



ROXIE'S PROTECTORS

JAGER'S MATE

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Blurb

Daylen is a cop, and a good one. When she discovers two men sword fighting in an alley during one of her nightly patrols, she confronts them, ordering them to put down their weapons. One of the men takes off running, surprising her with his speed. With one man left, she knows she'll have to take him down when he ignores her demands. With her suspect in her grasp, her world turns upside down when he pins her to the ground and kisses her senseless.

Jager knows no wilting flower, werewolf or mortal, would ever survive as his mate, but this cop has all the right moves. Her scent leaves no doubt this mortal woman is his, and after tasting her lips, he knows claiming her will be a challenge. The bigger problem, however, might be her obsession to arrest him whenever they meet. As their passion flares, he'll do anything it takes to make her his mate.

Chapter One

Jager silently followed the lone wolf who walked up ahead of him at a discreet distance. He kept his gaze locked on the other werewolf's back while he wove his way through the people who shared the sidewalk in this busy section of downtown San Francisco. More than a few of the buildings that lined the street were restaurants, bars or nightclubs. Jager had followed the lone wolf out of one of said nightclubs.

He'd gone to the Hot Spot, which had been anything but after Leif, his brother-in-arms, had heard a rumor going around about a lone wolf trying to recruit other lone wolves for a new cause at this particular nightclub. Leif had come by this information from a bar he liked to frequent to pick up female werewolves who were unmated and wanted to share their beds for a bit of fun. In some ways, Leif's womanizing paid off when he came across a bit of information such as this.

Jager watched the lone wolf duck into an alley between two buildings at the end of the street where most of the crowd had thinned. Increasing his speed, he quickly followed. Once he was inside the alley, Jager opened the front of his long black duster and brushed it to one side as he reached for the hilt of his sword. It made a slight hissing sound when he pulled it free of its scabbard. Taking a quick look behind him to make sure no mortals were able to see him from the opening into the alley, Jager stealthily walked halfway down the passage. It was quite dark, but with his keen werewolf sight, he could see just as well as if it were day time instead of night. Only one weak, exposed light bulb shone above a door that opened up onto the alley. His steps slowed when he caught the glint of light that suddenly flashed in his eyes. At the same time, he heard a sword being drawn. A smile spread across Jager's face. It looked as if this lone wolf wanted to play. And that he carried a concealed sword on him, it more than likely having been strapped to his back under his leather jacket, marked him as one of Miles' recruits. The average werewolf didn't carry swords nowadays.

The sound of a low growl drifted over to Jager after he came to a stop a short distance away from the lone wolf. He looked the other werewolf over. Like all of his kind, the lone wolf was taller than the average mortal, but he was about an inch shorter than Jager, which put him at about six foot eight. He was muscular as well, but Jager figured he had a few extra pounds of muscle on him that the lone wolf didn't have. Strength-wise they would be pretty close, but it all came down to how well the lone wolf could handle his sword. Jager planned to beat his ass, but he hoped the altercation would last longer than a few seconds. There was nothing more that Jager enjoyed than a good sword fight. Just the thought of it made his blood pump a little bit faster through his veins.

"So, lone wolf, you think you're man, or should I say, werewolf enough to take on the likes of me," Jager said as he moved closer. "I'll give you fair warning. You point a sword in my direction you better know how to use the damn thing."

The lone wolf snarled and growled menacingly at the same time. "Let me guess. You must be one of the Protector's who watch over the foretold one. Miles warned us about you."

Jager chuckled. "I'm sure he did. Yes, I'm one of the Protectors. And did dear old

Miles tell you that he used to be one of us before he decided to go bad?"

"Miles told us how unfairly he was treated while he was one of the Protectors, and how he was given no choice but to leave and try to find the foretold one for himself."

Jager snorted. The only way Miles had been treated "unfairly" was when it had been decided by his grandmother, who had brought all the Protectors together, that his sister, Saskia, would lead them instead of him. Miles had been so enraged that he hadn't been chosen to be their leader he had forsaken his sister and his grandmother, swearing he would be the one to find the foretold one and use him or her for his own benefits. Now that Roxie had come forward and declared herself as the foretold one, Jager and the rest of her Protectors knew it would only be a matter of time before Miles made his move.

Raising his sword, Jager let his gaze run over the gleaming blade before he pinned a hard stare on the lone wolf. "Enough of the idle chitchat. How about we get down to business? The night isn't getting any younger, and I'm itching for a fight."

Instead of answering him, the lone wolf growled once more and took the first strike as he closed the distance between them. Jager easily blocked the blade and took a strike of his own. He felt a surge of hope that he might actually have a worthy opponent when the lone wolf circled out of range at the last minute. Grinning widely, Jager swung his sword up to meet the lone wolf's next blow. Fun and games were definitely on.

* * * *

Daylen Reardon drove her police cruiser down the busy downtown street. She looked from right to left as she did her regular patrol. She didn't expect any trouble, but with the bars and nightclubs on this particular street, there was always a chance she would come across a few patrons who had indulged just a little too much. If Daylen spotted an individual weaving down the street, she usually pulled over to make sure they had an alternative means of getting home besides getting into a car to drive.

She had been a cop for the last five years and loved the job. When she put on her uniform and strapped on her gun, she knew she was doing a service for her city to help make it a better place. Not that she thought she did it all by herself, but she liked that she was doing her part.

Nearing the end of the street, she slowed the cruiser preparing to take the next left in her circuit. Daylen happened to glance out the passenger window at an alley sandwiched between two buildings. What she saw had her hitting the brakes and pulling over to the curb.

After she turned off the cruiser's engine, Daylen got out and locked the door behind her. As she made her way slowly to the entrance of the alley, she pocketed the car keys and pulled out her flashlight. Turning it on, she aimed the beam of light at what she thought she saw. The alley was semi-dark, but Daylen had always had pretty good night vision. When the light from her flashlight hit the middle of the alley, she knew she hadn't been imagining what she had seen from the cruiser.

With the flashlight still held in her left hand, Daylen unclipped the holster in case she needed to draw her gun while she quietly approached the two men who were going at each other with a pair of swords. Now *this* wasn't something she saw every day on her patrols.

Daylen didn't call out to the men, deciding to wait until she was a bit closer. As she slowly walked nearer, she could hear growling sounds that sounded all too animal-like to

her. They were mixed in with the sound of the men's swords clashing. The men themselves were big brutes. One had short black hair, was well over six and a half feet and wore jeans along with a black leather jacket. He appeared to be the one making the growling sounds as he swung his sword at his opponent. The other had long light brown hair pulled back in a pony tail, was just a bit taller than the other man, and wore a long black duster over his dark jeans. Daylen also noticed he had an expression of glee on his face, and a smile that seemed to get wider with each blow that came at him.

Daylen shook her head. They had to be a couple of kooks. At first, she thought the swords couldn't be real, but when the black-haired man ended up catching the blade of the other man's sword across his cheek and blood welled, she had her proof that they were. Just what she needed, a pair of crazies whacking at each other with real swords.

Having come close enough to the two men that she would be able to catch them if they decided to take off running, Daylen aimed the beam of her flashlight at their faces. "All right, boys, time to put the swords down," she said in her best, loud, and authoritative police officer voice.

Both men lowered their swords and turned to face her. Daylen opened her mouth to ask what the hell they thought they were doing when the black-haired man spun around, ran down toward the opposite end of the alley and disappeared into the darkness. Daylen blinked. The man had run so fast she'd had a hard time tracking him with her eyes. She'd never seen anyone move that fast before. She hadn't even had a chance to yell at him to stop.

Knowing the other man hadn't moved from where he stood, Daylen focused her attention on him. With her flashlight once again aimed at his face, she had to admit he was one good-looking kook. A male model came to mind when she took in his chiseled cheekbones, straight nose and firm, full lips. Against her will, her gaze settled on his lips for a few seconds longer than necessary. If he hadn't been a kook, and she wasn't on duty, Daylen would have liked to get to know him better. She might be a cop, but she was a woman also, and right now, she found herself more than a little attracted to the man that stood before her.

Putting her mind back on the task at hand, Daylen said, "Put the sword on the ground and take a step away from it."

The man's nostrils flared slightly when he took a deep breath. His gaze latched onto her, staring at her so intently Daylen found herself reacting in a way she shouldn't. His light blue-eyed gaze looked her up and down, leaving a trail of goose bumps under her uniform wherever it touched. Her breasts seemed to grow heavy, and her nipples tightened when his gaze settled on them. Daylen's breath hitched at seeing the look of arousal that lurked in the man's eyes. He made no move to put down the sword he held.

She cleared her throat and tried again. "Put the sword down," she said louder.

This time he slowly brushed the left side of his duster aside to reveal a scabbard that hung at his side. He sheathed the sword in it while he kept his gaze locked to hers. For a brief second, Daylen swore she saw his light blue eyes glow mutedly as he started to close the distance between them. With the beam of her flashlight still shining on his face, she had to think it was a trick of the light.

She put her right hand on top her gun. "Stay where you are and put your hands behind your head. If you don't do it, I will draw my gun."

"What are you going to do? Handcuff me?" he asked in a deep, sexy drawl. "I may

like that.” He continued to slowly move toward her.

Daylen had yet to fire her gun in the line of duty. She didn’t want tonight to be the night that she had to, but if the man in front of her decided to pull out his sword again and think to use it on her, she would do whatever was necessary to take him down.

“Carrying a concealed weapon is a major offense. Resisting arrest will make it that much worse for you. Why don’t you just cooperate and make it easier for the both of us?”

A grin spread across his lips that Daylen had to admit made the man look even sexier. “Sorry, but I’m not going to let you arrest me,” he said.

Figures. The kooks never wanted to be taken away without kicking up some kind of fuss. Not wanting this to draw out any longer than it had to, Daylen waited until he came within range. She dropped her flashlight and grabbed him by one arm as she used a karate move to kick his legs out from under him. Having caught him off guard, she managed to get him down face first on the ground with his hands behind him. She sat on his back, pinning his arms between her legs as she reached for her handcuffs that were in a leather case attached to her belt. With her other hand, she kept the side of his face pressed to the ground.

The handcuffs now out of their case, Daylen started to read the man his rights. “You have the right to remain silent. Everything—”

She never got to finish. One second she had him pinned, ready to cuff his hands behind him, and then the next, he had bucked her off. With a move faster than she could react to, he had her on her back with his large body on top of hers. He manacled her wrists in one strong hand as he grabbed the handcuffs and tossed them away.

Shit. Now she was in trouble. Even though his grip didn’t hurt, Daylen couldn’t break free of his hold. She tried to buck him off like he had done to her, but he was solid muscle and didn’t budge an inch.

Daylen gazed up at him not sure what he would do next. Instead of seeing malice in his eyes, he stared down at her with intense longing. Against her will, her heart started to beat a little faster. The longer he held her gaze the more her body reacted. Instead of being afraid of what he would actually do to her, she found herself becoming aroused. An ache pounded between her legs, and she started to breathe faster. And, if she was not mistaken, he was aroused as well. She could feel the hard length of his cock pressed against her thigh where he had her legs pinned between his.

He felt way too good pressed against her body. That had Daylen once more trying to buck him off. She shouldn’t be getting turned on by a guy who obviously had a few screws loose. She had to stay professional. He was the bad guy, and she was the cop.

When she arched her back again to try and throw him off, he made a low sound deep inside his chest that sounded pretty damn close to something a wild animal would make. She instantly stilled beneath him.

He shook his head. “Keep doing that and I won’t be responsible for what I do to you. I’m barely holding back as it is.” He shoved the collar of her shirt aside with his hand before he buried his nose in the crook of her neck and took a deep breath. He dragged his tongue across the skin where her shoulder and neck met. “God, you smell good.” He then lifted his head and looked down at the name tag pinned to the front of her shirt. “Officer Daylen Reardon, I would like to continue what’s started here, but I don’t think you’ll be as cooperative as I want you to be. We’ll have to finish this another time. But I’m not going to leave before I’ve gotten a taste of you.”

Before Daylen knew what he was about to do, he brought his mouth down to hers and kissed her. His lips moved over hers gently before his tongue came out and pushed its way inside her mouth. He swept the inside of it, tasting her thoroughly, twining his tongue with hers.

The man might be a kook, but he sure knew how to kiss a woman senseless. Unable to stop herself from kissing him back, Daylen felt her body go up in flames with each stroke of his tongue. He licked and sucked at her lips as she found herself sinking deeper and deeper into a fog of arousal. Her brain seemed to only be functioning at half power. A part of her knew this was so very wrong, but another baser part of her had taken over and wanted more. The feel of his well-muscled body pressed against hers just sent her arousal to greater heights. She moaned softly into his mouth.

Then his lips were gone, along with the weight of his body that had been pressing down on top of her. Now free, Daylen sat up and caught sight of the back of the man's duster as he ran down the alley in the same direction the other man had taken. Then he was gone.

What the hell is wrong with me? Daylen stood and grabbed her flashlight that lay on the ground not far away. Using its light, she found her handcuffs. If another cop had been present to see what had taken place, Daylen knew there would be questions as to whether or not she could do her job. And she wouldn't have been able to blame them. She'd just let a criminal kiss her stupid while she basically did nothing to stop him. And, if that wasn't bad enough, he'd gotten away on top of it all.

Calling herself the lamest woman to walk the face of the earth, Daylen headed back to her police cruiser. Just as she got back inside the driver's side, she remembered what he had said before he'd kissed her—they would finish this another time. Whatever the hell he meant by *that*.

Daylen started the cruiser and pulled away from the curb to continue with her patrol. She knew one thing. If she ever did see him again, she'd be more prepared. She wouldn't let his lips anywhere near her. Instead, she'd make him kiss the dirt as she cuffed his ass before hauling him off to jail. There was no way in hell she would let the man make a fool of her twice. No matter how attractive he was, and how he made her want things she shouldn't. Daylen wouldn't think twice about arresting him. The man had better hope they didn't cross paths again, for his sake.

Chapter Two

Jager ran down the street to where he had parked his black Chevy Camaro. He'd tried to pick up the trail of the lone wolf after he'd left the woman cop in the alley, but he'd lost it once he'd reached the street. The bastard must have had a vehicle parked there and had made good his escape.

After getting into his Camaro and pulling away to make the drive back to Marin County where he lived with the rest of Roxie's Protectors, Jager thought about the woman cop, Daylen. She had been totally unexpected, and not because she was a cop that happened to come across him and the lone wolf sword fighting. No, it had been his reaction to her. One whiff of her scent and he'd become cemented in place. All his senses had become riveted onto her, like he'd suddenly developed tunnel vision and only she existed. The wolf inside him had thrown back its head and howled. And, inside his head, the word "mine" had repeated itself over and over again. He'd at last found his mate.

Jager smiled as he remembered how she'd brought him down and then tried to handcuff him. She'd totally taken him by surprise. He hadn't expected her to use a karate move on him. Obviously, his mate was even tougher than she looked. Just listening to her ordering him to put down his sword in an authoritative voice and seeing her dressed in her cop uniform with her long reddish-brown hair pulled back in a bun had been a turn on. Her brown eyes had been all business, even when she had been checking him out, which was good. He needed his mate to be tough, not some flower that would dissolve in a fit of tears if he looked at her wrong. He was never one for watching what he said. He liked to say whatever was on his mind, no pussyfooting around.

Unlike his brother-in-arms Leif, who never wanted to be tied down, Jager looked forward to claiming the one woman who was meant to be his. Though doing it would be a tad difficult. Other than the fact that she was mortal, and more than likely had no idea werewolves actually existed, there was also the small point that she would try to arrest his ass if she saw him again. He would have to work around that. At least he knew she hadn't been totally unaffected by him. When he had kissed her, unable to stop from having one small taste of her before he left, and she had kissed him back, it had taken everything in him not to claim her as his mate right there and then on the ground in that dirty alley. The mating urge had started to ride him hard then, and that wouldn't have done anything to endear him to her.

Having arrived at the mansion where he lived with his sister and brothers, Jager parked his Camaro in the large garage and went inside. After he stepped into the spacious foyer, he heard the sound of voices coming from the kitchen. He made his way to that room and found Skylar, Roan, and Roan's mate, Ansley, there. Both Skylar and Roan were his true brothers. They all shared similar features, along with having the same light brown hair and light blue eyes. Ansley had Skylar sitting in one of the kitchen chairs with a hairdresser's cape around him while she trimmed the ends of his long hair. Ansley was a hair stylist and had taken over the job of doing haircuts from their sister, Saskia. Roan sat on the edge of the kitchen table as he watched his mate work.

Jager crossed the room and grabbed a bottle of beer out of the fridge before he went back over to the others. He pulled out one of the empty chairs and sat down before he

twisted off the beer cap and took a big sip.

Putting the beer bottle on the table, he said, "Aren't you looking pretty, Skylar, with your hair all nicely trimmed?" Jager chuckled when his brother flipped him off.

"Be nice, Jager," Ansley said. "And talking about trims, when are you going to let me cut your hair?"

Jager grabbed his pony tail and pulled it over his shoulder. It was getting long. It hung to the middle of his back when tied back, but he liked it that way. He looked at the ends. "I'm good. I'll let you know when I want a haircut." Since Roan had claimed Ansley as his mate three months before, she'd cut everyone's hair who lived in the mansion, except for his.

Roan snorted. "If your hair gets any longer, people will think you're a woman from behind."

"Bite me."

"No thanks. I'd much rather bite my mate." Roan moved to stand behind Ansley and nuzzled the side of her neck.

"Hey," Skylar said. "Enough of that. Please don't distract her when she's holding a pair of very sharp scissors near me. I only want a trim. I don't want my hair all cut off because Ansley chopped a big hunk out of it." Skylar usually wore his hair the same way Jager liked his, except it wasn't quite as long.

Ansley shoved Roan away. "Don't worry, Skylar, I would never do that. Roan will stay out the way. I doubt he would want me to slip and get his hair instead." She opened and closed the scissors she held in her mate's direction.

Roan backed away. "I don't want to be shaved bald either." He pulled out a chair next to Jager and took a seat. "So how did tonight go? Did Leif's tip pay off?"

Jager nodded. "Yeah. I found the lone wolf at the nightclub where Leif said he would be. If not for one small interruption, I would have beaten him during our sword fight and forced some answers out of him.

At that moment, Leif walked into the kitchen. "What kind of interruption?" With his werewolf hearing, Leif would have had no problem hearing what Jager had said before he arrived in the kitchen.

A smile spread across Jager's lips. "A lady cop spotted me and the lone wolf crossing swords in an alley. The lone wolf took off when she showed up."

"Why didn't you go after him?" Leif asked.

"I couldn't. I was a little busy trying to get a grip on the mating urge that slammed into me while my mate was ordering me to put down my sword so she could arrest me."

Leif cursed as he got up and went to the fridge. He took out a beer and gulped down two big swigs before he returned to the table with it. "Dear God, you're dropping like flies. First Saskia, then Roan, and now you find your mate. If I'm not careful, I'll be next."

Roan wrapped his arm around Ansley now that she had finished with Skylar's hair. "I wouldn't say that too many times out loud, Leif, or it may actually come true." Roan chuckled when Leif picked up his beer and chugged half of it almost in one gulp. He then turned to Jager. "So when do we get to meet this mate of yours?"

Jager scratched his chin. "Well, there is a bit of a problem, besides her being a mortal."

Ansley spoke up. "Does her being a mortal bother you?"

Jager knew why Ansley had asked that particular question. Before she'd mated with Roan, she had been a mortal, the same as Eli, Saskia's mate. They both had become werewolves with the help of Roxie, the foretold one. Not only was Roxie the leader of the werewolf packs because of the mark she had around her left wrist, she also had some extra magic inside her that the average werewolf didn't have. One of her extra powers was her ability to turn a mortal into a werewolf with a magic spell and some of her blood. Because she was *so* special, they had become her Protectors. If it ever came out that she could do the things she could, they would have more than Miles trying to steal her away to worry about.

With a shake of his head, Jager said, "No, her being a mortal doesn't bother me. The problem is the fact that I resisted arrest and she'll probably try to cuff me when I get close to her again."

Skylar started to laugh. "She tried to cuff you? I wish I'd been there to see that."

Jager ignored him. "Anyway, once I got away from my mate, the lone wolf's trail had gone dead. But he was definitely one of Miles' men. He admitted to that."

"We'll have to tell Saskia. She'll want to know," Roan said. "So what are you going to do about your lady cop?"

Jager shrugged. "Not sure yet. At least I managed to get her name from the tag she wore. Are Dirk and Kye still with Roxie?"

They usually split their numbers and took turns watching over Roxie, especially when she went to Wulf's Den with her mate, Beowulf. Beowulf owned Wulf's Den, a local nightclub where werewolves and mortals mixed, not that the mortals knew that.

Roan nodded. "Yeah, they are. They should be home in a couple of hours."

Jager grabbed his beer off the table and stood. "Good. I'm going to get Dirk to do his magic on the Internet and see what he can come up with on my mate." Dirk, though well over a thousand years old, as were the rest of the Protectors, kept up his skills with all the new technology. He was an Internet junkie just as Roxie was.

Without another word, Jager walked out of the kitchen. He needed to be by himself for a bit. Now that he had found his mate, the mating urge would ride him hard until he claimed her as his own. Even now, just talking about Daylen had caused him to become slightly aroused. He would be lucky if he didn't walk around constantly with a hard-on until she was his. And tonight, having listened to what Roan had gone through before he had claimed Ansley as his mate, Jager expected to have one erotic dream after another about Daylen. The longer he waited to make her his, the worse the mating urge would ride him. Not a patient man by any stretch, Jager knew he would have to act quickly.

Once he reached his bedroom, he shut the door behind him. He had plans to make. First and foremost, he had to find a way to get Daylen to overlook what she thought was her duty and not want to arrest him. Once they got over that, Jager had a feeling he could get her to accept what was meant to be. If she didn't, he had no qualms about throwing her over his shoulder and locking her in a room somewhere until he'd persuaded her to see things his way. Throwing himself on his bed, Jager turned on the television on the far wall with the remote and grinned. He knew just what he would do to convince Daylen to see things his way. It would be something they both would enjoy.

* * * *

When dawn started to lighten the sky, Daylen drove her cruiser back to the police

station. After a long night of patrolling, she was ready to go home and fall into bed. Once in her own car, a dark blue Ford Focus, she debated on whether or not to pick up some breakfast through one of the fast food drive-thrus, but in the end she decided against it. Her body needed sleep more than it needed food, especially since she had one more night shift to go through before she had a couple of days off.

Arriving at the street where she lived, a neighborhood that was made up mostly of families with young children, Daylen parked her car in the driveway of her three bedroom bungalow. Inside the house, she locked the door behind her, then headed to her bedroom to change out of her uniform.

As she locked up her gun in the metal fire-safe lockbox she stored in her closet, she once again found her thoughts drawn to the man she'd encountered in the alley. She seemed to be thinking about him way more than she should. For some reason, she couldn't stop herself from doing it. And it wasn't because he had gotten away. No, she found herself mooning over what it had felt like to be kissed by him with his body pressed to hers. It pissed her off every time she did it. Daylen had never been, and never would be, the kind of woman to go all gaga over a man. And especially not one who went around sword fighting in dark alleys.

Daylen was too practical to lose her head over a man. Every relationship she had, she'd looked at as a partnership rather than a romantic love affair. If she found the man attractive, and he was willing to overlook the fact that she was a cop, she'd let things take their natural course. The sex would be all right, but it was never blow-your-mind good. The relationship would usually peter out a few months down the road with no one getting hurt.

Now she had found a man who could not only kiss like there was no tomorrow, he'd also just about blown her socks off while doing it. And the kicker was she wanted to see him again. She also hadn't reported the incident in the alley. For some unexplainable reason, she didn't like the thought of another cop finding him and arresting him. Daylen wanted to be the one to bring him in.

Disgusted with how much time she'd spent thinking about him, she went to the bathroom to wash her face and brush her teeth after she changed into a pair of pajama bottoms and an over-sized t-shirt. That done, she returned to the bedroom and got into bed. The dark shade pulled over the window blocked most of the light from outside. Closing her eyes, Daylen drifted off to sleep with the image of the man swirling inside her head.

* * * *

Miles sat in an overstuffed leather armchair in front of the wall of windows in his penthouse apartment watching the sunrise. He swirled the Scotch in the glass he held before he brought it to his lips and took a drink. The news he had received had been good and bad. He took another swallow of his drink.

The bad part was that the Protectors had once again found one of the men he used to find new recruits. At least this one had been smart enough to get away before he'd led the enemy to their door. The last time the Protectors had found the place where he trained his recruits Miles had had to destroy it, taking some of his men with it. It had taken him months to set up a new location, and to rebuild the number of lone wolves willing to follow him. He couldn't afford a loss of that magnitude again now that the foretold one

had been found.

The good news had in a small way made up for the fact that the Protectors were once more on his trail. A wicked smile spread across Miles' lips. His man had made an interesting find before he'd managed to get away from the alley where he had encountered Jager. And Miles knew it was Jager from the lone wolf's description of him. He'd also told him about Jager's reaction to the female police officer who had interrupted their fight. The sword-happy idiot had found his mate. Needless to say, Miles found that information quite useful. It wouldn't be that hard to find out who the woman was. All he had to do was have one of his men follow Jager to her. The idiot wouldn't be able to stay away from her. Since she had to be mortal, Miles knew it would hinder Jager's ability to claim her as his. If the Protectors happened to come too close to his new headquarters, Miles figured Jager's soon-to-be mate would make an excellent bargaining chip. And if Jager managed to claim her before Miles needed to use her, all the better. Mated werewolves couldn't stand to be away from their mates. They became extremely agitated to say the least. It would be fun to watch Jager suffer while separated from his mate. It would just be one more incentive to get the Protectors to leave him alone. Given how honorable his sister and her brothers-in-arms were, they would do everything in their power to keep Jager's mate from harm. Their weakness would be his gain.

Chapter Three

At the start of her next shift, Daylen walked into the large room her sergeant usually used for the short meetings before she and the rest of the officers went out on patrol. She crossed the room and sat down in an empty chair next to one of the other officers.

He turned in his seat and smiled. "One more night and then the next two days are ours. Got any plans this weekend?"

Daylen shook her head and smiled back at the man beside her. She and Nick Winston had gone through the police academy together and then had come to work in the same precinct. At first glance, Nick looked like one tough customer with his brown hair buzzed close to his scalp and his large, muscular body. Being six foot four also helped with the illusion. But, on the inside, Nick was a sweet guy who would go out of his way to help people.

"No," Daylen said. "No plans. I'll probably just veg in front of the TV. How's Allison? Any signs of that baby making an appearance any time soon?" Nick's wife, Allison, was pregnant with their first child and due any day.

Nick shook his head. "Not yet, but Allison is more than ready."

Daylen chuckled. "I bet she is. I think she was ready a month ago."

"At least she hasn't gone over her due date."

"Well, you know what to do if she does go past it. From what I've read, sex apparently will jumpstart a woman's labor."

Nick grinned. "I told Allison about that when you told me the first time. Let's just say we've been putting that bit of advice to good use."

"I figured it would be no hardship for you."

At that moment, their sergeant walked into the room. The other officers settled down when he went to stand at the front of the room. "All right, people. You all know what you'll be doing tonight so I won't keep you long. While you're out, keep your eyes peeled for anything out of the ordinary."

"What would that be, sarge?" Nick asked.

"We've had a couple of reports that a wolf, or a very large dog, has been seen in the back alleys of the nightclub district. Normally I wouldn't take this seriously, but we've had more than one person call over the last couple of weeks, and the sightings have been in the same general area. This could just be someone's pet who has gotten loose, but if you do spot it, don't take any chances. Try to keep it cornered and then call in for animal control to take care of it. That's it for tonight. Be careful out there."

Daylen filed out of the room with the rest of the officers. Nick walked at her side. "The nightclub district is your patrol," he said. "Have you spotted a wolf lurking about?"

"None so far." A wolf couldn't be any stranger than that sword fight.

Damn. Just like that she found herself remembering the man in the alley. Even in sleep, she hadn't been able to get away from him. She'd had one particularly erotic dream starring him. It had started off with him kissing her in the alley, but then the scene had shifted and they had somehow ended up in bed together, naked. In her dream, they had made love, and it had been the best sex Daylen had ever had. He'd rocked her world. At the end of it, she'd woken up wet and aching for a man she'd have to arrest if she ever

saw him again.

Lost in her thoughts, she didn't realize Nick had been speaking to her until he grabbed her by the arm and pulled her to a stop. She saw they had reached his cruiser outside. Daylen quickly pulled her thoughts together. "Sorry, what did you say?"

Nick gave her a look that said he'd probably already repeated himself more than once. "I said if you do happen to see the wolf, don't do anything stupid. You never know. The damn thing could have rabies."

"I doubt I'll see it. And I doubt it's a wolf. It's more likely some mongrel stray that happens to be on the large size."

"Even then, be careful."

Daylen started to walk backwards toward her cruiser. "Stop worrying, mother hen. You know I don't do anything rash. If I don't catch you at the end of your shift, tell Allison I said hi."

"I will. Hopefully I'll be calling you from the hospital over the weekend."

"I'll keep my fingers crossed for you."

* * * *

The night turned out to be pretty uneventful for Daylen. Being a Friday night, she kept a closer watch on the patrons that filed in and out of the bars and nightclubs. Fridays tended to a lot busier, and people also seemed to drink a bit more than they did during the week. Not too often, but at times, fights would break out as well.

Near the end of her shift, Daylen made one final sweep of her patrol route. With dawn fast approaching, things had settled down for the night. As she neared the alley where the sword fight had taken place the night before, she slowed the cruiser, something she had done each time she drove by it. Not that she thought the man would be stupid enough to show up at the place where he'd resisted arrest. She just couldn't stop herself from looking at the last place she'd seen him.

Daylen's foot slammed down on the brake when she saw the figure of a man standing just at the opening of the alley. His long hair was pulled back in a pony tail, the ends of it fluttering in the breeze. He wore the same black duster he'd worn when she had first seen him. He waited until he'd made eye contact with her before he turned and ducked into the alley.

Not wanting him to get away from her this time, Daylen hit the gas and sped up to the alley. She slammed the cruiser into park and jumped out, slamming the door behind her.

Inside the alley, she stopped short when she swept the length of it with her gaze and found it empty. *Where has he gone?* It had taken her all of ten seconds to get to the alley. He couldn't have run the length of it and disappeared in that short amount of time. But then again, he'd moved incredibly fast the first time she had encountered him. Just to make sure he was indeed gone, Daylen walked down to the very end of the alley that opened onto another street. But there was no sign of him. She had to wonder if her mind had made him up since she seemed to be spending so much time thinking about him.

Just as she turned to head back to her cruiser, Daylen heard someone call her name. She looked to the opposite end of the alley and found Nick walking toward her. She met him at the halfway point.

"Nick, what are you doing here?" she asked.

“I saw your cruiser at the curb. Considering you weren’t in it, I thought I’d see if you needed any help.”

She shook her head. “I just thought I saw something and decided to take a closer look is all. If I had seen the wolf, dog, or whatever, I would have radioed in. There’s nothing here. I thought you would have already gone back to the station. This part of the city isn’t that close to your patrol route.”

Nick gave her a sheepish grin. “Okay, I came looking for you. I just wanted to make sure you were all right. I had a bad experience with a big dog when I was a kid, and I never really got over it.”

“That’s sweet, but totally unnecessary. I’m perfectly capable of looking out for myself, as you know. Having a black belt in karate, I can pretty much kick butt when I need to, be it man or dog. Now go back to the station so you can go home and enjoy your weekend. I’ll be right behind you.” Before Nick walked away, Daylen gave him a kiss on the cheek. “That’s for thinking of me.”

A loud animal-like growl echoed through the alley. Both Nick and Daylen put their hands on the butts of their guns at the same time.

Nick swept the alley with his gaze. “Can you see anything? It sounded like it came from somewhere close by.”

They did a thorough search of the alley but didn’t see the animal that had made the growl. “Nope. Nothing. Whatever it was, I don’t think it hung around. Let’s go.”

“You don’t have to ask me twice.”

As Nick and she walked out of the alley to their cruisers, Daylen couldn’t shake the feeling that they were being watched. Before she got into the car, she looked one last time down the alley. It remained just as empty as it had been when they had left it.

* * * *

Jager stood up from where he’d crouched on the upper level of the fire escape attached to one of the buildings that made up the alley walls. He’d had a good vantage point from up there to see what went on below. The shadows had also helped to hide his presence. When he’d let Daylen spot him, he’d climbed up the fire escape before she’d followed him. Being able to move faster than a mortal did have its advantages.

He’d been quite happy to watch Daylen when she’d done her search of the alley. Her scent had drifted up to him on the slight breeze, making him ache for her. His cock had hardened the instant she’d stepped into the alley. His gaze had run over her face and body. She wasn’t supermodel pretty like female werewolves were, but she was far from ugly with her full, kissable lips, high cheekbones and sharp brown eyes that didn’t seem to miss anything. Even dressed in her uniform, Jager had been able to see the faint outline of a small, curved waist and more-than-a-handful breasts. The uniform did more to hide her body than not. He wanted nothing more than to strip it off her and see what she would look like out of it. He also wanted to free her hair from its tight bun to see how long it was while he ran his fingers through it.

Then the male cop had arrived. Seeing how friendly they were with each other, Jager had had to put a tight rein on his wolf. The wolf didn’t like any other males around his potential mate. Neither had the man. Until he claimed Daylen as his own, her being around other males would make the mating urge ride him all the harder.

He’d been able to keep himself in control up to the point where Daylen had kissed

the male cop on the cheek. His wolf had wanted him to rush down to the alley and warn the other male away from his mate. Jager hadn't been able to stop the growl that had rumbled out of him.

Once he figured Daylen would have driven away, Jager headed down the fire escape. Thanks to Dirk, he'd found out in which precinct Daylen worked. Dirk hadn't been able to find a telephone number or a home address. Obviously being a cop, Daylen didn't want that kind of information to be common knowledge.

Reaching the alley below, Jager took off at a fast run to where he'd parked his Camaro. From the conversation he'd heard between Daylen and the male cop, he figured she would be on her way back to the police station since it was the end of her shift. He drove to the street where it was located and parked at the curb across from it where he had a good view of the cars leaving the parking lot. He fully intended to follow Daylen home. Fifteen minutes later, Jager watched a dark blue Ford Focus pull out of the lot with Daylen behind the wheel. He quickly started his car and merged into the traffic and followed at a discreet distance behind her.

The sky had completely lightened by the time he saw Daylen pull into the driveway of a bungalow in a quiet neighborhood. He drove past the house and parked his car a couple blocks away. He'd had all day to come up with a plan to be around Daylen without her trying to throw him in jail. There was a good chance it would backfire on him, but Jager was willing to take that chance.

Getting out of his car, he quickly made his way back to Daylen's house. When he reached it, he went to the side where the sun's rays had yet to touch. With a quick look around to make sure none of Daylen's neighbors would see him, Jager reached for the magic inside of him that would allow him to shift to his wolf form.

With his hand held out in front of him, Jager watched it begin to shimmer and then blur as he shifted. In a matter of seconds, a wolf with light brown fur took his place. On silent paws, he made his way over to the front door of the bungalow. He then scratched at it. When it didn't cause any reaction from inside the house, he threw his body up against it. Still not hearing any movement from the other side of the door, he threw back his head and let out a loud howl. If that didn't get Daylen's attention, nothing would.

Chapter Four

The sound of a loud howl coming from the front of the house had Daylen rushing to the front door. She'd just finished changing into her pajamas. Knowing she wouldn't get any sleep until she found out what had made the noise, she yanked open the front door to peer outside.

No sooner had she gotten the door open than a large furry body darted past her and into the house. "What the hell?" Daylen turned around to find what suspiciously looked to be a wolf sitting in the middle of her front entranceway hall staring at her. On closer inspection, she noticed it was a male. Not sure what to do next, she stared back at him. The wolf soon broke off the staring contest, got up and headed down the hallway that led to her bedroom.

"Oh, no you don't," she called as she followed him after she shut the front door in case there were more strays out there.

This was one headache she didn't need. All she wanted to do was get a few hours of sleep. Since she didn't have to work for the next couple of days, Daylen usually shifted back to sleeping at night instead of all day, which required her to only nap for a few hours before she got up again. That being the case, she didn't want to waste what little time she had chasing after what she thought was a wolf to get it out of her house.

Sure enough, the wolf had made a beeline straight to her bedroom. When she entered the room, he opened his mouth in a way that almost made it look as if he were smiling at her. Almost as if he knew exactly what room this was.

Trying not to make any sudden movements, Daylen edged nearer. "All right, you, it's time for you to leave." While she spoke, the wolf cocked his head to the side and wagged his tail. At least he didn't seem to be vicious. Actually, Daylen was starting to get the feeling he was used to being around humans. It made her wonder if he was someone's pet and had somehow gotten loose. It would explain why he had been so quick to run into the house after she'd opened the front door.

As she edged nearer, the wolf remained where he was, still watching her every move. Just before she reached him, he closed the distance between them. He gently took her wrist in his mouth and pulled her toward the king-sized bed. Daylen knew better than to try and yank her arm free. She could feel the sharp points of the wolf's teeth against her skin, but he wasn't biting down hard enough to break it. If she tried to free herself, there was a good chance those teeth could do some damage.

Once he had her at the end of the bed with her back toward it, the wolf released her. Daylen straightened to her full height and looked down at him. "And what exactly do you think you're doing? I'm not a new toy to play with, you know. You obviously have to belong to someone. You're pretty tame. I really should call animal control right now, but I have no idea how long it will take for them to get here, and I really do need to sleep."

As if he had understood what she'd said, the wolf jumped up and put his paws on her chest. Not expecting it, Daylen lost her balance and fell back on the bed. The wolf jumped up onto the mattress beside her and lay down next to her with his head on her upper chest.

Daylen tried to push him off, but that only caused him to put a paw on her stomach

to keep her in place. She lifted her head off the mattress to look at him. "Look, buddy, this isn't exactly what I had in mind when I said I needed to sleep." A pink tongue came out and licked her chin. Daylen chuckled. "Kisses aren't going to butter me up either. But since you seem friendly, I'm going to lock you in the bathroom, and once I wake up, I'll call for animal control to come and get you. Maybe they'll be able to find out who owns you."

Grabbing the wolf by the scruff of his neck, Daylen lifted him off her. She kept her hold on him as she sat up and then urged him to jump down. The wolf didn't try to resist when she pushed him inside the bathroom and shut the door behind him. Reassured that he wouldn't be able to get out, Daylen locked the front door and headed back to her bedroom. Being locked in the bathroom for a few hours shouldn't bother the wolf too much. At least he would be safer there than wandering loose outside.

Covering a yawn with her hand, Daylen crawled into bed. She'd sleep, then she would take care of her new furry friend.

* * * *

Jager waited a half hour before he shifted back to his human form, willing his clothes back on at the same time. He then let himself out of the bathroom. That had gone better than he'd expected.

Silently, he made his way back to Daylen's bedroom. He stood in the open doorway and gazed over at her sleeping form beneath the covers. Her long reddish-brown hair spread over her pillow. When she had changed out of her uniform, Daylen had also taken her hair out of the bun she'd worn. It hung just past her shoulders and had a slight curl to it.

Tiptoeing closer to the bed, Jager looked down at his sleeping mate. The urge to touch her, to feel her under him became a living, breathing thing inside him. Just being around her made him so hard he ached. All he wanted to do was join her on the bed and sink his cock deep inside her body. He took a deep breath and drew her scent inside his lungs. It was a heady mix of woman and Daylen's own scent. Forever etched in his brain, Jager would have no trouble picking her scent out in a crowd.

He stiffened when Daylen shifted in her sleep and then opened her eyes. As she opened her mouth, Jager jumped on top of her, pinning her beneath him, and put his hand over her mouth. Her brown eyes glared up at him. He needed to keep her calm. From the number of minivans he'd seen parked in the driveways around her house, Jager knew this had to be a neighborhood with a lot of young kids around. Which meant Daylen's neighbors probably looked out for one another. That being the case, if Daylen kicked up enough fuss to be heard outside, one of those said neighbors would undoubtedly come running.

He locked gazes with her. "I'm not here to hurt you." From the expression in her eyes, Jager knew she didn't believe him. "I just want to talk. I'm going to take my hand off your mouth, please don't scream. And, if I'd wanted to hurt you, I would have done it before you awakened." When she just continued to glare at him, Jager slowly moved his hand off her mouth.

"You have some balls breaking into my house. I may be off duty, but I can still arrest you."

He grinned. "When you talk to me all cop-like, it turns me on." He shifted so the

hard length of his cock pressed against her thigh.

Daylen stiffened. "So you aren't going to hurt me, but you're going to rape me instead?"

Jager scowled. "No. I don't need to force my attentions on a woman. When we make love, you'll come to me willingly. I can't help the way my body responds to being near you."

"I don't think that will be happening any time soon," she said as she started to struggle beneath him to get free.

He let more of his weight rest on top of her to keep her in place. "Stop squirming." The more she moved the more turned on he became. With his duster open and only a thin sheet separating them, her breasts under the large t-shirt she wore were flattened against his chest. He wanted to reach between them and mold them in his hands, to pluck at her taut nipples he felt pressed against him.

At her sharp intake of breath, and by the way Daylen's gaze had become riveted to his eyes, Jager realized they must have started glowing. He closed them for a few seconds while he got himself back under control. Whenever he became aroused, or angry, his eyes would start to glow mutedly.

He opened his eyes and said, "I think it would be better if we continued this conversation without you under me. It's playing havoc with my self-control."

"Look, whatever your name is—"

"Jager." When Daylen gave him a questioning look, he said, "My name is Jager."

"Well, Jager, you can't really expect me to calmly lie here and have a conversation with you. You're a criminal who has broken into my house."

"I'm not a criminal."

"Yeah, right," she scoffed. "In my books, resisting arrest, and now being here, would make you a criminal."

Jager sighed, starting to feel a bit exasperated. "Can you give the cop thing a rest? I'm trying to do this right. As for the sword fight in the alley, it's no concern of yours."

She shifted beneath him, which had Jager biting back a growl of need that threatened to push past his lips. "I hate to tell you, but it *is* my concern. You broke the law."

"Stop thinking like a cop." He was getting nowhere with Daylen.

"It's kind of hard when that's what I am."

Feeling as if he'd run up against a brick wall, Jager did what he'd been dying to do since he'd walked into her house in wolf form. He bent his head and took her lips in a heated kiss. At first, Daylen resisted him, but after he swept his tongue along the seam of her mouth and nibbled at her lips, they softened beneath his and she started to kiss him back.

Encouraged by her response, Jager kissed her deeper. He pushed his tongue inside her mouth and stroked it against hers. The taste of her filling his mouth made him groan. This was what he craved—holding Daylen in his arms with her scent surrounding him and the taste of her on his tongue.

As he sucked her tongue into his mouth, Jager shifted and put a leg between hers and pushed up so it connected with her pussy. Daylen sighed softly as she rubbed herself against his thigh. Jager knew he should stop this. It would only make the mating urge ride him even harder, but he wanted this too much.

When Daylen tried to pull her arms free where he'd trapped them at her sides, he

freed her. She then yanked the hair elastic out of his hair and tossed it aside. His long hair spilled forward, forming a curtain around their heads. Jager moaned against Daylen's mouth at the feel of her hands tunneling through his hair, holding him in place as she angled her lips across his.

His cock throbbed in time with his racing heart. God, he wanted her, wanted to strip their clothes off and take her until neither one of them could move. But he couldn't. He had to wait. If he were to make love to her now, their souls would join, which would complete their mating. Once that happened, there would be no going back. He wanted Daylen to know exactly what she would be getting herself into before he made her his.

No longer able to stand the sheet that was between them, Jager lifted himself from Daylen only far enough to grab it and yank it aside. He then settled back down with his hips between her legs. His fully erect cock came up against her pajama-covered pussy. He growled softly as Daylen rubbed herself against it.

Cupping her breast through her t-shirt, he brushed her taut nipple with the pad of his thumb. Daylen moaned in the back of her throat and pushed herself closer. Jager closed his eyes to hide them from her, knowing they had to be glowing again.

Moving from her mouth, Jager licked and sucked a path down the side of her neck. "I have to touch you," he said against her skin.

He bunched the bottom of her shirt in his fingers before he shoved his hand under it. He molded his hand to her bare breast before he plucked at her nipple with his fingers. Daylen's fingers tightened in his hair as she pushed his head lower. Knowing exactly what she wanted, Jager lifted her shirt to her chin and bent his head to her breast. He laved the tight peak with the flat of his tongue and then sucked it inside his mouth. Daylen's hips bucked beneath him as she let out a breathy moan.

The smell of her arousal, and the sounds she made, were pushing at the limits of his control, but Jager continued to suck at her breast. "I need to see how wet you are," he said once he released her nipple. "You smell so damn good. I bet you'll taste just as good, but that would be too risky." He trailed his hand down her side to the top of her pajama bottoms. Licking the underside of her breast, he asked, "Do you want me to touch you, Daylen?" Jager chanced a look at her and found she had her eyes closed. The sight of her face flushed with desire made his cock jerk in his jeans.

"God, yes," Daylen panted.

Jager moved off Daylen so he lay beside her on his side. Resting his weight on a bent arm, he watched her face as he shoved his hand down the front of her pajamas. She spread her legs wider when he dragged a finger along the seam of her pussy. He bit back a growl of need. Daylen was more than wet for him.

Using a finger to spread her folds, Jager circled her clit with the tip of his finger before he pushed it inside her core. The feel of her warm wetness closing around his finger caused his cock to strain against the zipper of his jeans. He was so hard he was surprised he hadn't burst it.

When Daylen's inner muscles gripped his finger while he slid it in and out of her pussy, he pushed another inside her. She moaned and lifted her hips, matching his strokes. Jager thrust his fingers faster and used the heel of his palm to rub her clit. Her wetness flowed around his fingers, making him wish it was his cock moving deep inside her.

Daylen moaned. "Ahhh...I'm going to..."

Jager continued to push her closer to climax. "Come for me, Daylen. Let me watch you fly."

Her breaths came in pants. She clutched at the sheet beneath her as the first flutter of her orgasm caused her inner muscles to grip his fingers. When she fell over the edge, Daylen let out a loud, long moan. Her pussy clenched around his fingers.

Aching to claim her, fighting to maintain his control, Jager pulled his fingers out of Daylen and dropped his head to her chest. Once he was sure his eyes were no longer glowing, he lifted his head. Daylen was still breathing heavily with her eyes closed. She opened them after he brushed a gentle kiss across her lips.

"I'll be back this evening," he said as he got off the bed and stood. "If I stay here any longer, I'm going to do something I know you're not ready for."

Jager then walked out of the bedroom. He unlocked the front door and stepped outside. With the scent of Daylen's arousal on his skin, and the image of how she looked when she'd come, leaving her was the last thing Jager wanted to do. Gritting his teeth against the unfulfilled desire that made his cock throb painfully, he took off at a run down the street. At least he now knew where Daylen lived, and that she wanted him as much as he wanted her.

Chapter Five

He was gone. Daylen heard her front door close behind him. He'd given her one hell of an orgasm and then just got up and left. Realizing her shirt was still pushed to her chin, she roughly yanked it down to cover her breasts.

What the hell was the matter with her? She had never been the type of woman to get swept away by passion to the extent that she lost the use of her higher brain functions. And she sure as shit had no business letting a man like Jager touch her so intimately. He was a bad guy. Good cops did not go around letting the bad guys make them come, no matter how good it had been.

Disgusted with herself, Daylen sat up. Her body still thrummed with little aftershocks of pleasure. It also craved more of Jager's touch. A shiver went through her when her thoughts strayed to how good it had felt to have his large body pressing down on hers, and how big his cock had felt against her pussy. Daylen gave herself a hard shake. She had to snap out of it. Her reaction to Jager was totally uncalled for. When he came back this evening, and she had a good feeling that he would, she would steel herself against him. If he touched her again, Daylen knew without a doubt she would let all her guards down as she had done this time. One touch and the man turned her into a quivering pile of jelly. She could blame it on sleep deprivation, but Daylen knew she would only be fooling herself. Both times when he had kissed her, here and in the alley, she'd hadn't been able to concentrate on anything but getting more of him.

Pushing thoughts of how good a kisser Jager was out of her head, Daylen then remembered about the wolf. She quickly stood and made her way over to the bathroom. She hadn't heard a sound out of him since she'd awakened to find Jager standing over her. Daylen soon found out the reason why he had been so quiet. The bathroom door stood wide open with no sign of the wolf anywhere.

"Terrific." At this rate she wasn't going to get any sleep at all.

Daylen did a quick search of the rest of the house, but the wolf wasn't anywhere to be seen. The only thing she could think of was that somehow the wolf had managed to get out of the bathroom when Jager had broken into the house. He must have left the front door standing open. Daylen figured Jager had to have picked her lock since there were no signs of forced entry, and none of the windows in the house were open. The wolf must have just walked out while she had been busy with Jager.

She went to the front door one last time and opened it. No wolf sat on her front porch or ran around in her front yard. He was more than likely long gone. Daylen just hoped he stayed out of trouble.

Closing and locking the front door, Daylen went back to bed. So far this had been one hell of a strange morning. She crawled under the covers as sleep tugged at her. How much she was going to get of it remained to be seen, especially since what had taken place earlier in her bed started to play through her head when she closed her eyes. Rolling to her side, she punched the pillow under her head, determined to forget about Jager and how he made her body go up in flames.

* * * *

The feel of someone shaking him had Jager reaching under the sheets for the sword that lay next to him. Not completely awake, he still managed to get it out from under the covers in case he needed to use it.

“Jesus, Jager. How many times do I have to tell you to knock it off with the sword already?” asked a very exasperated female voice. “And please don’t tell me you sleep with that thing in your bed every night.”

Shaking off the last vestiges of sleep, he looked up to find Roxie standing beside his bed with her hands on her hips. She stared down at him with an expression that matched the tone of her voice. Jager searched the room with his gaze and saw that Roxie had come up to his bedroom alone. “Yes, I sleep with my sword. What time is it?” he asked in a sleep-roughened voice. “And what the hell are you doing in my bedroom, let alone here at the mansion?”

Roxie shook her head. “Blunt as usual I see. It’s twelve-thirty. As for what I’m doing here, well, when you didn’t show up for your scheduled *babysitting* of me, and Leif arrived to take your place, I of course had to rush over here to find out why you were still sleeping.”

Jager groaned and rubbed his forehead with his free hand. “Damn it. Leif told you.”

“Of course he told me,” Roxie said with a laugh. “The man is scared shitless that he’ll be next to find his mate.” She reached up and brushed a length of her long golden brown hair over her shoulder. Her hazel eyes flashed with amusement. “Get out of bed. We’re going to have a little talk.”

He laid his sword back down on the mattress. “Can’t it wait? I think I got all of two hours sleep.”

Roxie crossed her arms over her chest. “No, it can’t wait. Now get up.”

When it didn’t look as if Roxie had any intention of leaving his bedroom, Jager figured she’d asked for it. Flipping back the sheets, he got out of bed to stand in front of her.

She let out a little squawk and turned her back to him. “You’re naked! And...and...”

Jager chuckled. “Well, you did tell me to get out of bed. And I do sleep naked. As for being aroused, with the mating urge riding me, I don’t have much control over that at the moment, as you very well know.”

“Just put something on.”

Reaching for the jeans he’d worn earlier and thrown on the floor, Jager slipped them on. “I’m decent. You can turn around now.” Roxie turned and then went to sit down on his bed. She reached for his sword, but he picked it up before she could grab it. He shook his head. “No you don’t. This is not your house. It’s mine. I’m not going to let you take it.”

Roxie wasn’t always thrilled with the idea that he carried his sword wherever he went. She especially didn’t like it when he came running with it drawn when he heard something out of the ordinary while he was protecting her. One simple mistake and Roxie was forever trying to take his sword away from him. If he’d known that she and Beowulf were only having sex, Jager wouldn’t have busted in on them with his sword drawn. He’d apologized more than once, but so far Roxie had yet to forget about that particular incident.

“Fine. Keep the damn thing,” she said. “We’re still going to have our talk.”

“About what?”

“About you having found your mate.”

“And why exactly does that warrant you coming into my bedroom and waking me up to talk to me?”

“Since your brother almost blew it with Ansley, I thought I would lay down some ground rules for you.”

He gaped at Roxie. “Some ground rules?” he asked warily. “There are no *ground rules* when it comes to a male werewolf claiming his mate.”

“With your mate being a mortal, there are now.” When Jager opened his mouth to protest, Roxie stopped him. “I’m the one who holds the power to turn a mortal mate into a werewolf, remember? If you want her to have the lifespan of a werewolf instead of a mortal’s, you play by my rules. I know what it’s like to be blinded-sided with this whole werewolf mating business without having a clue as to what is going on. Lately it seems to be a trend. Now sit your butt down.”

“Ah, fuck me,” Jager said as he glared down at Roxie.

She smiled. “No thanks. I’ll leave that job to your mate.”

He ran his hand through his long hair and pushed it behind his ears. He’d kept it down ever since Daylen had pulled out his hair elastic. It still had to be on her bedroom floor somewhere. Jager could still feel her hands buried in his hair. His cock jerked in his jeans before he pushed thoughts of Daylen away. They would just work him up even more than he already was.

“Roxie, is this necessary? I really don’t need you to add any more stress on top of what I’m already feeling,” he said.

She patted the spot on the bed next to her. “Stop your griping and sit down. You’re giving me a sore neck having to look up at you like this.”

Reluctantly, Jager sat down next to Roxie knowing full well if he didn’t let her say what she wanted to he would never get her out of his bedroom. “Okay, I’m sitting. Hurry it up already.”

Roxie shook her head. “I hope you aren’t this rude when you’re with your mate.”

“I haven’t had a chance to be rude. Most of our conversations have consisted of her ordering me to put down my sword so she can arrest me, or her telling me I’m a criminal who has broken the law.”

“I heard your mate was a cop.” Roxie started to laugh. “I also heard she got the take on you and almost managed to cuff you.”

“Yeah, yeah. I’m glad everyone thinks it’s so funny. Can we please get on with this?”

“All right. No more laughing at your expense. I promise.” Roxie’s face grew sober. “Now, the rules. First, you are not to take any advice from Beowulf on how to claim a mortal mate. He’s the one that gave Roan the oh so excellent advice of not giving Ansley the chance to refuse him as her mate. And that worked out so well too. Ansley freaked when she found out Roan was a werewolf. Just as I freaked on Beowulf when I found out about him.”

Jager clearly remembered the day Roan had told Ansley. He’d been at Roxie and Beowulf’s place when Roan had brought Ansley there to tell her. He’d thought Roxie would have been able to help Ansley better accept what he was. Ansley hadn’t exactly reacted well.

“All right. I won’t go to Beowulf for advice, not that I intended to anyway.”

“Good. Rule number two. You will not claim your mate until you have told her what you are and what being mated to a werewolf entails. Which means no getting carried away with the moment.”

“So far I’ve managed to stay in control,” he said.

“Rule number three. No using head games or coercion to get your mate to allow me to use the spell to turn her into a werewolf. It will be her choice when, and if, she wants to take that final step.”

“Not a problem.” Jager knew Roxie meant well, but her rules were starting to grate on his nerves. All this talk about claiming mates was only causing his mating urge to dig its claws deeper into him.

Roxie nodded. “Rule number—”

He cut her off. “I think that is more than enough rules. Give me some credit for not being a complete idiot. I know claiming a mortal as my mate is not the same as claiming a female werewolf. I saw how Ansley reacted. I was there, remember?”

Roxie’s eyes narrowed as her gaze landed on the sword he still held. “I remember. I also remember you came in running with that weapon in your hand ready to do battle when you heard the raised voices.”

“Don’t even think about it,” Jager said as he moved his sword well out of Roxie’s reach.

She sighed then stood. “Just promise me you won’t sleep with that thing in your bed once you’re mated. I’m sure your mate doesn’t want to find you cuddling your sword instead of her some night.”

“I don’t cuddle my sword. I sleep with it so it’s always on hand in case I need it.”

Roxie smiled. “Sure. I believe you.”

After Roxie left the room, closing the door behind her, Jager grabbed two fistfuls of his hair and gave it a good yank. He’d have to get things settled with Daylen very soon. If he didn’t, he could easily see Roxie driving him completely insane.

* * * *

Early that evening, Jager went to talk to Saskia before he left to go see Daylen. He found her down in the basement with her mate, Eli. She was giving Eli another sword lesson. Since Eli had been a mortal up until recently, the same as Ansley had been, he’d never had an occasion to learn how to handle a sword. But given how Saskia was the leader of Roxie’s Protectors, Eli had decided he should learn.

Jager watched Saskia cross swords with Eli. She was definitely taking it easy on him, though Jager could see Eli’s potential to become quite skilled. At least he already had the muscle mass that was required to swing a sword for any length of time. As a personal trainer at his family’s gym, Eli had been lifting weights for years.

When Saskia noticed Jager, she signaled Eli to lower his sword. She pushed her sweat-dampened almost white blonde hair out of her eyes and walked over to where he stood. “Are you going to see your mate?”

“Yeah. If I don’t work on claiming her as mine soon, Roxie will continue to hound the shit out of me to make sure I don’t screw it up.”

Saskia chuckled. “Roxie told me about the rules she said you had to follow.”

Eli moved to stand beside Saskia and put his arm around her shoulders. His black hair was just as sweaty-looking as his mate’s. “It makes me glad I was just a regular

mortal before Saskia and I became mates. I would have hated to go through the mating urge and then have a bunch of rules to follow on top of it.”

“Yeah, you lucked out with that one,” Jager said. He then turned to Saskia. “Is there any way we can put a muzzle on Roxie? I seriously don’t think I can handle any more of her *talks*.”

Saskia grinned and shook her head. “Sorry, I can’t help you out with that one. She rules over all the packs, which includes us. Roxie can pretty much do what she wants.”

“Well, you’re no help,” he grumbled.

“Go to your mate, Jager, and forget about Roxie. Also, don’t worry about having to take your turn protecting her until you’ve claimed your mate. I know Roan was pretty much useless before he claimed Ansley. And you look to be just as stressed as he was.”

Oh, he was stressed all right. The need to make Daylen his was a living, breathing thing inside him that he knew would not go away until he’d made love to her. Plus the lack of sleep wasn’t helping any. After Roxie had left him, he’d tried to go back to sleep, but he couldn’t stop thinking about Daylen.

“You can say I’m stressed” he said. “I guess I’ll leave you two to get back to your sword practice. I should be back later tonight.”

As he walked away, Eli said, “Try not to get arrested.”

Jager turned back around and flipped him off. He doubted he would ever be able to live it down that Daylen had almost gotten the better of him.

* * * *

Parked across the street from the entrance to the long driveway of the Protectors’ mansion, a lone wolf sat in his car watching who came and went. When a black Camaro pulled out onto the street, he quickly started his car and started to follow it. He smiled, knowing the werewolf who drove the Camaro was the one his leader wanted followed.

Keeping a discreet distance between it, he followed the Camaro out of Marin County and into San Francisco. When the werewolf pulled his car into the driveway of a bungalow in a residential area of the city, the lone wolf slowly drove by, making note of the house number and the street name.

Sure that Miles would be more than pleased to learn the address of Jager’s mate, the lone wolf turned his car in the direction that would take him to their new headquarters. They now had something that would put one of the Protectors at a distinct disadvantage. And maybe this information would make up for the fact that Jager had cornered him in that alley.

Chapter Six

The sound of someone knocking on her front door made Daylen jump on the couch where she sat watching television. Ever since that morning, she'd been jumping at the slightest noise thinking Jager could have returned like he'd said he would. She also hadn't been able to stop replaying how it had felt to have him kiss her. Her body craved more of his touch, much to Daylen's disgust. And when she had found the hair elastic she had pulled out of his hair on her bedroom floor, she hadn't been able to throw it in the garbage. It now sat on top of her dresser. Just another sign of her weakening toward him.

Getting up, Daylen walked to the front door. She figured it couldn't be Jager. He would more than likely break in again instead of knocking on the door. She opened the door and came face to face with the last person she thought she would see on her porch. So surprised to see it was Jager knocking on her door, Daylen stood there and stared.

After a few seconds, he smiled and said, "Does the sight of me leave you speechless? I must have left you with a better impression than I'd thought."

It was partly surprise, and something else that Daylen didn't want to admit to, that was making her stand in the doorway unable to get her brain to function properly. As soon as her gaze had landed on Jager, something inside her had stood up and shouted with joy. He hadn't even touched her and her nipples had already tightened beneath her long sleeved t-shirt. Against her will, her gaze lowered to his firm lips. Hers started to tingle as she remembered how it felt to have those lips moving across hers. Daylen knew she had to snap out of it, that she had promised herself she wouldn't let him do this to her again, but all she could do was stand there like a twit and stare.

Jager chuckled at her continued silence. "I'm going to take your reaction as a good sign that you no longer want to haul me away to jail." He then brushed past her and walked into the house.

Daylen sucked in a breath as Jager's body came in contact with hers when he walked past. A shiver of arousal shot through her. A small ache started to pound between her legs. She wanted to reach out, grab Jager by his long pony tail and take his mouth with hers until neither one of them could think straight.

Then his words sank in. *Why* the hell wasn't she trying to haul him away to jail? Moving quickly, Daylen shut the front door and came up behind Jager as he made his way toward the living room. She ignored the thrum of arousal that surged through her and kicked out her foot so it connected with the back of his knee. When he stumbled, she quickly kicked his other knee out from under him. As he started to fall forward, Daylen jumped on his back and used her weight to push him completely over. Straddling him, she yanked his arms behind him. Holding onto his wrists, she pushed his hands to the center of his back.

Jager started to chuckle. "Damn, you got me again. I'm going to blame this on the fact that whenever I'm near you I'm not my usual, observant self." He lifted his head and turned it to give her a sideways look. "Now that you've got me, let's see if you can keep me down."

With a show of strength, Jager surged beneath her and threw her off his back. Thrown onto her side, Daylen tried to get enough space between them so she could try

another karate move on him, but Jager proved to be faster. His large hand wrapped around her ankle and pulled her across the floor toward him. He shoved her flat on her back and threw himself on top of her.

Her hands pinned between their chests, Daylen futilely tried to push him away. "Get off me," she said through gritted teeth.

Having him stretched out along her body with her legs trapped between his heavily muscled thighs made her blood heat, which caused the throb in her pussy to pick up tempo.

Not moving, Jager said, "We're going to have to work on this, Daylen. I wouldn't mind you jumping me every time you saw me if it led to me and you in bed. I know that isn't what you had in mind when you kicked my legs out from under me just now."

Daylen arched her back to try and throw Jager off. She then had to bite her tongue to stop the moan that threatened to break free when his hard cock ended up pressed against her lower abdomen. "The only thing I have to work on is keeping you down long enough to cuff you."

Jager shook his head. "Are we ever going to get past this point? I'd like to get over it so we can move on to more pleasurable things like getting to know each other better in the most intimate of ways."

"I don't think so." That was the furthest thing from the truth. Daylen felt herself weakening, wanting Jager to touch more of her as each second ticked by.

He gave her a knowing smile. "Now I know that is a lie." His gaze dropped to her chest, which caused her already taut nipples to tighten even more. "Your nipples are just begging for me to suck on them, and the scent of your arousal is like a drug in the air." Jager lowered his head until his lips hovered above hers. "I'm so hard for you right now I feel as if I'm about ready to come in my pants. Since I first saw you, I've done nothing but dream about having you under me as I sink my cock between your legs over and over again."

Daylen took a shuddering breath. What Jager had said, along with the intense look of longing on his face, had her pussy readying itself for him. Wetness leaked between her legs into her panties. She'd never been so turned on in her life. The thought of ripping off their clothes so she could rub up against Jager made her pussy grow even wetter.

Jager closed his eyes and drew in a deep breath. He opened them again, and Daylen swore they glowed for a split second. "I need to touch you, Daylen. That delicious scent of yours just got stronger. It's got me in its claws, and I feel as if I'm going to die if I don't get a taste of you. Stop fighting this thing between us. Stop thinking like a cop. I know you want me."

With Jager's lips so close to hers, and the length of his hard body branding her everywhere they touched, Daylen's will to resist him shattered. Lifting her head to close the distance between their lips, she covered his with hers. A loud groan that verged on a growl rose out of Jager as he took her mouth in a fiery kiss.

Able to turn her hands enough to put them against Jager's muscular chest, Daylen fisted the front of his black t-shirt. Having jumped in feet first, she stopped holding herself back. She no longer let herself question how ethical it was to want this man. For the first time since becoming a cop, Daylen let herself be just a woman.

Their kiss became more passionate as Jager sucked her tongue into his mouth. Daylen twined hers with his before she swept the inside of his mouth. Jager shifted so he

no longer pinned her to the floor. Resting his upper body on his bent arms, he rocked his erection against her stomach.

Free to move her arms, Daylen skimmed her hands up his chest to his broad shoulders. When she encountered the material of the duster he wore, she grabbed fistfuls of it and yanked. "Off. Take this off," she said against Jager's lips.

He pulled away from her mouth and moved to sit up, straddling her hips. "I'll gladly take off whatever you want me to." Keeping their gazes locked, he shrugged out the duster and threw it to the side. He gave her a wicked smile. "I'll even take this off for you."

Daylen lowered her gaze to watch Jager undo the buckle of the leather belt around his waist that had his sheathed sword attached to it. He put that on the floor beside them. At this point, Daylen pretty much didn't care that he had been carrying a concealed weapon once again. She was more interested in the noticeably large bulge in the front of his snug-fitting jeans.

Licking her suddenly dry lips, Daylen pulled the bottom of Jager's t-shirt out of the top of his jeans and slowly pushed it up his body. Little by little, well defined washboard abs started to appear. Daylen swallowed. Unable to resist, she ran a hand over his stomach. Jager's loud indrawn breath caused her hand to still as her gaze shot back up to his face. He had his eyes closed while his large chest rapidly rose and fell.

"Don't stop," Jager said in a strained voice. "I love the feel of you touching me."

More than willing to comply, Daylen stroked her hand along his skin. Jager's stomach muscles quivered beneath her fingers. She pushed his shirt as high as she could reach before Jager took hold of the bottom of it and roughly pulled it over his head and off. It was Daylen's turn to suck in a breath. Jager's upper body was a sight to behold—all smooth skin. His chest was thickly padded with muscle, as were his shoulders and his arms. She wanted to explore every inch of him with her hands and tongue.

Since she couldn't reach his upper body, Daylen settled for putting her hands on his hard jean-clad thighs. When she kneaded them and his erection jerked inside his pants, it proved to be a temptation she couldn't resist. Running her hands up Jager's thighs, she settled them on his narrow hips. He made another half growl/half groan sound as she trailed one hand from his hipbone across the front of his jeans to his hard cock. Daylen lightly stroked her fingers across it. His hips jerked in response.

"Touch me there, Daylen," Jager said huskily. "Feel how hard you make me?"

Her pussy clenched at his words. Panting with need, she reached for the button and zipper of his jeans. Once she parted the material, his engorged cock sprang free. The sight of him, thick and long, caused more wetness to leak out of her core. Daylen wanted to feel it buried deep inside her, moving in and out until she screamed her pleasure.

With her fingers, she traced the length of Jager's shaft, then circled the head. Jager moaned as a bead of pre-cum appeared on the very tip of his cock. Circling his thickness with her hand, Daylen pumped it up and down. Jager rocked his hips in time with her strokes, pushing his cock tighter into her grip.

"Christ, that feels good," Jager said with a moan. "I'm about ready to explode, but not yet."

Jager pulled her hand off him and moved to lie at her side. He placed kisses along her jaw as he molded her breast in his large hand. While he dragged his lips to the side of her neck, Jager shoved a hand under her shirt. He pushed up the front of the sports bra

she wore and took her nipple between his thumb and index finger, rolling it between them.

When Daylen arched her back, Jager gathered the front of her shirt in his hand and pulled it, along with her sports bra, off. He flung them away and bent his head to take a taut nipple between his teeth. He gently bit down on it before he sucked it inside his mouth. Daylen reached up and pulled Jager's hair loose. She buried her hands in the silky strands and moaned, holding him to her breast.

He soon shifted his attention to her other breast. She moaned again at the feel of him drawing on her nipple. Her pussy ached to be filled. Daylen reached for Jager's cock, but he pushed her hand away before she could touch him.

He lifted his head. "Not yet. You touch me now and I'll lose control."

Daylen groaned. "Losing control is good."

"Yes, but not this time."

Jager laved her nipple with the flat of his tongue, then blew across it. Goose bumps rose along Daylen's skin, and she shivered. He kissed the underside of her breast as he hooked the top of her yoga pants with his fingers and pulled them down past her hips. Once he had them down her legs, Daylen kicked them free. Jager shoved his hand down the front of her panties and palmed her pussy. A finger delved between her folds and pushed inside her core.

"You're so wet," he said as he pumped his finger in and out of her sex. "I have to taste."

Jager quickly pulled her panties off before he shifted to lie between her spread thighs. He kissed his way down her stomach and cupped her bottom in his hands. Lifting her to him, he dragged his tongue along her pussy. Daylen cried out as waves of pleasure shot through her. They only intensified when Jager spread her open even more and lapped at her sex. He licked and sucked, circling her clit before he sucked on it as well.

Lost in wave after wave of pleasure, Daylen felt her orgasm build inside her pussy. She was so close to falling over the edge. With Jager, her body sang. He knew just where to touch her to give her the most pleasure.

Unable to hold still any longer, Daylen rocked her hips as Jager licked at her sex. She moaned when one finger, and then a second, pushed inside her core. He sucked on her clit while he moved his fingers inside her. With a strangled cry, Daylen started to come. Jager continued to work his fingers in and out of her until the last wave of her orgasm subsided.

Instead of yanking down his jeans so he could sheath himself inside her, he rose between her legs and up her body. Jager moved to his side, then pulled Daylen onto hers next to him and brought her hand down to his engorged cock. Holding her to his chest, he said, "Make me come this way."

Daylen dragged her tongue across one of his flat nipples. "Come inside me instead."

Jager wrapped her fingers around his hard length. "I can't. Not this time."

Thinking maybe he couldn't because he didn't have a condom, Daylen relented. She squeezed his cock before she started to slide her hand up and down his shaft. As she stroked him, she felt his cock harden even more.

"That's it," Jager panted as he rocked his hips in time with her strokes. "I'm going to come. Just a little bit more."

Daylen pumped her hand faster, tightening it around his cock. Jager held her closer

in his arms and buried his face in the crook of her neck. The sound of his harsh breathing filled her ears as she felt his cock start to pulse in her hand. With a loud moan, Jager thrust into her grip one final time as hot jets of semen shot into her hand and onto her stomach.

Breathing hard, once more aroused from bringing Jager to completion, Daylen allowed him to tuck her head under his chin and hold her close. Even though he'd come, his cock was still hard in her hand, but Jager made no move to do anything more than hold her.

With reason slowly returning, she lifted her head to look Jager straight in the face. The sight of his eyes glowing mutedly while he stared back at her made her stiffen. "What's with your eyes?"

Jager tried to push her head back under his chin, but she stopped him. He sighed. "Forget about my eyes right now. I just want to hold you for a little while longer before we get to the complicated stuff."

Daylen then realized she was lying naked in the middle of the hallway near the entrance to her living room. She could hear the TV playing in the background. She gave Jager a hard shove on the chest until he released her then scrambled to her feet. Needing time to let what had just happened between her and Jager sink in, Daylen gathered her scattered clothes, went to the bathroom and shut the door behind her.

Chapter Seven

Jager watched Daylen disappear down the hall and heard the bathroom door shut a few seconds later. He tucked his loose hair behind his ears before he stood. His jeans gaped open with his still hard cock hanging out the front. The hand job Daylen had given him had only whetted his appetite for her. But even if he had come deep inside her pussy, he still would have kept his erection. That was one thing the males of his kind had over mortal males—they could keep an erection for hours even after coming several times.

After he stuffed his dick back inside his jeans and zipped them up, Jager picked up his shirt from the floor and put it on. He gathered up his duster and sword but kept them in his hand. Jager found his hair elastic on the floor and put it in his pocket. Not sure how long Daylen would be in the bathroom, he went into the living room and sat down on the couch to wait.

A few minutes passed before Daylen walked into the living room once again dressed. She moved to stand in front of him with her arms crossed over her chest. Her cheeks still held a slight flush, and the scent of their lovemaking lingered on her skin. Jager forced himself not to reach for her, to let Daylen make the first move.

Her gaze skidded over his sheathed sword beside him on the couch before she brought it back to his face. “I’ve decided I won’t haul you off to jail. It seems every time you touch me I lose my ability to think like a normal, rational person, but that doesn’t mean I don’t want some explanations.”

Jager patted the empty spot next to him on the couch. “Sit down, Daylen.”

She shook her head. “I don’t think so. I need to keep my head, which is so out character for me. I don’t know if I like this weakness you bring out of me either.”

“It’s not a weakness. It’s part of the process,” he said in a matter-of-fact tone.

Daylen’s brows drew together. “Part of what process?”

“It causes us both to lose our heads when we’re near each other.”

“What is this *it* you keep referring to?”

“The mating urge. Now sit down so I can give the explanations you want.”

She snorted. “The mating urge, huh? I would say that would be an apt explanation of what just took place on my hallway floor. It had a whole lot to do with pure, simple lust.”

Jager sighed when Daylen made no move to sit down next to him. “That’s just the start of it. Are you going to sit down or not?”

Daylen gave him a hard look. “How can I trust you not to touch me again?”

He picked up his sword. “I swear on my sword, which is very near and dear to me, that I won’t touch you while we talk. Unless you want me to, that is.”

It took a few seconds, but in the end, Daylen gave a nod and moved to sit beside him on the couch. She made sure there was good deal of space between them.

“See, that wasn’t so hard,” he said.

“All right, talk. You can start off by telling me what you were doing sword fighting with that other guy in the alley. And why the hell do you carry a sword around in the first place?”

Jager knew if he wanted Daylen to understand about those things he would have to tell her about his being a werewolf first. Now that he actually got her to sit and listen to

him, he was a little reluctant to tell her the truth. He didn't think he would have to worry about Daylen running from him in fright. She was too tough for that, but there was a good chance she wouldn't want to accept what he truly was.

He turned on the couch to face Daylen. "I promised Roxie I would follow her rules, but right about now I want to say bugger them. There is something to be said about not giving you a choice."

Daylen shook her head. "You're losing me. Who is Roxie, and what choice am I supposed to make?"

"Roxie is a female my sister, brothers and I protect."

A funny look passed across Daylen's face. "A female? That sounds so—"

Flustered, Jager waved her question away. "Forget that. You don't need to know about her right now. Look, I don't know how to do this any other way but lay it all out on the table. I'm not known for being subtle."

"Then spit it out already."

Cursing Roxie and her damn rules, Jager said, "I'm a werewolf, and you are my mate. I knew the first time back in that alley when I smelled your scent. The mating urge has been riding me ever since. I want you as mine."

Daylen blinked at him a few times then burst out laughing. "As a cop, I've seen a lot of weird things, but seeing a real werewolf isn't one of them. Though I met a whacked out druggie once who liked to howl at the full moon and pretend he was about to change into a creature who hungered to kill."

Jager scowled. "I'm not some whacked out druggie. I'm truly a werewolf, and you are my mate. That's why you can't resist my touch."

He watched Daylen slowly bring herself back under control, though a smile hovered on her lips. "Come on, Jager, a werewolf? You can do better than that."

"I'm not making it up."

Daylen snickered. "Maybe I should go look out the window and see if there is a full moon tonight. I always say it brings out the crazies."

Starting to get a little annoyed that Daylen would laugh in his face when he'd told her the truth, Jager stood. It was obvious she would never believe him unless he gave her some kind of proof. Then proof she would get.

Not giving Daylen any kind of warning, he reached for the magic inside him to make the shift from his human form to his wolf form. All humor drained from Daylen's face as he jumped up on the couch and put his nose an inch away from hers.

"Holy shit!" She quickly shifted away from him. "You're a wolf," Daylen said in a quiet voice. "And you're the wolf I locked in the bathroom this morning."

Jager nodded his lupine head. At least Daylen had recognized him in his wolf form. But the way she was staring at him, with fear and shock flitting across her face, he wasn't sure if this had been a smart move on his part.

Daylen pushed herself back into the corner of the couch. When he followed, she practically leaned backwards over the arm to get away from him. "You can understand what I'm saying?"

Once again, Jager moved his head up and down. He then let out a whine and tried to put his head under Daylen's hand so she would pet him. All that got him was a hand in the face as she roughly pushed him away.

She jumped off the couch. "No, no, no. I don't think I can handle this."

Realizing he was doing more damage than good the longer he stayed in wolf form, Jager shifted to his human one. He got off the couch and went to stand in front of Daylen. She held out her hands to keep him away.

“You don’t have to be afraid. I would never hurt you. You’re my mate,” he said.

“Back up there. I’m not your mate. And, since you’re laying it out all on the table, I’m going to be truthful here. I seriously can’t see myself being mated to a freakin’ werewolf.” Daylen’s voice rose a couple octaves when she said those last two words.

“It isn’t as if we’ll have much choice in the matter. We were meant to be together. I know you’re my mate, and I’ll never be able to just walk away from you.”

“Well, you’re going to have to because I’m not tying myself, mated or whatever you want to call it, to you. Yes, I lust after you, but it doesn’t go beyond that. And now that I know what you are, the lust part just isn’t there anymore.”

Already having his nerves stretched thin from the mating urge riding him, Jager had reached the end of his tether. He lunged for Daylen, took her by the arms, and yanked her to him. He brought his mouth down to hers and kissed her until the lust she said was gone flared between them. The scent of her arousal swirled in the air, giving testament to the fact that Daylen wasn’t as unaffected by him as she wanted him to believe.

Jager continued to kiss her as he brought his hands down her arms and pulled them behind her back. He kept them shackled in one of his hands and lifted his head. He gave a grunt of satisfaction when he saw the glazed look in Daylen’s eyes.

Spinning her around, he kept his grip on her hands and walked her to her bedroom. Once inside the room, he looked around until his gaze landed on her uniform belt hanging from the closet door handle. Going over to it, taking Daylen with him, he opened the pouch that held her handcuffs. He pulled them out and put the key to unlock them in his jeans’ pocket.

“What are you going to do with those?” Daylen asked as she eyed the handcuffs warily.

“Since you’re not going to make this easy on me, I’m going to play by my rules now.”

Jager then slapped the handcuffs on Daylen’s wrists and pulled her back out into the hallway. It was time for Plan B.

*

“Where the hell are you taking me?” Daylen asked as Jager pulled her down the hall in the direction of the front door. She tried to yank her arm out of his grasp, but with her arms cuffed behind her back, she couldn’t get the leverage she needed.

“I’m going to take you to my place and keep you there until you start to see reason.”

Daylen dug in her heels, which had no effect on Jager whatsoever. “That’s kidnapping, another criminal offense.”

Jager pulled her to a stop and turned her so she faced him. “Do I look as if I care? We’re mates. The sooner you admit that the better off both of us will be. I want you, you want me, so no more trying to get rid of me. It won’t work. Once you accept what we mean to each other, you’ll wish you’d never fought it.”

She couldn’t believe the audacity of the man. “For your information, I don’t want you.”

Jager shook his head. “Do I have to kiss you again to show you how wrong that statement is?”

No, she didn't want him to kiss her again. She lost all will to resist when he did that. When his mouth claimed hers, Daylen no longer cared that Jager was a werewolf, or that he could shift into a wolf. Even now, her body wanted to feel his lips and tongue again.

When she didn't say anything, Jager gave a quick nod. "I didn't think you'd want me to, but I'm not promising I'll keep my lips to myself later."

Daylen's heart started to beat faster at the thought of Jager's lips kissing every inch of her. God, she was losing it. Here she was handcuffed, about to be taken against her will to some place she didn't know with a man who happened to be a werewolf, and all she could think about was how well Jager knew how to use his tongue.

Keeping his grip on her arm, Jager led her to the living room where he turned off the TV and all the lights. Before leaving the room, he scooped up his duster and sword. He then steered her toward the front entrance hallway. He snagged her house keys off the key rack that hung on the wall next to the door. Before he opened the front door, he got her to shove her feet into her running shoes that sat in front of the closet. For someone who was kidnapping her, Jager was taking his time to do everything someone would do if they were leaving the house for the rest of the night.

After he pulled the front door open, Jager walked her through it then closed and locked it behind them. Daylen looked at the neighboring houses as he led her toward the driveway where a new model black Camaro was parked. If one of her neighbors happened to be outside, all it would take would be one call for help and they would come running.

As if he knew what she had been thinking, Jager said, "Don't even think about it. You can either walk nicely to my car, without kicking up a stink, or I can sling you over my shoulder and carry you there. I'm sure your neighbors would get an eyeful if I start fondling that shapely ass of yours. I wonder what their reaction would be, you being a cop and all."

"Did anyone ever tell you you're a fucking asshole?"

Jager chuckled. "Actually, I get that quite a lot. I have a reputation for saying whatever is on my mind, no punches pulled. It tends to piss some people off."

"You think?" Daylen said sarcastically.

He chuckled again. "You'll get used to it."

Jager pulled open the Camaro's passenger door and helped her inside. Once he had her settled on the seat, he strapped the seatbelt around her. Starting to feel what it must be like for the people she'd arrested and stuck cuffed into the back of her police cruiser, Daylen watched Jager walk around the front of the car and get into the driver's side. After he threw his duster and sword onto the backseat, he started the car and backed out of her driveway.

As she watched her house grow smaller in the side view mirror, Daylen decided she would bide her time. Once Jager took the handcuffs off, he was going to find out what a black belt in karate could do to a werewolf.

* * * *

Daylen felt her jaw drop when Jager pulled onto a long drive of a house that could only be called a mansion. When he had driven across the Golden Gate Bridge and into Marin County, she'd known that there were some pretty swanky homes here, but Daylen hadn't expected a werewolf to live in a place so rich. She really hadn't thought of where

Jager would live, but the mansion that loomed in front of the car was not what she had expected.

Before she could stop herself, she turned her head to look at Jager and said with wonder, "You live here?"

He smiled as he parked in front of a large garage. "Yeah, I live here along with the rest of my family."

"How big is your family? This place is huge."

"There are nine of us altogether. You'll get to meet them all eventually. Not everyone will be home right now."

Hearing that somebody besides her and Jager would be inside the mansion, Daylen started to get her hopes up that she would be able to get free. She had to think that once one of Jager's family members saw her like this with her hands cuffed behind her back they would demand Jager release her.

Daylen kept her thoughts to herself as Jager got out of the car and walked around to her side. He undid the seatbelt and helped her out. With her upper arm held firmly in his, he guided her to the front door of the mansion.

Jager and she had just stepped inside the large foyer when a man started down the stairs that led to the upper level. Daylen found herself unable to take her gaze off him as he came down the stairs and then made his way toward them. He was just as tall as Jager, and just as exceptionally good-looking. And like Jager, from what she could see of it in his snug-fitting jeans and long sleeved t-shirt, his body seemed to be all muscle. He wore his dark blond hair on the long side with the ends touching the top of his shoulders. His brown eyes skimmed over her with interest.

When he reached them, he smiled in her direction. "Who do we have here?"

Jager pulled her closer to his side. "This is Daylen. Daylen this is my brother-in-arms, Kye."

"Under other circumstances, I would be happy to meet you," Daylen said to Kye. She then twisted around so he could see her handcuffed hands.

Instead of being shocked and demanding Jager let her go, Kye burst out into loud peals of laughter. In between, he said to Jager, "You're so screwed. Once Roxie finds out about this she's going to take a shit fit on you."

"She can rag me out as much as she wants," Jager replied. "I did it her way, and it blew up in my face."

Kye seemed to sober a bit at that, but laughter still lurked in his eyes. "You told her about what we are?"

Kye is a werewolf, too? Daylen hadn't thought about Jager's family being werewolves as well.

"I told her," Jager said. "She reacted just about as well as Ansley did, not as bad, but close enough."

At this point, Daylen had started to get fed up with Jager and Kye talking about her as if she wasn't standing right in front of them. "Can the two of you stop talking about me? I am right here. And I'm sorry, but when someone suddenly changes into a wolf, how else am I supposed to act?" She turned to look at Kye. "And are you going to do nothing about this?" Daylen twisted around again and shook her hands at him.

"According to California Penal Code Section 207, the punishment for kidnapping is serving up to eight years in a state prison."

Kye started to laugh again. "Yup, you can tell she's a cop."

"Well?" Daylen asked exasperatedly.

He shook his head and backed up a bit with his hands held palm out toward her. "Sorry, but I'm not getting involved with this. I can see where Jager is coming from though. If I was in his shoes and my potential mate outright rejected me, I probably would do the same thing."

"Plus Kye is smart enough to know I won't tolerate another male interfering," Jager said.

Daylen looked from Jager to Kye and back to Jager again. A look of understanding passed between the two men. She couldn't believe Kye would do nothing to help her, but Daylen really wasn't afraid of what Jager would do to her. If he had wanted to hurt her, he would have done it long before now. She was more annoyed with the fact that she had been so easily overpowered by him. It was a blow to her ego. Daylen broke out of her musings when Kye spoke to Jager.

"You're going to break the last part of Roxie's rule number two, aren't you? You're going to get carried away with the moment without giving a full explanation."

Jager shrugged. "I'm already going to be in shit. I might as well completely bury myself."

There the two of them went again, talking over her as if she wasn't in the room. "Would the two of you knock it off with acting like I'm not here? And, Kye, what do you mean about getting carried away with the moment?"

Kye gave her a knowing smile. "You'll find out soon enough." He gave her a wink then went to walk past her and Jager. "And Jager," he said as he turned to walk backwards. "I wouldn't hold off doing it for too long. You've got her here, and everyone else has gone out, so you'll have the house to yourselves. I would use my time wisely before Saskia gets home. I doubt she'll be too upset, but you know how close Roxie and her have become."

Jager gave a nod. "Don't worry. It'll be a done deal by the time everyone comes home tonight."

"Then I'll leave you two to it." He smiled at her. "And Daylen, welcome to the family." Kye then turned back around and walked out the front door.

Chapter Eight

With a yank on Daylen's arm, Jager got her moving again. The house sounded eerily quiet as he led her up the stairs. Usually, the mansion was filled with some kind of sound, considering how many people lived in it. But, for once, Jager was glad to have the house to himself. He was back on his own territory and knew, even if somebody did show up before he claimed Daylen as his mate, they wouldn't bother them.

Once he got Daylen inside his bedroom, Jager closed and locked the door behind them. He threw his duster and sword on top of the large wooden chest that sat at the end of his bed before he turned Daylen to face him.

He reached up and gently brushed a lock of her reddish-brown hair off her forehead. "I realize you're probably pissed at me, but I knew you weren't going to be reasonable about me being a werewolf, or the fact that we're mates. You really didn't leave me much choice."

Daylen glared at him. "So you thought putting me in handcuffs and then kidnapping me would make me more reasonable? What planet are you from?"

Jager smiled. "Well, at least you aren't cowering from me. I'd say we're off to a pretty good start. I definitely wouldn't want my mate to be afraid of me. Pissed, I can handle."

"Good, because if you don't take these damn cuffs off me soon I'm just going to get more pissed off."

He wrapped his arms around Daylen and pulled her up against his body. "How about we turn that anger of yours into something else?" He pressed his rock-hard erection along her hip.

Daylen bit her bottom lip, as if she was fighting to hold back a moan, but the tell-tale scent of her arousal started to perfume the air. Jager smiled to himself. She may fight what he stirred inside her, but she obviously couldn't stop her body's reaction to his nearness. She only needed a bit more convincing that he was the male for her, then she would no longer fight what was between them.

Daylen tilted her head back so she could meet his gaze. "You don't like to lose, do you?"

"No. Not really."

"Neither do I. That's why I'm just as pissed off at myself as I am at you. Every time you touch me you turn me into a weak-willed woman. I really, really don't like it. I should be able to resist you."

Jager chuckled. "Even though you aren't a female werewolf, you *are* feeling some kind of effect of the mating urge. You're not meant to be able to resist me. It just means I'm yours."

She audibly ground her teeth together. "You aren't mine. And I'm not yours." When he nodded that he was, Daylen shook her head. "For Christ's sake, we just met. There is no possible way you can have *that* kind of strong feelings for me. You know nothing about who I am as a person. What you're feeling is just a good case of lust, nothing more."

Jager tapped his nose. "This told me you were the one I've been waiting for."

Daylen gave him a look that said she thought he'd lost it. "Your nose? Your nose told you I was *the* one?"

"One whiff of your scent and I knew. Plus having my mating urge kick in helped as well." Jager bent his head closer to Daylen's while he spoke. He didn't miss the way her breath caught the closer he came.

With her gaze locked on his mouth, Daylen said, "What...what exactly is your mating urge?"

He dropped one of his hands to her bottom and squeezed while he held her more firmly against him. "Every male werewolf goes through the mating urge when he finally finds his mate. It will ride me hard until I've taken you."

"Taken me?" Daylen's words came out in a husky whisper.

"Yes, taken you. Make love to you until you know there will be no other man in your life but me. It's also the reason why I've been walking around with an almost constant hard-on since I met you. I ache for you. And I won't find any relief from the mating urge until I've claimed you."

At his words, a rosy flush filled Daylen's cheeks and her lips parted slightly. When the tip of her tongue came out and licked her bottom lip, Jager knew he'd reached the end of his control. With a groan of need, he closed the distance between their mouths and took her lips in a gentle, languid kiss.

Daylen moaned, then mumbled against his lips, "More. Kiss me harder."

She sighed when he increased the pressure of his lips and pushed his tongue inside her mouth. Passion flared between them as he stroked her tongue with his. Dropping his other hand to her bottom, he kneaded both cheeks while he ground his cock against her. The need to take her, to lower her to the floor and sink his cock deep inside her pussy beat at him, but Jager held it in check. He would take his time with Daylen, make it so she wanted him as badly as he wanted her. Keeping his grip on her ass, Jager picked Daylen off her feet and lifted her onto the bed. He slowly lowered her onto her back on the mattress. He followed her down and moved to lay stretched out on top of her.

Daylen squirmed beneath him and jerked her head to the side. "Take the damn handcuffs off, Jager. I want to touch you."

"Not yet," he said as he lifted off her and moved to her side. His hand took hold of the waistband of her yoga pants and started to push them down past her hips. "I have to taste you again. Then I'll free you."

Once he had her pants down her legs, he slipped off her running shoes and socks before he pulled her pants the rest of the way off. He moved to kneel at her side and ran a caressing hand down the flat plane of her stomach. Daylen's hips lifted off the mattress in invitation to touch more of her.

Not sure how much longer he could hold himself back, Jager eased her panties down her legs and off. He quickly went to lie on the bed between her legs, his shoulders spreading them even farther apart. A low growl pushed past his lips as the scent of her arousal filled his lungs with each breath he took. His cock jerked inside his jeans when he bent his head and dragged his tongue along her sex.

Daylen started to pant. "Jager. Please."

He gently blew against her clit, which caused Daylen to moan. "I know, baby. I know exactly what you want."

Jager bent his head and licked her pussy, lapping up her juices as her body wept for

him. Stiffening his tongue, he pushed it inside her slick opening as Daylen's hips rose off the bed. The little sounds she made as he pleased her had Jager about ready to explode in his pants. He circled her clit with his tongue before he sucked on it. Daylen's cries rose in volume.

Sensing it wouldn't take much to push Daylen into a climax, Jager moved from between her legs and went to stand at the side of the bed. Daylen whimpered in response. Looking down at her, knowing his eyes had to be mutedly glowing, Jager held her gaze as he lifted his shirt and yanked it over his head. He then reached inside the front pocket of his jeans and pulled out the key to the handcuffs. Daylen quickly rolled onto her stomach.

With quick motions, Jager undid each cuff and put them and the key on the bedside table. Now free, Daylen knelt on the bed and yanked her top and bra off. Moving closer to him, she reached for his jeans and undid them.

"My turn to taste you," she said as she pushed his jeans over his hips and down his legs.

Jager kicked off his shoes before he stepped out his jeans and kicked them aside. He growled deep inside his chest as Daylen ran her hands down his sides to his hipbones. His cock bobbed at the intense way she gazed at it. The feel of her fingertips gently caressing his length brought another growl out of him.

Daylen inched closer on the bed and wrapped her hand around his shaft. Panting as if he'd just run a marathon, Jager silently watched her tongue come out and circle the head of his cock. He fisted his hands at his sides to stop himself from pushing her flat on her back on the bed.

His eyes just about rolled back in his head as Daylen opened her mouth and took his cock inside it. The feel of her lips closing around him while she sucked on him had Jager moaning. Lost in a haze of arousal, he watched Daylen pleasure him. His cock hardened even more. He knew he wouldn't be able to last if he let her continue for much longer, but it felt incredibly good.

Unable to stand any more, Jager pulled free of her grip. He pushed her back on the bed and climbed onto the mattress. He followed Daylen as she shifted to the middle of the bed and then pulled him to her. Jager settled between her spread thighs. Her wetness coated his cock when he slid the tip of it inside Daylen's pussy.

"Look at me, Daylen," he said as he held himself above her.

Daylen opened her eyes and lifted her gaze to his. "Your eyes are glowing again," she said softly.

"I know. You make them glow."

Holding her gaze, Jager surged forward and sheathed his cock deep inside her with one thrust. He growled low in his throat as he started to move inside Daylen. With his weight resting on his bent elbows, he surged in and out of her. At first, he kept the pace slow and steady, but when Daylen held onto his biceps, wrapping her legs around his waist to take him deeper, he rode her faster.

As his orgasm inched closer, Jager felt the mating bond start to form between him and Daylen. A part of his soul reached out for hers. He knew the instant Daylen felt it and when her soul reached for his. Her eyes widened. They both moaned as their souls joined and became one. An intense wave of pleasure washed through his body with the knowledge that Daylen was now forever his.

Taking her harder, faster, Jager pumped his hips between her legs. He felt the first flutter of Daylen's orgasm ripple along the length of his cock. He fought to hold his back, wanting to watch her as she found her pleasure. Daylen's hands tightened on his biceps, and she arched into him as her pussy rhythmically clutched at his shaft.

Before it ended, he put his hand around the back of her neck and lifted her head so her mouth came to rest low on his neck where it met his shoulder. He felt the point of no return rushing up to meet him. "Bite me, Daylen," he said through gritted teeth.

She shook her head. "No."

"Do it," he panted. "Mark me as yours." When she nuzzled his neck, Jager groaned. "Hurry. I want to feel your teeth on me as I come inside you."

Daylen nipped his skin. Still working his cock in and out, he pushed her mouth closer. Her teeth bit down harder, enough to break the skin. With a loud howl, Jager surged into her one final time. His cock pulsed deep inside her pussy, filling her with his cum.

Once the last wave hit him, he released her neck and let her lay back down on the bed. Jager collapsed on top of Daylen with his head in the crook of her neck. The hard length of his cock remained buried inside her pussy.

Daylen ran her hands up and down his back. "You came, and you're still hard."

He rocked his hips into her. "I know. I can keep it that way for hours, no matter how many times I come. It's a male werewolf trait."

"I'm not complaining," Daylen said. She then let out a small moan when he almost pulled free of her body only to sheath himself to the hilt once more. "Again?"

"Again," he said. Jager rubbed his cheek against one of Daylen's taut nipples. He then sucked it into his mouth. Once he had her squirming beneath him, he lifted his head. "This time I want to take you as a wolf would take his mate."

Pulling out of her, he urged Daylen onto her hands and knees. He grasped her hips to hold her in position. Before he sank his hard cock back inside her warm wetness, he rubbed the tip of it against her clit. Daylen rocked back, trying to take him as he pushed into her.

She took him deeper in this position. Her inner muscles gripped his shaft in a tight fist as he moved in and out. Daylen rocked back in time with his strokes. He pounded into her while his cock hardened even more. Jager felt their mating bond grow more solid, drawing them emotionally closer together. The knowledge that Daylen was his had another climax building inside him. He pumped his hips faster as Daylen let out a whimpered moan. Her pussy fisted around his cock, milking him, as she started to come once more. Jager pumped into her once, twice, then he too found his release.

Satiated, feeling more content than he'd ever felt before, he pulled his still erect cock out of Daylen and took her in his arms. He moved to his back and got her to lie on her side with her head pillowed on his chest. With the mating urge no longer digging its claws into him, Jager let his eyes drift shut. He'd let them sleep for a while, but there was still a lot of the night left to love Daylen, and he was going to put it to good use.

* * * *

Daylen must have dozed off, because when she opened her eyes again the room was in shadowed darkness. Moonlight spilled in through the open curtains of the room's only window. She turned her head so she could look up at Jager from where she lay snuggled

against his side. His eyes were closed, and his chest moved with his even breathing. Even though there wasn't much light to see by, her eyes had adjusted enough to the dark so she could see most of Jager's features. He was so good-looking he almost took her breath away.

To look at him, you would never guess Jager was a werewolf. He looked like a normal man, be it an exceptionally good-looking one with a killer body. Now that she had made love to him, the fact that he was a werewolf didn't bother as much as it had in the beginning. Even when she'd seen his eyes mutedly glowing while he had taken her, she'd found they only increased Jager's sexiness.

And making love to him hadn't been like any of the other encounters she'd had with other men. Yes, Jager was great in bed, he'd made her just about mindless with his kisses and touch, but something else had passed between them. It was something she'd never experienced in another man's bed before. It had almost seemed as if a part of him had reached for a part of her. When they'd touched and joined together, Daylen had been filled with a sense of rightness, as if she really hadn't been complete until that moment.

Daylen also found herself drawn to Jager more than she had before. She was more than content just to lay snuggled beside him while he slept. All the reasons why she should push him away seemed to fly out the window. One bout of mind-blowing sex and she felt closer to Jager than she'd ever allowed herself to be with a man. And she'd only known him for a couple of days. But, during that time, he'd turned her life upside down and had her acting out of character.

She suddenly stiffened when another thought came to her. "Oh, shit!" she said out loud before she could stop herself.

Jager jerked awake and looked around the room. "What? What's the matter?"

Daylen moved out of his embrace and sat up. "We didn't use any protection. What kind of cop am I? I'm on the pill, but we still should have used a condom."

"Is that all?" Jager asked as he once more relaxed next to her. "Don't worry about it. We didn't need one."

"I beg to differ."

Jager sighed. "There's no reason to get upset. Werewolves can't get HIV or STDs, and I can't smell any of those sicknesses on you either. And, even if you did have any of them, you wouldn't be able to pass it on to me."

"You can actually smell when someone is ill?"

"Yes." He pulled her back into his arms.

She allowed him to tuck her head under his chin. "And you can't ever get HIV or an STD?"

"No. Werewolves never get sick, literally. Only mortals have that weakness."

Daylen tried to pull away so she could look at him, but Jager easily held her in place. "Mortals? What do you mean by that? They way you talk you would think werewolves are immortal."

Jager yawned largely. "Almost, but not quite." He hooked the blankets with his feet and pulled them over them. "Go back to sleep. I want to rest a little while longer then I'm going to make love to you again and again and again."

A small thrill went through Daylen at his words. She closed her eyes, but sleep eluded her. *Werewolves are almost immortal?* What exactly had she gotten herself into?

Chapter Nine

The sound of someone pounding on the bedroom door brought Jager and Daylen awake at the same time. Daylen blinked at the bright light and lifted her head so she could see the digital clock on the bedside table next to Jager's side of the bed. It was just after eleven-thirty. Considering Jager and she had made love most of the night, she wasn't surprised to find they had slept almost through the entire morning.

The loud banging on the door resumed until Jager shouted, "Whoever is out there had better have a good reason for waking us up."

A woman's voice sounded from the other side of the door. "Oh, I have a very good reason. Kye told me what you did last night. Now open this door and let me see what damage you've done."

"Aw, Christ," Jager said under his breath. He then said louder, "Roxie, go downstairs. Just give us a few minutes to get dressed and then you can commence with your reaming out."

There was a few seconds of silence, then Roxie said, "Fine, I'll be downstairs, but don't keep me waiting too long."

So the infamous Roxie who wanted Jager to follow her rules had shown up. Daylen was more than a little curious to meet her. Since Jager and Kye both thought Roxie would give Jager crap for pulling the stunt in bringing her here, Roxie obviously had some control over the men.

Jager threw back the covers and got out of bed. He stretched, giving Daylen a nice few of his tight ass. He turned and gave her a smile that said he knew she'd been staring. "You might as well use the bathroom first while I get dressed. If we don't get downstairs in what Roxie thinks is a fair amount of time, she'll only come pounding on the door again."

"What is Roxie to you? Is she a relation of yours?"

Jager snorted. "No. She's more like my boss. She rules over all the werewolf packs."

"So she's like your queen or something?"

"Not a queen. There are no royal families in werewolf society. Roxie's just special. She's the foretold one. She also can do things a normal werewolf can't. Being the foretold one also puts her at risk of being used as a figurehead if an unscrupulous werewolf ever got his or her hands on her. That's where my sister, brothers and I come in. We're Roxie's Protectors."

Daylen ran an appreciative gaze over the front of Jager. The sight of his naked body made her wish they could stay in bed. The man hadn't lied when he said he could keep an erection after coming over and over again.

Jerking her gaze back up to Jager's face, she said, "So you and your family are her bodyguards? And why do you sometimes call them your brothers-or sister-in-arms at times and just brothers and sister at others?"

"I guess we're closer to being bodyguards than anything else. We've trained for centuries waiting for Roxie to be found. As for your other question, we all aren't really related. I have two true brothers—Roan and Skylar. As for the others, they were lone wolves same as my brothers and I were. It was Saskia's grandmother who brought us all

together to train and basically form our own pack, with Saskia, my sister, as the pack leader.”

Daylen listened to the rest of Jager’s explanation, but her mind had sort of frozen on the part where he’d said he and his family had trained for centuries while they waited for Roxie. *Centuries?* She also then remembered his comment from the night before about werewolves being almost immortal. Could Jager really be that old? Daylen felt the blood drain away from her face when she thought about his penchant for carrying a sword. If he’d lived through a time when carrying one was part of everyday life, it would explain why he was so comfortable having it strapped to his waist.

Jager gave her a concerned look. “Daylen? Are you all right? You’ve gotten awfully pale all of a sudden.”

“You said last night that werewolves were almost immortal. How old are you, Jager?”

In a matter-of-fact tone, he said, “I’m one thousand and ten. Since you asked me my age, what’s yours?”

“I’m just a measly thirty years old,” she said with more calm than she actually felt.

Yup, at over a thousand years old, Jager was an official card-carrying medieval warrior. The sword now made perfect sense. His great age had her verging on wanting to laugh hysterically out loud. And not in a good way. She’d just spent the night screwing the brains out of a man who had seen history in the making.

Coming to sit on the bed next to her, Jager lifted her into an upright position and took her in his arms. He rubbed a large hand up and down her back. “Just breathe, Daylen. I guess I shouldn’t have just dropped the age thing on you like that.”

“It’s okay. I had to find out sometime.” Daylen pushed away from Jager and slid out of the bed on the opposite side. “I’ll hurry in the bathroom so you can have it after me.”

Before Jager could say anything to her, she raced into the en suite and closed the door behind her, turning the lock once it clicked into place. She leaned her forehead against the back of the door and took a couple deep breaths. She was definitely in over her head.

* * * *

Once she’d splashed some cold water on her face, Daylen had pulled herself together enough so she could face Jager again. When she stepped back into the bedroom, Jager didn’t say anything as he walked past her and into the bathroom. By the time he had finished up, Daylen was dressed.

They were now on their way downstairs and they still hadn’t said a word to each other. Before they reached the last step, Jager pulled her to a halt. Daylen gave him a questioning look.

“Just so you aren’t caught off guard,” he said, “you’re about to meet my entire family as well as Roxie and her mate. I can smell all their scents. I know I’ve dumped a lot on you already. If you’d rather not be around a bunch of werewolves right now, I’ll tell them to get lost.”

Daylen slipped her hand in his. She was not the type of woman to back down from anything. She was starting to get herself back on an even keel. If she could accept that Jager was a werewolf, she’d have to come to grips with how old he was. They had yet to discuss how things were going to go from here now that they’d slept together, but Daylen

had a feeling she was about to find out exactly what it meant to be considered Jager's mate.

Jager guided Daylen into a spacious living room with a large LCD television and a couple long black leather couches. Along with those pieces of furniture, there were a couple of matching black leather armchairs. Most of the seating was already taken up by Jager's family. There was only an empty spot on one of the couches.

All heads turned Daylen and Jager's way when they stepped into the room. She recognized Kye, who sat in one of the armchairs. He smiled at her. Two of the men sitting on one of the couches looked so similar to Jager that Daylen guessed them to be his true brothers, Roan and Skylar. One of them wore his hair almost as long as Jager did, while the other's brushed the tops of his shoulders. All three men shared the same hair color and the same light blue eyes. One had his arm around the shoulders of a woman.

The one thing Daylen immediately noticed was how extremely good-looking most of the occupants of the room were. The only ones who didn't have the supermodel look going on, though they were no means bad looking, was the woman who sat next to one of Jager's brothers, the man sitting beside a woman with white blonde hair, and the woman with golden brown hair who happened to be glaring daggers at Jager. If Daylen had to guess, she would say that was Roxie.

Jager led Daylen over to stand in front of the television and turned them both so they faced the others in the room. He then introduced her to everyone, leaving the man and woman who sat together in one of the armchairs for last.

"That's Roxie over there, and the man whose lap she is sitting on is Beowulf, her mate," Jager said.

Daylen smiled. "It's nice to meet you all."

Roxie slid off her mate's lap and moved to stand in front of Daylen and Jager. She glared at Jager, then turned a smile on Daylen. "It's nice to meet you as well, Daylen, though I heard you were brought here under duress."

"Jager and I sorted it out in the end."

"You two may have sorted it out," Roxie said, "but I would like to know if Jager left out some major details."

"Did you run out and tell Roxie as soon as you left here last night?" Jager asked Kye as he turned his gaze on him. "I figured she would find out eventually. I just wasn't expecting someone to tell her so soon."

Kye shrugged. "What can I say? I went to Wulf's Den last night, and Roxie asked if I'd seen you before I arrived. I'm sorry, bro, but when she threatened to do all kinds of nasty things to me if I didn't talk, I caved."

Roxie loudly cleared her throat. "Well, I'm waiting, Jager. Did you tell Daylen everything?"

Not sure what *everything* actually was, Daylen decided to take some of the heat off Jager. "He did tell me about his knowing I was his mate as soon as he smelled my scent, and about the mating urge. He also told me how werewolves are almost immortal, and that he is over a thousand years old."

"And that was it?" Roxie asked with exasperation tingeing her words. "Incredible. Just incredible. So he never mentioned what it meant when you made love for the first time and your souls joined. And you have to tell me you felt it. It isn't exactly something that just slides by without you noticing."

Daylen looked from Roxie to Jager, who happened to look a smidgeon guilty about something, and then back to Roxie again. "So that's what that was. Jager never said anything about it. I thought maybe I had imagined it."

Roxie rounded on Jager and started poking a finger into the center of his chest. "I told you to give her a choice, you big lug." Poke. "Why didn't you listen to me?" Poke.

Jager grabbed Roxie's finger and pushed it away. "Stop poking me. Hey, having no choice has worked out for all the mated couples here in this room. Granted, Eli wasn't a werewolf when he claimed Saskia, and didn't have the mating urge to tell him she was his, but they still didn't have a choice. Roan and Ansley are happy. And Beowulf didn't ask first before he claimed you."

"Leave me out of this," Beowulf said with a chuckle from where he sat.

Roxie crossed her arms over her chest. "All right, knucklehead. Daylen has accepted your being a werewolf pretty well. Shall we see how well she accepts what it really means to be a mate to one?"

Daylen met Roxie's gaze when the other woman moved away from Jager to stand in front of her. Given how upset Roxie seemed to be about Jager not telling her all there was to know about being a werewolf's mate, Daylen braced herself for what was coming next. She had a feeling it would be another blow to her system.

"Now, Daylen," Roxie said, "I want you to stay calm, and remember, I'm just the messenger. If you want to punish someone after I've told you everything, I suggest you do it to the idiot standing beside you." Jager let out a low growl at that, but Roxie ignored him. "First of all, I suggest you get Jager to buy you a big-ass diamond ring, because you and he are basically now married." Roxie flashed the large diamond ring and gold band she wore on the ring finger of her left hand.

Daylen swallowed. "Married? As in we're married married?"

"Yup. As soon as your souls joined, that was a werewolf equivalent of a mortal marriage ceremony, only it doesn't have any witnesses and it's much, much more intimate. There's also no breaking that bond once it has been forged."

She looked frantically around the room, hoping Roxie was pulling her leg, but everyone had a serious expression on their faces. "You're kidding, right? I can't possibly be married to Jager. We barely know each other. Up until last night, I wanted to throw him in jail every time I saw him."

One of the men started to laugh, but it was quickly covered over with a loud cough. Seeing as how Leif had his hand over his mouth and laughter lurked in his eyes, Daylen figured it had been him.

"That is why I told Jager to explain and give you a choice. As for getting to know each other, you'll learn pretty quickly. The joining of your souls will take care of that. Now that you're mated, neither you nor Jager will be able to stand being away from each other for any length of time, especially in the beginning. A few hours away from Jager and you'll feel as if you're in a living hell. All you'll be able to think about is getting back to him."

Daylen turned to Jager. "You knew that would happen?"

He unwaveringly met her gaze. "Yes."

She didn't think. She just reacted. Taking Jager by the arm, she kicked out at the back of his knees. As he went down to the floor, she kept her hold on his arm, keeping it high and outstretched as she used her thumb to apply pressure to the underside of Jager's

wrist. She had him on his knees, leaning forward, with his arm held higher than his shoulder in a matter of seconds. He also couldn't get out of this hold so long as she kept her thumb on the pressure point under his wrist. Daylen had used this hold on more than one suspect.

"Now I can see why Roxie is a little pissed with you," she said. "There is one thing you have to learn about me. I don't like surprises like that."

The room had gone completely silent. Daylen looked around to see everyone staring at her with surprise on their faces. "I have a black belt in karate, and I know a bit of jujitsu."

Leif, all of a sudden, burst out laughing. He laughed so hard tears started running out of his eyes and he had to hold his ribs. The others in the room broke out in varying degrees of laughter as well. Even Roxie had cracked a smile.

"I'm sorry," Leif said as he tried to bring himself back under control. "But you have to admit it looks pretty good to see Mr. He-man-warrior-who-can't-be-separated-from-my-sword taken down so easily by a woman, and a mortal no less. How many times is this? Twice now?"

"This would be the third time," Daylen answered.

That only sent Leif into another round of laughter.

Dirk, who sat next to Leif, elbowed him. "I'd cut that out if I were you. Jager will take it out on your hide."

While still laughing, Leif said, "But it will be so worth it."

Daylen ignored Leif and turned her gaze onto Jager. "If we're stuck with each other, you're going to have to stop keeping things from me. I don't do well with people who don't tell the truth or who purposely neglect to tell me things." She then released Jager.

He stood and quickly put his arms around her waist when she would have put more distance between them. "Okay, I didn't exactly go about this in the right way. If you had been a female werewolf, you would have already known these things. You being mortal just made it a little more complicated."

"Speaking of me being a mortal," Daylen said. "You said something about Eli not always being a werewolf. Does that mean now that we're mates I'll become one? Or do you have to bite me to turn me?"

"A mortal can't be turned from being bitten by a werewolf. Werewolves are born werewolves. Actually, to the general werewolf population, a mortal can never be turned."

Daylen frowned in confusion. "Then how did Eli get turned?"

Roxie broke into their conversation. "I think I should be the one to explain this one. I was once mortal as well, same with Ansley. There is a very old spell that will turn a mortal into a werewolf. I was the first mortal it actually worked on. It seems I have a little more magic inside me than the average werewolf. The spark of magic deep inside us is how we make the change. Anyway, it has turned out that I'm the only one now who can use the spell. With a small amount of my blood and the spell, I can make you and Jager truly mates in all ways. At least I think it will still work in my condition."

"Your condition?" Jager asked before Daylen could.

"You might as well tell them, Roxie," Beowulf said when Roxie hesitated.

"There was another reason why Beowulf and I came here this morning, other than me giving Jager shit." She paused, then smiled. "I'm pregnant."

Chapter Ten

The room went from being so quiet you could hear a pin drop to six people talking all at once in rather loud male voices. Daylen couldn't help chuckling when she saw the frantic faces of Roxie's Protectors. Even Jager looked as if someone had told him the world was about to be destroyed and he was the only one who could stop it.

"This means we're going to have watch Roxie even closer," Skylar said.

"We'll now have to do night shifts at Beowulf and Roxie's house," Roan said in a pained voice.

"Roxie won't be able to go to Wulf's Den anymore. It won't be safe for her and the baby," Kye added.

"I don't mind taking the first night shift," Dirk said.

"If Miles finds out about this, we're fucked," Leif said.

All Jager said was, "Fuck me."

Saskia hadn't said anything, but from the thoughtful look she wore, Daylen figured she was thinking about what Roxie had just told them.

When the men continued to talk over each other, Roxie put her fingers in her mouth and let out a shrill whistle. All the werewolves in the room stopped talking and covered their ears.

Now that Roxie had everyone's attention, she said, "Me being pregnant does not mean things have to change. So I'm going to have a baby. Countless women have done it."

Saskia finally spoke up. "That may be true, Roxie, but you aren't exactly just any other pregnant woman. You're the foretold one. We already know Miles will do anything to get his hands on you. We also know he's recovered from the loss of his last headquarters. His new one we have yet to find, but he's still recruiting lone wolves. Remember Jager managed to corner one of his men before the lone wolf got away. You being pregnant means we'll have to be extra vigilant."

Daylen cringed inside when she heard Saskia mention Jager confronting the lone wolf. It was because of her that Miles' man had gotten away. Now able to see the sword fight from Jager's standpoint, Daylen realized she'd caused the Protectors to lose out on some valuable information. Since she was now technically one of them because she and Jager were mated, she figured her skills as a police officer could be used to help them find where Miles' new headquarters were.

Before Roxie could reply to Saskia, Daylen asked, "Who is Miles?"

Saskia answered her. "Miles is my true brother. At one time, he was one of us, one of the foretold one's Protectors. He left vowing to find the foretold one for himself when I was chosen to be the Protectors' leader. Miles figured it should have been him."

"What's his last name?"

"It's Jensen."

"Can you give me a description of him?"

"Miles is just about as tall as Jager, has the same hair and eye color as me, and has similar features."

"Where was the location of his last headquarters?"

Saskia rattled off an address in San Francisco's older warehouse district. She then said, "I'm not sure why you need all this information about Miles. And the warehouse is no longer there. Miles blew it up because we got too close to him."

"It was my fault the lone wolf got away from Jager. If not for me, you probably would already have the location of Miles' new headquarters. I'm going to fix that." Daylen then asked the room at large, "Do one of you have a cell phone I can use?"

"You can use mine." Dirk pulled one out of the front pocket of his jeans and tossed it to her.

Daylen caught it and flipped it open. She punched in the number to her police station. Once the other end picked up, she said, "Hey, Carey, it's Daylen. Can you put me through to Ted's line?" She then waited for Ted to pick up. When he did, she said, "Hi, Ted. I was wondering if you could use your amazing police detective skills and dig some information up for me."

Ted chuckled. "Anything for you, Daylen. What do you need?"

"I need whatever info you can get on a man named Miles Jensen." She then gave Ted a description of Miles. "I also need you to look up who was listed as owning a warehouse that blew up some months back in the old warehouse district." Daylen quickly gave Ted the address Saskia had given her.

"No problem. I'll see what I can find and call you back at home."

"I'm not at home right now. I'm over at a friend's place. You can call me at this number." Daylen looked at Dirk who told her the number to his cell. Daylen repeated it for Ted.

"This may take me a while, especially finding the information you want about the warehouse."

"That's okay. I'm pretty sure I'm going to be here for most of the day."

After Daylen hung up with Ted, she snapped the cell phone closed and tossed it back to Dirk. "Ted is one of the detectives at my station. He has a knack for finding information about people and places that others can't. If he can find out who owned the warehouse, he may be able to trace it to another property that Miles may have recently purchased."

"Damn," Kye said. "Having a cop in the family is going to have some fringe benefits."

Daylen smiled. "I figure since I'm now a Protector too I might as well start pulling my weight."

Jager started shaking his head. "Whoa, slow down there. You're my mate. I never said anything about you becoming one of Roxie's Protectors. You haven't even said whether or not you want Roxie to turn you yet. A mortal doesn't stand a chance against a werewolf. We're a lot faster and stronger than your kind."

Daylen narrowed her eyes. "My kind? Well this *mortal* has gotten the jump on you more than once."

"That's only because you caught me off guard each time."

"Oh, really? Shall we test out your theory and see if I can still take you down head-on?"

"We don't just fight with our fists, Daylen. We fight with our swords, and if need be, in our wolf forms. As a mortal, you wouldn't be able to defend yourself against one of Miles' men."

“What’s the matter, Jager?” she taunted. “Are you afraid I’ll prove you wrong?”

Leif jumped up. “You’ve got him now, Daylen. That’s one thing Jager can never pass up on—a direct challenge.”

Jager crossed his arms over his wide chest. “All right, Daylen. You want to do this, then let’s see who has the right of it. I’d rather you found out here how much of a disadvantage you have than while facing down one of Miles’ men out on the street. I’ll go get my sword, and I’ll meet you down in the basement.”

After Jager left the living room, Daylen and the others in the room made their way down to the basement. Daylen took in the weights and large open space. The mansion’s basement had been set up as a training room. She moved to stand in the middle of the open space while everyone else went to stand off to the side.

It didn’t take Jager long to join them. He carried his unsheathed sword in his hand. Once he stood in front of her, he said, “Remember, I don’t like to lose. I won’t take it easy on you.”

She smiled. “I wouldn’t expect you to.”

Without giving her any warning, Jager swung at her with his sword. She jumped out of the way. Daylen may not have the speed of a werewolf, but she was still pretty quick on her feet. She then spent the next few minutes dodging Jager’s blows while striking out at him with her hands and feet. Since Jager was doing most of the work, Daylen knew it would only be a matter of time before he started to tire enough for her to make her move.

When the opportunity came, she quickly moved in and kicked out in a karate move that sent Jager’s sword flying out of his hand. The triumphant smile that spread across Daylen’s lips faded when Jager launched himself at her, shifting in mid-air to his wolf form. Jumping out of the way, she just managed to avoid his sharp teeth.

Jager stalked her as he growled and snapped his teeth. Daylen took up a karate stance and waited for Jager to go on the attack. This time she would be ready for him. When he leapt at her, she kicked out with a roundhouse kick that caught Jager right across the muzzle. He landed hard on the floor. Before he could get back up on his paws, Daylen jumped onto his back and used her weight to pin him to the floor while she wrapped her hands around his muzzle to stop him from trying to use his teeth to free himself.

“Well,” Daylen said while she panted. “Do you admit defeat?” Jager let out a whine. Taking that as a yes, she let go of his muzzle and stood. His wolf form blurred and shimmered as Jager shifted.

Daylen let her gaze touch on each of the other people in the room. They all were beaming at her. Roxie stood under the shelter of Beowulf’s arm and clapped. “Way to go, Daylen,” she said.

Saskia left her mate’s side and moved to stand in front of Daylen. “Now that I’ve seen your fighting skills, I think you’re more than qualified to be considered a Protector. Being a cop, you definitely have the background for it.”

Daylen smiled. “Thanks.”

She then turned to look at Jager. Seeing his stern features, the smile Daylen wore slipped. Without a word, he manacled her wrist with his hand and hurriedly walked her to the basement stairs. He didn’t stop until they were upstairs and inside his bedroom with the door firmly shut behind them.

As Jager put his sword on the dresser and turned to face her, she tried to ask, “Are you pis—”

Before Daylen could finish the sentence, he had her in his arms and his mouth moving greedily over hers. She could feel the hard length of his cock pressed to her belly. Wrapping her arms around his neck, she rubbed herself against him.

Jager finally lifted his head once they were both breathing heavily. "You were magnificent. You've made me so hard all I can think about is being inside you."

Daylen's heart beat faster as she gazed up into Jager's mutedly glowing eyes. "I'll have to remember me beating your ass turns you on."

Kissing a trail from the corner of her mouth to the side of her neck, Jager yanked at her clothes. "Only with you. I need you naked."

A deep ache throbbed inside her pussy. They had made love so many times last night that Daylen had lost count, but her body was in flames once again for Jager. They both yanked at each other's clothes until they stood naked. Jager pulled her back against him. Daylen moaned as her taut nipples bushed against his chest. The feel of his hard cock pressed against her bare skin had wetness leaking between her legs.

Jager took her mouth in a demanding kiss as he wrapped an arm around her waist. His other hand came up and cupped her breast. Leaving her mouth, he lifted her breast and bent his head to swirl his tongue around her nipple. Daylen clutched at Jager's shoulders as intense waves of pleasure shot through her body when he opened his mouth and sucked her nipple inside.

The pulling sensation on her nipple caused her pussy to ache to be filled. Needing to touch more of Jager, Daylen ran a hand down his chest to his hardness nestled against her stomach. She trailed her fingers along the length of his cock, then took him in her hand. Jager's hips jerked, pushing his cock tighter inside her grasp as she pumped her hand up and down.

Releasing her nipple, Jager straightened and said huskily, "That feels good, but being inside you will feel even better." He reached between her legs and worked a finger in and out of her core. "You're already wet. I don't think I can wait any longer."

Daylen moaned. "I'm not stopping you."

Jager moved his hands to her bottom and lifted her off her feet. Daylen put her hands on his shoulders. "Put your legs around my waist," he said in a voice that came out half a growl.

As soon as she had her legs around him, Jager lifted her into position and impaled her on his erect cock in one stroke. He then slowly sank to his knees to the floor. Once he moved to a sitting position, with her bent legs on either side of his hips, he took hold of hers and lifted her up and down. "Ride me, Daylen."

With his hard shaft filling her, deliciously stretching her, Daylen started to move. Jager reached up to cup the back of her head as he brought her mouth down to his. His tongue moved in and out of her mouth in time with the motion of their bodies. Able to control their lovemaking, Daylen alternated between slow and fast strokes. She arched her back as his cock slid in and out of her pussy, which caused Jager's hardness to rub in just the right spot to have her moaning.

Sinking down on his shaft, Jager lifted his hips to meet each of her strokes. His cock grew even harder inside her as she clamped her inner muscles around him. Faster she rode him, her body coiling tighter. Her orgasm edged ever closer. On the verge of coming, Daylen bent her head and dragged her tongue across the bite mark she'd made on Jager's neck the night before. Jager stiffened, then bucked hard beneath her, lifting her

knees off the floor.

“You like when I bite you there?” she asked softly.

“Call it a male werewolf’s G spot,” Jager said in a half growl. “You bite me there, and I’ll come.”

Already starting to feel the first flutter of her climax, Daylen bit down on Jager’s neck where it met his shoulder as her inner muscles rhythmically clamped down around his cock. Jager wrapped his arms around her waist and held her tightly to him as he started to come. His loud groans mingled with Daylen’s whimpered moans.

Turning her head to the side, Daylen rested her cheek on Jager’s shoulder and collapsed against his chest. Panting for breath, all she could do was put her arms around his waist and hold on. His still erect cock kept their bodies joined together.

Once she could breathe evenly again, she lifted her head to gaze into Jager’s light blue eyes. “If this will always be the end result, I’ll most definitely have to get the drop on you more often.”

Jager got her to sit up. He cupped the side of her face and brushed his thumb across her cheek. “Are you really okay with this, Daylen? With us?”

Each time they made love, she felt their mating bond grow stronger. With him buried deep inside her while she looked into his gorgeous face, she couldn’t picture herself being with another man. Jager and she just seemed to click. Daylen didn’t doubt they would butt heads over things now and then, but it was inevitable considering they both had strong personalities. Could she see herself uttering the words to him that she’d never said to any man before? Eventually, but it was just too soon.

“Yes. I’ve come to care a great deal about you. I’m not ready to say anything more than that, but that doesn’t mean I’m not committed to making this work. We have a few issues that need to be discussed though.”

A sexy grin spread across Jager’s face. “I have deeper feelings than caring a great deal for you, but I can wait until you’re ready. You’re mine now. That’s all that matters. Now what are these issues you want to discuss with me?”

Daylen ran a caressing hand along the thick slab of muscles on his chest. “We have to talk about how our mating is going to affect me doing my job, and then there is the whole topic of Roxie turning me into a werewolf.”

“Before we touch on either of those subjects, I think we’ll be more comfortable if we move to the bed.”

In a show of just how strong he was, Jager managed to get off the floor with her still held in his arms and their bodies joined. He then carried her to the unmade bed and placed her on the center of it on her back as he followed her down. His movements had his erection moving inside her pussy, which caused Daylen to gasp with pleasure.

Resting his weight above her, he said, “There. Much better. Let’s start with the easy one—your job as a police officer. You’ll quit. You don’t need to work. I have plenty of money for the both of us. As you said so yourself, you’re now a Protector. It’s basically the same kind of job except on a smaller scale. Besides, the long hours we would have to be separated while you did your shift wouldn’t work out. We’d never make it.” Jager slowly moved his cock in and out of her in a lazy glide.

Daylen took her bottom lip between her teeth and moaned. “All right. I can do that.” Another moan pushed out of her when he continued to slowly thrust between her legs. “That feels good. How am I supposed to be able to concentrate while you do that?”

He chuckled. "I think you'll manage. Now what about you being turned?"

She found she had to think a lot longer about that one. With Jager moving inside her, Daylen was having a hard time focusing on anything but the pleasure that started to build inside her once again. "Ah...ah, I think I need to know exactly what it means to be a werewolf before I can make that decision. You're over a thousand years old and practically immortal. Does that mean werewolves can't die?"

Jager reached down and hooked one of her legs over his arm as he pumped his hips a little faster. "We can die. We're just a lot harder to kill, and we're very long-lived. The oldest our kind lives to be is around three thousand years. So, if you let Roxie turn you, we'll have more than a few centuries to be together instead of a single mortal lifetime." His eyes started to glow as he gazed down into her eyes. "And, Daylen, I want to have every day of those centuries. I know the choice is yours, and you would have to eventually give up your family and friends, but I don't want to lose you before I have to."

Looking up at Jager, seeing what she could only describe as love shining in his eyes, Daylen knew she would take that final step to make them mates in every way. No man had ever looked at her the way Jager was now. "I really don't have any family. My mom died when I was ten, and my dad passed away three years ago. The only family I have is my dad's brother, his wife and my cousins. We have never been close, even when my dad was still alive. So they won't miss me. The only close friend I have is Nick. He's a cop at my precinct. It'll be hard leaving him, but I'll have a few years before I have to worry about him noticing I'm not aging."

"Is Nick the cop you were talking to in the alley the other day?"

Daylen smiled. "You *were* watching us?"

"Of course. He's also lucky he never touched you or I would have had to take it out on his hide."

She reached up and tucked Jager's long hair behind his ears. "Nick is very happily married, and his wife is very pregnant with their first child. So he's no threat."

Jager bent his head and kissed her long and hard. When he pulled away, he asked, "So we've worked out the first topic of discussion, what about the second? From what you said about your family and friends, do I take it that you're willing to let Roxie turn you?"

"More than willing," she said with meaning in her voice. "We're mates. We should be mates in every sense of the word."

With a low growl, Jager kissed her once again as he moved more forcefully inside her pussy. Daylen moaned into his mouth and held onto his biceps as he brought her arousal to a fevered pitch. When she came, Jager came with her. Daylen put her arms around her mate and held him tight when he collapsed on top of her.

Chapter Eleven

Jager and Daylen had just gotten out of the shower in the en suite when someone knocked on his bedroom door. Quickly wrapping a towel around his waist, Jager went to answer it while Daylen stayed in the bathroom.

He cracked open the door to find Dirk on the other side with his cell phone held against his chest. "Daylen's detective friend is on my cell. I figured she'd want to talk to him."

At the sound of footsteps coming up behind him, Jager looked over his shoulder and saw Daylen with a towel wrapped around her body walking toward him. When she reached his side, she said to Dirk, "I'll talk to Ted."

Dirk passed Daylen his cell phone. Both Jager and Dirk quietly waited as she talked to the man on the other end. After a few minutes, she snapped the cell phone closed and handed it back to Dirk.

"Ted came through again," she told them with a smile.

Jager nodded and then turned to Dirk. "Tell the others that Daylen and I will be down in a few minutes."

Dirk nodded then left to head downstairs.

Jager closed the bedroom door and turned to watch Daylen getting dressed. His gaze ran lovingly over her body. She had curves in all the right places and had enough muscle on her that he didn't have to worry that she would break in his arms. Even though Daylen wasn't ready to tell him she loved him, he already loved her. If he hadn't have been able to fall in love with her practically at first sight, his mating urge never would have kicked in to tell him she was his.

Realizing Daylen had finished dressing and he still only wore a damp towel around his hips, Jager dropped it to the floor and scooped up his jeans. He felt Daylen's gaze following his movements as he pulled them up his legs and fastened them at his waist. He moved over to his dresser and took out a clean dark blue t-shirt. Yanking it on over his head, he turned to face Daylen. Her gaze most definitely had a heated look to it that made Jager wish they didn't have to go downstairs.

As if Daylen had read his mind, she said, "Don't even suggest it. I have to tell the others what Ted told me. And besides, you just had me a minute ago in the shower."

He grinned. "You enjoyed it though."

She shook her head and smiled. "Yes, but you're going to have to feed me first before we have another marathon of sex. If I don't get some food into me soon, I'll start wasting away."

Jager crossed over to her and put his hands on the sides of her waist. He then brushed a gentle kiss across her lips. "We can't have that. After we've had our meeting with the others, we can go to the kitchen and get something to eat."

They left his bedroom hand in hand and headed downstairs. They found the others once again congregated in the living room. Much to Jager's surprise, he saw that both Beowulf and Roxie were still there.

Guiding Daylen over to the couch to where Beowulf and Roxie sat, he got Daylen to sit next to the other woman while he lowered himself onto the arm. He said to the other

couple, "I thought the two of you would have left by now."

"We thought it best to stay to hear what that police detective Daylen knows could come up with," Beowulf replied. "Plus if we'd left, Saskia would have sent a few of your brothers along to watch over Roxie. We didn't think it would be fair."

"Enough chitchat over there," Leif said from one of the armchairs. "What did your buddy have to say, Daylen?"

"Well, first off," she said, "Ted couldn't find anything on a Miles Jensen with the description I'd given him. No driver's license, no social security number, and no properties under that name either."

Saskia nodded and said, "Miles must be using an alias. He isn't stupid. He would know if he used his real name we'd have found him by now."

"Ted did manage to find out who the owner is listed for the warehouse. It's owned by a company named Denco Ltd. Ted also figures it has to be a dummy corporation, because he couldn't find anything else out about it. But, after he did a little more digging, he found an old factory that is no longer in use was recently purchased by a company named Wolfen Inc., which also happens to be a subsidiary of Denco Ltd."

Kye snorted. "Miles couldn't come up with better names than that? We'd never be able to guess that a werewolf owned those properties with names like those," he said sarcastically.

Saskia spoke up before anyone else could add anything more. "What's the address of the factory, Daylen? Some of us will go check it out while the others stay behind and watch over Roxie. Jager, since you and Daylen are newly mated and shouldn't be separated just yet, I suggest the two of you stay behind." When Daylen opened her mouth, Saskia said, "I know you're one of us now, Daylen, but you still have much to learn about werewolf kind." She then smiled. "Plus newly mated couples tend to be a little distracted. You and Jager will have more pleasurable pursuits on your minds."

Jager couldn't argue with that, and he guessed neither could Daylen when she closed her mouth and blushed slightly. He put an arm around her shoulders and pulled her over so she leaned against his side while Saskia split up the other Protectors.

In the end, she decided Roan and Ansley would stay behind with Jager and Daylen. Saskia, Eli, Skylar, Kye, Leif and Dirk would be the ones to go scout out the factory. Jager was a little disappointed that he would miss out on the action, but he knew Daylen wasn't ready to face a pack of lone wolves if the factory ended up panning out. And he wanted her turned before she had to confront any of Miles' men. As a mortal, she was just too vulnerable.

* * * *

After the others had left to check out the factory, Jager and Daylen raided the fridge. Since it was already well past noon, Jager made her a thick sandwich that he layered with cold cuts, cheese and lettuce. Having eaten nothing since dinner the night before, Daylen ate with gusto. Jager must have been just as hungry because his practically disappeared in two large bites.

Their empty bellies now taken care of, Jager and she joined the other two couples. The men eventually got on the topic of weightlifting and ended up heading down to the basement to check out the weights down there while the women stayed in the living room.

Roxie smiled at Daylen and said, "It would seem you've managed to tame the brash warrior. Both times I've seen Jager today he didn't have his sword strapped to his waist like it was one of his vital organs."

"Does he really carry it around that much?" Daylen asked.

Ansley answered her. "Afraid so. And Roxie is forever trying to take Jager's sword away from him."

Roxie snorted. "Not that I get it away from him for very long. He always manages to swipe it back when I'm not looking." She then grew serious. "So have you really adjusted to the fact that you're mated to a werewolf, Daylen?"

She nodded. "Yes. I'm a bit surprised by how easily I've adjusted to the idea. If you would have asked me last week if I believed werewolves existed, and that I would be a mate to one, I probably would have suggested I take you to nearest shrink. It has all happened so fast."

"That's the mating urge for you," Roxie said. "It makes you feel like you're on a runaway train. It's even worse for the males. They can't focus on anything else but the woman who is meant for them."

Daylen had noticed how more controlled Jager seemed now that their mating bond was in place. "About this not wanting to be separated, is it really that bad?"

"Yes, it is," Roxie said. "And I'm speaking from experience. Ansley has gone through it as well."

The other woman shuddered. "You feel as if you've lost your mind. All I could think about was that something had happened to Roan, and that I had to get back to him no matter the cost." Ansley then smiled. "The only good side about the separation is the explosive sex that happens after you get back together. I only suggest that if you ever get separated from Jager for a long time, make sure you get away from other people as fast as you can or you'll give them an eyeful."

"I'll keep that in mind," Daylen said. "Maybe it won't affect me that badly. I've always been a bit of a loner. I'm sure I'll be able to handle it."

Roxie gave her a look that said she didn't think so. "If you're that sure of yourself, why don't you test your theory? Jager obviously didn't let you bring a change of clothes when he brought you here handcuffed last night. Why don't you go back to your place and grab some clothes and then come back? I bet even that short amount of time will get to you."

"All right, but I don't have my car here. How am I supposed to get back to my place?"

"Take Jager's car. I noticed it wasn't parked in the garage when Beowulf and I arrived. And if you are going to do this, you should probably slip away before Jager realizes what you're up to. He'll try to stop you if he finds out."

Daylen stood. "You're on."

She quickly left the living room and headed up to Jager's bedroom. The keys to the Camaro and her house keys were sitting on top of his dresser. Snagging both sets, she hurried back downstairs and slipped out of the mansion. When she drove the Camaro down the long drive and no hue and cry was raised, she figured she'd made a clean getaway.

* * * *

By the time Daylen arrived at her house, she'd already started to feel a little out of sorts, as if everything wasn't quite right. It was less than an hour since she'd left the mansion in Marin County and already she missed not being with Jager. If this was only the start of how it felt when she was away from him, no wonder Roxie didn't believe her when she'd said she may not be as affected. Daylen could only think about getting back to Jager.

Once she was inside the house, she almost ran into her bedroom. Daylen quickly stripped off the clothes she wore and put on fresh ones. She then made short work of stuffing another change of clothes into an athletic bag.

Daylen was so distracted with thoughts of returning to Jager she almost missed the fact that a man stood blocking her way to the front door. Moving faster than a mortal could, he had her by the throat and gasping for air in a matter of seconds. As Daylen frantically tried to pry his hand off her, she realized this was the same lone wolf Jager had been fighting in the alley the first night she'd seen him.

The lone wolf eased his hold only enough so she could drag in air to fill her lungs. "You recognize me, don't you, little cop? I can also smell Jager's scent all over you. He's claimed you as his mate. I'm surprised he let you out by yourself, but it does make this a whole lot nicer. You're his Achilles heel now." He started to drag her toward the front door. "It's time for you to meet my boss."

Daylen dropped the athletic bag she'd been carrying and tried to punch out at him, but all that did was to have him throw her against the wall hard enough so her head cracked against it. With black spots flickering before her eyes, the lone wolf easily flipped her onto her stomach and tied her hands behind her back with a length of rope he'd pulled out of his jacket pocket. He then threw her over his shoulder and walked out of the house.

Chapter Twelve

Jager put down the dumbbell he had been using to show Beowulf one of the exercises he did. Something had suddenly started to feel not right. He frowned as he tried to figure out what the hell was bothering him.

"What's the matter?" Roan asked him. "You look strange."

"I don't know. If I didn't already know Daylen was upstairs with Roxie and Ansley, I would think she wasn't in the mansion. I feel as if I really need to be with her to make sure she's okay. I've never heard of the separation bothering mates when they are in the same place but not in the same room. We haven't been down here that long."

"It shouldn't be affecting you like that," Beowulf said. He then looked up at the basement's ceiling. "Maybe you should go and check on Daylen."

As Jager rushed up the basement stairs, he heard Roan and Beowulf following behind him. When he reached the living room and only saw Roxie and Ansley there, he asked, "Where's Daylen?"

Roxie answered. "She went to her place."

Jager took a deep breath to stop himself from bellowing at Roxie. "And why did she go there alone?"

"She didn't want to believe how badly she would feel if the two of you were separated, so I bet her she couldn't go to her place for a change of clothes and come back here without feeling as if she'd gone crazy. And she took your car, by the way."

Jager wanted nothing more than to take Roxie by the shoulders and give her a good shake, but with Beowulf standing beside him, Jager didn't think he would let him manhandle his pregnant mate like that. Instead, he took another deep breath and squeezed his hands into fists at his side. "I'm going to need someone to drive me to Daylen's house. Now."

"Since Roxie in a way caused this," Beowulf gave his mate a stern look, "we'll drive you."

Roan quickly said, "And Ansley and I will follow you guys in my car. Saskia will have my head if I don't go with you."

To Jager, it seemed to take a lot more time than was necessary for them to get on the road. But soon Beowulf's Mercedes Benz was on the highway with Roan's Lexus following closely behind. Once they crossed the Golden Gate Bridge, Jager gave Beowulf Daylen's street address. When they pulled onto her street and neared her bungalow, he could see his Camaro parked in the driveway. It made some of the anxiety he was feeling go away, knowing Daylen was still there. As soon as Beowulf stopped the car, Jager jumped out of the back and ran up to the front door. He paused when he saw that it stood slightly ajar.

Pushing open the door, he called, "Daylen?" His gaze landed on the athletic bag that sat in the middle of the entrance hallway. "Daylen? Where are you?"

When she didn't answer, Jager quickly did a tour of the house. Daylen wasn't anywhere to be found. His gut was telling him something was very wrong. Returning to the front hall, he saw Beowulf, Roxie, Roan and Ansley had come into the house. "She's not here," he said when he met their gazes. He took a deep breath. A low growl left his

throat. "I smell the scent of another werewolf."

Roan nodded. "I smell it too. I don't recognize it."

"I do," Jager said through gritted teeth. "It's the scent of a lone wolf. The one I fought in the alley. Miles' man."

Jager would have barged out of the house and gone looking for Daylen if Roan hadn't grabbed his arm to stop him. "Hold up. You won't be able to find him on your own, Jager. He more than likely has a car, which means there won't be a scent trail to follow. If he is Miles' man, he'll probably take Daylen to Miles. There's a good chance the factory Saskia and the others went to check out is his headquarters. They have to be there already. I'll call Saskia and let her know what's going on. They'll be able to get Daylen back."

Feeling completely helpless, Jager nodded. As he watched Roan take out his cell phone and call their sister, he felt as if he wanted to kill someone. Without thinking about it, he reached for his sword. When his hand only encountered the material of his jeans, Jager realized, for the first time in his adult life, he'd left his home without taking his sword with him.

* * * *

Unable to really move since her captor had used another length of rope he had in his car to tie her ankles together, Daylen could only sit in the front seat and watch the streets go by. When busy downtown gave way to industrial buildings, she knew Ted had been right about the factory. It had to be Miles' new headquarters. That realization also gave her some hope. Saskia and the others who had gone along with her to investigate the factory should be there. Somehow Daylen had to make sure they saw her so they could get her away from the lone wolf.

Worried what Miles would do to her if his man managed to deliver her to him, Daylen also had to deal with the wild emotions going through her the longer she was away from Jager. Jager had been right. There was no way in hell she would be able to keep working as a police officer. A ten hour shift away from him would kill her. She'd been a fool to think she could handle this better than Roxie and Ansley had.

When the lone wolf drove onto the street where the factory was located, and where Saskia and the others were investigating, he slowed as he drove by a black Cadillac Escalade parked at the side of the road about a half block away from the building. He continued on and drove his car around to the back of the factory. After parking the car, he walked around to the passenger side and hefted Daylen over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes.

He entered the building and took her to the main area of the factory. Outlines of the machinery that had been used at one time still marked the grimy cement floor. Unable to see what was in front of her, Daylen heard the lone wolf talk to someone who was out of her range of sight.

"Miles, I brought you a present. I figured you'd want her sooner rather than later." He then put Daylen down on her feet and jerked her around to face Miles.

She found the man standing in front of her to be exactly as Saskia had described her brother. He had almost white blond hair that brushed the tops of his shoulders. His eyes, the same distinctive violet color as his sister's, stared at the lone wolf with fury. Miles would be considered extremely good-looking, but the cruelty that lurked in his eyes took

away from some of his looks.

Miles backhanded the lone wolf. "You idiot. I never gave you permission to abduct Jager's mate. I wasn't ready to play that card yet. Now you've lost us the upper hand. With my bitch of a sister and her dumbass Protectors lurking around here, you have put me in a situation I had no wish to be in." When the lone wolf opened his mouth to speak, Miles backhanded him again. The lone wolf wiped a trickle of blood from the corner of his mouth. "Get out of here before I do more than bloody your mouth."

Once the lone wolf walked away, Miles centered his attention on Daylen. She lifted her chin and stared back. "Just let me go. No one has gotten hurt, and no damage has been done yet."

Miles chuckled. "You are a tough one." He pulled a knife out of the top of one of the boots he wore and cut the rope around Daylen's ankles. After he put the knife away and straightened, he roughly grabbed her by the arm and pulled her closer as he said, "Your presence does throw a wrench in the works, but I can use you to keep the Protectors at bay."

He jerked her arm to get her moving and took her outside to the front of the building. Miles then called out, "You all might as well come out of hiding. I know you're there. Plus I have something that belongs to you."

One by one, Saskia and the men with her appeared from different spots on the factory's property. They all moved to stand at a cautious distance from Miles and Daylen. Saskia took a step closer before she spoke. "Let her go, Miles. Your beef isn't with Daylen. Just let her go and you can walk away."

Miles shook his head. "As if there was ever a chance of you capturing me. You see, sister, you aren't the only one who inherited some of our grandmother's gift of sight. Mine may not be as strong as yours, but twice now, it has allowed me to see when you would be coming. The factory is useless to me now, and you'll find nothing inside it. I'll move on, and our little cat and mouse game will continue."

With a hard shove that sent Daylen sprawling painfully on the ground, Miles turned and took off at a run. Saskia rushed over to her and helped her to stand. When Kye would have gone after Miles, Saskia said, "Let him go, Kye. We have Daylen back." She then turned to Skylar. "Call Jager and tell him Daylen is safe, and that we'll get her back to him as soon as we possibly can." She then used a knife she carried on her to cut the ropes around Daylen's wrists. "Sorry you had to be introduced to Miles that way. He didn't hurt you, did he?"

Daylen shook her head. "No. The lone wolf had only just brought me here. Miles was more than a little pissed to see me. I guess I didn't work into his plans for the day."

"Be grateful for that. Come on. Let's get you back to Jager. Both of you must be feeling the separation."

Now that she was no longer a captive the need to be with Jager pressed down on Daylen harder. It almost felt as if her very soul was crying out for him. As she followed Saskia and the men to the Escalade that she'd seen parked on the street, Daylen knew her feelings for her mate were stronger than she had wanted to admit before. The time away from him showed her that even though their relationship had taken off at lightning speed, she really did love Jager. Why else would her soul yearn to be with him so strongly?

Once they had all crammed into the Escalade, Skylar, who was driving the SUV, wasted no time getting Daylen back to her bungalow. As they raced down the streets, she

was surprised no other police officers pulled them over for speeding. She knew if she had been on patrol, Skylar would have gotten a ticket by now. But, in her present condition, Daylen couldn't care less. She just needed to get back to Jager.

When the Escalade pulled over in front of her house, Daylen jumped out and ran up to the front door. She burst into the bungalow and threw herself into Jager's open arms when he met her in the front hall.

Heedless of the others who had been with Jager, and who quickly made their way out the front door, Daylen met Jager's lips halfway when he claimed her mouth in a heated kiss. She moaned as she clutched the front of Jager's shirt and pushed him up against the wall. The anxiety and the sense that something had happened to Jager melted away now that she could touch him. They were replaced with the need to have his cock buried deep inside her, joining them in the most intimate of ways.

Breaking contact with Jager's lips, Daylen tugged at his jeans. Her breath came in labored pants as she opened the front of them and took his hard cock in her hand. "I need to have you inside me. Right now."

Jager groaned and thumbed her nipple through her shirt. "I need you just as badly. It's the mating bond. The separation."

Daylen pumped her hand a few times on his shaft then released it so she could tug Jager's jeans down past his hips. "I promise never to leave like that again. I was an idiot to think I would be strong enough to take it. Now make love to me."

Switching their positions, Jager quickly undid her jeans and shucked them down her legs. Once Daylen kicked them the rest of the way off, he lifted her, pressed her back against the wall and sheathed his cock inside her pussy with one stroke. Daylen put her legs around his waist and wrapped her arms around Jager's neck. He thrust his hips into her, causing her body to coil ever tighter. The head of his cock butted up against her womb with each stroke in. Daylen let out a whimpered moan as her climax thundered to the surface. With one final stroke, Jager buried his face into the crook of her neck and groaned loudly as he came with her.

Still feeling little aftershocks deep inside her pussy, Daylen pulled the hair elastic from Jager's hair and tossed it away. She then ran her hands through the long silky length of his hair.

Jager lifted his head and chuckled. "If you keep doing that, I'm going to run out of hair elastics."

Daylen cupped his chiseled face in her hands. "I like your hair better when it isn't pulled back. That way I can run my hands through it."

"If you like it that much, I can keep it down."

She then grew serious. Locking her gaze to his, she said, "I love you, Jager. I don't want to ever lose you. I'll get Roxie to turn me as soon as she can."

Jager kissed her tenderly. "I love you as well, Daylen. I think I fell for you the first time you brought me down in that alley. Knowing my mate can stand up to me turns me on like nothing else." He then gave her a sexy grin. "I think we'll hold off on getting Roxie to turn you, at least for today. You're going to be a little too busy to have her use the spell on you. We have some lost time to make up, and I intend to spend it in bed with my mate."

Daylen smiled and gave his still hard cock a squeeze with her inner muscles. "That can easily be arranged. I don't think I could come up with a better way to spend a Sunday

than making love to the man I love.”

With his strong arms supporting her, Jager pulled away from the wall and started walking toward the bedroom. Daylen kissed the side of his neck. When she reached where Jager’s shoulder and neck met, she bit him. The hall floor suddenly rose up to meet her and soon Daylen didn’t care that they never made it to the bed.

The End

About the Author:

Marisa Chenery was always a lover of books, but after reading her first historical romance novel she found herself hooked. Having inherited a love for the written word, she soon started writing her own novels.

After trying her hand at writing historicals, she now also writes paranormals.

Marisa lives in Ontario, Canada, with her husband and four children. Check out Marisa's website at www.marisachenery.com. She would love to hear from you, so drop her an email while you're there.

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