

Moon Illusion

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The
Moore
Werewolves

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Moon Illusion: The Moore Werewolves

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Chapter One

Gina took a deep breath and opened her eyes. The scene was the same. The deserted road, the fresh scent of pine needles, the brisk breeze of late fall. And the wrecked car leaning drunkenly against a tree; every panel dented, every window smashed.

She shook her head, still hoping she'd somehow wake up to find she'd been dreaming.

Didn't seem as if that was going to happen.

Mesmerized by the sight of the car, she clutched her sweater closer. Within seconds of the front tire blowing she'd lost control, skidding across the rain-slick bitumen. She'd wrapped herself around the steering wheel—her knuckles were still sore from the strength of her desperate clutch—and watched the world spin sluggishly as the car rolled down the embankment and landed up against the tree with a bone-jarring *thunk*.

Then she was standing out here, cold and damp in the drizzling rain, with no memory of scrambling from the vehicle and scurrying to safety.

She glanced around again, but still no one had come running. Okay, so it was the middle of the

forest, she counseled herself, but that wasn't how it happened in the movies. *Someone* always came to the rescue. And there was no way the heroine would ever be left standing in the rain.

Alone.

Not a good thought, that one. Dusk had fallen early, and it was at least five miles back to town. If she was going to walk, she'd better get started.

She flinched at a rustle deep within the trees. Her hair was plastered to her neck, and she yanked it off her skin. This was not the time to start thinking about all those half-remembered tales of werewolves in the forest. Bigfoot too, she mused. Or was it called Sasquatch around here?

Another crash, louder this time, and closer. Just a branch falling, she assured herself. There's no such thing as werewolves. Or monsters. Or mad, chainsaw murderers...

She hugged herself tight, giggling a little hysterically, and turned towards the road. Definitely past time to start walking.

The rumble of an approaching car, its headlights cutting a bright swathe through the looming trees, was the sweetest sound. With the way her imagination was acting right now, she'd have considered accepting a lift with Jack the Ripper. Anything to get out of the forest that seemed to be pressing closer every minute she stood here.

* * * *

A stranger was standing on her front porch. No, on

looking closer, she could see the stranger was *pacing* on her front porch. Who the hell...?

Gina stared at him for a few seconds longer.

"This is your house, isn't it, honey?" Mrs. Chapman sounded worried. She was an elderly lady and had clearly been upset both by coming across the accident and having to drive at night in the rain. Gina wasn't quite sure which one was worse — she'd heard plenty about both on the ride home.

She forced a smile. "Yes, thank you. I was just wondering about the man on the porch."

Mrs. Chapman squinted near-sightedly across the yard. It was little wonder she didn't like driving after dark when her vision was so bad.

"It's Nathaniel Moore." She nodded amiably back towards Gina. "Jack Moore's son," she added.

"Umm..."

"The realtor. You know, Moore Property."

"Oh." The realtor? Oh, God. She'd forgotten...The realtor!

"Oh, yes. He only moved back to town a few months ago when Jack retired. He comes along to bingo at the church hall every Wednesday now, and..."

"Thank you so much, Mrs. Chapman. But I really have to run. I'd forgotten I had a rental inspection booked in for this afternoon." Gina paused as an odd thought struck her. "*Nathaniel* Moore goes to bingo every Wednesday?"

"No, silly! Jack does." She jabbed her with a sharp elbow. "You should look smart there, girl. Nathaniel's quite a catch."

Gina slid across the seat, wincing as the damp fabric of her skirt caught on the vinyl. She hesitated before closing the door, then simply smiled and waved as the car pulled out onto the street. It didn't look like Mr. Quite-A-Catch Moore was in the mood for watching any more social chit chat.

At least he'd stopped pacing but, now she was closer, she could see the tension in his shoulders and just how tightly his pen was gripped in his hand. His very large hand. She could also see why he was considered such a catch.

Early thirties, maybe? A good six feet tall, thick brown hair that looked softer than the fur on her favorite old teddy bear, and deep brown eyes. *Cranky* deep brown eyes, she had to admit, but they'd surely be the color of melted chocolate when he smiled. Or thick, rich treacle. It was hard to tell.

Gina pulled herself together. Well, it didn't matter in the slightest if he happened to smile at her or not. He was here to do her annual rental inspection. She was only—she glanced at her watch—half an hour late. She screwed her eyes closed in embarrassment. She was never late for anything. But half an hour, and he was still waiting?

She bounded up the three shallow steps until she was on a level with him. She held out her hand. "Good afternoon, Mr. Moore. I'm Gina Longmire. Sorry to have kept you waiting."

"I was about to leave." He grasped her outstretched hand and shook it brusquely. "Well, we might as well..."

His mouth dropped. As close as they were

standing, even in the fading light he had to have noticed just how soggy she was. Gina fumbled for her keys, refusing to look up. Until right that moment, she hadn't realized she'd left her sweater in Mrs. Chapman's car. Then, when he ran his eyes idly over her body—probably running a quick calculation on the value of her clothes, she thought—she saw with dismay just how indiscreet her lightweight skirt and blouse had become.

Okay, so they were practically see-through. And clinging to every curve. Thank goodness she'd worn a lacy bra this morning because, if he cared to look, he could see it clearly. And going by his stunned reaction, he had noticed that particular fact.

"What the hell happened to you? And why aren't you wearing a coat? It's got to be close to freezing out here!"

The door finally swung open, and she slammed it irritably behind him. A small puddle formed on the timber floor as she stood there, already steaming gently in the centrally heated warmth. One more thing to clean up, she noted before meeting his stare.

"If you must know, my car just went off the road in the Oldham Forest. It's raining, I'm wet." Gina smiled sweetly. "So, if you'll excuse me, I'm going to pop upstairs and get changed." She nodded towards the clipboard he held under his arm. "Feel free to get started and I'll be down shortly."

She spun on her heel and stalked across the small entry towards the twisting staircase. It wasn't easy to appear so completely unconcerned by his scrutiny when every movement set off a new cascade of drips.

“Oh, and my coat? I daresay it’s still in the car.”

Gina flung her hair back and headed upstairs, just catching the adorably confused expression on his face. She shook her head at her own thoughts, groaning. Adorably confused? Puh-leeze.

She looked like something the cat had just dredged up from the bottom of a slime-filled swamp and he was, as Mrs. Chapman had so neatly put it, quite a catch. Understatement of the millennium! He was drop-dead gorgeous, and the sparks that had shot up across her palm when he’d shaken her hand had contained enough heat to warm her through despite the soggy clothing.

But in a town this small, he was sure to be taken—no matter what the bingo gossip insisted. And even if he wasn’t, well, why would he be interested in her? New to town. A boring middle manager at the executive retreat down the road. Oh, and new to town. Polite as everyone was, in the twelve months she’d been here, she’d noticed that the locals kept to themselves.

She snorted as she stripped off her sodden clothes. Besides, he was a realtor. That made him overconfident, way too sharp, and possibly dishonest. How would he see her? She glanced at the usually modest navy skirt and blouse lying in a damp heap on the bathroom floor. Conservative? Boring?

Probably.

But, damn, he was cute.

* * * *

Surprisingly uncomfortable, Nate flipped through the pages on the entry report for her house and started the inspection. Odd really, he thought. He'd never felt at all awkward poking through someone's house before. It was his job. And it wasn't like he was ferreting through her cupboards or anything. Still...

There was something about her. The way she'd stood there, as good as naked in front of him, totally unselfconscious, and coolly told him to get on with it. Any other woman with that body would have stood there preening, making sure he got an eyeful of every luscious curve.

For the first time in an age, he felt his cock stir—uninvited. Sure, he bedded plenty of women—why not, when they practically threw themselves at him—but he was actually *interested* in her. There was something fascinating about that slightly distant hauteur, that attitude of 'look if you want; I don't really care.'

He almost growled at the thought. He'd make her care, all right!

Whoa boy! She was a client, not a bitch in heat to be taken by whichever wolf was closest. And it was way too close to the full moon to be having thoughts like those. Now wasn't a good time to be testing his self-control.

Wolf. Yeah. He grimaced. It wasn't like he wanted to try explaining *that* to her anyway. Last time he'd attempted to date someone from outside the werewolf community, she'd run screaming. And not in the way he liked to make a woman scream, either. Oh, yeah, he'd like to see Ms. Conservative Longmire

naked and screaming his name in orgasm.

The kitchen, he'd start in the kitchen. He smiled at his own imagination. It was so easy to visualize her standing right here in that tantalizing—clinging—wet fabric. Maybe making her lose some of that steely control of hers. The kitchen was so much less personal.

Or maybe not. Even here she'd stamped her own personality—but in a non-permanent way, the realtor in him noted approvingly. Conservative dark blue curtains, a healthy row of potted violets on the windowsill, and a cheerful checked tablecloth held in place with timber salt and pepper cellars. He made a note on his clipboard then hunkered down to look in the oven.

"Nice ass," her voice drawled from the open door behind him. My God! Had she really just said that? Surely he was imagining things.

He jerked upright, favoring her with the slow, sexy smile he knew was guaranteed to turn any woman to instant mush.

Maybe the smile had been overkill... She was already beet-red, her hand was clamped over her mouth, and her eyes were wide with horror. It seemed she'd been just as surprised by the comment as he was.

Nate couldn't help it—he grinned. Gina Longmire sure was cute when she was embarrassed. His let his gaze trace over her face. There was a faint shadow under one eye and, somewhat belatedly, his mind kicked into gear.

Shit! She'd just been in a car accident and, no

matter how minor, she had to have been shaken up by it. The last thing she needed was to have him teasing her. With conscious effort, he smiled again; a nice friendly smile, the sort you'd expect from a neighbor—or your friendly neighborhood realtor.

"I'm sorry, did you say something?" It wasn't easy, but Nate managed to look faintly quizzical.

"Huh?" She dropped her hand and straightened, instantly grasping the metaphorical lifeline he'd thrown. "No, I don't think so."

There, problem all smoothed over.

He smiled again, waving towards the oven. "I was just checking the oven."

Nate could have kicked himself. That was a really dumb opening line in a seduction. There were so many other, better ways to start out.

Hang on... Seduction? Hadn't he just told himself she was off-limits? He was sure he had. Obviously not all of him had been listening because seeing her again, even covered from head to toe in worn old jeans and a football sweater, his cock had sprung to life, demanding he do something about her. To her.

He winced as his cock swelled. Wet and near-naked had been nice, but now he was having fantasies about fucking the neat and wholesome girl-next-door! Oh, no. He shook his head gently. He'd *always* preferred his women tall and polished. Slick make-up, expensive hair, gym-toned bodies. And now he couldn't drag his eyes away from what was almost the opposite. There was something... different—no, special—about her.

Nate tried to figure out what it was, but it kept

eluding him. Gina was average height and comfortably slender with nice hips and breasts. His cock strained against his jocks and he hurriedly looked higher. Nothing notable there either. Her eyes were a pretty standard shade of hazel, her light brown hair shoulder length and tied back in a functional ponytail.

"It works."

"What does?" He had to hold in a groan. How long had he been standing there staring like some love-struck college boy?

"The oven." Her voice sounded strained. Small wonder, after everything that had happened this afternoon.

Nate put on his best professional voice, thanking the stars for all the years of practice at pretending to be something he wasn't—after all, who wanted to know they had a werewolf for a next-door neighbor?

"Of course." He made a small note on his clipboard, "but it's part of the routine to check for cleanliness."

And I passed?" Her single raised eyebrow was the only hint of displeasure.

"Never thought you wouldn't," he assured her. "It's all just routine."

He looked down at the paperwork again, hoping like hell she wouldn't notice the very suspicious bulge in his trousers. Even when she was looking at him like that, he wanted her. And, considering she had the same thoughtful gleam in her eyes that he imagined she'd have if she was considering how best to squash a spider, that was saying something. He was

obviously quite desperate.

When he turned back, he found she'd perched herself on the edge of the table, legs dangling, watching him. Damn. His randy imagination had instantly stripped her, suggesting how easily he could push her onto her back and take her right there. Right now. He could bury himself to the balls in her pussy and watch her eyes cloud as the orgasm took her.

He shook his head again, and the image faded. She was still on the table and still fully clothed. Definitely not lying back on her elbows, legs enticingly spread to show a cunt wet with desire. It was a shame, really...

Okay, that did it. He was going to ask her on a date, hopefully get invited back afterwards, and get her out of his system. Otherwise, the continual hard-on was going to kill him. Either that, or he'd go mad as his brain kept slotting her into the starring role in each of his favorite fantasies.

He'd just opened his mouth to speak when the front door swung open with a gust of icy air, and a short female barreled into the kitchen. At least he thought she was female. It was kind of hard to tell under all those clothes.

Gina looked up and squealed in delight. "Megan. I'm so glad you're here!"

"Gina-honey-I-just-heard-are-you-all-right-Mrs.-Chapman-said-your-car's-been-written-off-you're-not-hurt-are-you?"

The newcomer didn't pause for breath or an answer, but pulled Gina off the table and into a giant bear-hug. Small as her friend was, Gina was

swamped, and she had to tug quite hard to get released.

Gina smiled. "I'm fine, hon. Just a few little scratches and bruises"

She wrote off her car? God! The way she'd behaved he'd assumed she'd just skidded off the road on the ice or something...Was that little bruise her only injury? Geez, she'd been lucky. He stared at her with newfound admiration.

Nate cleared his throat, suddenly awkward, and waved away the invitation to join them for coffee.

"How about I come back and finish this off tomorrow?"

Gina smiled, a genuine smile that lit up her face. "Would you mind? That'd be great."

"Of course not. You should have said something earlier."

"I did."

"Yeah, but..." He grinned in embarrassment. "I didn't realize you meant you'd had a proper accident. You're so calm."

Laughing, she led him to the door. "I always am. See you tomorrow, Mr. Moore."

He grasped her hand in firm handshake. "Nate. I insist."

"And I'm Gina." She giggled, a surprisingly girlish sound. "I feel so old when I get called Ms. Longmire."

Nate grinned back. Tomorrow. He'd ask her out tomorrow.

Chapter Two

Gina collapsed into the sofa with a sigh, burrowing down between the cushions and curling her legs up beside her. Thank goodness he was gone. Now there was no reason for her *not* to fall to pieces. Megan certainly wouldn't mind.

Megan handed her a mug of hot chocolate. She wrapped her fingers around it appreciatively. She was still cold and huddled into the throw rug as Megan looked at her thoughtfully.

"So, what happened?"

Gina waved a hand vaguely. "Blew a tire. Ran off the road."

"Are you sure?" Megan wandered around the room, casually straightening a crooked picture and realigning the magazines on the coffee table. She stood back, eying them critically before making a further tiny adjustment. "Because this isn't the first accident you've had."

She was almost offhand about it, Gina marveled. Just throwing the statement out there like it was a perfectly reasonable proposition. She would have liked to shake her friend—didn't she realize that was

exactly what she *didn't* need to hear right now. "Why would someone want to kill me?" she asked instead.

Megan settled into the armchair opposite before answering. "Three accidents in a week would be suspicious on its own, but they all could have been deadly. Someone 'accidentally' pushes you off the footpath and into traffic; a pot plant falling from a balcony misses you by inches. Now this. It can't be a coincidence."

Gina stared across at her and spoke slowly. "Maybe not, but why? No one has any reason."

"Don't they?" Megan leaned forward, "What about Cain?"

"Oh, but he wouldn't..." She couldn't finish the sentence.

Megan raised her eyebrows. "Wouldn't what? Wouldn't want to? Wouldn't be able to? Don't try and tell me he doesn't have a motive."

Gina felt the color draining from her face as Megan's words sunk in. He did have a motive, one she didn't want to consider.

"But he's family," she pointed out.

"So? He'll also be very rich family when you're dead."

Gina chewed her lip in agitation. It was true. Under the terms of their mother's will, her half-brother Cain would inherit her share of their trust fund if Gina died before him. Their inheritance stayed in trust until they turned thirty—for Gina that was only a few days away. After that, it was up to her where she willed her money.

She shook her head. "No. If nothing else, he

wouldn't have the guts to do something like this."

"What about Alan?" Megan's voice was a sibilant whisper, gliding across the room.

Gina ignored the suggestion, standing up to switch on the lamps in a flurry of movement. Alan West was the local sheriff. He was also, unfortunately, her stepfather.

"Well?" Megan prompted.

Gina nodded reluctantly. "I guess he could. But he's the sheriff, for God's sake! He wouldn't..."

Megan shrugged. "Sounds good to me. Who's going to believe any different if he says your death's an accident?"

She was right again. He'd be the least likely suspect. The locals all thought he was wonderful—a generous man who looked out for his family and really cared about the local community. He'd only got the job two years previously, but it had been enough for him to insinuate himself into the town.

Huh! If only they knew! He'd made her life a misery from the minute he'd married her mother, smarmily charming to everyone in public, but nasty the second they were alone. Even her mother, while not condemning Gina's dislike of her new stepfather, never believed just how vicious he could get. He never left a single bruise, but the mental scars had lasted for years.

It had been a cruel fate that had had her multinational employer transfer her to their newest resort. The last place she wanted to be was close to her stepfather and weasel-like half-brother, but she couldn't refuse that sort of promotion. And the only

town within commuting distance of the Oasis Retreat was Two Oaks, the same town where Alan West was sheriff.

“So...?” Megan was fidgeting, impatient with the long spell of quiet.

“I guess.” Gina lowered herself back onto the sofa. “But even if it is him, what do I do about it? I can’t exactly report it to the sheriff, can I?” she scoffed.

It was a feeble attempt at bravado, and she knew it. The whole thought of someone disliking her so much swamped her with memories of the past. It had seemed like a lifetime ago when she’d been so lacking in self-esteem she’d not even bothered applying for college and had jumped at the opportunity to take on a junior clerical role with the Oasis Group. Her stepfather had sneered at her too many times. He’d told her she was worthless, she had no ability, no potential, was ugly, that no one could possibly ever like someone like her...

And now it all came back in a rush of fear and self-loathing. Once again, someone thought she was worthless—so worthless she could be killed and no one would even notice. No one would even care.

Was she really that dull a person? Gina lowered her head, her face in her hands, and tried to concentrate on positive things. For the first time in years she couldn’t think of any, and she was horrified by the tears that started to fall. Oh, God, and now Megan was going to think she was useless too.

She felt someone settle onto the sofa beside her, and a pair of arms wrapped firmly around her shoulders. Megan. A hand started to stroke her

neck... calming... soothing. She felt just like a little child again. Safe – and loved.

Megan was so close she could feel her heart beating, its rhythm jarring against her own. She snuggled closer. Now she could feel the warm moisture of Megan's breath tickling the fine hairs at her nape.

"You're not alone, honey," was breathed into her ear. "Not any more."

"No." She wasn't alone.

Megan's arm nudged her breast, her hand brushing softly over her nipple as she moved. Gina sighed, happy again, and relaxed. She barely even felt the careful stroking as Megan's fingers again brushed over her nipple, but she felt it pebbling in her bra.

The fabric was rough against the sensitized skin, and she rubbed at it irritably, cursing her choice of clothing. The only reason she'd fished it out from the back of the drawer was the memory of Nate standing in her entry, dominating it, and staring through her blouse to the lace demi-bra that barely covered her. She hadn't worn this horrible old thing for years but had instinctively snatched it up and put it on under her sweater. It wasn't the slightest bit sexy – probably the reason she'd chosen it, she realised ruefully. It was less Nate she had to worry about than her own reaction to him.

* * * *

Nate stared into the mirror, his eyes fixed on the trickle of red seeping down his chin. His beard grew

faster near full moon, and he tended to shave twice a day, but he hadn't nicked himself in years. This is what not paying attention does, he cautioned himself, knowing it was a wasted thought the moment it slipped into his head. He'd left her two hours ago and he was still horny. Shit!

A shadow loomed in the doorway to the bathroom, leaning negligently against the doorframe as he sniffed the air. "Been hunting, bro? I smell fresh blood."

Hunting? He wished... Preferably catching today's woman of choice and bringing her home to play with. Maybe he'd even want to keep her.

"I cut myself shaving, you idiot," he snarled, watching the shadow step further into the room. Once in the light, he was startlingly similar in looks to Nate, but considerably larger.

Sebastian Moore grinned and ruffled his little brother's hair. "I know that, you goose. I was teasing."

Nate snorted, and went back to rinsing the shaving cream from the sink.

"Seriously though, are you going on the prowl tonight? We're all going for a run."

'All' meant his brother, as well as his cousins Rafe and Rob. They'd grown up together, and it had been years since the old gang of four had regularly run wild in the forest. Not since they'd been pups, really.

"You're two nights early, aren't you?" he growled, still unreasonably annoyed about the tiny cut.

Sebastian smiled back placidly. "You know how crowded it gets in the forest at full moon. We thought

we'd have an extra night out—just us.”

It was tempting—and it might even help him to forget about Gina Longmire for a few hours. His family were the alphas of the area, and the only ones who could change whenever they wanted. On full-moon nights when all the betas changed, there were a lot more werewolves about. Sebastian was pack-leader, so he had to be seen to be involved in the local werewolf community. Nate usually preferred to stay home and watch TV.

He wiped his towel roughly over the basin and tossed it in the clothes hamper in the corner. “Yeah, I’ll come with you.”

“Good.” Sebastian winked. “Looks like you could use a bit of distraction.”

“Grrr.” Nate mock-growled at his mountain of a brother, thinking for a second before grinning evilly back.

He flung himself straight at him, shape shifting in mid air. Sebastian was sent careening backwards into the hall, but by the time he landed on the hard timber floor, he’d also changed. The two wolves wrestled their way down the hall, a tumbling mass of snapping, growling fur. They didn’t stop until Sebastian finally used his greater weight to hold Nate down, his neck clamped securely between Sebastian’s jaws.

Panting and laughing, Nate changed back, wiping away the slobber that clung to his skin. A second later, Sebastian did the same thing, buffeting him cheerfully on the shoulder as he stood up.

“Needed that, did you?” he asked, then pointed

down the hall. Stray hairs were scattered its entire length. "There's a reason we try to stay human indoors, you know."

Nate grinned. "Yeah, yeah, I know." He added sotto voce, "But isn't that why we replaced the carpet with timber? Easier to get the fur out..."

He was rewarded with a cuff about the ear. Sebastian was playing the role of big brother to the hilt tonight. "Just clean it."

"Should I eat dinner before we go out?" Nate asked innocently.

"Nah, just yesterday I heard the ranger saying he's got a problem with hares at the moment." Sebastian grinned broadly, his eyes bright with good humour. "I think we can help him out with that."

Good. A run was always much more fun when they got in a hunt at the same time. Unconsciously, he licked his lips. There was something extra nice about fresh meat eaten al fresco, plus he'd get the satisfaction of following the trail.. He loved to see the scents in three dimensions, and to hear the details of the forest around him. Just little things, but things he often didn't get time to appreciate when he was in human form.

Besides, surely it would take his mind off Gina.

Chapter Three

He was a goner. He knew he was. So much for all the good intentions he'd been so carefully fostering all day. Yesterday, even when she was wet and bedraggled, he'd been attracted to her. Okay, so it had been beyond 'attracted'. But, hell! The feeling had been within the bounds of sanity.

Today, however, was something else again. *She* was something else again. She'd greeted him at the door wearing a long suede skirt and a floaty peasant blouse. He could see even less of her skin than yesterday but somehow, she was just...

Trying to describe what she was doing to him wrapped his mind into knots at roughly the same time his stomach was melting into syrup and his cock was harder than rock.

He'd woken up, convinced yesterday was an aberration. She wasn't the slightest bit model-like, so it simply wasn't possible he'd harbored any thoughts of fucking her senseless—and on the kitchen table, of all places! She clearly wasn't his 'type.'

Positive he'd been imagining things, and thoroughly refreshed by the nighttime run in the

forest, he'd even started handing the file over so his property manager could complete the inspection. The only reason he'd been there himself yesterday was because Sarah was home with the flu.

Then he'd been struck by a vision of Gina perched on the table, naked, and the expression in her eyes—the pure need—had him telling Sarah that, purely for the sake of continuity, he would finish off the inspection himself.

He'd knocked on Gina's door, stared into warm brown eyes, and watched the elegant swing of her hips as she led him down the hall and into the kitchen. And he was lost. Maybe he should have stayed away after all.

"I, ah, won't be too long." Good opening, Nate—not! He would have given himself a swift kick in the shin if he wasn't afraid she'd notice and think him barmy—as well as inarticulate.

Gina smiled serenely and gestured towards the oven. "Be my guest. There's no hurry today."

That's what she thought! His cock was in a tearing great rush to find out if she was just as welcoming as in his imagination. Just as wet, and just as warm...

He stood up abruptly. "The oven's fine. Is everything working as it should?"

"Uh-huh."

Nate made a note on his clipboard. "Let me just check the condition of the walls and floors upstairs, then I'm done."

A few minutes later, having studiously avoided staring too obviously at her oh-so-feminine bedroom, he was back at the front door. He still hadn't thought

of a discreet way to introduce the subject and doubted that 'Wanna have wild sex with me?' would get him past first base.

He grasped her hand as he hesitated in the doorway, keeping hold of it way longer than a purely business-like handshake required.

"I was wondering if I could cook you dinner one night?" he asked.

Gina's calm demeanor barely wavered. "You can cook?"

He grinned, knowing his smile was lethal, and watched in satisfaction as her eyes dilated and her stance softened ever so slightly. "Of course." He pretended hurt, raising a small smile from her. "I'd offer to take you out but can't imagine you wanting to eat at the Oasis, and since the only other choice is Hank's Diner, I reckon you should take a risk on my cooking."

Gina joined in his teasing, mock-pouting. "Well, how could I possibly refuse such a wonderful invitation?"

"Good." Nate raised her hand to his lips, enjoying the way her eyes widened impossibly. "In that case I'll be back at six-thirty with some groceries." He let the anticipation stretch before carefully turning her wrist so it was palm up and placing a gentle kiss on her hand. He closed her fingers tight over the kiss and a slow smile, irrefutably wolfish, crossed his features. "Until tonight, then."

He watched her shudder, the movement so slight as to be almost imperceptible, and couldn't resist running his thumb lightly down her cheek and

tracing the outline of her luscious mouth. He'd save her mouth for later, but in the meantime...

His lips brushed lightly over her cheek before he pulled away and strode down the path to his car. Her eyes had still been half-closed when he'd glanced back over his shoulder, and he couldn't suppress a cocky grin. Obviously, he hadn't lost his touch.

* * * *

The pleasant mist surrounding her dissolved as his car pulled away, the distant sounds of early evening traffic filtering back into her consciousness. What on earth had all that been about? A man had never affected her quite like that before. It was almost like being...hypnotized?

Nah. She was being ridiculous. Stuff like that didn't happen in real life.

She was closing the front door when another thought struck her. What had he said just before he left? Something about dinner?

Oh.

My.

God.

Blood rushed to her face, and her hand trembled as she fastened the chain. Six-thirty. He'd be back to cook her dinner at six-thirty. She slumped against the wall. Nate Moore, Two Oaks's most eligible bachelor was going to be cooking her dinner. Here. Tonight.

And she'd agreed? She couldn't believe it. Wouldn't believe it.

But she had. She knew she had.

Damn.

And for *him* to cook *her* dinner? Couldn't get much more intimate than that.

Well, okay, yes, you could. He could be naked and cooking dinner...

Her imagination was certainly attempting to cast the deciding vote, and the erotic images flicking behind her eyes were sending her pulse throbbing between her legs. He was a realtor, she reminded herself impatiently — a *salesman*.

A vision of him standing in her kitchen, stark naked, sidled back into her head. Those fabulous, tight buns and a long, thick cock that would fill her very damp pussy quite nicely.

Gina glanced back towards the darkening street. She knew damn well that if she let him back through her front door, she was sending him a very clear message. She'd be telling him 'yes'.

Aw, what the hell! She *wanted* him to fuck her.

* * * *

She couldn't quite remember exactly why she'd said he could cook for her tonight. But she had. And now here he was, striding up her front porch with a sack of groceries under his arm. Apparently, when he said he was doing dinner, he really meant it.

And did the man ever do anything *but* stride? Mind you, he certainly had the body to pull it off. A fleeting memory of him walking away a few hours earlier crossed her mind. He had to have one of the best butts she'd recently had the privilege to perv on.

Nice, tight ass-cheeks, a good handful-and-a-half to each. Mmmm.

Then he was right in front of her, his nose practically touching hers, and that sexy smile just begging her to lean a fraction forward and...

Bad Gina. Bad.

Maybe yesterday's accident had done more damage than she'd realized? Her brain had been scrambled. *Had* to have been. What other reason could she possibly come up with for this completely out-of-character behavior?

Well, out-of-character *intention*, she amended. She hadn't actually done it.

Even while she was smiling automatically, moving aside, holding the door open for him, thoughts of a totally different kind were running wild in her head. He was seriously sexy, and he did seem to be coming on to her.

Unless she was reading him completely wrong?

Nah. The only local realtor didn't personally cook dinner for every tenant.

Did he?

Mrs Chapman's words dribbled into her mind. Perhaps he *did* cook dinner for every single, female client of the agency. It could help explain his reputation. And it was a pretty damn good seduction technique.

"Can I borrow some pots?"

His cheerfully called request echoed down the hall along with the sound of her kitchen cupboards opening and closing. While she'd been standing here daydreaming, he'd made it all the way into the

kitchen and—

And unpacked all the groceries...

Spread them out over the counter...

And half prepared a meal?

She stared in sheer disbelief. A large pot of water was bubbling on the cook top and he was calmly tipping a packet of pasta into it. Beside it, some kind of pasta sauce was simmering away, the dreamy scents of cream and bacon wafting towards her.

Hadn't it been only a few seconds ago that he'd been asking for pots and pans? What the hell was happening to her?

* * * *

Nate turned back to the stove so she wouldn't see his grin. *Definitely* hadn't lost his touch. Werewolves didn't go in for the whole mind-control thing like vampires did, but that wasn't to say they didn't have some abilities in that area. It had been years since he'd bothered...enhancing...the 'Moore experience' for whichever woman he'd chosen—usually they were so busy throwing themselves at him it was just a waste of effort.

But Gina was definitely different. For one thing, he'd actually had to work a little to get her to notice him properly. His grin widened as he listened to his own thoughts. He didn't sound half arrogant, did he?

He grunted softly. Well, so what? He had good cause for his confidence. All you had to do was ask any one of the women he'd had sex with. They'd all walked away very satisfied—if a little stiff—and so

would Gina. He smiled again at the idea. There was something about that lithe little body that just made him want to drop his trousers and take her up against the bench, or the fridge... or on the kitchen table.

Even this close to full moon, his control wasn't usually so shaky, or his imagination so vivid. He could almost *feel* his balls slamming against her cunt as his cock filled her until she screamed... Yeah, he did like to make a woman scream.

Nate glanced back towards Gina. She was still standing near the door, leaning against the architrave, a soft mistiness to her eyes. She was following his every movement, but her gaze kept dropping lower, before skipping back up to watch what he was doing at the stove. He turned fully towards her, grinning openly as he caught her staring at his bulging crotch.

It was probably time to let her off the hook, he figured, and let her gather her own thoughts—for a little while at least. He'd never used his mind skills to coerce a woman into sleeping with him—he'd seen what Sebastian, and his father before him, had done to the werewolves who had—but didn't think it hurt to focus her mind a little more specifically. Less thoughts about shopping lists, and more about just exactly what she wanted him to do to her. And if he could decipher those thoughts, well then, that was all the better.

"Would you mind setting the table?" he called cheerfully, watching as his words broke the spell.

Her eyes cleared and as her pupils contracted, the hazel brown of her irises seemed to change. Almost as if she was waking from some kind of luscious dream,

awareness slowly etched itself across her features. Her eyes swept abruptly to his face, and a blush slowly stained her cheeks as she realised where her eyes had been so firmly fixed.

"Where will I find the placemats?" he asked placidly, unwilling to embarrass her, and turned away to stir the sauce. "I hope you like carbonara, and I brought some fresh fruit for dessert," he continued.

"Yes?" she ventured cautiously, and crossed towards the cabinet closest to him.

She bent over, the same long skirt as this afternoon draping gracefully over her rear and highlighting her curves. She stood quickly upright, probably well aware of exactly what he was looking at, and placed two mats on the table.

He could hardly bear to take his eyes off her, to stop watching her unconscious sensuality as she wafted around the kitchen, casting the occasional hesitant glance back his way. Obviously, although she had no idea about the gentle mind games he'd been playing earlier, she knew something was awry.

Hell! Something was awry, all right! Since when was he entranced by softness, and femininity, and grace? If he didn't know better, he'd have said she was the one messing with *his* head.

Nate dumped the pasta into the drainer, cursing softly to himself. This wasn't supposed to be how it happened. He was here for simple, straightforward, recreational sex. Not that that wasn't still what he wanted—he wanted it with a vengeance. It was just that his emotions weren't supposed to be involved, and he certainly wasn't supposed to be getting the

warm fuzzies over a woman who appeared to be some modern version of Doris Day. Nice, and wholesome.

He shook his head abruptly, totally annoyed with himself. He was making her sound like some kind of food group, not a luscious woman he just couldn't keep his eyes off.

Chapter Four

Gina fidgeted with her cutlery, twirling her fork aimlessly between her fingers. When she noticed herself doing it, she used sheer mule-headed will power to force her hands to rest quietly in her lap. A few minutes later, she'd find herself playing with her wine glass, or her napkin, or the saltshaker, and the cycle would start all over again. She'd force her hands to her lap, only to find herself restlessly moving something else within moments.

This was so unlike her and, if anything, she was curious at the reaction he was causing. She certainly couldn't recall ever being so nervous around a man before, and definitely not in the exact same way that Nate made her nervous.

Really nervous.

She was no virgin, but nor could she say she'd ever been quite so aroused by something as simple as the single sideways glance he'd just cast her way. His eyes had been somehow...veiled—more an impression than a reality, she thought—but the heat in them had seared her, reducing her to a pile of ashes.

Very *needy* ashes, but ashes nonetheless. She couldn't imagine finding the energy to stand up and move away from the table ever again. Which was a pity, really. A single smoldering glance from those amazing eyes and all she could imagine was herself and Nate reduced to a tangled jumble of naked limbs on crisp linen sheets.

She wanted him, she longed for him. Her whole body was a blaze of electricity—surely he could see the tiny sparks glittering every time her skin brushed lightly over anything? The scrape of the tablecloth on her thighs was an unbearable mix of pleasure and pain, and the solid coolness of her fork in her hand was a pure torture to her overstressed senses.

She'd be certain it couldn't get any worse, positive it was nothing but her imagination's sex-starved response to having a genuinely handsome man sitting across from her at the table, then he'd look at her. A slow sweep from under those disgustingly long lashes, the darkness of his eyes seemingly beckoning her to him, drawing her closer, swallowing her, consuming her. Then he'd smile—a slow, ruthless smile—and somehow the intensity of the moment would glide away as easily as mercury, leaving no trace of its presence.

All she was left with was a gnawing sense of need, and a body demanding relief. Immediate relief. She wasn't sure she could sit through dessert without incinerating.

An interesting concept, that... Was it actually possible for her body to get any hotter than it was, or for the fine hairs on her arms to be any more affected

by the prickle of electrical current than they already were? She doubted it, but shifted uneasily in her seat at the idea.

Her nipples had hardened, were scraping against her bra, and she could feel an embarrassing trickle of fluid between her legs. She just didn't get like this. All horny and aroused and...desperate. She wanted him inside her like she'd never wanted another man. Her pulse was throbbing out her need, and she could feel a faint flush spreading across her cheeks and covering her body.

And on the opposite side of the table he was just sitting there calmly, smugly secure of his own desirability. Her blush deepened, her cheeks tinged a deeper red, and she tried to retreat within her own head. Okay, so she was apparently in dire need of release. Why else would her body behave like this around a man she barely knew?

The few things she did know about him weren't all that promising: he was arrogant, the town playboy, a salesman, and he was arrogant. Don't forget that bit, she cautioned herself as she stared over the table and into his eyes. She resisted the drowning suction but sat mesmerized, enchanted by what she saw.

No matter what, she had to accept that he was seriously good-looking—possibly the most handsome man she'd ever laid eyes on in real life. And he'd invited himself into her life, cooked her dinner, and now he was staring right back at her, his eyebrow hitched in question and his eyes gleaming in silent amusement.

Damn the man!

He knew she was trying to fight off her attraction to him and that...that...that...cocky bastard was just sitting there, grinning at her. Her temper flared. She'd show him!

Show him what? An insidious little voice inside her head was clinging onto the vision of them in her bed, her slight body overshadowed by his heavier legs, his hips holding her submissively beneath him as he stoked the fires somewhere deep within her, fanned them until her body was a raging wildfire, desperate for release.

Gina trembled. Could he really do what her imagination promised? Could a man really make her feel like that?

"Are you cold, babe?"

His voice reached around her, wrapping her in velvet warmth, comforting her sudden unease. The whole idea that a man could have so much control over her body scared her silly.

Or are you scared that a man could give you that much pleasure? the voice whispered enticingly. *Try it, it urged, What can you possibly lose?*

Myself?

Bah! Her conscience—or was it her very own personal devil?—went quiet, apparently disgusted with her indecision.

Other women have one-night stands. The voice was back, silky soft, enticing her to take action, to go get what she wanted.

He hasn't asked, she hissed back, feeling ridiculous. Was she going insane, or was she really having an argument with herself?

The little voice positively smirked. *He will.*

And that was it.

Through it all he'd been silently watching, his expression never changing, with that indolently amused grin firmly in place. Her eyes widened as she realized he'd observed the whole struggle and had actually enjoyed watching her fighting her own inner demons – and losing.

He knew.

There was a hint of complacency in the depths of his chocolate brown eyes. It was also in the humor lurking at the edge of his lips. Then there was the indefinable male arrogance in the way he watched her, as if he'd known all along she was going to be his that night. Damn him!

Gina squared her shoulders and smiled sweetly back. He may have thought she'd be panting in her eagerness to be his latest sex toy, but she was more than that. It was *her* choice and, tonight, she planned to be the one doing the using. His eyes promised lust and fulfillment, and she'd take it all without qualm.

Her lips twitched. Just the thought of using him as a kind of walking, talking human vibrator had sent a fresh trickle of warm moisture down her thigh. To have that kind of muscular strength totally at her command... Mmm.

* * * *

Nate struggled to hold his least threatening grin in place. Her thoughts crossed her face as blatantly as a child's. He'd watched desire, then need, then doubt

all flying across her face, and been inordinately relieved when the hunger returned to her eyes.

He would have known what her body wanted from streets away. His wolf instincts were fighting to the surface, the strong scent of her arousal inciting him to lean across the table and pull her to him – right now. Her blush had faded, but the pink of desire remained, and the tip of her tongue traced a soothing line around the lips she'd been unconsciously nibbling all through dinner.

He fought down his predatory instincts, the need to take her, to mate her, to make her permanently his, and instead reached a lazy hand across the table.

"How about we go into the living room for coffee?" he suggested mildly, careful to hide the ragged edge in his voice.

"Dessert?" she queried, her voice a siren's song beckoning him to rip her clothes off and fuck her senseless on the spot. And *then* think about all the wonderful things he could do with her body and the fruit he'd taken so much care choosing.

He smiled instead, ignoring his own body's demands for the moment. "I'll bring it in with the coffee," he said, accompanying the comment with a tiny mental push. If she didn't get herself out of the kitchen in the next few seconds, *she'd* end up as dessert. Which wasn't altogether a bad idea, he mused, glancing at the collection of berries and tropical fruits he'd rinsed and put aside while the pasta was boiling.

Fresh cream? He opened the fridge and upended the carton he'd bought into a jug he found in the

dresser.

Bowls? He considered for a few seconds then grinned, once again wholly the predator. Nah, totally unnecessary.

Spoons and a knife, however, he'd need if he didn't want to scare her. He may have had perfectly good claws that were ideal for peeling fruit, but he couldn't imagine her lying there quietly while he shape-shifted. He almost laughed at the image in his head – that of a werewolf calmly hulling and eating strawberries – and went back to his preparations.

"How do you take your coffee, baby?" he called through the door. Even in human form, his nose told him she drank it black with one sugar, but he didn't want to have to explain where he'd got that knowledge.

He waited for her reply, a little time-lagged by the slight compulsion he'd placed on her, and placed two mugs of sweetened coffee, the jug of cream, and a plate heaped high with fruit on a tray. Two spoons and a paring knife clattered as they landed on the tray and he glanced up, aware the sudden sound had broken his concentration. His gentle mind-spell had shattered.

His eyes gleamed hungrily and his teeth lengthened into fangs as he thought of the woman waiting on the other side of the door. By the time he stepped through, nudging the door closed behind him, his appearance was perfectly normal.

Gina had arranged herself on the lounge, curled into a corner of it to leave plenty of space for him. He accepted the unspoken invitation, watching her eyes

travel over the tray. She looked up at him expectantly as he settled and he smiled back, letting his reassuring warmth flow towards her. Before he'd thought about what he was doing, he'd let his body follow the same path as his mind. He leant towards her and scooped her into his lap, enfolding her protectively in his arms. As his mouth lowered over hers, he inhaled her scent and forced the wildness of the forest to lurk deep inside him. Her neck tipped, her lips parted, and he claimed her mouth as his own.

Chapter Five

Gina wasn't quite sure what she'd expected. Hunger? Desire? Strength? Lust, even?

Maybe.

But not this.

Everything slowed down, his passion suddenly on hold. Still there, but somehow...controlled. Waiting.

Well, she could wait. Right now, this was too nice.

Nice?

That wasn't a word she'd ever thought she'd use when it came to Nate Moore. But it was nice.

His lips were gentle on hers, coaxing her to join him in the kiss. His tongue flicked out, so swiftly she could almost have imagined it. But it was real. A hint of his heartbeat. The moisture of his mouth on hers. The sharp mint of toothpaste. His warm breath.

And the heat spread. Surrounded her. Wrapped her into her own little velvet world. Just her. And him.

Suddenly, the moment flared, grew. The warmth of spring became the sweltering heat of mid-summer, and the moment out of time was lost, swallowed by the return of his lust.

In an instant his arms had wrapped her closer to him, and his mouth ravaged hers. Helpless to resist, she found herself answering in kind, her own tongue delving deeply as she explored his mouth and lips.

Gone was the tenderness of moments before, replaced by a savage hunger that was almost frightening in its intensity. Almost, but not quite. There was nothing frightening in the way his hands ran smoothly up and down her sides; it was a soothing touch, making her feel something like how she imagined a cat would feel when it was being stroked.

His hands strayed gradually, almost absently, from their rhythmic caress along the side of her ribs and over her hips. He held her to him, his hands warming the small of her back as he pressed her hips into his, taking possession of her body as easily as he'd taken possession of her mouth.

A final hard kiss was pressed onto her lips, then he wrenched his mouth from hers and Gina found herself turned so she was somehow leaning forward over the arm of the chair, half kneeling on the sofa, her legs slightly spread and her arms trapped at her sides. Her bottom rested snugly against his groin: she wriggled against him, pleased with the evidence of his own arousal. As she moved, he grew harder, and she felt his breathing grow ragged before he yanked her hard up against him, restricting her teasing movements by holding her firmly in place.

That left his hands free to roam over her front, across her stomach and up towards her breasts. He'd sent a million fires roaring through her body, and the

slightest flutter of his breath on the back of her neck was enough to send new convulsions rocketing across her sensitized skin.

His lips were on her nape, his tongue a half-imagined instrument of delight as it swirled soft patterns that barely touched her. She could hear him murmuring into her neck; she couldn't understand the words, but knew instinctively what he was doing. Like a cat basking in the sun, she arched her back and stretched her neck, encouraging him to continue the sweet torture.

Gina *wanted* him with every fiber of her body. Emotions and commitment be damned, she was horny and becoming desperate for relief. The tiny, sane part of her that was still uninvolved in her body's reaction didn't for a minute believe he wanted anything other than a one-night stand. It would be a first for her, and she didn't care. If she experienced nothing else in her life, she wanted to be fucked by Nate Moore.

His hands still hadn't been anywhere near her breasts, yet she could feel her nipples abrading against the soft lace of her bra as they hardened. Her pussy was literally throbbing with her need. She was hot and swollen, and could actually feel all the extra blood that had raced down there, pounding in time with her accelerated pulse. And that had happened even before his hands had started their wicked stroking.

The feelings he was drawing out were at the same time too much and not enough. Totally overwhelmed, her eyes drifted closed. The soft light of the sole table

lamp seemed harsh and only added to her discomfort.

Discomfort? Or pleasure? She was so aroused it was hard to tell, but she knew what she wanted and struggled to free her hands, desperate to guide his hands closer to where she wanted to be touched.

Nate chortled in her ear, a deep sound of oh-so-masculine amusement that sent a fresh flurry of shivers coursing through her veins. Obliging, one hand dipped lower, his fingers stretching to brush over her pussy, which was still covered by her clothes. But her hands remained as securely caught against her sides as before, and she was vaguely aware that he meant her to savor every single nuance. She wouldn't be allowed to rush him.

The lightest touch of his fingers over her clit and she was shuddering as he teased her with only the *possibility* of an orgasm—and she was still fully clothed. Ever so slowly, his hand rubbed over her, finally settling with her pussy cupped in his palm. The added heat was almost unbearable. She tried to push herself against him, rubbing herself cat-like into his hand, but he chuckled again and pushed her body tighter into his, refusing her the freedom to pleasure herself with his hand.

"Please..." Gina hardly recognized her own voice, her plea half lost in the moan he wrung from her lips as a single finger slowly rubbed over the entrance to her pussy.

"Please what?" he whispered, his fingers starting to explore a little more thoroughly, apparently oblivious to her squirming.

Gina couldn't think, couldn't process a single

logical thought. All she knew was that the man behind her seemed intent on giving her the sort of orgasm she'd only dreamed about. Her entire world had been reduced to his hands and what he was doing to her.

She arched against him again, silently begging, so aroused by the sound of her own breathless little whimpers she couldn't even imagine asking for what she wanted. Surely he knew. He must have known what she wanted—needed—and was purposely holding back. She moaned again, rubbing her ass against his crotch as much as he'd allow, desperate for the orgasm he was keeping just out of her reach.

Finally, one hand moved up over her breasts, the other still firmly locked over her pussy. She flinched as he pinched a nipple, his thumb then running a soothing circle over it until she was again thrusting her breasts towards his hand.

Disappointment rushed through her as his hand kept moving but before she could do more than whimper a protest, she felt his fingers fumbling with the drawstring of her peasant blouse. As soon as he'd loosened it, he drew it over her head, the cooler air instantly pebbling her nipples impossibly harder. It was as if he'd finally run out of patience and, apart from a single fluttering caress, his hand went straight to her neck, pushing her further forward until he could snap the catch on her bra and thread it over her arms.

The same hand went immediately to her skirt, drawing it up over her knees and reaching down to grasp her panties. Within seconds, he'd folded her

over his arm, half stood to pull down the skirt and underwear, then rearranged her on the sofa. She was kneeling almost the same way, bent over the arm of the chair with her back to his chest, only this time he nudged her knees further apart, pushing his thigh between them until her legs were spread as far as possible.

Naked in front of him, her breasts and pussy exposed, her arms again trapped by her sides, she was vulnerable—and aroused. Unbelievably aroused. Gina could smell her own juices, could feel them trickling through her curls and running slowly down her thigh.

She looked down at herself, almost dismayed by her wanton behavior, and saw her nipples hard and dark against the creamy white of her skin. His hands were resting on her stomach, bluntly masculine against her feminine softness. As she watched, his thumbs started to move with a slow circling movement that soothed even as it aroused. Without thought, she leant her shoulders back into his chest, watching the way her nipples thrust proudly forward, begging for the attention of his fingers.

As her back brushed against his shirt the buttons dug into her skin and she realized that, although he'd stripped her naked, he was still fully dressed. Her eyes snapped shut, she felt her cheeks flame in embarrassment and his fingers simultaneously moved up to her breasts.

Any thought of modesty went out the window as she preened under his touch, practically purring as he again stroked her into a fever of longing. The more

aroused she became, the more erotic she found her nudity. The feelings fed one into the other until she was bucking against him, begging him to make her come.

Nate's mouth was back at her neck, nibbling and murmuring, his tongue lapping across her pulse, as he alternately twisted and pinched her nipples. The little bursts of pain only added to her pleasure, somehow intensifying everything he did. But still, he wouldn't let her come.

Then one hand moved down to her pussy, idly stroking her curls while the other pinched one nipple, then the other. Gina wriggled against the restraint of his arms, so desperate to make him touch her that for a moment she'd forgotten just how strong he was.

"I wonder what the little kitten wants?" he mused, his breath tickling her ear. "Does she want to be fucked, perhaps?"

Gina squirmed restlessly, her head tossing. "Yes. Please." The words were gasped out between moans as his fingers delved briefly into her entrance, careful not to touch her swollen clit.

Nate nipped sharply at her ear, sucking the lobe deep into his mouth and soothing it with his tongue. Her body trembled in response. She shivered as he licked it roughly, then blew a gust of cool air over it.

"Please..." Gina had never begged. Ever. For anything. "Please, fuck me. Please." The words sounded odd to her ears, but somehow right. She'd do whatever it took to get Nate to end this torture and just get on with it.

There was no warning. One second she'd been

squirming against him, begging him to fuck her, the next she was impaled on two long fingers, his other arm was looped around her waist and holding her down. She tried to lift her hips, to push herself up his fingers and drop back down again, but he wouldn't let her. His thumb was resting on her clit, and his fingers had spread, stretching her and somehow managing to massage her whole pussy at once.

With a sigh, she relaxed against him, forcing her eyes open to look down at his fingers spearing into her cunt. It seemed so intimate, seeing his hand thrust up between her legs, his fingers disappearing deep inside her. That alone sent the first tremors of an orgasm rocketing through her. Of their own accord, her eyes closed. She rocked back gently, reveling in the scrape of his nails against her womb.

His mouth fastened on her shoulder—she could feel where his teeth dug deeply into her flesh—and she tried to jump away, only to find herself held tight. Then he was thrusting his fingers in and out in a ferocious rhythm designed to send her straight over the edge before she could voice a protest—and tumble she did.

Her vision blackened with the intensity of the orgasm, the darkness relieved by bright comets of color that whirled behind her closed eyes. She was surrounded by them, free-falling into space, and sure that if the orgasm didn't end soon she'd never find her way back to earth. Nate didn't let up however, and her mind shattering release didn't stop him from rubbing gently on her over-sensitized clit.

Somewhere in the distance, Gina heard herself

scream as yet another wave overtook her, this one lifting her even higher. She was overwhelmed by sensation as every single cell in her body seemed to swell and burst, sweeping her up in a joyous ride that didn't slow but kept tossing her ever higher until, finally, she collapsed back into the security of Nate's arms.

Chapter Six

Nate's fingers ran repeatedly through Gina's hair, idly rolling the strands between his forefinger and thumb as he considered what he'd just done. He shuddered. For God's sake, he'd just bitten a woman. It was one thing to force a female ware into the traditional submissive posture, to hold her down with his teeth, but to see a regular woman in that role? Now, that was a problem.

A smile struggled across his mouth. Of course, it was a bloody good thing the fairy stories about the bite of a werewolf were just that—fairy stories. She wouldn't be waking up with long teeth and a once-a-month bad hair day, just a slightly sore neck where his teeth had broken the skin.

He leant closer and inhaled deeply, the fresh scent of woman filling his nostrils and his mind. She had her own special smell that went straight to his head. It was something like the earthy smell of a rainforest floor, but somehow sweeter. Rainforests and roses? He shook his head at his own imagination and let his tongue lap slowly over the small puncture marks. One thing werewolves did was heal quickly and, like

dogs, they licked their wounds clean.

Gina's taste was as provocative as her scent, and it took all his self-control to stop his tongue continuing the lazy exploration down her front and between her legs. Surely she'd enjoy waking up in the throes of another orgasm, licked into a frenzy by his tongue? He wanted to taste her pussy, almost as badly as he wanted to claim her with his cock. Heck, he wanted to see her wet with his cum, to watch it dripping back down her legs as he filled her cunt until it overflowed. He shifted uncomfortably—his thoughts definitely weren't helping his patience.

He'd covered her with a throw he'd snagged off the back of the sofa, but it slipped as he fidgeted. He hurriedly tucked it a little closer around Gina's waist, trying to hide the temptation, but was unable to resist touching the silky-soft skin on her exposed hip as he did. She'd collapsed on top of him after an amazing orgasm, one that just went on and on, and had fallen into a deep sleep. Hell, he'd fucked her senseless and he hadn't even got his cock inside her yet!

His cock was still rock hard, uncomfortably squashed under the dead weight of her sleeping body, but he couldn't begrudge her the rest. He'd obviously pushed her a lot harder than anyone else had ever done, and he'd hardly even started. She needed a little time to catch up before he introduced her to what sex with a Moore was really like.

In his mind he could see her going wild underneath him as he took her in every conceivable position. Rough and dirty, that was what he wanted. But was she up to it? He doubted it. But then again...

It was hard to tell. Not in his wildest dreams had he imagined Ms. Conservative Longmire turning into such an utterly abandoned—and wholly sensual—creature. She was seriously *hot*, and it wasn't at all what he'd expected.

Nate grinned at the thought. He'd been hoping for a bit of fairly ordinary vanilla sex, just enough to take the edge off his hunger and get her out of his head, and look at him now—lusting after her and totally impatient for her to wake up so he could get back to fucking her properly.

And fuck her, he would. It was his turn next.

* * * *

Gina awoke as cold cotton sheets scraped across her naked ass. She grumbled and shifted, her hand flailing as she reached blindly for the covers that were annoyingly out of reach.

"Uh-uh." The words positively dripped with masculine amusement.

Her eyes flew open as the memory of Nate's hands stroking her intruded on her dreams. He was sitting on the end of the bed, not even touching her, but heat flared under her skin as his eyes traced indolently over her naked body.

Her very wantonly sprawled, naked body.

Sure her blush spread all the way from her toes upward, she started to draw her legs together, her arms shifting to cover her breasts. Nate's grin grew, and he grasped one ankle, halting its progress across the sheets, again forcing her legs apart.

"You don't think I went to all the trouble of carrying you up here and arranging you so prettily, just to have you come over all modest on me, do you?"

Arranging her? Surely he couldn't mean he'd purposely...?

For an instant, his teeth gleamed. "You weren't particularly shy when I had my hand buried between your legs and finger-fucked you until you screamed."

Her blush deepened as his words brought back visions of her begging him to let her come.

"Put your arms back above your head," he urged, his face approving as she automatically obeyed his demand. "Beautiful." The single word was hoarse, his desire clear. "Now let me look at you."

Gina felt a tug on her ankle. The hand that had manacled it hadn't loosened, but the possessive grip felt somehow right. Not threatening at all. With a tiny sigh of acquiescence, she unlocked her muscles, allowing him to draw her legs further apart until she was again spread across the bed. Her covers, she saw, were in a heap on the floor. There was nothing to interrupt his view of her naked body.

"I..." She hesitated. Exactly what did she want? She'd certainly never had a man look at her with the same heat, the same *lust* as Nate Moore was looking at her right now.

He moved and her eyes were drawn downwards towards his bulging erection still hidden under his jeans. Instinctively, her fingers flexed.

There was no question but that he wanted her. And lying here under his heated gaze, she wanted him.

Every touch of his fingers, every stroke of his tongue against her skin was firmly imprinted in her mind, and her body was urging her to take everything that predatory gaze was offering.

Gina lifted her hands slightly, unconsciously beckoning, and moved restlessly against the sheets. She'd come for him—more gloriously than she'd ever imagined possible—but it wasn't enough. She wanted even more.

Slowly, mildly enquiring, he raised an eyebrow. "Yes?"

Dammit! Why wasn't he as desperate as she was? She wanted him over her, under her, *in* her. And she wanted to see him wracked by the same passion that was even now clouding her vision as she watched him closing in on her.

On his hands and knees he crawled up the bed towards her, stalking her. Yet there was something else hiding behind that lazy prowl. It was in his eyes, in the way they glittered as he stared down on her.

Thoroughly trapped now, his arms and legs spread to either side of her, pinning her in place, she smiled up a sultry invitation older than time itself. Slowly, she drew her hands down from above her head, equally slowly reaching up to undo the buttons on his shirt. He didn't flinch as she opened the halves wide, exposing his chest to her view for the very first time. A single finger brushed through the swirls of crinkly hair, tracing the solid outline of each taut muscle, then rested lightly on his flat nipple.

Slowly, wickedly, she placed the same finger in her mouth, enjoying the way his eyes darkened as they

followed the movement of her lips as she sucked her finger deep. Her tongue swirled out. His eyes glowed. Then, deliberately, she placed the damp finger back on his nipple, circling it until she felt him heave in a single deep breath. His eyes had never left her lips.

Amazed by her own daring, she returned the finger to her mouth, sucking avidly, fascinated by the sudden hitch in his breathing. It was something so little, yet she could affect him so easily. Confidence growing, her other hand dipped to his jeans, struggling one-handed with the button fly. She watched his face harden, then gasped as he lowered his weight carefully on top of her, instantly stopping her movement.

A tentative wriggle confirmed her status – trapped. Again.

But what a prison...

The gleam in his eyes was back, the darkness lightening, as he rubbed his groin lightly over her pussy. Even through the thick denim she could feel his cock, rock hard and throbbing. She wanted it closer, skin on skin, but with her hands caught between them and his hips holding her thighs spread wide, she was helpless to speed up his deliberate progress.

He was back in control, enflaming her. So much for her attempt at seduction—she'd hardly even managed to get any of his clothes off before succumbing to him.

Again.

She could feel the heat spreading through her. The subtle rasp of his bare chest against her nipples, the

firmer pressure as he purposely rubbed the hard denim over her already sensitive clit, and she knew she'd soon spiral out of control.

Gina struggled to hold her eyes open, to look up at him, only to close them quickly when she saw the heavy satisfaction etched in his features. She was his, and he knew it.

And so did she.

It may not have sat particularly well with her recently acquired in-charge-of-my-own-life personality, but how could she fight the kind of pleasure he was so capable of giving her? And so easily, too.

With a contented sigh, she settled back to take whatever he offered. It was unlikely to last for more than a night but—for now—she'd settle for whatever she could get.

* * * *

Those hesitant little butterfly touches had been enough to send his already brittle self-control flying. She had no idea of just how much power she wielded, yet she was the first female—ware or human—who'd truly got under his skin. He'd have to think about that. But not now. Later, when his cock wasn't being quite so insistent about exactly where it wanted to be—buried to the balls in the welcoming heat of her cunt.

For a moment he considered using compulsion to hold her in thrall while he regained his composure but as quickly dismissed the idea. His brother would

flay him alive if he ever found out, even if Nate had been doing it for her own good. He didn't relish the idea of a serious run-in with Sebastian. The chances were good that he—Nate—would end up as a rather handsome fur rug on someone's living room floor.

Gina was playing with fire and simply didn't realise it. He wanted her—now—and she was obviously more than willing. Ah well, she'd just have to live with the consequences of her actions. He withheld the arrogant chuckle that threatened to burst forth—she might even like it.

Chapter Seven

Please..." Gina panted, trying to fit the words between the breaths she so desperately needed. "Now... I need..."

"I know what you need, babe." Braced above her, Nate seemed bigger, stronger, and infinitely more ruthless than he had when he'd brought her to orgasm in the living room.

"Please..."

He shook his head, and for an instant she thought she saw a gleam of white teeth in the darkness. "When I'm ready."

She gasped as he rubbed his groin against her clit, pressing hard but pulling back as soon as she thrust her hips up to meet his. It felt like he'd been teasing her for hours, one minute grinding his pelvis into hers, the next dipping his head to swoop on a breast, suckling until she cried out, unsure whether it was pleasure or pain.

Then, every time she responded, he drew back. He let her suffer, neatly caught between his legs, and let her urgency rise with every measured movement.

Suddenly her legs were spread wide, his knee

rammed solidly between her thighs. He pushed his leg forward, increasing the pressure on her clit until she thought she'd scream. Then, just as her eyes screwed shut, any semblance of control beyond her, he pulled back.

Frustrated as all hell, she balled her fists and pounded on his bare chest. It just wasn't fair. She wanted to come, *needed* to come, and he wouldn't let her. If anything, he seemed to be getting off on watching her lose control. Each time she begged him, the words spilling from her mouth before she could hold them in, his eyes lit up and waves of satisfaction positively rolled off him. And every time, it apparently goaded him to push her on just a little bit further.

She could sense him above her, controlling her, fucking her, and he hadn't even taken his frigging jeans off! What was it going to take? His mouth descended onto her other nipple, drawing it taut between his teeth and stretching, stretching until she did scream, her nipple a single point of glorious fire in a body that was beyond sensitive.

Eyes closed, she squirmed against him, thrust her hips upward, and reached out to grab his upper arms, desperately trying to pull him right down on top of her. He hardly even seemed to notice, his muscles barely flexing as he held himself rigidly above her.

Sheets rumpled under her thrashing body, and a vague scent of vanilla rose around her with every movement. The laundry soap, she realised, or maybe the potpourri that sat on her dresser. Every gasp, every panting breath contained a hint of sweetness, a

touch of normality. But over it all was *his* smell, warm and intoxicating.

"Listen." His voice was a deep whisper, the scrape of his stubble sending a minor lightening bolt from her ear to her spine, only to have it explode deep between her legs.

Mindlessly she obeyed, listening to the helpless little moans, the gasps of pleasure and frustration. The sheets rustling, the rasping of his jeans against the smooth skin of her thighs and, through it all, the sound of a woman being thoroughly pleased. Her.

"Can you smell yourself?" His voice was back in her ear, tempting, beckoning. "Smell how much you want me?"

Even as she obeyed, drawing a deep breath through her nose, she felt his fingers plunge deep within her, as quickly withdrawn.

"Smell," he ordered, and she opened her eyes in time to see his fingers drift under her nose, evidence of her arousal dripping from them.

Too late to stop herself, she inhaled, her own scent filling her head, the vanilla no more than a memory. Apparently satisfied with her obedience, he pushed the fingers into his mouth, languorously sucking them clean.

"You taste good," he purred and lowered his mouth to hers, his lips covering her mouth as he forced her to taste the remnants of her juices on his tongue.

Gina moaned into his mouth, too aroused to be embarrassed, her tongue flicking out to dual with his. She grasped his shoulders, fingers digging deep as

she held him close, and relaxed as he finally lowered himself fully onto her.

His pelvis ground into hers, the rough hair of his chest abrading her nipples, and she didn't care. All she wanted was the contact, the fulfillment his movements promised. A whimper of protest died on her lips as he pulled his mouth away, immediately refastening onto the closest nipple. Helpless to resist, she arched into him, only to have him pull away again just as the orgasm started to overtake her.

"Damn you!"

He laughed, a surprisingly contented sound, and held her wildly flailing arms to either side of her head, her legs caught under his. "What do you want?" he growled.

"Fuck me. Now. Please." Gina's hips bucked in time with her words, emphasizing them. "Please."

The last word was lost in a scream as his cock filled her in one fierce lunge. She'd have sworn he'd been off her for only seconds, yet his jeans were gone and he was as naked as she.

He lay there, filling her, but hadn't moved beyond that first thrust.

She wriggled, pleading, wishing he'd hurry up. The waiting was killing her. "More." She shoved her hips sharply upward, reveling in the way his eyes glazed and the planes of his face went taut with concentration. "More."

And she'd thought what he'd done to her downstairs was the very peak of pleasure. Without words, he showed just how wrong she'd been, his cock sliding in and out of her as he fucked her beyond

thought, beyond reason. She was on her back, writhing under him as he slammed in, then she'd find herself face down on the bed, ass high in the air as he took her from behind, his cock thrusting deeper again as he drove them both.

All she could think about, all she could feel, was his cock as it filled her repeatedly, stretching her, and nudging her closer and closer to explosion. That, and the wholly sexual man who turned her within his hands, arranging her limbs as easily as if she were a doll.

She was on her back again, lying exactly where he'd placed her, when his tempo changed. She was too sated to move a muscle, or even to take note of what was different, when suddenly she found herself tumbling headfirst over the edge of the world. He'd held her high on the plateau for so long, ruthlessly dictating her pleasure, that the shock of the final plunge was even greater.

It felt like she'd been pushed over a waterfall, twisting and falling, breathless and exhilarated. Her body fell and, some distance behind, her brain followed, wrapping the world in darkness as she finally slowed to a halt.

* * * *

He pounded into her — one last savage thrust — and let his own release overtake him.

"Mine."

The growl burst forth as he shuddered, his cock still twitching, and automatically settled himself on

top of her, securing her. So long as he had any say in it, Gina wasn't going anywhere.

Shit!

Had he really just said that? How the hell had he let go so much that the were instincts took over? That had *never* happened before...

Nate forced his eyes open, surprised at the effort required, and looked down at her face, a slight smile of feline content the only sign she was even aware of what they'd been doing for the past half hour. Gina was already asleep and, frankly, he doubted she'd be lying there so peacefully if she *had* heard him. And that probably meant she hadn't seen the harsh lines of possession he could still feel etched into his face.

Feeling just a little bit safer, almost certain now that she hadn't heard him, he rolled heavily away to the other side of the bed. A chill spread through him; already, he was missing the heat of her body.

Damn.

He reached back, one arm pinning her to his side.

Much better.

A tiny, satisfied sigh escaped, and he grimaced at his own vulnerability. He wouldn't think about it just yet—god, he was tired—but he'd have to do something about the sensual Ms. Longmire. A werewolf was *not* supposed to fall in love with a woman who resembled nothing so much as a well-pleasured—and totally exhausted—kitten. Even as his eyes closed and he settled to sleep, he couldn't help grinning at the ridiculous thought. Cats and dogs just did not get on.

Nate woke slowly, automatically noting the

position of the moon through the uncurtained window. No more than an hour had passed, but he was wide awake and ready to fuck her some more. Despite his fears, she'd loved the way he'd taken her, screaming her pleasure as he rode her hard and deep. He inhaled deeply; the scent of their lovemaking filled the room. He wanted to do it all over again.

Nate pushed himself up onto an arm, the better to watch her wake up, and shook her gently. Another time, he'd wake her up with his cock already buried deep inside her, her cunt dripping as he fucked her. But not today. He didn't want to scare her away just yet.

He shook her again, a little more forcefully, but still she refused to wake. The words were unclear but she was grumbling about something. Still muttering, she turned her back and, pushing her tight little ass snugly against his erection, grabbed her pillow and snuggled back down into it. Apparently, she wasn't planning on waking up anytime soon. He grinned, smug masculine satisfaction clearly written on his face.

There was something extremely satisfying about loving a woman so thoroughly she was utterly sated, utterly exhausted. 'Loving a woman'. That was the difference. He'd fucked her senseless, but there was more to it than just that.

The suddenness of the thought made him wary. It reminded him of the instinctive possessiveness that had overtaken him as he came. He wasn't ready to face that kind of emotion just yet—'love', the very word was enough to make him shudder. He enjoyed

his life precisely as it was. Determined on his course, and quite certain the only option was to avoid her in the future, he shifted her slightly further away from him, away from all temptation, then lay back and stared at the ceiling. Already, it felt wrong. He liked the way her body curled so naturally into his. Yep, abrupt as the decision was, he'd definitely made the right choice. As of tomorrow, he'd stay away from Gina Longmire.

Almost unconsciously, his arm crept out and wrapped itself around her waist. There was nothing to stop him having the rest of the night, however. His eyes gleamed as his imagination took over.

She'd wake to find her thighs spread wide, anchored in place by his hands, and his tongue licking up the juices that flowed from her cunt. Her whole body would be perfectly exposed in the morning sunlight, her creamy skin flushed with desire, her nipples taut, and she'd be squirming, halfway to orgasm before she even knew what was happening. Nate closed his eyes and settled more comfortably into the mattress. Surely it would be okay to have early in the morning as well. There was no point in denying himself the pleasure of her body too soon...

Chapter Eight

The coffee smelt good. Very good. Gina rubbed her eyes wearily, almost too tired to carry the mug she'd poured the few paces across to the table. She'd actually staggered rather than walked down the stairs this morning. Thank goodness it was Saturday, and she didn't have to be back at work until Monday. Maybe, just maybe, she'd manage that. Then again...

She couldn't remember ever having been so utterly, thoroughly, comprehensively fucked. She literally ached with the exertion; her legs were still wobbly, and it was an effort to hold herself upright in the kitchen chair. Her body felt *used*, like she'd finally found out just exactly what she was capable of. And that was way more than she'd ever imagined.

There'd been the sofa in the living room—she remembered that quite clearly—then he'd fucked her senseless on the bed. Her eyes glazed as her brain stumbled. How many times had it been? Try as she might, she couldn't remember. She shrugged it off. More than once, that was for sure. It must have been a lot because she couldn't seem to remember sleeping

or, more to the point, she *did* remember being woken up. Lots of times.

She took a scalding gulp of coffee, trying to boost herself for the next memory. Then, there was how she woke up the last time. Even sitting here in the very ordinary kitchen, the breeze quietly wafting through her totally normal—and extremely un-sexy—blue curtains, she couldn't help blushing at the thought.

An odd noise had prodded her from a deep dream, a very pleasant dream in which she was somewhere deep in a forest, tall old pines soaring overhead, their needles shivering in a warm breeze that played over her naked body, caressing every curve and dimple. It was night in her dream, the stars appearing and disappearing as the foliage moved, the full moon sailing high above the clouds that scudded across the sky.

And with her, on her...

She wasn't sure. That was the worst thing about dreams—the one thing you wanted to be clear wasn't. There was someone with her, a tall man whose shadow occasionally blotted out even the clear moonlight. He loomed over her as she lay amongst the pine needles, the forest floor a soft and fragrant bed. Yet even as he loomed, towered, lowered himself over her and took control, she was never afraid of him. The lightest stroke of his fingers set her trembling and she arched into his touch, longing for more.

Then the man had changed. She still couldn't see him clearly, but he'd become even larger, stronger, infinitely more demanding. His outline was unclear,

almost shaggy, but she could feel his weight pressing her into the earth, hard and solid. He'd brushed his fingers over her eyes—try as she might, she couldn't force them to open again—and she was left inhabiting a whole new world of sensation, one where touch and sound and scent were all that existed.

There was no sight, nothing to see. And no taste either. Her blindly questing mouth couldn't quite seem to make contact with him. Then her hands were anchored by her hips, her legs spread wide and her head was thrashing, her hips rolling as she tried to escape his searching tongue.

She couldn't escape him—did she really want to?—and slowly, so slowly he explored her. He laved her thighs, swirled warm breath over her nipples, licked, sucked and probed until he knew every part of her intimately. Once he'd discovered where she was most sensitive, he set about torturing her with his newfound knowledge. Her ears were filled with the sound of his ragged breathing, their frantic heartbeats, and her own moans and cries. She heard herself whimpering, begging, and still he continued. His head had finally settled between her legs, apparently content to let his tongue wreak havoc with her self-control.

It was a particularly loud moan that woke her up. She'd started to push herself upright, wanting to see the normality of her bedroom surrounding her—and couldn't.

Her wrists were anchored to the bed, her fingers kneading the sheet. Her legs were spread wide, her knees bent over Nate's shoulders, and her body was

writhing as she strived to gain release from his sensual torment. His face was buried between her legs and his appreciative little grunts of approval were sending heady vibrations racing through her blood.

She'd been able to feel the heat gathering under her skin, had almost heard the electric sizzles as her nerves jumped and all her senses centered on the spot where his tongue was tracing lazy spirals, apparently waiting for her to regain her senses. As much of them as he was willing to let her cling to, that was.

Satisfied she was awake, his tongue had delved deeper, invading her pussy at the same time he used his teeth to grab her clit. Slowly, stretching her for every last second of pleasure, he'd bitten down, and she'd exploded. Before she'd floated back to earth he'd been inside her again, his cock easing in as he pushed himself deep.

She'd felt his cooler saliva mixing with her own cum, its warmth flowing down her leg and over her ass. It had drenched the sheet under her, puddling in the depression made by her buttocks, and—for once—she hadn't been embarrassed. He'd whispered in her ear, praised her, incited her, desired her, *wanted* her.

Rough.

Dirty.

Messy.

Was that what sex was like with the right person? A little bit of adolescent groping and fondling, a few not-very-satisfactory thrusts, then it was all over. That was sex. *Wasn't it?*

And yet with Nate...she'd loved it. She'd never imagined feeling so completely fulfilled. Or so at ease with a stranger. And that was pretty well what Nate was to her. A stranger. She'd met him, what—two days ago? So how could she feel so close to him already?

Gina pushed her coffee aside, folded her arms and collapsed onto the table, wrinkling her nose at the slightly chemical smell of the polish she normally used. Obviously, she hadn't spent enough time with her nose pressed into the woodwork, otherwise she'd have changed to something a little less...pungent. Still, now she was here, she was too tired to even think about moving again, let alone actually lifting her head. God, she was tired. Exhausted.

It seemed like hours later when she lifted her head, twisting irritably to straighten out the crick in her neck. Fancy falling asleep at the kitchen table! She'd put her head down, thinking to have a few minutes' rest, and had fallen into a deep sleep. Goodness, he'd worked her over last night. Gina's lips twisted at the thought. Heck, it had been good.

A light breeze ruffled her hair, just like gentle fingers teasing it away from her scalp. It filled the kitchen with the scent of morning—wet grass and moist earth slowly warming in the weak sunlight. There was even a hint of spring in the air. She glanced up at the fluttering curtains, her smile turning thoughtful. She never opened the windows in the morning, preferring to wait until the day had warmed a little before airing the house.

Nate had certainly made himself right at home,

and not just with her body, either. She had a vague memory of him springing out of bed at some ungodly hour. He'd been disgustingly cheerful when all she wanted to do was crawl back under the covers and hide until sometime after lunch. At least.

She'd simply refused to believe it was morning. That warm chuckle of his had rumbled through her, the vibration in her ear setting off another uncontrollable shiver. What that man could do with his mouth! And his tongue... Oooh.

Then he'd tucked her in and disappeared. Or at least, she thought he had. He'd somehow managed to tidy the bedroom while she slept—the *ridiculous* collection of condom wrappers in the en suite tidy bin mute testimony to what they'd spent the night doing—then he'd apparently headed downstairs, finished cleaning the kitchen, and put on the coffee. *Then* he'd disappeared.

Where the hell did he get his morning-after energy? Even after her little power-nap on the kitchen table, Gina felt something like warmed-over oatmeal—uninteresting, soggy, tasteless... Or maybe not. She grinned at herself, remembering the contented murmurs Nate had made as he licked her pussy, thoroughly enjoying himself as he literally slurped up her juices from between her legs. She very much doubted he'd accept her describing herself as 'tasteless'.

Ah well. She heaved herself upright, running her fingers over her face and grimacing. The table had left an amazing imprint in her cheek and there was a sore spot on her shoulder. Had he given her a hickey? At

her age! She knew she should have been outraged but smiled despite herself.

A hot shower was what she needed, and she needed it desperately. The evidence of last night was still plastered to her legs, the scent of sex rising faintly as she moved, wafting around her and inducing memories she'd much rather forget. After all, the chances of her seeing him again were pretty damn low. Just because she'd already known it, didn't necessarily make it any easier to accept. And it was, she knew, going to be even harder now she really knew what great sex was.

Her pussy clenched and, even through the soft robe she'd tossed on before heading downstairs, she could feel her nipples hardening. If just the thought of sex was enough to make her body react... Ugh! Right now, she wasn't sure whether she was grateful to Nate for giving her the experience, or whether she should hate him for showing her just what she'd been missing out on.

* * * *

Nate bit back an irritated sigh, instead smiling brightly at the couple who were looking at their third property of the day. Since taking over the agency, he'd started opening on Saturday mornings and—usually—he didn't mind. This morning, however, he'd have much rather stayed in bed. Gina's bed.

And that, he realised, was dangerous. She'd responded so readily to that final tongue-fucking that he'd really wanted to know what she was dreaming

about. The instant the dream became reality was obvious, yet she'd relaxed almost immediately. He didn't think *he'd* have been quite so calm if it had been him that had woken up being sucked off by a woman and already in the throes of orgasm. To give up so much control of himself to someone else, to trust them that much... The thought alone was enough to make him shudder. Yet she'd been quite unperturbed to find herself spread wide in front of him, unconscious of just how he'd stroked her, touched her, to get her to that point. He smirked. Well, as unperturbed as she could be considering the way her cunt was writhing wildly into his mouth as he drove her out of her mind.

Was it really going to be possible to escape the fate some deity with a rotten sense of humor apparently had planned for him? He was starting to doubt it.

"Mr. Moore?"

Nate jerked himself back to the present. Thinking of exactly what he'd done to her – all the wonderfully innovative things he'd do to her next time – maybe wasn't a good idea when he was supposed to be selling houses. Make that, *definitely* wasn't a good idea. He could feel his cock swelling and there wasn't much he could do about it.

"Do you like this one, Mrs. Winston? It has a rather good view, don't you think?" Thank goodness he knew this particular house so well – it had been on the books so long he could spiel off its attributes without thought.

"The kitchen is a little old-fashioned."

He put on his best 'salesperson' smile, nodding his

agreement even while saying the opposite. "But that's the beauty of it, don't you think? The owner took that into consideration when he decided his price, so you pay less for the house because of it. And of course," his smile became conspiratorial, "that means you get to decide your own color scheme when you renovate."

"I don't know..." She shook her head, lips tight. "It still seems expensive considering we're nearly two hours from the city."

"Have another look around," he urged. "A property similar to this in the city would cost ten times as much. There's no comparison."

He pulled a face as the couple trailed up the stairs. Working Saturdays paid off because he got the city buyers in, the ones who were looking for their own little piece of paradise. Unfortunately, they also expected it at bargain basement prices. But despite their complaints, they still paid an awful lot more than a local would ever consider for the same property.

You couldn't put a price on Utopia. If he hadn't been sure they'd have heard him, he'd have groaned out loud. God, he was getting cynical. Maybe it was time he gave some thought to settling down, raising a family. If nothing else, 'practicing' could be fun.

A floorboard creaked directly above his head, and he shrugged. The house was an overpriced pile of crap. Not that he'd tell the eventual buyer that—legally, he couldn't—but there was nothing to stop him strenuously recommending they get a building inspection done before they signed any contracts.

His memory crept back to the board floors in Gina's bedroom as he waited. He'd seen quite a lot of them this morning when he'd gone searching for all the condom wrappers he'd tossed on the floor last night. The timber was a nice color, well worn but with the patina of a good polish hiding the imperfections.

He poked idly at the bearskin rug covering the ugly tiled floors of the house he was trying to sell. Yugh! Who'd put tiles in a living room anyway? The board floors at Gina's would be good if he moved in with her. It really was a pain trying to get the fur out of wall-to-wall carpeting.

This time he did groan out loud, spinning to look out the window at the distant forest. He could hardly believe it. No matter how many times he told his brain to forget about her, his thoughts snuck back around to Gina Longmire.

It wasn't until he realised his fists were tightly clenched by his sides, his stance stiff, that he forced himself to relax. Castigating himself for every errant thought obviously wasn't working. He flicked open his cell, punching in Gina's number. So much for him being the one in control...

Chapter Nine

Bending over to pick up the apple she'd accidentally knocked off the counter, Gina discovered a whole new set of muscles. A hot shower had loosened her up—for a while—but now muscles she hadn't even known existed were protesting almost every time she moved. And when every movement reminded her of last night...

Swallowing a groan, she straightened, gingerly adding the apple to her small pile of groceries. Her thighs ached. She doubted she'd ever had her legs spread so wide—or for so long—as she had last night.

Megan, damn her, simply grinned. It was such a *knowing* grin, and such an 'I know what you did last night' kind of a grin, that Gina looked cautiously around the store, wanting to be absolutely certain no one else had seen Megan's indiscreet smirk.

The store would close in a quarter of an hour and was unusually quiet. Just an elderly couple bickering quietly at the deli counter and Yvonne, the same middle-aged woman as usual scanning the groceries at the counter. She'd not even looked up, and Gina turned back to Megan, a lot more secure in herself.

Surely it wasn't that obvious? It wasn't like she had a whopping great sign plastered across her head, flashing lights spelling out the fact she'd been fucked 'til she couldn't walk straight.

The very idea sent a hot flush scooting up her neck and over her cheeks. It was true, too. She'd noticed walking between the car and the shop that, if she wasn't careful, she was tending to waddle rather than walk. How embarrassing!

She blanched. Then again, maybe Yvonne *had* noticed. Maybe that was why she was so studiously staring down at the groceries rather than chatting away as usual. On second thought, no. If Yvonne suspected anything even the slightest bit gossip-worthy, then nothing and no one was safe.

That didn't stop her paying up as quickly as humanly possible and practically dragging Megan from the store and out to the relative safety of the street. Saturday morning trading was slowly drawing to a close and, like small towns everywhere, the weekend lethargy was drifting in to take the place of the earlier bustle.

Only a few places would remain open so, after stowing the grocery sacks in the trunk, Megan towed her towards the diner. That meant walking past the realtor's. No matter how determinedly she tried to look away, Gina just couldn't quite keep her eyes off the shuttered shop front. There was a closed sign swinging behind the door, the lights were out, but there was a shadow moving somewhere down the back. Nate?

She probably should have kicked herself for the

naïve little burst of hope, but there had been a message on her machine when she'd stepped out of the shower. A fairly standard 'thanks for the night' sort of message to be sure, but a message nevertheless. She honestly hadn't expected to hear from him again.

As soon as their orders had been taken, Megan started. After all, she knew the only reason Megan had insisted on accompanying her this morning was the chance to pry for details.

"So," Her face was alight with curiosity. "How was it? Is he as good as the rumors say?"

Gina answered before she'd stopped to think. "Better."

Oh puh-leeze! Gina cringed. Had that dreamy little sigh been hers too?

Megan leaned across the table, her hand tugging Gina's wrist. "And?"

"And what?"

Megan's mock-grimace attracted the attention of the next table, but she totally ignored Gina's frantic hand signal to tone it down.

"Nuh-uh." Megan shook her head, eyes glinting wickedly. She glanced around the diner at the handful of people having an early lunch, the threat obvious. "Tell all—or else!"

"Tell what?" Nate pulled out the chair between them, settling himself at the table without asking permission. "Megan," he nodded amiably in her direction before his eyes returned to Gina. "How are you?"

There was a hint of humor in his voice, and she

couldn't miss the barely suppressed laughter lighting up his eyes. How the heck did he imagine she was going to answer that question?

"Good. Thank you." Did her answer sound half as stilted as it felt?

"Glad to hear it." He grinned down on her then glanced back across to Megan who smiled serenely. "I had dinner at Gina's place last night," he explained. "Ended up being a bit of a late night."

"So I heard." Megan grinned at Gina. "I was just asking for details."

"Ah." He nodded, pretending a seriousness he obviously didn't feel. The laughter in his eyes was infectious. "I never kiss and tell."

He winked at Megan. "I'd better be on my way then," he said, swinging out of the chair as lithely as he'd sat down only minutes earlier. "I'll let you get back to pumping her for all the details. I know we Moores are legendary."

Gina looked heavenward, muttering. "Great!" Realizing her only chance of escaping Megan's avid curiosity was about to walk away, she hammed it up, lowering her head into her hands, then resting it slowly on the table. "Just great."

Nate ruffled her hair companionably then bent to plop a brotherly kiss on her bent neck. "You'll survive." From under her hair, she watched him grin across at Megan. "Your friend doesn't look all that scary to me."

"Some kind of hero you are," Gina grumbled.

"Sorry love, but you know what?" He chuckled, the sound going straight to her belly. "I don't do

‘riding to the rescue on a white charger’. It does terrible things to my suit.”

A sharp tug on her hair, and he was gone.

Gina looked up, attempting a scowl. Megan just burst into peals of laughter, tears streaming down her face. Eyes still bright, she grinned at Gina. “Tell me he’s exaggerating about the ‘legendary’ status?” she demanded.

Gina shook her head, a slow smile curving her lips. “Nope. No exaggeration at all.”

* * * *

Another totally dull Saturday night was looming on the horizon. After running into Nate in town this morning—surely that couldn’t have been a coincidence?—Gina had half-expected him to call. But he hadn’t, and now she was sitting around at home with nothing much to do.

She glanced around the cozy living room, half wishing more housework would materialize out of thin air, but it was as perfectly neat and tidy as it had been two minutes earlier. What else could she do to fill in the evening? It was way too early for bed, and the thought of settling down to watch a movie was beyond her. Unusually for her, she was filled with nervous energy. What on earth had he done to the quiet, boring Gina Longmire who’d been perfectly content with her quiet, boring life? Just one night, and he seemed to have banished her forever: leaving behind this sexually frustrated creature who hadn’t even been able to sit still long enough to watch a

rerun of 'Friends'.

The linen cupboard. Perhaps she could sort through that? Gina was clutching at straws, and she knew it. Maybe she could rearrange her bookshelves then?

She shook her head, a small part of herself finding it totally hilarious that the safe persona she'd erected to protect herself from her own emotions had been so easily shattered. Surely there had to be something she could do to take her mind off sex and, more specifically, to take her mind off Nathaniel Moore—local realtor and sex god.

That did it! Sex god? Huh!

Her mind—and other parts of her body too, she acknowledged ruefully—were running out of control. It was past time to find something to fill in the hours to bedtime.

She drifted listlessly through the house, cataloguing possible chores and trying very hard not to wonder what Nate was doing right now. Or who he was doing it with. She found it very hard to believe that a man with such a huge sex drive didn't have a Saturday night date. Surely, he had to be in demand.

In the kitchen she straightened the pot plants and tweaked the curtains closer together. This morning's hint of spring had well and truly disappeared and there was ice in the air. Even through the fogged glass she could feel the insidious cold, seeping through every chink in the old window frame. There'd be a heavy frost in the morning. She shivered, her lightweight wrap no longer holding off the chill

despite the centrally heated warmth of the house.

Enough was enough. She'd go to bed and read a book. As she turned back towards the hall, a flash of white by the back door caught her attention. She'd forgotten to take the trash out. For a second she hesitated—surely it could wait until morning? But, no. If she left it, despite the cold weather, it'd be sure to attract mice, and it had taken her weeks to get rid of them when she first moved in.

Shivering before she'd even opened the door, she drew her wrap closer with one hand, the fingers of the other securely entwined in the knotted top of the plastic garbage bag.

And she'd thought it was cold when she'd been standing by the window inside. Sheesh. She should have known better and grabbed an overcoat rather than just ducking outside to dump the trash in the bin by the side wall. Even through the solid soles of her fluffy slippers, she could feel the chill of the partly frozen ground. The cold snap was going to be worse than she'd thought.

A light mist was wending its way through the trees, stray tendrils floating around her ankles, but it hadn't fully thickened yet. Gina stopped for a second, fascinated by the way it billowed out towards her, eddies of wind she couldn't even feel shifting it into amazing patterns—there for an instant, then gone again. It was quite beautiful, yet eerie too, and it didn't take much imagination to see werewolves and vampires, monsters and fairies, as the fog suddenly swirled around her, enveloping her in a clammy white world.

She shivered again, her cold feet reminding her it was winter and that she was outside wearing nothing more than a light wrap over her nightgown. The bin was only two steps away; she could cope with the aching cold for a few seconds more.

The bin lid was in her hand, the bag lifted half way, when a sharp crack, totally out of place in the softness of the mist, caught her attention. For a second her breath hitched, then she relaxed as she realized it was the snap of a tree branch, nothing more. In this fog, it wouldn't be surprising to find more than one little creature's senses not quite as accurate as usual. It was probably an owl, she reasoned even as she tried to force her numb fingers to move more quickly.

A surge of movement in the fog behind her caught her attention and she swung to meet it, wryly aware that she was being much jumpier than usual. There were no bears in the area, she reminded herself sternly, and there was no such thing as werewolves. Anything smaller couldn't hurt her. Therefore, there was nothing to be afraid of.

Nothing but humans, she realized as disembodied arms reached from the fog, grasping her wrist. The rest of his body was shrouded by mist, almost invisible, but the strength in his grip was very real, as was the way he was drawing her inexorably closer.

She tugged sharply and tried to spin away, her mouth opening on a scream. A thudding blow to her stomach had her doubled over, gasping for breath before she'd managed to make a sound, and she'd barely straightened to meet the new threat when her vision went dark. There were soft voices,

unrecognizable, but still she struggled. From a distance, almost like it was happening to someone else, she felt the pain in her temple and saw the bright colors flash behind her eyes. Then nothing.

Chapter Ten

Nate hadn't really planned on going out that night. The forest would be crowded with betas, especially in the more easily accessed areas, and it really was bloody cold. Even with a thick fur coat, it wouldn't exactly be a comfortable evening out. But since the only alternative seemed to be staying home alone brooding about Gina for the rest of the night, he didn't really see that he had much choice.

He and Sebastian had shape-shifted early in the evening, but while Sebastian had stayed in the forest closer to the towns, Nate had loped off into the thickening fog. He liked it deeper within the forest, all the areas the humans rarely ventured into. Although his wolf ears picked up the cacophony of tiny sounds he'd never hear in human form, he still found it peaceful. And there wasn't anything more soothing to his soul than the sound of the wind sloughing through pine trees. It was such a distinctive sound — there was nothing else quite like it.

Something was different tonight, though. It wasn't anything obvious, more a feeling of disturbance. All the regular sounds of nightlife were there, the

scuttlings of tiny creatures in the undergrowth, the hiss of air flowing under the wings of a swooping owl and, over everything, the breeze. He paused, his nose raised to scent the wind, and waited while his mind sorted through the different sensations.

Humans. They were close or, at least, they had been. The wind brought details to him; of where they'd been, what they'd been doing. He could sense their trails, fading now, but still bright enough to be clear. There was something wrong too.. Overriding it all had been the acrid orange stench of triumph, of adrenaline-laced sweat.

Cold wind ruffling under his fur brought his mind sharply back to the present and he padded a few paces into the lee of a clump of bushes, thinking furiously. Two men, both reeking of beer and sweat, and a woman. Fear radiated from the woman, saturating her too-familiar scent.

And pain. Always pain. The fear came and went, almost like she was only there part of the time. Odd. Ears pricked, he strained for any further information. A short lull in the wind had reduced the amount of information flowing towards him right when he desperately wanted every smallest detail.

A fresh gust carried the information that the men were gone, leaving the woman behind. In the forest? At least three miles from the nearest habitation? He shook his head roughly, certain he was wrong. It was too long since he'd changed regularly, practicing the skills that should have come naturally. There was no way that Gina was out here by herself. *There was absolutely nothing wrong.*

He hesitated, then, ignoring his own admonitions, turned tail and ran. Nate streaked through the forest, for once heedless of the joy he found in his wolf shape and the way his muscles responded so effortlessly to his commands as he slewed around the occasional boulder, galloping headlong up the rise.

Within minutes his heart was pounding; not from the exertion, but from sheer fear. He could no longer fool himself. It was Gina—not just his over-fevered imagination—and she was in trouble. He could hear her heart rate fading with every beat, could almost feel her labored breathing.

For a second he paused, lifted his head and howled into the wind. If he was lucky, one of his family would be close enough to hear, but with the wind whipping his voice away from him... He repeated the call, relief flooding over him as he heard a faint, answering echo. Another were had heard, and the cry would be passed from wolf to wolf until Sebastian knew of his need.

Nate raced onwards, leaping logs and streams, for once grateful for the fact he was both wolf and man. He glanced up at the stars that flashed between the foliage, laughing sardonically at himself even as he sent a vow whizzing upwards to whichever deity had decided to entangle his life so thoroughly with Gina's. Whatever it took, he'd do. Obviously, they were meant to be together and apparently he wasn't going to get any choice in the matter. If this kind of heart-slamming fear was what he was going to feel every time she was in danger, how was he ever going to let her get far enough away from him to even cross the

road by herself? He'd do whatever it took to save her.

Soulmate. It was a word he wasn't keen on, something his mother had told stories about when he and Sebastian were young. He hadn't really believed in it. But now...

* * * *

Gina's head throbbed. Actually, most of her ached, but her head was the worst. Every time she tried to lift her head, to straighten her awkwardly bent neck, bolts of pain stabbed through her skull. At first she'd wondered about the strangled cry that had echoed nauseatingly around her every time she attempted to move but gradually she figured it out. The animal-like whimpering was coming from herself.

After the third attempt to move, she gave up. It hurt too much.

Time passed slowly, fingers of cold gradually creeping under every last fold of her flimsy nightgown. She shivered, the uncontrollable movement sending new flares of pain into her head. And through it all, Gina drifted, only half aware that she was alone in the Oldham Forest. It could almost have been a dream if she weren't so cold.

As the minutes passed—or was it hours—consciousness crawled back. God, she was cold. There were pins and needles where her toes should have been. Slippers, she realised vaguely. She was sure she'd been wearing slippers.

Outside?

She slumped back against whatever it was that was

holding her upright, wishing she could just lie down for a while. Warm covers would be nice, too. Maybe even a feather pillow, a luxury she hadn't indulged in for years.

Her eyes flicked open as a cramp started to swell in her shoulder. Impatient with herself—how hard could it be to lie down and stretch out, anyway—she twisted, trying to untwist the knot that was sending fresh pains up her neck to throb and echo around her head. What she wouldn't give for some Tylenol.

Damn it! Why wouldn't her arms move? She yanked irritably at whatever they were caught on, only to gasp in agony as the soft skin on her wrists shredded. There was something rough and unyielding behind her and, whatever it was, she couldn't move away from it.

When she concentrated, she could feel something digging into her chest and stomach, too. At least her skin hadn't been rubbed raw there, but still... A rope, maybe? The idea filtered its way through her jumbled thoughts. It didn't make sense.

Gina relaxed back, her eyes still closed, and tried to make her sluggish brain work properly. It was getting harder to breathe. The air was so cold that every breath felt like she was gasping in a lungful of tiny, sharp icicles.

She tried inhaling deeply, only to find herself coughing wildly. Shallow panting was more comfortable, but then she felt like she was hyperventilating. She couldn't win.

Suddenly, she realized what had been nagging at her for the past few minutes. Every breath was sweet,

redolent with damp pine needles and rich, dark soil. There was no way her little back yard had ever smelt like that.

But it was getting harder to breathe, and her heart was thumping in her chest, every beat noticeable. Too lethargic to be bothered thinking, she collapsed back, hanging limply against the rope that seemed to be holding her upright.

* * * *

Nate skidded to a halt, his heart still pounding, anger vying with his fear. In a small clearing—really just a turning circle at the end of a fire trail—Gina was slumped against a tree, thick ropes holding her upright. He couldn't see her face; her loose hair had fallen forward to hide her features, but he knew she was alive. His wolf's ears were still picking out the irregular rhythm of her heart. He could smell fresh blood and could see where blood from a slightly older wound had congealed in her hair

Within seconds he was bounding across the clearing, his nose pressed against her as he judged just how badly injured she was. She was cold. Too cold. Anything else would have to wait.

It was obvious someone had left her here on purpose, probably someone who at least knew about the existence of werewolves in the area, even if they didn't know very much about them. He was shaking his head in disgust, even as his limbs extended and his torso stretched back into human form. She'd been left as an old-fashioned sacrifice. He'd heard stories of

some of the earliest pioneers leaving a sacrifice for the wares, but in this day and age?

Totally unaware of his nudity, Nate pressed his body close into Gina, sharing his warmth as he struggled to untie the ropes that held her standing upright against the tree. In other circumstances, he could see it would have been very erotic—a half-naked woman tied to a tree and left for the pleasure of the werewolves. Just this particular were wasn't thinking thoughts about dinner, but about sex...

A shudder traveled through her, physically rocking him as he stood chest to chest with her, her slight figure dwarfed by his heavier frame. If nothing else, it reminded him that now was not the time to be letting his imagination run wild. Her nightgown was almost transparent in the moonlight, and delicious as she looked with every curve lovingly outlined by the clinging fabric, she had to be cold.

Even with the warmth of his body pressed against her, her nipples were hard little buds that teased at his senses—and at his self-control. He desperately wanted to bend down and take one into his mouth. It was no longer only the cold that was making him uncomfortable.

Hell, she was the very image of the naked sacrificial victim of his fantasies. Perhaps when it was summer, he could persuade her to come back here to play?

As if that was likely to happen after tonight's trauma. She was more likely to scream in fear than pleasure if he so much as suggested tying her down. He heard his own groan of disbelief echo round the

clearing. He was an insensitive brute to even be *thinking* like he was at the moment, and he knew it.

Nate's jaw clenched at the effort it took to banish the images of her writhing under his tongue. Her pale skin would be translucent, checkered by shadows as the breeze riffled its way through the trees, her eyes would be closed in ecstasy, and all the time she'd be struggling fruitlessly against her bonds, helpless to escape his marauding mouth and hands...

Where the hell was Sebastian? He couldn't keep Gina warm and untie her at the same time. And he certainly couldn't keep his way-too-vivid imagination under control while he was forced to stand here with his cock jammed between her legs, and her breath fluttering so softly against his neck. He could actually feel the life flowing through her now, his heightened senses still able to hear the flow of blood in her veins and the painful gasping as she drew in air.

And Rafe and Rob, too. He definitely wanted them to show up soon. Still huddled as close to her unconscious body as possible, Nate lifted his head and howled at the moon. He needed them all, and he needed them now.

He'd accepted his fate, and he refused to lose her to whatever prick had decided to use her as live wolf-bait. *Do you hear me?* He breathed the words into her ear, needing to tell her, even though he knew she couldn't hear him. "You're mine. And I'll not let you go."

Never.

Nate wrapped himself even more tightly around her, closed his eyes and did something he hadn't done

for years. He prayed.

Chapter Eleven

Gina didn't bother opening her eyes, but snuggled closer to the warmth surrounding her. Nate. He was here after all. She felt her lips curve in a tiny, satisfied smile and tried to reach for her quilt. There was still a cool patch to one side where it had slipped from the bed.

Mmmm. Her muscles sagged against him as she tried to relax. Warm again. Finally.

She nuzzled her face into Nate's chest, enjoying the pleasantly masculine feeling of his hair scraping against her skin. He smelt good, too. Like the outdoors. Like pine trees.

Pine trees? That wasn't what he'd smelt like when he'd come for dinner. Maybe he used more than one cologne. Still, she couldn't quite remember what he was doing in her bed right now. Actually, she had a vague memory of spending Saturday night at home, by herself.

An icy breeze glided over the curve of her hip. She shivered and tried again to reach for the covers. Her arm was caught somewhere down behind her, and Nate was on top of her, squashing her.

"Gerr ooof." What should have been a sharp command came out as a murmur. Doubting he'd even heard her, she tried again, only to find herself coughing and coughing as she swallowed a mouthful of the frigid air. Why was it so cold?

"Shhh, honey. Just stay still. I'm here now." Nate's voice soothed away the kaleidoscope that had been whirling behind her eyes as the coughing continued.

Strong fingers caressed her neck, calm and warm, but definitely Nate's.

Gina made an effort to force her eyes open. Why were all her thoughts centered on the concept of 'warm'? And why the hell was Nate talking to her like he would a frightened child? All she wanted was the quilt. There was nothing too scary about that, was there?

She blinked and suddenly realised he was right there in front of her, so close she had to refocus her eyes to actually see him. He smiled down on her, gently, and she shifted awkwardly, for some reason wanting to put some distance between them.

"Stay still. You'll hurt yourself if you move."

Huh?

Those melted-toffee eyes were staring down at her, the obvious tenderness doing nothing to conceal the worry he was trying to hide behind his smile. Hurt herself? In bed?

Well, whatever he'd meant, it didn't seem like he was going to move away from her, or pass her the blasted quilt. She squirmed, trying to escape his closeness, before she realized what he'd meant.

She couldn't move her wrists, her skin was

burning, and there was something horribly hard and rough behind her. That was all forgotten in the moment she shifted her head to look over his shoulder. A glimpse of nighttime and pine trees was lost as the agonizing pain sent the darkness sweeping over her.

* * * *

Poor little thing. Her head must really have been pounding if that small a movement was enough to make her faint. Maybe she was better off that way—at least she wouldn't feel it when they had to move her. Nate grunted. If, that was, the family ever bothered showing up.

His fingers were still stroking her neck, the rhythm as hypnotically soothing to him as he hoped it was to her, when the undergrowth rustled wildly and three full grown wolves leapt into the clearing.

Underneath him, he felt Gina start upright, a hardly heard gasp and the fresh lines of pain as she screwed her eyes shut the only sign she was back with him again. He considered using his influence to put her back to sleep and decided against it.. She might have been more comfortable if she was unconscious, but he wasn't willing to risk playing with her head after the thump she'd obviously taken.

"What the hell happened?" Rafe's voice was incredulous.

"What do you think?" Nate snarled in reply. "Took your bloody time getting here, didn't you?"

Sebastian was calm as always, sniffing carefully

before standing fluidly upright, his wolf body seemingly dropping away behind him as his shape flowed from animal to man.

"I take it this is the lady you spent last night with?" he asked as he moved behind the tree, tugging experimentally on the ropes that held her upright.

Nate growled. It was der-obvious to anyone with half a brain that Gina was *his* woman—well, it was obvious to a wolf anyway. After all the sex they'd shared the night before, his scent was literally still seeping from her pores.

"Rob?" Sebastian queried.

There was only one wolf still left in the clearing, and he rubbed his body around Gina's ankles, snuffling at her scent. As elegantly as Sebastian, he stretched upright, shape-shifting as he did, and offered an encouraging smile. "She should be okay. You've got to her in time." He circled the tree thoughtfully, eyeing the ropes. "Can you hold her weight when Sebastian cuts the rope?"

Nate didn't grace him with an answer, just wrapped his arms more firmly around Gina's shoulders. Whether she was conscious or not when she was released, Nate fully expected he'd have to support her entire weight.

"Ready?" Sebastian called quietly, rapidly changing back to wolf shape and using a single claw to slit the coarse ropes.

Gina's weight sagged against Nate's chest and, once again, he had to suppress the wicked little voice that was suggesting how good it felt to have her body melded so closely, so trustingly, against his.

"Nate?" Her voice was tiny, but he heard and instantly looked down at her.

Gina's hazel eyes were wide with shock, and a telltale tremble was moving through her body.

"I'm here, honey," he crooned. "I'm taking you home. There's nothing to—"

"Who's he?"

He glanced up to find that Rob had moved into the space between Gina and the tree, pressing his body as tightly against hers as Nate was on the other side. Rob was nodding approvingly, but Nate could certainly understand her hesitation. She was sandwiched between two large naked men, and the remains of her nightgown weren't much protection from the feeling of their warm skin on hers.

"That's my cousin Rob," he told her calmly, only an extreme effort of will hiding his jealousy at having another man holding *his* woman. "He's a doctor. You've been out in the cold too long, and we have to get you warm."

"Oh." Her eyes closed, and she slumped bonelessly back against him, seemingly unaware of Rob's continued presence at her back.

Nate scowled across her head at Rob, who grinned an insincere apology.

Damn! Not only was he going to be overprotective, but jealous, too. A shiver ran through him at the thought, but he refused to put it down to anything but the wind. Standing here without his fur on, he was getting cold himself.

"Nate?" Gina's voice was slightly stronger this time, and her eyes were open again.

"Yes, honey?"

"Where are we?"

"Oldham Forest."

"Oh."

She seemed satisfied with that for a few moments, but jumped against him as Sebastian pushed a furry arm between her and Rafe, reaching for the cord that still bound her wrists tightly behind her back.

"Why is everyone naked?" she whispered into the silence.

Ah.

How the hell was he supposed to answer that one? Nate thought furiously, pulling her closer against him and pushing her face more securely into his chest.

A hearty laugh—totally out of place in the cold forest—broke into his hectic thoughts. He scowled across at Sebastian who was standing slightly to the side, the remains of the rope dangling from his again-human hands.

"I think you'll have some explaining to do," Sebastian chuckled, totally unfazed by Nate's dagger-laden stare.

"Apparently," he agreed carefully, not wanting to worry her any more than she already was.

He looked down, inspecting her face closely. Gina's eyelids had drooped, and she wasn't making any effort to hold herself upright, leaning trustingly into him. The fine lines of pain were still there, but her forehead was smooth and her mouth relaxed. Whatever she thought was happening, she didn't seem to be fretting about it.

Nate shrugged. "Time to go home? Rob?"

"The sooner she's properly warm, the better," he agreed. "You, too," Rob added amicably. "Your nose is blue."

"Thank you for sharing that with me. I really didn't want to know," he retorted.

Nate hadn't needed Rob to point out just how cold he was. His teeth were chattering, and he was quite sure it wasn't just his nose that was blue. His ass had gone numb and his feet were freezing. And he'd only been exposed for ten minutes or so—he hated to imagine what Gina was feeling.

Before he'd had time to start walking, Sebastian had moved closer and scooped Gina effortlessly out of his arms. "You," he told Nate, "change back and get warm. We'll have to take turns carrying her or we'll all freeze our butts off.

And you," he pointed to Rafe, "had better get tracking. Then we'll know who to go after."

Nate barely hesitated, gladly sinking downwards into his wolf form as Rafe headed off down the fire trail, following the scent of the men who'd left Gina alone in the wilderness. They were all too used to having Sebastian take control to query his orders, and it was only sensible, anyway. He did notice, however, the startled gaze Gina fixed on Sebastian's face as he began to stride through the forest with her, away from the fire trail and towards their house. She apparently wasn't quite so sure about the change of her 'rescuers'.

* * * *

Gina looked wildly up at the stranger who'd pulled her away from the comfort of Nate's warmth, folding her up and carrying her as easily as if she were a small baby. She supposed she was, measured against his size.

"I'm Sebastian," he offered, "Nate's brother."

What could she say to that? Formal introductions seemed more than just a little out of place. Heck, she was surrounded by naked men—*large*, naked men, she corrected herself—and...wolves? She looked down again, checking that she hadn't imagined it. Yep, they were wolves, all right.

"Uh, Sebastian?" No matter how hard she tried, her voice was whisper-soft.

"Mmm?"

Ignoring the fresh throb of pain, she used her head to indicate the two wolves unconcernedly loping along beside them. Trying to move her arms to point them out seemed like too much trouble.

"Wolves," he said helpfully.

"Uh, yes." She sighed.

How did she explain this? He seemed to think it was the most natural thing in the world to be naked, carrying a barely dressed woman through a forest at midnight, in the middle of winter, with wolves for an escort. Her dreams were getting *really* weird.

Too weird. It couldn't actually really be happening, could it? She caught herself tensing, trying to burrow deeper into this stranger's chest, and had to force herself to relax again.

"It'll make sense tomorrow, sweetie," he soothed. "Just let us get you home and warm, and don't worry

about it.”

Don’t worry about it, the man said. She started to shake her head in sheer disbelief, only subsiding when it sent pain stabbing through her head and down her neck.

Maybe if she just closed her eyes, next time she woke up she’d be at home in her own bed, snugly and warm. She certainly hoped so. On that comforting thought, she let herself drift away from reality, content to fall back into the welcoming blackness.

Chapter Twelve

is she awake yet?"
"Shhh. Not yet." A pause. "Soon, I think."
"What did Rob say? Will she be okay?"
"Yeah." Another pause.

Gina could almost imagine the first speaker raising an enquiring eyebrow at the obvious lack of details. Heck, she wanted to know more herself!

"Quite a few bruises," the second voice finally ceded. "Nothing permanent, and her temperature's back to normal."

The voices were hushed, but there was nothing the least bit soothing about the feeling of being surrounded by men. Rather *masculine-sounding* men, now she thought about it. Her brain was still feeling very doughy, yet she had vivid memories of being carried through the forest by a stranger. A naked stranger. And there was something about wolves teasing at her, too.

She shifted restlessly, strangely uneasy with her dreams. After all, there was no way she could really have been attacked and left for the werewolves. Definitely too many horror movies, or maybe too

many chocolate cookies. That was all.

Still...

She could *remember* the sensation of being totally surrounded, the rougher skin of the men warm against hers. There'd been the scrape of wiry hair against her smoothly shaven legs, the flattering bulges pressed into her bottom and stomach. Dreamy as she'd been, a tiny part of her had been rejoicing at the way her body had affected them. And the way one of them had so easily picked her up and carried her off – almost like the heroine in a bad western.

Yet through it all, there'd been no fear. She'd trusted them. And she could remember that trust quite clearly.

Less clear, however, was what had followed in the dream. There'd been hands, lots of hands, stroking and caressing. Her nightgown was gone, and she'd stood nude between them, enjoying their touch – encouraging it. But more than that... She wasn't sure. It was more imagination than reality, and if she hadn't been so sure she was dreaming, she'd never have believed it of herself. She – boring little Gina – in the midst of a *ménage*. Willingly lapping up the attentions of the strangers who were so eagerly exploring her body. She'd wanted it. She'd wanted *them*.

Was it possible? She doubted it. Apart from the fact her actions had been so out of character, her memories were...

She thought for a minute, drifting in the quiet. Her memories were *flat*. That was the difference. At first, the dream had been so realistic it was almost scary,

but the actual ménage had happened at a distance. When she'd felt the men pressed against her, felt their erections through the fine white silk of her gown, she'd really *felt* them. It had been dark and cold and the smell of pine trees had been so strong as to nearly obscure Nate's own particular scent.

Nate?

Had he been there, then? Or had the whole thing been nothing but her own overactive imagination? Too tired to force herself to think any more, she let the world retreat, a vague smile creasing her lips as she fell asleep. True or not, the dreams had been very, very nice.

* * * *

The sheet was cool beneath her, the unmistakable feel of crisp, freshly laundered linen scraping pleasantly on her skin. God, she was sensitive! She could practically feel the fibers in the cotton weave under her bottom, a rough caress up the small of her back that tickled her neck as she moved.

She wriggled again, savoring the sensation. She really should sleep naked more often. It was such a nice feeling. Sensual. Her muscles protested as she stretched her arms high above her head, her legs spreading sinuously under the light covering.

A shaft of light fell over her eyes, and she wrinkled her nose in disapproval. Surely it was too early to be morning. Her body felt suspiciously like she really had been out in the forest all night... Nah. She refused to believe it.

“You’re awake, then?”

Her eyelids flew open. Okay, so maybe it hadn’t been all in her dreams. After all, Nate was here in her bedroom. Admittedly, he was hovering kind of anxiously, but, nonetheless, he was here.

And so was his brother.

Apparently she looked just as horrified as she felt, because Nate instantly stepped between her and the very large man who looked suspiciously like the very large, very *naked*, man of last night’s dreams. Ah, hell!

“Shhh. It’s okay; you’re safe at my place.” Nate bent and wrapped his arms around her, attempting to soothe her even as she was craning her neck, trying to confirm that there really was another man in her bedroom.

No, not her bedroom. Nate’s bedroom.

She banished that thought as the other man moved into her view. He looked precisely the same this morning as he had last night, too. Not drop-dead handsome like Nate, but mighty fine in a very physical, in-your-face sort of way.

Unfortunately, he was dressed this morning..

Where had that particular thought come from? She shook her head wildly. It was all very well and good to dream about a plethora of gorgeous men tossing her over their collective shoulders and taking her home with them; it was another thing entirely to actually have it happen to her.

She gripped the sheet tightly, drawing it up and twisting it between her fingers as she remembered she was naked. In bed.

And naked.

And she certainly didn't remember getting here herself. How many of them had seen her without any clothes on? There'd been those voices talking about her. Apparently she'd been sick and only half-aware of what had been happening around her. How absolutely mortifying!

And rather erotic, too. The whole idea of being totally helpless, stripped naked by these men she barely knew, was strangely appealing... Horrified with herself for even *thinking* about it, let alone the fact she could feel herself becoming aroused by the pictures her imagination was busily painting, she tried desperately to pull the reins on her careening imagination.

How much of last night had been real, and how much had been a dream? Now that was a sobering thought. Mind you... She forced herself to push Nate aside, staring over his shoulder at the man who was – quite definitely – standing near the door.

"Sebastian?" she queried softly.

His mouth quirked – grimace or smile, she wondered – and he nodded.

"You remember, then?" Nate sounded worried.

Why the hell did he sound so worried? Surely they hadn't actually...?

She looked between them, comparing them to her memories.

Brothers, definitely. No question there.

"Um."

They were both watching her. Sebastian's face was unreadable, maybe an expression of polite interest while he waited for her to put her thoughts into

order, but that was it. Nate, however, looked like she was about to tell him the world was ending.

Um? That sounded so unintelligent! Disgusted with herself, she tried again. Her mouth was dry so she licked her lips, then hesitated when both men's gaze suddenly shifted, their eyes uniformly following the tiny movement of her tongue.

"Uh..." Two sets of eyes snapped back, locking into place on her face.

"Yes?" Sebastian prompted.

"I had some fairly strange dreams last night," she ventured, wondering exactly how she should go about asking for information without them thinking she'd flipped. "And I'm not quite sure just how much was real."

"What do you remember?" Nate picked up her hand, enclosing her fingers securely in his. Despite the comforting gesture, he sounded strained.

"There was someone in my backyard, then I was in Oldham Forest?"

"Uh-huh."

Uh-huh? Did that mean that much was real? Unthinking, she moistened her lips again before continuing.

"I was cold, then Nate was there." She paused, Sebastian's gentle nod encouraging her to continue. She swallowed. "There were other people..." Gina looked helplessly around the room.

"Rob and Rafe," Nate supplied.

Okaaaay. This wasn't good. If that much was true...

Gina took a deep breath. "I was tied to a tree;

someone let me go. Then you," she gestured to Nate, "and one of the others stood close to warm me up."

"That's right. Do you remember anything else?"

How could they be so calm? She'd been abducted, left in the forest, and they just stood there quietly listening to how much she remembered. Well, she remembered a lot more, and if it was making her uncomfortable, then maybe it would make them equally uncomfortable, she thought maliciously.

"You were naked," she offered. "All of you, in mid-winter."

There! See how much they liked the way her dreams had combined with reality.

Over Nate's shoulder, she watched for Sebastian's reaction. She'd expected some kind of embarrassment, not just the calm acceptance he was radiating. Aaarrrrggggghhhh!

She was struck by a sudden, horrible thought: did that mean they really *had* all been running around in the buff last night?

Gina continued in a rush, suddenly unsure if she actually wanted to know the truth. "Sebastian carried me home; Nate and the other two turned into wolves."

Sebastian's face split in a wide grin as he turned to Nate. "I see you have some explaining to do, brother." He clapped a hand on his shoulder. "I'll leave you to it."

To say she was startled was an understatement. She literally felt her jaw drop—and she'd thought that only happened in movies. How hackneyed!

Ah well, as the old saying went, in for a penny, in

for a pound. She started to speak before Sebastian could reach the door. "On the way back, we were..." She hesitated again. Could she really admit to the next bit? Sebastian's silent laughter, the way his whole body shook as he watched his brother's reaction, gave her the courage to continue.

"I've never participated in a ménage before," she said sweetly. "Three men. And me."

That shut them up, she saw with grim satisfaction. She wasn't the only one whose jaw could fall open in shock.

Too late, she realised what she'd just admitted to.

Oh.

My.

God.

Sebastian recovered the fastest, turning towards the door but no longer trying to hide his amusement.

His eyes were sparkling. "My darling," he said. "I only wish."

Sebastian turned to Nate, "She's all yours." Then he was gone, and the room was strangely quiet. Just the sound of Nate's ragged breathing close to her ear, his breath fluttering the fine hairs and reminding her what his mouth felt like on other, more intimate, parts of her body. She hastily made herself concentrate on something else.

Nate. But *not* his tongue.

She may have been imagining it, but she was pretty sure that was a flush of color making its way up his neck and across his face.

"What he means," he said, his face hidden somewhere in her neck, "is that we *did not*...um...

have sex last night." He hurried on. "As a group, or otherwise."

Was he embarrassed? She sneaked a peek from under her eyelashes.

He was!

Gina felt like crowing aloud. After everything they'd done, and after all the things he'd whispered in her ear while he was fucking her senseless the night before, he was embarrassed by the idea of sharing her!

Mind you, it was quite possibly all those things he'd told her he wanted to do to her that had made her dreams quite so... X-rated. She wasn't exactly the sort of girl who'd come up with those ideas by herself!

"And the rest of it?" she asked, sure now he was going to tell her she'd imagined the lot. After all, a ménage was a lot more likely than him being a werewolf!

He straightened, sitting up until he was looking right into her eyes. She could actually see the effort as each muscle under his T-shirt rippled into place. Unthinking, she reached out and traced a gentle finger over the hard ridges that made up his chest.

He caught her hand in one of his, holding it away from him. "What would you say if I told you the rest was real?" he asked quietly.

Gina laughed, her whole body shaking at the ridiculousness of the idea. She couldn't help herself. "You're a werewolf? Sure, and I'm a—"

Nate was sitting absolutely still, watching her. It was his eyes that were worrying her, though. They'd

fixed on her breasts, and the way her nipples had hardened against the abrading sheet. There was something disturbing about his eyes, something she'd almost noticed the night before. It was the absolute focus, something very akin to how a retriever looked when it scented game and pointed. Nothing could shake its concentration, and Nate's eyes had the exact same look in them.

Her free hand came up to her mouth, and she felt her eyes widening impossibly more. "You're...?" she prompted. She suddenly had this very bad feeling that she was about to become someone's supper, and she *needed* to know. Now.

Nate grimaced and nodded. "'Fraid so."

* * * *

Well, at least she hadn't screamed. That was something. Of course, there was a good chance she was still in shock and hadn't actually worked out what he meant yet, so he said it again, just to be sure there was no possible misunderstanding.

"I'm a werewolf. Sebastian, too."

"Oh."

Damn! She was whiter than the sheet she'd pulled so protectively, so provocatively, around her. He'd been sitting here for hours, watching her move restlessly under the light coverings, imagining those long legs wrapped around his... Hell! He knew exactly what was under that sheet—not only had he been the one to strip her sodden night gown off when they'd got her home, but he'd explored her luscious

body *very* thoroughly only twenty-four hours earlier—and his memory wasn't making this any easier.

Add to that her dream about being shared between the Moores and he was getting seriously uncomfortable. It was probably only the fact she was too busy deciding whether or not to panic that had stopped her noticing how his cock had jumped to attention at the idea. Sebastian's too, he'd noted jealously.

Nate pulled her closer, almost worried when she didn't try to fight him off. He'd expected a little more reaction than this.

"Um..." Her voice was tiny, but at least she was talking to him.

"Yeah, babe?"

"Do werewolves eat people?"

"Nope."

"Oh." He could almost hear her thinking; he could definitely feel the infinitesimal movement as she settled more securely into his shoulder. "Never?"

He chuckled, holding her more firmly when she stiffened. "Well..." He pretended to think about it. "Not for dinner, no."

He let his hand wander down her side, still on top of the sheet. It was a smooth gliding movement that encompassed her waist, her hips, her thighs. Then he paused, pleased with the way her body responded to him even when, intellectually, she was obviously still very unsure. There was a tremor running under her skin, and he could feel the effort it took her to hold herself even slightly away from him. Her breath

hitched, and he relented, his fingers brushing back up her legs, coming to rest squarely on her pussy.

Even through the sheet, he could feel the throbbing of her blood as it rushed between her legs. A tiny movement of his thumb had her sighing and her legs falling slightly open. That was enough of an invitation for him. Just the thought of watching her being pleased by the others was driving him out of his mind. He needed to touch her, to taste her, to reinforce to her that she was *his*.

Then, and only then, he might sound her out. If she really did like the idea of a ménage, well, who was he to protest? He grinned, well aware he was showing his fangs. It had been a while since he and his brother had...shared. Having seen Sebastian's reaction to her dream, he doubted he'd say 'no'. Rafe and Rob would probably be interested, too.

Nate pushed her gently back down onto the bed, spreading her legs wide as he did. She was still covered by the sheet but it didn't stop him inserting a finger into her pussy, pushing the sheet up and inwards as he filled her. Already she was wet, and he could feel her cream seeping through the fabric and coating his skin.

He glanced at her face—her eyes were closed and her mouth slack—then bent his head to nuzzle between her legs. "You smell good," he growled, probing more deeply with that single finger. He was rewarded with a shuddering moan that vibrated through her entire body. Deep within her pussy, even through the sheet, he could feel the ripples of pleasure.

As slowly as he could, he withdrew his finger, lifting himself until he was on his knees. Her eyes were on him now, glazed but watching him, and he smiled down on her, purposely predatory. He lifted the now-wet sheet to his mouth and slowly, deliberately, licked the damp fabric.

"You taste good, too," he purred, holding eye contact as he gradually lifted the sheet away from her, drawing it slowly down her body so it rippled over her skin until it was pooled at the foot of the bed.

Gina shifted restlessly under him, half reaching her hands up to him, then replacing them on the bed. Her indecision was very clear. She wanted him—but he was a werewolf.

Nate's grin broadened as he lowered his head, taking his time as he teasingly swirled his tongue around her opening and lapped at her clit. Tonight, there'd be no preliminaries, and no working his way slowly up to it. He was going to make her come until she begged him to stop, then he'd make her come again.

His tongue delved into her cunt, a sweeping motion that made her squirm, and her helplessly thrusting hips forced his tongue even deeper. There were benefits to being tongue-fucked by a werewolf that she hadn't even dreamed of. The size of his tongue, for instance...

To accept him, or not? He was planning on making the choice easy for her. There was no choice—she was his.

Chapter Thirteen

Unusually, it seemed to take forever for Gina to wake up. On a normal day, she just opened her eyes and sprang out of bed, but not this time. She just lay there groggily, patiently waiting for her brain to kick itself properly into gear.

Late afternoon sunlight fell across the foot of the bed, creating a noticeably warm patch over her feet. She wriggled luxuriously, savoring the sensation of heat and cool, along with the contrasting textures of smooth sheet and knobbly hand-woven blanket.

Daffodil-yellow. There was no other possible description for the cheerful yellow blanket.

Hmmm. She didn't remember the blanket. Gina grinned. Actually, she didn't remember falling asleep either... No matter. Apparently Nate was still looking out for her, even when she collapsed from the sheer exhaustion of his lovemaking.

The curtains were pulled wide, flooding the room with mellow winter light. Ruffled white curtains, draping low to touch the cherry floorboards, caught her eye. They certainly weren't the sort of thing she'd choose—but their fussiness somehow suited the

room. There was no pink, and nothing so obvious as floral patterns, but she still couldn't imagine it as a man's room.

She pushed herself up on her elbows and glanced around more curiously, wondering about the decorator. It was a very feminine room, and not at all what she'd have expected to find in Nate Moore's house. He and Sebastian didn't have a sister that she knew of. It couldn't have been Nate's room like she'd first thought—a guest room, maybe?

Whatever. It was time to get out of bed. She struggled to a sitting position, trying to ignore the stiffness in her back and neck. She wasn't even going to *think* about how sticky she was between the legs, and all from her own cum. Nate hadn't touched her with anything other than his tongue, but...oh my God, what his tongue could do... Just the memory of how he'd used it on her was enough to set her blood boiling.

She was half way across the room, her bare feet making no noise on the timber, before she realised she was stark naked. And she hadn't even noticed.

Whatever had happened to her?

Only a few days ago she'd been horribly self-conscious to be standing in front of Nate wearing a damp blouse. Now here she was, prancing naked about a house filled with strange men—werewolves, she corrected herself with an uncontrollable shiver—and she was barely even aware of the fact.

A promising-looking door opened onto an ensuite bathroom, and she stared somewhat moodily into the mirror. Could she really have changed so much in

only a couple of days?

The face staring back at her looked more-or-less the same so long as she discounted the faint bruising on one cheek. She touched the discolored skin gently, surprised to find it wasn't particularly sore. It was probably thanks to the men in her back yard. For a second she paused, wondering about them. Later on, she'd have to find out what Nate and the others knew...

Gina focused on the mirror again. Her eyes were still boring hazel, her hair ordinary light brown. Yet Nate obviously saw something in her that he approved of.

She wasn't going to kid herself about him—he wasn't the sort of guy who hung around for the long term. But for the time being... Heck, he made her feel good about herself. He gave her the confidence to like herself, to be comfortable in her own skin. She couldn't actually remember anyone else who liked her exactly as she was. There was always Megan, of course, but that was different.

Megan had never made any secret of the fact she swung with the wind. Male or female, it didn't matter to her so long as they were cute and a good fuck. But Megan wasn't the sort of person who could grab at her senses the way Nate did. She *liked* Megan, but not sexually. And Megan understood that—they were friends, nothing more.

Nate, however...

Grrr. She grimaced at the starry-eyed dope in the mirror. How could she have fallen so hard for someone like him? And the damn man had the hide

not only to like her, but he seemed to be a genuinely nice person.

Werewolf.

She scowled at herself. Weren't werewolves supposed to be the bad guys? Yet Nate and his family had—without hesitation—rescued her and taken care of her. No matter how hard she tried to convince herself there was something wrong with *that* particular picture, her heart very firmly overrode her mind. Womanizer, salesman, and werewolf aside, she couldn't imagine him as anything but the hero of her very own personal fairy tale.

Gina spun around to the shower cubicle, twirling the taps until the spray was pummeling onto her back as hard as possible. She had a multitude of tiny scratches and scrapes and the tingling pain served to do as she'd hoped, taking her mind off him, even if it was only for a few minutes.

It worked, for a little while at least. Problem was, as soon as she picked up the soap and started to rub it over herself, her thoughts drifted.

She soaped her breasts; he'd suckled on her nipple until she'd moaned in pleasure, even then not relenting until she thought it wouldn't be possible to survive the sensation.

She ran the soap over her hips and around her waist; his fingers had trailed tiny circles of fire over her tummy, running tantalizingly lower as she'd squirmed in anticipation.

She dipped the soap between her legs; his tongue had been just...there. And he'd nipped and sucked and licked until she'd...

No!

She slumped against the shower wall, welcoming the shock of the cold tiles on her nerve endings. This shower was supposed to be taking her mind away from sex, not reminding her of everything he'd done to her. Yes, he was damn fine between the sheets—*and above them, and on the sofa, and on the floor*—but there had to be more to a relationship than just sex.

The soap was lavender-scented—*not* what she'd expect to find in a household of men...

Werewolves.

Dammit! She had to remember that and stop thinking about him in this cutesy-girly, disgustingly lovey-dovey way!

He couldn't be a nice person. It wasn't possible.

He was a realtor. Therefore, he was a slimy salesman.

He was a werewolf. Therefore, he ate people.

And you enjoy it when he eats you.

The sneaky little voice in her head was back. She could just imagine a gangly red imp giggling slyly as he—she?—rearranged all her thoughts in the most sensual way possible. *Everything* reminded her of sex.

Aaaarrggggghhhh!

Gina slammed her way out of the bathroom, hardly pausing to check her room was still empty before flouncing over the threshold. She needed some normality in her life. She needed some clothes.

Miraculously, there was a pile of clothes sitting on the end of her recently tidied bed. While she'd been in the bathroom, someone had been in here. The bed was made, the curtains were closed, and there was a

lingering scent of... pine forests.

Nate.

Her skin prickled, and she realized that nothing she'd told herself in the bathroom had sunk in. Nothing. She still wanted him, desperately, and her body was making its own arrangements. Not only was she starting to tingle all over—anticipating just how alive he made her feel with little more than a light brush of his fingertips—but her nipples had hardened, and she could already feel the moisture gathering between her legs.

Traitorous body.

She sighed and picked up the clothes that had been left for her, half surprised she wasn't expected to just wander around the house in the nude. After all, they hadn't thought anything of putting her to bed naked and had seemed totally unembarrassed to be hanging around in her room while she was in that state. A few drops of liquid trickled down the inside of her thigh.

Traitorous body.

* * * *

Surprisingly enough, she'd found a pair of jeans and a man's T-shirt. It was way too big but, cinched around her waist and tied in a snug knot, it was at least respectable. The jeans actually fit—she figured she really didn't want to know which past girlfriend had left them behind—and she buttoned them up, smiling at the lack of underwear.

It wasn't like she'd expected them to keep spare panties on hand or anything, but it actually felt a lot

naughtier venturing downstairs, relatively modestly clothed on the outside, but going commando underneath. Who the hell had come up with that expression, anyway? She had some pretty serious doubts about actual commandos going out without their jocks...

Still, at least she was clothed.

Gina stopped, one foot already on the stairs. Would they be wearing clothes? It wasn't like they'd bothered last night...

She shook her head impatiently. It didn't matter. It was their house. They could do what they liked.

She continued downstairs, padding quietly along the timber-floored corridors. There was the hum of a TV coming from somewhere on the ground floor, and light spilled out from a door that had been left ajar.

It was a football match, the volume turned fairly low but still unmistakable. Cool. Normal men doing normal things, just watching a bit of sport to fill in a lazy Sunday afternoon.

She took a deep breath, suddenly aware she'd been holding it for several seconds. More confidently she reached out and pushed the door open. She was already two steps into the room before she realised it wasn't quite so ordinary as she'd expected.

The living room was large—maybe three times the size of the bedroom—with a row of windows along one wall and an open fireplace at the far end. Despite the central heating, a fire was blazing away merrily, throwing out yet more heat. She could see now why whoever had left the clothes out for her hadn't bothered with a sweater.

There was a mismatched collection of timber and leather furniture scattered through the room, with a sofa and two winged armchairs grouped so they faced both the fireplace and the widescreen TV and curled up on the sofa and chairs were three timber wolves.

Gina came to an abrupt halt. It wasn't like they'd eaten her when they had the chance last night, and Nate had said they didn't eat people. *Normal* timber wolves certainly didn't eat humans—but werewolves?

The closest wolf glanced towards her, unwound himself, and stretched, fangs showing as he yawned widely. Then he re-settled himself, curling up and tucking his nose under his tail. His eyes closed.

Okaaaay. So apparently that one wasn't thinking of her in terms of dinner. The wolf nearest the fire didn't even seem to have noticed her entrance, and the one on the sofa simply lifted his head, sniffed once, and looked at her. If it wasn't a wolf, she'd have said he was challenging her. But it was a wolf... Or was it?

She realised she had absolutely no idea of exactly what a werewolf was and hesitated as she wondered what she should do next. That one wolf was still staring at her and, suddenly defiant, she decided she was just as entitled to a seat near the fire as they were.

She threaded her way across the room and settled gingerly on the sofa, as far away as possible from the wolf whose eyes had tracked her progress but otherwise hadn't moved. It was the same singular stare as when something caught Nate's attention and she shivered, suddenly cursing herself for her stupid

bravado.

Her heart leapt as a log settled abruptly in the fireplace, flames leaping briefly before settling back to an even burn. Then she jumped even higher as she felt a cold nose trace a damp line over her partly exposed midriff. While her attention had been on the fireplace, the wolf had shifted closer, leaning his body against her tightly closed legs and placing his head in her lap.

He looked peaceful, she decided, as his head settled more heavily into her lap. He'd closed his eyes and was just laying there quietly. Her heart rate gradually started to return to something more normal. Not that she could ever imagine herself considering having a sleeping wolf across her lap quite... normal.

The other wolves didn't appear to have noticed her discomfort, and if he knew she was nervous, the wolf beside her was acting oblivious. She didn't think he was asleep but he did look—and feel—pretty darn relaxed. It was amazing just how heavy his head was after only a little while.

If she hadn't thought it would disturb the wolf, she'd have hit herself in the head in frustration. She was an idiot! Of course he knew she was scared! He was a wolf for goodness sake, and if that made him anything like a dog, he could probably tell from her scent almost exactly what she was thinking.

His fur was thick and looked silky smooth. Although the fur was mostly grey, sitting this close, she could pick out a variety of colors. Some darker, some lighter, and all blending together into a

beautiful whole. Very, very carefully she reached out, the tips of her fingers slipping lightly over the fur between his ears.

She jerked her hand back as the wolf moved, certain she'd mortally offended him, but he just settled his head more comfortably on her lap, his nose pressing close to the juncture of her thighs, and sighed. She started to relax again but held her hands safely away from that very tempting fur. She badly wanted to run her fingers through it, but obviously that was out of bounds.

The wolf lifted his head, looked directly at her, then lowered it again, eyes closed. Was that a warning, or a request? If it was a warning, it was a mild one. She had to do it. She *had* to pat him.

A little more confidently she stroked his head. His fur was almost as wonderful as Nate's hair. No. It was better. Smoother, if not quite so soft.

Almost without noticing, her strokes became firmer and longer. Soon each one was reaching from between his ears, down the length of his neck, and right into the thicker fur around his shoulders. Her fingers were kneading tiny circles whenever they returned between his ears, and the little sighs of content told her just how much the wolf approved.

She glanced around the room, hardly believing she was really here. Or, more to the point, it was hard to believe she was sitting in a living room surrounded by wolves, and that one had had the gall to make itself comfortable in her lap. Her attention turned to the fireplace, to the flickering flames, then to the soft chatter of the commentators coming from the TV.

Strangely enough, for the first time in a long time, she felt totally safe.

Chapter Fourteen

The match was over, the commentators droning on about statistics and final scores, when the door swung inwards and another wolf entered the room. He paused after a few steps, his attention instantly fixed on Gina and the wolf that was now stretched even more familiarly across her legs.

Gina watched, fascinated, as he turned and prowled towards them. Her recent confidence was swiftly failing, replaced with the same vague uneasiness she'd been feeling almost continually since Nate had confirmed that the Moores really were all werewolves.

Gradually, she became aware that she was being stalked. Those intense eyes were staring right at her. She tensed. She felt very hemmed in, and there were too many wolves between herself and the safety of the hallway.

The new wolf's eyes never wavered, and his teeth were bared, unapologetically threatening. Was she about to become someone's dinner after all? She fidgeted, hearing the leather underneath her squeak in protest at the awkward movement. Where the hell

was Nate when she needed him?

She'd never realized just how graceful a wolf could be and couldn't drag her eyes away from the elegant movement of the creature that was quickly closing in on them. Her eyes had widened, and her mouth was dry. She could hear her heart, could *feel* it beating out a rapid tattoo. Even her fingertips were vibrating, and she couldn't have moved if she'd wanted to.

The wolf in her lap finally condescended to stir itself and, for a frantic few seconds, she thought it was about to turn on her, too. But he simply raised his head and stared coolly back at the approaching predator. It was the same challenging stare he'd directed on her as she entered the room.

He yawned, stretched, and, in a single fluid movement, jumped off her lap to stand directly in front of her, nose to nose with his obviously upset kin. She wasn't sure, but was that a...grin? He simply stared at the newcomer for a moment then wandered off to curl up on the floor in front of the fire.

So much for her great protector! His nonchalance had made her relax a little, but there was still that cranky great beast staring at her, somehow managing to look threatening and kind of aggrieved at the same time. She watched him cautiously, watched the gradual softening of his stance and the effort he seemed to make to cover his fangs. The effort paid off—he actually seemed to look less wolf-like.

Less wolf-like? *Less wolf-like?* She wasn't usually prone to hysteria, but how could a hundred pound wolf, the aggression still flowing off it and wrapping her in an uneasy thrall, possibly contrive to look

anything less than what it so patently was. He was a massive great angry *wolf*!

A wolf who was trying very hard to be nice, she had to concede a few minutes later.

He'd sprung onto the lounge beside her, arranged his limbs so he didn't crowd her, then laid his head on her lap. When she'd unconsciously tensed and shrunk away, he'd patiently waited for her to relax again, then he'd lifted his head, wetly licked her hand, and resettled himself.

Now he was here, comfortably spread across her lap, as relaxed as the first wolf had been; the threat she'd imagined as he'd padded across the room towards her seemed simply nonsensical. He was just a big cuddly...

...man-eating werewolf.

Gina shook her head. She was going to have to get used to having wolves wandering around the house. If she kept imagining herself as dinner every time she saw one of them, she'd go totally insane.

Mind you, she was having a lot of difficulty believing she hadn't seen the usurper shooting a very satisfied glance at the dispossessed wolf by the fireplace. What was worse was that she was equally certain that particular wolf was shaking with laughter at her current 'friend'. If it wasn't pure sardonic amusement she could see in his eyes, then she didn't know what it was!

* * * *

Nate forced himself to relax. It wasn't easy.

Yes, he knew that Sebastian had a well-developed sense of humor and, yes, Sebastian was also known for having a very sharp eye when it came to his appreciation of members of the opposite sex, but that hadn't made it any easier when he'd ambled into the living room to find Sebastian racked out on her lap.

Jealousy was a fine thing—not! He could hardly believe the instant anger, the flood of aggression that had made him want to tear Sebastian's throat out simply for daring to touch *his* woman without permission. And as to Gina...she'd looked totally unconcerned at the fact his big brother had his head practically buried between her legs! Did she have any idea what Sebastian's sense of smell was telling him about her? About what she'd done with him only a few hours earlier.

To be fair, Sebastian, Rob and Rafe would all have known exactly what they'd been doing recently. Their wolf senses were extremely accurate and, even if they hadn't been able to recognize the scent of a well-satisfied woman, they'd certainly have heard her moans and whimpers—not to mention her occasional screams—as he'd worked her over with his tongue.

Oh yeah, that had been *good*. In all honesty, he didn't often take the time to pleasure a woman when he was expecting nothing in return. Sure, he wanted to make them all hot and bothered, but—usually—he did it purely because he wanted them desperate to have him inside them. It was then that he could really start enjoying himself.

This afternoon, however, he'd made her all hot and bothered, but *he'd* had no relief. He'd tongue-fucked

her until she'd fallen asleep in exhaustion and, uncomfortable as it had been, he just didn't want to jerk himself off. Rather than take a cold shower, he'd gone for a walk in the forest only to come home to find *his* woman surrounded by werewolves who were all looking more than faintly interested in what she had to offer.

Ugh, jealousy!

He burrowed his snout more firmly into Gina's legs, cursing the idiot sense of chivalry that had made him leave her a pair of jeans. He should have made her go naked! He wanted to smell her, to press his nose against her skin and to inhale her unique scent. Raggedy as the nightgown she'd been wearing had been, it was infinitely preferable to the unyielding denim that covered her now.

The primitive urge to mate was hammering at his senses, and he shifted restlessly, pushing his head under her fingers and rubbing suggestively. She got the hint quickly enough, and it wasn't long before she was stroking him with the same long, gliding caresses Sebastian had been enjoying so much when Nate walked in.

He sighed and stretched languidly, content now he was being touched by his Soulmate. What was that saying about soothing the savage beast? He couldn't remember, and it didn't matter anyway. Gina still wasn't really comfortable with him—her fingers had trembled when she first started to run them through his fur—but she was doing it. For now, it was enough.

Nate awoke to find himself alone with Gina. The others had taken themselves off while he slept,

turning off the TV and lowering the lights on their way out. The fire was ablaze but he could still smell the encroaching night air. It was damp and somehow sweeter than during the day.

Above him, Gina was breathing deeply, her chest rising and falling in time with each breath. With her eyes closed she seemed more defenseless, and he couldn't help but admire the fact she'd actually been calm enough to fall asleep with a werewolf in her lap.

He stirred, nudging her gently, but otherwise remained curled peaceably over her legs. The last thing he wanted to do was scare her. Her breathing hitched, her eyelids fluttered, then she was staring down on him, remaining perfectly still other than her eyes which had widened considerably as she remembered what was apparently asleep on her lap.

Rather than leave her anticipating the worst for too long, Nate stretched broadly, his limbs extended to their fullest as he eased out the kinks from sleeping curled up in a ball. She was sitting rigidly still. Whatever she was thinking, she was obviously trying very hard not to give him any excuse to get upset with her.

He sat up, his bottom heavy on her lap, hind legs straddling her knees, and pushed himself upright until he could easily rest his front paws on her shoulders. He heard her hastily smothered gasp, but ignored it and pushed his nose onto hers. He grinned as she shuddered—there was something truly awful about having a cold, wet nose jammed in your face—and leant back slightly so she could see his doggy smile for herself. Tongue lolling out the side of his

mouth, jaw relaxed, he hoped she was seeing him as nothing other than a big gangly dog with a rotten sense of humor.

She rewarded him with a crinkle at the side of her mouth. It was tiny, but unmistakable, and she'd even relaxed a little. He pressed the advantage, pushing lightly against her shoulders until she was forced to lean back against the sofa, trapped between it and him. He waited, half expecting her to panic at her even more vulnerable position.

"Get out of here, you rotten great beast!" She surprised him, freeing one of her hands and swatting ineffectually. When that didn't work, she tried pushing his chin away instead. "You're slobbering all over me."

Nate leant closer and licked her face, a long sloppy swipe of his tongue that reached from her chin to her eyebrows. Then he sat up again, watching her reaction.

It was all he could do not to laugh at her horrified expression as his saliva dribbled down her chin and ran down the front of her shirt to pool between her breasts.

"Yugh!" She swatted some more, laughing this time. "Naughty wolf!"

Naughty wolf?

He hadn't expected to feel such relief at her acceptance of a wolf in a playful mood and considered teasing her some more but decided she'd had enough shocks for the day. Instead, he stretched upright, fluidly transforming from wolf to man.

Within seconds the wolf had been replaced, and he

laughed aloud at the comical shock on her face. Her jaw had dropped, her mouth was open and her eyes were impossibly wide.

"Nate!"

"Who'd you expect?" He stroked his fingers down her cheek, smiling broadly.

"Well, I..." She pushed against his shoulders. "You're squashing me!"

"Am not." He smiled complacently, but shifted anyway so his weight fell on his knees rather than her thighs.

"And you're naked!"

"Yep." He watched a blush spread upwards from the neck of her T-shirt, and grinned. "You're embarrassed."

Her blush deepened. "Yes."

"You've seen me naked before," he pointed out reasonably, enjoying her mild discomfort.

"And Sebastian and Rafe and Rob too," she muttered mutinously under her breath.

Nate held a hand up to his ear, his grin widening. "What was that? Didn't quite hear you."

Gina wriggled but couldn't escape him without making a scene. Even though he'd shifted a little, he was still straddling her, trapping her effectively between himself and the high-backed sofa.

"Nothing."

"Hmmm" He pretended to consider her answer for a minute, before relenting, still chuckling. "Do you know who you were cuddled up to before?" he asked innocently.

"No." She attempted to pout.

"Sebastian. He was *very* happy to be there with his head buried between your thighs." Shamelessly, he projected his own thoughts onto Sebastian. It wasn't like it would have been too far from the truth anyway. "Bet he wished you were naked, then he could have pushed his nose right into your —"

Gina swatted him indignantly. "Don't be rude!"

He put on his best mortally wounded expression. "I'm not. He appreciates you just as much as I do. Only thing is," he added seriously, "I saw you first, and that makes you mine."

"Yours? Huh!"

"Yep, mine." He nodded decisively. "Unless I choose to share you, of course."

"Share me?" Her voice was faint.

"Oh yeah. You did mention that fantasy about being used by all of us — probably shouldn't have said anything in front of Sebastian though..."

Gina spluttered. "Used? Use me?"

Nate nodded. "Of course."

"Oh."

He moved off her, rearranging himself so he was sitting on the sofa beside her, his legs spread wide to allow for his jutting erection. Just talking about having her was making him hard, and it was taking every bit of self-control he'd ever possessed to not turn her around, pull down her jeans, and sink himself deep into her wet, swollen cunt from behind. She was already so aroused, waves of her scent were pulsing around him with every beat of her heart, and he was hanging on by a fast-unraveling thread.

"Did you like being tongue-fucked by a

werewolf?" he enquired mildly.

Her blush was answer enough.

"Well, imagine all of us, all of our tongues, licking and suckling on every tiniest part of your body. We have clever tongues, babe."

His voice had deepened, and he watched a shiver course through her. The shirt wasn't doing enough to hide her breasts and, without thinking about it, he bent down and latched on to a hard nipple, suckling through the fabric.

She wriggled, gasping as he pulled more strongly.

"Where do you think we got our reputation?" His teeth fastened on the nipple and he tugged. As she moaned, he let go, replacing his mouth with his hands and kneading the soft flesh as he reached across to purr in her ear. "You want it, don't you?" He nuzzled then speared his tongue deep into her ear canal.

"Just think how it'd be, babe. You're naked, your legs spread wide, held open so every little bit of you is exposed. Do you like to feel vulnerable?" he whispered, and was rewarded with an almost inaudible whimper of agreement. "Someone's tongue deep in your cunt, licking up your cream; two mouths on your breasts. Maybe even someone's cock in *your* mouth. Mustn't forget your ass, either," he murmured.

She squirmed urgently, and coils of dark pleasure rippled through him as he continued, already planning what they'd do.

"And four sets of hands stroking you, fondling you, teasing you. You think you've had it good before; wait until you see what it's like when we're *all*

fucking you.”

He watched her force her eyes open, saw the effort it took for her to look up at him from under heavy lids. Her eyes were slightly glazed, her lips wet where she'd been running her tongue over them to moisten them while he spoke.

“Babe,” he promised huskily, “you won’t want to move for a week.”

Chapter Fifteen

Rafe padded through the forest, his paws near silent on the fragrant leaf-mold. It had rained a few hours before and the scent of moist earth was strong. His fur glistened where he'd pushed through a thicket, dislodging a shower of raindrops from the overhanging bushes, but he barely noticed. His concentration was firmly focused on a house that perched on the very edge of the forest. The house Alan West had purchased when he first arrived in town.

He stopped, still on a rise slightly above the house, and inhaled deeply. A curl of smoke wisped from the chimney, scattering in the breeze. Washing flapped on the clothesline out back. Despite the smoke, he picked up the scents of both Alan and Cain. One wore cheap deodorant; the other's scent was a sour combination of stale cigarette smoke and sweat. They were both at home.

Rafe settled himself to the ground, blending into the foliage without conscious thought. His eyes remained fixed on the house, his senses alert while he considered his options. He'd come out here with a

vague idea of revenge circling in his mind. Unlike the others, he wasn't quite so sanguine about Gina's near-miss.

With access to the FBI computers, it hadn't taken him long to work out that Gina would be safe enough within a day. As soon as she gained control of her section of the trust fund, there was no way either her stepfather or stepbrother could profit by her death. Leaving her out for the wolves had been a last-ditch effort on their part.

His lips pulled back in a snarl. His fangs bared. He was caught between wanting to rip the guy's throat out and wanting to laugh. Considering that he was the town's sheriff, Alan was terribly amateurish when it came to attempted murder. Surely even he should have worked out that their trail could easily be followed by the very same wolves he was hoping to tempt with his stepdaughter's unconscious body.

And a very nice body she had, too...

He shrugged and sniffed again, drawing the fresh scent of pine needles deep into his head in an effort to blot out the unwanted image. Overhead, clouds were starting to swirl and the air was damp. It wouldn't be long before the rain returned. Not that it would bother him—his fur coat was more-or-less waterproof. Rafe forced his mind back to the problem at hand.

Nate was obviously head-over-heels for Gina. How long would it be before she joined the family, he wondered, grinning to himself at the idea of Nate happily married. He'd always been the most carefree of the old gang, and now it looked like he was going

to be the first to get himself leg-shackled. And she wasn't even a ware...

So, simply protecting her from the sheriff and his son for the next couple of days was too tame. Even if Nate hadn't quite accepted the fact, Gina was family. She was as close to becoming a Moore as made no difference.

It wasn't like Rafe could do anything *legally*, but he was a werewolf. Sometimes, he thought, the others tended to forget that fact. And werewolves had quite a few skills. Ripping the enemy's throat out may not have been socially acceptable, but that didn't mean he couldn't scare him senseless. With luck, the jerk might even leave town afterwards.

Inwardly grinning, he stood up and stretched languidly. The movement made every muscle clearly visible, even through the thick fur of his coat. He may not have had Sebastian's height and natural strength, but he was fitter—and life had taught him how to play dirty.

Rafe was positively looking forward to a rumble with the two men in the house below. And there was absolutely no need for the others to know he'd taken matters into his own hands. His lips twitched in amusement. He knew Sebastian wouldn't approve.

The wolf padded silently down the hill, a natural predator blending effortlessly into his environment. For an instant, he wondered what the others were doing then dismissed the thought. He very much doubted they'd be having anywhere near as much fun as he was about to have.

* * * *

"When- " Gina was quite breathless, Nate's massaging fingers having suddenly latched on a nipple right as she started to speak.

"When what?"

Unresisting, she followed his gentle urging, slumping down the sofa cushions until she was lying on her back, her legs dangling over the edge of the seat. "When can we... oh!"

His hands shifted, one thumb stroking her bottom lip, the other delving between her legs, pressing them apart and running a fingernail repeatedly up and down the crotch seam of her jeans. The light pressure vibrated right through her clit, and she thrust her hips helplessly up into his hand.

Deliberately, Nate grinned down on her. "When can we what?"

"I want..." she breathed, "I think I want..."

"Yes?"

"All of you!" she blurted out.

My God! She was fully aware of the fact that he hadn't even had to ask her. She'd been the one to beg him to let her take part in a ménage.

Nate sat up straight, pulling her briskly upright. She just sat where he propped her, head spinning slightly at the abrupt loss of contact.

"Alright. When?"

When? He actually expected her to set the time and place? She was having enough difficulty believing she'd actually just thrown her good-girl image out the window, and all because she wanted... What did she

want?

She stared up at him, struck dumb.

"How about right now?" Gina whirled to look behind her. Sebastian was standing there, framed by the doorway, with one of the others behind him. Rob, she thought. She couldn't tell which one had spoken.

"Now?" she repeated.

"Sounds good to me." Nate spoke up beside her. He was grinning again, and she belatedly realised that Sebastian and Rob had probably heard every gasping nuance. She had to start remembering about that sharp werewolf hearing... Whatever, she'd as good as broadcast her wishes to them all.

"Rafe's going to be sorry he went out," Sebastian offered easily as he sauntered into the room, waiting for Rob and closing the door behind them. "He's gone to confirm the identities of the men who kidnapped you."

"Oh."

"So," Sebastian directed himself to Nate. "Shall we get started?"

Nate glanced towards her, his eyes focusing on her with that dreadful intensity. His lips quirked, and she shivered, wondering what he was thinking when he looked at her like that. "I think so."

Sebastian and Rob moved to the other end of the room, and she followed their progress idly. It was a shame they'd both dressed before coming in, she thought. Having a great butt was apparently mandatory for Moores. She glanced back towards Nate as he stood up.

"Wait here. I'll be back in a sec."

He disappeared out into the corridor, reappearing only a few minutes later fully dressed in casual track pants and sweat shirt. That confused her, and was a bit of a disappointment really. She'd been practically salivating over the erection he'd been sporting and had been giving serious consideration to exactly what he was planning on doing with it. Her mouth, her pussy—her ass? Now there was a possibility she'd never yet dared to explore...

She shrugged, bringing her attention back to what was going on around her. What were they all doing dressed anyway? Surely it would have been more sensible for them all to be getting naked, than for Nate to be getting dressed?

In the meantime, the others had pulled a full-length, backless, chaise lounge closer to the fire, pushing the other chairs out of their way. Her attention grabbed, she watched as they shifted it, angling it lengthwise to the fire—for warmth, she guessed—then stood back and looked enquiringly towards Nate.

He returned to her, almost gliding across the room to sink into the chair beside her. He reached for her face, cupped her chin, and tugged gently until she was looking deep into his eyes. There was a flame in their depths, and she felt that if she'd leaned too far forward she would have spilled over the rim, tumbling into the heart of a volcano.

A shiver of anticipation ran through her—what those eyes promised! But at the same time it was one of fear. She wasn't afraid of Nate; that wasn't the issue. It was more that she was afraid of herself,

afraid of the uninhibited side of her he'd so effortlessly dragged out of hiding. She was afraid of the fact that this was something she actually wanted to experience. More to the point, she wanted to experience it with Nate.

His finger trailed gentle fire down her cheek, then traced the line of her lips, and all the time he held her eyes captive in his. "Are you sure, babe?"

Suddenly hesitant, she nodded slowly, his hand on her chin restricting her movement. He made no attempt to loosen his hold, but his thumb swirled reassuringly over her skin.

"I want to give you this," he said, "I want you to see what *you're* capable of. But only if it's what you want too."

What *she* was capable of? The confusion must have shown in her eyes, because he smiled his understanding even as he turned her head towards where Sebastian and Rob were waiting near the fireplace. Sebastian was leaning against the mantle, his elbow propped and his foot resting negligently on the fender. Rob had propped his back against the wall, his arms loosely crossed over his stomach.

They both looked infinitely relaxed, calmly waiting for whatever was going to happen next. She tried to swing her head back to Nate, wondering what he was showing her, but he held her firm. She looked more closely, slowly becoming aware of the tension in Sebastian's muscled forearm, and the odd alertness in Rob's gaze. Neither of them was anywhere near as relaxed as they appeared at first glance.

"Oh." Understanding dawned.

"There are three full-grown men in this room," he explained, "and they're all in your thrall. Even if you've never realised it, you," he turned her back to face him, "are a supremely sexy woman."

Gina had been starting to get that idea; it was hard not to be aware of the fact her body was sending out demands that were entirely different to what she'd always programmed herself to expect. But to hear someone with a reputation like Nate Moore's, say that to her, his eyes bright with sincerity, was still a huge shock.

"I would give you anything," he continued with a self-mocking smile she didn't quite understand. "I'll even manage to put aside my jealousy and let my family play. Somehow." She almost missed the last word, it was uttered so softly.

"Play? What do you mean?"

He grinned. "Oh, yeah. We love to play. Don't you want to know what it's like to be the preferred plaything, the favored toy? With us?"

A wave of red rode over her cheeks at the thought, and she answered somewhat faintly. "I think I would. But..." She hesitated, more embarrassed by her sudden doubts than the erotic images of entwined limbs—strong, possessive arms, and muscular legs—that her brain kept replaying in front of her eyes.

He raised an eyebrow.

"You'll be here the whole time, won't you?" It came out in a rush.

She looked up, inspecting his face for any sign of what he was thinking, only to find herself enveloped in a hug, her face crushed against his chest.

“God, I’m glad you feel that way,” he murmured into her hair. “I’ll never leave you alone.”

Never?

Any lingering worry was swept away in the rush of emotion that single word had evoked. Never was a long time, and maybe—just maybe—it meant she wasn’t the only one who was getting lust confused with love. Gina stretched her arms around his waist, shrugging off the ferocity of his hold to free them, and squeezed back. She was starting to look forward to more than just some fantastic sex.

* * * *

After what felt like an eternity, Nate finally released her, enfolding her fingers in his and leading her over to stand near the fire. Both Rob and Sebastian were standing upright now, obviously alert, and she realised with a start that they’d heard every word of the quiet conversation.

Seemingly reading her mind, Sebastian reached out and ran his fingers through her hair, twirling a strand around his fingers and tugging gently. “Don’t worry about it. We all learnt discretion very early.”

Rob chuckled, and she could feel the silent shaking of Nate’s laughter rumbling through her, touching something deep inside. A shared joke, something they all picked up on without the need to exchange words. That was something she’d never had, and she suddenly understood the difference between the supporting closeness of the Moore family, and her own. It was something she would have liked to

experience.

She looked shyly up to Nate, a tentative smile on her lips. "What happens now?"

"Well," he stepped back and looked her up and down, a scowl on his face as he pretended to consider what she was wearing. "I think that the first thing we need to do is get rid of some of your clothes."

Behind him, Sebastian and Rob straightened, their attention fixing on her. She could see the same fire flaring in Sebastian's eyes as that which already burned in Nate's, and Rob's lips were slowly parting, his tongue darting out to moisten them as he stared.

"Take your clothes off," Nate ordered.

"Uh..."

"Now." His voice was flat, the sort of no-nonsense tone a parent would use on a recalcitrant child.

None of them made any move to help her, but just stood there, ranged in a semi-circle between herself and the fire, the hunger in their expressions warming her more than the flames behind them.

She licked her lips nervously. "I don't..."

"Close your eyes." It was Rob this time, issuing the terse command.

She did, and it helped. The darkness was voluntary, and she could still *feel* the heat of their combined gaze on her flesh, but it was easier now she couldn't see the way they were looking at her, like well-trained dogs waiting impatiently for a reward they knew was coming.

Quite an apt simile, she thought, the touch of humor giving her the nerve to fumble with the knotted T-shirt, untying it and lifting it slowly over

her head.

There'd been no bra provided, and the cooler air on her breasts instantly reminded her there was now nothing between their ravenous eyes and *her*. Goose bumps prickled over her bare skin. She really was going to have to stop thinking of them in terms of 'hungry', and herself in terms of a feast... Gina almost grinned, then she dropped the shirt on the floor, her eyes still tightly closed, and reached for the button fly of her jeans.

It was unnaturally quiet. She'd heard the swoosh of the shirt crumpling on the ground, the soft crackling of the fire, and even the hiss of air as someone inhaled sharply. Her nipples hardened, and she felt moisture building up between her thighs. Just the thought of what her actions were doing to these men was turning her on. She paused, her fingers twiddling with the second button, listening avidly.

A sharp tweak on her nipple made her jump. She hadn't heard even a hint of the stealthy approach. "Tease." Sebastian's voice was husky. He tweaked again. "Hurry up."

Oh.

My.

His fingers were still wrapped around her pebbled nipple, his breath hot and sweet in her face. Cinnamon? Whatever, it was proof that she was really doing this. She was really giving herself to three men. For them to *play* with. She shuddered, the tiny movement making his fingers pull deliciously on her nipple.

"I'll rip them off you myself," he threatened silkily

as she continued to hesitate.

Apparently she didn't move fast enough, because he was suddenly pressed hard up against her, her shoulders caught in his massive hands. He spun her around, dragged her bottom close against his erection, brushed her hands away from the buttons as nonchalantly as he would a fly, then his fingers were pushing through them, entwining themselves in her pubic hair and gliding roughly over her clit until she buckled against him, breathless.

Before she could think about it, he'd dipped his head, his mouth had taken possession of her lips, and his tongue was ravaging her mouth. She was vaguely aware of the denim sliding away and pooling at her feet but was concentrating more on the feeling of his tongue dueling with hers, tasting and thrusting, than on the fact that she was now totally naked and he was still fully dressed.

She opened her mouth willingly, a very feminine satisfaction at his impatience sweeping through her. She lifted her arms as far as she was able—his arms were wrapped firmly around her waist to hold her hard up against him—and attempted to stroke his cheek. Before she could touch him, her arms were pulled back down, someone else's hands anchoring them lightly to her sides. She thrust her breasts forward, annoyed at being deprived the right to touch, and found her nipples simultaneously sucked into two warm, wet mouths. Two tongues circled them, drew them out, suckled. Two sets of teeth scraped the aureoles, two tongues licked, and two mouths puffed cool air on their rigid tips.

Overwhelmed by the sensation, she struggled against the restraining hands, writhing against Sebastian and feeling his cock growing harder and larger. Impossibly larger. Her eyes stayed screwed closed—she doubted she could force herself to open them if she tried—and she kept on squirming as the three mouths continued to attack her. All the while, Sebastian's fingers were rubbing up and down her fold, spreading the moisture that was flowing freely from her pussy and massaging it into her clit.

Her hips bucked helplessly. Once...twice... She was so close she could see the stars circling just out of reach, could feel the earthquake that was about to flatten her, but they held it just out of her reach.

"Do you know how wet your cunt is?" Sebastian whispered in her mouth as his fingers continued their sensual gliding. She felt the vibrations of his speech echo through her, a tremble rocking deep within her.

"Do you want to come?" he continued. "We haven't even started yet."

He thrust one long finger deep into her cunt, then swiftly withdrew it. She moaned her protest into his mouth, unable to think, unable to feel anything other than the mouths on her breasts and the fingers that were pushing her so close to the edge.

"Perhaps you're impatient?" he mused, spearing her with two fingers this time. She moaned again, trying to roll her fingers to hold his hand in place.

He chuckled at her predicament; held upright against him by three large men, she had no way to influence what they were doing to her. "Definitely impatient."

His fingers probed, rubbing against her inner walls, then he started a slow glide. In, out, in, out. And each time he went a little deeper, a little faster. His tongue lashed out, delving deep into her throat, his fingers pushed deep into her cunt, the mouths on her breasts nipped, and his thumb came down hard on her clit.

She screamed and slumped bonelessly against him, her body quivering as three mouths continued with a more gentle torture. For a few seconds the world was black, the lights behind her eyes had given up, and Nate's words burned themselves vividly across her mind. So much for not wanting to move for a week. She couldn't imagine moving ever again, and they hadn't even made it anywhere near the sofa yet.

Chapter Sixteen

Almost before she had her feet securely under her, Sebastian was holding her upright again. He stepped back, released his grip, and she found herself standing alone.

After grappling with the consequences for a few seconds, Gina made the effort to open her eyes, blinking dazedly in the muted light. She *was* by herself, the other three having retreated nearer to the fire. Their eyes were all trained unerringly on her, and she glanced down at herself, unsurprised to find her entire body flushed pink. Her own distinctive scent washed over her and she looked down again, mortified to see a glistening trail of her cum wending its way down the inside of one thigh. The thought caused another gush of moisture and an embarrassed blush heated her cheeks.

She forced herself to look up, only to find all three sets of eyes now focused on her face. They were all still fully dressed, and she was very aware of her utter nudity.

Very aware.

Another wave of heat rushed up her breast and

over her cheeks as she realised they'd probably left her standing alone out here on purpose.

Vulnerable.

On display.

"I wonder if her ass goes the same pretty red when she's spanked?" Rob stepped forward, circling her in a few easy paces, his thoughtful gaze raking over her entire body then returning to linger on her butt.

She lifted her arms helplessly, a silent appeal no one seemed too inclined to answer. Her nipples pebbled, and another gush of that telltale fluid trickled down her leg. Awful as it was to admit, she *liked* the way they were looking at her, almost like they really were considering which was the best way to go about consuming a wonderful three-course meal. She smiled inwardly. There she went with those food analogies again...

Though, maybe it wasn't such a bad comparison after all. If she *was* a three-course meal, well, they'd only just had the starter—which left mains and dessert still to be sampled.

And the way Nate's eyes were heating up again, those flames swelling to drown the chocolate brown in fathomless black, it looked like he was ready for the next installment. Actually, so was she. Standing here naked in front of them, she was feeling very, well...*naked*.

She wanted more. Nate had been right—she was a much more sexual being than she'd ever given herself credit for. Now she was standing here with three men who all looked liked they'd happily fuck her until her brains scrambled and, surprisingly, that was what she

wanted. She wanted to feel them inside her, filling her and stretching her. Sebastian's thick fingers had been nice, but 'nice' wasn't what she wanted. She wanted hot and dirty. She wanted Nate to the power of three.

She let her lips curve upwards in an inviting smile and crooked her knee—just slightly—in her best attempt at a come-hither pose. Or maybe that was a come-fuck-me pose? It was a fight to stop the smile broadening to a grin at the direction her thoughts were taking. Really, either would do.

"Eager for more, darling?" Sebastian purred. "Better close your eyes again, then."

She chewed gently on her bottom lip, purposely letting them get a glimpse of her tongue as she moistened her lips. She didn't actually think it was terribly fair that they got to look at her, and she didn't get to see at all, but she didn't seem to have much choice if she wanted them to get started again. Nate may have *looked* like he was ready to pounce, but he made no movement towards her. Neither did the others.

With a tiny sigh, she let her eyelids fall.

"Good girl." Nate's voice was at her ear, his breath tickling, as he trailed his fingers lightly up and down her side. When she went to raise her arms, he held them gently at her side, an obvious request, before going back to those soothing strokes over her waist and hips.

She could hear movement near the fireplace but Nate's fingers were distracting her and it wasn't long before she was breathing rapidly, her heart racing as his fingers drew ever closer to her breasts and clit.

They never quite touched however, and she caught her breath in shock when she found herself scooped into his arms without warning and carried towards the fire.

There was no question of which direction they were headed—the difference in heat was marked—and she was hardly surprised to find herself lowered over what she assumed was the chaise lounge. What was unexpected, was to find a naked man sprawled underneath her.

Before she could open her eyes, a hand was lowered over them, and Rob's voice queried the room at large of whether they should just be done with it and blindfold her? "I don't trust her," he added.

How could nothing other than a few words make her body jump to attention even more than it already was? Her tummy curled at the very wickedness of the idea—it was one thing to voluntarily close her eyes, another altogether to have that choice taken away.

Though, there was nothing stopping her removing a blindfold whenever she pleased, she mused. Unless, of course, they tied her down. Her breath hitched and she felt the blood draining from her face. She barely remembered the feeling of helplessness as she'd been tied to the tree, but it was enough of a memory to send fear coursing through her. It wasn't an option.

"No." Her voice was a mere squeak, and she tried again. "No."

Instantly, Nate spoke up. "We won't do anything you don't want, babe."

Rob's hand remained firm over her eyes, however, and when she attempted to push it away, she found

her wrists caught and held together in a single large hand. She tensed. It was a scary feeling, a reminder of her total vulnerability with these men...

... werewolves.

And it was kind of...erotic, too.

"Keep your eyes closed," Rob crooned into her ear, releasing her wrist. "I mean it, hon'." His thumb brushed her closed lids, little butterflies of feeling skittering around under her skin. His hand dropped away, leaving her again feeling somehow bereft.

What it did leave her with was plenty of time to assimilate the sensations of bare skin under her butt, the crinkly hairs of someone's thighs tickling the back of her legs, and the unmistakable feeling of an erect cock pressed against her. She gave an experimental wriggle. His hips thrust sharply forward until she could feel his cock against her back. Then it settled firmly into her butt crack.

So much for experimentation—he was obviously going to be quick to retaliate. She squirmed, suddenly uncomfortable. That cock was darned close to slipping up her ass, and she didn't even know just whose lap she was sitting on.

Blindly, she reached her arms out behind her, suddenly desperate to know. A low chuckle rumbled through his chest, the vibration spreading through her own body. She could even feel it in the way his cock rubbed more enticingly. Her hands were caught, lightly manacled between long fingers, and forced downwards until they rested by her sides.

"Leave them there." A whispered command from behind. She sagged slightly, somehow stronger for

the knowledge. It was Sebastian.

She tugged against the restraint, and he immediately released her, but as soon as she lifted her arms, he again anchored them firmly back on the smooth, cold leather of the chaise.

"Tsk, tsk, tsk." She could feel his head shaking, his nose ruffling her hair. "Naughty girl." Again her hands were released.

There was movement beside her. Another set of fingers grasped her nipple and tugged. She gasped, the tiny pain flooding her. "Naughty girls get disciplined," Rob's voice informed her smoothly, tugging again.

Oh.

My.

God.

Seemed like she'd thought *that* particular thought not so very long ago... Unfortunately, words were failing her. What on earth had she agreed to? She so wasn't into bondage and discipline—uh-uh. She shook her head. No way.

Yet her skin was tingling all over, she was breathing shallowly, and they'd hardly even touched her since dropping her on Sebastian's lap. It was the idea, she decided, that she could be made to do things she wasn't comfortable with that was so... thrilling. There was no other possible description for the way her entire body was thrumming in anticipation.

"No?" Nate's voice sounded amused. "Are you sure?"

Then she felt his hands grasping her ankles, slowly drawing them apart, until they hung to either side of

the chaise longue. His skin was warm, his fingers gentle yet intractable, and she doubted that he'd let her go if she struggled.

And it was that doubt that was making her wet. She could feel the moisture between her legs, could feel the way it dripped down the inside of her thigh.

Did she have a choice? She pushed tentatively against his restraining hold, unsurprised when her legs didn't budge. "Uh-uh." He still sounded amused.

Hot breath snaked between her thighs, his tongue licking its way up her inner leg on a direct line for her pussy. She shuddered but he didn't stop when he reached it, just continued the sweep over her stomach until he latched on her breast, his tongue curling around a nipple and tugging. Within seconds he'd retraced the entire journey, again gliding straight over her pussy.

"Do you know what I can see?" His tongue returned between her legs, a lazy lick collecting some of the gathered moisture. Her breast heaved at the light touch, and she gasped as his tongue returned, teasing her entrance.

"I can see a naked woman, her legs held wide, her cunt warm and dripping. For me. For my tongue." He punctuated the remark with a slurping lick up her slit, lifting her butt to get better access. Slightly muffled, he continued. "She's spread over my brother, I can see just how much he's lusting after her, yet he's holding off, waiting..." A finger speared into her cunt. "Waiting until you're ready to take all of us."

She whimpered, a forlorn little sound in the

silence.

She could feel Rob bending low over her chest. "You're not ready yet, honey. Trust me."

His mouth descended over her breast, a moist, hot cave that momentarily drew her senses away from the fingers that were rhythmically stabbing into her cunt, accompanied by occasional slurping as Nate did what he'd promised and drank her juices. She could feel liquid flowing from her, damp and cool where his breath caught it, and squirmed in need.

"Mine." Nate's voice was a deep growl, more wolf than human.

"Ours," Sebastian corrected above her. She could hear the smile in his voice. "For now."

She ceased to listen, unable to concentrate on anything other than the three men surrounding her, covering her, teasing her with their fingers and mouths. Sebastian's cock was pushing persistently into her back, and she had to return the pressure. She couldn't help it. And that action pushed her hips upwards, pressing her pussy more firmly into Nate's mouth. Rob was crowding her, almost straddling her to access her breasts, one minute ruthlessly twisting and pulling her nipples until she cried out with the pain, the next soothing and caressing as he kneaded them, his fingers constantly moving.

"Are you ready yet, babe?" Nate mumbled. A clear picture of his head bobbing between her thighs flashed into her mind. She could feel that luscious teddy-bear hair tickling her, felt his hands holding her legs spread wide. Without opening her eyes, she could imagine the way her view of him would be

blocked as Rob bent over her, could imagine how her legs were entangled with Sebastian's...

"Yes."

"Honey, if you can answer that clearly, you just ain't ready." Rob nipped the breast he was holding. "I want to hear you beg."

"Please."

"Please what?" Sebastian this time. She couldn't hold her hips still, was jerking uncontrollably, and still they teased her. There was no way she could need something this desperately and not explode. She *needed* them to finish what they were doing.

Her eyes flicked open and she stared between her legs, watched as Nate lifted his head to look right at her. Her cum was dripping from his chin, smeared on his cheeks. A bolt of lightening flashed through her at the sight. She couldn't think. "Please?"

"What do you want me to do to you?" he asked patiently, his black gaze unwavering.

Nate's tongue may have left her, but his fingers were still inside her, aggressively thrusting her closer and closer to the edge of the mountain she was so desperate to freefall off.

A fractured groan echoed around her, and she realised with a start the sound was coming from her own mouth. "Fuck me."

"Mmm?"

"Please fuck me. Please." Her hips thrust helplessly, but her eyes were locked on Nate's face. "Please."

For a moment, the darkness in his eyes flared, and she saw the wolf staring out at her.

Chapter Seventeen

A deft movement of Nate's arms caught Gina's attention, and he ruthlessly took advantage of her momentary lapse in concentration, flipping her onto her stomach and dragging her down the chaise by her legs. Her breath left her in a whoosh, and she found herself staring straight into Sebastian's groin, her forehead resting just above his cock.

She shut her mouth abruptly but it didn't stop the warm scent of very aroused man wafting into her nose. Her face was held firmly in place by a hand on the back of her head. She couldn't see a thing, but she could certainly feel the velvet-soft skin that sheathed his cock, could feel it twitching as her breath puffed moist air over it. A tiny groan escaped her. It was sooo tempting to just open her mouth, let her tongue flick out, and...

His reaction was everything she could have wanted. His hips thrust up—just a little—and she could sense him fighting to keep his iron control intact. Her tongue flicked out again, a longer lick this time, and she let her lips close gently over the head of his cock, pulling carefully and tasting the salt as a

drop settled into her mouth.

Looked like it was her turn to play...

Sebastian's hips jerked again, but she didn't release him. Now she had the power, she was planning to use it. Her mouth worked, her teeth reaching out to grab at his balls. She inhaled as much of him as possible, ridiculously pleased to feel his fingers clenching in her hair. She drew her arms down, wanting to cradle his balls at the same time, but someone held them above her head, pinning them to either side of Sebastian's hips. This time it wasn't a wave of fear that flooded her, but one of elation. It was a challenge, and she loved a challenge.

Gina listened carefully, wanting to catch every nuance. He groaned, a shattered sound that made her tug more strongly, determined to wring every tiniest reaction from him. She was so caught up in what she was doing she barely noticed Nate rearranging her legs, pushing her up on her knees and anchoring her legs to either side of Sebastian's. She could feel the cooler air brushing at her pussy as her legs were drawn inexorably wider, and couldn't help a shiver when he puffed his breath between her legs.

Concentrate! She was going to make Sebastian come, no matter what Nate was doing to her. Now she'd tasted the power, she needed to experience it fully. She could already feel the heady rush as his hips ground upwards, pressing her face more securely into his crotch, and when she drew his cock as deep into her mouth as she could, suckling fiercely, his soft cry was enough to send moisture flooding from her cunt.

Her ass was in the air, swaying wildly in time with each strong pull of her mouth, and she could imagine Nate standing back, watching her going down on his brother. She pulled backwards, until only the tip of Sebastian's cock was in her mouth, her tongue swirling and teasing, before leaning forward and again burying her face between Sebastian's legs as she swallowed as much of him as she was able. Nate's fingers were drumming out a faint rhythm on her ass, and the little vibrations rocked through her, growing to a crescendo by the time they echoed around her pussy. Spread and open, she could feel her emptiness.

She gasped as something cold and slimy covered her anus, dripping down her crack, across her pussy and, slowly, slowly dripping between her legs. It blended with her own juices but unlike her own cum it was cold, and it stayed that way. Then fingers were kneading her ass, stretching her, probing, and—eventually—sliding inside her.

A deep blush crept up her chest, the heat flooding her face. It was one thing to imagine it, but another one entirely to actually have someone *do* it. And it felt...good. Her blush deepened.

"You're forgetting something." She felt Sebastian lean forward, crushing her face back into his testicles as he whispered in her ear.

Automatically, she opened her mouth to ask what he meant, but all that came out was a groan as the fingers in her ass slipped out, then returned with more of the cold goop, plunging back in and stretching her further.

"That's only two fingers, hon," Rob informed her

neutrally, his voice seeming to float down from somewhere near Sebastian's head. "There'll be at least three—"

Gina groaned again, a fractured sound of longing as Nate's fingers retreated, leaving her empty. She thrust her bottom up into the air, tempting him to fill her again, to give her more of that unusual feeling. No one had ever shown any interest in her ass before—herself included—and now she desperately wanted Nate. She wanted him taking possession of it.

"Or maybe even four fingers before you're ready to be fucked," he continued as if he'd never been interrupted.

"What about me?" Sebastian purred, almost sounding amused at her inability to concentrate on more than one thing at a time. "I thought you were enjoying making *me* squirm."

He was right, and it was enough of a reminder for her to nuzzle into him again, inhaling his musky cinnamon scent, and take his cock back into her mouth. She sucked sharply, meaning to remind him who was boss, only to find his hips thrust abruptly into her face, her bottom pushing back under the pressure.

"Oh." Her strangled cry was muffled, her mouth still full. Despite the shock of having something pushed deep into her ass, she hadn't dropped his cock.

Sebastian's fingers stroked soothingly through her hair. "There's a price to pay for everything, darling." She could hear the grin in his voice, could imagine the heat in Nate's eyes as he stared down at her, her ass

impaled on his cock, and she not daring to move.

The thought of those eyes, all of them heavy with need, made her tremble. A small movement, but it was enough to sent jets of fire from her ass to her cunt. Her tummy flipped, a queer little feeling that had her struggling to catch her breath.

"Suck me," Sebastian ordered and, unthinking, she did.

His hips surged forward, her ass flew back, and this time it was lightning that sizzled through her veins as Nate settled even more deeply.

Nate's voice sounded tight. "It's self-inflicted, babe. You can make Sebastian come, make him lose control. But every time you suck him off, you'll push me deeper into your ass."

"I wonder who'll be first?" Rob mused, leaning on her hands as she tried to pull them to her sides.

Gina licked her lips. The challenge had just increased ten-fold and, apparently, they didn't play fair. A tentative stroke of her tongue up Sebastian's shaft had his hips again pushing her deeper onto Nate's cock. Now she could feel Nate's balls resting against her, almost touching her cunt. How much deeper could he go?

Not much apparently, but every jerk of Sebastian's hips sent the fire racing through her, her breath was ragged, and her cunt was clenching and unclenching in need. Determined to win at all costs, she latched her lips around Sebastian's cock, refusing to give ground no matter what. Eyes screwed closed, she sucked ruthlessly, increasing the suction until his hips were thrusting helplessly into her face, over and over

again. Behind her, she could hear the occasional grunt from Nate.

The weight on her wrists was gone—she felt the tiny breeze as Rob moved around the chaise—but she was too busy concentrating on making Sebastian lose control to wonder what he was doing. A small movement under her bottom as her hips were slightly tilted was her only warning before Rob's tongue swiped slowly along her crack, lingering on her clit. Her hips jerked, Nate pushed deeper, and for a moment she forgot about Sebastian.

They definitely didn't play fair.

Then Rob's fingers were spreading her lips, a single long finger inserting itself into her cunt, and his tongue was running trails of cold fire all around her pussy. She shuddered helplessly, the vibrations equally strong in her ass and her cunt. Unable to even think any more, let alone work on Sebastian, she gave up the fight as Rob's teeth came together on her clit.

Her vision went black, streaks of color racing behind her closed lids as every individual cell in her body exploded, throwing her deep into space. She settled slowly, her brain still spinning with the ferocity of the orgasm and only gradually realised that Sebastian's still-twitching cock was lying limply in her mouth, his cum dripping over her face. And she was slumped bonelessly on Rob's face, his tongue still running lazy circles over her pussy as he licked up her cream, his contented rumbling tickling her sensitized skin.

She looked up, blinking carefully—cum was even dripping from her eyelashes—but couldn't find the

energy to raise her hands to wipe herself clean.

Sebastian smiled down on her, a slow sexy bending of his lips that had her nerves instantly standing to attention. "I like looking at you like that. Leave it."

She didn't have much choice; Rob was still licking and suckling, sending aftershocks rattling through her even as she thought about it. She struggled to lift her head, turning to look over her shoulder at Nate.

The small movement was enough to remind her that Nate was still buried deep in her ass and sending little thrills running up and down her spine. Obviously they weren't finished just yet, but she figured another explosive orgasm like that one and she might never be able to put all the pieces back together.

Seeming to confirm her thought, Sebastian slipped further down the chaise underneath her, and she could feel Rob's reluctance as he pulled away to make space. Sebastian didn't stop until his face was almost under hers. His cock, already hard again, was nudging the entrance to her pussy, but before she could think too much about just what they were about to do, his hands firmed on her head, steering her face downwards. Then his mouth took hers, stealing her breath and doing his best to kiss her senseless. Gina groaned into his mouth—she'd thought that only happened to the heroines in trashy historical novels, but he was easily proving she was just as susceptible.

His tongue swirled, painted patterns on her teeth and over her gums, licked traces of his own cum from her lips. She couldn't think, she couldn't move, and it

was nothing but a kiss.

And the fact Nate's cock is still buried in your ass, and Sebastian's about to fuck your cunt...

A single hard thrust and Sebastian was buried as deep as Nate. His mouth left hers as he withdrew slightly, ramming home again, keeping strict time with Nate.

Her arms flew upwards, trying to grab at Sebastian's waist. She didn't see how she could possibly survive the sensation as they both fucked her. There was no other possible description; she was being thoroughly possessed, thoroughly fucked.

"Rob." Nate's voice was a command.

She felt him beside her but couldn't imagine opening her eyes to see what he was doing. One flailing arm was caught, then the other, and he held them firmly at her side, forcing her to accept whatever Nate and Sebastian chose to do. Her hips rose and fell helplessly. She could feel the blackness swelling, trying to envelop her as they continued, apparently determined to kill her with pleasure.

"Oh, God, I can't... Please..." She jerked against his restraining hands.

"Put something in her mouth, would you?" Nate's voice was calm.

"Gladly." Rob's reply was little more than a murmur.

What the hell were they talking about? Not a gag? Surely not!

Gina struggled briefly against them, trying to sit up and finding it only sank both cocks deeper inside her. A scream was forced from her lips as the pleasure-

pain welled, a distant tsunami waiting to consume her.

"I don't—" She was cut off as Rob's cock surged into her mouth, pushing past her gag reflex and deep into her throat.

"My turn," he murmured.

Shock stopped her struggles. She opened her mouth wider in sheer reaction, allowing his cock to slip deeper still. "Good girl," he approved.

It wasn't long before he was following their rhythm, his cock thrusting in time with the others as they pushed her closer and closer to the edge.

Somewhere in the back of her mind, a little bit of sanity was trying to make itself heard. She was being fucked by three men.

Thoroughly. Fucked.


But she wouldn't have stopped them if she could. The sound of flesh slapping on flesh, their grunts of satisfaction proof of how much they were enjoying her body, the sweet smell of the cum that was drying stickily over her face, the heat, the sweat...

A low growl from Nate, a final thrust from Sebastian, and the wave broke over her head. She was drowning in ecstasy, totally overwhelmed as explosion after explosion ripped through her. From a distance she could feel her entire body shuddering and contracting, gripping the cocks that were still embedded deep within her.

Then...nothing.

Gratefully, she fell into the welcoming darkness.

Chapter Eighteen

unlight slanted across the yellow blanket, stopping just short of her face. Her eyes may have been in shadow but her breathing was deep and even. Ten o'clock and she was still dead to the world.

Nate grinned as he ran light fingers down Gina's cheek. She'd had more than enough sleep—it felt like all night and half the morning—and he couldn't help his smug male satisfaction. *He'd* done this to her, sated her so completely she hadn't stirred when he'd scooped her up and carried her upstairs. Her eyelashes hadn't even fluttered when he'd arranged her under the covers, careful she wouldn't feel even the slightest bit cold. He'd collapsed in the arm chair in the corner, watching from under hooded eyes, quite sure she'd wake and then...

Then they could talk.

But she hadn't woken, sleeping peacefully through the long evening and well into the morning and, frankly, he couldn't wait any longer. He leant closer, brushing his lips softly over her nose, then her lips. She stirred, a single hand fighting its way free from the sheet to flick irritably at whatever was disturbing

her.

Laughing softly, he held her hand, bending to kiss her properly. He let his lips settle over hers, softly at first, then gradually more demanding. He felt her indrawn breath, was aware of the instant she became fully awake. A moment's hesitation, then she was returning kiss for kiss, her mouth as demanding as his.

He could still taste the remnants of last night's... activities. The faint aroma of sex and sweat that the warm washcloth he'd wielded before putting her to bed hadn't quite erased wafted up to him, inciting him to take more than just a kiss. He'd already claimed her waking breath, but now he wanted to taste more of her, to possess her all for himself.

Physically, yes, he'd enjoyed last night. But the jealousy had been extreme, and it had gnawed at him all night, an acid burning in his stomach that filled him with dread. He doubted he could stand to share her again. If nothing else, *that* told him just how infatuated he was.

Reluctantly, he drew away from the temptation of her mouth. He knew the instincts of the wild animal were lurking deep within him. His wolf wanted to claim her. Now. If he didn't retreat, he might not hold onto his control for long enough to actually give her the choice. And, no matter what his feelings on the matter were, she had to have some say in the matter.

"Good morning, baby." He smiled down at her and perched on the side of the bed, nudging her until she squirmed over, making space for him beside her.

That unconsciously sexy little wriggle was almost

his undoing. The sheet slipped and a single glimpse of creamy skin was enough to start the beast roaring, demanding he take her immediately.

He sneered at himself. *And do what with her?* Drag her deep into the forest, hiding out until he could convince her they really were fated to be together? As if that was going to happen!

Gina blushed, a delicious shade of pink that immediately reminded him of Rob's comment the night before. *Did* her bottom go the same shade when she was spanked? It wasn't something he'd ever really been into, but with Gina, he wouldn't mind experimenting a little.

"I brought you breakfast," he continued, desperately trying to ignore the frantic messages his hormones were sending his way. He nodded towards a tray he'd left on the dresser. "I was starting to think you were going to sleep the day away."

"What time is it?" Her voice was deep and slumberous.

"After ten."

She sat abruptly upright, grabbing for the sheet, and would have sprung out of bed if not for his restraining hand on her chest. The sensation of the sheet sliding over her skin had him quickly moving his hand to her shoulder. Even there, her skin was soft and tempting, and he couldn't help running soothing swirls over her thudding pulse.

"There's no rush."

Gina shook her head. "I have to get to work. I'm already late."

He smiled, his fingers still caressing her nape. "I

rang the resort already and spoke to the general manager. He's not expecting you in for the rest of the week."

"What!"

So much for the undying gratitude he'd expected. Rather than thanking him nicely she was pushing futilely against his shoulders, still trying to get up.

"He's a friend of the family, babe. It was no problem."

She flung herself back against the pillows. "That's not the point! Just because I let you fuck me last night—" Her blush deepened and her eyes went slightly dreamy as memories overtook her, but she continued doggedly. "You have no right to just go around arranging my life!"

Nate sprang back from the bed as if he'd been struck. Was that all she thought last night had been to him? *She'd let him fuck her?*

He turned his back, staring out the window at the endless trees marching into the distance. A groan escaped before he could censor it. Maybe the ménage hadn't been the best way of showing her his commitment. But he was a sexual creature, and she'd enjoyed it... Aw hell, who was he trying to kid? He'd screwed up big time.

"What about the men who attacked you? You can't go home yet, not until we know it's safe." He attempted to be reasonable.

"Did you call the sheriff yet?" Gina sounded sulky.

"Rafe followed their tracks back to their vehicle; he also tracked them around your house. That's what he was doing yesterday evening."

“And?”

“It was your stepfather and his son.”

“Damn.”

He forced himself to glance towards the bed. That ‘damn’ hadn’t sounded half as forceful as it should have. She was lying limp, her eyes closed, and he could have sworn he saw her lips trembling.

“Aw, babe, I’m sorry...”

“Don’t.” She attempted to brush away his sympathy, but her smile was shaky at best. In reality, it looked like it was taking every ounce of her self-control not to break down and cry.

“I’ve been hoping it wasn’t him,” she said simply. “All the stuff that’s been happening. Megan reckons I’m an idiot, closing my eyes to reality.” She sighed. “I guess I have been.”

“Rafe said the threat would be gone as of your birthday tomorrow. You’ll be in no danger if you stay here until then.”

Her eyes flew open, and she pushed herself up onto her elbow. “How does he know that?”

Nate shrugged casually, hoping she wouldn’t notice him skirting the truth. She didn’t need to know that Rafe had visited her stepfather and brother late last night—and she definitely didn’t need to know he’d scared them shitless. “He’s FBI. It wasn’t too hard to get a look at your mom’s will and the conditions on the trust fund. Greed’s a pretty common motive.”

Fear was a damned good motivator, too, and that, more than anything, was likely to make her family keep their distance. Questionable they may have

been, but Nate wasn't about to argue with Rafe's tactics.

Gina frowned, a tiny line of concentration marring the smooth skin of her brow. He couldn't help himself: he had to reach out and smooth it away with his thumb. He could see her sifting through what he'd just said, watched as she relaxed again. She'd barely even noticed his light touch.

"Do they know where I am?"

He shook his head. "They'll think you were taken by werewolves."

"I was taken by werewolves," she muttered sotto voce.

Nate wagged his eyebrows, and she couldn't help smiling. "Good thing we gave up snacking on tasty young women a few decades ago, hey?"

"Yeah." Gina wrinkled her nose. "Speaking of snacking and stuff, I need a shower. I can't believe I'm still sticky."

A clear vision of Rob licking her pussy, savoring every drop of her cream invaded his thoughts. "I can."

She batted a playful arm in his direction. "Out."

"Nope." He stood back, leant nonchalantly against the wall, and crossed his arms, grinning at her look of disbelief.

"Off you go. Shower's that way." He pointed helpfully towards the ensuite door.

"I seem to be naked under here," she told him.

"I hope so."

Her eyes gleamed, and she threw the covers off huffily, exposing every inch of bare skin to his gaze.

"You," she pointed at him, "stay right where you are."

His voice dropped to a rumbling growl. "Spoilsport."

She smiled sunnily, practically dancing to the bathroom. "Yes." The door slammed behind her.

* * * *

Damn. Damn. Damn. And double damn.

This was not happening as easily as he'd expected. Okay, so he'd only known the woman a few days, but that didn't mean he was wrong about her. She was his. Fate had decreed it. He just *knew*.

Unfortunately, that didn't mean he was doing a very good job of explaining it to her. All he'd wanted to do this morning was jump her bones, then she'd gone all teary and he'd had this urgent need to wipe the tears away and make everything all right in her world. Telling her about her stepfather hadn't been quite the disaster it could have been, but it was obvious to an idiot that she wasn't seeing yours truly in the proper light. If everything was going the way it was supposed to, by now she should have been staring at him with stars in her eyes.

And she wasn't.

She was staring at him like she'd happily jump *his* bones. Or Sebastian's. Or Rob's. Hell, she might even be curious about what she'd missed out on with Rafe last night!

Well, if he had anything to say about it – which he did – she wasn't going to find out!

* * * *

The shower was exactly what she needed. It gave her a few minutes by herself, time to reflect on just what she'd done last night. Try as she might, she couldn't find it in herself to regret it. She'd *enjoyed* herself, and the pleasurable ache between her legs reminded her of that every time she moved.

By the time she entered the kitchen, she was relatively relaxed in her freshly laundered jeans and shirt, but couldn't help the blush that stole up her face as soon as she realised she wouldn't be alone. Rob was just turning away from the counter, sandwich in hand, when she paused in the doorway.

He smiled. A genuinely welcoming smile with not a touch of lust or lechery.

"Good morning. Sleep well?"

Her blush fairly sizzled as she thought about the connotations. "Uh, yes, thank you."

"That's good." He jerked a chair back from the table that filled the centre of the kitchen, setting down his plate and beckoning her over. "Can I get you some toast?"

Toast! Who was he trying to kid? She looked at him and remembered that same distant voice suggesting they blindfold her, the clinically cool hands holding her down while Nate and Sebastian fucked her... And he was discussing toast!

A faint smile creased his lips, almost as if he could read her thoughts. She wondered if he could – after all, vampires supposedly had that ability, so why not

werewolves?

His smile broadened. "Peanut butter?"

She nodded mutely, for some reason unwilling to take her eyes off him. There was something about the way he was looking at her...

He settled back into his own chair, pushing the coffee pot across the table and taking a mouthful of his sandwich before speaking. "Okay."

Gina looked up, then looked back to the neat little pile of toast crumbs in front of her.

"Nate is obviously not doing a good job at explaining himself, is he?" He smiled sardonically. "So much for my cousin the silver-tongued salesman."

He took another bite of sandwich, drawing out her curiosity. "Firstly, no, werewolves can't read minds." He grinned as she squirmed. "Usually. You're projecting your thoughts so loudly, *anyone* could read them this morning."

Gina watched him rock back in his seat, fascinated by how at ease he was. "Secondly, Nate was as jealous as all hell last night. You saw how he reacted when he found Sebastian on your lap during the game. He's head over heels for you."

She shook her head in denial. "Then why —"

"Why would he let us play with you? Because he thought you'd enjoy it. And you did, didn't you?" His voice lowered to a purr.

Another wave of heat surged over her cheeks, and she wondered how long it would be before she learnt to control the annoying blush. He laughed, and the blush disappeared as quickly as it had arrived.

"He did it for you, hon," he emphasized quietly. "Not for him, not for us. For *you*."

"Oh." The last person she'd expected to be having any kind of conversation with was Rob, and she especially hadn't been expecting to discuss last night with him.

She let her thoughts settle. Was he trying to tell her that Nate actually liked her? Wanted her for more than just a quick fuck?

"Hell, yes! Are you even listening to me, woman?"

He was reading her thoughts again and, apparently, she wasn't listening closely enough, for he leaned across the table, grabbing her hand in exasperation and shaking it to get her attention.

"Nate loves you. You are his Soulmate. That's very important to a werewolf. It's like the human equivalent of marriage, but even more." He hesitated, sudden worry wrinkling his forehead. "He did ask you, didn't he?"

Gina shook her head.

"Aw, hell! He's an idiot!" He dropped his head into a hand, staring down at the table. "Okay, well pretend I didn't just tell you this, all right?"

"Uh..."

"Just say 'yes' when he finally gets the guts to ask you, okay?"

"Uh..."

He shook her wrist impatiently. "Say 'yes'."

"Yes?"

"Good girl. Welcome to the family." He slapped a brusque kiss on her hair then stomped out of the room.

What the heck was all that about? He was rather... mercurial. One minute perfectly nice and offering toast, the next telling her she was going to marry Nate. Mad. That was what he was. And he was supposed to be a doctor. She could only be glad she wasn't one of his patients. There was something infinitely calming about an elderly doctor with a cheery personality – and Rob was the exact opposite.

She filled her mug, added cream and stirred idly. Still, it was a nice dream. She could even understand what he meant about Soulmates. There was something about Nate that had just reached out and grabbed her the very first time she'd laid eyes on him.

Chapter Nineteen

*W*elcome to the family?

Reality landed with a whopping great thud. Pleasant daydreams aside, what the bloody hell had Rob meant by 'welcome to the family'? Nate hadn't asked her to marry him, she hadn't said 'yes'... She shook her head violently at the very idea. There were way too many unanswered questions before she could even *think* about it.

Such as? The evil little voice was back, and it was *loud*.

What's not to like? The voice was a hiss, a promise of sinful pleasure. *Handsome, rich, good in bed...*

Overbearingly arrogant, a salesman, and too good to be true. A werewolf.

Way too good to be true.

Besides, he hadn't asked her yet.

What would she do if he did? It was an interesting question. In one day she'd be financially independent, free from a threatening stepfather, and life could go back to normal. Was that what she wanted? Now she'd had a taste of what she'd been missing, it was going to be damn hard.

And damn boring.

She liked having Nate in her life. She even kinda liked the idea of getting an instant family. A weird instant family to be sure, but a family just the same. She could probably even learn how *not* to blush every time she saw them. Mind you, that was going to be a lot harder now than it would have been, oh, twenty-four hours ago...

Gina paced the kitchen, thinking furiously. If Nate's behaviour to date was anything to go by, the chances of him giving her space to make up her own mind were about a million to one. In other words, she had to work it out now, on the off chance Rob was actually right.

She paused. Just imagine—a catch like Nate Moore actually wanting her. Plain, boring old Gina. Well, maybe not quite so boring now, she conceded with a wry grin as she resumed her pacing. Nate hadn't let her hide from reality for very long at all.

Okay, so the question was, did she—or did she not—want Nate Moore? She sank into a chair by the table, chewing her lip in agitation. This so was not the sort of thing she should be deciding this early in the morning. Even if she had slept in until something after ten...

She replayed the last few days in her mind, attempting to fast-forward when she got to the evening before. Her imagination, however, had other ideas, slowing down and reminding her of every fleeting touch from those hot male mouths and searching fingers, replaying in vivid detail her writhing in front of them, moaning and screaming.

How could she have been so brazen as to be lying there with her ass in the air, every orifice filled, and have enjoyed herself so thoroughly?

Unsurprisingly, she blushed bright red, dropping her head onto the table and shaking it in dismay. The problem was, she couldn't imagine being so uninhibited with any other man. Nate had been there with her the whole way, and she'd trusted him enough to accept his word that she'd enjoy what they did. Everything they did. And she had. She'd known plenty of men in her life, but Nate was the first one she'd trusted so easily. If he believed they were fated to be together, then maybe she should trust his judgment on that, too.

A rustling behind her alerted her that she was no longer alone. She sat up slowly, smoothing her hair and stretching cramped muscles as she did so. There was no point trying to hide the fact she'd been slumped on the table mere seconds ago—let whoever it was make of it what they would.

Her tummy curled, little bolts of lightning suddenly flying directly to every nerve ending. It was Nate. Her mind may have been uncertain, but her body was sure. More than sure. A slow, sexy smile tugged at her lips.

So, decision made.

"Hey, babe."

She sat up straighter, tossed her hair carelessly over her shoulder, paying very close attention to his reaction. His groin twitched. Well, she'd been in absolutely no doubt about the fact he was in lust; it was the question of whether or not he was really in

love that plagued her now. She was, but was he?

"You're not working today?"

He attempted to sound nonchalant, but she could tell he was feeling the strain. The skin across his forehead looked tight, and she itched to reach up and soothe away the tension. "Nah, thought I'd better stay home and look after you."

Gina smiled, a siren's call. "Thank you."

His eyes were burning into her, the flame within them hot enough to incinerate her clothes and leave her naked to his gaze. Purposely she fanned the flame, all the time knowing she was tempting the wolf. She stretched, as supple as the cat he'd accused her of being, and leant backwards, angling herself so her nipples thrust enticingly towards him.

Her eyelids lowered, and she glanced up at him seductively. "So, what shall we do to fill in our time?"

Two quick paces and he was behind her, his arms wrapped around her shoulders to link under her chin. She was surrounded by the fresh pine scent of his aftershave. She inhaled deeply, watching her own breasts rise and fall, then shifted slightly on the seat. Moisture was dripping from her pussy, and she could feel it gathering inside her jeans. Her body definitely remembered him and was already getting ready to accept him all over again.

Nate's breath was warm in her ear, his voice strangled. "Babe, I can't stand this any longer."

"Stand what?" She pretended innocence.

"I have to be with you. I *need* you in my life. You are my Soulmate, and I, I..." He stumbled over the words, obviously seeking the correct phrase. "I would

be honored if you would consent to be my wife." He nuzzled her hair. "Be the mother of my cubs, babe. Say 'yes'."

The last few words were practically a groan, but she caught them clearly. "Cubs?"

"Babies. You know."

Gina fought to contain the giggle that was welling up. "I know what babies are. I also know what cubs are. It's the bit about 'cubs' that I'm specifically wondering about."

"We'll have baby werewolves," he explained absently, his fingers catching in her hair as he drew her face upwards. "Sometimes they're babies, sometimes they're cubs."

"I'm not a werewolf."

"Ah." He jerked upright, and she instantly missed his warmth.

"Yes?"

"There's a special part of the mating ritual for when a ware's Soulmate is human. You become..." He hesitated, his tense hands on her shoulders now the only contact between them.

"A werewolf?" she ventured.

"Yeah."

"Forgot to mention that, didn't you?" Her voice was soft.

She stretched upright, catching his hands and bringing them back to her breasts. "It doesn't matter anyway," she murmured, using his hands to caress her nipples. "Because you don't really love me, you're just in lust."

It was a gamble, but the only thing she could think

of on the spur of the minute. She wanted him forever, but she'd offer him unlimited sex — no commitments. Then she'd just have to wait and see how he reacted.

"Babe, you have no idea how much I want you." His fingers started to follow the pattern she'd set, tweaking and fondling until her nipples were rock hard and she was arching her back into his hands. "And I want you forever," he added huskily.

"You don't even know what commitment means." She dismissed his words, grasping his hands and dragging them downwards, at the same time leaning back to run her fingernails up and down his cock, teasing him through the fly of his jeans.

This was killing her. A few well-placed strokes of his fingers and she was ready to agree to anything he wanted. But she wouldn't give in. She had to know he really meant it. And he hadn't said those three little words yet, either. They were non-negotiable.

"Now," Gina turned to face him, unbuttoning his fly and freeing his cock. "Now it's my turn to play," she purred and took him into her mouth.

Nate's hips rocked against her, thrusting him deeper. His skin was silken, and she ran her tongue lovingly over his length, pausing to lick up the drop of cum that was waiting on the tip. She sucked gently, reaching her fingers up to stimulate his balls, and release more sperm. She desperately wanted to taste him.

"God...please...I can't..." He pulled his cock free with a growl, the sudden movement catching her by surprise. She licked her lips, catching the fluid that dripped from her mouth. He was still hard and he

hadn't climaxed, yet he tucked himself away, buttoning his jeans almost savagely as he caught her chin and forced her to look up at him.

"Obviously, you don't believe me," he growled, the flame in his eyes brighter than ever. "I love you, I want you, and I'll be damned if I'll let you sidetrack me so easily!"

I love you. Gina sighed softly, content. The very words she'd been waiting for. He'd spat them out in frustration, true, but she was sure he'd learn to be more gracious about it in time.

She opened her mouth to speak, only to find herself falling into his gaze, trapped. She was no different to any other small furry prey through the eons. There was no escape.

* * * *

Gina opened her eyes carefully. She seemed to be standing up, and she wasn't exactly all that comfortable. Her hands were caught somewhere behind her, and she was brought up short when she tried to tug them free. The damp smell of rich dirt and fresh pine needles assaulted her senses. She shook her head in disbelief. It couldn't be...

Adrenaline pumped through her bloodstream. Once more she was tied to a tree, her hands bound behind her back, and thick ropes holding her upright and immobile. She looked around quickly, immediately aware that it was a different tree in a different clearing. Actually, this tree was an awful lot smoother than the one her stepfather had chosen.

And it was daytime. Afternoon. It was an awful lot warmer, too.

She tugged at her wrists again and felt silk sliding against them. Definitely more comfortable than the coarse ropes that had cut into her skin. Not, however, that she had a snowflake's chance in hell of getting free. Whoever had tied her here had done a darned good job of it.

And they'd had quite a good imagination, too. A gust of wind lifted the soft fabric that had been resting limply against her legs. She glanced down. She was wearing a white night gown, extremely low cut, and silk—keeping with the theme, she assumed. As she rested her head back against the tree trunk, one of the straps slithered down her arm, revealing even more cleavage. There were no panties either, she could just tell. She'd obviously been brought here for a purpose... Her body came alive as she started to consider the possibilities and a telltale trickle of moisture trailed down her leg. For whatever daft reason, she wasn't feeling the least bit threatened.

Her head fell back in resignation. It was Nate. She was sure of it. A movement in the shadows opposite confirmed her guess. He was leaning negligently against a tree, his eyes shaded, but she knew he was watching her. He stood upright, unfolding himself to his full height before ambling across to her. She shivered. There was something very precise about his movements, as if he knew exactly what he wanted and was about to go after it. He was totally naked, and she didn't have to think too hard to guess exactly what it was he wanted. Her stomach lurched.

"Well." He reached out and ran a finger down her cheek, his eyes searing her skin as they followed the movement of his hand. "My little disbeliever." He shook his head sorrowfully. "You realize I'm not going to let you go until you agree to marry me?"

Unfortunately for him, she could see the amusement glittering in the dark brown depths of his eyes.

His fingers traced the curve of her shoulder, snagging the second strap and flicking it off her shoulder. The gown sagged, held up only by the rope he'd tied around her waist. Her breasts were revealed, nipples already pebbling in the cool breeze. Nate's fingers traveled lower, and she shuddered at the feather light touch.

He circled her nipples then stepped closer so his entire body was pushed against hers. She craved the skin-to-skin contact and couldn't help pushing against the ropes, trying to hold herself more firmly against him. He stepped back.

"Why would I want to marry you?" she goaded.

"Because I'll torture you until you do." He sunk to his knees before her, lifted the skirt and tucked it over the rope. His voice was a low rumble against her naked pussy. "Spread your legs."

"No."

He puffed breath onto her clit, a single finger probing her entrance. "You want me. Admit it," he crooned.

"No."

"Bad girl," he whispered and ran his tongue down her thigh, catching the moisture that was continually

trickling. "Little liar."

Gina screwed her eyes closed and leant back against the tree. If she hadn't had it behind her, her knees would have buckled by now – and he'd hardly even touched her. The idea of being totally at his mercy, completely in his control, was becoming very, very sexy.

So she wasn't about to tell him that she would have said 'yes' back in the kitchen. He'd fiddled with her concept of time before she'd had the opportunity. For that alone, she was willing to make him wait. Besides, she liked his idea of sensual torture. She wondered how long she could string it out before she'd agree to anything he wanted?

"Get off your knees, wolf-boy," she managed, looking down at him. "It won't work."

"Wolf boy?" The words were almost lost in a snarl as he sank fluidly into the shape of a wolf, fur rippling along his limbs as he changed. A pair of wolf eyes glared balefully up at her, and she trembled in anticipation.

"Yugh!"

Nate had run his wolf-tongue up her leg, returned to nip at her ankle, then nuzzled between her legs. She tried to pull her legs more firmly together but he held his body between them, his gorgeous fur rubbing sensuously against her naked legs.

He pushed his head upwards, forcing her legs further apart, and his tongue ran a long wet line up her thigh. Her head fell back again. Then it was Nate's hands holding her legs open, and Nate's amazing tongue licking up her cream.

"I don't think 'yugh' is very polite," he noted, plunging three fingers deep inside her and using them to jerk her hips closer to his face. "My wolf tongue is rather clever, you know."

"Yes." A breathless mewling sound echoed around the forest in time with his stroking tongue. Oh, my God – was that her making those noises?

"Yes, what?" He managed to sound totally unconcerned.

"Yes...just...yes." Her hips lunged helplessly into his mouth, each thrust bringing her into contact with the rope at her waist. Behind her back, her fingers clenched.

Closer. She needed him to be closer...

Nate shook his head and stood up. "Not good enough."

The slight distance between them was pure agony. His fingers were still deep in her cunt, but she missed the heat of his mouth, the intimacy of having him on his knees before her.

"Please..."

He raised his eyebrows, leant a little closer, then pushed hard on her clit just as she thought he might kiss her.

Stars were bursting behind her eyes. There was no way she could put two cohesive thoughts together, let alone enough words to agree to marry him. He relented. "Will you marry me?"

"Yes." She gasped as he pushed impossibly deeper. "I love you."

"I love you, too," he growled, suddenly grinding his hips into hers. The extra friction was all it took to

send her soaring, screaming her release into the surrounding forest.

When she opened her eyes, she was still standing against the tree, the ropes as firmly tied as before. "Um, could you untie me, do you think?"

Nate looked up from where he was sprawled against a trunk a few feet away. He grinned. "Nope."

"But..." She was honestly confused. She'd been so sure that he was teasing an answer out of her; nothing else had crossed her mind.

"I like seeing you there, all nice and helpless." She shivered at his words. The predatory gleam was back in his eyes. "It's a particular fantasy of mine."

Gina squeaked, half alarmed, half horny as hell. Last night she wouldn't have even contemplated being tied up and fucked. Now, however, with Nate...

"Besides, it's payback," he informed her as he stood, casually stretching his arms above his head. "Werewolf hearing, remember?"

Her eyes widened as she realised he'd heard her and Rob talking. All along he'd known she was teasing him, that she'd as much as told Rob that she was going to say 'yes' to his cousin. She licked her lips cautiously. "I was only..."

"I don't care," he purred, stalking her. "Payback can be hell."

The End

About the Author

Amy O'Connor lives in the Australian outback. When she's not writing (which isn't very often) she can usually be found attempting to round up her sons, cats, and poultry, or trying to restore her one-hundred-year-old garden. Occasionally, she even manages to sneak in a few hours reading a good book. Unfortunately, since that tends to involve running away and hiding on the side verandah, it doesn't happen as regularly as she'd like!