

Crymsyn Hart

Aspen Mountain Press

Storm Riders

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Chapter One

"Yo, George, you ready to do this?"

Georgiana "George" Morlan stuck her tongue out at her fired up assistant, Jeremy. In the predawn hours, the sky overhead was gray, bordering on black. Lightning bounced inside the clouds while a light mist blanketed the road. She gripped her cup of coffee blowing the steam away. Sleep still encrusted her eyes, but if this trip went the way she hoped, then the early mornings, late nights, and hardly any sleep would pay off. They were getting close to a breakthrough on understanding what occurred inside the clouds right before a tornado formed. What it really was that hatched a twister.

"You ready to go?" Jeremy popped out from behind the van.

Her coffee flew from her hands and down the front of her shirt. The liquid soaked through the fabric and onto her skin, scalding her. "Ouch! Shit. Jeremy, what did I tell you about surprising me?" She snapped and pulled her shirt away from her body. Now the liquid was making her cold. She grabbed a few cast off napkins from last night's dinner and began dabbing at the coffee. Seeing it wasn't doing any good, she yanked her shirt off and wiped down her wet stomach. Her assistant whistled, but she ignored him. After she cleaned herself the best she could, she dug into her duffel bag and pulled out a shirt she'd worn the day before. She sniffed it and decided it didn't smell too dirty.

"Sorry, George. I didn't mean to scare you. I'm just excited. Come on. You can't tell me that you're not."

She rolled her eyes and fished her cup out from underneath the van. Grit and dirt clung to the outside of the cup. Mud had mixed with the coffee creating an even thicker sludge than what she was drinking. She threw the remaining liquid out and then put the cup into a trash bag. Lightning illuminated the storm front. The hairs on her arms were standing up. The drop in the barometric pressure weighed on her bones. This was going to be a whopper of a storm "Yes. I'm excited too. But can you bottle some of the enthusiasm until we're done? We might not get any activity at all. This whole business is hit or miss and mostly it's miss. I've been chasing tornados for a long time now."

George squelched the memory which threatened to dampen her spirits. She didn't need to be remembering her childhood at this moment. It was bad enough she fought her deep seated fear every time she was out in the field confronting a funnel cloud head on. Nevertheless, the drive to find a warning system was the only thing which kept her going.

"So you ready to go? The wind's kicking up." She studied the Cumulonimbus Clouds noticing the change in their formation. They were bulkier and closer together. Her inner sense said they'd have activity today. The atmosphere pressed heavily upon her shoulders. Lightning flashed again and for an instant, she swore she saw the shadow of a man on horseback. Shaking her head, she secured the back of the van, and hopped into the driver's seat. Jeremy climbed in next to her and checked the radar on his laptop.

"A severe storm warning's been issued for the area. According to the Doppler there's some rotation to the clouds."

George gunned the engine and peered through the windshield. The gray clouds were taking on a purple hue. *It won't be long now*. Her inner sense said that a twister was going to touch down somewhere close by. Ever since she was little, she'd always known when a big boomer was approaching. Her father used to compare her to his old bloodhound, Rosie, he'd had when he was growing up who also foretold squalls. When George was an infant and a thunderstorm rolled in, she would start bawling about half an hour before the rain began pelting down. Her father called her his little weather

witch. She considered it a small burden knowing when the storm would hit because her whole body would get a pins and needles feeling the way it was now. Adrenaline pumped through her until she yearned to chase after the looming storms. When she got older, she could predict if a funnel cloud would appear well before the sirens ever went off. This one is going to be a whopper. They had to get out in front of it if they wanted to make any headway and get the readings she was hoping for. Thunder rumbled all around them. Strong wind gusts shook the van. George put the van into gear and focused on the country road ahead of them. A crumpled map sat on the floor between her and Jeremy. It had seen better days, but it always got her where she was going. Her job at the university, besides teaching meteorology classes and chasing storms, was to get a better understanding of why animals and a few people were able to foretell storms. That was the hard part. No one knew why people could predict storms and science hadn't specifically recognized human barometers. It was a never-ending battle to prove why she was influenced and others weren't. Today they were out gathering general readings and had a weather balloon they had rigged with temperature gauges to document the electricity in the air and see if the balloon was picked up by the tornado. Her instincts said they had about ten minutes before the twister formed and it was heading to the east.

"Jeremy, get the balloon ready and hold on." She hit the gas.

Out of the corner of her eye, she saw her assistant clutch the side of the door. His face turned green from her increased speed. *He's the one who wanted to chase storms with me*. This was his second ride along and she wasn't sure if he'd come back for a third.

"You keeping your breakfast down?" she laughed. Now that she was on the job, her brain was functioning. Her body was flooded with the rush of fear and excitement she always got when pursuing tornados. Her hair stood up on end and a tingle crept along the back of her neck. The twister was coming soon. She gazed at the clouds and saw their revolution was faster. The bottom of a funnel appeared. Jeremy scrambled in the back trying to get the balloon ready.

"Hold on!" George cut a quick right following her instincts.

Jeremy muttered something and some of their equipment was bounced around in the back of the van. The wind kicked up sending cornhusks slamming into the windshield. She jerked the steering wheel, hit the brakes, and found that she was in the middle of a cornfield. The dried up stalks clattered around them. Clouds of dirt and pebbles pelted the side of the van. Rain began dropping from the heavens and pounding the vehicle using it as a war drum. Sometimes it was a battle facing the storms, but she never let them beat her down.

"You ready?" Jeremy asked her. She heard the anticipation in his voice. The adrenaline was pumping through his veins too. They made a good team.

Once she was out of the car, she ran around to let Jeremy out of the back. He jumped out with the weather balloon. The shiny metallic surface was made of a light material that would be picked up immediately, but they had to release it at just the right moment. Once it was deployed it would start transmitting information back to her laptop. Inevitably, the sheer force of the tornado would tear it apart, but all that mattered was the data. That would make the day a success.

"Yeah. I'm ready," she yelled. The deafening wind made it almost impossible for her to hear him. She gave him a thumbs up. Her brown hair kept blowing in her face and escaping her ponytail. The rain drenched them. Staring at the horizon, a funnel stretched downward touching the land. The sheer force of the natural wonder could carve a path in the earth marring the land. George closed her eyes and focused on the tempest. She didn't know how to explain it, but she saw its movement in her mind. Sometimes if she concentrated hard enough she got lost in the void, in that perfect moment inside the eye where all was quiet and still. That was the place she went to, monitoring the storm until she gave the order to let the balloon go. Rocks and sand hit her face, but she ignored them. The wind almost blew her over, but she stayed anchored to her spot. The rain had her cold and soaked, but she didn't care. It's almost time. The cyclone curled to the right. She went with it. It would pass by them in a matter of minutes. Even being on the fringe was dangerous. They had to release the balloon and haul ass to clear it.

"George, come on. It's getting closer."

She vaguely heard the trepidation in Jeremy's voice. She was lost in her own world, one with the storm. *It's so beautiful. So quiet. Just like that night.* A little voice inside shouted at her to get out before the twister barreled them over leaving nothing behind in its wake.

A hand clamped down on her arm breaking her reverie. "Are we doing this or not?"

Her eyes snapped open. The world came back into focus. Jeremy shook his head, but she saw the worry in his eyes. George figured that her past assistants had warned him about her strange *fits*. "Yes. Sorry."

She took the other side of the balloon and stretched it out. The wind was so powerful now they could barely hold onto it. Lightning struck a nearby tractor. She smelled the ozone and the burnt rubber from the electrified tractor tires. Studying the clouds, she thought she saw the image of a man on horseback riding along the top of the twister. I'm imagining things. I'm just seeing him because of what happened when I was little.

A jolt spiked down her spine. It was time. She tore her gaze from the clouds and then met Jeremy's dark blue eyes. She nodded. They lifted the balloon and released it. It hovered for a moment until the wind caught it. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw the funnel cloud racing toward them.

"Come on!" The wind ripped the words from her lips. Jeremy and she raced toward the still running van. She hopped in, kicked it into gear, and punched the gas all before her assistant had time to close the door. She smiled. The sheer rush sped up her heart and she could barely draw in a breath as they hightailed it out of the cornfield.

After a few minutes of driving and the van rocking from the strength of the wind, she felt a change in the air. The storm was turning in their direction. The smile fell from her lips.

"Jeremy, buckle up."

Her assistant was about to say something, but his eyes grew wide. His face paled. Her grip on the steering wheel tightened. She floored the gas pedal and the van jumped

forward. The wind made it almost impossible for her to control the vehicle. Stalks of corn and dirt, even a passing chicken, made it hard for her to see. She didn't care about the equipment sliding around in the back of her van. Inside her, the little girl terrified of the storms was screaming. The hot breath of the tornado was blasting against her neck.

"Are we going to make it?" Jeremy asked.

His voice was laced with fear and he clutched the laptop to him like a life vest. She chuckled and wondered if he would go out with her again. They were almost at the end of the cornfield and about to pull out onto another road, when a man on a gray horse galloped out in front of them and stopped. She stepped on the brakes. The van swerved and fishtailed until they came to a stop parallel to the horse. George gazed out the window and into the horse's amber eye. Its rider had on dirty black jeans and black boots with a silver buckle in the shape of a tornado. When she glanced out of the other window, she saw the funnel cloud careening toward them.

"We have to get out of here." Jeremy clasped the door handle trying to get out, but the horse blocked his path.

"There's no time," she said feeling his panic. The cloud would be on them in minutes and they didn't have anywhere to go. The horse reared and then leapt over the van. She didn't get much of a look at the man, but saw that he wore a black cowboy hat and a long duster. For some odd reason, his jacket wasn't billowing in the gale. She watched in fascination as the rider went full gallop at the storm.

"What the hell is he doing? That's suicide!" Jeremy screamed. He tried to scramble over the seat, but she grabbed his hand and squeezed not taking her eyes from the mysterious rider.

"There's nothing we can do. It's his funeral." The cowboy stopped right in front of the funnel cloud, almost challenging it. The man turned, gave her a wry smile, and then winked. Her jaw dropped. This isn't happening. He should be swept up by the storm. He turned back around, reared his horse and held up his hand at the exact moment the twister should have swallowed him whole. Instead, the funnel stalled, and then died.

There's no explanation for that. It doesn't work that way. The wind dissipated and the sky cleared. She slipped outside the van and headed toward the mysterious rider, but he had vanished with the tornado.

"George, look!"

She glanced up in the direction of Jeremy's finger. A flash of silver fluttered down toward them. It was their weather balloon and miraculously it was intact. She walked over to it following the road and sure enough, there were hoof prints in the dirt.

"What the hell is going on?" She ran her fingers over the impressions. "Both of them should've been killed."

Jeremy came running up to her. "I got the balloon."

"Uh-great."

"Great. That's all you can say after what just happened. Woo! Did you see that guy? Where the hell did he go?"

She stood up and dusted herself off. "I don't know where he went, but let's get the hell out of here. We got what we came for. Let's go back and analyze the data. Hopefully it's what we need."

Jeremy hugged the balloon. "Don't you want to know what happened to him?"

George stared back up at the clearing sky. Something about the encounter was all too familiar. It struck a chord deep within and tugged on the back of her consciousness. She shook her head. "No. I don't care. Whatever it was. It's over with. So are the storms. There won't be any more today. Come on. Let's get this back to the lab."

Her assistant sighed but didn't argue. They both climbed back into the van and headed back to base. On the drive back, George ran the encounter over and over again in her mind, but couldn't come up with a rational explanation about the rider. Her mind tried to dismiss the event as something from her imagination, but now in the morning light, she knew what she saw was real. Jeremy had seen the horse and black clad cowboy stand before the storm. It had to be. It just had to be.

Chapter Two

"Wyatt, what in the Sam Hell was that?" Landon asked, closing the paddock gate. Whirlwind snorted, seemingly agreeing with him. The white mare shook her head and peered at him with intelligent amber eyes. He also sensed her displeasure with his partner.

"What?" Wyatt grinned. His dappled gray mount pawed the ground sharing his amusement. He let the horse take the lead, back up, and then leap over the fence and land smoothly next to the mare. He slipped off the horse and patted him appreciating the ride they had. "Good times, buddy. Good times." Tempest nudged his hand before bumping his head against Whirlwind, who snubbed him and turned to head into the pasture. He shook his head. "Guess she's not happy with us either."

"Wyatt!"

He rolled his eyes and faced his fellow Rider. "What, Landon? I didn't do anything." He took off his cowboy hat and ran his fingers through his sandy brown hair. The only thing he hated about his vocation was how full of dirt he got. There was no getting around it though. Wrangling twisters kicked up a lot of dust and debris.

"Don't give me that shit eating grin of yours. How many times have I told you to stop hot doggin' and do your damn job?" Landon crossed his arms over his chest. "I told you to turn the twister to the right and what did you do, you turned it to the left and then got out in front of it."

He shrugged. "I was having a little fun. Besides, the couple in the van didn't seem to mind that I was there for the rescue."

Landon's expression darkened. His green eyes narrowed. The muscles twitched along his jaw. The bottom of his ears and neck turned burgundy. Wyatt rarely ever saw his partner get this pissed. "There was a van! You *let* them see you! What did you do?" He raised his hand and stepped toward Wyatt.

He put up his hands and backed up. "Whoa! Nothing happened. Calm down, bro. I jumped over the van. They were storm chasers or something. Some chick and some young dude. They were doing the normal thing hoping to take pictures or something. Whatever those crazies do. Who cares? They'll chalk it up to a hallucination on their brush with death." He began to walk toward the house to get some chow when Landon grabbed his arm.

"It's not *nothing*," he said in a controlled voice. "If you were seen, we have to report it."

"Why report it? He doesn't need to know. No one does. I'm not going to say anything. I know you're not going to say anything. Or are you going to have another repeat of what happened before?"

Landon winced at the comment. He had hit a sore spot even though his partner was disciplined for it twenty-five ago. Wyatt remembered the time Landon had been reprimanded and he didn't want his fellow rider to have to deal with that again.

"No. We don't want that to happen again, but if you see them, then you have to tell me and we'll take care of it. Raul doesn't need to get wind of it. Promise me you'll be more careful." Landon rolled his shoulders, stowing his anger.

Wyatt whistled glad to see his partner calming down. "I'm sorry, man. I'll keep my eyes peeled." He didn't wait for a response and walked toward the house for a shower to wash the grit from his tanned skin. The dirt and grime snuck underneath his shirt and even worked its way between his teeth.

"Back so soon?" Gina asked. He glanced over and saw her pouring over paperwork at the kitchen table. He straightened up and put on a smile. She had no idea

what the riders were. She got paid well not to ask questions no matter how strange it was when her bosses disappeared without a word for days on end at times.

"Yeah. Landon wasn't feeling up for the long ride. Guess he's getting rickety in his old age."

Gina snickered. "Well. I wouldn't say he's old, but he does look damn good for his age. Not that I'm looking, of course, but mmm if I could have me some of him. That ass..." She stopped and blushed. "Sorry, Wyatt. I didn't mean to get all personal commenting on your partner and all, but damn."

He chuckled. If you only knew the truth, you'd be chasing after him. "No worries, G. I'll let you in on a little secret. No matter what Landon tells you, he loves hearing about how good he looks. He's really a Narcissist under that gruff exterior." Wyatt winked at her and then sauntered off into his rooms. It was easier to put up the façade that he and Landon were lovers than explain the truth. She wouldn't believe it anyway. Who would? I didn't when I was first offered the position and that was a long time ago. A very long time ago.

He opened the door to his rooms enjoying the warm earth tones of the walls. A long leather couch was the focal point before a large stone fireplace. The mantle he had carved almost a hundred years ago held mementoes of a bygone era. Slipping off his coat, he hung it on the coat rack near the door and inhaled the heady smell of the sage he'd been burning before he was called away. The remnants of the herb were in a bowl before the hearth. The walls were wood panels and stone. A few plants were here and there, but most of the walls were covered with Native American blankets and rugs he'd collected over the years. He pulled off his black T-shirt and shook it out. Bits of dirt and cornstalks fell from the creases. He stopped before an old-fashioned silver frame with the picture of a woman in it wearing a high collared dress and her hair piled on top of her head. His fingers trailed over the curve of her face following a familiar smudge on the glass. The photograph had been with him ever since he became a Storm Rider. He'd had nothing to live for. Patricia had died of pneumonia after a long winter. Her loss devastated him. He didn't care about life any longer. He frequented saloons and gambled away what little money he had. One night, when he was falling down drunk and half dead from being beaten up, he'd been given a new lease on life. The offer had

given him something to live for, but now little brought him joy. Riding Tempest was one of the delights in his world. In their world, they were given orders to tame storms and direct twisters. When they weren't doing that, they had regular lives, relationships, and whatever else they wanted to do until they were called away.

Tempest and he were joined together on a deeper level than he could fathom. They sensed one another's moods. Along with the horse, he was also granted immortality. Now the enduring years were rubbing on him. "One day, I'll rejoin you," he whispered. In all of his years since losing Patricia, he'd never found another woman who had that same spark about her. The intense feeling that he could lose himself in a woman and be happy. Now the only fun he had out of life was pushing the boundaries the way he had today. Who cares if the storm chasers saw me or not? They'll run back to wherever they came from and forget about me. Even Tempest had egged him on about showing off before them. Then Landon's strained expression ran through his mind. Maybe he's right. Maybe I have to stop. A smile turned up his lips as he stared in the bathroom mirror. "But what's the fun in being good, when being bad is so much better." He might have missed his wife, but there wasn't any point to lingering on it. Time had healed some of his wounds and he enjoyed the company of other women.

Speaking of women, that one who I saw today in the van was pretty sweet. Maybe I can look her up. What was it that the van said? University of Oklahoma I think it was. Wonder how far they drove to get out here? I'll have to look her up. First shower. He winked at his reflection and turned on the faucet. He stripped the rest of the way down, anticipating the blast of hot water on his skin which would massage his muscles. Maybe she has a friend. I can certainly use a night out. He stepped into the steady stream and let the water take away his passing sorrow. He would relax a little and then get gussied up and hit one of his favorite bars.

Chapter Three

Landon headed into the stable to review the schedule for the next few weeks. He saw they were booked solid for riding lessons. He left the everyday planning to Gina and only got involved when he had to. Gina was more or less the cog that kept the ranch rolling and he made sure she was paid well enough for it. Sitting down, he set his hat on the empty chair next to him and skimmed the calendar to see if Gina had left any notes for him. There was one from her requesting a couple of days off. He glanced at the days and saw it was later in the month. Damn it. Right in the middle of tornado season. The few months when he and Wyatt were on call almost every minute of the day. Oh well, we just have to deal with it. She is, after all, only human.

Human. I'm not really sure I remember what that's like these days. Wyatt's more human than I am. That boy just doesn't get it. He could've exposed us by appearing to those storm chasers. They'd better not have taken any photos of him. If Raul finds out about it, Wyatt will be punished and he won't be able to handle it. Hell, I almost didn't handle it.

He heard a nicker next to him. Whirlwind stuck her head in through the open window sensing his mood. She nodded her head and banged the wall. He chuckled and went over to her.

"You're such an attention whore. You know that?"

She was amused. They'd been together for two hundred and fifty years and he'd never broken the rules except once and she'd been there with him. She was one of the things that had gotten him through the months of agony. For six months, he had been

subjected to the tortures of the rider commanders. He'd learned his lesson and would never reveal his true nature to anyone again. The scars on his chest and back were a forever reminder of his insubordination. He knew the consequences when he first made the decision to become a rider. Interfere with the mission and suffer the punishment of the angel Commanders. If he messed up again, he was out of the riders and death would be instantaneous. It was different if he left voluntarily, then he would live out his life. He shivered at the thought of seeing one of the angels again. Raul was bad enough, but the angels were dangerously beautiful and almost impossible to look upon.

"So, lovely lady, you know you're the apple of my eye don't you?" He pulled out a carrot from the refrigerator that he kept in his office and handed it to her. She batted her eyelashes at him. He laughed and rested his head against hers and scratched behind her ear. In his mind, he saw a picture of a little girl seen through the eyes of his steed. The same girl, who was the reason, he had been punished some twenty-five years ago now.

"Yeah. I was thinking about her. Sometimes I wonder if it was the right thing to do. Maybe I should have left her to the storm."

Whirlwind nipped his finger and he sensed her displeasure. She sent him another picture of him holding the girl in his arms, the twister passing over both of them, and saving her from the craziness of the storm. "Ouch! What was that for? I can think whatever I want. And yeah I guess I would've done the same thing over again. I wasn't expecting her to be right there in the path of the twister. It's just... I worry about Wyatt. He doesn't understand what a dangerous path he dances on."

The mare rested her head on his shoulder. Her concern for him and his partner rolled through his mind. There was a questioning in her thoughts. "You worried about Wyatt too?"

He didn't get an answer. "The little girl?"

She snorted.

"What about her?" Landon stared into her dark brown eyes waiting for an answer. He wished they had a better way to communicate, but they had an unusual system that they both hated at times. Other riders could actually hear the thoughts of their steeds.

Wyatt was only able to sense his horse's moods so he was lucky that he could receive the pictures from Whirlwind. He saw the little girl and himself, with his hand covering his eyes, looking off into the distance.

"You want me to search for her?"

She nodded her head in agreement.

"Why would you want that?"

Whirlwind backed away from the window, pranced off into the field, and didn't answer him. He shook his head and watched the mare disappear. A few moments later, a small whirlwind blasted through the window and knocked his hat off the chair. It was the horse being her sassy self. He enjoyed that she had spunk even though she was a mystical animal formed from the elements. She had chosen him when he accepted the position of rider and they fit together perfectly. He wondered what she was up too.

"You day dreamin' again?"

Landon glanced up and saw Gina leaning in the doorway. She'd worked for him for six years now and never complained about the long hours or the strange lifestyle the two men had. She was more concerned about the horses than anything else. She shared part of the house. Over the course of the years, she'd seen a few strange things, but never commented on them.

He smiled. "No. Watching the horses. How's everything going?"

"Did you see my leave request?"

He nodded and stroked his chin feeling the beginnings of a beard. *Maybe I'll let it grow this time*. "I did. You trying to escape this wonderland and go off to some tropical paradise? Or has Simpson finally won you over?"

She gave him a sly smile. "Well, he did up his offer last time I saw him."

He crossed his arms over his chest. "And what did you say? Do I lose you?"

Gina remained silent, forcing him to wait. Then again, they had been playing this little game for years now. Miles Simpson was a rancher a few towns over who continually tried to steal her away.

"Well I told him that once hell froze over then sure, I'd take him up on his offer, but that'd be a very long time. Come on. You know I'd never leave you. My sister's getting married. I'm the Maid of Honor."

"Well that's wonderful. Why didn't you tell me earlier?" Landon asked.

She shrugged. "Didn't think you'd care. I've noticed you've been preoccupied recently. You've been away a lot and lately you've been getting all these creases next to your eyes. It's ahh...something I've noticed over the years. Is everything okay between you and Wyatt?"

He struggled to keep a straight face. Sometimes he wished he'd never let Wyatt talk him into letting Gina think they were together. His right hand was an attractive woman and there was more than once he thought about asking her out, but because he was supposed to be gay, that ruse wouldn't work. So he played along, but he knew she had a crush on him. "I've had a lot on my mind. That's all. Things this time of year make me tense with the weather being so unpredictable and all. Twister season blows in fast. I want to be sure we have all the necessary provisions on hand, in case something happens, so that the horses are safe. Things between Wyatt and me are fine. Thank you for asking."

She ran her hand over a blanket. Her brows furrowed and she chewed on her lip. The Jeep engine gunned to life in the driveway. He glanced out the window and saw his fellow rider dressed to cause trouble. I hope he's not going to get into anything tonight. That's all I need is to bail him out of jail again because he gets into another fight.

"Well, I assume it's okay for me to take the days off?"

Landon focused back on Gina. "Yeah. Please take as long as you like. We can handle things. We did before you came on board."

"Thanks." She left the room, but then popped her head back through the open doorway. "You sure everything's okay with Wyatt? I know it's none of my business, but I've noticed he's been going out a lot. He's not messing around on you is he? I wouldn't want to see you hurt. If you ever need to talk, I'm here. After all these years, I'd hope that you know you can confide in me."

"I do. And I appreciate that. Wyatt does things to his own beat. No matter what I do, I don't control him. I can caution him, but he thinks he's hot shit. He has to find his own way. If that means exploring other avenues then so be it."

"So you're telling me that he's not sure if he's gay and he's out trolling for women?"

He chuckled. "You could say that. He and I have an understanding. Don't worry about it and if you happen to find someone in the house...well just keep an eye out."

"You're the boss. But he shouldn't be treating you that way."

He strolled over and kissed her cheek. "I might be the boss, but I value your opinion." He went past her and headed toward the house. When he got to the driveway, the rubber from where Wyatt had peeled out darkened the asphalt. He sighed and walked into the house looking forward to fixing a good meal and relaxing.

Chapter Four

George squinted at the computer screen. Her eyes hurt from staring at the monitor for so long. All the data they had collected, from the weather, balloon had been stored and logged. She'd been going over some of it, but there were other things that kept distracting her. Jeremy kept nodding off and snoring. She'd poke him and he'd be useful for another five minutes before he was brain dead once again. Finally, she'd had enough and sent him home telling him to come back tomorrow afternoon when he'd had a good night's sleep. Since his departure, she'd lost track of time and now it was dark outside. Shit. Trina's going to be waiting for me. Her and that stupid bar she likes to hang out at. I'm not sure why she likes it. The place is filled with hicks. George had tried to get out of it, but there was no saying no to her best friend once she started using her puppy dog eyes on you.

Checking her watch, she had enough time to get home, shower, and change. Throwing her things into her bag, she raced to her car and began her half an hour drive home from the college. While she did, her mind wandered back to the man on horseback that she'd seen in the field. It's just my imagination. I didn't see anything. I don't need to dredge up the past. There was no man. Just like the shadows I see in the clouds. They're easily explained away. He turned and winked at me though. Jeremy even commented on it. There has to be something to it. He took control of the storm and made it go away so it wouldn't hit the van. No. George, get a hold of yourself. It's bad enough half the teaching staff thinks I'm nuts because I can sense storms and know when they're going to turn. Sometimes I think they want

to put me in their labs and dissect me. I wouldn't be surprised. Bert glances at me like I'm some kind of lab rat. I remember the time he tried to hook electrodes up to me to see if I had different brain waves and then he asked me out for dinner.

She shivered just thinking about her co-worker. While she recalled buried memories, others were pried loose and brought to the surface. Her father's laughing and smiling face. The way he smelled of fresh hay. The sound of his screams interrupting her peaceful place while she watched the twister which was coming toward her. He was running, yelling for her to get out of the way, but she couldn't move. Fear and awe had held her to the spot. Then at the last second there was a man with a white horse who came to her right before the cyclone hit.

She slammed down on the memory. No. I just made him up. He wasn't real. That's what the years of therapy were for. I'm not to blame for my father's death. It was a force of nature. Nothing I could've done would've saved him. Even though he was trying to save me.

She pulled up outside her house. She had inherited the old farmhouse after her mother died a couple of years ago after a long, hard fought battle with breast cancer. Watching her mother's struggle with the disease, through the chemo and the hair loss was heartbreaking, it was a dark time in her life. Knowing her mother had gone to a better place and was no longer suffering was the only source of comfort she had after her mother passed. She threw herself into her work. That was when she had come up with the idea of trying to see if there was an instrument that could predict oncoming storms, but nothing had panned out so far. Just a lot of failed experiments. A light breeze blew across her face ruffling her hair. She glanced up to the clear night sky and breathed in the wonderful crisp air. Sometimes she wondered what was beyond. She wasn't sure if something watched out for her or not, but she wanted to believe her parents were happy wherever they were.

She grabbed the mail and headed inside. Checking her watch again, she only had half an hour to get ready and then leave. *I can do this*. She dashed upstairs, went into the shower, and rummaged through her closet. Inside she pulled out typical cowgirl attire. Short denim skirt, black T-shirt, black cowboy boots, and then she pulled her dark brown hair into a ponytail. She studied her reflection. Her eyes were her best feature.

She didn't require much make-up because of her tanned skin from spending a lot of time outside studying weather patterns. Years of helping out on the farm had given her an athletic body. She ran two miles in the morning and three times a week worked out at the school gym. She grabbed her purse and then bolted out of the door.

When she arrived at *Spunky's*, she noticed Trina was already inside. *This is a first*. *Normally she's always late*. *Great*. *Now I'm never going to hear the end of it*. She dug into her purse and splashed on some perfume and put on a little lipstick and eye shadow before getting out of the Jeep. She walked in amazed they had actually carded her. The band was taking a break so the cacophony of voices was the only sound. She scanned the crowd and saw Trina by the bar flirting with a couple of guys. She rolled her eyes. Her friend was always flirting. Her big brown doe eyes and round face pulled men right to her. George, on the other hand, repelled any potential suitor that hung around her for more than a few months. She figured it was her electric personality that ran them off and that she was only good for attracting storms.

Her best friend smiled and waved her over to the bar. When she got close enough, Trina wrapped her arms around her in a bear hug. George had to pry herself away to catch her breath. "Where the hell have you been?"

She hung her head. "I lost track of time at the office. Sorry."

"You and your weather experiments and balloons. Did you run into a twister today? I heard one touched down fifty miles from here," Trina teased.

Her friend had no interest in her storm chasing and wished that she wouldn't do it at all because she didn't want her to get hurt. "Yeah, we got some readings. That was what I was doing before I lost track of time. How was your day?"

She shrugged. "Sucked until I met these two here." Trina nodded to her left. "This is Cliff." She gestured to her right. "This is Daniel."

Cliff had short black hair, was stocky, with a pockmarked face, and was dressed in jeans and a white t-shirt. He smelled of horses. She noticed Cliff's gaze was fixated on Trina's low cut pink top. Both of them were probably hands on a local ranch or a farm. Daniel was taller than Cliff. Wiry, but his tight shirt hinted at muscles underneath. He

had a faraway look to his eyes. She wasn't sure of the color of his hair because it was under his hat, but it was short. He gave her a hesitant smile and tipped his hat.

"Hey guys. Nice to meet you."

"You too," Cliff answered.

Daniel remained silent.

"So what do you guys do?" George asked. Trina handed her one of the beers she had on the counter. She took it, but wasn't in the mood to drink. Her mind was clouded enough from the events of the day. She thought coming here would get her mind off her brush with death and the unexplained cowboy, but it hadn't.

"We go to OU," Daniel answered softly.

"Really? I'm one of the professors there. What are you studying?"

"Religious Studies," he replied.

"Nice. Good luck with it." George saw the band reassembling on the stage. She really wasn't into Daniel knowing he was at least ten years younger than her. She didn't go for younger guys, at least not a decade younger, and it would be awkward if she ran into him on campus. Plus she could be fired for dating a student. She wasn't about to let that happen. Trina really knows how to pick 'em. The band started playing a song. The lead singer's voice had a sultry deep tone that she enjoyed. It was a cover of a song that she knew. Her thoughts traveled back to Jeremy in the van that morning. She knew it was real. It hadn't been her imagination. The guy probably went back into the cornstalks and that was it.

"George, did you hear what I said?"

She blinked and focused back on Trina. "Nope. Sorry. What was that?" The boys had headed toward the dance floor waiting for them.

"They want to dance. Come on." Her friend tugged her hand.

Her feet remained planted. "I'm not really feelin' it. Why don't you go and dance with them? Honestly, they're a little young for my taste."

Trina leaned in and whispered. "They might be young, sweetie, but that makes them all the more delicious. I can't wait to be a sandwich in between those two. You sure you don't want a crack at them?"

She smiled. "No. You go ahead. I'm not in the mood for dancing."

Her friend narrowed her eyes. "You sure you're okay?"

George saw the other men's eyes wandering. "Yeah. Fine. Go ahead and have fun."

Trina winked and then headed toward the boys. George set her beer down on the bar and watched the people strolling in. The crowd was a variety from college aged kids to middle aged guys. Some bikers and a few others that looked like they had never been in a country western bar before wearing chinos and button down polos. She shivered with the breeze which blew in from the open door.

"What will it be?"

George turned and faced the bartender. "Ahh. Tonic water please."

"No gin added to that?"

"No, not tonight. I'm driving." She took the tonic water he poured. A tingle ran up her back. The same thing she encountered when a storm was forming. *Nothing was predicted*. The feeling got stronger until the hair raised on the back on her neck.

"Excuse me."

The pit of her stomach dropped. Her glass barely touched her lips when she heard the husky voice. Everything in her froze. She turned around slowly to see who was behind her. Her gazed stared at the black, but well-worn cowboy boots that somehow seemed familiar. Dark blue jeans encased muscled calves and thighs. His pants weren't too tight and just hinted at the curves and bulges they concealed. A stretched black shirt hugged a broad chest which only enhanced the flatness of his stomach. Sandy brown hair brushed the top of his shoulders. Full lips that might turn up into a sneer in a heartbeat were smiling at her. Dark blue eyes gazed at her holding more wisdom than they should have.

"Can I help you with something?"

He gave her a crooked smile. "I was wondering if you might want to dance."

She glanced at him and tried not to melt right there on the barstool. The band was starting a slow song. Couples were getting snuggly on the floor. A pang of longing

went through her. He seemed handsome enough. He waited patiently. She sipped her drink one more time and placed it on the bar. "That'd be nice."

He offered her his hand. She took it. Once she did, a bolt of electricity zapped her and made her stagger. He caught her and held her close. "Are you okay?"

She reached the top of his chin and tilted her head back so she could gaze into his eyes. For a moment, she thought she saw a tornado reflected in them. Shaking her head, she dismissed the vision. Get a hold of yourself. "Yeah. Tripped. That's all."

He led her onto the dance floor and rested his palm against the small of her back. The heat of his hand burned through her thin shirt, but the overwhelming sense that a storm was near made her head spin. Her stomach knotted the way it got before a boomer rolled in. Her muscles were tense and she didn't know why. There was a static charge in the air. She rested her hands on his shoulders and moved in time to the music. Over her partner's shoulder, she saw Trina sandwiched between the two college boys. Her friend gave her a thumbs up.

"What's your name?" her mystery man asked. His hot breath tickled her ear and made her shiver inside.

"Georgiana. Everyone calls me George. You?"

"Wyatt."

She nodded and settled against his shoulder inhaling his musky scent. She tried to ignore the static charge in the air and relax into the dance. For whatever reason, she was comfortable with him. Not many men made her feel that way. If they did, then the relationship lasted a few months before they left. He pressed her a little closer against him until her breasts brushed his shirt, but he made no further move. His hand remained on her back and didn't try to slip down and cop a feel. His other hand rested on her hip. She appreciated he was being a gentleman. Then the song ended.

"Can I buy you a drink?" he asked.

"I'm good thanks. I had quite a day and I'm not sure alcohol needs to be involved in it. What about you?"

He chuckled. "I thought men bought drinks for ladies and not the other way around."

"Ha. I'm no lady."

Wyatt laughed. "You sure look like one to me." His lips were only inches from hers.

The pull between them was dizzying. She was already tipsy even though she was stone cold sober. Gathering her self-control, she placed a hand on his chest.

"What would you do if I wasn't?"

His gaze darkened. "You really don't want to know. If you're playing around with me, I'll—"

George felt him stiffen up. *Crap*. "I'm just kidding. Sorry. I've had a-ahh...well a fucked up day. Thank you for the dance." She began to walk away, but he caught her arm and spun her back around.

"I know you were. I was just joshing. I'm sorry you had such a crazy day. We should compare stories. Maybe you can come back to my place and tell me all about it."

She raised her eyebrows. "You're awfully full of yourself, aren't you? Do you honestly believe I'll go home with you just after one dance and the offer to buy me a drink?"

Wyatt captured her lips in a kiss that caught her off guard. She stiffened before responding. The moment his lips touched hers, she heard thunder rattle everything around her. Static electricity exploded through her. Her head reeled. Before the storm around her could ease, he pulled away. She stood there, lips pursed, frozen, taking a moment before she realized it was over. When she opened her eyes, he gave her his smug smile.

"Wow. I'll take that as a yes."

He stepped closer and reached behind her settling his hand on her waist, but his fingers pressed against the mounds of her derriere. "Only if you really want to. I can sense you do. What we have between us is stimulating. A little tumble in the hay won't hurt either one of us."

She bit her lip. He's so fucking fine. I can't say yes. I normally don't do stuff like this, but like he said, one night wouldn't hurt. I don't think he's an axe murder and I really need to get today out of my mind. "Do you always use such cheesy lines?"

"Only on the beautiful ones."

He's laying it on thick. Trina was making out with Cliff in the corner. She won't even notice I'm gone. She's too wrapped up in the college boy sandwich to care. "Why not! I could use a good tumble. I'll follow you." She brushed past him and waited for him to catch up.

Chapter Five

Landon opened the refrigerator and pulled out a bottle of water. He'd been watching some old movies for the past few hours enjoying the silence in the house. When he closed the fridge, he saw Raul, his commander leaning against the counter with his arms folded. He took a swig as he watched the man before him. Raul was nearly seven feet tall. His long dark hair was pulled back into a ponytail. He appeared to be Native American with dark skin and penetrating eyes, but in reality, the man was only half human. The other half was angel. He was a Nephilim, one of the original Riders who had survived. Landon knew of a handful of others, but most of them had been killed by angels ages ago because they took the power they were given and went insane thinking they were gods. Raul was the one who had recruited him to be a Rider in the first place. He doled out their assignments, but most of the time the information was basically downloaded into their thoughts and they were off. Storm riding wasn't something which had an exact schedule. A storm could pop up at any time. When a tornado was involved, they were summoned.

"What are you doing here?"

"It's nice to see you too. Can't I come and check in on my Riders?" Raul's deep voice echoed like distant thunder.

"You never make social calls." Landon pulled out a chair and straddled it.

"I'm here about Wyatt."

His partner. Always pushing the boundaries and just narrowly avoiding trouble. *I told him to be careful.* "What about him?"

"He's getting sloppy. He almost lost control of a twister today because he was showing off. I think you're aware of this."

"I was taking care of my end of the storm, racing around it to get the rotation just right. Wyatt isn't green. He knows what he's doing. His showing off is nothing new. We both know that."

Raul closed his eyes and took a deep breath. Landon sensed the change in the air. He could see the static charge around his commander. It pulsated like controlled lightning while he kept a grip on his anger. Landon had never seen him this pissed before. When he opened his eyes, after he'd taken another breath, the air calmed a bit. "I can only sweep his transgressions under so many rugs. You need to convince him to curb his grandstanding tendencies. I know he showed himself and that he turned the storm away from them."

Landon gripped the edge of the chair. He slammed his water down on the table so hard it sloshed out onto the table top. "You can cover up for him, but you couldn't help me out when I was disciplined. Why is that? Playing favorites? That's bullshit."

Raul's expression didn't change. "This isn't the same thing."

He stood up sending the chair sliding across the wood floor until it hit the wall. "The hell it isn't. He shows himself and doesn't get punished. What the fuck is that about? I stick to protocol in all my years of being a Rider and when I step out of line once you don't stick up for me."

"Enough. You scooped up a child who was slated to die. I had to deal with Azrael, the Angel of Death. You don't fuck with Universal Law. Once in a while if a human sees you it's tolerated. Fucking around the way Wyatt is will get him castigated or worse. You over stepped your bounds and her father was taken instead. That wasn't supposed to happen. I pleaded your case, but it was out of my hands. You're one of the best Riders I have. Do you think I wanted you reprimanded the way you were?"

"I never realized. I'm sorry. I'll tell Wyatt to cut it out before you have to." Landon was shocked to learn that he was responsible for changing the natural order of things. He'd never known that. He thought by saving the girl he was doing the right thing. She had been so helpless and unaware of the storm coming at her, that her innocence had tugged at his heart. He wasn't about to let her die. Whirlwind's question came back to him. Would he do it again to save her? Yes. Over the years, she haunted him from time to time. He had often wondered what had become of the girl he'd saved.

Raul clapped him on the shoulder. "Don't worry about it. We all have to blow off steam and I know you've been waiting a long time to say that to me. How is everything else going?"

Landon met his superior's eyes. "Fine. Couldn't be better. I'm immortal, have a lot of free time, and a thriving business. Everything is peachy."

"And yet I sense some unease brewing."

"It's nothing."

"Good. Let's keep it that way." Raul headed for the door. Landon turned. His boss was no longer there. A gust of wind opened the door and then slammed it shut.

Once he was alone, he relaxed. I have to have a serious talk with Wyatt when he gets back here tonight. He can't keep being so reckless. It's almost like he wants to get caught. Oh, God. I hope that's not the case. Does he want the angels to enclose him in their wings and pierce his flesh with their feathers? He doesn't know how dangerous they truly are. He shook remembering the lashes he'd received from the wings. Because he was immortal, he was a fast healer and his punishment lasted six months. The pain was intense he had begged to die, but they hadn't let him.

He sensed Whirlwind was around. Something nudged his hand and he knew it was her. She was always close by if he needed her. "Tell Tempest about Raul showing up here and what he said. Warn him not to go along with any more of Wyatt's stunts. If not both of them could be in trouble."

She didn't respond, but she heard him. Landon rubbed the back of his neck, cleaned up the spilled water, and then headed into his room. His rooms were the largest in the house. The master bathroom was big enough to hold three people with multiple

jets of water at different levels. A long sandstone bench ran across one wall of the shower. He flipped on the light and stripped off his clothes. His salt and pepper hair made him appear older than the thirty-five years he was frozen at. Years of working on his farm had sculpted his body into a muscled machine. He thought back to the years before he became a Rider. He'd been a real cowboy exploring the old west and causing trouble with the best of them. Jesse James, Wyatt Earp, and Buffalo Bill. He'd met Jesse when he lived in Missouri. He'd known the family when Jesse was young and Missouri was embroiled in the civil war. He'd met Wyatt at the poker tables in California in the early 1860's. He'd known Buffalo Bill during the years he worked for Buffalo Bill's Wild West show. The past was alive in his bedroom with the memorabilia from his earlier days. Sometimes he wished he could go back. He'd had a lot of fun in the old days when the country was wild and still forming. Through it all, he'd never found the woman he'd want to share his life with. After so long, he had almost given up on finding love and decided that he would live a solitary existence spending an occasional night with a woman.

Shaking his head, he turned the water on and stepped under the hot streams hoping to forget about his fellow Rider and the little girl he had once saved.

Chapter Six

Wyatt kept checking his rearview mirror to see if Georgiana was still behind him. *I* can't believe *I* scored with her. She's a hot piece of ass. Something about her sure seems familiar. *I* can't put my finger on it, but maybe *I*'ve run into her before. *I* do tend to lose track. He chuckled as he pulled into the driveway. He parked and slid out of the car. After a moment, he saw headlights piercing the darkness as she pulled in beside him. He waited while she slipped out of her vehicle and took in the surroundings.

"Wow. Nice place. You work here?"

He smiled feeling a little cocky. "Something like that." He gazed down at the huge barn. The door was open to the barn with the light shining out of Gina's office. He heard the horses rattling the barn doors because they were in for the night. He glanced at the house and saw Landon was home. He's probably reading some stuffy old book. I know what he'll say if he runs into us. He'll tell me I shouldn't be running around and risking the chance of exposing our secret.

"So you just staying here or something?"

His grin widened. "No. Actually I own half the place."

"Oh."

"I'm sure you thought I was some no-good-cowhand going to take you to my loft in the barn."

She laughed. "It had crossed my mind."

He inched closer to her feeling her hesitation now that she wasn't in the heat of the moment at the club. She was looking fine in her short jean skirt and black T-shirt. The fabric showed off the lines of her bra and the bumps of her nipples from the chill in the air. He ached to run his hand over her breasts to feel their firmness.

To ease the tension, he stepped closer to her and cupped her cheek. Georgiana drew in a quick breath. He saw the trepidation in her eyes. Seizing the moment, he leaned in and kissed her not too hard, but just enough to leave her wanting. When he touched her again, he noticed the energy between them. His lips got all tingly from kissing her, but he thought it was a fluke from the dryness of the air at the bar. Now it was stronger. His whole body was on edge the way he was before a ride. He could sense a storm in the air, but he had no orders that one was coming. Withdrawing a step, he waited for her to come around.

"Do you still want to come inside? I can understand if you've changed your mind."

The tip of her tongue touched her lips. The small gesture tightened his cock. *Oh baby, I can't wait to get you alone so you can use that on me.* She ran her hands over her arms. He noticed her hair was standing on end. She was shaking slightly.

"No. I'm okay."

"Great." He offered her his elbow. She looped her arm through it and he led her inside.

They entered through the front door into a small foyer. Landon had decorated the place making it appear to be something out of the old west since that was his era. Old horseshoes were on the wall along with hats and other memorabilia. There was even an old poker table in the other room set up to use. He led her through the kitchen, which was the center of the house that connected the other three wings. He held his breath hoping he wouldn't bump into his partner. Luckily he heard Landon blasting Mozart so he knew he was busy.

"Who's the classical buff?"

"That's my partner. Don't worry. I bet he's occupied for the night. He's nothing to worry about."

She nodded and scanned the kitchen. "So you and he share everything?"

Wyatt laughed. "Not one another if that's what you're asking. We've known each other for a long time. We both love horses so we pooled our money and ended up with this place." He tugged on her hand. "Don't worry. He and I aren't into one another. Unless that's something you want to explore?"

She laughed. "I think I'll pass for now."

"Good." He led her down the hall to his room. She walked in and took in the surroundings. He paused feeling his cock shift once more. He couldn't wait to feel her hard body underneath him with her moaning his name. Sometimes he wasn't sure which one he enjoyed more, the game of getting women or the actual act of making love to them. Both of which he considered himself a master at.

He led her through another room and into his bedroom. His king sized bed was covered in a dark green spread. One wall was windows with a sliding glass door with easy access to the backyard that led into the fields beyond the paddock. Tempest hung out sometimes. Tonight a half moon beamed down on them. He sensed a calmness to the atmosphere, but there was definitely something different about this woman. He couldn't place what intrigued him so much more about her than anyone else he'd ever been with. She gave him a nervous smile. When he touched her arm, she stiffened up again.

"I won't bite you, Georgiana."

"George, please."

"All right. George." He kissed the side of her neck. Once his lips touched her flesh, he was zapped. Her skin had the hint of roses, but she tasted like butter cream. His lips glided along the line of her throat to her ear. When he began nibbling on the lobe, she gasped, just the reaction he was hoping for. Her fingers brushed his chest, barely touching him. "You taste wonderful." He licked her neck and she giggled.

"You're making me feel like an ice cream cone or something."

"Is that so bad?"

"No. It's just it's been a long time and I normally don't do this kinda thing."

He pulled away. "We're two consenting adults who are sexually attracted to one another. I certainly understand that, because we've just met, you're concerned about how quickly we've come together. But I know you feel the sparks between us, why don't we take it slowly one night at a time? I promise I won't run away and break your heart."

Her mind was working over what he said. He saw her resolve. She tugged on the bottom of her shirt before pulling it over her head and dropping it to the floor. George walked over and pushed him down onto the corner of the bed. *I like this one*. His cock strained to be released from the confines of his jeans. She placed one knee between his legs and leaned over him giving him a better view of her wonderful breasts enclosed in their black satin prison. He ran a finger along the swells and between the dip of the globes and back along the other side before slipping a strap down off her shoulder.

She pushed her lips against his and parted his mouth with her tongue. At that moment, he put his arms around her and brought her down with him onto the bed. He didn't break her kiss, but touched her tongue with his until they both tasted one another. His free hand snaked underneath her skirt, gripping the firm mounds of her ass. George jumped bringing him closer. His other hand cupped her nape and pulled the elastic from her hair. Her chocolate brown locks cascaded over her shoulders and down her back. He inhaled the peppermint aroma of her shampoo and broke their kiss. It wasn't fair she was exposing more skin than he was.

"I want you, George. I want to fuck you until you come screaming my name. I'm going to eat your pussy until you can't think anymore. And then I'm going to fuck you some more. You up for that?"

She nodded.

"Good. Now strip for me." Wyatt eased away and took off his boots and socks. He observed while she undid her bra, but held it over her breasts. She slipped the other strap from her shoulder, teasing him, taunting him while she stared at him the entire time.

His dick swelled even more watching her drop the satin undergarment to the floor and run her hands over her breasts, pinching the nipples. Next she pulled off one boot and then the other. His mouth watered watching the vixen before him. He couldn't wait to feel her hard backside. Oh baby, I'm going to rock your world until you won't even know what planet you're on.

She shimmied out of her panties, but left her skirt. He couldn't stand it anymore. He had to have her. Wyatt stood up. He pulled his jeans off and his boxers. Once his cock was free, he felt a hundred times better. She stood before him in her skirt with her hands over her nipples like pasties. "This what you wanted?"

He nodded. "You better fucking believe it is. You're a beautiful filly. I'm going to ride you all night." He guided her hand down to his cock letting her take in his length. Once she touched him again another jolt went through him only this time it was sharper and it hurt more, but in a good way. His whole being was energized. Her caresses were soft running all over his shaft. Her eyes widened and a playful smile beamed on her face.

"What if *I* want to ride you?"

"My bed. My rules. Get on the bed and turn around." He pinched her erect nipple. She gasped. He hit her ass lightly while she positioned herself on all fours on the bed. He dug into his nightstand and pulled out a condom. He might be immortal and immune to disease and injury, but he could still have children. He tore open the thin foil with his teeth and then slid on the rubber. Before long, he stood before George marveling at her luscious pussy. She was already wet waiting for him. Her pendulous breasts taunted him. Running his hand down her back, he saw a faint blue spark go between his palm and her skin. It intrigued him.

"Ahh...what are you doing?"

"You feel that?" he asked.

"Yeah. It feels good."

Wyatt smiled and called upon his power over the storms. A small breeze stirred in the room and the charge between them grew. It made him feel larger than life. He'd never had that reaction before when he was with another human being. Only when he

was among the clouds and Tempest's hooves were striking up lightning. He stood behind her, traced his hands over her flat stomach, and touched her nipples before kneading her breasts. He squeezed them hard and drew a satisfying moan from George. Without being able to wait any longer, he slid his cock between her succulent pussy lips. Once he parted them, she swallowed him whole.

"Oh, baby. You feel so tight." He pulled out of her again and then slammed back inside. She backed into him each time he thrust into her deep well taking all of him. He rubbed her breasts and pressed his forehead against her back feeling the static charge riding both of their skins. Just focusing on that made the contact between them almost unbearable. The energy rubbed along his flesh. It was a new addiction he didn't want to stop. George screamed when he plunged into her again. Their coupling was moving faster than he wanted, but he couldn't contain himself.

"Wyatt, I'm coming." Her muscles quivered around his cock clutching him, not wanting to release him from their velvet hold, but he pulled out of her one last time not being able to hold back any longer. His legs wobbled and he came. Even after their release, jolts of energy were zapping between them.. As the energy built up Wyatt realized he wanted her again. He finally pulled out and threw the used condom in the trash. He walked into the bathroom and stared in the mirror. His eyes were whirling. It seemed he was going to jump out of his skin. Something wasn't right. He'd never lost control of his power before. Gripping the edges of the marble sink, he forced his abilities back under control. Everything inside of him was swirling wanting to break apart into a rush of air and he couldn't do that around her.

"Is everything okay?" George stood in the doorway with a concerned expression. Her hair was plastered to her forehead. Her skin was red and she smelled wonderful.

He forced a smile. "I'm fine. No worries. I'll be right as rain." A sharp pain sliced him from the inside and he doubled over. George rushed in and caught him. Once she touched his shoulder, the pain melted away.

"You're not okay. I have to get you some help."

What the fuck? "No need, darlin'. I'm okay now. Must have been the cow getting back at me for eating it." He beamed and leaned in for another kiss. She hesitated at first and then gave in.

"As long as you're okay."

He stood up slowly feeling frisky. I don't know what it is about her, but fuck I want more. "Oh I am, but you're not." He scooped her up and deposited her back on the bed. George laughed when he began to tickle the back of her knees. She kicked at him, but he caught her legs and spread them wider. Licking his lips, he stared at the pearls of her wetness clinging to her downy pubic hair. The mouth of her pussy waited for him to torture it, taste it and explore it. He dipped his face between her legs and grasped her hips. Wyatt tasted her unique tang still having the charge between them. He laved each individual fold feeling her shake and squirm until he settled on her clit. He studied her before he began his torture. Her nipples were alert. She drew in deep breaths. Her eyes were closed. His tongue licked a smooth line across her lips. His balls tightened once more. He could take her again without waiting, but first he wanted to pleasure her.

He began to lick her slowly tasting all her exotic spice while the small jolts of energy ran over his tongue. Each time he touched her, she jumped from the zaps passing between then. He found her hidden bud, the special gem that would bring her absolute pleasure, and began to tease it. First he nipped on her clit. Then he suckled it. He was rewarded with her squirming.

"Wyatt, ahh don't stop. Please. More."

As you wish. He redoubled his efforts until she was whimpering. He enjoyed her taste on his tongue. He tried to keep her steady, but the more she shimmied, the stronger the energy grew between then. He felt his power rising again, but this time it didn't go haywire. He was able to channel it into a small breeze blowing across the two of them. It hardened him again and made her come hard. He lapped up all of her honey then swiftly claimed her lips once more.

"You taste so good."

"I want you inside me. I need to feel you."

He began to roll off her, but she grabbed his hand. "I have to get—" "No. Now."

He did what she asked and plunged inside of her. He was rewarded with her legs wrapped around his back. She gripped all of him and set their rhythm. The more he lost control the more the wind in the room blew. She held his shoulders tighter until the wind surged through the bedroom. The doors blew open. He shut his eyes tight and released deep inside of her enjoying the comfort of her arms. It was only when he lay beside her and the draft died down that he realized the wind hadn't blown anything over. It was pristine. It had only been the power sparking between them.

Chapter Seven

The decadent smell of coffee roused George from her deep slumber. She'd been dreaming about storms with lots of thunder and the man who had saved her when she was a child. The sound of hooves and horses filtered through her dreams, but then she remembered she was on a horse ranch. When she opened her eyes, the image of the man's dark eyes haunted her. They had burned into her memory. Before the impact of the storm, her father had come running to get her out of the twister's path, but a man appeared and held her to him. Her father's scream echoed in her mind.

George inhaled again and opened her eyes. It took her a moment to remember she'd had a wonderful night with a man who she barely knew. Somehow, she didn't feel as though he was a threat. She shook her head. Trying to squash her memories was almost impossible. Sometimes they overtook her despite all her efforts to keep them at bay. The pain was so acute it almost strangled her. The memory of the storm played like a continuous loop in her head. She was thrust into the vacuum of the storm. She was so overwhelmed by her fear and yet there was a sense of peace because of her unique ability. Her strange gift made her feel as if she was one with the storm. She was frozen in place, waiting as it got closer for the funnel cloud to suck her up. That's when the man materialized before her as if he had been formed from the spinning dirt. Last night with Wyatt she sensed one hell of a storm, but there hadn't been one. Well, there was one with Wyatt and nothing like that had ever happened to her before with another

person. He was amazing. I give him credit. He's not what I thought he'd be at all. God. I've never had anyone make my body react that way.

She got out of bed and went to answer the call of Mother Nature. When she came back in, she noticed Wyatt was out cold, sprawled on the bed. The scent of the coffee stirred her. She gazed around the room and saw a robe tossed over a chair. She grabbed it and pulled it on. The black silk cooled her skin, but it felt good. She tiptoed out of the room and followed the wonderful aroma into the kitchen. A coffee maker sat tucked away on the corner of the large counter next to a stainless steel stove. On it there was a coffee mug tree that she plucked a cup from.

Glancing around, she didn't think anyone was around or would mind that she was taking some of the coffee. Wyatt said his partner shared the other part of the house. Surely he won't mind if I get a cup. She bit her lip and then poured a mug. Glancing around on the counter, she didn't see any cream or sugar. She grabbed a spoon from the dish drainer and then pulled open the refrigerator searching for milk.

"Hey, Wyatt. You and I need to have a serious talk."

George froze at the deep voice. The hair stood up on the back of her neck. Energy crawled all over her skin. She had the same sense she had last night with Wyatt that a storm was creeping up on her. *Shit. This has to be Landon*. She took in a deep breath praying he wouldn't be upset at discovering a strange woman rooting around in his fridge. Slowly she peeked out from behind the door and shut it. The first thing she saw was a man dressed in black silk boxers, tan skin, a well formed eight pack, and muscled arms. Her gaze moved to his face. He had shaggy salt and pepper hair that touched the top of his ears. His mouth was made for kissing with succulent lips that she could kiss all night long. He had a classic nose which was slightly bent to the right as if it'd been broken. His eyes were deep and framed by black eyebrows. His brow furrowed when he saw her.

Her gaze drifted back to his eyes. Those deep green eyes that swirled and held too much wisdom. The kind eyes which had held sympathy for a five-year-old girl. The realization washed over her. She staggered back and bumped into the counter.

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to frighten you—"

She held out her hand warding him off. "It's you!"

"Excuse me?" Landon asked.

He stepped toward her again. She slid along the counter floundering for something. A weapon. A phone. Something to make sure she wasn't dreaming. This isn't real. He isn't real. There was no man that day. It was all in my mind, but there he is. I could never forget those eyes. If this is the man, how can he look the same? "You're him. You're the one."

Those full lips pursed. "I'm him who?"

She shook her head and ran her fingers through her hair trying to clear her mind. George took in a deep breath, but it was hard to focus. The closer he came, the stronger the charge in the air got. The hair on her arms was standing up. Her whole body trembled. Her stomach dropped. The sensation was stronger with him than it had been with Wyatt the night before. She clutched the counter not sure why this was happening.

"Oh, Landon, I guess you met George."

George focused on Wyatt. He walked over to her and slid his arm around her waist. Landon came over and touched her arm. When he did, she was hit with an intense electric jolt. The breath caught in her throat and darkness grabbed her into its arms by surprise.

* * * *

She heard her name. Struggling she fought through the darkness and opened her eyes. Wyatt was above her with a concerned look on his face. He held a glass of water and lifted it to her lips. She drank in a few swallows before she waved it away. The cool liquid helped clear her head. Her insides were shaking from the sudden overload of sensation. This had only happened to her once before when she'd run into a very strong storm. Something in her had shut down from the deluge. There wasn't a storm around, why was this happening now? It took her a moment before she got her bearings. When she did, she sat up slowly, but her head was still spinning so she had to lie back down.

"Hey, take it easy. Are you all right?"

"I-I think so. That was weird. I've never had that happen to me before," she lied.

"You should stay lying down until we can figure out what happened. We need to check you over and make sure nothing's broken. You took a good pitch," Landon said from behind the couch. He leaned over and pressed a cool cloth against her forehead.

"I'm fine really. I didn't mean to scare you like that."

"I was worried when I woke up and didn't see you in bed." Wyatt took her hand and kissed the back of it. What she saw was true concern and not something made up because of the quick tryst they'd had.

"The coffee smelled so good. I didn't want to wake you and then Landon surprised me."

"About that. Before you passed out, you insisted that you knew me. Are you positive that we've met before because I don't remember you? No offense."

She glanced at Wyatt and then back at Landon. "No. I-ah- thought you were familiar, but I realize now that you're not who I thought you were."

"See, Landon. I told you she didn't know you," Wyatt smiled. "He was saying that you kept saying it's you like you had a past life together or something."

George laughed. "Of course not." She leaned in and kissed Wyatt. Once their lips touched, a jolt of electricity ran through her.

"Hey, Landon, what's all the racket? Is everything oka—"

George broke off the kiss and saw a woman dressed in jeans and a button down shirt standing before them. She had short dark hair with red highlights and fair skin. Her jaw dropped when she took in the scene. "Oh, God. I'm so sorry. I didn't realize that I was interrupting anything."

George glanced between her and the other two. Wyatt stood up and Landon rushed after her. "Gina. Wait."

"What was that about?" She asked Wyatt.

He seemed stunned. "You got me? Gina's our right hand man. She watches over the place and runs it when we're off on business."

George nodded not too sure what to make of it. She sensed there was something he wasn't telling her. I bet she's attracted to Landon and doesn't know how to tell him. There was shock in her eyes seeing me on the couch with the two men. Oh boy I bet she figured I slept with Landon and Wyatt had walked in on me. What have I gotten myself into? I should never have come home with him, but God it was good. "So they have anything going on? You two ever have something going on?" She bit her lip and realized she felt a little better now that Landon had left. Her head wasn't whirling so much. She stood and waited for the room to go black again. It didn't, but the static charge hadn't dissipated. She took in a deep breath.

"Gina has a serious crush on my partner, but he doesn't reciprocate it. Honestly she thinks the two of us are gay. We thought it was easier, at the time, it explained the two of us owning the business. And no, I've never been with her. Are you feeling better?"

"That's a horrible thing to tell someone. You really should tell her the truth. And yes, I am feeling better. I think I should go though. There's work for me to do. I need to get back home."

Wyatt got up too and followed her back to his room. He didn't say anything, but closed the door. She gathered her clothes, began to dress, and threw his robe on the bed. She looked around for her keys and saw they had fallen next to the bed. She came up too quickly and the room spun a little, but she was okay. God I have to get home. I have a strong feeling, I'm missing something here. There's Landon and the fact that I recognize him. I have to sort out what that means. It doesn't make any sense, but I know I wasn't dreaming. Wyatt's arms wrapped around her stomach. Her body reacted to him. She trembled with the jolt of current passing through her. She bit her tongue.

"Last night was wonderful. I'd love to do it again."

George turned and saw the truth in his eyes. "I thought you only did one night stands."

He brushed the hair from her face. "Normally I do, but there's something about you. I can't put my finger on it."

"I'd like that. Maybe next time we can actually get to know more about one another before we have a wild night. Was it me or did you have a window open last night."

"No window. It was all us. You were wonderful. There's some kind of spark between us that I've never had with anyone. Please say that I can see you tonight." He kissed her neck and she shivered.

"I'd love that, but I can't tonight. I have some research to go through. How about I call you?"

"I've heard that one before. You'll go back to your life and forget about me."

George turned in his embrace. Her gaze searched his. The jolt between them made her skin crawl and ignited the pleasure spot between her legs. Her body was tired, but her mind was alert. "There's no way I can forget about you." She pressed her mouth against his and bit his lip before pulling away. She saw a piece of paper and scribbled her number on it. "Call me tomorrow."

She gripped her keys and then left the room. Heading back to the car, she wondered if she should go back into the house and track Landon down. No I was only dreaming it. He must have been in my mind. She climbed into her Jeep and revved the engine. Her thoughts wandered toward Trina. Hopefully her friend had ended up home okay or at least having fun being the middle of a cowboy sandwich. I'm sure I'll hear all about it later. First I need to go home and clear my mind. After the amazing night I had with Wyatt, the last thing I expected was to dream about my father and the stranger who saved my life. Why did I end up putting Landon's face on the stranger who's been haunting my dreams since my father died? Oh well, we'll see what tomorrow brings. Hopefully it'll be Wyatt asking me out again.

Chapter Eight

Landon grabbed Gina's arm to stop her and prevent her from running out of the house. When she turned around, her eyes were puffy and overflowing with tears. He wanted to shoot himself for being the cause of her pain. He'd never intended to hurt her in any way, she was his friend as much as she was his manager. "Gina, are you okay?"

She spun around. "Are you? Wyatt was in the living room with a woman and you were in your boxer shorts. You know I can understand your partner, but you? Doesn't that disturb you? Were you and she...not that it's any of my business, but from what you told me just yesterday..."

He released her and ran his fingers over his chin feeling the stubble. "She came home with Wyatt last night. I went into the kitchen, when I heard someone in there, I thought it was Wyatt and I had something to talk over with him and found the woman making a cup of coffee. Nothing's going on between me and her. I appreciate your concern, but this is honestly none of your business."

She wiped her eyes and glared at him. "Right. After all these years, you don't trust me enough to tell me the truth. You just expect me to believe both of you are gay. I've seen all the women Wyatt has brought home. You've had a few here too but I've turned a blind eye. This is a good job, so I've been managing this place and I keep my mouth shut when I see odd things. Twisters that turn away from the farm. Both of your horses vanishing and reappearing out of thin air. I've never asked you about any of it. I've kept your secrets. Why don't you trust me enough to start telling me the truth for once?"

Landon hung his head. He hadn't realized how lax they had become around Gina. They were lucky to have her working for them. Staring at her now, he saw the feelings she had for him displayed on her face. He'd always looked past it by telling himself she would get over it. "My life and Wyatt's is complicated. You and I-I respect you, but I don't have feelings for you. I'm sorry. I appreciate everything you do for us, but there are some things that I can't discuss with you."

Tears fell down her cheeks. The hurt in her eyes and her struggling for control cut him to the quick. "Fuck you then and Wyatt. You can have your girls and your horses. I'm through with both of you." She tore out of his grasp. Landon headed after her when he heard footfalls behind him. Then he remembered Wyatt was in the house with a strange girl.

"Yo, Landon. What's up with Gina?"

Landon faced his partner. "Wyatt, what the hell was going on with your girl in the kitchen? I'm getting tired of you bringing home strays. Now Gina's pissed off and I don't know if I can talk her into coming back. She knows something is up."

Wyatt's eye widened. "She wasn't a stray. And it doesn't matter what Gina thinks. We should've told her the truth a long time ago."

"What's that supposed to mean? Where's the response I normally get 'oh she'll deal with it?'" Landon crossed his arms over his chest surprised he was actually hearing a grown up response. "What the hell has gotten into you? The new chick you brought home somehow get inside your head?"

Wyatt shrugged. "I don't know, man. There's something about her. I can't put my finger on it. Something happened last night which I can't explain. My power—"

Landon put up his hand. He didn't want to hear any more bullshit from Wyatt. That was all he needed after Raul and now Gina. "Who cares about your power! Maybe whatever happened to you was Raul's way of showing you that you have to be more careful. You know they're about to drag your ass to Heaven and punish you for all your showing off. Do you think I want to lose another partner? I don't want you to end up like Paul."

Wyatt shook his head. "Lan, it's not like that. Something about this woman. You felt it too. I know you did. She touched me and—"

Landon slammed his fist against the wall not able to control his anger anymore. "Damn it. I don't fucking care. No more showing off. Write off the bitch you fucked last night. Find those storm chasers and wipe their memories. I don't care what it takes. I don't want Raul in my kitchen again. Is that understood?"

His fellow Rider hung his head. "Fine."

Landon hated pulling rank, but he was not going to stand by and watch Wyatt get into any further trouble. He's had over a hundred years to pull it together. If he isn't going to do it on his own, then I'll make him do it. Landon sighed and stared at the empty hall. The intercoms around the house were filled with banging and the whinnying of horses. The day had begun a while ago. He looked out the window and saw Whirlwind galloping close to the house. Tempest was with her. He didn't intrude on the pair's time together.

Cars had pulled up in the driveway and others were getting ready to ride. He saw Gina talking to one of the regular riders who boarded her horse with them. They were laughing together. The sun glinted off Gina's hair. She was an attractive woman, but he didn't share her feelings. He never had. Sure he'd brought a few women home over the past six years, but they were always discreet. He hadn't realized how much Gina knew about them and that worried him.

What worried him more was Raul and what he had in store for Wyatt. Landon had lost Paul, his old partner, to showing off. He was pulled into Heaven and killed by the angels. It was only a few months later when Raul appeared with Wyatt to work with him and be his new partner. They'd hit it off right away and he considered him a friend. He'd better go off and find those storm chasers. If not we both could be screwed and I don't want anything to happen to him.

He thought back to the woman he'd discovered in the kitchen. It seemed she knew me, but I don't remember her at all. Who is she? She has to be really something if Wyatt is spouting off about her. The sex must have blown his mind and that's saying something for him. He normally moves on after the next day and never calls his one-night stands. I can't remember how many notches he has in his belt. He glanced at the clock. Time was ticking away and

he had errands to run for the day. He hoped he'd be able to talk to Gina before she decided to leave, but he knew that she needed space to process everything that had been said. He would hate to lose her as a friend as well as an employee.

Landon walked back to his room, dressed, and got ready for the day. Once he was outside about to get into his truck, he saw something underneath his front tire. It was a wallet. He flipped it open to see the driver's license inside and recognized the woman he had seen earlier in the house. The one who had been with Wyatt. He read her name Georgiana Morlan. Female. Age 30. She wasn't that far away. Next to that was her ID card from University of Oklahoma. Shit. I should just give this to Wyatt, but I sent him after those storm chasers. I might as well bring this over to her. It's the least I can do after scaring her half to death.

He programmed the girl's address into his GPS and then tucked the wallet into his pocket. The automated voice told him he had twenty miles to his destination. That wasn't too bad and then he could swing by the new feed store which was out that way. He had wanted to check out their prices. He left the ranch and saw that Wyatt's Jeep was still there. He'd better be going out and finding those storm chasers. If he doesn't, I'm going to kick his ass.

As he drove, he pulled out the wallet and studied the picture of the woman on the license. She looked zombie-like in the photo, but there was something about her eyes. He glanced at the picture again. She definitely looked better even after just waking up than she did in the picture. The way she peered at him was eerie. It was like she really did know me. She can't be recognizing me though. I'd remember her. All of this is crazy. Wyatt has me all wound up and I can't think about him now. I have to get this woman off his back, fix what I said to Gina, and make sure Wyatt stays in line. Who knows when the next storm will blow in? Have to be ready for that.

Finally he pulled up outside of an old farm house. Paint peeled on the front porch posts. The fence was in disrepair. An old tractor sat in the backyard rusting. A few of the shutters were missing. There was a hole in the screen door. The porch swing was in working order and it appeared to be fairly new. On the side of the house about five hundred feet away was a storm cellar. He could see from the dip in the front yard that a

twister had once torn up the ground, but it seemed to be an old scar. *Wonder if it was one of mine?*

He sighed and got out of the truck. He headed up the stairs and knocked on the door. He waited a few minutes, but he didn't get a response. He pulled open the screen door and knocked again on the front door. He heard heavy foot falls and then the door opened. The same woman who fainted in his kitchen answered. What did she ever see in Wyatt? She appears intelligent.

"Hi. Can I help you?"

"Ahh...George, right?" Landon asked.

Her eyes widened. "Holy crap. It's you. Again."

He glanced down. "Yeah. About this morning. I wanted to apologize for what happened. I didn't realize that you weren't Wyatt and I didn't mean to scare you."

She waved her hand. When she did, the air stirred. He glanced toward the horizon, but didn't see any clouds. There was a charge in the air current that he couldn't place all of a sudden. I'm losing it. It has to be something natural. We don't have an answer for everything.

"No. I didn't mean that. I mean...Shit." She bit her lip. He thought it was kinda cute. "What I'm going to say is going to sound insane and I swear I'm not. I've been going over it in my head ever since I got home. I can't concentrate on anything else. I know you."

"I'm sorry, but we've never met before this morning. Unless it was some drunken night a long time ago and if so, I apologize. I came out here to give you back your wallet." *This is wild.* He shifted his weight feeling uncomfortable and hot. His skin tingled. The power of the storm stirred inside of him. He dug into his pocket and pulled out the wallet. Landon handed it to her.

She took it and stepped away from the door. "Come in please. I think we need to talk."

He sighed. "I have to go to town to buy some things and then get going back to the ranch. I wanted to give your wallet back to you;, I figured you'd miss it and wonder where you lost it. And I wanted to warn you about Wyatt. I don't know what your

kinda kink is or anything, but my partner isn't one for long term relationships. And—" She touched his arm. A spark went between the two of them loud enough he heard it crackle. The world began to spin. He caught the doorframe before he stumbled. *There's definitely something more going on here than meets the eye. Maybe Wyatt was right.* "Yeah. Maybe I'll come in and sit for a moment. If that's okay?"

George smiled and released him. Once that happened, his head cleared, but the charge in the air didn't recede. He followed her inside taking in the farmhouse at the same time. It was a mixture of old and new. Antiques and modern furniture were placed here and there. He noticed that she had good taste. He made it to the sofa and fell into the cushions. His host sat across from him and barely met his gaze. She wrung her hands together and took a few deep breaths. When she did, the static in the air lessened. He noticed the hair was standing up on her arms too.

"When I was a kid, we had this bad storm. I was out in the middle of it. My mother was in the storm cellar yelling for me to come to her, but I couldn't hear her because of the roar of the tornado. You can still see the scar in the earth it made out front. Anyway the sight of the funnel cloud transfixed me. Debris was flying everywhere. I knew that it was going to take me and that was okay. It was peaceful. There in the place I was in. Then a man appeared out of nowhere and scooped me up. He held me to him while the twister passed over us and it didn't suck him up. My father wasn't so lucky. I saw him pulled into the cyclone. Th-that man was you." She met his eyes and surprise rolled through him. He understood now why she seemed familiar. She was the little girl he had saved. How does she remember me? Her memory should've been erased.

"Ahh, George. I really don't know what you're talking about. I'm sure that you had a brush with death and it was traumatic for you, but if it was that long ago I was ten or eleven. How could I have been able to save you?"

She rested a hand on his knee. When she touched him a strong jolt ran through him causing him to jump closer to her. He rested his hand on top of hers intending to move it away, but found the energy increasing between them. He couldn't deny the instant attraction. I've never had this happen to me when touching another person. It seemed his

insides would blow apart from his power almost going out of control. He gripped her fingers and saw an arc of energy pass over their flesh. Her muscles shivered.

"What's going on?" George asked.

"I don't know. This has never happened to me before."

Chapter Nine

Wyatt rested his head against Tempest breathing in his animal aroma and the scent of earth which blended with his steed. He didn't bother with a saddle when he rode. He'd never fallen off his horse. When Wyatt was riding Tempest they were in perfect accord. The two of them were in harmony with the elements and stronger together because of it. Landon's words ran through his head about finding the storm chasers. There was also a sense of fear he never had when dealing with the thought of the angels. He'd only ever met their commander Raul a couple of times in his existence, but each time had struck a deep seeded terror in him. He understood why Landon didn't want him to show up in the kitchen. Landon had told him a few times about his old partner being punished. He never assumed it would happen to him. One reason he screwed around was because he liked making his job fun. He never once let the power go to his head. Even though he had a responsibility to do, his mind drifted back to George and the way she had made him feel. Being away from her now the world seemed unsteady. His power rattled around inside him and he wasn't sure why. Part of him was missing. He'd never encountered that with any woman before, not in his hundred years of existence. It was a physical need to touch her and be next to George. He couldn't shake it. She electrified him and that scared him.

He sensed Tempest's question and wished he could make out the words the horse really spoke. Landon was able to get pictures from his steed, but his mind wasn't as developed. He scratched Tempest behind the ears.

"I don't know, boy. There's a lot going on that I don't understand. I'm going to need your assistance. You think you can help me track down those storm chasers we saw the other day?"

The horse snorted and pawed the ground. He felt the horse's negative response and he kicked up some dirt dancing away from him. Wyatt got the feeling he was missing something. He walked toward the horse with his arms open. "Come on. You got more bloodhound in you than horse. You were with me the whole way on showing off in front of them. You know I love you."

Tempest gave him an evil eye and lifted his top lip at him. Wyatt knew he was being an ass and loving every minute of it. Over the years, he had come to understand his horse. "Fine. Don't help me, but I won't put in a good word with Landon about Whirlwind. I see how you've been looking at her."

The horse pawed the ground again and he sensed the beast's shock. Wyatt began to walk away and after a moment, he felt the horse tug on his shirt. He turned and patted Tempest. "Okay. I forgive you. We have to get this over with because I want to call George. I think you'll like her. She's... I don't know, but she's something." Wyatt swung his leg over the steed. Once they were together, the air swirled around him. He looked skyward at the blue sky and thought about a storm. At once, the breeze blew stronger until the stallion bucked and made him remember that he wasn't supposed to be using his powers outside of riding a storm, but he was itching to do something. Every time he got on his horse, their joined powers overwhelmed him. He was a part of something and it was one reason he loved being a Rider so much. He closed his eyes and remembered the field where he had stopped the twister, the white van, and the two people inside of it. The image of the boy inside came to mind first. He telegraphed it to Tempest knowing the horse could read his thoughts even if Wyatt couldn't understand his.

"Let's go get 'em." The horse reared. Wyatt hung onto his mane as he went off at full gallop down the field. The other horses knew to move out of the way. They rode hard and right when he didn't think they would make the fence, Tempest sailed over

the barricade. Before his hooves touched the ground, horse and rider became invisible and one with their element of air. Wyatt never got over the exhilaration of watching as the world flew by him while they traveled upon the currents leaving only the rustle of the trees and grass behind to show they had passed. The intensity of leaving human form behind and becoming elemental was mind-blowing, better than sex and for him that said a lot.

The world went by in a blur. When they began to slow down they were in the field. The tire tracks from the van were still imprinted in the mud. Tempest drew in a normal breath not even winded from their run. He saw the van and the boy in his mind. The horse sniffed the ground and craned his neck so he could see he had something in his teeth. It was a piece of silver material. Part of the weather balloon they were chasing.

"Can you find them with that?"

The horse kicked his back legs and nearly made him fall off. Wyatt clutched the horse with his thighs catching his amusement. "I'll take that as a yes. Okay then. Let's go." He wheeled the horse around so they were facing the open row left behind by the tornado and they dashed off again.

The next time they stopped, they were outside of a brick building with students lounging on the front steps. He saw books in their hands and knapsacks slung over their shoulders. This was a college campus. Maybe they weren't storm chasers after all. Maybe they were doing some kind of research. I wonder what they were doing. Oh well it doesn't matter now. I have to wipe out their memory and any pictures they might have taken of me to be sure that I got everything. He slid off Tempest's back feeling the solid ground under his boots once again. Taking a few steps, the wind that had gathered around him kicked up a small dirt tornado. He resumed human form. As he got closer to the building, his body began to solidify. As he passed people, they felt a small gust of wind which knocked them back until he was completely solid.

Once he climbed up the steps, he met the gaze of several of the girls. They gave him wide smiles and straightened up. This was the typical response he expected from most women, but this time he didn't feel the need to pursue any of them. His mind was

set on winning George over. *Damn, she's put a spell on me because there are some fine lookin' ladies here.* He approached one of them.

"Excuse me."

She perked up and grinned. "Yes."

"Can you tell me where the Meteorology Department is?"

"Why do you want to go there? I can tell you the weather and it's hot."

He chuckled. "I'm sure it is, but I really need to cool off. So if you don't mind."

She wilted, but the mischievous gleam remained in her eye. She touched his arm feeling his bicep. Normally that would have really gotten him going. "Why don't I show you?"

He removed her hand. "Not interested. Thanks." Wyatt shook his head and went inside. Once he did, he was met with a security guard.

"Meteorology Department?"

The guard pointed down the hall. "Take a right at the end. Up one flight. Be careful of crazy George."

Wyatt nodded. *Crazy George. Their professor must have an interesting side if the guard thinks he's wild.* He followed the directions and the closer he got to the department, he heard blaring rock music coming from one of the open doors. It was a Saturday so most of the doors were closed. He peeked in. A man in his early twenties sat playing airguitar thrashing his blond hair to the music. Wyatt smiled. *A man after my own heart.* He knocked, but the kid didn't hear him.

"Hello!" He yelled over the music.

The boy looked up. His cheeks reddened from being caught in the act. He brushed his hair out of his face and smiled. "Can I help you?"

"I hope so. I was looking for the Meteorology Department."

"Yup. That's me. Well not me. George runs it. I'm only a student. I'm Jeremy."

Wyatt looked around at all the equipment in the room. Computers, printers, cameras, and the weather balloon were on the back table. There were barometers and charts. There was even an old weather vane sitting in the corner with a horse on the top

of it. "You were conducting an experiment the other day with the weather balloon. Right?"

Jeremy glanced back to the balloon. "Yeah. Me and George were trying to get some readings off this twister. Man it was insane. Then the most outrageous thing happened. Well almost as crazy as George, but oh man."

He stepped in and closed the door. "What happened?"

The man before him grew more animated. "Shit. The twister was coming at us and then out of nowhere this dude appears on this horse. He jumped over the van and faced down the twister. It was almost like in the old west where the cyclone was the bad guy and we were at the O. K. Corral. God it was awesome."

He feigned disbelief. "That's amazing. I'd be willing to bet no one believes your story."

Jeremy shook his head. "Yeah. It was awesome. Oh, stupid me, what was it that you needed?"

Wyatt rested his hand on Jeremy's shoulder. At that moment, a zap of power passed between them. The boy grew lax and his eyes glazed. Wyatt had complete control over him. Part of being a Rider was also damage control at times when they dealt with humans so altering perceptions was par for the course. "I need you to tell me if you took any pictures, video, or any other evidence of the man or the horse that you saw."

"No evidence. We were only focused on the balloon and the experiment."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

He nodded. "Good. Now tell me when George will be back in." "We're supposed to meet tonight about six to go over the data we collected."

"Jeremy, you listen carefully. You don't feel well at all. You have a bug or you ate a bad burrito. You're going to go home and sleep until tomorrow night. You won't hear your phone or anyone knocking on the door. Is that understood?"

"Yes."

"Good. One last thing. There was no rider and there was no horse. All you remember is the twister coming at you. Then it stopped. Repeat."

Jeremy repeated everything Wyatt had said. He used a little more of his power and set the suggestion deep into Jeremy's brain making sure he didn't remember anything about him. Then he let him go. The boy jumped and blinked. "Ahh, Hi. Can I help you with something?"

Wyatt sighed. "I was looking for George."

Jeremy clutched his stomach and moaned. "Excuse me. I think I'm gonna puke. Must have been the burrito I ate this morning." He rushed past him, opened the door, and ran into the hallway.

Wyatt examined the weather balloon and some of the charts on the table beside it. He couldn't make heads or tails of them. He pushed them aside and walked to the teacher's desk. On it, he saw handwritten notes and a journal. He read the latest entry seeing that George was trying to find a better way to predict storms. Something about measuring the electrons in the air. He lost interest and scanned the remaining contents of the desk. He picked up a photograph of a woman because he'd seen her the night before in the bar dancing with two other men. Her arm was around another woman. He moved the stack of papers. When he saw the other occupant of the photograph, his eyes widened. It can't be. They can't be one in the same. He sunk into the chair and stared at the picture. "I can't do it. I won't do it," he said to the empty room.

A blast of air ruffled his hair. "You have to."

He slipped the picture into his pocket and faced Raul. "And what if I don't?" He tried to keep his rising fear of the commander under control. He also sensed his steed's presence in the room.

"You were the one who revealed yourself to her. Now to rectify your mistake in judgment you have to wipe her memory of everything she saw. The boy's been taken care of. Good job."

How could he explain the budding feelings he had for George? He couldn't just rub out her memory of him altogether. She was one in a million. Whatever connection

they had could not be wiped away all because the higher ups didn't appreciate the fact he was horsing around. "She's special. I don't know how to explain it. You can't make me erase her memory."

Raul stepped forward. The muscles twitched in his jaw. He slammed his hands down on the table where the weather balloon was. "Damn it, Wyatt. This isn't up for debate. Take care of it or I will. You don't want *me* to wipe her memories do you?" He shifted his coat so Wyatt saw the gun resting against his hip.

"You'd kill her. Why?"

"There's no reason for you to know that. Now do your job before actions are taken for you. I won't give you a second warning." Raul turned and vanished in a gust of wind.

Wyatt pounded his fist on the desk. The impact vibrated his bones, but didn't break his hand. "I can't. I won't." I have to talk to Landon. He gazed out the window and saw Tempest milling about on the grass invisible to everyone but him. The stallion looked up. His ears twitched back. Wyatt got a tingling sensation along his arms. There were a few clouds in the sky. Shit. He knew the signs too well. He raced from the building and outside to his horse. His meeting with George would have to be delayed a little while longer.

The storms came first.

No matter what.

Chapter Ten

George wasn't sure what was going on between her and Landon. The spark that flared between them passed through her system and made her shaky. The attraction she felt toward him was stronger than what she had felt for Wyatt, but not by very much. Wyatt was more the dangerous type and Landon was more controlled. He could deny all he wanted that he wasn't the man who had rescued her when she was a child, but they both knew it was true. She remembered him. She remembered his eyes and his soft touch. He had kept her safe and that feeling had never left her. Now it was creeping back over her again.

"What's going on? How are you doing this?" he asked. He slid his hand a little further up her arm. Even this little contact had made the hairs all over her body stand up and take notice. It made her mouth water. Seeing him there, with his salt and pepper hair, the worn jeans hugging his muscular thighs and his broad chest which made her want to see and touch what was underneath the wrapping. I have to get my head out of the gutter. I slept with his partner last night and now I'm ready to jump him.

"Whoa. I'm not doing anything. You touched me, remember. The only other person this has ever happened with was Wyatt last night and that was weird enough. Now please stop lying to me. I don't know how it was you, but you were the one who saved me. The twister was barreling right at me, but you were safe from it. The winds didn't even remove your hat. How is that possible?"

"It's not possible. You don't remember anything about it." His expression darkened. Another strong surge of energy moved up her arm. Her head got a little fuzzy, but she shook it off.

"Of course I remember it. How could I not? You—" Before she could react, he pulled her into him. She pushed him back against the couch. His mouth met hers in a frantic kiss. George couldn't stop kissing him as she nibbled at his lips. His mouth had an earthy taste to it with a hint of lemon. She loved lemon. She straddled him and ran her hands over his face into his hair. When she did, she felt the static charge. A bolt of energy crept down her spine. There was a storm coming and it was going to be close. Normally, she would have listened to her instincts and chased after it, but the attraction between them was beyond animal. She had to be with him. She tried fighting her body's urges, but couldn't. He wasn't either.

The heat between them ignited when he raked his fingers along her sides. Landon worked his lips along her throat biting here and there. George fought to catch her breath, but she wanted to feel all of him. They were coming together like two violent storms and merging into one. After a moment, she pulled away and took in a deep breath. She had to look away from his enticing eyes. His lips glistened with their shared saliva. His cheeks were red and she was warm.

"I'm sorry. I don't know what came over me. I don't normally jump guys and smother them with kisses."

Landon trailed his fingers down her back slowly. She felt the energy trails and it made her back arch. "I've never reacted this way with a woman who has just slept with my best friend. George, we shouldn't do this. I think Wyatt really likes you and that's a huge step for him. I think you should turn your back on the two of us before this goes any further. Walk away and forget that you ever met us. It's too dangerous."

Dangerous. What's he talking about? "I don't care. I can't fight this. Having Wyatt touch me it's like I'm electrified and with you it's even more intense. Deeper." She began kissing his neck and nibbling on his ear. Landon pulled her shirt from her jeans and slipped his hands underneath it. His deft fingers pinched her nipples and hardened

them instantly. Her heart increased its rhythm. She felt his cock growing harder the longer she sat on top of him.

"We can't. We shouldn't." He kissed her neck running his tongue along her jugular vein. His voice deepened taking on a husky tone. She undid his belt, and then the zipper of his jeans. He didn't fight her. After that, she took her shirt off and dropped it on the couch next to her. I can't believe I'm doing this. Two guys in less than twenty-four hours, but it feels so right. What would it be like to get them together? How would I react to both of them touching me? The idea made her shake and she was wet. She began to grind against Landon's cock feeling it stir. He pressed his face to the valley between her breasts, above her heart and held her for a moment.

The air around her crackled. His palms rested against the small of her back. His tongue and mouth enclosed one of her breasts. He bit down on her nipple. It seemed they were both struck by lightning. The jolts of energy passing through her made her hot and near to losing her mind. She began unbuttoning his shirt to feel the toned muscles underneath. His tongue flicked over her nipple hardening it even more. She closed her eyes to the sensations wracking her body. Her gift stirred more. The air was moving around them. His free hand slid under along the waistband of her jeans. Her nerves were a maze of passion that ignited everywhere the air passed over her. Landon bit down again. The bolt of pain was so pleasurable that she clenched her thighs together to keep from having an orgasm.

"We can stop," her voice wavered. *God, I don't know if I can stop*. The longer they were together, the more it seemed they were fusing together on a greater level. She was being engulfed by a feeling of serenity just from being in his arms. It was almost as strong as when she was one with the storm. She opened her eyes and looked at his chest. Two inch jagged scars were scattered all over his torso. She traced one of them feeling the smooth skin of the mark. Landon stopped. "What happened to you?"

"Nothing. Forget it." The mood was broken. He pulled his shirt together, but she caught his face between her hands. She stared into his eyes and saw them darken.

"Tell me," George whispered.

"I-I —"

He doesn't want to tell me. Whatever it is, it must be the reason he's warned me to stay away from him and Wyatt. God help me I can't. I don't know why, but I have this feeling I need the both of them in my life. "You can trust me."

She kissed the side of his neck working down to one of the scars. Once her tongue touched the one directly over his heart, Landon bellowed a groan. The muscles rippled in his chest. Wind kicked up around them. He guided her mouth back to his lips and un-zippered her pants. She got up and broke her kiss for a moment to slip out of her clothes. When she did, she shimmied down his jeans and boxers releasing his fully engorged cock. She took it in her hands for a moment, feeling the fullness and loved how round and large it was. He was bigger than Wyatt was, but not as long.

"Do you want to fuck me?" she asked.

"Yes. I don't have any protection. I wasn't—"

She should have cared, but she didn't. She needed to feel him skin on skin with no barriers. Her mouth sought his and captured it. Whatever her power was, it washed over her burning along her skin. The current between them seemed hot enough to spark a lightning fire. The breeze kicked up. She heard the rustling of paper falling to the floor. Her tongue met his and twined together in a French kiss. His hands settled on her hips and guided her down onto his full cock. At the moment he entered her, she knew their pairing was right. It rattled in her bones that he was a part of her, but there was something missing. Before she could realize what, he drove his length deep inside of her. A wave of ecstasy washed over her and she was lost. He began kissing her breasts once more teasing one nipple and then the other. Biting and suckling until she was crying out. The rhythm between them was slow, but every time he lifted her up, he hit her buried bud and drove her into more of a frenzy. She grasped his forearms while he began to increase his tempo. George let go and when she did a charge so immense gripped her that she thought a twister was going to come barreling through her house.

"Landon, faster."

He obliged her until he was pounding into her so fast she could barely hold on. Her skin was on fire. He groaned and gave her one final thrust. At that moment, she

came and collapsed against him. George felt safe in his arms. She breathed in his musky scent and was satisfied. The weighted sensation she got when a storm was coming hadn't left her. She brushed it off and trailed her fingers over a few of his scars. She couldn't imagine what kind of a weapon made them.

"I didn't come here for this you know."

She kissed his chest, swirling her tongue around his erect nipple. "I know. I didn't plan any of this either. Tell me what happened to you."

He hugged her closer. She heard the far away tone in his voice. "These are for going against everything that I pledged. I got these for saving a little girl a quarter of a century ago. For some reason, she was standing in the middle of the path of a humongous storm. One of the hardest ones I'd ever ridden to contain. I saw her while I was spinning and spinning almost trying to take off into the middle of the cloud. I don't know what it was, but something about her struck me. Her innocence I guess. I couldn't let her die as I had others in the past. Something tugged on my consciousness. So I took form and protected her all the while her father screamed behind me to save her. The funnel cloud passed over us and the little girl clung to me. Something passed between us I didn't quite understand. Honestly I haven't been able to get her out of my head all this time."

"Why would you be punished for saving me?" She searched his eyes.

His fingers wound through her hair. "Because you were supposed to die that day. When I saved you, I messed around with the Universal Law. For six months, they held me captive. And—" he hesitated.

"Tell me the rest of it."

He shook his head. "I-I can't. I've told you enough already. I fear if I tell you more there could be severe repercussions. I don't want them to know about you. We have to figure out what's happening. You touching me and what's flowing between us. It shouldn't be this way. I feel... I don't know what I feel."

She bit her lip. "Does it feel good?" She clenched her thighs together feeling him still inside her.

He laid his head back and thrust up into her once again. "It feels wonderful. You feel wonderful. Better than anything I've ever felt. I don't know what's going to happen, but I can tell you that I don't want to let you go. And—" he stiffened. When he did, a weight descended over her shoulders. The air switched. She unwound from his arms and gathered her clothes. Her entire body was heavy. He stood up and gathered his wits.

"There's a storm coming." They both said together.

"Wait." Landon said. "How do you know that?"

George shrugged. "I've always known when a front blows in. I can't explain it. I feel it deep in my bones. The weight of the air and the static electricity. My bones ache from the drop in the pressure. This one's going to be a whopper. It's turning all ready in the atmosphere. Spinning."

She opened her arms letting the power of the storm fill her. She tilted her head to the right feeling the squall drift that way. A shiver of sheer delight encompassed her. Besides the storm, Landon's aura rubbed against her larger than life. He reached out and touched her, forcing her to open her eyes. When his fingers collided with her flesh, a jolt of pure bliss and pain rolled through her. She doubled over. When Landon took his hand away, the agony receded. It had been like this with Wyatt. The colliding and the receding of a storm.

"I know what you are. You're very rare."

"What am I?"

"You're a human barometer. A weather witch. I wonder if that's one reason why you react the way you do around us." He shivered. "I have to go. The storm is calling. And it's my job to keep it under control." He took her face between his hands and kissed her. George was shocked by the sudden admission and the quick kiss. It sent bolts of ecstasy along her already sensitive nerves.

"Can I see you again?"

Landon turned from the front door and smiled. "Oh yeah." She didn't hear his car start. When she looked outside, he'd vanished but his truck remained. Where the hell did he go?

A blast of cold wind went by her and she heard a whinny. She raced onto the porch and heard the echo of hooves on the road. Glancing up at the cloudy sky, she knew that the storm wasn't coming toward her, but she prayed for the people caught in its path.

Chapter Eleven

Landon patted Whirlwind when they were back in their enclosure. Exhilaration flowed through him. Wyatt was brushing his steed. The most recent storm had been a doozy. It had spawned two tornados which meant they had to tag team to keep them in motion and turn the storms. All the while he was wrangling, his mind was on what to do about George. She was one of a kind. He understood now why his body had such a violent reaction to her and how she made him feel. Since she was a true weather witch, her body was sensitive to the drop in atmospheric pressure. Science hadn't proven that humans could foretell the weather. He had met a few in his day, but none exactly like her. It seemed she was tuned in to the raging storms on some elemental level. His mount nipped him lightly because he stopped his patting. She also sent him a vision of a heart and then one of George standing on the porch of her house with the wind whipping around her. Landon smiled seeing her and feeling the rush of such emotion. It had been a long time since he'd felt that way about anyone. He never believed in love at first sight. Or love at first touch, but she had him hooked.

"Yes. I guess I'm in love." He glanced at Wyatt and that complicated things. Shit. I have to talk to him about this. In all fairness, he did hook up with her first. This was never something I expected and he really cares about her. I wonder if that's why he has such a stick up his ass. Either that or he's pissed at me for making him take care of the storm chasers. Whatever it is, I'll drag it out of him.

Whirlwind bumped her head against his shoulder and gestured over toward the barn. He slapped her rump lovingly. "Fine. Leave me and go get something to eat. I'm

sure Gina will have a treat for you. If not, you'll use your persuasive powers on her." His steed nickered a few times and shook her head, laughing.

Landon watched the beauty still marveling that he was hers. Not that he could claim ownership to the force of nature that the horse truly was, but it was nice to know they went so well together. Tempest trotted behind his mare and they were getting a little more playful than normal. *Wonder what that's all about?* Wyatt stood at the edge of the field staring at the sky.

I was too hard on him.

"Hey, Wyatt."

His fellow Rider turned. He saw the tight line on his lips and the haunted look to his eye. He knew the look all too well. Wyatt had it in the first days when they'd just met and he would talk about his wife. He understood the deep scar her death had left on his partner's soul. It had been a long time since he had seen the sadness in his eyes. "What happened?"

"Raul came to me today after I found one of the storm chasers and erased his memory. He wanted me to take care of the other one."

"Well that's a good thing. I know seeing him can be daunting. Look, I wanted to apologize for being a hard ass about this. I didn't want you to end up the way I did or Paul. That's all. You're a good guy. We've been together a long time. You're like my brother and—"

"That's not all he said to me."

"What else did he want?"

"He ordered me to take care of the other storm chaser who was there. If I don't he said he's going to kill her."

"Well just erase her memory and be done with it. Then he won't have to be involved and you don't need to feel conflicted about her death. It's as simple as that. Look, I need to talk to you about George. I went to see her today. While I was there, something happened between us. I wasn't planning on it, but one thing led to another,

things got heated and before I realized what was happening she and I ended up making love on her couch."

Wyatt's eyes widened. Landon hated being the cause of pain for his partner.

He knew something would have to be worked out because he didn't want to lose his friendship or trust. All at once, Wyatt was on top of him. A fist connected with his eye and another one with his lip. Landon pushed his partner off him and scrambled to get up before he was punched again. This time Wyatt's boot connected to his gut. The air was knocked out of him. He rolled and got out of the way before another kick came down.

"Wyatt, stop. I don't want to hurt you."

"How could you, Landon!" he spat.

Landon made it to his feet, caught Wyatt's arm on the swing, and wrapped it around his back immobilizing him. "Enough. I don't want to hurt you. There's no reason to be fighting." He released him and walked away wiping a trickle of blood from his mouth. The side of his face hurt from being punched, but the pain was fading because of their fast healing abilities.

Wyatt glared at him. "No reason to be fighting. You slept with the woman I'm falling in love with. That's reason enough. You pushed her out the door in the morning and you fuck her in the afternoon. What the fuck! Did you use your boyish charm and woo her? Or was she really jonesing for you all along?"

"It wasn't like that. She wasn't expecting me at all. I wasn't expecting it. She's special."

Wyatt seethed and got right in his face. "You're damn right she is. I won't let you spoil it for the two of us. Do you know how long I've been waiting for a woman I could love since my Patricia died? Do you know how dead my heart has been this last century? I won't let you or Raul take her from me!" He began to walk away.

Raul. What the hell does he have to do with it? He caught up to Wyatt. "What about Raul?"

"I was doing as you directed and was going to wait for the other storm chaser until I found this." Wyatt pulled out the photograph from his pocket.

Landon took it and saw the two people in the picture. One was a woman he didn't recognize and the other was George. His stomach dropped. "This is a joke right?"

Dread washed over him. If Raul knew about George then there was more to her than just being a storm chaser. She was involved with them now. He had saved her. Does this have something to do with my rescuing her all those years ago? Or is this some twisted quirk of fate?

"It's no joke. She's not a storm chaser. She's a Meteorology Professor at the college. She was doing some experiment on how to forecast storms earlier so it could save people's lives. I-I can't do it. I've thought about it since this morning. I—" he shook his head and balled his fists together. He yelled into the open field.

Landon understood the frustration and the betrayal he was feeling. "Let me talk to Raul. I'll see if we can do something. Wyatt, about George, you said that when you touched her your powers went out of control. The same thing happened with me. I think it's because she's a weather witch. She can predict storms. Her research makes sense."

"I don't care about her research or what she is. I just want to hold her and protect her and the thought that you were with her. Is that what brothers do? You're right, we've been together for over a century, had some pretty good times over the years. But this is the lowest thing you've ever done to me."

"Wyatt."

"Go fuck yourself, Landon." He stormed off to the barn.

Landon knew better than to follow him. Let him cool off, we can talk again later.

I understand why he's upset with me. I would be too. Shit. He kicked a clod of dirt and spied Gina in the driveway throwing bags into the back of her pickup. He sighed knowing he had to smooth things over with her. Why do I get myself into these messes? He headed toward the ranch manager.

"Gina."

She stopped and glared at him. "What do you want? Come to pick another fight the way you did with Wyatt? Let me guess it was all over that girl from this morning."

He looked down at George's smiling face on the picture in his hand. He couldn't let her die either. He'd protected her once and he would do it again. He slipped her photo into his pocket. "Yeah. It was about her."

"All of a sudden you're not gay for her the way you are with me. Or did she suddenly grow a dick and that's why you're interested?"

"I deserved that."

"Damn right you do. You lied to me, Landon. You and Wyatt. I can't work for a bunch of liars. I've kept my mouth shut about the strange shit I've seen around here."

He touched her shoulder. "I know we lied to you, but there are reasons why we did. The whole gay thing. That was Wyatt's idea and by the time I had the balls to tell you it was too late so I just kept up the ruse. You're a good friend. Please stay with us. We need you here. Especially when we're gone."

He could use his power on her, but he didn't want to resort to that. He'd never forced her to do anything against her will and he didn't plan on starting, but he couldn't tell her what he was.

"You guys really have a thing for this chick, don't you? I heard the way you were arguing in the paddock. I think the whole ranch did. I've never seen you too go at it like that."

"I never meant to harm you in any way or hurt your feelings. And yes this is about the woman from this morning. It's complicated. Please will you stay? We need you around here."

She sighed. Landon knew she was melting. "I want a raise and I want you to hire someone else to work with me. I do a lot around here which you guys don't even know about. I also want another week's vacation."

She was really pushing it. "Fine, but the raise is negotiable. You pick out a couple of candidates and Wyatt and I will discuss it."

"Well that might be hard because I already hired him. He's been working with me for the past two weeks. His name's Cliff. He's been working part-time learning the ropes. He's in school. I'll bring him around later to meet you."

"What about all the crazy stuff you saw? Will you tell him?"

Gina bit her lip. "You hurt my feelings, Landon. I hate to admit it, but I've had a crush on you for a long time. I've told myself it was stupid since you weren't available. Whatever else you do, I'm sure can be overlooked with the right amount of money. Deep down you're a good guy. Wyatt is too, but I'm at my wits end right now. Make it worth my while." She patted him on the shoulder and strolled past him heading back to the barn. He shook his head and laughed seeing how easily she had manipulated him. Blackmail is more like it, but it isn't like I can't afford to pay her more. Being around for a couple of centuries builds up one's bank account.

He slipped his hand into his pocket and took out the picture. His next problem was dealing with Raul.

Chapter Twelve

After spending time in the barn mucking stalls, Wyatt headed back to his part of the house and avoided his partner. How could Landon have done this to me? Stealing away the one person I've found after all these years. Now George will want him and not me. I can't let that happen. I won't let that happen. At least he said he'd deal with Raul. I can't imagine having to erase her memory. God, even touching her is hard. Being without her near is difficult enough. What am I going to do? He glanced at his bureau and saw the number she had scribbled down. She was supposed to be busy tonight going over her data, but he doubted if she was doing that since he had erased Jeremy's memory. Fuck it.

He grabbed his cell and punched in her number. It rang a few times and went to voicemail. "Hey, George. This is Wyatt. Can you call me so we can talk please? Landon told me what happened and...fuck. Please call me back."

He hung up and threw the phone down on the bed. He needed to get out of there. He grabbed his hat, car keys, and slipped out of the house. The sun was setting and the urge for a drink ran through his soul.

He couldn't get the picture of her and Landon together out of his mind. It had felt so good punching him in the face. His knuckles tightened on the steering wheel. *I can't do this. She has to be the one to choose. I don't know what I'll do if she's going to go with him.* His anger escalated. The force of the wind began to push the Jeep this way and that. He tried to regain control of his emotions, but it wasn't working. All he could think of was the mind-blowing night he had with George, then Raul's instructions to wipe her

memory combined with Landon touching her, pleasuring George, and her moaning Landon's name when it should have been his. *I can't do this*. He pushed his foot down on the gas pedal trying to outrace the images in his head when out of nowhere Tempest appeared before him. He stepped on the brake, but the Jeep fishtailed and went off the road hitting a telephone pole head on. Something sharp stabbed his shoulder. His leg was crushed from the impact and the steering wheel pressed against his sternum. Before he could pull himself out, pain overwhelmed him and darkness dragged him under.

* * * *

Something warm was pressed against his flesh. It made him open his eyes. When he did, he saw Landon peering down at him. He tried to get up, but every muscle and bone ached. He glanced around and found he was back in his room at the ranch. The moon shone through the window. He flexed his fingers, surprised he could move them.

"What happened?" His voice came out a harsh whisper.

"Your sorry ass died is what happened. First time is always the hardest. Hurts like a mother. You'll be fine by morning."

"Died? I don't remember anything." Dread overwhelmed him. "What about George? Is she okay? Did Raul—"

"I haven't called him yet. I was going to, but I've been wracking my brain trying to figure out a way around it. He didn't give you a time limit so it's okay for now. Don't worry. Look, I'm sorry about the fight we had earlier. I hated that you sped off like that."

He shook his head and sat up. It even hurt to do that. *How could I have died? I didn't go anywhere.* "How did I die?"

His partner got up. "The steering wheel was shoved into your chest crushing your rib cage. The Jeep was torn in half. How fast were you going? I had to make up some story so the paramedics and the police would believe me."

Wyatt laughed. "What did you say?"

"I said we were testing a new remote control car system and it got out of hand and that you were only a dummy so there was no need to bring you to the hospital."

He chuckled and it hurt to do that. He began coughing. "So I healed?"

"Duh. Of course you did. You've been shot and stabbed before. You know how fast we mend. I'd forgotten you hadn't actually died. It takes a little while for us to come back from that. Rest for now. We'll talk more in the morning. You owe Tempest an apple or something for coming to get me." Landon left the room.

Even though he'd been a Rider for a long time, he had never died. He believed in the power and the immortality, but now he understood what it meant. They couldn't die. At least he didn't know of a way they could die. Tempest poked his head in through the window and gazed at him. He sensed the horse's concern.

"I'm fine thanks."

Good because I get tired of looking out for you.

He was stunned. "What did you say?"

Wow, it finally took you dying to understand me. I think it's a miracle.

"Holy shit. I can understand you word for word."

Tempest laughed. Yeah. Shows you what a hard head you have. I'm glad that you're okay.

Wyatt wasn't sure if he was crazy or not, but he heard the horse's thoughts. He'd always wanted to. Now it was true. "So thanks for getting Landon. I appreciate it."

Someone has to look out for you when you fly off the handle. All over a woman. Humans. I'll never understand you.

"She's not just a woman."

I know all about George. So does Whirlwind.

"Do you know anything that we can do? I can't lose her."

The horse peered at him with deep amber eyes and flicked his ears back. *I'm not supposed to be telling you this, but there's a way you can get around Raul's ruling.*

"What is it?"

Turn her into a Rider.

He blinked. Was that even possible? He'd never heard of three Riders for a certain territory. They were always sent in pairs. "How can we make her into a Rider?"

She's a unique human. She stirs passion and emotions in each of you. The last time she touched both of you at once, she blacked out. Who said she wasn't a born Rider? They are rare, but it happens. The power inside of her might extend to more than what you think. You just have to unleash it. The two of you have to help her discover and use her power.

Both of us. He shook his head. Sharing with Landon wasn't something he had ever considered. But he couldn't lose her either. Maybe if that was what it took. "For a horse, you sure do seem to know a lot about all of this."

The stallion kicked the side of the house and the room shook. A biting wind raced through the bedroom. *I am more than a horse. I'm an elemental. You should know that by now. I'm older than the hills. When life was first breathed onto this planet, I came into existence.*

"Sorry if I insulted you."

I'm not insulted. I'm just saying. I know a few more things about this whole organization than you. Take my word for it if you want to save your lady friend. Now get some sleep.

Wyatt wasn't going to argue with him on that. With the new information, he was going to talk to Landon in the morning. If there was a way to save her, then he would do anything. He hoped that Landon would agree. He closed his eyes and his thoughts drifted toward George.

Chapter Thirteen

George gazed at her reflection. Her hair was all over the place and her eyes were puffy. The pressure of the storm weighed heavily on her. Everything hurt including her thighs after the two bouts of lovemaking she'd had in less than twenty-four hours. Of course that trail of thinking made her realize the snafu she was in now. She liked both men. Was drawn to both of them. It's a pity I can't have the two of them and call it a day. That'd make it so much easier. Then I wouldn't have to worry about choosing. She ran her hand through her hair and tugged on it. I really don't want to choose. Each of them makes me feel complete except on a different level. Crap.

She sighed and hopped in the shower. The warm water helped revive her and relieved some of her aching muscles. After Landon left, she'd gone to the college to meet with Jeremy, but he never showed. When she knocked on his door at the dorm, his roommate answered and said that he was sleeping. Something about a bad burrito. She'd gone over a few of the readings herself, but the later she stayed, the more uncomfortable she felt at the office so she went back home. Landon's truck remained in her driveway. She assumed he would come back and get it, but so far he hadn't. She was too tired to drive it back tonight so opted to do it in the morning. Now it was morning.

Out of the shower and dressed, she stood on the front porch of her parents' farmhouse. Her father's tractor was rusting in the last field he had plowed. She owned the surrounding ten acres, but there used to be more. Across the road rows of soybeans

ripened under the sun. That land used to be hers too, but it was too much upkeep for her and she wasn't into farming so she'd sold it off to the local farmers. Land developers had approached her a few times, but she turned them down no matter how much money they threw at her. She had enough to be comfortable and made it work on her salary. The house was in disrepair, but her project for the next year was to fix it up. The bright sun shone with only a few wispy clouds splashed across the blue. The forecast called for a clear day, but the way the air passed over her, she knew something would be stirred up. She just wasn't sure what it would turn into.

Well if he's not going to come back and get his truck, I'll have to take it to him. Now to remember the way. She walked out to the vehicle and saw it was locked. Running her hands underneath the wheel wells and the bumper she was hoping to find some kind of a hide a key. Nothing.

Biting her lip, she headed inside and stared at her living room remembering he had pretty much been on the couch. *I wonder*. She pulled the cushions off, but the couch hadn't swallowed his keys. She moved her foot and heard something jingle. Fishing under the sofa, she came away with a key ring. *Jackpot*. She grabbed her purse and headed out the door. She hopped into the truck and then looked at his GPS. She turned it on and noticed there was a home button. *Why not?* She pressed it and it gave her directions to the house.

After a thirty-minute drive, she pulled into the ranch. Seeing it in the daylight was even better. The horses were amazing. She parked and saw two horses, one a white and the other was a mottled gray. One that she had seen before. It eyed her. She walked over to the white one and began to pet it. Once she did, a zing went up her arm.

"I know you don't I?"

It flicked its ears at her. A shiver went down her spine and she felt a weight on her back. They have to be close.

"Tempest, are you trying to woo her?"

George spun around to see Wyatt standing behind her. When she looked down, she saw his scuffed boots with the distinct silver buckles shaped like tornados. Then it

dawned on her where she had seen the horse before. He came to her and then stopped. Her smile widened. When she got closer to him, her body shivered remembering the night they shared. Her cheeks burned when her thoughts drifted to Landon and what she had done with him. She could barely look Wyatt in the eye. Seeing him now, she understood she carried feelings for both of them. *Shit*.

"Hey, Wyatt." He wrapped his arms around her. Her whole body ached, but it felt good. Her bones were heavy. She rubbed her cheek against his stubbled one. It felt normal and right to be in his arms. She stared into his eyes and then kissed him lightly on the lips wondering if he would reject her, but he opened to her and traced his tongue along her lips. "I wasn't sure if you'd be happy to see me."

He smoothed the hair from her face. "Of course I am, but there are some things we need to talk about."

She chuckled. "Yeah like you telling me that you and Landon have the same profession."

His eyes narrowed. "You know? How?"

"I don't know exactly what you are, but I know you were the one who was showing off and jumping over my van the other day. What the hell were you doing?"

He put a finger to her lips. "Not out here. The wind has ears."

He threaded his fingers through hers. She snuggled against him and inhaled his masculine scent. When she gripped his arm, her gift weighed on her more than it had before. They went inside and she was still clutching Landon's keys. They walked into the kitchen. She put the keys down and leaned against the counter. Wyatt stood across the room. The separation put a sense of tension in the air. Gazing at him, from across the room, she bit her lip it was so hard to believe someone as handsome as Wyatt was interested in her. The slope of his nose, the chiseled chin, it all made her mouth water. She cleared her throat.

"Do you want something to drink?"

"No. I'm good. Thanks. God, this is awkward. I assume Landon told you about yesterday." She stared at the floor and couldn't meet his gaze. Her cheeks burned. The

betrayal she felt was creeping up on her. Tears lined her eyes. She sniffled when Wyatt lifted her chin so she could look into his eyes.

"Please don't blame yourself for anything. There's a reason for what's happened between the three of us. I'll admit the idea of you with another man, especially my partner, made me furious, but then we talked about it."

She was confused. She could see the hurt in his eyes, but he wasn't blaming her. Wyatt gave every appearance of having accepted what had happened with Landon. "What did you talk about? What's going on?"

He ran his finger down her cheek hearing the static charge between them. There was a mischievous gleam in his eye. "We need you to put your trust in us?"

"It all depends on what's going on."

"Wyatt, stop charming her and let's sit her down and explain what's going on," Landon said from the hallway.

The hair rose on her arms when he entered the room. Her bones ached more and her ears began to ring. Landon was dressed in tight jeans but no shirt. Looking at the scars on his torso made her wonder exactly what had happened to him. Whatever punishment he received, for saving her life, it didn't seem fair to leave him scarred like that. He should have been rewarded as a hero. The torment he had suffered opened her heart. Wyatt retreated and pulled open the fridge. Landon smiled and placed his hand on her cheek. A zing went through her. His lips met hers in a sweet kiss before pulling away. Having them so close together made it hard for her to breathe, let alone concentrate. Wyatt gripped his water bottle and his mouth was set in a hard line, but he didn't say anything once Landon pulled away. Her cheeks burned and she felt very much put on the spot.

"So what's the big secret? Who are you guys really?"

Wyatt threw Landon a bottle and then handed one to her. "Why don't we go into the living room? It's more comfortable." Landon gestured down the hall. They all followed into a spacious living room with a stone fireplace that reminded her of the old time hearths where people did all their cooking. A large leather sofa sat before the

fireplace. A cord of wood rested next to the grate waiting to be burned. The room smelled of old leather. There's the poker table set up in the corner with cards, she remembered seeing it the other night. She sat on the sofa and sank back into it. Wyatt sat on the arm and Landon on the seat next to her. They both kept their distance which was good because it was hard for her to focus around the two of them.

"Okay so you guys talked and now you're going to play a hand of poker to see who wins me?"

Both men chuckled.

"No poker games. You asked us what we are. By telling you this, we're going against the oath we took never to reveal our true natures. We are Storm Riders. We always ride in pairs. Each pair is assigned to a territory. Different riders for different storms. Some—" Landon began.

"There are some who ride hurricanes; others direct earthquakes, sand storms, typhoons, and fire storms. We each—"

Landon gave Wyatt a look and he quieted.

"Sorry. We don't get to talk about this much and there isn't an annual convention. We only get to meet other riders once in a great while."

"Going from what Wyatt said, we normally wrangle tornados, sometimes violent thunderstorms. Each Rider is immortal. We heal fast and very little can scar or kill us. Normally the Storm Riders develop the powers of the elements and storms they are associated with. For us that's air, wind, lightning and thunder if we get really pissed off. Sometimes rain. When we ride, we become one with the elements. We have other abilities, but those are the basic ones."

George stared at the two of them. What they said made sense it just seemed farfetched. Of course it does, but I've seen it firsthand. Landon saved me when I was a kid. Wyatt jumped over the van and commanded the twister to go away the other day. If they are both infused with the power of the storms then that explains why I end up going haywire around them. They throw my senses off. That's why I blacked out when I touched the two of them at the same time in the kitchen. Sensory overload. But God when they touch me it's awesome. "So why break the secrecy with me?"

"Y-you believe us?" Wyatt stammered.

She glanced at him enjoying the shocked expression. "Yes I believe you. I remember Landon rescuing me when I was a little girl and I saw you the other day. Neat trick with the tornado by the way."

Landon touched her knee to get her attention. "We're breaking our vow because we don't want to see you get hurt. Wyatt was told to erase the memories of the two storm chasers he encountered the other day because he was showing off."

The color drained from her face. "Me and Jeremy? Why?"

"No one can know about us. Our Commander, Raul, told me I had to or I'd be punished by his superiors and...well you see what they did to Landon, so I did what I was told. I went to your office yesterday morning and altered the memory of your assistant. I didn't know at the time the other storm chaser was you until I saw the picture on your desk. Raul came and told me I had to wipe out your memory too or he..." Wyatt looked down at his hands.

She glanced at Landon. His expression had hardened. "What is it you're not telling me?"

"If we don't cleanse your memory of our encounters then Raul's going to kill you," Landon whispered.

Panic flooded her. *Kill me!* "But why? I didn't do anything. I'd never tell anyone about you."

Landon shook his head. "It doesn't matter. He wants you taken care of. <u>We</u> talked about this earlier, neither of us wants to let you go. We've come to the conclusion we're both in love with you."

"Is that true?" she asked Wyatt.

He nodded. "I know I seem like a hot shot but ever since I lost my wife, I've been trying to find someone to love. I never thought I'd find love again until we danced in the bar. You make me feel whole again. I can't explain it." He met her eyes and then looked down at his jeans. His cheeks turned red.

"What about you, Landon?"

"You're a true force of nature. I haven't felt this way about anyone ever. I think it's stronger than love. I don't want to lose you. I know you haven't known either of us for very long. This is really unconventional, but we don't want to let you go. And it's the only way we know of to protect you."

"So how does this play into me not getting killed since you don't want to remove my recollection of you?"

The men looked at one another. Wyatt answered. "We make you into a Rider. The only way for us to do that is if you're with both of us at the same time. Then there's no way that Raul can say anything about you being taken from us."

She stood up. "Whoa! Guys, I adore both of you probably more than I can fathom at the moment. And sleeping with you wasn't something I planned on. It just happened. Now you *both* want to get in bed with me at the same time. I've never—" She shook her head honestly not sure she could handle both of them at the same time even though she had contemplated it. "I'm no supernatural being. I'm a science professor who's trying to find a better way of detecting storms. Or crack whatever it is that makes me be able to sense storms. Whether it's a drop in the barometric pressure or an act of God. I can't just stop my life."

Landon tried to calm her. "We're not asking you to put your life on hold. You can still be a teacher, just when the storms come you have to go. Please, George, it's the only way to save your life."

She shook her head and pushed past them. This wasn't what she expected at all. Not sure where she was going, she headed through the kitchen, back into the paddock, and down into the barn. The sound and the smells of the horses drew her. She was walking, trying to clear her head, when she walked right into a bale of hay coming at her. She stumbled against the barn wall, but kept her footing. When the bale went down, she saw a face that she recognized from the bar.

"Cliff, right?"

"Oh my God, are you okay?" He dropped the hay.

"Yeah, I'm fine. What are you doing here?"

"Waiting for you actually."

She gave him a questioning look. "Me? I thought you were with Trina. Wait. How did you know I'd be here?"

His smile widened. He grew taller, towering over her. His hair lengthened. His eyes darkened and he was dressed all in black. "Your friend was only a distraction. I've been waiting for us to have a private chat. Have the boys told you all their secrets? I figured they would sooner or later."

She inched along the wall, heading toward the door, but the barn door slammed shut when a large gust blew through. She bolted toward it and tried to force it open but couldn't make it budge. Something held it shut. She heard the pounding of boots. Landon and Wyatt banged on the door trying to get it open.

"Let them try. They won't be able to get it open. I was hoping I wouldn't have to do this." He pushed his coat aside and revealed a gun. He pulled it out and examined the barrel. She assumed it was full of bullets.

"You really don't have to do that. I'd never tell anyone about them. I swear."

He clicked the barrel shut and pointed the gun at her. "It's not that simple. A rule is a rule. And if my Riders don't follow the rules they know they must be punished. This small infraction doesn't mean they will have to be taken to the higher-ups. Your death will be punishment enough I think. I don't understand why humans like you are even allowed to be born. All you do is cause trouble for us."

"George, what's going on?" Landon yelled.

He aimed the gun at her and released the safety.

"Please, you don't have to do this. No!" she cried.

Landon pounded on the doors again. She was frozen with fear. The evil spark in his eye brightened and twisted his smile. George shut her eyes expecting the pain. Time stopped for a split second. Her mind flashed back to the instant she had been transfixed by the twister which had changed her life. Her father was screaming behind her. This time she could hear him. He was telling her to run. A tear slipped from her lashes because she wasn't able to. She tried to break away from the fear holding her but she

wasn't able to move no matter how much her father's screams urged her to. Time started again when the gunshot exploded and deafened her for a moment. A puff of air brushed her cheek as something whizzed past her ear. She opened her eyes and saw Wyatt on top of her attacker. The gun was on the floor. She turned to look behind her and saw the shot had missed her by centimeters.

"Raul, what the hell do you think you're doing?"

The door burst open. Landon gripped his left shoulder. Blood trickled down his chest. He darted in and grabbed the revolver when Raul threw Wyatt off his back. Wyatt flew back a few feet and banged his head on one of the barn doors. Landon pointed the gun at Raul.

The larger man put up his hands. "Do you really believe you can kill me with that? I'm one of the original Riders. It would bring down more anger from above if you killed me. Do you want to go through that kind of punishment again?"

George touched Landon's arm. "It's not worth it."

"You don't know him. He won't stop until you're dead and next time we might not be there to save you."

Her gaze darted to Raul, but he had disappeared. "What the—?" She spun around. Wyatt was getting up and Landon held the gun out before him. Suddenly an arm wrapped her waist and another went around her throat making it hard for her to breath. Strong fingers wrenched her head to the side. Landon stepped toward George and Raul.

"I wouldn't if I were you. One wrong move and ... snap. There goes her pretty little head. I'll tear it off and you won't have anything left. Now give me the gun and I'll let her go."

George tried not to panic, but it was hard. A death knell tolled through her mind. It was hard to breathe, but underneath it all she sensed the power inside the man holding her. It was strong, stronger than Landon or Wyatt. If I open myself up to it, what will happen? Will I shut down the way I did when I touched both Landon and Wyatt? I can't let them get killed over me. I have to try something. She closed her eyes and tried to use the

ability on purpose. With her guard down, the buzzing in her ears increased. The charge in her system crept over her skin. It seemed she was surrounded by a violent storm. Thunder rumbled in her ears. Jolts of electricity passed from Raul into her. She tried not to convulse from the power. She needed to go limp and focus on the storm inside Raul. On his actions. George forced herself to go lax. Her instincts kicked in and said her captor was going to turn quickly. A fraction later, he did.

"Raul, let her go!" Wyatt shouted.

Without thinking, she stomped her heel down on his boot and elbowed him in the stomach at the same time. The surprise was enough for him to let her go. She was pitched forward and into Wyatt's arms. A shot rang out again. She turned in time to see Raul fall down and hit the cement floor with a bullet hole in the center of his forehead. A small trickle of blood oozed from the hole. His eyes were blank, but the smile held on his face. She gazed at Landon and saw the smoke billowing from the gun barrel.

At that moment, the clamor of hooves erupted in the barn. A black horse appeared with a black rider on top of him. He slid down from his mount. His face was hidden by a black cowboy hat and the collar of his black duster was pulled up high. Something about him didn't seem right to George.

He knelt before Raul, got up, and then went to Landon. Wyatt let her go and both men went to their knees kneeling before the new arrival. "You Riders have done well."

Landon glanced up, but she noticed his pained expression and his shoulder was still bleeding. "I saw no other course of action. He shot at me and he was going to kill George. We couldn't let that happen."

The stranger glanced in her direction. He took a few steps over and took his hat off. She recognized him as Daniel from *Spunky's*. Only he seemed much older. "You know about them? You know that Landon suffered reprimand for saving your life when you were a child. We only punish once and then after that the sentence is death for those who don't comply."

Her eyes darted between the two riders and then back to Daniel. "You can't. Please. They were trying to save me."

Daniel stroked his chin. "It's our way."

"Well screw your way. Haven't you ever heard of change?"

"George, shut up!" Wyatt hissed.

Landon hit him and he quieted.

Daniel addressed her again. "Do you know what I am?"

She stuck her chin out. "You're an ass if you think you can hurt them again. I don't care about what you do to me, but leave them alone. They did it because they loved me. Before any of this started we were talking about me becoming like them."

Daniel's dark eyes widened. "So they didn't tell you I'm an angel? The very same one who punished Landon. You're becoming a Rider? That's an interesting concept. Let me see." He snatched her wrist, unfurled her palm, and studied her hand. Once he touched her a feeling of peace overtook George, but it was an uneasy one. The angel didn't need to be here. He wasn't of the earth and the wrongness was apparent in her bones.

"I see." His horse neighed and bumped her shoulder. She reached out to stroke the magnificent animal. When she did, she experienced a oneness with the beast she couldn't explain.

"There's potential. A natural born Rider. Very rare." He let go of her hand and went to the other riders.

Chapter Fourteen

"Rise."

They did what they were told.

"Landon, your sentence is averted because you have disposed of Raul. I've been keeping an eye on him. We feared he was becoming unstable. Because of his death, it appears we have an opening in upper management. If you were to take this position, there would be an opening for a Rider. What do you say?"

Landon was stunned to hear an offer of a job in upper management from Daniel. His shoulder throbbed from the gunshot. He hadn't been in this much pain since he was human. Whatever the bullets were made of, they were one of the only things that could wound or kill a rider. "I-I'm honored for the offer, but what about George and Wyatt. I can't leave them. I won't leave them."

"Afraid I'll claim her all for myself?" Wyatt joked.

She jabbed him in the gut. "Shut up."

Landon laughed. "No. I'm not worried about that. Sir, I have a life here. I'm not cut out for whatever it was that Raul was doing and honestly being around all of you doesn't sit too well. I assume you know why."

The angel nodded. "Think on it. The offer stands. If the decision is made for Georgiana to become a Rider then we'll see what happens. Keep the gun, Landon. They are rare and in your position it will be needed. You could be called to other Territories to keep order."

Daniel laid his hand on Landon's chest. A warm pulse went through him and the pain receded from his shoulder. He glanced over and saw the wound was healed. "Thank you."

"It's the least I can do. Wyatt, no more showing off please. George, I think you can whip the two of them into shape." He passed his hand over Raul's body and it disappeared. He swung up onto his horse. Landon watched in awe as he landed gracefully on the horse's back. They turned as the echo of hooves left the barn. Once Daniel was gone, Landon grabbed the door, grateful he had just dodged a bullet. Now there was only one problem left to solve.

George had to figure out what she wanted. Seeing her in Wyatt's arms made him jealous. He couldn't let his partner have her all to himself. They were made for one another. After Wyatt had discussed his concern that morning and his plan, it all made perfect sense. He wasn't sure if he would be able to go through with it, but they had to try something. It was all for George's sake. After they revealed their arrangement, she had rushed out.

He had sensed Raul immediately but wasn't able to get the door open. Thinking about his love lying dead on the barn floor made his blood run cold. The gun went off. All he could see was her dead body. That wasn't going to happen. It couldn't happen. Then seeing the angel, one that he had known, he knew they were all fucked.

"Landon." George touched his face making him come back to himself.

"Yes."

"Are you okay?"

He searched her eyes seeing her distress and the buried feelings she was fighting. Standing before him was the woman who had gone up against one of the most power men he knew of and she had come out alive. She'd stood up to Daniel and was asking him if he was okay. She should be the one running away from him screaming.

"I'm not sure."

He really didn't know if he was or not. He'd been so sure he was going to be killed, but they'd left him alive. He just didn't know what to believe in at the moment. George came closer, the warmth of her body made him realize he was here and so was Wyatt.

"Bro, you have to be sure. We're alive so that has to mean something. Alive is good." Wyatt patted him on the back and walked out of the barn. George stayed close by. He gripped the gun knowing it was otherworldly and in the wrong hands could be used to kill him or Wyatt. Daniel's offer ran through his mind. Was it something he wanted to consider? Could he do the job? Would it mean he had to give up this new life with Wyatt and George?

George placed a hand on his chest. A jolt of energy passed through him. He knew he couldn't give her up. If he didn't take the promotion though she couldn't become a Rider.

"I think a storm is brewing."

He gazed deep into her eyes. He didn't feel one. Her fingers trailed over his jeans. His eyes widened. "Do you know what will happen if we do this?"

She kissed the side of his neck. "I know. I'm scared, but standing there with Raul, I didn't want to lose you. When that shot went through the door and I saw you bleeding, I didn't know what to think. It's like you said, all of us are part of something. Life kinda changes when you're forced into a dangerous situation. Everything gets put into perspective. I'm afraid, but I trust you."

"And you're okay with having both of us? Being with both of us? Last time you passed out when we touched you."

She shrugged. "We have to find out how to make this work. I think I know how to filter it better. If not, well you'll just have to revive me. I can't have you gone from my life. I know that." George kissed him again and then walked toward the house. He stared after her dumbfounded. Whirlwind came up behind him and rested her head on his shoulder.

"You like her?"

He got a positive answer.

"I don't know if I can do this. Wyatt isn't exactly bedding material in my book."

Don't think about it that way. Remember you have the power of the storms. When you get into it, you'll be more focused on one another than semantics. It's okay to share. She nipped his ear and then walked away.

It took him a moment to realize that he had understood her. "Hey. When did you and I get to communicating this way?"

She turned and eyed him. *Comes with the big job. Guess you already got the promotion*. She swished her tail and walked back to her stall.

Landon shrugged and felt a longing he hadn't had in a long time. It was time to see if this was going to work. *I can't believe I'm getting advice on my love life from a horse*.

I'm not a horse.

"Whatever. If it quacks—"

I'm not a duck either.

He smiled and shook his head, wondering what in the world was going to happen next.

Chapter Fifteen

Wyatt stared at George who wasn't able to look him in the eye. When she did, she turned red every time. The tension in the air was unbelievable. He could hardly believe what had just happened. They had been given permission to make her a Rider, if that was what she wanted Landon had been promoted which meant they weren't going to be broken up. He wasn't sure if it meant George was going to choose him over Landon or what. He did know he wasn't going to lose her and that made his soul sing.

"George, you know there is no other way."

She glanced at him with a coy smile and then chewed her lip. He loved seeing her do that. "I know. One minute I'm on board for this and the next I'm not so sure. I think I'm still in shock about the whole thing. But I know what I want." She placed a hand on his face. A zing went through him making him understand how far her power truly ran into him. When she pulled away a deep stab of pain slashed his gut. There was a connection between all of them, more than any of them could fathom.

"You know -"

She placed a finger on his lips. "I'm not going to choose one of you over the other. That I do know. I care about both of you and being with one of you would leave a part of me missing."

"Are you sure about that?" Landon asked as he entered the kitchen.

She turned and faced him. The atmosphere thickened. Wyatt shivered when he came in. Landon was brooding which he did when something troubled him.

George blushed. "Yes. It's true. The longer I'm around you guys..." She shook her head. "I don't know. When I touch one of you, I feel this charge. Well you both have felt it too. You said that I had to become a Rider. So what happens? Do you touch my hand, kiss me and then I become one of you?"

"Is this something you really desire? You were just saying that you didn't want to give up teaching. Being one of us, you can't draw attention to yourself so your experiments would have to end. Are you ready for that?" Landon asked.

She shrugged. "I don't know. I don't have a choice. If I say no, then the angel comes back and probably kills me for knowing too much about you. I heard what he said, about breaking the rules, only one punishment and then death. I can't let that happen to Landon. I see the scars from what they did to him when he saved my life. I can't let that happen to you too, Wyatt. So I don't have a choice."

Wyatt held in a smile at hearing she had considered his feelings, but he had to say he was longing for the time when she would be touching him again. Caressing the two of them made him feel so alive. Everything about her blew his mind. She was strong and powerful even if she didn't know it. He reached out to her. Once their fingers touched, a jolt so powerful went through him that it made his balls tighten.

"George, this is hard on all of us, but that moment before you passed out, I don't know what it was, but I've never felt that way before. It was power. It made me feel alive. Landon, man, tell me if you didn't feel the same thing."

Wyatt glanced over at Landon and saw him look down and exhale. He ran his hand through his hair. George glanced at him too.

"It's true. There's something about the three of us. I don't know what it is. But fuck, yeah I want you. Even if we have to share. I can't let you go."

She sighed. Wyatt moved a strand of hair from her face. George moved her cheek into his palm. Her skin was so soft that it felt like velvet. It was almost as soft as Tempest's coat. The sound of her sigh rattled his heart.

"Please let's give this a try." He leaned in, searched her eyes, and kissed her lips lightly. She took a second before kissing him back. Her lips were soft and the power

that stirred inside of him almost made him come on the spot. If he could contain his power for a short time, then he could focus it and make her enjoy their time together. He wanted to learn every part of her body and what made her whimper and if that meant having Landon with him then so be it. She pulled away and met both of their gazes with a timid smile. She let go of Wyatt's hand and headed toward Landon's room. He gazed at his partner with a grin on his face.

"You ready to do this?"

Landon snorted. "Guess we'll find out, but if this works out, don't think I'm lusting after your body."

Wyatt batted his eyelashes at his fellow Rider. "You never know, you may enjoy it."

He turned and followed George.

Chapter Sixteen

George stood in Landon's room holding her breath. I can do this. I know I can. God what am I thinking? Two guys at once. I have to be losing it, but if I don't then they could be punished and I can't let that happen. Then again, it wasn't bad being with both of them. I was with them one at a time. I've never been with two guys before. Okay. I can do this. God they are so hot. I can't believe I just faced an angel. They want me to be a Rider. They said I had the potential to be one. This is so fucked, but the thought of losing them. I don't know what the connection is but it works and it's amazing. Now I just can't pass out when I touch both of them. A cool breeze worked over her skin. She heard their footfalls coming down the hall behind her. She did want both of them. Her mind was on the two of them when they entered. Each so different in how they looked, but they were both so mouthwatering and she didn't want to have to choose between the two of them. She only hoped they wouldn't chicken out.

Landon closed the door and Wyatt stood before her. She bit her lip and pulled off her shirt. She loved watching both of their eyes widen, waiting for her to make the next move. She removed her shoes and socks and stretched her toes. She always liked to feel the earth underneath her feet when she was a child and as she went out to greet the storms it made her feel more connected.

She walked close to Wyatt. The longing to touch both of them went through her soul. The air was heavy and weighed on her shoulders. "Take your shirt off," she whispered. She didn't wait for him and splayed her fingers on Landon's chest. A jolt of

energy ran through her body and made her tremble. She curled her toes. It was stronger than before and stimulated all her erogenous zones. The ache in her bones began to dissipate. The scent of ozone wafted through the room leaving a metallic taste in her mouth. She extended her other hand and touched Wyatt's chest. A quake strummed her nerves as the energy rode her spine. She felt both men react.

"Oh fuck, me!" Wyatt groaned.

She giggled. It was good they felt it too. She trailed her finger over Landon's pecs and watched him struggle to hold onto his control. "What do you say, Landon? Can we do this?"

He swept her up in his arms. His fingers wound through her hair raising the static electricity. His lips were hungry and she sensed his desire. Wyatt touched her back running the length of her spine. She moaned into Landon's mouth touching his tongue with hers. Wet kisses dotted her shoulders. She dragged her fingers along Landon's back. Wyatt's hands slipped under her bra and released the hooks. He slid the straps down off her shoulders as he kissed the places where they had been. Landon's hands left her hair and slipped the bra all the way off. Once it was on the floor, she pressed her breasts against his naked chest. His hard cock strained against his jeans. She ran one hand the length of it. Wyatt took her other hand guiding it back to his shaft. She ran her hands over both of them trying to ignore the buildup of pressure between them. A whirlwind started to move around them. It stirred her hair and cooled her exposed skin. Because they were so close, she was already starting to burn up.

She undid Landon's pants and felt his warm cock with her hands. She appreciated that he wasn't wearing boxers. It only gave her easier access. His cock stirred against her palm. Wyatt began undoing her pants and then unzipped them slipping his hands over her already wet panties. Landon rubbed his thumbs over her nipples making them even harder, squeezing them at times until they ached. Small zaps of energy passed between the two of them. She kissed down Landon's throat and licked his Adam's apple.

"God, you two."

Wyatt chuckled and nipped her ear. "I take it that this is working for you?" "Shut up, Wyatt," Landon mumbled.

George smiled and bit Landon's Adam's apple lightly. Her gift rushed up and she knew the storm was building. She tried to sense the way it was going, but it was impossible. She did know that the power inside both of them was building. The wind around them was picking up, but it wasn't affecting her. Wyatt began teasing her throbbing clit rubbing gentle circles upon it. She broke away from Landon and turned into Wyatt. She grabbed his face and brought his lips down to hers. He met her with his tongue and ran it over her teeth. His hands were possessive pulling her away from Landon. She let him, but felt the other Rider clutch her ass. Wyatt's hands roved over her stomach and tugged on her panties. That ripped a peel of laughter from her throat and leaned her back into Landon. She took a moment and slipped out of her pants and took her underwear off all the way. Wyatt pressed his face into her moist curls and began sucking on her buried bud. He spread her legs wider and placed his fingers on her hips while he licked away at her. Landon grasped her breasts while his other hand slid along the mound of her buttock and slipped a finger deep inside of her. Once he did that, she shut her eyes feeling her gift going out of control. Something was happening between the three of them. She hadn't passed out, but the energy moving through her made her head spin she dared to look past the two of them and saw the air swirling. Her abilities were telling her the storm was intensifying and the more Wyatt pleasured her, swirling his tongue around her clit, the more she was going to lose it. Her legs were rubbery. The only thing holding her up now was Landon against her back and Wyatt before her. The slow pumping of Landon's fingers made her want a cock nestled inside of her.

She gripped Wyatt's head for something to hold onto that would help her remember she was still on the planet earth. Landon nipped along her collarbone. He twisted her nipple harder.

"Do you want us to fuck you?" Landon asked, breathing into her ear increasing his rhythm inside of her. His cock poked her ass teasing her.

"Yes." The breeze around her was swirling faster. Her muscles shivered the more Wyatt pleasured her. His hands clutched her ass. Landon went faster and she needed release. Her heart thundered in her chest. Wyatt stopped. He pulled away, took off his pants and briefs, throwing them in the corner. Landon slid his arms under hers pinning her and rubbed himself against her so she could feel his engorged cock.

"You're such a tease," she hissed to both of them.

Wyatt lifted her foot and drew her big toe into his mouth. She shivered when he released her feet.

"Wyatt, stop feeding your foot fetish and get on the bed," Landon suggested.

George struggled to get away playfully, but was transfixed to see his stiff cock resting against his thigh waiting to be used.

"Which one of us do you want?" Wyatt asked.

She giggled. Both of you. "Do I have to choose?"

A bolt of Landon's energy filled her and fluttered her eyes shut. "Funny. You're driving me crazy. I can't hold onto my power. It's hard to keep control when you're so damn hot."

Wyatt gave her a sly smile and patted the bed. He was propped up against the pillow. He grabbed his dick and waved at it at her.

"If you want me then you have to let me go. If not, then you can't have your way with me." She grabbed his finger and brought it to her lips. She sucked in his finger and was rewarded with a jolt of electricity on her tongue. He tried to pull away but she worked her tongue over his finger and then cupped his balls. Finally, she let go. Being away from Wyatt she missed his warmth and the closeness of his body. Being with Landon only a part of her was missing.

She backed onto the bed watching Landon's eyes as she straddled Wyatt. Wyatt's hands came around her hips and held her to him. His cock was so close to her pussy. She reached down and guided it into her sheath.

"Yeah, baby." Once they were connected, his power mounted through her. He lifted his hips taking her with him. Being impaled on him from behind was a new feeling, as his shaft rubbed her inner walls in a different way. Landon's eyes widened.

She ran her hands over her body and clutched her breasts. "Come here, Landon."

He knelt on the bed beside her. She ran her hands over his chest memorizing the lines in his abs. As she did it, she felt the peace inside of her which meant she was in harmony with a storm. She kissed the spot over his heart. He gripped her breasts while Wyatt lifted his hips faster.

She met his eyes and held onto his cock. She licked the spongy head swirling her tongue around it tasting the salty flesh. She laved up and down the shaft. Wyatt increased his pace. Her teeth scraped along Landon's silky sensitive flesh while she took all of him in. He touched her breasts while Wyatt kept her going and she concentrated on both of them. The storm raged inside of her. Sweat had broken out on her body. She drew him in and out of her mouth taking what she could of him. George gripped his hips feeling him clenching and hearing his breathing. Underneath her, Wyatt was going to come to. She didn't stop, but loved hearing both of them breathing hard.

"Fuck, George." A rush of energy washed over her from Wyatt. The wind around her increased. Static electricity roamed over her entire body. He was struggling for control and loosing it. Landon was almost there. She increased her sucking and gently ran her teeth over the head. It would all come down to this. She drew him in one last time as she felt the first spill of his warm cum in her mouth. Wyatt groaned and shivered. Landon pumped into her once again while she swallowed him down tasting all of his tang. At that moment, she orgasmed while the energy of both of them bombarded her. The roar of a tornado filled her ears. The massive storm blasted over her, but she held onto Landon and it passed.

She glanced up feeling Wyatt kissing her shoulder. Landon was out of breath and his skin was glistening with sweat. His eyes were full of amusement and satisfaction.

"I think we did it," she stated.

"Not quite, but that was amazing," Landon responded.

"Well what do we have to do now?" George asked.

Wyatt placed his hand over her heart and kissed her neck. "Hold on to us."

Landon took her hand and put it over his heart. "You sure about this?"

"Yes."

She saw the concern in his expression. Landon nodded and began to kiss her. Once he did, it felt like the air was sucked out of her body, but she could breathe. Tongues of energy ran through her settling into her bones. Wyatt was still hard and buried inside of her but he didn't let her go. He began moving again slowly and kissing her. Each kiss he planted on her neck was more electrifying than the last. Landon's kisses grew more insistent. The roar of the tornado ran around her. It seemed her whole body was infused with air and remolding her very cells. The longer she kissed Landon, the more intense the feeling became. Her sense said that she was turning with the storm, keeping the rhythm of Wyatt. Her fingers dug into the flesh of Landon's shoulders.

She began to fight against the intensity, but Landon held onto her and continued kissing her. Then Wyatt's hands where there guiding her, slowing their timing as he plunged into her. Her head fell back. She climaxed so hard that it rattled her bones.

Her body rode Wyatt's and Landon released her bringing her down from the pleasure high she was on. Finally he pulled away and she climbed off of Wyatt. Her head spun like a tornado she couldn't keep her thoughts straight at what happened to her. Landon pulled her into his protective arms and Wyatt hugged her too. Having both of them with her, she knew she didn't have to worry about anything.

Chapter Seventeen

Georgina awoke the next day and found the bed empty. She didn't feel any different. She got up, dressed, and looked for her two lovers. Her body hummed from where they had touched her and everything felt right. Her clothes were folded neatly on the chair and she noticed they had been cleaned. She showered, put them on, and headed into the kitchen to find the woman she'd run into the other day.

"Ahh, hi."

The woman met her eyes. "You're George right?"

She nodded. "Yeah. Who are you?"

"Gina. I work for the guys. They told me to tell you that they had some business to do so you could stick around or they'd catch up with you later."

She nodded. "Thanks."

Not really wanting to hang out with a woman she didn't know, she decided to head back to her house. Instead, she found herself driving to the campus. When she got there, she examined her equipment which was still laid out. Her weather experiments hadn't determined if there was a way to mimic her experiences.

"Hey, George, I've been wondering where you were."

Jeremy stood in the doorway. She smiled. "Hey. What's been going on?"

"Nothing. I was just going over some of the data. We got some promising readings from the electric static change in the air. Only a little bit, but it's good." She was thinking about what the guys had told her concerning giving up her lifestyle. There had

to be a way she could balance her life. If she had found a way to have both men, then she wasn't going to give up teaching or trying to find an early warning system.

"Thanks. You have what you've recorded so far?"

"Yeah. It's on the laptop and my notes are there." He pointed to the desk.

She scooped them up and patted her assistant on the shoulder. "Thanks. I'll take these home and look at them. Can you cover my classes for the next couple of days? I'll email you the schedule and stuff. Nothing too heavy. Freshmen and one sophomore session."

"Sure." He was always looking for ways to impress her.

"Thanks."

She left the campus and took the information back to her house to analyze. Pulling into her driveway, a prickling went down her spine. She studied the skies, but didn't see anything. She got out and heard a whinny behind her. When she turned, a large black Clydesdale studied her with coal black eyes. The angel, Daniel, had been riding this same horse. She put her stuff down on the porch and went back to the horse. Once she placed her hand on it, a strong jolt went through her.

"You're a beauty."

She turned and saw Daniel standing beside the stallion. He patted him and came around to face her. "I assume you're talking about the horse?"

He smiled. "No, beautiful. I'm talking about you. You've tamed two of the hardest men I've ever met. This is your reward."

She snorted. "My reward is becoming a Rider so you don't punish or kill either of them."

He shrugged. "I don't make the rules. Of course rules are made to be broken."

"So what happens now?"

Daniel shrugged. "You're a Rider now. You ride the storms. Keep your life until you have to move on and do something else. We're not going to stop you from researching storms, just don't expose what you are. As long as you keep the secret,

you'll be fine. Well, you have a good ride. I'll see you around. Oh, his name is Hurricane. He's a handful."

The angel strolled off and vanished. She glanced back at the horse and felt a presence press upon her mind. She touched the stallion once more. Another blast of air went through her. She could sense him with her and now he was something more elemental. "Hurricane, hmm. That's a good name. You think you can deal with me?"

Only if you can deal with me. If the others don't treat you right, then they have to deal with me.

George heard his thoughts. "What does that mean?"

He snorted. It means I'll kick their asses if they hurt you and I can pull rank on their mounts. I'm their elder.

"So then why not hook up with Landon since he got a promotion?"

He's not my type and I've been waiting for you. We only bond with one Rider. And you're it. Besides I see us having a good future. So you ready to ride?

A breeze stirred her hair. Thunder rumbled in the distance. When she glanced at the sky, it was clear, her instincts said a storm was developing. It was a tickling deep inside of her, but her bones weren't aching or weighed down anymore. A smile spread across her face and the excitement was already coursing through her.

"You might have to help me get up on you. I've never ridden before."

Don't worry, you won't fall unless I want you to.

"You ready?"

George glanced over and saw Wyatt and Landon atop their steeds. Both were dressed in jeans, dusters, and hats. Landon slid off his horse and walked over to her. He wrapped his arms around George. Once his hands touched her flesh, she was hit with that peace again and a flood of power so intense that she nearly had an orgasm right there.

"That is a big horse for a tiny thing like you. You sure you can ride him?"

George trailed her finger down his middle. "I rode you big boy and that one over there." She kissed him and cupped his groin. He stirred under her touch.

"You don't want to do that. Maybe later." He returned the kiss.

She felt something go on top of her head, a hat. She turned and Wyatt flashed her a smile. She leaned into him and gave him a kiss too.

"Hey, beautiful. You having a good day?"

"Are you going to help me up so I can figure out what exactly we do?"

Both men reached to help her and then frowned. She laughed and grabbed both of their shoulders and had them settle her. Once she swung her leg over Hurricane's side, she wound her fingers through his mane. Now that they were connected she felt the storm brewing inside of her. It was going to be a crazy ride.

She watched the men she loved sit atop their horses. Seeing them, she understood she was now complete and the hole she'd had inside of her for so long was now filled. The other horses neighed and pawed the ground stirring mini cyclones with their hooves.

She sensed the amusement in her steed. You want to give them a run for their money?

I like your train of thought. Hold on. I'll take the lead for now until you get the hang of things. Don't let those two doofs tell you wrong even if Landon's now your boss. Hurricane reared and when his feet hit the ground, thunder rumbled in her mind. And then he was off and running. The shouts of the other riders sounded behind her as they tried to catch up. When she heard them, she knew this was indeed going to be just the beginning for a new and fascinating chapter in her life with two devoted men who were always going to be chasing her.

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