought about it, he knew Trevor and Nicole would have never bonded as they did if he hadn't left. Fate, destiny, coincidence, or something altogether more powerful than he could understand, he wasn't sure. All he knew was that everything worked out perfectly.

The gripping of Nicole's insides as he slowly eased his fingers inside of her caused her to moan into Trevor's mouth. Her clit pulsed and he quickly flicked it with his tongue, running it in a figure eight over his slowly thrusting fingers and her clit.

"That's right, baby. Let go." Ayden pushed his tongue against his fingers. He couldn't help but hold in his smile. With Trevor here to keep her distracted. He could do this all day without her stopping him. And he planned to do just that, every day, for the rest of their lives.

* * * *

Nicole couldn't believe what she'd been missing. Trevor had been right. When she slowed her actions, everything intensified so much more than she ever could have imagined. But now that she let them take their time, she needed more, needed both of them to take over her body.

“Ayden, make love to me.”

She picked up on his hesitancy as he slowed his movements. But after endless moments she felt him raise his head.

“Trevor, let’s get her on all fours. It’ll be easier that way.” He took one last lick of her pussy before she felt the bed adjust under his weight.

A sob nearly broke from her mouth at the relief she felt. Gently, Ayden eased into her from behind. His thick length filled her to the core, causing her to cry out against Trevor’s cock, which began sliding into her mouth.

Tingling covered every inch of her limbs while she felt something she’d never experienced before. A surging of energy rushed through her, taking over her body. She knew in that moment the meaning behind the word mate. The reason Ayden and she never experienced being whole was because they truly weren’t. They didn’t have Trevor to complete them.

This was the way it was meant to be. With both of them touching her, the bond they’d formed grew until she knew deep inside herself things would never be the same. No longer did she need more. She had everything she’d ever dreamed with both of them by her side.

When Nicole originally set out to find the woman who rested deep inside of her, she never expected to find such obsession or a craving that went beyond the bounds of passion. Was this what true love was all about, pleasure, obsession, a need so intense to be consumed by the ones an individual loved?

She wasn’t sure. All she knew was that it worked perfectly for her. Ayden and Trevor could stalk her anytime, as long as at the end of the day they both came home and made it worth her while.

THE END

<http://jennifersalaiz.com/>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I live in a small Texas town along the Gulf of Mexico. Family is everything to me. My mother always encouraged my reading growing up. Looking back, my earliest memories revolve around my grandmother, who was always glued to a book. Her passion for mystery is probably the reason I'm so comfortable around a police scanner. Hers was on twenty-four hours a day.

When I'm not writing, cooking, or brainstorming new ideas, you'll see me with a book in my hand. Briefly, before I started writing, I was devouring a romance novel every day. For some reason, I couldn't get enough. My husband asked me the question that ultimately changed my life forever. "Why don't you try writing a book?"

At first, I laughed. Write a book? Who, me? Never written a story in my life, I was intimidated. To satisfy my husband and to sate the curiosity that began to fester inside of me, I did. My first story was my husband's favorite. There was something that ultimately bothered me about it, though. I couldn't write a love scene to save my life. Not one that would fit inside of a "romance" book, anyway. It was way too graphic.

After doing research I came across the erotica genre and knew this is where I belonged. Details are important and with my books, the more details during their "coupling," the better.

Also by Jennifer Salaiz

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