



THE WOLF WITHIN

By

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Cover Art by Eliza Black, March 2010
New Concepts Publishing
Lake Park, GA 31636
www.newconceptspublishing.com

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Chapter One

Life just couldn't get any better. It was like some kind of cosmic farce was being played at her expense. She'd thought it was hard when her best friend, Melanie, had gotten pregnant. She'd been plagued with pregnancy envy ever since she'd found out months before. But she didn't realize it could get much worse than that. Her mother, who'd just turned fifty, who'd started dating a guy twenty years younger than her, was pregnant. When her mother had told her, she'd thought she was just ribbing her, because she knew how much she wanted to have a baby, but, no, it wasn't a joke, she was really pregnant. She felt like crying, she felt like standing on the tallest building and cursing at the heavens. Everyone but her was having a baby! Why? Why not her?

But she didn't give in to her impulses. She didn't add arrest for mental instability to her already mounting troubles. Instead she'd decided to let Melanie and her mother cheer her up. They had told her that they wanted to treat her to a girl's night. They couldn't go to the bar since two out of the three of them were pregnant, so they'd decided to have a girl's night in rather than out. They'd lined up a night full of activities such as watching romantic movies and pigging out on junk food and bitching about men in between time. It was the kind of night that usually had her feeling recharged, but today it just wasn't going to make her feel better. She'd finally reached the point where nothing was going to make her feel better except to have the baby she'd wanted for so long.

Melanie looked at Brooke's downtrodden expression as another romantic movie ended and the credits started rolling. "Oh, come on, Brooke, it's not all that bad is it?" she asked, picking up the remote and turning off the television. "Isn't our girls' night making you feel the teensiest bit better?"

Brooke didn't respond. She really didn't want to be rude and/or hurt her friend's feelings by telling her that watching romantic movies when she was single and had no prospects didn't make her feel any better. It was sweet of Melanie and her mother to have gone through such effort for her. They cared. She knew they did. They meant well. But being in the same room with them, seeing them pregnant, hearing them talk about little things they were experiencing with their pregnancies, only served to make her feel worse, reminded her of what was really missing from her life.

"Look, baby, I've been thinking about your situation, and I think I have a solution," her mother said, scooting closer to her on the couch and patting her on the leg reassuringly. "Now, I know this is going to sound a little unconventional, but, if you'll just hear me out, it really isn't that bad of an idea."

"Yes," Brooke said, sounding sullen and depressed even to her own ears.

Her mother paused, seeming to internally debate how she was going to broach the subject. "I know that you really want a baby, and, I've thought long and hard about it, and I think what you should do is buy one of those kits that tells you when you're ovulating. When it says that you're ready, go to the bar and pick out the best looking man in the place. Talk to him for a little bit, get a few details about his background. You know, make sure he doesn't have mental illness in his family. And then have a one night stand. If you're lucky, you'll get

pregnant and you'll never see the baby's father again. A winning combo if I do say so myself. Most men just aren't cut out to be father material nowadays anyway."

"Mom!" Brooke said in open-mouthed shock as she turned to face her mother. She was more than a little surprised at her mother's suggestion. Her mother had never been the type that would have held a gun to a man's head if he didn't marry her daughter for getting her pregnant, but her suggestion was a little unexpected.

Silence reined in the room for a moment while all three of the women thought about what had been said.

"You know, Brooke, it's really not that bad of an idea when you think about it," Melanie said, squeezing Brooke's hand, timidly smiling at her.

Brooke turned to look at Melanie. She took in the half-hearted smile on her face. Maybe they were right. Maybe it wasn't such a bad idea after all. But, as she thought more and more about it, her mother's idea, although good, had a very big flaw in it. She realized that it wasn't just any man's baby that she wanted. There was only one man that she would consider having a baby with, and it was her boss, Dorian.

She'd spent years admiring him from afar. Sure she'd tried to muster up the courage to get closer to him. There'd been that disastrous first time at the Christmas party five years before where she'd had too much to drink. When she'd thought back on it later, she was just glad that her words had been so slurred he hadn't understood her. It had been the only way she was able to get back to work and look anyone in the face again. Just one more reason she never drank.

She could tell that her mother was waiting for some kind of response from her.

"Thanks Mom. I'll think about it."

Her mother hugged her to her, squeezing her a little tighter than necessary. "That's my girl, tough as nails." She held her at arm's length. "Now that we've got that out of our system, do you want to watch any more movies?" she asked.

"I don't know, I think I've had all the romance and junk food I can handle for one evening."

Her mother looked a little disappointed.

"But that doesn't mean we can't still bitch about men," she added, smiling when she saw her mother's eyes light up again.

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Desperation had finally triumphed over Brooke's rational mind. A few weeks before, she'd bought an ovulation kit. Tonight, she was finally ovulating. Thank goodness it had happened on the weekend. She wasn't sure what she would've done if it had happened during the week. Small tremors coursed through her. She wasn't sure if they were from anticipation or her nerves or both. She'd donned her best looking outfit, even put on makeup, which she never wore. But tonight was special. She was a woman on a mission. She just hoped like hell Dorian was at the club he sometimes frequented.

It might scream of a desperate woman stalking, but she didn't really care at this point. Over the years, she'd come to learn a lot of Dorian's routines in an effort to get close to him, hoping against hope that she'd get the guts to start something, a conversation at least, but she'd always chickened out, at the park where he jogged every day, at the club he occasionally went to. But not tonight. She'd have to start something tonight. She'd told herself that she had to. She'd pined for him from afar for years. If she couldn't have him, have him love her, at least she could have his baby. At least she could have a part of him with her always, a part of him that she could love unconditionally and that could love her in return.

She stepped out of her car where she'd sat watching the club entrance for about twenty minutes. She hadn't seen Dorian enter, but that didn't mean he wasn't already inside. Another shock wave of tremors struck her as she approached the club. She bit her lip and forged on. She needed to get a grip. She was a grown woman. She could do this. She just had to keep her eye on the prize, a baby, Dorian's baby. Just the thought of having his baby warmed her on the inside, brought a smile to her face, calmed her quivering insides somewhat. Yes, she could do this. And she'd have the memory of her night with Dorian that she could keep with her forever.

There was only one nagging thought that didn't let her feel completely at ease, something her mother had said to her after she'd seen the ovulation kit. She bit her lip nervously as she thought about it. What would she do if it took more than a one night stand to get pregnant? Well, there was no point in worrying about that right now. She was going to have to get through today before she worried about tomorrow. And, as it was, she was having a hard time getting through the moment. She couldn't bog down her already wavering confidence by worrying that the first time might not be a charm.

She met up with the bouncer outside the club. He gave her a visual once over, nodded his head approvingly, and waved her inside. At least the bouncer approved, though that was scarcely consolation, but maybe it meant that she wasn't a total lost cause. Maybe it wasn't completely unreasonable for her to think that she had a chance. But as she walked through the entrance of the club and made her way to the bar, she caught sight of Dorian.

Just the sight of him was enough to make her stop breathing. How on Earth did she think she stood a chance at sleeping with him? He was perfection. He stood leaning against a pillar next to the dance floor, his body half covered in darkness, like some dark obelisk, the black shirt and black pants he was wearing helping to conceal him, a dark figure in the shadows. But she didn't need to see him clearly to recall the details of his face. She'd spent years studying the perfect square of his jaw, deliciously sprinkled with five o'clock shadow tonight. She was disappointed that she couldn't see the color of his eyes from where she was. Until she'd met him, she'd never seen eyes like his, an exotic dark green, like precious emeralds, but with flecks of gold. His well-tanned physique and coal-black hair only emphasized his dark, exotic good looks. He was breath-taking. It was little wonder so many women eyed him when he came to the club or wherever he was.

He was like some mythical creature walking among mortals, completely untouchable. Through the years, she'd been glad that she hadn't had to see him dating a parade of women. She certainly didn't have the strength for that. But, with that came worry, especially since she'd seen women far more attractive than her, women who were obviously more experienced with men, make passes at him that were left unnoticed. The realization did little to still her already frazzled nerves.

She decided what she really needed was a strong drink of liquid courage. Waving the bartender over, she ordered a shot. She quickly knocked back the shot. It wasn't long before the alcohol burned a path to her empty stomach. She took a few deep breaths, feeling much better, her courage most definitely bolstered. Finally, she got off of her barstool and started over to where Dorian was still standing, feeling a little more confidence than she had before.

She'd known since she'd first met Dorian that she'd never want another man again, and it wasn't just the way he looked on the outside that mattered or the chemistry that she felt when he was near. She'd worked closely with him for years, been there when he had donated thousands of dollars to causes that helped children, the homeless, and every other cause in existence. What

mattered to her was that he didn't do it because he would get a tax break. He did it because he genuinely wanted to help those people.

He was a good man, the most compassionate, caring man she'd ever met, probably would ever meet. And, a couple of months before, when he'd saved her in the park from getting raped by two men behind some bushes, he'd only reaffirmed what she'd already felt. That day had seemed like the worst day in her life. She'd been sure the men would rape her and then kill her. She'd heard about it happening so many times in the news, she'd felt certain her fate was sealed.

And then her ray of light had come. She'd been so fortunate that he'd come out of nowhere and saved her. After he'd beat up the men, he'd held her close to him, the first and only time she'd ever been in his arms. She recalled that he'd said soothing words to her. She hadn't been able to make heads or tails of them, though. She'd been so frightened by what had been about to happen and then so completely consumed by her salvation and his nearness, she hadn't been able to think, to function clearly. All she'd been able to do was close her eyes and mentally wrap herself in his scent, so masculine and earthy, in the comfort of his embrace. He'd been the rock in her torrent of emotions. He'd been her hero that day, her protector, and she would never forget it, not as long as she lived.

She stopped walking when she was just inches away from Dorian.

Slowly, he turned to look at her, some emotion that didn't register flickering briefly in his eyes, but he didn't say anything.

Brooke swallowed nervously.

"Dorian. I'm so glad to see you here tonight," she started, smiling half-heartedly before biting her lip nervously. Her cheeks were warm from the alcohol she'd just consumed. She tried to cool them with her cold hands. She was sure that her ears were blazing with a nervous blush. She hated it when she blushed, but being so close to Dorian did all kinds of crazy things to her insides, and she couldn't help her body's reactions to him. She swallowed convulsively as she tried to regain her composure under his intimidating, unwavering stare. "I was actually hoping maybe you could come back to my place with me," she said, pausing for a second when he didn't say anything and his expression didn't change, "for a nightcap perhaps."

"No," he said flatly.

She hadn't really had any idea what to expect from him, but that had definitely not been it. It was so brief, so precise, so *final*. She felt completely crushed. She felt like a complete idiot. What had she been thinking? Why the hell would he want to go home with her? She was hurt beyond reason and felt like a child, felt like a complete idiot for trying. He was so out of her league, why would he ever consider her?

She felt tears burn her eyes, and she quickly turned away before he could see them. She worked hard to keep them at bay, but they would not be held back. They came streaming down her cheeks, blinding her. She had to leave. She had to get away. She couldn't see the front door. But, fortunately, there was a large neon exit sign close by. She couldn't make out the words, but she was sure that's what it said. She raced for it as fast as she could, stumbling pitifully over people in her way. But she didn't stop. She couldn't slow down. She had to get as far away from him as possible. She had to get home so she could cry in her pillow without him seeing her. She didn't want him to see how much he'd hurt her. She continued to cry, finding it suddenly hard to breathe. She wasn't even going to get one chance to have his baby. Not even one!

She flung open the back door to the club and headed out of it as fast as she could. She had no idea where it went, she didn't really care. All that she knew was that it was an escape.

She discovered that the exit led to a back alley, a really poorly lit back alley that looked scary and dangerous, but she didn't care, she didn't care about anything anymore. All the hopes and dreams she'd been holding on to for years had been dashed. He'd ripped them to shreds, discarded them like garbage with just one word.

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"Shit!" Dorian cursed under his breath. What the hell had she gone out that door for? It led straight to a back alley. It wasn't safe. Mumbling under his breath, he took off after her. He couldn't let her go out there alone. She was likely to get her fool self mugged or, worse, raped and killed. His heart picked up the pace as his long legs quickly ate up the distance between him and the back door. He wanted to shift, he wanted to transform. His beast was clawing at him, roaring in his ears, fighting to break free, but he beat it back, held it at bay with stubborn determination. He couldn't let it take control, not now, not when she might need him. He had to have his wits about him.

He grabbed the back door to the club and quickly exited. Once outside, it only took him seconds to locate Brooke. She was leaning against the outside wall of the club, her body slightly shaking from her soft sobs. With his keen hearing, he could easily hear her crying, although he could tell she was working hard to fight back the tears.

Just the sight of her upset at what he'd said sent a sharp pain through his heart, twisted his gut painfully. He hated himself. He hated the monster that he was, the beast that held him prisoner. He'd never wanted anything for himself, not in all the long years that he'd been alive. He'd long ago come to terms with what he was, had decided to make penance for all the wrong he'd done when he'd first been transformed into a beast and hadn't had any control. And, although he could never undo the wrong he'd done, helping others and keeping himself busy with his work had helped him to get by, to get through each torturous day. He didn't know how long he'd gone on living like that. How long he'd had his head buried, how long he'd gone on just subsisting.

He'd been content to go through the motions until the day he'd seen her, until the day he'd seen Brooke. She'd changed everything. It was like he'd suddenly awakened from a deep sleep when he'd first set eyes on her. Somehow she'd brought to life feelings that had long been dormant, desires and passion that he'd thought had long since deserted him. She'd brought him back to the land of the living. But with the exultation of those feelings also came more torture. He wanted her so bad, wanted to touch her, to hold her close, but he knew better than to think that he could. He was nothing but a beast, a monster. She deserved better than him. He'd told himself that over and over again. He'd told himself that he should fire her, send her away so that he would never have to see her again.

But he hadn't been able to do that. He couldn't bring himself to do it. If he couldn't have her, at least he could see her every day, have her close by, so he could protect her. And it had been such sweet torture. There had been many days when he thought her scent would drive him completely insane, that he would corner her in his office and tear off her clothes and claim her as his woman, but he'd fought those urges. And, fortunately, she'd never done anything to make his life harder on him than it already was, until tonight. He'd wanted her for so long, since he'd first met her, and having her suggest things to him had nearly been his undoing. It was what he wanted more than anything. But how could he allow himself to be with her, a human? Realistically, he knew damn well he couldn't. He was a monster, a beast. He wasn't a man. He couldn't pretend like everything was fine. He couldn't act as if he was a normal man. He

couldn't lie about what he was. He couldn't lie to her. She deserved better than that. She deserved better than him. She didn't deserve a beast.

His anger at himself for letting things come to this was mounting. But, more than that, he was angry at her for running out into the alley that was clearly unsafe. How could she put herself in danger like that? He couldn't fathom what he would do if something happened to her.

He angrily walked over to where she stood and grabbed her by a shoulder, whirling her around to face him, to face his wrath. When he spoke he practically yelled at her, "What the hell are you doing? Don't you know it's dangerous to be out in this alley all by yourself late at night?"

Brooke blinked a few times in disbelief. First he rejected her advances and then he chased after her to yell at her like she was some kid? She responded with some fury of her own. "And why the hell do you care?"

Dorian struggled with his beast, ground his teeth together, a muscle in his jaw ticking. He had a mind to beat her ass, to just bend her over his knee and spank some damn sense into her. But he didn't. Somehow he managed to restrain himself. As he stood there, towering over her, seeing her tear-filled eyes looking up at him, he could see that even though he'd hurt her feelings, she still wanted him, would forgive him if he let her. But he couldn't have that, he couldn't be close to her. He knew then that what he needed to do was to scare her away, give her a taste of his beast. That way she'd never look back, never look at him again with want in her eyes. It would be hard knowing she was scared of him, or worse, hated him, but it was better than her caring for him.

"I don't care," he said, his low husky voice belying his words.

The low timbre of his voice made Brooke tingle all the way down to her core.

He leaned closer, his lips only a breathtaking inch from her own.

Of their own accord, her lips parted ever so slightly. She did nothing but wait, eager and afraid all at once to see what he'd do.

Suddenly, he closed the space that separated them, crushing his mouth against hers, slanting his lips across her lips.

An electrifying jolt of pleasurable sensation vibrated along her nerves at the contact, startling Brooke.

Dorian could sense her body's reaction, and it fueled the beast in him, stoking the flames of his desire higher and higher. He growled low in his throat and cupped her jaw. Forcing her mouth open, he plundered her with his tongue. He tasted her, sweeping his tongue through the dark crevices of her mouth with a slow, thorough glide, his touch greedy, demanding, relentless in its pursuit to explore every part of her.

She instinctively felt when something inside of him changed, when burgeoning need overrode all else. Though she hadn't realized it, he'd been holding back before, trying to maintain some kind of control.

He growled menacingly low in his throat again and crushed her against the cold stone wall of the alley, trapping her against the hard heat of his body.

Her knees completely gave out on her and her legs turned to gelatin. She draped her arms over his shoulders, trying to support herself as best she could as he guided a knee between her legs.

She clamped her thighs against his invasion, reveling in the feel of his leg pressed hard against her pussy. But it wasn't nearly enough, it wasn't what she'd come for, but, at the

moment, it was hard to remember what she'd come for. All she could think was that she needed this, needed him.

She moaned her pleasure as he rubbed his leg against her aching pussy. She clutched at him frantically, desperately wanting more, needing more. She needed his cock inside of her.

Her moans broke what little control he'd had, the control he'd spent years developing, maintaining, the control that he so tenuously held on to whenever he was around her. The beast roared its pleasure. The beast inside of him was free.

He broke the kiss and latched on to the slender column of her throat, sucking at the tender flesh he found there.

He was driving her insane with need, and they hadn't done anything but kiss.

"I need you inside of me," she panted, breathless from his touch.

He lifted his head and looked at her.

She gasped when she saw his eyes. Normally they were a beautiful exotic shade of green, but there was no mistaking the fiery red and yellow they were now. It brought back memories of the day when he'd saved her in the park. She'd thought she'd only imagined that his eyes had changed color, that, somehow, inexplicably, he had changed right in front of her, still a man, but something more. She knew now that she hadn't imagined it.

His voice sounded pained when he spoke, "Are you sure?"

There was no doubt in her mind as Brooke nodded her acquiescence.

It was all the assurance he needed.

He sailed on her again, like a predator on its prey, kissing her, nibbling on her lips as he unceremoniously ripped her blouse open to devour her, buttons popping off in every direction. He traveled down her jaw to her collarbone, trailing searing kisses, tasting each new discovery until he reached her breasts.

Brooke groaned as he pushed her bra aside and withdrew one breast from the lacy covering. She didn't want him to take his time. She was frantic to have him inside of her, but when he closed his mouth around her nipple, she lost all train of thought.

He suckled the taut bud hard, teasing her sensitive flesh with his teeth and his tongue, with the heat and wetness of his mouth.

He was far rougher than any man she'd ever been with before. And, although it felt as if he would consume her entirely, she never once thought of objecting, of resisting. It was what she wanted, what she'd waited so long for, and it was better than she could have ever imagined.

"Mine," he murmured huskily against her heated flesh. "Mine."

He rolled her other nipple between his fingers, toying with her as he reached his other hand beneath her skirt. He made quick work of peeling her now damp panties down her thighs, letting them drop unceremoniously to the ground.

Fingers shaking, she wasn't sure whether from need or nerves, Brooke went to work at the buttons of his pants, eager to ease the ache in her pussy, eager to have him fill her, but her fingers resisted her efforts.

When Dorian realized that she was having trouble, he pulled away from her just long enough to undo the buttons of his pants and free his cock.

Brooke reached for it, curious and eager to feel him because she couldn't see him very well in the darkness of the alley.

He tilted his head back and let out a deep mournful groan as she wrapped a hand tentatively around his engorged cock.

She was surprised to discover that he was enormous. She'd had absolutely no idea. Her pussy grew wetter as she imagined him sinking his huge cock inside of her.

"Now," she said a little breathlessly, weak with desire. She pulled at his hips, urging him on.

He hesitated, hovering just above her, sweat breaking out all over him as he fought to maintain control of himself. Inside, he was still at war with his beast that now took the forefront, the beast that roared at him that it was free, that it would not be beat back into submission, that demanded he take what he wanted from her. He tried hard to find some mental clarity, to reason with himself why he shouldn't take her, but all of his conflicts from before were forgotten.

She could feel his body tremble with tension, could feel the power humming beneath the surface of calm, as if he was debating the wisdom of what he was about to do. Somehow it only made her want him more.

Desperate beyond compare, Brooke lifted one leg and wrapped it around one of his hips, using it to draw him to her.

It served to further weaken his resolve to abstain from taking her. Finally he shuddered in defeat, the inner battle he'd waged over. Giving in to his desires, he grabbed both of her thighs in his strong hands and spread her open wide.

Cool air whispered over her heated nether lips, making her tremble slightly as she waited to see what he would do next.

He sunk his cock fully inside of her with a ferocity that she'd never experienced before, making her cry out in pleasure.

He muffled her cries of pleasure by settling his mouth over hers as he pumped his cock inside her, grinding his pelvis against her sensitive clit.

Brooke wasn't able to marvel at the strength he possessed to hold her up. She couldn't think past taking in more of him, all of him, taking in everything she could hold. She hooked her legs together around his waist and squeezed tight, urging him on.

He sunk his cock into her faster, harder, grinding her against the wall with near jarring force.

But she didn't give a damn. She couldn't feel it anyway. She could only feel her climax mounting in her every nerve ending with each forceful thrust. Pleasure coursed through her veins with each intense stroke, leaving her weak and trembling.

He dragged his mouth leisurely down her throat, sucking at the tender curve of her neck until he'd left his mark on her flesh, the mark that defined her as his possession. While slightly piercing her skin with his teeth, he pumped his cock in and out of her wet pussy.

She teetered at the precipice of release, consumed by pleasurable agony. Then her muscles contracted around his engorged flesh as he continued to thrust inside of her, short fast strokes as he rode her to his own completion, involuntarily ripping a scream from her. Her pussy quivered with her release, building toward yet another as he continued to plow into her. She moaned, the pleasure thrilling and exhausting all at the same time.

His lips descended on hers to claim them for a hard kiss. And then he came, spilling his seed inside of her, a great shudder wracking his body as he heaved a sigh of relief. He let her legs drop to the ground and leaned heavily against her in the aftermath of his climax, his breath coming in ragged bursts.

Brooke clung to him, reveling in the feel of his thundering heart against her breasts, a heartbeat that was far faster and more powerful than her own. It wasn't long before her pulse

and breathing returned to their normal pace. But the pleasure he'd elicited still coursed through her veins, leaving her clit to continue to throb with the intensity of her climax.

Suddenly a chill wind burst through the alley. Brooke shivered and pulled her blouse back together, smoothing her skirt down her thighs. Leaning back against the wall of the club, she felt incredibly weak, almost as if she would faint, and her skin felt hot despite the cool air whipping around her.

Seconds later, they both heard the back door to the club open up. Music and a couple of people wafted through the door, surprising both Brooke and Dorian.

Dorian pushed himself away from her and quickly picked up his pants, trying to fasten them before the people got any closer and noticed them.

Brooke decided to use that opportunity to get away. She broke into a run, heading for the street and her car.

Dorian cursed under his breath as he saw Brooke break into a run, heading toward the street. After he'd finished fastening his pants, he chased after her, but he didn't see which way she went and realized that he'd lost her scent because of the wind. Not having seen which way she was headed, he couldn't follow.

"Shit!" he said vehemently. What was he going to do now? After a minute of standing in the street and running a hand agitatedly through his hair, he decided he would see her at work the next day and confront her about what had happened between them there. Perhaps he'd succeeded in what he'd intended. Perhaps he'd frightened her so bad she'd never look at him the same way again. In the same moment the thought was both what he wanted and what he most feared.

Chapter Two

Laying in bed the next morning, Brooke stretched languidly. She'd had pleasant dreams all night long that replayed the fantastic sex she'd had with Dorian. She had thoroughly enjoyed herself the night before, but, at the same time, she also wasn't very proud of herself for what she'd done. But she'd never dreamed that being with him would feel so good, that being with him would help to heal the hole in her heart. Being with him had been what she had always wanted and more, so much more. But after what had happened, she knew she couldn't face him, not right away, maybe never, especially since she'd had an ulterior motive for having sex with him. She couldn't believe how grateful she was that she had weeks of vacation time saved up. She called work and told her secretary that she was ill, that she was taking some time off from work, to give anyone that asked for her that message.

She sat up in bed, leaning back against the headboard as she worked over her dilemma in her head. After a minute, she decided she wouldn't just take a day or two off, she wouldn't go back to work until she found out if she was pregnant or not. She just hoped she would wind up being pregnant. There was no way in hell she would be able to do what she'd done again with Dorian. Although the experience had been well worth it, it had been hard enough approaching him the first time, and she certainly didn't think she'd ever be able to have a one night stand with another man, especially after having been with Dorian.

Sex with him had been so different, so amazing, so animalistic and yet so savagely passionate. She'd never been with a man like him before, and, she had the distinct feeling she would never be with another man like him ever again.

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A month later, she had brought a few tests home from the supermarket. She couldn't believe how nervous she'd been to take a pregnancy test. After only a short few minutes, the test had confirmed she was pregnant. Before she let the excitement run away with her, and, just to be certain, she had taken a few more, and, after a doctor's visit the next day had also confirmed the findings she'd had at home, she had decided to muster up her courage, end her 'vacation', and go back to work.

She had tried to prepare herself to go back to work, prepare herself to face Dorian. She'd told herself that he probably hadn't thought twice about that night. He'd probably forgotten all about what had happened. In all likelihood he wouldn't say one thing about it. He might even act as if it had never happened.

She went back to work after being out for five weeks. Stepping into her familiar routine, she had a veritable spring in her step, still high off of her test results from the day before. A baby, she was going to have a baby, finally! And not just any baby, Dorian's baby. She could hardly contain her excitement.

She pushed the mail cart through the office, heading down the hall towards Dorian's door, stopping at each office along the way. Some of her enthusiasm wavered as she continued to make her way to his office. She chastised herself. There was no sense in being timid around him. She'd known that she was going to have to see him again, known in her heart of hearts that she couldn't quit and never work with him again. That would've been unbearable. She had told

herself that she was going to have to steel herself to see him again. She was going to have to act as if nothing had happened.

Dorian was immersed in work until a he caught a whiff of an all too familiar scent.

It was her! It was Brooke!

But there was something different, something new. His heart suddenly stopped beating altogether. Time itself seemed to slow down and then just stop altogether. Seconds ticked by like hours as his blood sizzled in his veins, as his brain worked hard to make the connection.

Pregnant, she was pregnant!

She finally arrived with the mail cart at his office.

He met her at the door.

She walked in with his mail and then he sailed on her. She could tell from one look at him that he was angry. She was completely surprised by his anger and dropped all of the mail she'd had in her hands at their feet. Out of all of the things that could happen, she'd never expected him to be angry. Why was he so mad?! Boy had she been wrong when she'd thought about how he was going to act when she saw him again.

"You're pregnant!" he hissed accusingly, grabbing her by the shoulders and shaking her.

It was a statement, not a question, and all she could think was how the hell did he know? But she neither confirmed nor denied anything. She decided it would be better to just remain quiet for a minute so that she could assess the situation.

"You don't know what I am. You have no idea what you've done, what you're messing with?" he vented.

"Well, why don't you enlighten me?" she said quietly.

"I'm a monster, a beast. I'm not human. You don't want me. You might think you do, but that's only because you know nothing about me."

"Yes, I do. I know that I love you. I know that I've loved you for years. And nothing you can say or do is going to change that," she said, setting her jaw stubbornly.

"Is that so? What if I told you that I'm a werewolf? Would that change your mind?" he asked. He watched her with unblinking eyes, waiting for her reaction.

He wasn't intimidating her. But what he said brought back the memory from that time in the park when he'd saved her. Everything had happened so fast. One moment she'd been fighting for her life, fighting off the men who were trying to rape her, and the next, he'd been saving her, savagely beating the men who'd been trying to rape her. She'd seen his eyes after he'd beaten up the men, when he'd turned to look at her. They'd been a strange hue, almost red, and when he'd growled at the men as they scampered away, his teeth had seemed larger than normal. He'd been so feral. But even then she hadn't been afraid of him. Somehow, she'd known then what he was, even though she'd dismissed it later as her overactive imagination creating illusions because of the stressful situation. But, in the back of her mind, she'd known what he was. And it didn't matter, she loved him.

"Brooke, we can't do this. This has to stop right now," Dorian said, his voice filled with anguish.

She tipped her head back to gape up at him in confusion.

He took it as an invitation. Spearing his fingers in her hair, his hard mouth covered hers and instantly sent a shaft of pleasure coursing through her. Vivid images of their animalistic sex a month before assaulted her senses, shattering what little semblance of sanity she had left.

In the weeks that they'd been apart, she'd longed for his nearness, his touch, his caresses. She'd lain awake many nights wondering if he'd felt what she had when they'd been together.

She plastered herself against him, sucking feverishly at his tongue as it tangled with hers in a thrust and retreat so reminiscent of the play of his cock in her pussy that she felt like she was being consumed by a heated wave of need.

The kiss they shared seemed to last for eternity.

She wanted it to. She never wanted to let him go again. She never wanted to spend another day without him. She'd wanted to tell him how she felt. She'd thought of so many things to tell him, rehearsed them in her mind over and over again.

And yet, when she found herself lying on her back on his hard desk, found herself looking up at his handsome face, fierce now with the desire flaming in his eyes that were now slightly red in hue, she couldn't think of a single thing to say.

His gaze flickered from the sweet oval of her face to her breasts, which heaved enticingly with the quick breaths she was taking. Without saying a word, Dorian pushed her silken blouse up, exposing her breasts to the hunger of his gaze, scooped a breast from the cup of her bra, and descended upon it to pluck at the nipple taut with excitement.

The heat that coursed through her entire being the second his mouth scorched her flesh made the world begin to whirl in a slow drunken spin.

Grabbing one of her hands, he guided it down to where his hard cock was straining against the fabric of his pants. He forced her to cup his cock through his pants, to stroke him. When she'd caught the rhythm he demanded, he slid his other hand between her legs and began to stroke the lips of her pussy through her now damp panties, teasing her clit through the thin material until he became weary of the barrier between him and what he wanted. He ripped the offending fabric from her body, letting it fall to the floor, and began to rub her swollen nub, eliciting a guttural moan of pleasure from her. Unable to remain still and passive any longer, she began to squirm beneath him, arching to meet the stroke of his fingers.

Briefly she wondered if someone might walk through his office door and catch them. She hadn't shut it when she'd come in and neither had he. It hadn't occurred to her that anything like this would happen. But here she was having sex with her boss, the last person in the world she should be having sex with for so many reasons. If someone walked in on them and caught them in the act, they would both be in deep shit. But the more he continued to pleasure her, the less she cared. Fuck it. Who cared if someone walked in and saw them? She certainly didn't care anymore. He had completely turned her entire life inside out, and now all that mattered, all that she wanted, was for him to genuinely want her in return.

She'd begun to feel like she had been consumed by fire by the time he'd leisurely suckled both of her aching nipples. Pushing her thighs further apart, he rubbed the lips of her pussy for what felt like an eternity, forcing her so near her climax that she had to fight not to have an orgasm. She wanted these feelings to last. She wasn't ready for them to be over yet, but that was all before he undid his pants and pulled his pulsating cock through the opening.

He pulled her to a sitting position, then grabbed her by the ass and dragged her to the edge of the desk. His strong hands caressed her buttocks and moved between them to stroke her cleft.

Her throat suddenly went dry, and she found it hard to swallow as he replaced his fingers with the head of his cock.

Forcing her legs further apart, Dorian positioned himself at the opening of her pussy and thrust hard into her aching depths, ramming the head of his cock into her pussy. He began to work his engorged cock deep inside of her in the thrust and retreat necessary to lubricate his

cock with her juices so that he could sink into her fully, moving agonizingly slow at first. Then he sunk his cock to the hilt inside of her, grinding against her clit.

It was more than Brooke could take. She couldn't breathe, couldn't think, her mind and body were in such a torrent of desire. But she wanted to savor the feel of him, of this moment, of this time with him, so she squeezed her eyes shut. Intuitively, she could tell that he was rapidly losing the battle with his control. She grabbed his shoulders in a desperate hold as his thrusts became more and more powerful and frenzied until he was pumping his cock into her with a jarring force.

Abruptly, a euphoric bubble exploded inside of her, catapulting fiery, scorching pleasure through her. She wrestled with the cries of ecstasy that fought to break free. She didn't want anyone to hear them, and finally began to pant and groan in spite of all of her efforts. The mewling sounds she was making seemed to send him over the precipice.

He thrust deep, held himself still for a second, and then began to shake with his own release.

Gasping for breath, he leaned against her in the wake of his release and finally nuzzled his face against her neck.

"I thought I told you we can't do this. Never again," he said, his breathing ragged.

He fixed her clothes and his before grabbing her by the wrist and dragging her with him out of his office. He dragged her down the hallway and directly in front of the elevator.

Unfortunately, her mind had not fully caught up with what was going on. It was all happening so fast. And what he was saying only confused her more.

The elevator came into view, and Dorian pulled her with him forcefully over the threshold. Once inside and the doors had closed, he quickly pressed the 'Basement' button that would take them to the parking garage and immediately pulled her into his arms, his lips searing her skin everywhere they touched as she closed her eyes.

"We can't," he said between kisses. "We can't do this."

But the words didn't register with Brooke. All she could do was bask in the feel of his arms as they moved around her, pressing her hard against him. He kissed her top lip and then her bottom lip and probed her tongue with his own.

Excitement built in her again. Her blood began to pump harder and harder through her veins, making her feel slightly breathless and weak with need.

He pushed her against one wall of the elevator. Grabbing her by the hair at the nape of her neck, he took complete control of the kiss, demanding entry. With each touch of his lips and tongue, her excitement increased tenfold, until whimpers began to escape from her throat. She needed him so desperately that she began to rub her body against his to ease her the ache between her legs.

He grabbed her ass, pressing his hips more fully against hers.

She spread her legs and hooked a thigh around his thigh. She needed to feel his hard cock against her swollen pussy before she died from need. When she felt Dorian's hand seeking its way up her skirt, pushing it up her waist, she felt like passing out.

His rough hands thoroughly stroked her thighs, coming closer and closer to her needy quivering flesh.

Finally, he rested one hand at the top of her thighs. But to her frustration, he didn't move any further, he didn't touch the aching lips of her pussy. He was driving her crazy, but, she decided she was thankful that he'd ripped her panties off in his office earlier, at least they wouldn't be in the way this time. Fleeting, the thought of someone looking for Dorian and

discovering her panties by his desk came to her. It should have bothered her, but, right now, she didn't care. All she wanted was Dorian, and despite his protests, he was giving her exactly what she needed.

His hand remained still on her thigh, just a breath away from her hot flesh. She continued to hear the ding as they passed each floor of the high rise. Need, worry, desperation all assaulted her at the same time. If he didn't touch her now, they were going to be either interrupted or be at the Basement level. She felt like pleading with him to touch her. Fortunately she didn't have to suffer the indignity of pleading with him because he was keeping her lips occupied, but that didn't stop her hips from grinding against him.

Finally, he rubbed the lips of her pussy. The rough touch made her flesh jerk and shudder, made her ache with fevered pleasure. And when he stroked a finger down her wet slit, a low mournful moan came from deep within her. She needed his touch so much that she was physically in pain.

At last, he found and stroked circles around her clitoris.

He had her so worked up that after only rubbing it a few times, she came, her orgasm resonating through every nerve ending.

He moved closer and leaned his head against her shoulder, his cock pressing hard against her stomach. Then he grabbed her by the hair at the nape of her neck again, forcefully bending her to his will, and fused his lips painfully against hers.

While their tongues danced, she moved her hand down to firmly grab his cock through the material of his pants.

At her touch, he tilted his hips back and forth, rubbing his hard cock against the softness of her belly and hand. He kneaded her left breast, rolling a nipple between one thumb and forefinger.

No man had ever made her feel so turned on in her entire life. Every time Dorian touched her, she felt as though gunpowder was being ignited in her bloodstream. Her taut nipples wept for his mouth to kiss them, to suckle them. Her pussy clenched maddeningly, aching for his deep penetration.

He leaned his head heavily against her shoulder, and she felt the heat of his cock as it burned like a brand through the thin barrier of her clothes. Suddenly, the elevator stopped moving and she realized that the elevator had arrived at the basement floor.

He tilted his head slightly, and the feeling of his tongue tracing her jaw line and then the curve of her neck made her whole body clench in pleasure. "Dorian, please take me home," she panted breathlessly.

He raised his head at her words and grinned down at her slightly then pulled free from her arms, grasped her hands, and led her out of the elevator. He walked over to the passenger side of his car, then he pulled her over to him with a yank and held her close while he leaned down to open the door.

Brooke watched him hungrily as he moved around the car and got in, starting it. Disappointment flickered through her when she realized he wasn't going to finish what he'd started—until it occurred to her that he must be taking her home with him.

"This won't work," he muttered as he guided the car into traffic. "Believe me, I've considered it. If I wasn't a beast, it might, but there's no changing that."

Brooke stared at him, feeling her hopefulness spiral to dust. A chill replaced the heat of a few moments before. "No?" she managed.

"No! I should never have touched you at all. I knew I shouldn't have!"

He was sorry he'd made love to her that first time?
"I lost control. I'm dangerous when I lose control."

Brooke swallowed convulsively. "You didn't seem dangerous ...," she said hesitantly. He turned and glared at her. "Little fool! You only think that because you can't grasp what I am! I've tried to protect you. God knows I have! But I can't protect you from myself! This won't work! It won't work!"

Brooke stared at him in confusion when he pulled into his drive and parked his car.

Getting out, he moved around to her side and helped her from the car. "I ... Dorian, I'm confused," Brooke stammered.

"I know you're confused. I tried to keep my distance because I knew this wouldn't work," he growled, ushering her into the house. Grabbing her the moment they were inside and he'd slammed the door, he pushed her roughly against the wall of the hall, burrowing his face against her neck. Brooke gasped as he bit down on her neck and then sucked the sting away. He stroked his hands over her as he nipped at her throat and then her face and finally her lips, resurrecting the drunken desire he'd left simmering on the drive to his house.

Pulling away as abruptly as he'd pushed her against the wall, he scooped her up and strode purposefully down the hall and into the bedroom at the back. Disoriented, Brooke landed on the bed before she even realized where they were. Dorian followed her down, popping the few buttons that remained on her blouse as he jerked it open.

Her nipples puckered and stood to attention as the cool air of the room caressed them, blood pulsating in the taut tips as anticipation began to grow inside of her.

His hot mouth meandered along the valley between her breasts and then wandered up one slope to the crest. For some time, he teased it with his tongue, making her move restlessly and gasp beneath him. She thought he meant only to tease her, but he finally sucked the aching bud into his mouth. The moment his mouth closed over the sensitive tip, heat coursed through her. Gripping his shoulders and then stroking his arms, shoulders, and back, she moaned in pleasure and encouragement. With each sucking motion of his mouth, a new, harder jolt of sensation went through her, creating a corresponding tightening of muscles low in her belly and gathering moisture in her sex until she found she was panting in an effort to draw enough air into her lungs, leaving her feeling drunk and dizzy with desire.

Hunger grew inside of her, burgeoning, building, making her body grow taut, and then tighter still until she felt herself nearing her zenith.

Briefly, disappointment filled her when he released the nipple and began to wander down hill again to the valley, but her belly tightened in expectation, her neglected nipple throbbing a plea for attention.

He bestowed it with fervor, making her body leap upward to the wrung it had been perched upon and then begin to climb higher still. Uncomfortable with her growing need, she shifted beneath him. His engorged cock was digging into the soft flesh of her belly and she needed it lower. Satisfaction filled her as it nestled between her thighs, nudging her cleft each time she arched her hips and evoking welcome waves of pleasure.

Groaning, he broke off his attentive caress of her nipple and sat back on his knees, dragging her skirt off impatiently and then settling between her thighs once more, guiding the head of his cock along her cleft until he wedged the rounded head in the mouth of her sex. She moaned, lifting up to meet his thrust. His cock slipped through her wetness, breached her passage and was caught in the taut, unyielding grip of the throat of her sex as it tightened convulsively around him.

Grinding his teeth, he withdrew slightly and bore down again, gaining a little more ground before her muscles fisted around him and halted his progress once more.

Despite the chill in the air, moisture beaded his body as he struggled to hold onto his control, as he fought his way past her clinging muscles and finally buried himself deeply inside of her.

Brooke wrapped her arms tightly around him as he paused to catch his breath, held him for several moments and then began to stroke his back, rotating her hips in invitation when he seemed slow to respond to her needs. Uttering a sound between a growl and a groan, he captured her mouth beneath his and began to thrust inside of body with his cock and his tongue, caressing her mouth and her nether mouth with the same erotic rhythm. Brooke's body leapt with excitement, shaking as it scaled the limits of pleasurable endurance. Without warning, she crested, her body quivering, quaking and finally exploding with release. Crying out, she closed her mouth around his tongue, sucking him as her body convulsed around his cock in delightful waves.

He shuddered, jerked as her release provoked a hard response from his body, driving him beyond control and into crisis.

The release of tension took her back down toward oblivion and Brooke went perfectly limp, smiling faintly as she drifted away on a warm cloud of satisfaction.

Dorian caught his breath, stroking her silky skin. Slowly, it dawned upon him that he'd lost the battle he'd fought so long and that he was fiercely glad he had. Gathering her close, he nuzzled his face against hers.

"I want you in my life, Brooke. I want my baby in my life. I can't offer marriage—not when I am what I am—but I want you to move in with me so I can take care of you and our baby. You don't have to sleep with me. I won't require anything of you. I'm a monster, a beast, and you have every right to be afraid of me, but I give you my word I'll never harm you or allow you to be harmed."

Brooke swallowed her disappointment with an effort, feigning sleep when she'd nearly been asleep in truth before he'd begun to speak. She'd thought at first that Dorian was saying he truly cared about her. That made it hurt that much worse when she realized he only felt an obligation to take care of her because of the baby.

Clearly, it wasn't her he wanted at all! If he had, he wouldn't have offered to take her in and told her he wouldn't 'require' her to sleep with him at the same time! Well! She might love him desperately, but she sure as hell wasn't going to hang around where she wasn't wanted!

She didn't need his damned protection! She could take care of herself just fine!

Waiting until she was sure he'd drifted to sleep as she nearly had, she eased off the bed. On tiptoes, she collected her clothing and made her way to the door. She was halfway to the front door when she heard a floor board creak.

Whipping a look behind her to make sure Dorian hadn't awakened, she gaped at him when she saw he was standing in the door of his room. Folding his arms over his chest, he leaned back against the bedroom door frame. "Where are you off to?" he growled.

She blinked at him, clutching her clothing to her chest. "Home," she said a little weakly. She didn't really want to leave, but she kept telling herself she couldn't live with him knowing he didn't love her.

"You are home!"

Despite everything she could do, Brooke couldn't keep her chin from wobbling ever so slightly. "This isn't my home. I can't stay here. I'm leaving."

“Why?” Dorian asked quietly.

“Because!” Brooke wailed in aggravation, giving up on maintaining the pretense that everything was okay.

Pushing himself away from the door frame, Dorian crossed the room and caught Brooke by the shoulders. “That’s not why. Tell me the real reason. Now.”

“Because ... I hate you!” Brooke yelled, pushing at the hard wall of his chest with her hands, trying to get some space between them.

“Do you?” he asked, his voice full of anguish.

She could see in his eyes that he thought she believed he was a monster. “No, I don’t hate you,” she said sullenly, trying hard to hold back tears. She wished she could hate him, then perhaps it wouldn’t hurt so much to know that he didn’t love her.

To her surprise, he chuckled, wrapping his arms around her and pulling her tightly against him. She’d never heard him laugh before. She really liked the sound. But it only served to make her melancholy deepen when she realized she’d probably never hear it again.

“I’m relieved to hear that, Brooke,” he said, pulling her back at arms length so he could look her straight in the eye, “because I love you so much sometimes it makes it hard to breathe.”

Brooke suddenly found it hard to breathe. Had she heard him correctly? Did he really say he loved her? Or had it been her overactive imagination playing tricks on her? “You do?” she asked cautiously.

“I do.”

Brooke burst into tears and buried her face against his chest. “I thought you only wanted me to stay with you because I was pregnant with your baby.”

“No, I want you to stay because I’ve loved you since the day I met you.”

Sniffing back her tears, Brooke pulled away to look up at him. “Really?”

“Really.”

She wasn’t entirely convinced, but he was saying all the right things and she desperately wanted them to be true. Sighing, she leaned against the hard wall of his chest and took a deep breath, inhaling his scent. “I’m so sorry for everything. I just wanted to be with you so bad. And when I thought we couldn’t ever be together, I thought maybe I could have the next best thing. I wanted to have your baby desperately.”

Dorian tipped her chin up to look at him. “I’m not like the men you’re used to, Brooke. I’ll never be like the men you’re used to. I was born a long time ago. I grew up in a different time, and, besides all of that, I’m a werewolf. I don’t think I have it in me to change.”

Brooke blinked back fresh tears. “I love you, Dorian. I fell in love with you just the way you are. I don’t want you to change for anything in the world.”

“No?” he asked.

“Well ... maybe there’s a few things we could work on,” Brooke said, smiling up at him as she wrapped her arms around his neck and nuzzled his neck.

THE END