



THE SENTINELS

NIGHT
MOVES

DESIREE HOLT

A Total-E-Bound Publication



www.total-e-bound.com

Night Moves

ISBN # 978-1-907010-33-0

©Copyright Desiree Holt 2009

Cover Art by Natalie Winters ©Copyright June 2009

Edited by Michele Paulin

Total-E-Bound Publishing

This is a work of fiction. All characters, places and events are from the author's imagination and should not be confused with fact. Any resemblance to persons, living or dead, events or places is purely coincidental.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any material form, whether by printing, photocopying, scanning or otherwise without the written permission of the publisher, Total-E-Bound Publishing.

Applications should be addressed in the first instance, in writing, to Total-E-Bound Publishing. Unauthorised or restricted acts in relation to this publication may result in civil proceedings and/or criminal prosecution.

The author and illustrator have asserted their respective rights under the Copyright Designs and Patents Acts 1988 (as amended) to be identified as the author of this book and illustrator of the artwork.

Published in 2009 by Total-E-Bound Publishing 1 The Corner, Faldingworth Road, Spidlington, Market Rasen, Lincolnshire, LN8 2DE, UK.

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

The Sentinels

NIGHT MOVES

Desiree Holt

Dedication

To Wolfie, the ultimate alpha male

Chapter One

Regan Matthews sat in her car in the parking lot and stared at the side of the stone building. She couldn't sit here all day. A glance at her watch told her she'd already been here for fifteen minutes and hadn't even been able to unbuckle her seatbelt. How ridiculous was this? She was a lawyer – and a damn good one – with a level head and a firm grip on reality. And yet here she sat, unable to complete a simple task.

Maybe the trouble was finally admitting she had a real problem she couldn't solve by herself. Regan *always* took care of things herself. An only child whose parents had both passed away, she'd learned to depend on herself long ago. Never show weakness. Even now, she wanted to convince herself this entire thing was a hoax that she could make go away by ignoring it. But the hang-up calls every night unsettled her more than she wanted to admit. The emails made her nervous, wondering who would send threatening messages to her personal email address.

She'd debated with herself through the entire work day as she prepared motions to be heard in court, reviewed evidence and interviewed witnesses. She was focused enough to shut everything away when she was working, but by evening, the problem had popped up again. Just a simple message on her windshield, but it had been enough to shake her. Especially since it had been left in a secure garage.

You're dead, bitch. You can't run away from me now.

It had finally convinced her this was more than a prank and made her admit the unthinkable. She was scared.

Damn!

Standing in the garage, looking at the message, she'd realised only a fool would ignore what was an escalating situation. Okay, so now it might be time to talk to someone. Not the police. She didn't trust them any more than she trusted anyone else. As a high profile assistant prosecutor, she'd seen her share of bad cops and had her run-ins with them. Who was to say one of them wasn't doing this?

She pulled out the business card that her friend, Linda Gillette, had given her at lunch after Regan had dumped the problem on her. She'd had to talk to someone, just to make sure she wasn't crazy. When Linda had run from an abusive and very wealthy husband, she'd hired an agency to protect her, shield her, and get enough on her husband to make him go away quietly. The Sentinels, it was called.

"They're terrific," Linda had told her. "There are eight partners, including one woman, and they just do...incredible things."

"What, you mean like magic tricks?" Regan snorted. "Give me a break. One agency's the same as all the others."

"Not them," Linda insisted.

"Well, I'm glad they helped you, but I hardly think I'll ever need their services. I'm not hiding from a rat like Calvin Gillette." She laughed. "I don't even have a *relationship*, for God's sake."

"Something you need to remedy as soon as possible, my friend. You're going to burn yourself out." Linda pulled a business card from her wallet and thrust it at Regan. "Take this. Someone's waging a campaign against you. You've put a lot of crazies away, Regan. You never know when one of them will decide it's time for a little payback."

Now Regan stared at the card, and before she could change her mind, punched the numbers into her cell phone. Maybe no one would be there this late, and she could go home and forget she was being a nervous old maid.

But the man who took her call identified himself as Brian Spencer, assured her they kept late hours and it was fine for her to come right over. His voice was deep and warm like chocolate syrup, only with a slightly rough quality to it. For some reason, the sound of it reminded her of the wolf head logo on the business card, and a tiny shiver danced on her skin.

She looked at her watch again. Five more minutes had passed. *Well, Regan, you won't get anywhere just sitting in the car. Just go talk to him. If he thinks it's nothing, all you've lost is an hour or so. And you'll have reinforced your own thoughts.*

A stalker. How ridiculous. Something she absolutely did *not* need.

She pulled down the sun visor and checked herself in the small, lighted mirror. Her thick blonde hair, which she usually wore pulled back with a clip, was still in place even after

a harrowing day. Her emerald-green eyes looked tired, missing their usually sparkle, and her pale skin looked even paler. She took a minute to refresh the minimal amount of makeup she wore. The last thing she wanted when she walked in was to look like a basket case. Smoothing her navy silk blouse and skirt, she climbed out of her SUV.

Automatically, she scanned the parking lot for any other presence, a habit she'd developed the last few days. A shadow moved at a distant corner, and she blinked her eyes. Surely that wasn't a wolf. No, her eyes were playing tricks on her because she'd just looked at the business card. When she looked again, whatever it was had disappeared. Shaking her head at her own foolishness, she locked her car and strode to the entrance of the small building. Through a glass door, she saw a deserted lobby, no one in sight.

Well, it is almost eight o'clock.

She pulled on the door, but it was obviously locked. What the hell?

"Miss Matthews?"

She looked around. The voice was coming from a speaker just above the door to the right.

"Yes. I can't seem to get the door open."

"I'll be right there."

Regan checked her surge of impatience and watched as a tall, dark-haired man strode into the lobby from the left. Even through the glass, there was something electric about his presence.

Stop it, you idiot. You're not here for a date.

A buzzer sounded, and seconds later, he pulled the door open and waved her inside.

"Brian Spencer." He held out his hand.

The moment they connected, a bolt of pure lust shot through her. She was struck speechless. Other men had certainly appealed to her, and she'd had her share of lovers, but nothing—*absolutely nothing*—had ever elicited such a powerful reaction from her. An electric charge seemed to zap the air. She looked at the man and saw a flash of surprise whisk across his face. Then it was gone.

She was tempted to call the whole thing off and run to the safety of the car. Oh, wait. Her car was no longer safe. But neither was this man. She drew in a breath and pulled herself together as best she could.

"Sorry about the door," he told her. "A lot of our clients have not so nice people dogging them so we built in some security safeguards."

"Not so nice people. Like Calvin Gillette.

"Seems like the smart thing to do. I'm Brian Spencer. Thanks for calling the agency."

She raked her eyes over him in a quick assessing gaze. Well over six feet, he had broad shoulders tapering to a narrow waist and hips and ending in long, long legs. His long-sleeved, black T-shirt and grey slacks fit him closely. His face was lean with a broad forehead and high cheekbones, amber eyes beneath sooty thick lashes and all of it framed by a thick mop of silken black hair that flowed almost to his shoulders.

This was the man Linda told her could handle any problems? Regan thought he looked like the kind who would make them. She couldn't help staring at him. There was something almost feral about him, and she wondered if she'd made the right choice. Then he spoke again, and the spell was broken.

"My office is upstairs," he told her in that same deep voice, leading her to a curved open stairway. "This way."

Although the lobby was empty of people, as they moved along the upper hallway Regan saw ribbons of light beneath closed doors. Another door was partially open, giving her a view of a massive electronics set-up. As they passed, a man in jeans and a rumpled T-shirt spotted them and rose to shut the door.

Brian's office was at the end of the hall and was a reflection of the man himself. A wide desk with a black granite top set on chrome legs was angled at one corner, a high-back ergonomic chair behind it. In front of it were two client chairs in ebony upholstered in black and white tweed. A black leather couch ran along one wall. A side extension of the desk held not just one but four computers, all with the Sentinel logo blinking on their screens.

He gestured towards one of the client chairs and sat down easily behind the desk, watching her. "All right, Miss Matthews, let's hear what your problem is and see if we can help with it. You mentioned on the phone that Linda Gillette had recommended us, so I'm going to assume you're familiar with our services."

She wet her lips nervously, once again wondering if this was such a great idea. She, who found most men either boring or abrasive, was imagining the kind of services she'd like from this man, and they had nothing to do with investigation or detecting.

"It's probably nothing," she began, trying to get herself on track. "And I'm not someone given to jumping at every little thing. I'm an assistant prosecutor with the homicide unit. Very little scares me."

Brian shook his head. "Almost every client who walks in here says something similar. If it was nothing, you wouldn't be sitting across from me. So tell me what's going on."

"All right." She uncrossed and re-crossed her legs, doing her best not to let her skirt ride up, especially when she saw his eyes drop to the exposed area of thigh, a faint flame flickering in them. "I seem to have picked up a stalker."

"A stalker." Those eyes seemed glued to her face, and with an unexpected jolt, her nipples hardened and moisture dampened her panties.

Holy shit, Regan! This is a business appointment. Your life might be in danger and the guy you want to hire is waking up your almost dead hormones?

"I think so. It started with hang-up calls at night. One then another, until now, it's every night. Then I got a couple of text messages on my cell, followed by three emails to my personal email address."

"So...someone who obviously knows you."

She shrugged. "A frightening thought. And now, he's taken to leaving messages under my windshield wipers." She pulled the most recent note from her purse and handed it to him. "This is why I decided to call you."

Brian studied the note. "*You're dead, bitch. You can't run away from me now,*" he read. "Seems pretty explicit to me. You were smart to call us. What else can you tell me?"

Regan shifted uncomfortably in the chair. "I think maybe...that is, on a couple of nights, I was sure I heard someone outside my house, but when I looked out the windows, I couldn't catch any movement. I turned on all the lights, so maybe if there was someone out there, it scared them away. And no one's broken into my house. At least, not so far."

"Anything else? Any actual attempts or just warnings?"

"The other night in the rain, I thought someone was trying to run me off the road, but it could have just been the wet pavement."

"That's always a good cover up," he pointed out. "Anything you've left out?"

She wrinkled her forehead, trying to think. "I don't know. I haven't exactly been keeping track."

"I would imagine being someone who handles high profile cases would put you in the line of fire a lot."

Regan leaned forward in her chair. "Listen, Mr. Spencer —"

"Brian," he interrupted. "We're big on informality here."

"All right. Listen, *Brian*. In my job, you get nutcases threatening you all the time so I tend to disregard most of it. And I'm usually quite good at taking care of myself."

"So what makes this one different?"

"Usually the perps I put away, or whose lives I make miserable, threaten, yell, scream, and then, if they're actually going to do something, they act on it. They don't play these kinds of game. They're actually pretty predictable."

Brian narrowed his gaze. "There are other agencies in the city. What made you choose The Sentinels?"

She brushed an imaginary piece of lint from her skirt. "Linda Gillette convinced me to at least let you look into it. And these threats are more plentiful and vicious than usual. After the first vent of rage, whoever it is usually goes away, but not this time."

"We aren't cheap," he warned her and quoted an hourly rate. "There's a retainer if you sign a contract with us, but we provide everything from bodyguard services to electronic snooping." He opened a drawer and took out a folder, sliding it across the desk. "Take a minute to look at this. If it suits you, please sign it, and we'll get started."

Regan glanced through it, but she'd already looked at the one Linda had signed. Scrawling her signature in the appropriate place, she pulled out her chequebook and wrote out a retainer cheque then handed both of them to the man across from her.

He raised one eyebrow at the speed of the transaction but silently signed his own name to the contract. "I'll make you a copy before we leave." He sat up straighter in his chair and pulled one of the keyboards onto his desk. "Start from the beginning. Every note. Every incident. Any little thing that comes to mind. I'll want to take a look at your house and check out your office as well."

"My house? My office?"

"Your car, too. Places where you're most vulnerable."

"But I have an alarm system at my house," she protested. "And on my car. And in my office, there are people around all the time."

"But these places are also vulnerable to bombs and other explosive devices. And a good sniper can pick you off through a window. Besides," he pointed out, "this could very well be someone you work with."

The thought had occurred to Regan, too, but she'd hated to think someone at her office had it in for her like this.

"Actually, a man I convicted a few years ago was just released. Mickey Walker. Rich and powerful and thought he could get away with murder. He made a lot of threats then. I...thought maybe this might be him."

"Did you ask the cops to check on him? They ought to be able to do that easily enough."

She snorted. "The cops are so overworked they don't know up from down. I checked with his parole officer, and a couple of the guys paid him a visit, but he's been out a while and nothing has happened. So..." She shrugged.

"So they wrote him off and left it at that," Brian finished.

Regan nodded. "I don't blame them. Anyway, it's a stretch. But he's the only one I can think of."

"You never know who else might be lurking around that doesn't even occur to you. Let's go over everything and see what we've got."

By the time, she'd finished answering all the questions, including a list of everyone who might have the slightest reason to do this, Regan was beginning to wonder how it had taken her so long to be frightened. Especially when she listed the people at her office who might be motivated to threaten her, out of anger or envy or something she couldn't even think of. For one crazy moment, she thought about asking Brian Spencer if she could just hide in his office until he caught whoever it was.

"Do you have your cell with you?" When she nodded, he said, "Let me see it. I hope you saved the messages."

She dug into her purse then handed the phone to him. "Not the first one, but when the second one showed up, I kept it just in case."

At the time, she'd still thought it was some stupid prank. Now she was glad she hadn't deleted it, also.

"What about the emails you got?"

"I'm sorry, but I deleted them. I just thought it was some idiot amusing himself by giving the prosecutor a hard time."

"Too bad. We might have been able to backtrack it. Okay, give me your best guess of anyone—and I mean *anyone*—at your office who might possibly have a reason for doing this. Other prosecutors who think you've screwed them over. Support staff who have a hard-on for you. Anyone. Let's get started."

He finished inputting information on his computer, saved the file, typed an email and hit the Send key then pushed the keyboard away. He picked up his phone and punched a button. To whoever answered, he said, "I'm off with the new client. I sent you an email with some instructions for you to hand out. I'll have my cell on if you need me." He replaced the phone and stood up. "Come on. I'll follow you to your house. I want to check out every inch of it, inside and out."

His hand touched her shoulder as he guided her out of his office, and again, she felt that snap of energy between them. She'd need all her wits about her to keep from making a fool of herself with the dark, sensual Brian Spencer.

* * * *

Walking Regan out of the building, Brian wondered if he had just made a very stupid mistake. The minute he'd opened the building door for her, his wolf gene had woken up and caused his blood to roar through his body.

Mine!

Shit. Just what he needed. Not that he hadn't waited a long time to find his mate. He just hadn't expected one in human form. It worked out fine for his brother, Luke, and his sister-in-law, Sierra. But successful human and shifter matings were very rare. Even when the pack had been at full strength and more accepting of outsiders, something like this was very uncommon. Now that they were reduced to such a small group, they all had to be exceptionally careful.

And what would she think if she knew he was half wolf? Could shift from human to wolf and back again? Would she run screaming into the night? Call the police? Shoot him?

But looking at her thick blonde hair with its wild, natural streaks and her eyes like glittering emeralds, her lush yet petite body, he knew he was doomed. Somehow, before tonight was over, and without frightening her away, he'd have her naked beneath him, his cock buried in her cunt, his body imprinted on hers.

Yeah, Brian, good luck to that.

Chapter Two

By the time Brian had prowled every corner of her house and checked every inch of her small yard, Regan was a jangle of nerves. The sexual energy sizzling between them was almost palpable. Although he kept his face implacable, she saw an answering light in his eyes that he quickly extinguished. She wondered if she wasn't in greater danger from her protector than her tormenter.

He'd told her to close all the drapes and blinds, but she couldn't help peeking between two of the slats on the sliding door verticals. She could barely see him, blending into the night the way he did. And once, she could have sworn she saw the wolf again.

"Ridiculous." She let the slats fall into place. "There are no wolves in the city of San Antonio."

Regan busied herself making a pot of coffee. When Brian let himself back inside, it was ready and she poured a mug for each of them.

"Well?" she asked, watching him over the rim of the mug. "Everything okay?"

"Not as okay as it should be." He set his mug down on the counter. "It hasn't rained in more than a week, and unless you have a habit of standing in your own beds of shrubbery there're some clear footprints that indicate someone has indeed been prowling. I'm going to take pictures of them."

"Someone was really here?" Her heart began to bang against her ribs.

"I'd say yes. And that's only what I can see in the dark. Tomorrow, while the office is doing a rundown on all the names you gave us, I'll do a more thorough check. I also want to make some modifications to your security system and install a new one in your car."

He had moved as he talked, and now, he was standing so close to her she was afraid to breathe. His masculine scent mixed with something that hinted of the outdoors and teased at her nose. Her nipples, which had softened, snapped back into hard points. She could feel moisture dripping onto the inside of her thighs. What the hell was happening with her? Regan Matthews *never ever* reacted to a man this way. Especially a stranger.

When he reached his hand out to put his mug on the counter, it brought him into full body contact with her. She felt the hot bulge of his erection through the fabric of his pants and her thin silk skirt. His eyes burned into hers, holding her gaze and making it impossible for her to look away. Her breathing hitched, and her heart rate sped up.

"I've never come on to a client," he told her, his lips a whisper away from hers. "But the minute you walked through the front door at the agency, all I could think about was stripping you naked and plunging myself inside of you."

Regan was so shocked she couldn't make herself form words. Maybe because his words echoed her own feelings. Invisible fingers of hot and cold raced over her body, making the entire surface of her skin tingle.

If I had any brains I'd slap his face and tell him to get out of my house.

Instead, she reached out with a shaking hand to set down her own mug and stared back at him. Her entire body throbbed, yet he'd hardly touched her.

His large, warm hands came to rest on her shoulders, and his head bent so their lips almost touched.

"I know this is crazy, not to mention unprofessional, and you have every right to kick me out of here. But if you don't, I'm going to fuck your brains out until neither of us can move. So which is it, Regan? Stay or go?"

She couldn't speak, merely lifting her head a fraction of an inch until their lips touched. The kiss exploded, his tongue tracing the line of her mouth, forcing her lips apart, sweeping inside to find her own small tongue and wrapping his around it, sucking it into his mouth. Her head reeled and pulses she didn't even know she had came to life. His hands found her breasts beneath the thin material of her blouse, squeezing and plumping them, his fingers pinching nipples now almost painfully swollen.

"I have to have you." His voice was harsh, thick with need as he lifted his mouth from hers. "Right here. Right now."

"Yes." She barely got the word out before he was stripping her clothes off, dropping them into a heap on the floor. Seconds more and he was out of his own clothing, pressing her against the kitchen wall and dropping to his knees in front of her. Lean fingers separated her thighs. He bent his head and swiped the length of her slit with his tongue. She shook with sensation, a mewling sound coming from the back of her throat.

Calloused thumbs pressed her labia open, and his tongue invaded her inner lips then circled the opening of her cunt with the tip. She shivered at his touch, her cream poured into his mouth, and her inner walls fluttered in response. Her fingers dug into his shoulders as she clutched them for balance, feeling the flex of hard muscle beneath his warm skin. Her head fell back, hitting the wall, but she couldn't have cared less. All she could focus on was that hot, wicked tongue doing clever things to her cunt. She rocked her hips forward, urging him to plunge his tongue inside her.

When he did, she couldn't restrain the tiny shudders that raced through her, pulling at her, drawing more liquid from her. Her hands tightened on his shoulders, fingers digging into his flesh, as one spasm built on another. When he bit down lightly on her clit, her whole body tried to clench, but Brian was relentless, not giving her a moment to catch her breath.

As each spasm died down, he lapped at her, probing her with his tongue and tormenting her clit until the convulsions raced through her again. She wanted to squeeze her legs together, to push herself over the final ledge into space, but his hands kept her thighs far apart and her cunt open to his marauding mouth.

When he released her and rose to his full height, his chin glistening with her cream, she wanted to scream at him to do it more. Again. Harder. He kissed her, thrusting his tongue, coated with her taste, inside her mouth. This time when he broke the kiss, he lifted her into his arms.

"Bedroom," he growled, his voice low and rough.

"Upstairs," she gasped. "First door."

He took the steps two at a time, holding her as if she weighed nothing, and pushed her bedroom door open with his foot. When he placed her on the bed and stood up, she got her first real glimpse of him naked. Her eyes flew wide open, and her throat was suddenly dry.

He was gorgeous, a towering mass of lean, hard muscles, his chest covered with a pelt of hair as dark as that on his head, stomach flat, thighs made of ropes of muscle beneath the skin. And a thick, swollen cock that made her gasp. It stood straight out from his body, the head a deep purple, pre-cum glistening at the slit, the heavy sac of his testicles resting against his thighs.

Oh, God! He was more magnificent than any man she'd ever seen. There was something so...animalistic about him. So basic. So primitive. She had to restrain herself from licking her lips.

"You are unbelievably gorgeous," he rasped, his eyes taking in every inch of her.

He knelt between her thighs, bending her legs and separating them so he had a full, unobstructed view of her cunt. One finger brushed the tip of her clit then drew a soft line down to the opening of her vagina before slipping inside. When he withdrew it wet with her juices, he leaned forward and painted her nipples, then licked them clean, sucking them one at a time into his mouth.

Brian seemed determined to put his mouth on every inch of her body. He kissed his way from the valley of her breasts down to her navel, swirling his tongue in the indentation, then following a line to her mound where his tongue brushed through her curls. Then he turned his attention to the inside of her thighs, trailing licks and kisses from crease to ankle on one leg and back up the other. He seemed to be dedicating himself to eliciting the most pleasure from her. And every place he touched quaked beneath the sensuous onslaught.

Regan couldn't help the delicious shivers that raced through her. She'd never thought of her ankles or the backs of her knees as erogenous zones, but under Brian's attention each place he touched sent darts of pleasure directly to her core. He wielded his mouth like an erotic weapon, attacking and retreating, her need rising with each feathery touch. She heard a low, keening sound and realised it was coming from her,

Trailing his tongue back up to her neck, Brian kissed the hollow at the base of her throat where she was sure her pulse was about to beat through the sensitive skin. When he moved his mouth and bit gently on the tender spot where her neck and shoulder met, she felt the trembling within her begin all over again.

"I haven't nearly finished tasting every inch of you," he told her, his voice thick with lust. "But if I'm not inside you in two seconds, I'll explode. I need to fuck you. Now."

He grabbed a condom he'd dropped onto her nightstand, ripped the foil open and sheathed himself. Pulling her legs over his shoulders, he took his cock in one hand, opened her lips with the fingers of the other, and with one strong push, seated himself completely inside her.

At first, she tried to pull away. Too big, her brain blared. Too wide. Too thick. As wet and slick as she was, her pussy still had to stretch almost beyond its limits to accommodate his size, and she flinched involuntarily.

"Shh, shh," he crooned. "It's all right. You can take it. Just hold still and let yourself adjust to it. God, Regan. You feel like heaven." He closed his eyes, and a soft growl rumbled up from his throat.

Regan took deep, slow breaths, focusing only on the incredible spikes of pleasure stabbing through her and the growing intensity of the pulse throbbing in her womb. In a moment, she felt her flesh give elastically and adjust to Brian's thick, hard penis. No other man had ever taken her with such power, such demand and hunger, and that alone stoked her response to him.

Little by little, she felt her inner muscles expanding to accommodate him, felt the spike of desire that jolted her, pushing away any sense of pain or discomfort. And then, miraculously, it was as if they'd been doing this forever. As if his cock was meant specifically for her cunt. A perfect fit. The realisation stunned and dazed her.

"Okay?" he asked after a minute.

She nodded, and he lifted her buttocks, sinking in even deeper.

Her entire body felt stretched beyond endurance, but she was well past the point of discomfort, spinning onto a plane where pinpoints of pleasure stabbed at her. Her blood thundered in her ears. He rolled his hips, thrusting in and out of her, pulling out until only the tip of the head was buried in the clasp of her pussy then driving back inside again.

She lost all track of herself, consumed only by the pleasure burning inside her and the feeling of his swollen cock.

"Pinch your nipples," he rasped, his breathing choppy. "Now. Do it, Regan."

As if her hands had a mind all their own, she reached for her nipples, took them between her fingers and pinched them hard. Thunderbolts shot to her womb, and the insistent pounding of her blood in her ears grew louder and louder.

Her orgasm didn't so much as roll through her as claw its way through her body. The walls of her pussy sucked at Brian's cock, pulling at it, and her hands clutched at his arms. Locking her ankles behind his neck, she gave herself over to the cataclysmic convulsions. Everything fell away except for the cock pounding into her and the sense that a giant fist had

picked her up and shaken her, tossing her into a whirling vortex. She couldn't tell where one orgasm ended and another began.

Finally, as she felt Brian gather himself, she fell over the edge screaming his name. He roared his release, bracing himself on his forearms and spurting into the thin latex shield. When the whirlwind blew itself out, he drew her legs down from his shoulders and eased them onto the mattress then lowered himself and rolled to his side, taking her with him. Still connected. Holding her close against him, the sweat on their bodies gluing them together.

Regan could feel their hearts thudding together, hear the sounds as they each drew in a great lungful of air, felt the slowing of their pulse rates.

"Did I hurt you?" His voice was low against her ear. "If so, I'm sorry. I just had such a great need to be inside you. I couldn't...couldn't wait."

"I'm okay." A little sore but the twinges were more than worth it.

Slowly, as if with great reluctance, he slid his cock from the clasp of her vagina, and rolled off the bed. She kept her eyes closed, enjoying the lassitude of the most incredible sex she'd ever had, and listened to him moving around in her bathroom. Disposing of the condom. Washing his hands. Whatever. Then he was back beside her, cradling her against the hard wall of his chest, one hand stroking lazily down her spine.

"I'm not going to insult either of us by apologising," he said in a lazy voice. "I don't know if you'll believe me when I tell you this isn't the way I usually begin a relationship with our clients. But there was something so strong between us the minute you walked into the office. I know it and you know it, so it would be stupid to deny it, right?"

Regan sighed. "I don't know what to say. I don't fall into bed with men an hour after I meet them, either," she said. "But you're right. Whatever this is, it's like a living thing gripping us."

He tilted her chin up and brushed his lips against hers. "This isn't the end, either, Regan. I haven't nearly begun to do all the things to you and with you that I want."

She looked up into his amber eyes, glowing with satisfaction. "And then what, Brian? Spectacular sex and thanks for the buggy ride."

He took a long time answering her. "No, I don't think so. Not at all. But first, we've got to catch whoever's after you. Then we can make plans." He pulled away from her and sat up.

"To that end, I'm going to check and make sure the house is secure. Maybe my truck in the driveway will deter whoever it is tonight, also. Then we're going to get a good night's sleep."

She raised her eyebrows. "You're spending the night with me?"

He grinned, a slow, lazy, grin. "The first of many. After all, how can I guard your body if I'm too far away from it?"

But at that moment the telephone rang, breaking the mood. Regan looked at Brian.

"Answer it," he told her. "It's late for someone to call."

"It could be something breaking on one of my cases," she told him and picked up the receiver.

"Hello? Hello? Who's there?"

There was silence on the other end then a whispered, "Bitch. You think you've got it all. Think again."

She stared at the receiver, now hearing only a dial tone. She looked up at Brian, her hand shaking, and repeated what the voice had said.

Brian's jaw clenched. "Tomorrow, we're also putting caller id on your phone, and setting a trace." He pulled her towards him. "Meanwhile, let's go to bed. I can chase the demons away for the rest of the night."

Chapter Three

Brian looked up as his brother, Luke, knocked lightly on the door frame.

"Aren't you the early bird?" Luke grinned. "I know you didn't sleep here last night." He dropped into one of the client chairs. "By the way, just out of curiosity, where *did* you sleep?"

"None of your business," Brian snapped. The urge to shift had been exceptionally powerful this morning, fuelled by his rage at Regan's stalker. The short run he'd been able to get in hadn't satisfied his body by half. "Just tell me the geek squad has been running the list of names I emailed everyone."

Luke nodded. "We're here to do your bidding, big brother. Care to give me a rundown."

Brian gave him a thumbnail overview of Regan's case, hitting just the high spots. "I'm in the process of writing a full preliminary report for everyone now. I want Stan out there today upgrading her security system. I've got a key for him to get in." He reached in his pocket and slid it across the desk. "I'm going to install the system in her car myself."

"Giving this one a lot of personal attention, are you?" One corner of Luke's mouth turned up in a half smile.

"I give every case my full attention," he growled.

"Uh huh. I might take you more seriously if you hadn't shown up in the same clothes you wore yesterday."

Damn!

He'd awoken early in the morning, the need to shift fierce inside him. Checking to make sure Regan was still in a deep sleep, he'd slipped downstairs and allowed himself the freedom of a short run. Then he'd been in such a hurry to get started this morning he'd just showered at Regan's and pulled on the same slacks and t-shirt. Trust his brother to notice.

"I want a bodyguard detail, too," he went on, as if Luke hadn't spoken. "Two-legged and four-legged kind."

"I'm assuming you're taking care of the two-legged variety yourself?" Luke chuckled.

"Let's look at the work schedule and see who's available for what," Brian said, ignoring his brother's comments.

He was having a hard enough time focusing as it was. He'd fucked a lot of women in his life. Probably more than his share. Some had been pliable, some exciting, some challenging. But none of them had set his body on fire the way Regan Matthews did. He'd taken her twice more before dawn, and he was hard again now, wanting her as if his life depended on it.

He had no idea what the hell he was going to do. Taking her to bed was a simple enough process, but what he felt for Regan was much deeper and more complex. And what would happen if he told her he was a shape shifter, half man and half wolf. After one disastrous experience years ago, he'd sought out and mated only with women of his kind. None of them had even come close to igniting the raging fire within him that Regan did.

Shit! Hell and damn, too.

He realised Luke was still talking and tried to get his brain in gear again.

"I'm sorry. What?"

"Damn!" Luke swallowed a smile. "You must have it bad. I said who do you like for the most logical suspect?"

Brian shook his head. "The list she gave me runs three pages. She's sure pissed off a lot of people. But four of them stand out." He tapped a key on his keyboard, and a page emerged on his computer screen. "Regan doesn't agree with me, but I don't think she can be objective."

He pointed to the first one. "Hart Cameron. Multimillionaire investor who killed his wife. Regan got the goods on him and put him away forever. He's got the money and contacts to hire someone to get rid of her."

"Possible," Luke agreed. "Very possible."

"Then there's Manuel Acosta, local chief of a huge Mexican drug cartel. Those guys don't mess around. If he's ordered a hit, she's already in someone's sights."

"Except for one thing," Luke interrupted. "Cartel leaders don't send advance notice or use phone calls to intimidate people. They drive by, shoot, and get the hell out. Same thing with the third name on your list. This is too sophisticated for him." He leaned forward and looked more closely at the screen. "Who's the fourth one? Greg Sampson. Ex-boy friend?"

"Yeah. Another attorney on the district attorney's homicide staff. But Regan insists the break-up was amicable and that there were no hard feelings."

"Bullshit." Luke tossed the pencil he'd been playing with onto the desk. "There's no such thing as an 'amicable' break-up, especially if the two people have to continue working together."

"I checked into this guy myself," Brian said. "The picture I get is an arrogant asshole, who thinks he's every woman's desire. Doesn't sound like the forgiving sort to me." He pushed away from his desk. "I'm on my way to check him out in person. Thought I'd use the excuse of installing the car alarm as an opportunity to give the entire staff a good look-see."

"Okay. I'll set up a bodyguard schedule and email it to your cell." He moved to the doorway, forcing Brian to turn and confront him before leaving. "Watch your dick, okay? Don't get into trouble you can't get out of. And you know what I mean."

"Things worked out fine for you and Sierra," he reminded his brother who was married now for six months to a human.

"Sierra is one in a million. Not all women are as...accepting. You know that."

"I can handle things." He brushed past his brother. "Just see that the things get done that I need."

He had just pulled out of the parking lot when his cell rang.

"Brian?"

Regan's voice, sounding far from the confident woman who'd been only cautiously worried last night.

"Great minds," he answered. "I'm on my way to your office as we speak."

"I-I got another one."

Brian's gut clenched. He sensed the effort she was using to keep the panic at bay, but this note seemed to have tipped her past the flash point. "When? Where? What did it say?"

"On my windshield again. I went to get a box I'd left in the car, and the note was stuck under the wiper." Her voice rose slightly. "It says, *You had your chance, bitch. Now you'll find out what real pain is.* Brian, I park in a secure garage. How is he doing this?"

Rage surge through Brian's body, the urge to shift into feral form so strong he had to grit his teeth to exert every ounce of control. Just what he'd need...to shape shift in the middle of traffic and lope into Regan's office.

Way to scare the lady even more, dumbass.

"Where are you now?"

"In my office. With the door closed. I asked Lisa Jensen to take two depositions for me. Said I had a crisis to handle. She's a junior prosecutor on the homicide staff and is always looking for a chance to get herself noticed. And she's good."

"Okay," Brian muttered. "Stay right where you are. Do not leave your office. I'll be there right away."

All of his wolf rage threatened to break loose, and he controlled himself forcibly. He'd known this woman less than twenty-four hours, yet in that first moment, he'd known, impossibly, she was his mate. It had worked for Luke and Sierra. He'd make it work for them, if he didn't freak her out.

But first it was up to him to protect her. To keep her safe.

* * * *

Regan heard the commotion in the outer office, a man's voice raised then her door flew open and Brian was there. Sharon, the department secretary, hovered behind him, eyes avid with curiosity.

"I told him I needed to check with you first," she told Regan. "Shall I call security?"

Regan stood up so quickly she almost knocked over her chair. "No, it's all right, Sharon. Mr. Spencer is just a little, um, aggressive."

Aggressive or not, she'd never been so glad to see anyone in her life.

"Fine. As long as everything's all right." She favoured Brian with a come hither smile and managed to brush up against him as she closed the door with obvious reluctance.

Brian was around her desk and hauling her into his arms in seconds, holding her so tightly she was afraid he'd crush her ribs. But she didn't care. The minute she felt his arms around her, the panic ebbed and her heart rate began to return to normal.

His mouth came down on hers in a bruising kiss, his tongue like a flame branding her. He tasted her tongue, her teeth, the sensitive inner side of her lips. Finally, he eased his grip and set her slightly away from him, his eyes raking over her.

"Are you okay?" His amber eyes burned into her, and a muscle jumped in his cheek.

"Yes." She tried to keep her voice from shaking. "I think so, anyway. Brian, how is he getting into secure places? Is no place safe?"

"Where's Sampson?" he demanded.

"He's in court all morning." Did Brian really think Greg was doing this? "I'm sorry, I just can't see him threatening me this way. He was angry when we broke up but not enough for something like this. Anyway, I hear he's dating someone else, although I have no idea who it is. Maybe whoever he was seeing before he and I got together."

"When a secure facility is violated, Regan, we have to look at every suspect who has access to it. Don't be so quick to cross him off the list."

"God, Brian." The thought of Greg doing something like this to her made her physically ill. She'd almost prefer it to be someone from one of her cases. She expected it from criminals.

"What about the secretary with the 'fuck me' sign on her?"

"Sharon?" Regan couldn't help laughing. "She's got a problem with *every* woman in this office, so she'd have to come after us all en masse."

"She certainly let me know subtly she was available if I was interested."

Regan shook her head. "That's standard operating procedure with her. She's harmless."

Brian's face was just inches from hers. "No one is harmless, Regan. Certainly not in a situation like this. Remember that." He took a step back. "Does the garage have security cameras?"

She nodded. "But only a couple of them. They think it's safe because everything is locked and requires a coded card. Also, there's a guard at the entrance."

"All right. Let's go to the building security office and get them to replay the tapes for us. Tell your secretary you're unavailable for the rest of the day."

"B-but I have ongoing cases. I can't just —"

"Get your files together. You can work from home today."

She shook her head. "I can't. I have court appearances." She bit her lip. "C-can you stay here with me?" If he was with her all the time, she wouldn't feel so much like collapsing. This was a new and strange feeling for her, and she hated it. Hated being dependent on someone else. But with Brian, she could handle it.

He blew out a breath. "All right. Let's go look at the tapes. Then you can go over your schedule with me."

On their way down to the security office, she listened to Brian on his cell with his office.

"That's right. Progress on the fingerprints from the note I left and on those four names on the list. And send someone to her office to pick up the latest one."

The tapes showed them nothing. Regan's parking space was located out of sight of either camera, and nothing else they viewed looked suspicious. Brian thanked the security guard and hustled Regan back to her office. He was about to close the door when a deep male voice called to them.

"Regan? Hey, wait a minute."

"Oh, hell," she muttered.

"Regan, what the hell is going on?"

She sighed and turned to the man who'd hurried up beside them. Next to Brian, the ultimate alpha male, Greg Sampson looked a pale imitation. Where Brian was tall and lean, Greg was more tall and thin. The sun-streaked hair and angular face Regan had once thought so appealing, today, looked washed out beside Brian's dark good looks.

Okay, he's not bad, but what the hell did I ever see in him?

"Nothing's going on, Greg. I got jammed up this morning and asked Lisa to cover some depositions for me. Why is everyone making such a big deal about it?"

His hand closed over her shoulder, and she saw Brian's eyes smoulder. "Honey, if you've got a problem, I wish you'd let me help you."

"I don't have a problem. Thanks for asking, though. Now, if you'll excuse us?"

Instead, he let his eyes travel over Brian who had moved protectively close. He stuck out his hand. "Greg Sampson. Regan and I have a...special relationship. Who are you?"

"Brian Spencer."

Regan noticed he offered no further explanation, except to casually drape his arm around her shoulder, effectively pushing Greg's hand out of the way. Something close to anger flared in Greg's eyes then he pasted on a smile.

"Whatever. Regan, you know you can call me if you need anything."

"Thanks again," she told him. "Now I really have to check on some things."

Brian closed and locked the door. His face was taut when he looked at her. "That's the idiot you went out with?"

She sighed. "We all have lapses. Meanwhile, someone's still after me."

"It's got to be someone who works here," he pointed out. "And I'm not ruling out Sampson, no matter what you say. We're going to sit down and make another list before your first court appearance today." He pulled her roughly against him. "But first I have to do this."

His kiss shot fire through her, silencing any protest she might make about where they were. His fingers unbuttoned her blouse, unclasped her bra and were pinching and rolling her nipples before her brain kicked in.

"We can't do this here," she gasped, moisture dampening her crotch even as she made her feeble protest.

"I have to do this," he rumbled. "I have to imprint myself on you. Let everyone know you're mine. Let whoever this is realise what a foolish thing he's doing. Jesus, you don't know how I felt when you called and said you'd gotten another note."

"I'm yours?" Her eyes widened as she focused on the one phrase. "But we hardly—"

"I don't think it's something either of us can deny, Regan. You know it as well as I do." The raw need in his voice made her even more aroused. "You knew it the minute we met last night, just like I did. And certainly after the first time we fucked. Right?"

She swallowed. God, what was happening to her? Everything in her well-organised life was spinning out of control. And, for some unknown reason, she had no desire to stop it, at least where it came to Brian Spencer. It seemed just inconceivable that she, Regan Matthews, commonsense individual, hard-nosed and hard-assed, was falling in lust—or whatever it was—so instantly with a man she didn't even know. But he was telling the truth. It happened and she knew it.

"R-right."

She barely had the words out of her mouth before he had her skirt up around her waist, her pantyhose down around her ankles and had lifted her to her desk. Impatiently, he yanked her pantyhose off one foot, dug in his wallet for a condom and rolled it on.

"No time for foreplay today, darlin'. If I'm not inside you in two seconds, I'll explode." He bent and lapped at her cunt, testing her moisture. "Shit, you're already wet and ready for me."

He paused with the head of his cock at the entrance to her pussy, gripped her hips, and pushed himself inside.

"Oh, God," she moaned and thrust her hips at him, clutching at his arms.

"Wrap your legs around me," he commanded.

At that moment, the buzzer on Regan's intercom sounded.

"Shit." Brian bit down on her lip. "Don't answer it."

"I have to." Regan could hardly catch her breath. "It's probably Sharon, our secretary. If I ignore it, she'll come banging on the door."

Brian swore again and shifted her body so she could reach the phone.

"Yes?" She hoped her voice sounded calmer to the secretary than it did to her. She had no idea where her control came from with desire racing through her body like a runaway train.

"Sam Franklin says you're locked up in your office with that man who pushed his way in earlier." Sharon's voice held just a touch of acid. "Are you all right? What's going on? You have a deposition in five minutes."

"Lisa Jensen's taking it for me." Her voice rose slightly as Brian rolled his hips. "I have something urgent to take care of. Hold all my calls for right now." She dropped the receiver in place before Sharon could say anything else. "I'll pay for that," she mumbled, her mouth against Brian's neck. "Besides being a man-eater, she's the queen of bitches. She only keeps her job because she's so damn good at it."

"You told her this was urgent. We'd better get to it."

He pressed his mouth against hers, forcing his tongue inside and scorching her flesh with it as he began to pump steadily in and out of her. Her body seemed to remember him as the muscles of her pussy automatically stretched to accommodate him and clutched at his shaft.

"Ah, darlin'," he rasped. "Are you too sore? I should have thought about that, but my dick doesn't have a brain."

"I-I'm fine," she gasped. "Don't you dare stop."

"I couldn't if I wanted to. Which I don't. Jesus, it feels like you're squeezing my cock. Keep those tight cunt muscles flexing just like that."

The orgasm ripped at them so quickly and with such force Regan couldn't breathe. If not for Brian's corded arms holding her, she was sure she would have flown apart, shattering

on her desk. The spasms held her like a giant fist as the walls of her pussy contracted again and again. Brian's cock pulsed inside her, his hot seed spurting into the latex reservoir.

When her heart stopped beating in triple time, she loosened her death grip on his shoulders and eased her legs down. Brian relaxed his arms and leaned his head down until his forehead touched hers.

"I don't do this as a habit," he told her, still trying to draw air into his lungs.

"Oh, I think you do it often and well." Her voice was still breathless as she teased him.

He laughed, the vibrations rumbling through his penis and into her body. "I mean, having sex with a client in her office." His face sobered. "But you're more than a client. You know that, right? Last night was about more than just sex, and that shocks the hell out of me."

"Me, too," she whispered.

Exhaling slowly, he gradually withdrew from her body. Regan opened a desk drawer and grabbed a box of tissues. Her face heated as she handed some to Brian to dispose of the condom then proceeded to clean herself.

He put a finger under her chin and tilted it up. "No embarrassment. Not with each other. Not ever, for anything. Okay?"

"O-okay."

When they had finished rearranging their clothing, Brian pulled out his cell phone and punched in a number. "Me," he said. "Did you get photos of the footprints outside her house? Yeah. Uh huh. Anything on the information I left you about the text messages? Okay. I hear you. Whoever's doing the alarm system at her house, have him set up a caller ID on the phone. Regan can call the phone company to connect it. And fit her up with a better answering machine. And one more thing. I want special sentry duty tonight. Okay. Later."

Regan was full of questions. "Okay, give. Did they find anything? About anything? What about the text message?"

Brian held up a hand. "One thing at a time. Our geek partner checked the SIM card from your phone. The text message came from a throwaway so nothing there."

"Damn." She nibbled at a fingernail. She'd been hoping they could trace it back to someone. "What about the footprints?"

"Looks like a man's size eleven. They measured the impression and figure whoever it is has to be a pretty skinny guy. The footprint wasn't too deep. How tall is this Greg character and how much does he weigh?"

Again the mention of Greg's name made her feel sick. "He's just under six feet but not more than one-seventy, I'd say."

Brian gave her a hard look. "I wouldn't have guessed you went for twigs."

"He has a certain...appeal." Why was she even defending him? "But I'm telling you, I don't think it's Greg."

He took her elbow. "Let's go hunt him up and we'll find out. I can tell in five seconds if he's lying."

But they got nothing out of Greg except defiance and anger. Dejected, Regan led Brian back to her office. "I have to appear in court this afternoon then go over the depositions Lisa Jensen took for me."

"And I'll be right beside you. There are good people at the agency working on this. I'm not letting you out of my sight."

If anyone was curious about the tall, fierce-looking man sitting behind Regan in the courtroom, they were either too polite or too intimidated to say anything. At last, the day was over, and she went to pack up her briefcase. The first thing she noticed was the missing files.

"Something wrong?" Brian asked.

"The depositions I wanted to read and the case files. I left everything here on my desk. Now they're gone." She buzzed the intercom. "Sharon, can you come in for a minute?"

"I'm just on my way out," Sharon said, entering the office. "Can this wait?"

"I can't find the files that I left here. The depositions and everything else."

"I never saw them," Sharon said defensively, smoothing her hand over her straight blonde hair. "You must have misplaced them."

"I never misplace a file," Regan snapped.

"You did last week."

Was it her imagination or was Sharon enjoying her discomfort and worry? Last week, two files she was working on had gone missing. She'd found them two days later stuck

between two file cabinets, with no idea how they'd gotten there. It still rankled, because she was meticulous about her work.

"What happened last week?" Brian demanded.

When she told him, he didn't comment, but his lips thinned to a hard line.

"I'm sure they'll show up like the last ones did," Sharon said, looking at her watch. "And I hate to leave you like this, but I have a date waiting."

Regan waved a hand at her. "All right. Go, go." She picked up the phone and punched in three numbers. "Lisa? It's Regan. Just checking, but you did leave those depositions on my desk, right? Uh huh. Uh huh. Okay, thanks." She looked at Brian. "She swears she left them on my desk."

She began picking up everything on her desk and the table next to it, checking each piece of paper. A knock at the door interrupted her.

"I'll get it." Brian opened the door, blocking entrance with his body. "Can we help you?"

A head of tousled dark curls peeked around the lean body. "Regan? Do I need a password?"

"Lisa. Thank goodness." Regan dropped the papers in her hand. "It's okay, Brian. This is Lisa Jensen. She's the one who took the depositions for me."

Lisa looked back at Brian. "Oh, my. Is this one yours? No wonder you've been off your feed."

"I have not been off my feed. I wish people would quit saying that. I just can't find a couple of file folders."

"I swear I put them right on top of your desk." She skittered around Brian, pushing her curls away from her face. "I know you need them for tomorrow. I'd hate to think they've gotten lost."

Regan gritted her teeth. "They are *not* lost. I don't lose important files."

"Oh, honey." Lisa's voice turned sympathetic. "I know you're just the best around here, but you have been a touch distracted lately."

"For God's sake," Regan huffed. "I'm fine."

"Do you want me to take those court appearances for you tomorrow? You look real disturbed about something."

Lisa's Texas drawl was beginning to grate on Regan's nerves. "No. Thank you. I'll find the depositions, and I'll be in court. Thanks again for your help." She made her tone as dismissive as possible.

"Okay, then." Lisa all but fluttered her eyelashes at Brian. "Maybe tall, dark and handsome here can help you." She looked back at Regan. "Unless he's not yours. In which case, I'd like first dibs."

"Good *night*, Lisa."

"Okay, okay. I can take a hint. Can't blame a girl for trying, though." Like Sharon, she managed to brush against Brian's body as she left.

"Are all the women in your office this predatory?" Brian asked.

"I guess." Regan unclipped her hair and shoved her fingers through it. "I guess I'll just keep looking."

"No you won't," Brian told her. "We'll lock the office so no one can get in or out, and you can start looking again in the morning. I'm going to hook up the new alarm system to your car and alert the guard that we're leaving your car here overnight. I think that'll work best. Then we're going to pick up some dinner and go back to your house. Your day is done, counsellor."

Chapter Four

A panel truck with a logo on the side that said Electric Man was parked in her driveway. Regan looked at Brian as he parked next to it and raised an eyebrow.

"Nobody questions an electrician," he explained. He opened her garage door with the opener he'd taken from her car, drove in and parked. "Come on. I'll introduce you to everyone."

"It must be a big crowd," she said. "You bought enough Chinese food for an army."

"Trust me," he chuckled. "These guys eat like animals."

Four people were in her kitchen. The three men were all as tall, lean and muscular as Brian, two of them as dark, one a golden blond. The fourth was a woman, slender with red-gold hair in a long braid tossed over her shoulder. Brian looked surprised to see her.

"Hey, Sierra." He nodded at the dark man standing with his arm around her shoulders. "Sorry if we delayed you guys heading back to Maine."

She grinned and went to give him a kiss on the cheek. "You know nothing's hanging fire up there right now." She gave him a look Regan had trouble defining. "And Luke thought I might be of some help here."

"Always glad of some assistance, darlin'." He grinned, set the large bags on the table and gave her a hug.

Regan, feeling like a third wheel, cleared her throat. "I take it you're all from the agency?"

The woman smiled and held out her hand. "Please forgive us for being so rude. Especially Brian, who is sorely lacking in manners."

Brian grunted.

"I'm Sierra Spencer, Brian's sister-in-law." She nodded at the man sprawled at the kitchen table. "My husband, Luke. Also not known for his manners."

Luke rose in a lithe, graceful movement, and held out his hand. "I apologise for the Spencer family. Nice to meet you, Miss Matthews. Sorry it isn't under better circumstances."

"Regan, please. Thank you all for doing this. It's been a...trying experience, to say the least."

The other two men introduce themselves as Grey Montgomery and Michael Dancer. Sierra began taking the food from the bags while Regan took out plates, utensils and glasses. Brian had purchased two twelve-packs of soft drinks.

"Nothing alcoholic on the job," he'd told Regan.

Curiosity piqued her when she saw Brian whisper in Sierra's ear and the two of them moved into the next room, but she said nothing. If the woman's husband didn't mind, why should she? Still, she wondered what they couldn't discuss in front of the others.

When they were all seated around the table with full plates, Brian looked at each one individually. "Okay. Reports, please."

"You know we couldn't do anything with the text message," Luke reminded him. "But Michael," he nodded at the blond, "took the list of possible suspects and using his computer magic is checking to see who might have bought disposable phones in the city in the last month."

"But how can you find that out?" Regan asked. "Don't you need sales slips or something?"

"As long as they didn't pay cash, which is a possibility," Michael said, "you'd be surprised at what we can find out. Something, by the way, I don't think you, as a prosecutor, want to look at too closely."

Privately, Regan agreed with them. She'd hired The Sentinels because they got the job done, whatever it took. She didn't need to know the details or all the ways they might be skirting the law.

"I've got the profiles on your four top suspects," Grey said. "The folders are on the counter. You can look at them after we eat, but I don't think you'll find much there."

"Not even Greg Sampson?" Brian asked.

"I told, you," Regan said. "I really don't think Greg would do something like this."

"The new system's in place," Luke told him. "Once it's turned on, if anyone trips a sensor, they'll think a brass band is standing next to them."

"Good. All good. And we're set for tonight?"

They all nodded.

"Tonight the system will be off," Michael told him.

"What's happening tonight? Why will the alarm be off after you went to so much trouble to install it?" Regan felt as if she was missing something here. "And what's Sierra's role?" She smiled at the other woman. "Not that it isn't nice to have you here."

"We're going to do some outside guard duty," Brian told her. "Sierra's going to keep you company for a while. Maybe have some girl talk with you."

Her jaw dropped. "Girl talk?" She wasn't even sure she knew how.

"Why don't you let me take care of that?" Sierra said, beginning to clear the plates from the table. "You and Regan need some private time before it gets dark."

* * * *

"Okay, what's this all about?" They were in her bedroom with the door locked, Regan's hands clenched into fists, her emotions a mix of irritation and anxiety. Brian's warm hands smoothed her shoulders, his body so close to hers she could feel the heat radiating from it. "And don't think you can distract me with sex," she told him.

"Not even a little bit?" he teased, brushing his lips against hers.

Regan tried to push him away, but when she opened her hands and pressed them against his chest, her mind began to wander. God help her. One touch and this man had her reduced to nothing but a puddle of hormones, all running a marathon through her body. The sexual chemistry between them was so incendiary it almost frightened her. No other man had ever called to her senses this way, possessed her so completely, drove her need for him higher even as he satisfied her again and again.

What was happening to her? Sex in her office. Sex with a house full of people below. And no more ability to stop this than to stop a speeding freight train.

What is happening to me?

Brian licked at her lips, tracing the outline with his tongue, his hands moving from her shoulders to her back and down to cup the cheeks of her ass.

"Jesus, Regan. I feel like a stallion after a mare in heat with you. I can't be around you for five minutes without wanting to get you naked and fuck you every way possible. What the hell are you doing to me?"

"What are you doing to *me*?" she asked.

"Not nearly enough."

He pressed his lips to hers again. Unable to resist, she opened her mouth to let his tongue in and danced her own with it. Just that quickly, moisture soaked her panties, and her nipples sprang to life.

With a desperate effort she pulled her mouth away from his, gasping for air.

"Wait, wait, wait." She tried to make some space between them. "What about everyone downstairs? They'll know exactly what we're doing up here."

Brian's eyes burned into hers with a hunger that fuelled a fire within her. "Nobody pays attention to what we're doing. We'll just be very quiet. I want this, Regan. I want *you*. Anytime. Any place. And you want me, too. Admit it."

She would have if she could find her power of speech. His mouth was all over her, kissing her cheeks, her eyelids, the column of her neck, her breasts, stealing her breath and heating her blood.

"Brian. I can't think when you do this. Take a minute and tell me what's happening."

He loosened his hold on her, but only slightly. "You're right. You need to be in the loop. It's just that I want to spend every minute fucking you every way possible." He backed her up and sat her on the edge of the bed then stepped away. "There. That's better. At least, I can think." He ran his fingers through his hair. "Okay. That footprint indicates that whoever this is doesn't mind coming around your house. And with today's message, we have a feeling whoever it is will try something tonight."

"Here? In my house?"

"It's difficult to get at you physically in your office—or anywhere in that building, for that matter. Trying to run you off the road didn't work too well, so this is all that's left. It's someone with a bitter grudge. The language of the notes clearly expresses that. And they've been building a campaign to knock you off balance."

"So what are you all going to do?"

"Like I said earlier, tonight Luke, Grey, Michael and I are going to be on guard duty." He smiled. "The Sentinels."

"But won't he see you?" she asked "And why will the alarm be off? Why install it and not use it? Isn't the purpose to catch whoever this is?"

He shook his head. "It won't catch the person unless someone's here to do it. Besides, when I decided to install it, I hadn't realised yet I'd be closer to you than your own skin. I had the guys set it up anyway, though. In your line of work you need it. But tonight, the alarm will be off."

"Why?" she asked again

"So whoever this is can get close enough to the house that we can catch him in the act. We'll turn it back on when I come in to go to sleep."

"But—"

He pressed his fingers to her lips. "Sierra will answer the rest of your questions."

"Does she work with the agency, too?"

"No. Actually, she and Luke spend most of their time in Maine. We opened up an office there, but Sierra does her own thing. She met Luke when she was an unofficial client. They just happen to be in town, fortunately, and she has...things to say you'll want to hear. Meanwhile, it won't be dark for half an hour, and I don't want to waste the time arguing."

While he'd talked, he'd moved close to her again. Now, he was pulling her silk sweater over her head, unzipping her skirt and dragging it down her hips along with her panty hose and tiny panties. He managed to toss them to the side while she tugged at his T-shirt and tried to unfasten his jeans.

"You make me crazy," he murmured in a raw voice as he helped her with his clothes. "I've never been like this with anyone else. Jesus, Regan. I'm supposed to be protecting you and finding your stalker, and all I can think about is being inside you every minute."

"Me, too," she said, struggling for breath. "Oh, God, am I losing my mind?"

"If you are, we both are."

In a frenzy, he dug a condom out of his pocket and rolled it on. Then neither of them said a word as he moved her up on the bed, settled himself between her thighs and took her mouth in a kiss that stole her senses. One arm cradled her while his other hand trailed down to her breasts, lightly pinched each nipple in turn then slid around to her spine. His fingers traced the cleft of her buttocks, moving up and down the length between her firm cheeks.

"Soon," he told her, lifting his head. "Soon, I'm going to have my cock in this tight channel back here. I'm going to fill it with my shaft and fuck you until you don't know your own name. Then you'll truly belong to me. You hear me, Regan?"

She could only nod her head, all her breath trapped in her throat, a ribbon of dark lust tightening inside her. She wanted this. She wanted *him*. For one brief second, she wondered if they were just caught up in the seductive sense of danger. The next minute, she couldn't think at all as he moved his free hand between them down to her clit and rasped his thumb back and forth over it.

Tiny spasms set up in her pussy, and the liquid of her arousal spilled onto her thighs.

"I love your scent," Brian growled. "Sweet, hot and musky. One tiny little whiff of that aroma and my brain takes a holiday."

Regan ran her hands over his heated body, touching his broad shoulders, his back, the ridges of his spine, loving the feel of hard muscles beneath taut skin. The hair on his chest chafed her hardened nipples, and she pressed hard against him, trying to rub herself back and forth.

"Not much time for foreplay tonight, darlin'." His voice was heavy with lust. "Later, I promise I'll take my time, but right now, I have to be inside you."

He moved his hand to her cunt, testing her readiness, spread her legs wide and drove into her. This time she was prepared for it, her inner muscles elastic as they accepted the hugeness of him, her body already learning his size and feel and adapting to it. She wrapped her legs around him and locked her ankles at the small of his back, dragging him into her even deeper.

Bracing himself on his forearms, he set a steady pace, in and out, in and out, adjusting his body so the crisp hair above his cock rubbed her clit with every movement forward. Using her position as leverage and gripping his shoulders, Regan adjusted to his rhythm, hips thrusting, meeting him stroke for stroke. Her body was like a live wire, filled with an electrical charge, nerves firing, pulses pounding. She felt as if somehow Brian had tapped into a basic element of her nature, raw and greedy. Nothing existed at that moment except the two of them and the magical ride to the top of the mountain.

When they exploded, it was like the eruption of a volcano, her hot liquid bathing his sheathed cock, the muscles of her cunt spasming around him and pulling on him. Her blood pounded in her ears, and her whole body convulsed like the tightening of a giant fist.

Even when the intensity of the orgasm began to abate, she was loathe to unhook her legs from Brian's waist, to somehow disconnect them. His hot breath washed over her as he

struggled to draw air into his lungs, and she wasn't sure whose heart she heard thundering, his or her own.

Long minutes passed before he lifted himself and slowly withdrew. Bending his head, he showered kisses onto her stomach and in a line from hip to hip. Then he slid off the bed, and she heard him moving around in the bathroom, no doubt disposing of the condom. In a moment, he was back, sitting beside her on the bed and lifting her into his embrace.

"It's dark," he said, inclining his head towards the window and the blackness beyond. "I have to go. Go downstairs and be with Sierra, okay?" His kiss was brief but hard. "I'll be back inside before dawn. Turn off your phone up here. If it rings, Sierra will answer it. If it's a real call, she'll just give it to you. We'll see what shows up on the caller ID."

"But—"

He pressed fingers to her lips. "If your stalker calls again, I don't want you getting the call. So no questions. Not now. I have to get going."

He dressed hastily, unlocked and opened the door and disappeared into the hallway.

Regan switched off the ringer on her phone as Brian had instructed. Then she pulled jeans from her closet and a light sweater from her drawer, slid her feet into soft moccasins, and went into the bathroom to brush her hair and repair her face. Her muscles were sore from the day's activity with Brian, but she didn't want to take the time to shower now.

She stared at herself in the mirror. The person looking back at her had a face that was flushed rosy and eyes sparkling with a bright light.

"I might as well wear a sign saying 'recently fucked'," she muttered to herself.

Finally, she made her way downstairs. Sierra sat at the kitchen table, a worn book lying face down next to her. Someone had made a fresh pot of coffee, and Sierra had filled a mug for each of them.

"Is everyone outside now?" Regan asked.

Sierra nodded. "Doing their thing. All the woods in back of your house make it dangerous for you but help the guys to conceal themselves."

Regan sipped her coffee. "One of the reasons I bought the house was because it backed up to a conservation area. I never thought I'd have to worry about it hiding a stalker." She put her mug down, carefully choosing her words. She hardly knew this woman, and

wondered what on earth she could have to say that was so important. "So, how long have you and Luke been married?"

"Six months." Sierra flashed a grin. "Six wonderful months, I might add. We met in Maine. He was taking some down time, and I was enjoying the cabin my grandfather left me and trying to figure out what to do with the rest of my life. We were married four weeks later."

Regan studied her. "Such a short time? Did you really know what you wanted that fast?"

"Oh, yes. I knew the first night we were together. We were meant to be mated."

Regan's eyebrows rose. "Mated?"

Sierra nodded. "There was something inside both of us that knew we were meant to be together. We had some... issues to resolve, but that didn't take us long."

"Then you won't think I'm crazy if I tell you I feel the same way with Brian. As if we're bonded forever." She shook her head. "I know this sounds crazy, but the first time he touched me the word 'forever' flashed through my brain."

Now Sierra laughed. "I don't think you're crazy at all. And I know Brian feels the same way. When he stepped out of your courtroom for a while this afternoon, he called Luke and talked to him at great length." She paused and wet her lips. "Did Brian tell you he'd asked me along tonight to talk to you?"

"Yes, but I can't imagine about what."

Sierra picked up the book and flipped it over. Regan could see now how old it really was, the covering frayed in places. Across the front, in gold script, was written, *The Legend of the Wolf*. "How much do you know about wolves and shifters?"

Regan nearly dropped her mug. "You mean like *werewolves*?"

"Werewolves are an old myth started by people centuries ago. Shifters are an ancient race of people who evolved through generations into what they are today. Humans who have a specific gene that allows them to change—shift—into wolf form."

Now Regan was sure she was losing her mind. Wolves? Shifters? She thought back to the logo on the business card and the shadowy form she'd seen lurking around the office building.

"Are you telling me Luke is a...a...wolfman?"

Sierra nodded. "The first time I saw him was in his wolf form, as a matter of fact."

"My God." Regan felt a chill sweep through her. "That means Brian is, too." She stood up so quickly she almost knocked her chair over. "I think I need something stronger than coffee."

In her family room, she opened the cupboard that held her liquor and brought a bottle of bourbon back to the kitchen. Dropping ice cubes into a glass, she poured herself a healthy shot and took a quick swallow, choking slightly as it burned the back of her throat.

Sierra was beside her at once, arm around her shoulders. "Are you okay? I didn't mean to shock you so badly, but sometimes you can't work your way into these things."

Regan flapped her hand in the air and caught her breath. "Give me a minute, and I'll be fine." She held out the bottle. "Would you like some?"

"No." Sierra smiled at her. "Coffee's fine. Come. Sit down again."

Regan took a smaller sip of her drink. "Tell me. Weren't you shocked when Luke told you? Did you see him shift? Have you ever," she dropped her voice, "made love when he was in wolf form?"

The other woman laughed. "Yes, yes, and no. All the partners in the agency are shifters. They're all that's left of a pack from Minnesota that once numbered in the hundreds but were decimated by hunters when they ran at night as wolves."

She went on to explain how they'd eventually migrated to Texas and were reaching out to find others like themselves. How, rather than be repelled by Luke's admission, she'd been fascinated.

"I've always been intrigued by wolves," she explained. "And really, when he's in his human form, he is a truly magnificent male specimen."

"What about children? Don't you want to have a family?"

"Of course. Our children are called Halflings, and if they are born with the gene, they can be given medicine to repress it. But eventually, we'd like to re-establish a pack large enough that our children will have friends and accept their genetic differences."

Regan pulled the book towards her and flipped it open, leafing slowly through the pages. Her heart was racing, but she was shocked to realise it wasn't from fear but from fascination. From the knowledge that the man who had taken over her life was a rare and incredible being.

"No wonder he talked about mating," she said.

"Brian asked me to leave the book with you. It's the one Luke brought for me to read right after we met." She stood up and held out her hand. "Come with me. Let me show you something."

She turned out the lights in the kitchen and tugged Regan by the hand to the sliding door, opening the vertical blinds just a fraction.

"Look," she said. "Watch carefully in the yard."

Regan stared through the narrow slit in the blinds, her eyes open wide.

Chapter Five

With only moonlight to see by, if she hadn't been watching carefully, Regan would have missed the dark shapes. Four of them, moving stealthily among the tall side hedges and into the thick trees at the back of the yard.

"I hope my neighbours don't spot them," she said.

"The guys are really good about not being seen. And if anyone does lay eyes on them, they'll just think it's a big dog. Most people don't even know what wolves look like."

The more the impossible realisation took shape in her mind, the more questions Regan had. Sierra willingly answered even the most intimate ones, until finally Regan felt the tight knot that had formed inside her unravel and a thrill of excitement take its place. She began to leaf through the book again, studying the history of shape shifters, until her eyes began to droop.

"Why don't you go on up to bed?" Sierra suggested. "I'll curl up on your couch. The guys won't be in until dawn."

"I think I will, if you don't mind. I still have work tomorrow. I don't know how Brian will keep going."

"He can nap as a wolf and regenerate quickly. You'll see. Go on. I'll be fine." She lifted the book from the table. "And take this with you. Spend some time reading it."

Regan's mind whirled as she climbed the stairs to her room, undressed and brushed her teeth. As a prosecutor, she dealt in facts backed up by evidence. If you could see it, touch it, smell it, taste it—it was a fact. What Sierra had told her was so complex and demanded a huge degree of acceptance and unqualified belief on her part. Something completely opposite from the way she'd always lived her life,

But as Brian said, the connection between them had been instant and fierce, more than just great chemistry. So she had two choices. Walk away altogether or acknowledge what she'd just learned. And walking away just didn't seem possible. She put the book on her nightstand and crawled into bed. Tomorrow, she'd do more than leaf through it.

As tired as she was, she still didn't expect to fall asleep easily with all the thoughts whirling around in her mind. Yet her head barely touched the pillow before she was asleep, dreaming deeply of wolves leaping and playing around her.

The alarm woke her at six-thirty, and she reached over to punch the snooze button, relishing the fifteen minutes extra she always gave herself. As she rolled to her side, her gaze landed on the floor...and the huge black wolf lying on the carpet next to her bed. The weird part was it didn't seem strange to her nor did she feel any fear. Safe. Protected. Loved. Those were the emotions that struck her full force.

He was awake and watching her with his all-knowing amber eyes. Brian's eyes. She reached out a trembling hand to touch the rich black pelt and smoothed her fingers against its softness. He turned his head and licked her hand with his warm, pink tongue, sending shivers racing through her body.

Why am I not frightened? How can I just accept...this, whatever this is? I am a logical person, and this is not logical. But here I am, accepting it as a normal part of life. My life!

"Good morning, Brian," she whispered. "Thank you for watching over me."

Immediately, the wolf rose, a burst of stars exploded before Regan's eyes, and Brian stood before her in human form, in his very magnificent nakedness. His hair was dishevelled, a twenty-four hour growth of beard shadowed his jaw, and he looked so mouth-watering her pussy began to throb.

"Hi, darlin'."

The deep, warm timbre of his voice made her feel as if her bones were melting.

"Did I scare you?" he asked.

"No." She couldn't tear her gaze away from him. "And that shocks me as much as the knowledge that you're...that you're..."

"A shifter?" he finished for her. "Sierra said you didn't freak nearly as much as she expected you to." He lifted the edge of the covers and slid into bed next to her.

"I think it's because she's so calm about it." Regan leaned on one elbow and ran her fingers over the thick pelt of curls on his chest. "One minute, I think I've gone crazy, and the next, I wonder why this whole business of shifting even disturbs me." She ran her tongue over her bottom lip. "Is that why you're so...? I mean...when we have sex..."

He cupped her cheek with his large, warm hand. "We make love, Regan. It's a damn sight more than sex, and you need to admit that to yourself."

"But how can you tell in such a short time?"

He ran his tongue over the lip she'd licked. "That's one thing having the shifter gene does for you. When you find the person who's your mate for life, your body let's you know. There's no mistake there. Trust me."

As usual, when he touched her, a sensual fog swirled around her brain, making it difficult if not impossible for her to think. With a supreme effort, she placed her hands on his chest and managed to get a little space between them.

"I...I...I..." She let out a breath. "As impossible as it seems, I have to agree with you. It is what it is."

He let one hand roam up and down the indentations on her spine and caress the upper slope of her buttocks. "I know you have to get ready for work. I'm going to shower and go in with you, and run this show from my phone. But I have to be inside you first." His voice had lowered even more. Thickened. "And I promise next time you'll get the full treatment."

She wriggled in his grasp. "First, tell me about last night."

Brian sighed. "Okay. Sierra said your phone rang not once but twice, but no one said anything. She gave Luke the numbers from the caller ID, and he'll trace them today."

Regan shivered. "I hate this."

He kissed her forehead. "I know you do, but we're going to fix it. Anyway, about a half an hour after the second one, Luke spotted a figure in the woods creeping towards your house, but we couldn't tell anything about who it was. Black clothes in a black night don't give much information. Plus whoever it was drenched himself with some kind of bug repellent, killing any human scent."

"You think..." She shook her head. "No. There's no way whoever it is could know about you being shifters and taking that kind of precaution."

"I agree. I think it might have been to fool any dogs that might be in the area. Or that you might have acquired as protection. Luke took off after whoever it was, but even in wolf form we couldn't catch him. Or her. They just disappeared."

"Her?" Regan cocked an eyebrow. "You think this might be a woman?"

"I'm not ruling out anything. Whoever it was sure moves fast. Or had a quick escape hatch of some kind. Someone's definitely after you, Regan. We'll try again tonight. The guys are doing some more digging today, going through the information on the top suspects. You may need to create a secondary list for us, too, because I have a feeling we're running out of time."

"I keep trying to think who would want to hurt me so badly."

"Whoever it is won't get close enough to you to do any damage. I promise you that. Now let's see what we can get done in five minutes."

It was quick and hard and raw. Regan was already wet just from seeing Brain's naked body and feeling his long, lean length against hers. In seconds, he retrieved a condom from the nightstand and rolled her to her back, yanking the pillows from behind her head. Spreading her legs wide, he opened the lips of her cunt, positioned the head of his cock at her entrance and penetrated her with one hard thrust.

"Oh, God." The harsh cry ripped from his throat. Bracing himself on his forearms, he held himself completely still as the walls of her pussy gripped his shaft, tiny quivers racing through the muscles.

Regan lifted her legs and wrapped them around his waist, locking her ankles at the small of his back and pulling him in even deeper. When he began to move, he thrust into her with deep, firm strokes, driving into her again and again. He moved one hand and slipped it between them, taking her clit between thumb and forefinger and chafing it in rhythm with the movement of his cock.

Her whole body was on fire from the assault, her pussy slick against his latex-clad cock. She matched his pace, her hips rocking as his body slammed into hers, again and again. The orgasm roared up without warning, consuming her, shaking her, her hot liquid bathing his cock as he spurted hot cum into the reservoir of the condom.

He held her through the aftershocks, his forehead touching hers, his body shaking from the force of the shared climax. When they finally got their breathing and heartbeats under control, Brian slid from the tight grasp of her cunt and flopped onto his back.

"You know, we may just kill ourselves, but what a way to go."

Regan reached down and linked her fingers with his. "I'll second that. Think you have enough energy to help me into the shower. We have to get going. I have to find out what happened to my files from yesterday, too. I have hearings in court today, and I'll need them."

Brian sat up and looked down at her. "I thought you misplaced them?"

"I *never* misplace files," she said with vehemence. "Someone wants me to think that's what I'm doing. Maybe it's the same person, but then that means..."

"That it's definitely someone from your office." Brian hauled her out of bed. "Shower. We need to get moving. Now."

* * * *

"So tell me," Regan said as Brian manoeuvred through morning traffic. "How often do you...um...change?"

"Shift. It's called shifting. I usually can't go more than three or four days without shifting once. I do it at night, someplace where I can run. That satisfies the need, but rage can exacerbate that and call up the urge more often."

"But where do you go? You can't run around in the city."

"My house is just north of the city where there's plenty of undeveloped land. And now with Sierra in the family, we can go to her cabin in Maine, where she has five thousand acres of woods."

Regan shook her head. "Are there just the eight of you at the agency? No one else? Where did you live before?"

She felt the tension surge through his body. "Minnesota. We had a pack of nearly seven hundred. But someone declared open season on wolves, and we were decimated. Those of us left fled as far as we could."

Her throat tightened as she imagined the sadness and anguish they had suffered. "I'm so sorry."

He let out a long breath. "When this is over, we'll talk about it more. I'll tell you the whole story of shifters and about everyone at Sentinels. " He slid a quick glance at her. "If you want me to, that is."

"I want you to." She reached over her hand and squeezed his thigh and was rewarded with a tiny smile curving his hard mouth.

At the office, her car was untouched and the lost files had miraculously appeared. When Brian wasn't sitting with her in court, he was just outside on his cell phone, talking to his brother and the others.

"They've got a tail on Mickey Walker," he told her at a break. "But he's not doing anything to call attention to himself. And his wife, who managed to hang onto most of their money, sticks to him like glue."

"Then who...?"

"Don't know, but we'll find out."

* * * *

Brian was glad to see Luke, Grey and Michael waiting for him when he and Regan let themselves into her house.

"No van tonight?" he asked his brother.

Luke shook his head. "We had Sierra drop us off. She sent along her apologies but she had some stuff to take care of tonight. She'll pick us up in the morning." He looked at Regan. "She says she hopes to see you again before we have to leave again."

"Me, too."

Regan smiled, but Brian could see the strain on her face. Just in the short time he'd known her, he'd become aware that being in control of a situation was important to her. Now, control had been taken from her, and he would fix that as fast as he could. If they hadn't been in a room full of people, he would have yanked her into his arms and done what he knew would ease her tension. But right now, they had other things to do.

"I've got some stuff for you to look over." Grey, who had been leaning against the kitchen counter, took a folder from under his arm and dropped it on the table. "We checked out all the perps on the list you gave us, and the ones on the loose are too busy getting into trouble again or staying under the radar to plan this kind of vengeance."

Brian grabbed it before Regan could and flipped it open. "Did you know Sharon has applied to law school three times and been turned down?" he asked Regan. "Or that your

friend Lisa is in financial trouble and a promotion on the homicide team would give her the bump in salary she needs? Or that your former...date, Greg Sampson, wants your spot as assistant chief on the homicide team and has been lobbying your boss for it?"

"According to his nosy next door neighbour, he also has a woman visiting him at least four times a week," Michael added. "No security cameras and the woman didn't give us a very good description but we're on top of it."

At that moment, the telephone rang. Everyone looked at it as if it was a living thing.

Regan reached for it. "It's too early for my 'friend' to call. It's probably about one of my cases."

But as she listened to the person on the other end, Brian saw Regan's face turn even paler. She dropped the receiver and left it dangling for Michael to receive.

"What?" he asked.

"It was him. Or her." She wet her lips. "Whoever it was said it's happening tonight and all the bodyguards in the world can't protect me."

Brian's wolf rage rose up within him, and for a moment, he thought he'd be unable to control the urge to shift. The need to kill to protect his mate.

"Shit." He guided her into a chair at the table. "Where's your liquor? You need a shot of something."

"Family room," she whispered. "Bar." She knotted her hands together, but the trembling was still obvious.

As he went to pour Regan a drink, he managed to get himself somewhat under control. But he also realised they had bigger troubles than threatening calls and nasty notes. Someone wanted Regan dead. And badly.

* * * *

Regan sipped on her drink, feeling marginally better. She'd strained to hear the voice on the phone, trying to identify it, but whoever it was had used something mechanical to disguise themselves. The news about Sharon, Lisa and Greg had unnerved her. She'd thought she and Greg had parted friends, but that might only be her perception. And the

information about Sharon and Lisa floored her. How little she really knew about anyone around her.

That's what comes of being totally consumed with my work.

"It will be dark soon," Grey pointed out. "We need to get ourselves set up."

Michael, who hadn't said much up until now, nodded and looked at Regan. "Nothing will happen to you. We promised Brian, and we promise you. I guarantee you no one could have gotten on the property today without tripping the alarms, and we monitored them all day. That means whoever it is has something planned for tonight. They've pegged me as a bodyguard, but don't know about the rest of us."

"Whoever this is sounded pretty confident," Regan told him, taking another swallow of the liquor to steady herself.

Brian leaned down and brushed his lips against hers. "That's because they don't know about your secret weapons."

She looked around the kitchen. "Do you all...shift? I mean...I'm sorry, I shouldn't be asking..."

Luke laughed. "It's okay. Sierra asked the same thing. Yes, we are all shifters. All with the wolf gene." One corner of his mouth turned up in a grin. "And we don't howl at the moon."

Heat crept up her cheeks. "I apologise for —"

"Not a problem. Why don't you go upstairs and change into something more comfortable? I'll fix you some soup," Brian said. "You need to eat something, and I know you only nodded at lunch today."

"I'll try. My stomach's just tied in knots."

He cupped her face in his hands and pressed his mouth lightly to hers. "I think this may all come to a head tonight. Then you can finally relax."

Regan sighed. "I hope so. This is driving me nuts. But how do they think they can get close to me with all this protection?"

"No one knows just how well covered you are. And we plan to do the same thing we did last night. Let them get just close enough so we can grab them." He swatted her rear. "Now go change, and I'll see about that soup."

When she walked into the kitchen clad in her favourite sweats, Regan did a double take. Brian was standing at the stove stirring a pot, but three wolves prowled the room restlessly. One of them had a gorgeous red pelt that reflected the kitchen light. Another was a silver grey. The third was as black as Brian.

Luke, she thought. The brother.

They all looked at her with the same warm amber eyes, and if she hadn't known better, she'd have thought they were grinning.

Brian grinned at her, poured soup into a bowl then carried it to the table. He had a place set with a cold drink and some crackers.

"Here. Eat."

He gave her another one of those brief kisses then calmly took off his clothes and folded them on a chair. With burst of stars, the black wolf of the morning was back. At the same time, in another starburst, the grey wolf disappeared and a very naked Grey Montgomery appeared.

Regan couldn't help staring at him. Were they all this magnificent?

Grey unselfconsciously took his clothes from the counter and slipped them on. "Sorry. I meant to shift before you got back down here but got sidetracked." He finished with his buttons and zipper. "We decided someone needs to be inside with you. Brian wanted the job, but his senses are keener than ours so we need him outside."

He opened the sliding door, and the three wolves slipped outside into the dark.

Regan ate her soup slowly, knowing Brian would be upset if she just dumped it. Grey prowled restlessly around the house, checking windows and doors and every so often peering into the darkness outside.

When the phone rang, they both jumped. Grey put his hand over Regan's.

"We've got a recorder set up on the phone to try to get whoever it is to talk some more."

She nodded and picked up the receiver, holding it so Grey could hear also. "Hello?"

"Regan?" A woman's voice, slightly garbled. "This is Ruth Fairchild."

Her boss's secretary.

"Ruth, I can hardly hear you."

"That's because I'm on my cell, and I'm in a weak reception zone. Listen, Barry has some last minute files for you to review before tomorrow. I hate to do this, but can I drop them off?"

Regan looked at Grey.

He mouthed, "Do you know her?"

"Yes."

He nodded his okay.

"Fine, Ruth. How soon will you be here?"

"About half an hour, if that's okay."

"Come on over." She disconnected the call. "I've known Ruth since I started working at the prosecutor's office. I promise you, she's not the stalker."

"Okay. Let me tell the others. I'll be right back." He stepped out into her yard and whistled for the wolves. In seconds, he was back inside. "All set on the perimeter," he told her.

Regan paced uneasily as she waited for Ruth to arrive. So much whirled through her mind – Brian, his story, the stalker, the news about her co-workers. How the hell had she gotten into this mess, anyway?

It was almost a relief when the doorbell rang. Grey moved to stand against the wall beside the door, a gun in his hand then nodded for her to proceed. Regan wished she had one of those doors with a peephole.

"Ruth?" she called through the door?

"Yes."

"Okay."

Regan unlocked the deadbolt and released the chain, pulling open the door. She was stunned to see two people not one and to have a man's hand push her back so fast she fell on her rear end.

"Close the door," Greg Sampson snapped, pointing a gun at Regan.

Everything happened so fast that even afterwards Regan couldn't recall details. Grey moved away from the wall and placed the barrel of his gun against Greg's neck. Behind him, Lisa Jensen squealed then shrieked as a large, black furry body hurtled through the door,

knocking her down and sinking its teeth in her throat. Two others followed, one of them pushing Greg to the floor and sitting on his chest, his snout pressing against his mouth.

"Get this animal off of me," Greg shouted. "Regan. Call off your dogs."

"Not dogs." She managed to scramble to her feet and stay out of the line of fire, trying to hold back her venom. "Wolves. And they love hunting prey. Greg, for God's sake, why did you do this?"

Next to him on the floor, Lisa gurgled as the black wolf kept his fangs closed on her throat without breaking the skin.

"Let's get this wrapped up before we call the cops," Grey said.

He pushed Brian off Greg's chest so he could roll Greg over and slap a pair of flex cuffs on him. Then he freed a terrified Lisa from Michael. She came up spitting and shrieking, but he placed the barrel of his gun against her temple.

"Shut up. Guys, I could use some more help here."

The wolves disappeared into the kitchen, and in a moment, Luke returned, fully dressed, with his own set of cuffs.

Brian was right behind him. "Time to call the cops."

Regan was shaking with anger. "Why did you do this?" she asked them. "Do you both hate me so much you'd want to kill me?"

"You think you're such hot shit," Lisa spat at hers. "The rest of us do your slop work, and you get all the praise and glory. Did you know I dated Greg before you stole him away?"

"Stole him away?" Regan was stunned. "*He* was the one who asked *me* out."

"He told me was only trying to get something on you so he could rat you out to the chief and take your place."

"This is all over *work*?" She couldn't get her mind around it. "For God's sake, are you people crazy?"

"I'd say so." Brian was next to her, his arm wrapped around her. "The cops will be here any time now. We'd better get our act together."

Chapter Six

Regan didn't think the night would ever end. She still had trouble understanding how work could be so important to someone they'd kill for it.

"You have a great success rate," Luke pointed out. "And you're the boss's favourite. Jealousy is a powerful emotion."

"I think I'm mostly embarrassed about my relationship with Greg," she said in a quiet voice. "I can't believe —"

"Stop." Brian's voice was a quiet command. "We all misjudge people. It's over and done."

"My favourite part," Grey said, "was when they tried to tell the police they'd been attacked by wolves."

Even Regan had to laugh at that. "I called my boss. He's overseeing their processing, and he plans to ask for the indictments himself. He's furious, not only at the plot they hatched, but also at the fact they used his name to gain entry to my house. They're in for big trouble." She sighed. "He thinks it shows a lapse in judgment on his part to have hired them, so he wants his pound of flesh and more."

"There'll be a lot of fallout from this and some heavy days ahead." Brian looked pointedly at his watch. "And shouldn't you all be heading home?"

Luke laughed. "I can take a hint. Come on, guys. Let's give them some privacy. They need it after all this."

"Take my car," Brian said. "I'll get it from you...sooner or later."

"Should I ask if we'll see you tomorrow?"

"Maybe. I don't intend for Regan to go into the office alone and face all the gossip."

Just as they reached the door, Luke turned to Regan and cupped her cheeks the same way Brian did. "You're a winner, Regan. A keeper. My brother will make you very happy...if you let him. We will all keep you safe."

"I-I know," she stammered.

"It can work. I want you to know that. You just have to open yourself to the possibility." He kissed her gently on the forehead.

Then they were gone, and it was just the two of them.

"Luke meant what he said," Brian told her. "We're a family. I want you to be part of it." His eyes burned into hers like burnished torches. "I love you, Regan, and I want you for my mate. My wife. Can you handle that?"

Could she? Hadn't she, in fact, already decided that? She inhaled a deep breath and let it out slowly.

"Yes. Yes to everything."

With a shout of joy, Brian lifted Regan in his strong arms and carried her upstairs, taking the steps two at a time.

"I think we could both use a good, hot shower, don't you think? I've been dreaming about getting you in that shower again."

He reached into the shower to turn on the water then stripped the clothes from both of them. His large, warm hands cradled her face, and his mouth descended on hers. His lips moved over hers, his tongue tracing the seam before pushing inside her mouth. She opened for him, and the sensation of that hot tongue tasting every inch of the warm cavern was like being brushed with a live wire. Electricity shot through her body, sparking every nerve and making her shake with need. When he lifted her into the shower she wasn't sure if the steam was coming from the water or their bodies.

Brian reached for the bottle of shower gel, poured some into his hands and worked it into a rich lather. His hands stroked the lather over her body, beginning with her shoulders, smoothing over her skin. Slowly, he spread the bubbles over the slope of her breasts, his thumbs chafing her hardened nipples. With thumb and forefingers, he pinched each one lightly, sending spikes of pleasure straight to her cunt.

He moved slowly over her body, lathering and rinsing, his mouth following the path of his hands. He sucked lightly at the sensitive place where her neck and shoulder met, biting it gently, and placed an open-mouthed kiss on the hollow of her throat where her pulse beat hard.

With great care, he let his hands and mouth travel from her breasts over her tummy to her mound, tugging at her curls with his teeth as he lowered himself to his knees. His slick

fingers outlined the length of her labia, separating them so he could slip one finger inside her. Regan rocked back and forth on it, tiny quivers racing through her pussy, her fingers digging into his shoulders. Sensations jolted through her, heating her blood and accelerating her heartbeat.

"More," she begged. "Please."

Brian's chuckle was harsh, edged with desire, as he slipped a second finger in next to the first, then a third, curving them to find her most sensitive spot in her vagina, rasping them against the slick, hot flesh.

"Oh, God," she moaned, rocking her hips harder.

Brian pressed his thumb against her swollen clit, rubbing back and forth as he fucked her with his fingers. One hand slid around to cup her buttocks before he trailed his fingers into the cleft between her cheeks. The tip of one finger pressed against the tight pucker of her anus and sensuous thunderbolts raced to every nerve.

When he removed his hands, she cried out at their absence, but in a moment, he brought them back to her body, thick with fresh, rich lather. Coated with the gel, his fingers slipped easily back into her body, and as he finger-fucked her cunt, he pushed one digit into the hot well of her rectum. As he slid it in to the knuckle, his thumb pressed against her clit again, and without warning, she exploded. The walls of her pussy clamped down on his fingers as they clenched over and over again, and her entire body shook with the force of her release.

Brian eased her through the aftershocks until her body was limp and lax again, then he rose to his feet and poured more gel into his hands as his mouth captured hers in a gentle kiss.

"That's just the beginning," he told her.

When she held out her hands for gel to lather on his body, he shook his head. "Tonight is for you, darlin'. I owe it to you. I've taken you quickly and selfishly too many times in the past couple of days. Now, I want to make sure there is no part of your body that isn't pleased."

He washed and rinsed quickly then turned off the water, dried them both and carried her to the bed. Before she could catch her breath, he had her flat on her back, knees bent, and

he was kneeling between her thighs. When he opened the lips of her sex, he stared at her, a hot light blazing in her eyes.

"Jesus, Regan. This is the most gorgeous cunt I've ever seen. I don't think I'll ever get enough of it."

He bent his head and traced the length of her slit with his tongue, his thumbs squeezing the lips of her pussy as he lapped her length again and again. Regan thrust her hips at him, but he was determined to take his time, lazily tracing every inch of her sex with the tip of his tongue, his wide shoulders holding her thighs apart. Her skin felt stretched too tight, and hot and cold shivers raced over her body as his devil's tongue teased and tormented her.

Her body came to life again, nerves humming, muscles tightening. When Brian finally thrust his tongue inside her waiting vagina, her whole body clenched. Then he began the slow torment again, slipping his tongue in and out of her in a slow, fucking motion while his thumb was busy with her clit, rubbing it, brushing it lightly, pinching it. Just as she approached the edge of her climax he withdrew, moving to place rows of kisses up and down the insides of her thighs, his mouth tracing a line from ankle to hip and back again.

"Please," she begged again, fire raging inside her and her blood pounding in her ears.

Then he began again, taking tiny bites of the lips of her pussy and just the tip of her clit before fucking her with his tongue again. Its rough surface lit every nerve in the walls of her vagina, her cream showering down on him and pouring into his mouth.

When he backed off again, she was sure she'd lose her mind. She was ready to promise him anything if he'd just let her come.

The low, keening sound rumbling from her throat brought forth that devil's chuckle from him again.

"Pinch your nipples for me, darlin'." His voice was thick with lust and pleasure. "Come on. Pinch them hard, and I'll let you come."

Regan moved her hands to her nipples, pinched them and tugged on them as she hitched her hips at Brian's head. This time when he thrust his tongue back inside her, he increased the pace of its movement and pinched her clit, hard.

Her orgasm roared down on her, spinning her into a whirlpool of sensation, electricity crackling around her as she convulsed over and over again. Each time the spasms slowed, he

launched her to yet another plane, another level. In the midst of the most intense climax yet, he lifted his body, and she faintly heard the tearing of foil and the snap of latex.

Then he was inside her, the walls of her cunt clasp him as the tremors of her climax shook her again and again. As they slowed, Brian began to move, rolling his hips and thrusting inside her with long, slow strokes. She was caught on the rack of pleasure, stretched on it, her body not her own anymore as wave after wave of sensation rippled through her.

"I'm going to come, Regan," he gasped. "I can't hang onto it any longer."

"Come," she cried, wrapping her legs around his waist and dragging his body tightly to hers.

With an explosion she was sure shook the house, they came in one gigantic orgasm, bodies shuddering and convulsing, her liquid heat bathing his latex-clad cock as he spurted his hot semen. The pleasure was so intense she was sure she wouldn't survive it. Over and over, the spasms rocked them, her blood roaring in her ears, her heart thundering against her ribs. She spun out on a whirlwind of sensation, her body answering his, his cock pounding into her as he pushed her from one level of pleasure to the next.

At last, he collapsed on his forearms, dragging air into his oxygen-starved lungs. Regan struggled to get her own breath, the thundering of her heart so loud she was sure he could hear it. Little tremors raced over them again and again as their bodies relaxed from the peak of climax. Finally, he collapsed and rolled to the side, taking her with him. Her legs still wrapped around his waist held him tightly inside her body.

"Give me a minute." His voice was ragged. "I'll be right back."

He took a moment in the bathroom to dispose of the condom then he was back, holding her close against him.

"Did you mean what you said before?" he asked, brushing damp strands of her hair back from her face. "That you'll marry me? Because I fell in love with you the minute I saw you. I knew you were mine, but you could be taking a risk with me. You know that."

She nipped at his chin. "Because of the wolf gene? The shifter thing?"

"That's not something everyone can live with. Besides, the eight of us left from our original pack are continuing to reach out to other orphans and form a new council if we can."

He hand idly stroked her back, trailing over the curve of her ass and walking up and down her spine.

"I guess I'm like Sierra," she said. "I'm not nearly as shocked or stunned or whatever as I should be." She grinned. "I actually find myself fascinated by it." Her grin disappeared. "I told you I love you, too, Brian, and I meant it. For who and what you are. Whatever comes along, we'll handle it together. Besides, I may have resources that can help you in your search for others."

"You'd do that?" He lifted his head and looked at her face, eyebrows raised.

"For you, I'd do anything," she said in a husky voice. "This business with Greg and Lisa taught me that you can't turn your back on any pleasure in life. I want to be with you, whatever that means."

"Then, darlin', get ready for a long, hard ride."

His mouth took hers in a kiss that stole her senses. She wrapped her arms around him and held on tight.

About the Author

I always wanted adventure and change in my life, and I certainly got it. I grew up in Maine, a beautiful place to live, then lived in the Midwest and Florida. Now I make my home in the Hill Country of Texas, truly God's chosen place on earth. My husband, David, is a sixth generation Texan, tracing his roots here back to the time when Texas was a Republic, so retiring here was a dream we finally fulfilled.

I've had a lot of firsts in my life – first female sports report on The Michigan Daily at the University of Michigan; first woman to own a rock and roll agency in Detroit, the home of Motown; first woman president of the Pasco (Florida) Economic Development Council.

I graduated from the University of Michigan with a double major in English and History, and a minor in Economics, and went on to have at least four careers. When my children were small, I satisfied my need for writing by working for weekly newspapers. I had a wild and wacky time managing rock and roll bands. I joined the insanity of retail with a string of shoe stores. I worked in fundraising, public affairs and community relations. But writing fiction was always my dream. I had a lot of stops and starts, but it wasn't until we retired that I could devote myself to it full time.

My wonderful husband, David, encourages me and supports me in my dream. Our children are all grown and on their own, and are my biggest fans.

When I'm not writing I'm an avid reader – anything and everything – and watching football, especially my beloved Michigan Wolverines. David and I golf and target shoot, and of course enjoy life in the gorgeous Texas Hill Country, where most of my stories are based.

I am a member of Romance Writers of America, and San Antonio Romance Authors, Diamond State Romance Authors, and Passionate Ink chapter of RWA.

Email: desireeholt@desireeholt.com

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

Also by Desiree Holt

Crude Oil
Brit Party: Fourplay
Beg Me
Afternoon Delight
Heatwave: Summer Spice
Down and Dirty
The Edge of Morning
Night of the Senses: Carnal Caresses
Caught in the Middle: Swingtime

Total-E-Bound Publishing



www.total-e-bound.com

Take a look at our exciting range of literagasmic™
erotic romance titles and discover pure quality
at Total-E-Bound.