



Loose Id

DOWN ON THE  
BOARDWALK  
SUZANNE ROCK

*The Kyron Wolf Pack:  
Down on the Boardwalk*

*Suzanne Rock*



## **The Kyron Wolf Pack: Down on the Boardwalk**

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## Chapter One

*Wright Casino, Atlantic City, New Jersey*

“The blonde woman betrays you.”

The tall, thin man crouched until he was eye level with the woman on the floor and narrowed his eyes. “How?”

Gwen Anderson refused to answer. How could she? The future was always uncertain. Even if a vision was clear, something small could happen in the present and forever alter it.

Eric grasped her chin and pulled her face within inches of his. “Tell me!”

She jerked away from his bony fingers and closed her eyes. *Tired, so tired.* How long had she been kept in this makeshift cell underneath the casino? Hours had turned into days, then weeks. For all she knew, she could’ve been down here for years.

The sting from Eric’s slap exploded across her cheek. “What did you see? I have to know. Does my sister betray us?”

*Us.* There was no *us*. Not now, not ever. At one time Gwen thought that maybe she could be part of an “us,” but not anymore. After she was kicked out of her own werewolf pack and rejected by all the others, the hope of having a family, a home, was nothing more than fantasy. Now there was only loneliness and pain, interrupted occasionally by Eric’s frantic questioning.

“I know you saw something important. Amos said you were mumbling in your sleep.”

Gwen looked up into her captor’s face. Eric Wright, leader of the Wright pack and in charge of all the werewolves who lived in the Northeast. Eric Wright, the one she had turned to when she had nowhere to live and was out of options. At first he dismissed her, but once werewolf leader learned about her “gift” for seeing into the future, he kept her caged down here like some animal.

At least he didn’t lie to her. The abuse she could take. It was the false kindness of the Kyron pack, the pack who’d abandoned her, that hurt the most. She still remembered the look of pity in the leader’s eyes as he shut the door in her face—

“Useless twit.” Eric straightened and brushed his long blond hair over his shoulder. His eyes looked bloodshot, as if he hadn’t been sleeping. *Good.* He had brought her nothing but pain and disillusionment. The thought that he might be

suffering pleased her. Maybe now he'd treat her better, more like a human than an animal.

"Let me try, boss. I can get the information out of her."

Gwen's gaze flew to the brute in the doorway. He smiled at her, a slow, evil smile that turned her blood to ice. She lifted her chin and tried to hide her fear.

"Ah, a weak spot." Eric smiled, showing most of his perfectly white teeth. "Come here, Amos."

Gwen scrambled closer to the wall. The last time Eric gave Amos free rein, she hadn't had enough strength to use her magic to heal herself. It had taken her days to recover. Eric would never allow him to—not when he still needed information from her... Would he?

Amos slapped the handle of a long, thin whip against his hand and approached them, his gaze never leaving Gwen's half-naked body.

As he got close, she pulled her torn shirt over her breasts and spit at his feet. "When I get out of here, I'll make sure you're both punished. What you're doing is immoral and against the werewolf code."

Eric laughed. "Nobody will enforce the code for a freak like you." He grabbed her shoulders and shook her until her brain rattled in her head. "You want to be treated better? Then tell me how my sister, Lydia, betrays me." His beady blue gaze pierced her skin as he spoke. He was getting angry. She couldn't deal with this right now. Her bruises still hadn't healed from her last beating, and she was malnourished. If she could just buy herself a little more time, she could figure out a way to get out of here.

Her chains rattled as she lowered her hands and straightened her spine. "The vision was fuzzy. She hasn't made up her mind yet. I only saw a possibility—"

"Tell me."

Gwen glanced at Amos, and a shiver raced down her spine. She didn't want to give the bastards any more information, but she didn't want to get beaten again either. "The Kyron pack leader persuades Lydia to betray you." She had seen more but held her tongue. Eric didn't have to know about the other part of her vision. It didn't have to do with his sister anyway. It had to do with *her* future, or at least what was left of it.

"Bitch." He slapped the other side of her face.

She refused to react to his outburst. She knew through experience that it would only encourage him. "If you don't like the truth, then don't ask me. Let me go, and I'll—"

"And you'll what? Go to the other packs? My dear, no one would believe an outcast like you." He straightened and began to pace. "Josh Kyron is proving to be a thorn in my side. First he harms what's mine; then he denies it." He stopped in front of her and rubbed his chin. "The selfish whelp thinks he's above were-law. My own people grow weak while his pack grows fat and lazy. Now he wants to take my

sister out from under my nose. If Lydia turns her back on me for that arrogant wolf—”

The basement door flew open and slammed against the wall. Cool air rushed in from the hall, creating goose bumps over Gwen’s pale skin. The fresh breeze brought life and hope—a welcome change from the stuffy, stagnant atmosphere in her cell. Eric and Amos whirled around. Gwen stared at the door.

Two large men marched into the room, carrying a third man between them. “We caught him snooping around.”

Gwen silently thanked the gods for the reprieve from her interrogation. She pulled her knees up to her chest and wrapped her arms around her legs. If she could make herself invisible, then maybe they’d forget about her and an opportunity for escape would present itself. She huddled against the wall and tried to blend in with the background.

Eric approached the prisoner. “Who are you?”

Silence. The man was large, over six feet, with thick hair the color of night. Muscles rippled as he growled like an animal and tugged against his captors. She tried to get a look at his face, but he kept his head low to the ground.

“Look at me.” Eric grabbed a fistful of ebony hair and pulled the prisoner’s head up for all to see.

“Fuck you, Eric,” the prisoner spat.

Gwen flinched as the were leader pulled harder. It must have been so painful, but the prisoner didn’t cry out. Instead he hissed and flashed his sharp teeth.

“Werewolf.” Eric let go in disgust. “But not of my pack. Where did you find him?”

The guards glanced at each other. “Up in the casino.”

“What was he doing?”

“He was dressed as staff and flirting with one of the cocktail waitresses. He asked her where the casino records were held.”

*Dressed as staff.* Gwen squinted at the tears in the maroon pants and white polo shirt the man wore. The thin cotton clothes clung to every muscle of his body like a static-filled sock, outlining his broad shoulders and narrow hips. The air around him was charged with energy. Awareness tingled over her skin. Gwen shivered as a sliver of heat raced up her center. This was the man from her vision; she was sure of it. There was no denying the savage power that radiated off his body or the sexual energy that filled the room. If her vision was accurate, this man would bring hope and life to her world.

And she would bring death to his.

*Fuck.* Her vision was becoming reality. It would have been so much better if he were never caught, if they had never met. She never wanted to hurt anyone. All Gwen ever wanted was to be accepted and loved. How did everything end up such a mess?

The prisoner raised his head and snarled at Eric. "That waitress would have given me all the information I wanted if you hadn't interrupted us. Your pack isn't as loyal as you think." His deep baritone vibrated through Gwen like a caress. The prisoner frightened her, yet something about him excited her too.

"Whose pack do you belong to?" Amos asked.

The captive pressed his lips together and stared at Eric.

"Kyron," Eric announced. "He carries the same arrogance as his leader. I should have known Josh would try to retaliate."

"You're the one who's arrogant," the stranger said. "You let the members of your pack live like savages while you obsess over something that never happened."

"Shut up, you Kyron whelp." Eric grabbed his hair and yanked his head up to meet his gaze. "You have no idea what you're talking about."

"Josh never did anything to your mate."

"I said shut up!" A loud *crack* echoed through the room as Eric slapped him across the mouth. "You weren't there. You have no idea what you're talking about."

The prisoner's chest heaved as he caught his breath. Gwen's heart skipped a beat. Eric was so volatile; there was no telling what he was capable of. One false move and both she and the stranger could be beaten within an inch of their lives.

The prisoner looked up and noticed her for the first time. His expression changed, first softening, then becoming more intense. Power and confidence fell off him in waves. Her body responded. Lust wove her stomach in knots and dampened her thighs. Need rose in her chest and stole her breath. She had been alone in this world for so long and had gone without sex for even longer. Gwen longed for someone to hold her, to want her. For just a little while, she wanted to remember what it was like to lie in a man's arms and feel loved.

She saw something flicker in his eyes. The air became electrified as his deep amber gaze pierced through her skin and heated every inch of her body. His features shifted and became darker, more possessive.

Sexual hunger swept over her skin and set every nerve ending on fire. Her gaze flicked down to his tented pants, and she knew the same sensations ran through his body too. Her womb tightened at the thought of pulling down his zipper and exploring what lay beneath. Gwen eased her hand down her waist and hips, outlining her curves. She longed to go to him but knew her chains would never reach. The gentle throbbing intensified, and her hand slipped between her thighs to relieve her frustrations.

No. Gwen jerked her hand away and shrank back against the wall. A quick glance around the room told her that no one had noticed her momentary lapse of common sense, at least not yet. She hadn't seen this attraction in her vision, but then again, her powers were fickle, showing her only pieces of a puzzle.

The prisoner held her gaze, immobilizing her with their dark depths. His face was thin and angular, his jaw hard, but there was a spark in his eyes, something savage. Gwen moistened her lips as lust dripped slowly through her middle,



hardening her nipples and pooling between her thighs. She shifted her legs and caught a scent of her arousal. If she could smell it, the rest of the wolves in the room could smell it too. Yet she didn't care. Her passion overwhelmed every other emotion and focused her thoughts on the man before her. All she cared about was kissing each of his wounds, licking his bruises while she rubbed her hips against his...

The prisoner pulled against the guards, trying to reach her. Shouting erupted, and one of the guards slammed something against his back. The noise broke the spell, and Gwen blinked as she huddled closer to the wall.

What was she thinking? Acting this way would only draw Eric's attention.

She schooled her features into a blank mask and tried to appear disinterested in the prisoner. It was hard. Never before had she felt anything so strong. The man awakened a craving in her she had thought was dead. And so intense! There was only one reason why a wolf could become so aroused, so emotional.

*Oh God, it can't be possible...*

Eric rubbed his chin. "Looks like our old friend Josh Kyron is up to his tricks again." He nodded at the prisoner. "Was he alone?"

"No, there was another."

Eric waited, but no one spoke. Crossing his arms over his chest, the were leader narrowed his eyes at one of the guards. "Well? Where is he?"

Silence blanketed the room.

"Amos," Eric said. "Make these two talk."

"Gladly." He cracked his whip in the air as he approached.

One of the guards adjusted his stance and jerked his head from Eric to Amos. His eyes widened with fear. "He got away. We didn't mean to—"

"Got away?" Eric let his arms fall to his sides and curled his fingers into fists. "Of all the—"

"It was *his* fault." The other guard kicked the prisoner in the shin. The captive grimaced but said nothing.

Eric droned on about the lack of good help, and Gwen shifted her gaze back to the prisoner. The man's hungry stare consumed her. It brought with it warm heat, chasing away the chill in her bones.

Shifting her legs, she became aware once again of the dampness between them. Her need grew stronger every second, yet she had to resist. If she could deny her libido, then maybe she could save the prisoner the pain of her vision. She had to try—for his sake.

Gwen broke eye contact and pulled her knees closer to her chest. She had heard of such strong sexual cravings happening in the werewolf community. First came a desire so great it was impossible to ignore. Then, after sex, an instant connection would form. With each coupling the connection would deepen, and the moon-rage that threatened every one of her kind would dissipate.

Such was the way of mates.

But it couldn't happen to her. She was different. Her psychic magic made her a freak of nature. Unlovable. Despised. Alone.

She glanced back at the prisoner. He held her gaze and nodded, as if he understood her despair and loneliness.

*Understood?* No one understood. The stale air in this basement must have affected her brain. How long had it been since she had been outside on the boardwalk, breathing in the fresh sea air? Too long. She couldn't even remember what the sea smelled like anymore.

The glow vanished from the prisoner's eyes as he glanced at Eric. "Only a bastard would keep a woman locked up down here."

Eric pointed at Gwen. "Her? She's nothing but an animal."

*And you're nothing but a bully.* Gwen tightened her jaw to bite back her retort.

Eric crouched down to her level and smiled. It was a slow smile of someone who was in on a secret. "You're a feisty, savage animal who will save my clan. Isn't that right, sweetheart?"

"Go to hell."

His smile faded, and his eyes narrowed. "You'll pay for that later, I promise." He straightened and turned to the guards. "Leave the prisoner in here. He'll make a good test."

*Test? Test for what? Not...* "The full moon," she whispered as realization washed through her.

Eric fixed his gaze on her. "Yes, my dear. The full moon."

Gwen tried to school her features as horror knifed through her chest. The full moon brought the moon-rage. Most werewolves were able to control the madness with sex, but not her. Thanks to her freakish abilities, she had no defense against her rage. Once the full moon hit, she destroyed everything and everyone around her.

Eric marched to the door. "Send Eamon and Karl to my office, and notify the rest to widen the search for the escaped Kyron wolf."

Amos moved in front of the door. "Leave him here? With the girl?"

Eric glared at the brutish guard until he moved out of the way. "Yes."

"Shouldn't we chain him?"

Eric turned back toward Gwen. The gleam in his eyes was like icicles piercing her body. "No need. He isn't going anywhere as long as the girl's here."

The guards looked at him in confusion.

"Can't you sense it? They're mates. The air is rife with their hormones." He barked out a laugh. "A hell of a lot of good it will do them."

Gwen turned to the prisoner. If Eric could sense it, what she was feeling must be real. *A mate.* Not that it mattered. Having a mate changed nothing. The full

moon would still come. She would still change. Then the handsome man before her would have to die.

One of the guards dropped the prisoner. "But won't they—"

"Let them have sex. It'll just make it that much more painful when the full moon hits." Eric turned his back on the room in dismissal. "Come on. We've got work to do."

The second guard kicked the prisoner in the gut and then dropped him. A growl sprang up from Gwen's throat, but she bit it back. She knew from experience that voicing complaints only brought more pain. Amos and the other guards laughed and shut the door behind them.

The captive clutched his gut and tried to stand. Gwen wanted to go to him, but the chain and collar around her neck prevented her.

Staggering to his feet, he made a fist and shook it at the door. "Come back here, you cowards." He took a step forward, then stumbled to his knees. "Get your lazy asses back here and fight like real wolves."

She decided to let him yell. It wouldn't do any good, since they were essentially in a soundproof room, but she sensed that yelling and cursing would make him feel better.

After he had shouted his vocal cords hoarse, he slumped against the wall. Silence poured over them as he shifted into his wolf form, presumably to heal whatever Eric's guards had damaged. His human form was handsome, but the wolf was exquisite—a large, magnificent animal with soft gray fur that begged to be touched. It howled, a long, awful note of one in pain, then collapsed on the floor. Gwen reached for him, but the chain held her back. After a few agonizing moments, the creature stood and shook its head. It paced in a large circle, then paused and stared straight at her. Once more Gwen held out her hand. The wolf turned and snarled at the door.

"They won't hear you," she said. "Or they don't care. Either way, we're stuck here."

The wolf snorted and returned to his position along the far wall. There he sat and watched her with curious eyes.

"It's hopeless." Gwen sighed and drew her arms around her knees. "For months I've tried to find a way to escape. If it was possible, I'd have found it by now."

The wolf shimmered and changed back into his fully clothed human form. When the last of the magic faded, he raked his hands through his short, layered hair and swore. Gwen swallowed the lump in her throat and remained silent. What was he thinking?

After a few moments, he looked up at her. A black lock of hair fell across his forehead as he winked at her. "Don't worry; the wounds they gave were human made, not were. I'm regaining strength by the second." He motioned toward the

door. "My brother's still out there. He'll call our leader and get reinforcements to help us. The Kyron pack never forgets their own."

*Ha.* Gwen knew for a fact the Kyron pack leader would never come to her aid. She wrapped her arms tighter around her legs and rested her chin on her knees. "If you say so."

Without a word, the man stood up and ran toward the door on the other side of the room.

"Don't." She started to stand.

He threw his weight against the metal slab. Hissing, he jerked back and collapsed on the floor. "Silver," he gasped.

"Plated."

His heated glance caused a stirring in her lower abdomen. She itched to ease her fingers between her thighs and relieve the torment—or wrap them around his cock and ease his—but now wasn't the time. With effort, she forced back her craving.

What were they talking about? Oh yes. "The door—it's silver plated. You can touch the knob, but the rest will make your skin burn." She shrugged. "Eric had it installed. He would have made the knob silver too, but then he wouldn't be able to enter the room." She smiled. "As it is, sometimes he forgets and gets a nasty burn."

The prisoner scrambled back to the door. "I'll loosen the knob, then."

"You can't. I've tried."

He wasn't listening. Gwen settled back down on the floor and put her head between her knees. There was a time when they hadn't chained her. She'd tried everything to escape this prison. Nothing worked. This space was werewolf proof. Even during her moon-rage, she couldn't escape. The only reason why they chained her now was because the full moon was close, and Eric liked to visit when she was in one of her moon-rages. He thought that if he could control her during her rage, he'd have the ultimate weapon against the Kyron pack. So far he had been unsuccessful, but with each month, Gwen feared he was getting closer to achieving his goal.

Gwen looked up and saw the man had begun to pace. Her lust ebbed and flowed through her body as he moved from one end of the room to the other. Her heartbeat quickened, and awareness rippled over her skin. Would he touch her? Did he want her? When he passed by unseeing, emptiness and disappointment seeped into her body and left her weak. *God, this is crazy.* Women like her didn't deserve mates. She was broken, used. A misfit even among the weres.

After a while, the pacing stopped. Shivers of awareness trickled down her spine as he moved to sit next to her. A warm arm wrapped around her shoulders. "Everything will be all right. My brother, Nico, will save us."

She lifted her head to look at him. "Your brother will be caught, like us."

"Impossible. He's too quick." A smooth smile lit his features. "You'll see."

The smile heated her cold body. Before she realized what she was doing, she leaned closer and settled her head in the crook of his arm. He felt so warm, so right. It had been a long time since she had felt this good. Gwen decided to enjoy the moment. She'd pretend she never had that second vision, the one she kept from Eric. The future was in a constant state of flux anyway. She didn't know for certain that Nico would be caught or that Amos would torture them one by one. What good would do to tell her companion she'd seen herself crying over his lifeless body? Nothing would change, and he probably wouldn't believe her anyway.

"Name's Tony, by the way." His kindness touched her. How long had it been since someone talked to her? Really talked, not try to get information.

She snuggled closer. "I'm Gwen."

"Gwen," he repeated, testing the word on his lips. "Beautiful name."

She pressed her cheek against his chest and closed her eyes. His scent—a mixture of coffee, spice, and something distinctly male—filled her nose.

He slid his fingers through her hair. She shivered as he ran them along her skin and slipped them through her locks. With each stroke, her tension eased. With each touch, her pain and loneliness drifted away. Gwen pressed closer and basked in his spicy male scent and warm body heat. *Heaven*. She wished she could stay like this forever. Kindness was rare in her world, and she found herself hungry for more of it.

She glanced up and saw his faraway look and stiff jaw. He was thinking, probably trying to figure a way out of this hellhole. She closed her eyes and let her thoughts drift. If she concentrated enough, maybe she could pretend that her captivity was just a bad dream.

As she relaxed, she became more aware of his close proximity. Desire sprang up from his touch and echoed through the dark cavern of her soul. Ribbons of heat wrapped around her and urged her closer to his strength. The temptation to touch him was strong, and Gwen could no longer resist. She slipped her hand up and brushed his chest. It hardened under the smooth cotton of his shirt. Gwen held her hand still. Did he notice? Would he mind?

When he didn't respond, she slid her hand sideways. Her fingers brushed over his nipple. He tensed and stilled his fingers in her hair. She waited for him to push her away, but he didn't. Encouraged, she repeated her movements. He hissed out a breath and placed his fingers over hers. Slowly, he lowered their joined hands to her lap. She couldn't stop the flicker of disappointment in her chest.

"I suppose you heard what Eric said."

"He says a lot of things. Most of it's garbage." She lifted her chin and met his gaze.

"About us being mates," he clarified.

Sadness filled her as she turned back to their joined hands. "It can't be possible." She ran her fingers along the inside of his wrist. *More than anything, I wish it could be true.*

“Why not?”

*I'm broken.* She didn't answer.

He cupped his fingers under her chin and raised her head. “Why not?”

Tears stung at the edge of her vision. She opened her mouth, but the words stuck in her throat.

He slipped his free hand from around her shoulders and brushed her hair from her temple. “Don't you feel it? The heat between mates only happens once in a lifetime.” He closed his eyes and inhaled. “I don't sense that you're already mated.”

“No.”

He opened his eyes. “Then it's possible.”

Such determination—so black-and-white. How she wished she had his confidence. She opened her mouth to deny it, but something in his eyes stopped her. Passion heated her veins and made her thoughts blur. Anticipation sparked in the air, warming her body and dampening her thighs. He wanted her; that was unmistakable. She could see it in his face, feel it in his gaze. She wanted him too. Unfortunately, things were never that simple.

He ran his finger over her lips. “I don't know why they brought you here.” Frowning, he slipped his hand down her neck to her metal collar. “Or why they chain you like a dog.” His jaw hardened as he studied the marks left by the collar on her neck. “You're a wolf?”

She nodded, unable to speak. Normally such wounds would heal quickly, but the collar kept reopening the same skin, never giving it any time to heal.

He briefly closed his eyes. “Thank God.” His gaze returned to his fingers as they eased her shirt back from her shoulder. The crease deepened between his brows. “These look like scars.” He studied her face. “Only a were in wolf form could leave something so lasting.”

She looked away. “Eric gets carried away sometimes,” she whispered.

“He won't hurt you again.” The hard conviction in his voice felt like a caress across her skin. “Not while I'm around.” He slipped his hand down over her shirt and drew a lazy circle around her nipple. Her body tightened, and her breath caught. Another circle, then one more. Each rotation drew up her sexual urges, made her hot and wet.

“You're with me now.” He pinched her hardened nipple between his fingers. “Don't worry; I'll get us out of here.”

Pain flashed through her but then quickly dissolved. Intense pleasure blanketed her body and numbed her mind. She closed her eyes and soaked it up like a sponge. Heat trickled along her skin and seeped into her pores. *And that voice...* She had never heard anything so seductive. It turned her limbs to water and made her pussy ache. The man could make her come using his voice alone.

Maybe he was right about them being mates. She certainly couldn't deny her feelings. What if he could help her? What if...?

*No, don't think it.* She had learned the hard way that when she got her hopes up, it just made everything worse.

He slid his hands down her sides, tracing her curves with his hot fingers. Hunger spiraled through her, causing her whole body to cry out with longing. Grasping her waist, he held her steady and brushed his lips against hers. The gentle press of skin on skin fanned her craving. Her resistance dissolved, and she melted against him.

A growl formed in Tony's throat as he coaxed her mouth open with his tongue. Heat consumed her, and the kiss deepened. He tasted wild and free, two things she longed for in her own life. She curled her fingers into his shirt and pulled him closer. The gentle probing of his tongue caused another vine of lust to climb through her body. He was everything she wanted, everything she needed. Maybe he could free her from this hellhole. Maybe he wouldn't die in the process. Her visions had never been so completely wrong before, but there was always a first time, wasn't there?

*Please let it be wrong.*

He explored her mouth, each caress of his tongue claiming another inch of her body. She pushed the negative thoughts from her mind and focused on the moment. As long as he was alive, there was hope. She wouldn't dwell on the future now. Instead she focused on his taste, his smell, his touch. Everything about him overloaded her senses.

He eased back much too soon.

"Is something wrong?" she asked. *Did you not like it?* It had been a long time, but she didn't think she was that out of practice. Maybe he just didn't like *her*. Hurt stabbed her chest, and she fought the urge to pull away and curl up in a ball.

He rested his forehead against hers. "No, nothing's wrong." He closed his eyes and muttered something under his breath.

Gwen struggled to bring her turbulent emotions under control.

She had been with men before, but never like this. There was something about him that touched her inner wolf. It made her feel alive one moment and insecure the next. She wondered if it was really true, if he was her mate. Eric seemed to think so. Tony thought so too. Maybe if they worked together, there was a chance—

*No.* She had trusted a man once, and he had disappointed her. Never again would she let herself be so vulnerable. Her vision had spoken nothing of mates. In fact, there were two men, not one. Who was this second mystery man? Was he a friend or foe?

Tony leaned back and opened his eyes. "Gwen..." The word fell from his lips, electrifying the air between them. Cupping her neck, he ran his thumb over her jaw. She shivered as the vines of passion wrapped around her body, tightening her muscles and making her damp with longing. When his thumb flicked over her lips, she caught it between her teeth and dragged it into her mouth.

"What are you doing?"

She locked her gaze with his as her tongue swirled and caressed his finger, drawing it deeper.

“Gwen—”

She lightly scraped her teeth over his skin, then let go. “Yes?”

Heat flashed through his amber gaze before it dropped to the metal around her neck. “Are you part of the Wright pack?” He traced the edges of her collar with his hand.

Gwen shook her head. She would never willingly serve such a foul leader. When she first arrived, she had no idea the depth of Eric’s cruelty. Once inside the pack, she learned of his true intentions, and then it was too late to escape.

He breathed a sigh of relief. “Then you were captured.”

Sort of, but he didn’t need to know the details. She touched his hand at her neck, offering him reassurance.

“Why were you taken?” he asked.

She pressed her lips together. Everyone who learned of her secret had either abandoned her or tried to use her for their own selfish gains. Tony was her last chance for freedom and sanity. If his touch was any indication, she’d be happy with him. Well, as happy as someone like her could be. She’d die if yet another person she cared about turned their back on her.

He must have seen the hesitation in her eyes, for he shook his head and slid his hand away. “Later, then.” He kissed her forehead, the tender press warming her heart. “First we’ll get you out of here. Maybe we can coax some of the guards in here, and then I’ll surprise them in my wolf form—”

He made to stand, but Gwen pulled him back to her side. “No.”

“We have to get you out of here.”

“No.” Fear welled up in her chest as she remembered her vision—Tony’s lifeless body on the floor not far away from where they sat. “Please,” she whispered.

“Okay, okay,” he said as he sank beside her.

Gwen breathed a sigh of relief and leaned her head against his shoulder. She hadn’t realized how much she needed to feel his close presence or hear his voice. For months the only conversation she had was with Amos or Eric, neither of which were ideal. Tony’s words made her feel safe, alive...

Normal.

“Talk to me.” God, she was begging him now. Is this what Eric had reduced her to? It was undignified. Then again, dignity had left the room a long time ago.

He wrapped his arms around her again and held her close. “Talk to you,” he repeated. “What about?”

She shook her head. “I don’t care. Anything.”

“Like why you’re chained up like an animal?” There was no mistaking the undercurrent of anger in his voice.



She blinked back her tears. "Something else."

"We should really find a way out of here before they get back."

"Please. Just talk to me for a little while. I get so little conversation down here."

He hesitated, then pulled her into his lap. "You're shaking."

Was she? She hadn't noticed. "Please," she whispered.

He pressed his lips against the crown of her head. "Talk to you. Okay." He rocked her back and forth like a baby as he thought of something to say. She pressed into his chest and listened to his heartbeat. The *thump* sounded low, steady, and confident. Things she hadn't felt since...

"I can't do this." He grasped her upper arms and pushed her far enough away to look into her eyes.

Gwen held her breath as their gazes locked. He was searching for something, but what? She tried not to move, not to think. *Everyone has either used or abandoned me. Don't be like them, please.*

"I can't think with you so close to me." He shook his head and traced his finger down the side of her face. "But even going across the room seems too far away."

"Tony..."

He ran his fingers through her chestnut locks. "I can't imagine how it must have been for you down here all alone." He let his hand fall and traced the rips in her shirt. "What did they do to you? It almost looks as though they treat you like an animal."

*I am an animal.*

He slipped his finger through one of the larger tears and outlined the upper swell of her breast. Gwen held her breath as heat trickled over her skin. He shifted his legs, and she felt his hard cock press up against her hip.

"Never had I felt desire so strong. I just want to..." His voice trailed away as he lowered his hand.

"Want to what?"

He dragged his gaze up to meet hers. "I don't want to scare you. You're hurt and tired. Why don't we rest for a while, and then we'll find a way out of here."

"No." If he felt even half her longing, it would be painful for him. Would he let her ease his ache? Or would he want to ease hers? Lust flowed freely through her as she pictured him between her thighs, her body stretching to receive him. Pressure mounted in her lower abdomen, and her muscles tightened in response. She inched closer and rested her hand on his thigh. "Tell me, what do you want to do?" *Do you want to taste me? Touch me? Or just throw me down and fuck me?* She eased her fingers closer to his cock. His muscles tightened, and he leaned back, offering her more room. Excitement tingled over her skin. Gwen slid her hand up and over the bulge in his pants. He hissed out a breath as she curled her fingers and gave a gentle but firm squeeze.

"I've never craved anyone so much in my life." He brushed his thumb over her lips. "If we had met under different circumstances, I probably would have already claimed you for my own."

"Different circumstances?"

"You're hurt."

"I'm lonely."

"You need rest."

"I need *this*." She squeezed her hand for emphasis. His cock jerked against her palm in response.

Lust flashed over his features before it was quickly contained. He closed his eyes briefly before speaking. "No, this is the heat talking. You're my mate and deserve more than this. I refuse to take advantage of your situation. After we get out of here—"

An image of his broken body surfaced in Gwen's mind. She pushed it back and drew down his zipper. "One thing I have learned while staying here is that the future is uncertain. All we have is the here and now." She slipped her fingers through the hole and ran them over the head of his cock. He felt warm, wet, and inviting. She gathered some moisture on her finger and then drew her hand back. "We need to live in the moment, for tomorrow, we may die."

"We won't die."

He seemed so sure of himself. She slid her moistened finger between her lips. He tasted salty and male. She craved more, much more. Heat and need rose through her body, making her mouth dry and her heart thud inside her chest.

Tony curled his thumb around to the side of her face and slid it over her cheek.

He flicked his gaze to her mouth. "I would have stripped you down and savored every inch of your skin." He framed her face with his hands. "I would have started at your temple." He brushed a finger along her hairline. "And then worked my way down..." He blazed a trail of fire down to her cheek, her jaw, her neck. Everywhere he touched, her skin burned with longing. She reached up and covered his hands with hers. Passion soared through her body as she felt his fingers outline each dip and rise of her shoulders, her chest. Together they inched lower.

"Yes." The word was barely a whisper from her lips, but it had the desired effect. His amber eyes darkened as he inched his finger through a tear in her shirt. With skin finally touching skin, he traced the swell of her breast. "I would linger here."

She opened her eyes. "Would you?"

He tore his gaze away from her hands and met her eyes. "Do you want me to?"

"Yes."

"Good." Tony slipped his fingers from her shirt and continued down the length of her breast. "And here." He circled her nipple, teasing it into a sharp peak through her shirt.

“Anywhere else?”

“Maybe.”

“Show me.” *Please*. As much as Gwen wanted to touch him, to move, she didn’t dare. Movement would break the beautiful spell he wove around them, and she wasn’t quite ready to do that.

“And here.” He moved over to the other nipple, his intense gaze following his movements. Gwen held still as desire crashed through her body. He was going much too slow. At this rate, she’d self-combust before he got his cock out of his pants. She arched her back, pressing her breast into his waiting palm. He focused on his hands as he cupped her, then rubbed his palm over her tip.

“And then I would kiss you here.” He pressed his fingers underneath her breast. “And here.” He slid his hand down to the center of her abdomen, just above her belly button.

He raised his head, and she saw her passion mirrored in his eyes. Urgency tightened her muscles. She wanted him inside her. Now.

“Do it.”

He ignored her command. “And then here.” He slid his fingers lower, slipping between her thighs.

Her womb contracted with longing. This man was infuriating. She should just push him to the ground and take what she wanted, yet she couldn’t. His gaze held her captive. He watched her every movement, saw every emotion that slipped across her features. She felt as if he was a scientist and she was an interesting specimen. Did she give him the result he had hoped for?

“Yes.” His expression softened. “I would definitely kiss you here.”

Gwen closed her eyes. *Those words...* There was such need, such longing in them. Images flashed through her mind of him between her legs, brushing his tongue over her opening, flicking it over her clit. No one had ever talked to her like this before. His voice was laced with desire, of course, but there was something more. There was reservation. Despite the deep craving burning through both of them, Tony was holding back. For her.

The thought of him reining in his libido because he didn’t want to take advantage of the situation brought tears to her eyes. He barely knew her, yet he was showing her more care and consideration than anyone else ever had during her cursed existence. It was so sweet, so thoughtful.

So unnecessary.

He pressed his fingers against her slit, pushing her clothing over her damp skin. Passion climbed, the vines dividing, spreading, and curling up through her body. She opened her thighs to give him better access. A growl of hunger vibrated in the back of his throat as he ran his finger over her pants, tracing the outer rim of her opening. *Clothes, too many clothes...*

She leaned toward him like a flower eager for sunlight. Her vision had clearly shown how their connection would lead to his death. For now, she would take what

he offered: warmth, excitement, and a chance to belong to someone, to be *with* someone. She'd worry about the consequences tomorrow.

"I can smell your desire, Gwen." He leaned closer. "All I can think about is tearing off these clothes and driving myself deep inside you."

*Finally.*

Gwen's whole body shook, and her pussy clenched with need. She slid her arms around his neck and leaned her forehead against his. "What's stopping you, then?"

## Chapter Two

He opened his mouth, but no sound came out.

“There’s no need to wait.” She pressed her lips against his. Fire sparked the tiny flames racing over her skin.

Tony shook his head as if he had come out of a trance. “No.” He placed his hands on her shoulders and moved her away. “You’re hurt. We have to find a way to take off this collar.”

Shaking her head, she ran her fingers down his cheek. “I’ve tried, believe me. The collar doesn’t come off. There’s enough slack, see?” She held up the chain. “I can reach a full quarter of the room, including the bed.” She fingered the links as she talked. “Eric and his men have held me prisoner in this casino for months with no human contact, no conversation. Once the full moon rises, we may be separated.” *Or dead.* “Please...” Her throat constricted, choking her words. *You can’t hurt me any more than Eric already has.* She dropped the chain.

He grasped her wrist and placed a soft kiss in the center of her palm. “It’s close to the full moon. I have heard that being intimate with a mate has a stronger calming effect on the moon-rage than casual sex.” He placed her hand in the center of his chest, over his heart. “We’ll need to control the moon-rages if we want to survive.”

Gwen frowned and looked away. It was hard not to get caught up in his hope, but she knew better. Unlike him, she had seen what Eric was capable of, and then there were her visions...

He traced his fingers up her arm. “It *is* possible that having sex now will keep our heads clear enough during the full moon to seize an opportunity to escape.”

Gwen tried to stop the sinking feeling in her chest. Each month she slipped out of control, and it became harder and harder to return. The rages were strong now, much stronger than the normal weres’. She suspected it was because the antidote—sex—had never worked for her. Her descent into insanity had never been slowed. One day, she knew, the rage would claim her completely.

*Stop it. He is trying to convince himself that having sex with you is okay. That’s what you want, right?* She needed to stop worrying about the future and live in the here and now.

“Perhaps you’re right.” She decided she didn’t want Tony knowing she was a freak among their kind, an outcast who was a danger to others and herself. He didn’t need to know the real reason why she wore the collar—or why Eric kept her

here. Gwen had a chance to feel a close connection with someone before she succumbed to the madness. She'd be a fool not to take this opportunity.

He leaned forward and kissed first one cheek, then the other. "Are you sure?"

Having sex with Tony wouldn't calm the moon-rage, but it would give her the companionship she craved, at least for a little while. She reached down and slid her fingers over the bulge in his pants. "Very sure." His cock jerked in her hand, and she wrapped her fingers around his length. With a slow, purposeful movement, she caressed him from the base to the tip.

Tony closed his eyes. "Gwen—" He focused his gaze on her lips. "I promise to be gentle." The air heated around them as he captured her mouth. His spicy taste exploded across her tongue, making her body melt against his. She came alive at his touch, her skin tingling with sensation. *More*. She felt as if she had just come out of a long sleep with satisfying her hunger as her top priority.

She shifted her legs apart. "Don't be gentle." She had never felt this needy, this desperate.

He slipped his arms underneath her body and lifted her into the air. In two short steps, he placed her on the cot in the corner of the room. The chain around her neck went slack, dipping down from the iron ring over the mattress and in between the cot and the wall.

Tony ran his palms over her torso. "I have waited so long for this moment." He circled her nipples with his fingers, causing her back to arch. "For you." He flicked his gaze up to meet hers. "My mate."

She reached up and undid the button on his pants.

He groaned as she freed his cock from his clothing. It was large and thick, filling her palm. Gwen watched his face as she stroked him and listened to his moans of enjoyment. She marveled at the way his hair fell across his forehead, how he closed his eyes as pleasure rippled through him. He whispered encouragement, all the while caressing her with his voice. She couldn't remember the last time she had pleased anyone sexually. Between living like a hermit and her captivity, her only means of release had been by her hands. His approval washed over her body, heating her skin and fogging her mind.

"Stop." He grabbed her wrist, stilling her movements.

Had she done something wrong? She let go and shifted her gaze toward the floor.

"No, it's not that." He dropped her wrist and cupped her cheek in his palm. "I want to be inside you when I come." He leaned closer and brushed his lips against hers, sending tendrils of lust twisting through her body. "I want to savor every inch of your skin and listen to your moans of satisfaction." He slipped his hand down and began to remove her clothes. "I want to taste you, touch you."

No one had ever talked like that to her before. She felt energized by his words, powerful. Heat raced through her body, fueling her craving. He wanted her. She

was desirable. After years of being alone, it felt wonderful to connect with someone, especially if that someone was a handsome wolf like Tony.

He freed her breast and cupped it in his hand. "So perfect."

She wiggled against his hand. "It feels perfect."

He slipped his thumb over her nipple, eliciting a low hum of enjoyment from her lips. "The mating heat is strong. Can you feel it?"

"Yes." Yearning rocked her body. She closed her eyes and let it take control. It was as if every fiber of her being had come alive with emotion. It burned and pulsed, amplifying her libido. He stripped off her shirt and cupped both her breasts. She sighed as he stroked and teased, then arched her back and pushed them deeper into his hands. Reaching toward him, she began to unbutton his shirt, but he pulled away. "No."

"No?"

He leaned her back on the mattress and helped her remove her pants. "I want to take things slow. Your touch makes it harder to be gentle." His words sounded strained.

She watched her pants fall to the floor. "I want to touch you." She reached for him. He grabbed her wrists and locked them over her head with his hands.

"Not yet." His expression softened at her frown. "Soon."

Tony kissed her, a slow, lazy kiss meant to appease and disarm. He filled her mouth, and she opened her legs in invitation. With a soft growl, he left her lips and kissed a line along her jaw.

"Please, Tony, I don't want to wait."

"Have patience, sweetheart." He slid his hands down her arms, toward her torso.

She held her breath in expectation. Gwen felt so exposed and vulnerable. Those feelings weren't foreign to her. It was the trust that surprised her. She was emotionally naked before him. Eric's treatment had left her weak. In this state, Tony could do whatever he wanted to her. Any sane woman would be afraid, wouldn't she?

But she wasn't. There was something about the way he touched her, the way he looked at her, that made her feel safe. She trusted him.

She watched his expression soften as he traced her curves. He had such reverence, such calm. It fed her libido. Instead of fear, excitement tickled her skin.

"I want to show you where I'm going to kiss you." He dragged his fingers up to her chest, circling each of her breasts in turn. "These in particular look like they need attention." She gasped as he pinched her nipples, sending a spark of pain through her body. It quickly dissipated, and a surge of pleasure followed. His voice relaxed her and eased the doubts in her mind. The playfulness in his tone confirmed her suspicions—he wouldn't harm her. This knowledge allowed her to fully enjoy the moment and succumb to the craving raging through her body.

He inched his hands down her belly, distributing her heat beneath his fingertips. He circled her belly button, tracing the rim before he inched down and hooked his fingers in her briefs. "These need to go, however." Within seconds, they were removed and tossed to the floor. When she reached for him, he placed her hands over her head. "Not yet."

Her hands weren't bound. At any time she could move them and do as she pleased, though he might not continue with his exploration.

"Beautiful," he whispered as he removed his clothes and bent over her body, following the trail his fingers made with his lips.

His movements were slow and methodical. "You taste exquisite." He ran his hot tongue along her skin, causing her to murmur with enjoyment. "I could savor you all night."

She gasped as he took her nipple into his mouth. He stroked and teased the tip, molding it into a sharp peak. A small thrill shot through her body as his tongue flicked over the sensitive tip. His touch was soothing, his voice magical. She closed her eyes and basked in the affection he offered.

A growl vibrated low in his throat. "You're so responsive to my touch. I wonder..." He rose slightly and blew across her nipple.

The warm air rippled over her skin. Heat rocketed down her spine, and pushed her hips up against to his waiting cock.

He moved away. "Not yet, sweetheart."

*Sweetheart.* How she loved that word on his lips. When Eric used the word, it felt like a slap in the face. When it fell from Tony's lips, it was a caress. She groaned and reached for him again. This time he let her touch him. Wrapping her legs around his hips, she pulled him closer as she claimed his lips with hers.

He pulled away. "Not yet." He kissed the tip of her nose. "I want to enjoy you."

She reached for him again, desperate for his warmth.

"I said not yet." He put her hands above her head again, wrapping the chains around her wrists. "Keep them there."

"Only if you keep talking to me with that sexy voice."

He raised his brow. "You like my voice, eh?"

She opened her eyes and nodded.

"But there is so much more to me than my voice." He kissed a slow trail of fire down her chest, lingering in the channel between her breasts. The chains were loose—she could easily touch him if she wanted to—but she kept them in place. Touching him would make him stop, and she didn't want him to stop. She sighed and wiggled, urging him downward. With each of her movements, his progress slowed. When she rested, he proceeded. Through trial and error, she learned that holding still and allowing him full access to her body gave her the most enjoyment.

"Kissing you is addictive." He swirled his tongue around her navel. "I could do it all night."



She sighed as he inched lower and lower. Spreading her legs, he kissed the inside of her thigh, beginning at her knee and slowly inching his way upward. When he reached the top, he blew a warm puff of air over her pussy, making her shiver. Then he retreated and traced the same trail on the other thigh.

Anticipation built, and she lifted her head off the mattress to watch him. The sight of his dark head between her legs, his eyes fully concentrating on her and only her, made her weak with need. Hunger crackled through every last nerve ending.

He outlined slow, deliberate circles around her opening with his tongue, building her passion until she could think of nothing else but her desire. Her body tightened, then stretched. He worked his way over to her clit and pressed it with his tongue. Excitement shot through her, and she raised her hips off the mattress. He chuckled as he placed his palm on her abdomen and pressed her back onto the bed.

“Patience, sweetheart.”

He bent back between her thighs and licked her a second time. Another bolt of pleasure swept over her skin, and she closed her eyes. *Yes, please.* Lust fanned out through her body, and her pussy clenched with yearning. He spread her folds with his fingers. Warm breath brushed past her opening.

“So beautiful,” he murmured. Then he teased her again.

She resisted the urge to press her hips toward his mouth, knowing it would only make him pull away.

“Good girl.” He shifted his hands and angled his head lower. Taking her clit into his mouth, he sucked on the nub as his fingers entered her body. She gasped when new, deeper sensations rocked through her. Again and again he tormented her, and soon her enjoyment began to multiply. Using his mouth and hands, he continued to lift her higher and closer to the brink. He sensed what she needed and adjusted his fingers. If she was too close, he would ease his movements, pulling her back from the brink. The result was an ebb and flow, a sea of passion and hunger.

“Please.” Forgetting herself, she planted her feet on the mattress and lifted her hips toward him.

He murmured his approval and slipped his hands under her hips, angling her toward his greedy mouth. She cried out as he slid his tongue deeper. He coaxed her higher, wound her tighter. When her excitement climbed again, he continued to tease and torture. With sure, steady movements, he stoked her desire, dragging her to the edge.

“Come for me, sweetheart.”

The words touched something deep inside her, and she let herself go. She pressed her hips higher, urging him on. The orgasm tumbled over her like an avalanche, roaring through her body and causing every muscle to quake in pleasure. He continued to caress, milking her body of sensations until the last bit of energy flowed out of her. Exhausted, she collapsed on the mattress.

He moved away and ran his hands over her inner thighs. “I can’t wait any longer, sweetheart,” he whispered.

He wanted to keep going?

Tony gently pressed against her knees. "Let me inside."

"I..." She allowed him to push her legs apart.

"I hope you aren't too tired." He trailed his fingers over her mound, drawing forth new heat and longing in her core. "Because I want to continue."

"I want that too." Fresh desire fanned through her body at the thought of him entering her. She curled her fingers around the chain over her head in expectation.

He cupped his hands behind her ankles. With a swift, fluid movement, he lifted her legs in the air and onto his shoulders. She shivered as passion rippled through her body.

"I have always dreamed of having a mate. Now that you're here, I won't let you go." He positioned himself at her opening and, with a swift plunge, filled her completely.

She opened her eyes and cried out as pain shot up her middle. Although she wasn't a virgin, it had been a long time since she had been with anyone.

He stilled, his cock pulsing inside her channel. "It's okay, sweetheart." He slid his hands down her legs, and her skin tingled under his fingertips. He inched lower, closing his eyes as his fingers drew little circles behind her knees. *Perfect*. He was so gentle, so loving. The fact that he waited for her body to adjust made her want him even more. She wasn't used to such kindness or consideration. Contentment eased away the pain, and she began to relax.

"That's it." He inched his fingers lower. Cupping her ass, he angled her up and pushed himself deeper. "So tight." He opened his eyes. "How do you feel?"

He was the first person to ever ask that question. Normally, no one cared about how she felt about anything. It made her want him even more. She smiled. "Stop talking."

He chuckled as he began to move. "I thought you liked my voice."

She hummed her contentment as sweet friction set every nerve ending on edge. "I do."

"I like your voice too." He pulled out until only the tip of his cock remained inside. "Tell me what you are feeling."

Tell him? All her encounters had been wordless, emotionless. She didn't even know where to begin.

"Tell me what you need."

"I need..." What did she need? Heat crept into her cheeks. "I need to feel your cock deep inside me." She had never talked during sex before. This was so new, so exciting.

"Yeah?" He pushed himself forward until he was about halfway inside her. They both moaned at the friction.

"I want you to fill me." She wiggled closer as excitement swept through her body.

He did. Her name fell from his lips as he filled her again. His hips pressed up against her. She hummed her enjoyment as her body tightened around his shaft.

He pulled out again, and pleasure filled her. She felt powerful and in control. Wild. "I want to touch you while you move inside me."

He leaned over her body, causing her to stretch her legs and arch her ass into the air. "Then you shall." He unwrapped the chain from her wrists and caressed them with his fingers. Taking her hands, he brought them up to his chest and placed her fingers over each nipple. Then he covered them with his palms. He watched her as her fingers teased and stroked, his eyes dark with longing. "Gwen..." Dropping his hands, he began to move, all the while holding her gaze.

She was captivated by him and found she couldn't look away from his handsome features. Something flashed in his eyes. Loneliness? Sorrow? Before she could give it a name, it was gone. Hunger quickly surfaced and burned in his gaze, making her desire soar.

He moved quicker, harder, all the while holding her gaze. His passion fueled her, lifting her closer and closer to the edge. Wrapping her hands around her knees, she unhooked her ankles from his shoulders and spread herself wider for him. He murmured his approval and thrust deeper. Once again, she began to reach toward that unseen goal.

It came suddenly, like a summer thunderstorm. Wild and turbulent, her orgasm roared through her with a force that left her shaking. Excitement sprang up like a fountain in her body and burst through her senses. She felt him harden, his thrusts deepen. She curled her fingers into his biceps as he groaned and spilled himself deep inside her. He continued to move, stretching both their enjoyment until they were left weak and stoned.

When it was over, he gathered her in his arms and rolled over until she was on top of him. After a quick kiss to the temple, he reached down, grabbed the small wool blanket, and covered them the best he could.

She laid her head on his chest and listened to his heart. The moment was so perfect, so special. Gwen didn't think she had ever experienced such bliss before. Words couldn't do it justice.

She loved the way he ran his fingers through her hair, the way his warm body cocooned hers. In his arms, she felt like she belonged. That she was somebody. All her troubles seemed to fade away as she focused on Tony.

"That was incredible," he said.

She lifted her head and rested her chin on his chest. "For you too, eh?" For the first time in a long time, she felt content.

"Yeah, for me too." He traced her face with his fingers, and Gwen leaned into his hand. "The pull of the moon is fading. I don't think I've ever felt such freedom from the rage before." He ran his fingers through her hair, brushing it away from her face. "It's a true gift." He frowned. "I don't think Eric expected this. Tomorrow

night, when the moon is full, we may have a chance to escape while their guard's down."

Her smile faded. Although the sex was great—probably the best she had ever had—it did nothing to ease the pull of the moon on her body. It was still there, just as strong as ever.

She buried her face in his chest to hide her pain. Tomorrow night, Tony might be lucid, but she still would suffer the rage. She had hoped that because they were mates, things would be different. Unfortunately, Tony was just like the rest. No one could help her. Eric was right—sex would just make tomorrow night's full moon all the more difficult. As a wolf, most of her kind had a vague sense of self, knew who was friend and who was foe. At one time, she had too. But now... Now her wolf side took over almost completely. She was too far gone during her rages, more animal than human. She blinked back the tears. Perhaps this moon-cycle would be the one where she wouldn't be able to change back into her human form, and she would become the rabid wolf. She rubbed her eyes and played with the fine hairs on Tony's chest.

"Nico's never going to believe this," he said, misunderstanding her movements.

Gwen brought her hand to her mouth and bit her nail. She had to keep him talking while she collected herself. "I'm not sure he will survive long enough to know about it."

"Don't worry, he will." He kissed the top of her head, sending tingles of warmth over her skin. "We have always worked as a team—in everything we do. I can't remember a time when we weren't together." He sighed and tightened his arms around her. "You'll like him."

*As a team.* "You mean, you and Nico...?" She raised her head and waved her hand in the air between them. "Together?"

He grasped her hand and kissed the inside of her wrist. "We are legendary in Las Vegas." He sighed and pulled her closer. "He'll contact our pack leader, Josh, and together they'll rescue us."

*Josh. That's right.* Tony had mentioned the Kyron pack earlier, but it wasn't until now, with the mating heat appeased, that she could fully understand the implication of his words.

He was a part of a pack that refused to keep her. Even if she did manage to escape her moon-rage and leave Atlantic City with him, she could never live with him. At least, not with his pack. How could she ask him to leave everything he knew just to be with her? Was the mating heat strong enough for him to deny his world? She didn't think so.

Gwen leaned her head back on his chest and tried not to think about it. If her vision was any indication, they'd never survive an escape anyway. So what was the use in worrying about things that would probably never happen? She sniffed and blinked back the tears that threatened to fall down her cheeks.

“Hey.” He brushed his fingers over her temple. “Don’t worry; Josh would never forget us. We’ll get out. You’ll see.”

Gwen tried to smile at him, but it felt forced. She got up from the bed and began to put her clothes back on.

Confusion ran across his features, then disappeared. “Right.” He got up and did the same. “We should probably concentrate on finding a way out of here.” A sly grin slipped over his lips. “Although I think we may need to revisit this mating heat once more before the full moon hits, just to be sure the rage doesn’t affect us.”

Gwen turned her back to him so he couldn’t see the tear that ran down her face. *Hours*. She had less than twenty-four hours to try to save Tony and his brother before they would both be destroyed by her rage. She had to alter future events, but how?

The door opened. Tony swore and pulled his pants over his hips. “What the...?”

Amos entered, carrying a man in his arms. “Your savior.” He dumped the body on the floor.

“Nico.” Tony rushed over to the body and gently turned it faceup. Gwen couldn’t see him very well, but there was a definite rise and fall to Nico’s chest. That meant Eric probably got to him before Amos could play his games. Still, his injuries were extensive. If they were human or from a human-made weapon, Nico would quickly recover. Were injuries were a different matter, however. They took much longer to heal. Sometimes, if the wound was deep enough, they didn’t heal at all. Her scars were proof of that.

She looked up at the guard in question to find him leering at her. She pulled her open shirt tight around her.

Tony looked up from his brother on the floor. “Bastard.”

Amos sneered. “You and I have some unfinished business.” He pounded his fist in his hand for emphasis.

Tony straightened. “Bring it on.”

“I would, but I have to take care of the lady over here first.”

Gwen shrieked as he grabbed her arm and dragged her toward the cot to unchain her. *Not again*. The last time Amos had gotten his meat hooks in her, she was unconscious for days. She struggled but could do nothing against his viselike grip. “The boss wants to question you again. And then, I was promised some time alone with you before I return you to the cell.” He grinned as he unfastened her chain from the wall, which made him look more like a wolf than a man.

“Don’t you dare touch her.” Tony lunged for Amos. The guard released her arm and swung at Tony. Gwen rolled away as the two men collided. *No*. If Tony got injured, it could take weeks, even months, for him to heal—if he healed at all. They’d never be able to escape.

She watched the fighting, trying to make sense of it. Both men had changed into their wolf forms, and the blurred movements made her head ache, and she was forced to look away. She wanted to help Tony, but if she tried to intervene when

they moved that fast, she would end up getting in the way and doing more harm than good.

Gwen crawled over to Nico and knelt beside him. "Wake up. Your brother needs you." She pressed her hand against his cheek. It was still warm.

She stared at the handsome square face. He looked a lot like his brother, almost identical. Were they twins? She glanced up at Tony, who was fighting not far away. Was he winning? It was so hard to tell. If she changed into her wolf form, she would be better able to follow their movements. She might be able to help too. Changing into her wolf was too dangerous, however. She wouldn't be much help to anyone if the madness consumed her.

Pressing her lips together, she returned to Nico. "Come on." She rubbed his cheek with the backs of her fingers. "Snap out of it. We need you." He didn't appear to be hurt too badly. She wondered what was wrong.

Warm tingles spread over her skin as she examined his face. Gwen brushed a stray lock of ebony hair away from his temple and ran her fingers over his brow. The tingles got stronger. The brothers were so much alike, but different. Tony's face appeared open and relaxed. Nico's was...restrained. Even unconscious, his expression appeared darker, more menacing. She traced the dark circles under his eyes. Rough on the outside, yet something tortured him enough to keep him up at night. Was he worried about his brother? Or was there something more?

She sighed and patted his cheek. "Come on, Nico. Wake up." Gwen glanced back at the fight. Tony was losing. She wished she could help him, but she didn't know how. "Come on, Nico—for me."

Tony lunged, teeth bared, and missed. He was weakening. Amos rammed his side hard, sending him sprawling to the floor. With a frustrated growl, Gwen stood and threw herself at Amos. "Leave him alone!"

He shifted back to his human form and caught her wrist easily before she could slap him. "Now, my dear, where were we?" His eye was swollen and his lip split, but there was no mistaking the intention in his gaze.

"Get away from me." She pulled, but he held fast.

He dragged her toward the door.

"No!" She beat him with her free hand, but it was like hitting a wall. "Tony!"

Out of the corner of her eye, she saw him get up. His body was bruised and battered but looked like it would heal with time. *Thank God.* Tony lunged for the guard's knees and held on tight. Amos fell, dragging Gwen down next to him. The three of them collapsed into a heap on the floor. Unfortunately, she was at the bottom.

Gwen didn't know where one body began and the other ended. There was a lot of yelling, but she couldn't tell who said what. Finally, the weight was lifted off her, and she scrambled away.

Amos stood and frowned over Tony's body on the floor.

*Shit.* Gwen took a step away from the men and toward the wall.

“Eric’s going to kill me for this.” He grabbed her wrist and dragged her over to the bed. “At least I wasn’t a wolf when I punched his head,” he muttered. With two sharp *clicks*, she was once again chained to the wall. “We’ll continue this later, after I clean up Pretty Boy here.” He picked up Tony and slung him over his shoulder.

Before she could react, he left the room, closing the door behind him.

Gwen screamed in anguish and her hands up over her face. This couldn’t be happening...

She wrapped her hands around her collar and pulled. It didn’t budge. She grabbed the chain and tried to disconnect it from the collar. No luck. She kept playing with the metal, hoping that this time things would be different and she could break free.

After a while, she gave up. It was useless. Even if she could unchain herself, she couldn’t get out of the room. Amos had won again. And when he brought Tony back, she would be next.

It was her vision, coming to life. And she was helpless to stop it.

Gwen turned to Nico’s body on the floor. He hadn’t moved. She walked over, her chain trailing behind her. Thank goodness there was enough slack to reach him. What had happened to him? She retrieved the blanket from the cot and tried to make him more comfortable. She wasn’t a doctor, but he didn’t look to be in bad shape. Why wasn’t he waking up?

She ran her fingers over his skin, and the warm tingles she had felt previously returned. It was odd that her lust came back so quickly after she had been with her mate. Maybe it was because they were brothers. Or maybe what she had with Tony was so strong that it lingered after they parted. She didn’t know. It wasn’t like she had been through anything like this before.

“They’re gone, Nico.” She sighed as she studied his face. “They took Tony. I could really use your help right now. We have to find a way to get your brother back.”

Gwen ran her fingers over his jaw, his lips. His skin felt so good on her fingertips. She suppressed the urge to tear off his clothes and explore every dip and curve.

“I wish I knew what to do to wake you up.” She placed her hand on his chest and leaned closer to his face, inspecting it. “I know you’re in there. I can feel you breathing.” His warm breath caressed her skin, sending a bolt of need through her body. “I wonder what would wake you up.” She leaned in closer until her lips hovered above his. “Would a kiss wake up Sleeping Beauty?” She smirked. “I guess it couldn’t hurt.”

She gently pressed her lips against his. He felt so inviting, so hot. It was different than with Tony. While Tony’s touch was exciting and stimulating, Nico made her feel calm and safe.

With a sigh, she leaned back and cupped his cheeks in her hands. “I guess not, eh?”

Nico's eyes flew open. After grabbing her wrists, he yanked them away from his face. Within seconds, Gwen was on her back with his muscular body on top of hers.

She looked up into his hard amber gaze and set jaw. Gwen knew she should feel afraid, but there was something there that told her this man would never hurt her. She felt it instinctively, like she had felt it with Tony. In fact, many of the feelings she had felt with Tony were returning to the surface. Lust sparked like electricity through her body, despite her having had sex only a short time ago. Nico's body was pressed up against hers in all the right places, which didn't help the situation.

She smiled and was surprised to find it was genuine. "So nice for you to join us."



## Chapter Three

*What the hell...?* Nico blinked at the chestnut-haired beauty underneath him. Lust shot through his body like a rocket, tightening his muscles and hardening his cock. He gasped at the sensations flowing through him, momentarily freezing him with emotion.

She frowned in confusion.

He started to speak but then stopped, remembering. Instead he met her gaze and found instant understanding, a connection. He saw intelligence and fire, yet behind them lurked loneliness and dignity. This woman showed one face to the world and kept another to herself.

Just like him.

The knowledge made his cock ache with need. He longed to ease his suffering but guessed that if he did, he might scare her.

*Damn.* Josh had had him and Tony running around in circles for so long he had been deprived of the more carnal enjoyments. It must be the lack of sex giving him such a strong response. And yet...something was different.

Raising his head, he sniffed the air. He couldn't quite put his finger on it.

Nico leaned his head low to her neck and inhaled deeply. The woman sighed and pressed her hips against him. It was a welcome surprise. Heat raced through his body, and pain shot between his legs as his cock tried to break free of the zipper. It had been too long.

But he couldn't just take her; that wasn't his style. Oh, he wanted her, and she wanted him, if her actions were any indication. But Nico was terrible with women. He didn't understand them. It was easier to let Tony do all the talking. It was what he was good at.

Touching. That was what Nico did well. He and Tony used to set fire to the Las Vegas strip, leaving a trail of happy women in their wake. They worked well together, and he wouldn't have it any other way.

"You feel it too, don't you?" the woman asked. God, she was beautiful. Her long hair hung straight around her shoulders. Her heart-shaped face tilted to the side, as if she was studying him. "Don't you talk?"

No, he didn't talk. That was the problem. He let Tony do all the talking, and after a while, words had become unnecessary. He could always make himself understood through actions. *Doing* was what he was about. There was no room for words in his world. If pressed, he wasn't even sure he could speak anymore.

But looking at the woman beneath him, he found he *wanted* to speak. He wanted to tell her that he wouldn't hurt her, and ask what had happened to Tony. If he only knew why they were here...

He opened his mouth, but no words came out.

She lifted her head and shoulders off the ground and nuzzled his cheek. "It's okay. You're safe here."

Desire once again shot through his body. What the heck was happening? He had to find Tony and get out of here.

*Tony.* That was the smell. His brother's scent was on everything here—the floor, the walls, her...

He let go and rolled into a standing position. If Tony was here, what had happened to him? Nico rubbed his chin and began to pace.

The woman rose into a sitting position and pulled her knees up to her chest. "Do you need to shift to heal your injuries?"

Nico shook his head. They had hurt him, but not too badly. If he changed into his wolf form now, his more animalistic instincts would take over, and he didn't trust himself around her. What would happen if his lust overpowered him? He didn't want to frighten her.

"You look a lot like your brother."

She knew? In two strides, he had covered the distance between them and crouched until he was level with her gaze. He stared hard, trying to will the words from her mouth. She searched his face for a moment and lowered her head.

"He was here, yes." She wiped her eyes with the back of her hand. "They took him away after you came."

It was then that he noticed the collar. He reached out and ran his fingers over the smooth metal.

She covered his hand and met his gaze. "Yes, they captured me too. Although I've been down here for a while."

He tilted his head to the side and focused on her bright green eyes.

"How long?" she asked, reaching up and lacing her fingers with his. "I don't know. Weeks, months. Everything blends together when you can no longer see the moon rise or set."

*The moon-rage.* Tomorrow was the full moon, and he had yet to have sex. If he didn't do it soon, he wouldn't be lucid enough to save himself, let alone Tony and the girl.

"I think they might bring him back after a while," she offered.

He touched the collar again, then followed the attached chain.

"You want to know why they have chained me and not you, right?"

He nodded.

She sighed. "They put on this collar because they think I'm dangerous." When he frowned, she pressed her lips together and looked away. "I *am* dangerous, at least when the moon rises."

Then he smelled it—sex, mating heat. She was mated. No...that wasn't right. She wasn't mated yet, but she had been with her mate.

He pulled his hand away as if stung. A pain exploded in his chest, so raw, so intense, that he fell back from it.

She had a mate.

Then why was his libido so strong?

She moistened her lips. "Some...things...happened while Tony was here. We discovered we were mates."

The tension eased in his chest. Tony's mate. He should have known.

She brushed a lock of hair from her face. "But the same emotions I felt with him, I feel with you." She shook her head. "I don't understand it. There's just something about you..."

He knew—he felt it too. It didn't make any sense. If she belonged to Tony, they shouldn't be feeling the heat. Even if he could speak, he wouldn't be able to explain anything to her. He didn't understand these feelings himself. Everything seemed to be happening so fast, and it was difficult to wrap his head around what it all meant.

Nico didn't know what to tell her, so he did the only thing he could. He crooked his finger under her chin and drew her gaze up to meet his. Then he pressed his lips against hers. He held a rein on his lust and let the kiss speak for itself. Slow, tender, caring.

She inched closer to him. Placing her hands on his cheeks, she tilted her head and deepened the kiss.

*Mine.* The surge of emotion took him by surprise. He wrapped his arms around her and pulled her up against his chest. Desire roared through his body, fogging his mind and heating his skin. His cock twitched and pressed harder against the zipper of his jeans, eager to escape. He had never felt such intense feelings like this before. In the were community, they could only mean one thing: they were mates too.

He broke the kiss and tried to catch his breath. The air around them heated and crackled with lust. This was crazy; she was Tony's *mate*. Yet he couldn't deny the unnatural chemistry between them. He leaned his forehead against hers and closed his eyes.

"It's okay." She slipped her hands down his cheeks to caress first his neck, then his chest. "Something's happening between us. I can feel it." She leaned back as he opened his eyes. "I know you feel it too."

Boy, did he ever. For the first time in a long time, he wished he could speak.

Her hands moved to the buttons on his shirt. "Tony told me that you both...did things together." A delicate pink crept into her cheeks. "That you shared things."

Maybe it was meant to be this way.” She shrugged, but her fingers shook against his chest.

Maybe she was right. God, he wished Tony were here. His brother was the smart one, the communicator. Nico was nothing but—

“I need you, Nico.” She stilled her hands on the buttons and looked up into his eyes. “I don’t know what they are doing to Tony right now. I’m scared.”

He was too. Josh had warned them both about Eric—said to be careful. Nico had lost his cell phone when both he and Tony were ambushed. He had been searching for a way to contact Josh when he was discovered again.

He leaned forward and brushed his lips against her temple. Her scent rose up to meet him, awakening the wolf inside. He traced small circles along her lower back with his fingers. She rested her forehead on his shoulder, groaning her approval. “Your hands are magic.”

He smiled. Women had said such things to him before, but from her lips, it sounded different, special. Nico continued to work his way up her back, easing the tension out of her muscles and hopefully the bad memories from her mind. If only he could do the same for himself...

After a while, she turned her head and kissed his cheek. The tenderness felt full of promise. He closed his eyes and pretended that they weren’t in a prison far beneath the casino floor, but back in Las Vegas, and Tony was with them.

“What do you think they’re doing with Tony?” she said.

He slowed his hands and opened his eyes. A worry line creased her forehead, and he traced it with his finger.

“Do you think he’ll survive?” she asked.

He nodded in reassurance. If anyone could survive a beating, it was Tony. Hopefully, they would bring him back here soon. Nico worked best when he was with his brother.

She sighed. “I suppose we just have to be patient, then.”

He slipped his hands up to her shoulders and tried to work out some of the knots in her neck.

She closed her eyes and sighed. “You should really bottle that.” After a moment, her hands covered his, and she opened her eyes. “You miss him too, don’t you?” She traced his jaw with her finger. “You look so much like him, but you’re different.” She smiled. “There’s something about you that makes me want to just bury myself in your arms and let everything pass us by.” She brushed her lips against his jaw. “Do you ever just want to curl up and forget about the world, Nico?” She nipped him, sending a small spark of pain across his skin. “I do, quite often.”

He welcomed the pain. It was something he understood. Soon it dissolved into a river of pleasure. He buried his face in her hair. God, how could she know him so well? They had only just met, yet she’d summed up the last eleven years of his life. Better still, she understood him, something no one besides Tony and Josh had ever been able to do.

She ran her tongue over where she bit him. Lust bolted through his body, hardening his cock. How would it feel to come inside a woman who understood you so completely? To lose yourself in someone who knew your secrets and accepted you anyway? He tightened his grip around her shoulders, pulling her closer.

She kissed a path over his jaw and down his neck. At the base, she halted. "What happened to your neck?" She ran her fingers over his skin. He hissed and pulled away, opening his eyes.

"Sorry." She retreated, but her gaze never left his neck. "It looks like a puncture wound. Is that a wolf bite?"

Nico closed his eyes as memories flooded back to him. He was running. The wolves came out of nowhere. He tried to fight, but there were just too many of them. Then they changed into their wolf forms, and all hell broke loose. The wound wasn't deep, thank God. It would heal with time. Unfortunately, he didn't have the luxury of waiting around until he was back to functioning at 100 percent. They needed to get out of there, fast. The next time that guard got his hands on him, he might not be so lucky.

"I'm so sorry." She slid her hands down to his chest. "Is that why you don't talk? Because of what those guards did to your neck?"

Christ, he couldn't take much more of this. He needed to clear his head and think things through. Every second they stayed in such close proximity was torture for his cock. Having sex, while very appealing, wasn't going to get them out of here. Nico covered her hands with his own.

"That's it, isn't it? The wound in your neck made you lose your voice." Those deep green eyes touched something deep inside him, something he'd long thought dead.

As much as he wanted to let her believe it was Eric's guards who had caused his muteness, he couldn't lie to her. Nico shook his head and cupped her cheek in his hand.

"Then how did you lose it?"

*It doesn't matter.* Nothing mattered except her. The kiss was deep and thorough. He savored her taste, explored her mouth. Possession surged through his body as she groaned and molded herself against him.

"Okay, so you don't want to talk about it," she said when he finally pulled away. "Fine by me. Talking's overrated anyway." She shifted her gaze to his mouth.

He smiled. *She has spunk, this one.* It had been a long time since he had met a woman with such quick wit. He slipped his hand away from her face and down her neck. When he reached her collar, he straightened and frowned, questions filling his mind.

Gwen pushed herself out of his arms and walked a short distance away. "What's the use? In less than twenty-four hours, we'll all be dead." She curled her arms around her middle and shivered.

Dead? She couldn't be serious. Okay, so he hadn't been able to contact Josh, but once Tony came back, they could all form a plan and get themselves out of here. He was sure Josh would welcome her into the pack. She could make a home there—with them.

Nico was beginning to believe she was right and that this woman was meant for him. There was no denying the mating heat pumping in his veins. He and Tony had often talked about what would happen if one of them mated. Would the mate accept them both?

This situation was almost too good to be true. If she was *their* mate, she would have to accept them both. Nico and Tony wouldn't need to be apart. They could live together, love together.

Gwen put her head in her hands and sobbed.

Panic rose in his chest as he stood and moved over to her. This was Tony's territory, not his. Where was his brother when he needed him? Nico reached out to touch her, then hesitated. Maybe she didn't want to be touched.

That was ridiculous. The woman needed to be consoled. Taking a deep breath, he rested his hand on her shoulder.

She jerked around and buried her face in his chest. Surprise whipped through his body, and he somehow managed to wrap his arms around her before they both crashed to the ground.

She held tight, her fingers curling into his shirt. Nico looked up to the ceiling and said a silent prayer for guidance. What was wrong with this woman? Was she upset about Tony?

With a sigh, she began to reveal her thoughts. "At first they turned me away..."

Her voice trailed off. He stroked her back when she paused, encouraging her to continue.

She took a deep breath before continuing. "When Eric found out I could see the future, they took me captive. They've been using me against your pack. Eric sees your decisions before you make them and acts accordingly." She let go of him, stood, and moved away. "You must hate me."

He brought her around to face him and shook his head. No, he could never hate her. How could she think such a thing?

She let out a short laugh as tension flew out of her. Holding up her chain, she displayed it between them. "This is for when the moon comes up." She sniffed and rubbed her nose with the back of her hand.

He took the chain and studied it.

"I—Sex doesn't—The moon-rages come every moon-cycle. It doesn't matter what I do. I can't stop them."

He looked up from the chain and frowned. No ease for the moon-rage? He had never heard of such a thing.

“No, sex doesn’t keep the rage at bay. It never has.”

He opened his mouth, but no words came out. Where was Tony when he needed him?

“It happened again just now, with Tony.” Sadness filled her eyes as she looked down at the chain. “I thought that since we were mates, things would be different.” She sighed and brought her gaze back to meet his. “The pull of the moon lessened for him but not for me.” She sniffed again as a faraway look came over her eyes. “The rages are getting worse. Soon I won’t be able to change back from my wolf form, and I’ll be nothing more than an animal with a death wish.”

Nico brushed away a tear with his finger. She had such a beautiful face; it was a shame to see it filled with such sorrow.

She caught his hand and rubbed her cheek into it. “I just want to know what it’s like to be loved, to be needed. For once, before I die, before we all die, I want to feel normal.”

He pressed his lips together and pulled her into his arms. His mind raced as she cried into his chest. This was Texas all over again, only worse. Much worse.

*Fuck.*

“Tony won’t be back for a while. When they bring him...” She sighed into his chest. “He’ll need both of us to be strong.” Gwen looked up at him with a tear-stained face. “Right now I need someone to be strong for me.” She glanced at her hands. “Can you help me forget this place, Nico? Just for a little while.”

Again he caught a tear with his finger and brushed it away. This woman before him was so beautiful, and she was asking for his help. He could smell her arousal and see the loneliness in her eyes. They were a lot alike, she and him. Two weres looking for someone to help them forget for a little while. She wanted comfort and companionship. So did he.

She was right. The moon would be full soon. Already he could feel its pull, calling him to change. Sex would offer control over their shifting and the inevitable rage that followed. He needed that control if they were ever going to find a way out of here. And what better way to gain the upper hand than to have sex with a gorgeous woman?

He didn’t delude himself that he would be the one to heal her. Tony was much better at those sorts of things. Even before Texas, women naturally gravitated toward his brother. Nico understood Gwen, though. He understood her better than Tony ever could. For eleven years, all he had wanted to do was forget, to hide.

For once it would be nice if someone wanted to be with him—only him. He brushed a stray hair from her face.

“This is silly.” Gwen looked away. “I’m sorry. I just thought...” She shook her head. “Forget about it.”

No, not silly. Purpose rose up inside his chest and mingled with his desire. He caught her chin and lifted her head to meet his gaze. Leaning forward, he covered her lips with his. Gone was the gentle, tender kiss. This one was fierce, possessive.

She wanted to feel needed, and by God, he'd show her how much he needed her. It was crazy, Nico barely knew her, and yet he felt a closeness with this woman that couldn't be explained. It didn't need to be explained. It was just *there*. He poured every want, every ache, every yearning into that kiss, hoping that it would be enough.

She reached up and wrapped her arms around his neck, molding her body to his. With a sigh, she rubbed her breasts against his chest, causing his cock to ache with longing. He murmured his enjoyment as her fingers dived into his hair and held him to her.

She was a firecracker, this one. Lust wound through his body, wrapping him like a present. He slipped his hands down her curves and over the globes of her ass. They felt so round, so perfect. He tilted his head, deepening the kiss as he pulled her hard into his cock. She moaned her appreciation. The soft vibration against his lips drove him crazy, and he wanted nothing more than to drive himself deep inside and forget who he was, where he was...

He kissed a path down over her jaw and neck, savoring the sweet taste of her skin. She tilted her head back, giving him better access. He hooked his finger in her shirt and pulled it aside, kissing along the exposed skin. He lingered just underneath her collar, in the spot where her neck met her shoulder. Fire raced over his skin, burning his body and heating the air. She tasted sweet, and he couldn't get enough. Over and over he teased with his mouth and hands, until she shook with pleasure in his arms.

He claimed her mouth, inching her backward until her shoulders leaned against the wall. She wiggled and then bent her knee, raising it to his hip. He grasped it and positioned himself between her thighs. God, how he wanted this woman.

With shaking hands, she undid his buttons and then tugged his shirt off his shoulders. He sighed and tore his mouth away from her lips. After flinging their clothing to the floor, he resumed his attack, drowning in her scent, her taste. He wanted to possess her, consume her.

*Mine.*

Lust beat through his veins and thrummed in his ears, making it difficult to think. Her murmurs of pleasure fueled his lust. Never before had he felt such longing, such craving. She was *his*. It was his right to claim her when and how he chose. He wanted the oblivion she offered, the peace. He wanted to plunge himself into that soft body, lose himself and never come up for air.

Nico spun her around and placed her hands on the wall. *Behind. Must take from behind.* She gasped in surprise as he covered her fingers with his hands and rubbed his cock in between the cheeks of her ass.

So sweet, it was as if their bodies were meant to fit together. Nipping her shoulder, he slid his knee between her thighs and edged her legs apart. He straightened, dragging his hands up her arms as he kissed a trail down her spine.



“God, Nico...”

His name sounded like heaven from her lips. He reached the curve of her back, kissing the indentation above each cheek. If he had Tony’s charm or grace, he would have said how beautiful she was, or what she did to him. There was only him. He would let his hands say what his voice couldn’t. He only hoped it would be enough.

He slid his fingers over her ass, enjoying the way she shivered at his touch. Her skin felt so delicate, so soft. Inching his hands down her flesh, he traced the curve between her backside and thigh. Years as a mute had led Nico to use his hands to communicate with his lovers. As a result, he knew where to touch to get a laugh or a sigh. He knew where they were sensitive and where they ached for attention. He now had a lifetime to use this knowledge on the woman before him.

He stooped lower and kissed her where he’d just touched, one peck on each cheek.

“Nico—” Her breath caught as he ran his fingers down the backs of her thighs.

Nico nipped the sensitive crease on the underside of her ass and smiled when she whispered her delight. She bent forward, exposing more of herself to him. Her scent drifted up and tickled his nose. *Lovely*. He nipped her ass again and enjoyed her sounds of contentment. He slipped his hands between her legs, then eased them farther apart and allowed the sweet scent of her desire to fill his nose. He kissed her thigh, causing her to moan. *Perfect*.

“I can’t believe... Your mouth...” Her words dissolved into a groan as he kissed his way up her inner thigh. When he came close to the top, he pulled away and angled himself between her and the wall. For eleven years, he had only ever taken women from behind. Once, just once, he wanted to watch a woman’s face as she fell apart in his arms.

*No, not any woman, this woman.*

She trembled as she met his gaze. “I need you, Nico,” she whispered.

He leaned his head up against the wall and slipped his finger between her legs. Keeping their gazes locked, he entered her. She gasped and then sank onto his palm. With his free hand, he caressed her leg, moving up and down, touching every inch as he moved inside her. Soon she moved with him, riding his fingers and begging for more.

He added a second finger, then a third. She tightened around him, her muscles clinging to his hand as he stroked and teased. Crouching, he took her nipple in his mouth. Her taste exploded on his tongue, heightening his craving. She took her hands from the wall and slipped them in his hair, humming her joy as he continued to caress and tease her body.

He sensed when she was close, and quickened his movements. She leaned her head back as she rode him, climbing toward her release. When her orgasm came, he watched her, and felt every single tremor ripple through his body.

When she finally stilled, he removed his hand, straightened, and took his place once again behind her. *Beautiful*. Now that he saw her satisfied, it was time to ease the throbbing ache in his cock.

“Nico...” She started to turn, but he turned her back to the front and put her hands on the wall. Watching her as she came was one thing; having someone watch him was something else entirely. It made him vulnerable, connected. After Texas, he had vowed never to be in that position again.

He inched his fingers down her arms, over the swell of her breasts, around the smooth planes of her abdomen.

“I want to touch you.” She reached behind her hips and grabbed his wrists. He guided her hands back to the wall.

He kept her hands immobilized as he rubbed his hips into her ass. She moaned and leaned forward, pressing her beautiful backside into him. Pleasure burst through his system, and for a moment, he forgot where he was. Soon she shifted her weight, and his libido took control. He repeated his trail over her body, enjoying the softness of her skin.

“Let me touch you, Nico,” she begged.

He couldn’t. She would be disappointed. If Tony were here, then maybe... He worked his way back up her body and covered her hands with his, holding them in place.

“Nico, let—”

He nipped her shoulder and pressed his cock deeper into her ass. How he loved her backside. He wanted to plunge himself deep in between her soft cheeks but was afraid that anal sex would be too much for her. For now, he would refrain. Her first time needed to be special, and he didn’t think he could coax her to do something so different on his own. Later, with Tony, things would change.

He removed his hands from hers and positioned himself against her slit. She groaned, and her pussy wept, dampening his cock. God, she felt so good pressed up against him. He almost came right then and there. After taking a deep breath to clear his head, he slipped himself just inside her opening.

She hummed her approval and arched her back, pushing him deeper. He bit his lower lip between his teeth as her muscles clenched around him. Inch by torturous inch, he slid inside her until he was sheathed fully. There he paused, letting her adjust to the intrusion. It took most of his strength to hold himself still, but he managed.

“Nico.” She curled her fingers along the wall and wiggled her hips, the sweet friction leaving him breathless. His resistance broke, and he began to move inside her. These weren’t the smooth, controlled thrusts he’d had with other encounters, but something more raw, more animalistic. He pushed harder, moved quicker, wanting to mark every inch of her body for his own.

Tony normally tempered him, allowed him to relax and take control. He wasn’t here, though, and Nico found his passion burning hotter than it ever had before.

He braced himself against the wall with his hands and bucked against her, letting her cries of delight tie his body up in knots. Fuck, she was so tight, so wet.

Something deep inside told him he needed to slow down and be careful, that women couldn't take such force and wild abandon. He tried to ease off, but she only arched her back more and whimpered in protest. Grabbing her hips, he let his inner beast go, pumping himself deep inside her body. He'd apologize later. Somehow.

He heard her say his name, felt her shudder as her orgasm overtook her. Her cries wrapped around his body, pulled him up, wound him tight. *Fuck*. He pushed harder, deeper, as the tension within him built.

The orgasm hit hard, crashing through him with the force of a freight train. It rolled over him again and again as he pumped, until every last part of him emptied inside of her. The pleasure was so intense, so complete, that he could do nothing but ride it out, enjoy it. It stretched on and on, until every inch of his body was bathed in bliss.

When he was finished, he collapsed against her, wrapping his arms around her middle. He didn't know what Eric and his goons had done to her, but he knew that he would never let them touch her again. They were mates, and she was his.

Nobody harmed what was his.

For a long time they stood in each other's arms, catching their breath. Eventually he felt her stir, breaking the spell. He pulled out and turned her to face him, hoping she could see all the intent and promise in his eyes.

She brushed a stray hair from his temple. The act soothed him, calmed the outrage at her mistreatment. After scooping her up into his arms, he walked over to the bed and laid her across the mattress. Then he grabbed the blanket off the floor and settled next to her, wrapping them both in a cocoon of warmth.

She cuddled against him, resting her chin on his arm. She felt so right there. Nico ran his fingers through her hair. It felt smooth and soft. He nuzzled against her and closed his eyes.

"Your brother does that too."

Nico stilled.

She lifted her head and rested it on his chest. "Your brother likes to run his fingers through my hair too."

Tony. He was out there somewhere. Some brother Nico was. While Eric's goons were doing God knew what to Tony, Nico was in here fucking his brains out. He should be ashamed of himself.

"What's wrong?"

He stood and walked a short distance away. Why couldn't he think with his head for once? Just once? The longer they stayed, the more hopeless their cause. He had to find his brother and get the three of them out of here.

"Nico?"

She was distressed, he knew. But how could he calm her fears without words?

He returned to the bed and gave her a kiss. He kept it soft, tender. She opened to him, running her tongue against his own.

*Good God.* She tasted so good.

He had to stop, or else they would have sex again. There was no time for that. First they had to get out of here.

"You're worried about him, aren't you?"

He grabbed his shirt off the floor and stood from the bed. After slipping it over his head, he frowned at her.

"Tony," she clarified. When he didn't move, she cast her gaze down to the mattress and picked at the fuzz on the blanket. "I'm worried about him too."

He went back to the bed and sat beside her. After taking her hands, he kissed each of her palms in turn.

She smiled. "Tony likes to do that too." She shifted, bringing her legs underneath her and sitting up in a more upright position. Her breasts hung like two ripe fruits in front of his eyes, tempting him to come back to bed, to forget...

No.

"I don't think they'll kill him. At least not yet."

Did she know something? If she did, then she had to tell him.

She looked up at him, sadness etching her features. "Eric likes to use people to get what he wants. Hurting innocent bystanders means nothing to him as long as he can claim his revenge."

He closed his eyes. *Of course.* Using innocents for his own personal gain was very Eric. The man was the most unstable werewolf he had ever seen. Rumors circulated that Eric's mate had died a long time ago. He had blamed Josh. Josh denied it but wouldn't elaborate on what had happened. Truth was, nobody knew what had happened the night Eric's mate died. Soon after, Eric's behavior took an odd turn. He accused the other pack leaders of greed and selfishness, but his anger seemed to intensify with Josh. Each moon-cycle, Eric slipped deeper and deeper into the rage that claimed many of their kind.

"My visions don't always come true." Gwen went back to picking at lint on the blanket. "The future is ever changing based on people's decisions. All I see is one possibility, what the future would be if things stayed on their present course." She sighed and leaned against him.

He cradled her next to his chest. It must be tough, seeing the future like that. Did she see her own future? What if it held nothing but misery? He pulled her closer, his heart saddened by the burden she must carry.

She sobbed into his chest, dampening his shirt. "I saw... I saw the three of us. I was in my wolf form, and I couldn't change out of it. The moon-rage had taken me fully." She sniffed. "You were both dead, and I was howling over your bodies. There was...laughing."

It wouldn't happen. He wouldn't let it. Didn't she say she only saw one possibility in her visions? That meant other things could happen.

Nico leaned away and lifted her chin to meet his gaze. Tears flowed freely down her cheeks. He brushed them away with his thumbs. Then he kissed her eyelids, wishing he had the words that would wipe her fears away.

She cupped her palms over his fingers and lowered their hands. "So you see, they can't kill him, because...I'm the one that does it." Her gaze fell back to the blanket between them.

*Shit.* She wouldn't harm them. It just didn't happen between mates. The instinct to protect was too strong. But how could he make her understand? He touched her shoulder, but she jerked away.

"Did you feel the easing of the moon's pull after we had sex?" She looked up from the blanket, brow raised. "Did you?"

He stilled, mentally assessing his body. The force of the moon-cycle had indeed ebbed, more so than he had thought possible. It was a sign, he knew. They were meant to be together. With time, he would be able to resist the moon-rages altogether. He would no longer need to change, no longer need to kill. He nodded.

She slumped her shoulders. "I knew it." After picking up her shirt, she threw it over her head. "It was the same with Tony." She stood and finished getting dressed.

He watched her. Even if he could speak, he didn't know what to say. So instead, he continued to dress.

Once she finished buttoning her shirt, she turned to him. "Don't you see? I didn't feel *any* change. If anything, the pull of the moon is even stronger now." She shook her head, dismay plainly written across her features. "Ever since I was a teenager, I've had this slow progression toward insanity. I've never experienced the tempering effects of sex. Tomorrow night, I won't be able to resist the change. I'll take my wolf form and kill you both. I probably won't even realize what I've done until it's too late."

The tears started again. God, he couldn't bear to see her cry.

Nico crossed the distance between them. Taking her in his arms, he rested his cheek on the top of her head, offering her the comfort with his actions that he couldn't with words. Tears spilled, soaking his shirt, but he didn't care. He didn't know how he would make this better—he didn't know if he could. But here, in this moment, she needed him, and he was here for her.

They jumped apart when the door crashed open. With a growl, Nico pushed Gwen behind him and faced the intruder.

## Chapter Four

*Did Nico just growl?*

He'd never made a sound, not once since he entered the room. When he didn't speak to her or make any noise during sex, Gwen had suspected he couldn't talk, that something had happened to his vocal cords.

The significance of this was lost as a guard dragged Tony into the room and dropped him on the floor. "Bet you won't mouth off to Amos again now, will ya?" He kicked Tony in the ribs. "He was going to fix you up, you know. You blew it. Next time, you will show more respect."

Nico stepped forward, and Gwen put her hand on his arm to still him. Now wasn't the time to fight, not when Tony was hurt like this. A second guard appeared, bringing a tray of food—her usual broth, bread, and water. He placed it on the bed, then checked her chain to make sure it was still attached to the ring in the wall. Nico took another step forward, and a low growl vibrated in his throat.

"Touch him, and I swear I'll shoot your brother."

Gwen whirled around to see the first guard hold a gun to Tony's head. Nico hesitated. The second guard slipped past them and then out of the room. The first guard aimed the gun at them and then slowly followed his friend. The door slammed shut.

Tension eased from the room, and Gwen focused her attention on Tony. She put her hand to her mouth as surprise and frustration rippled through her system. "Oh my God."

They had worked him over. Cuts and bruises lined his skin; his clothes were torn. Whatever they had tried to do, he fought it, fought it hard. She hardened her jaw. It was hard to tell if the injuries were from weapons or from the guards in wolf form. She hoped it was the former. If they were from wolves, he wouldn't be healed by the next full moon and wouldn't be able to defend himself against her moon-rages.

Nico rushed to his brother's side. Gwen followed and then knelt on the other side of Tony. Tears filled her eyes as Nico assessed the damage. His brother had been hurt, but she couldn't find any wounds serious enough to knock him out—just a bunch of cuts and scrapes. There was nothing were-made or blows serious enough to cause concussions. *What happened?* Nico frowned and pointed to a dark bruise on Tony's arm, then tore his shirt away to show the puncture wound on his neck.

Gwen lifted her hand to her mouth. "He was drugged." She looked back down at Tony. "It looks like the mark you have. They probably gave him something to knock him out as well, but why?" She placed her hand on his chest. "He's still breathing. That's good."

Nico continued inspecting his brother. Gwen watched as helplessness swelled up and gripped her chest.

*Drugged.* She had received such marks before when she refused to speak about her visions. Some kind of potent truth serum. She suspected it wasn't perfected. While the drug forced her to answer Eric's questions truthfully, the toll it took on her body often caused her to pass out for many hours afterward. Amos probably wanted to confirm her visions about the Kyron pack and Eric's sister, and Tony had refused to cooperate. It was one thing when it happened to her, but it was entirely different when such abuse was used on Tony and Nico. The brothers had shown kindness when others had shown distaste. It hurt her to know they'd received such treatment.

Tony moaned and rolled his head to the side. Nico leaned forward, his eyes narrowing.

"Is he okay?"

Nico raised his finger to his lips and then continued to inspect his brother. Gwen returned her gaze to Tony and waited. The fact that Tony was waking up so soon was a testament to his strength. It also meant that his other injuries must have been from weapons rather than wolves' teeth and claws. *Thank goodness.*

"He'll be fine, I'm sure," she said. *Hopefully.* She looked away and blinked back tears. Even though Gwen knew she would be the one who killed him, it didn't mean that Amos hadn't done some lasting damage during his questioning.

A low growl vibrated in Tony's throat. He swung his fist around, aiming for Nico's jaw. Gwen gasped. Nico leaned back just in time and caught the wrist in front of him.

"No." Gwen took Tony's free hand. "Stop."

He opened his eyes and blinked up at her. "Shit."

Not exactly the warmest welcome, but she'd take it. Gwen smiled. "Welcome back."

Tony turned to his brother and swore again. He relaxed his muscles. "I'm fine, big guy."

Gwen looked from Tony to Nico. Although they initially appeared similar, Gwen now noticed subtle differences between the brothers. Tony's face was thinner, more angular. Nico's jaw was more square. While Tony's amber eyes held golden flecks of humor and warmth, Nico's were darker, turbulent. Tony's hair was shorter, hanging in wavy layers around his face. Nico's was longer, straighter.

The differences didn't stop with appearances. Tony used his voice to soothe, his presence to stimulate. Nico was the opposite. She found his touch to be calming and the absence of speech to be intriguing. Both men had held her while she cried; both

had moved her physically. Gwen found that she wanted to form a deeper connection with each of them. If they each began to heal her broken spirit separately, she could only imagine what they would do together.

She wanted to learn their secrets and be a part of their lives. Crazy thoughts, since she hadn't known them for very long. Then again, she heard this yearning she had was part of being a mate. Maybe she was mated to not one, but two wolves. If that was true, then it would hurt twice as much when they died at the next full moon. Sadness filled her chest and caused her shoulders to sag. What was the point of giving away your heart if it was just going to be broken?

Nico let go of his brother and sat back on his heels. Relief washed over Gwen as Tony was helped into a seated position. She wanted to hug him, but something about the tension radiating off him made her refrain.

"Yeah, I know." Tony looked down at his own body. "They roughed me up pretty bad." He ran his fingers through his hair. "I was in and out of it for a while." His hands stilled midstroke. "Shit."

"What?" Gwen glanced at Nico, whose gaze remained fixed on his brother.

Tony blinked a few times, then tried to focus on her. "I think I told them about Zach." He turned to Nico. "It's hard to remember—everything is kind of fuzzy—but I think I told them about our backup plan to go retreat to Houston."

Nico pressed his lips together and patted his brother on the shoulder. When Tony frowned, Nico showed him the mark on his own neck.

"Yeah, but you didn't tell them anything." Tony covered his brother's hand. "It's not okay. Our entire escape route is in jeopardy. Zach is still a young wolf. He doesn't have the means to protect himself. He's fucking exposed, and now because of me, Eric is going to send a whole crew after him." He ran his fingers through his hair once more, tugging at the ends in his frustration.

Nico passed a hand over his face, stood, and began to pace in front of them.

Gwen couldn't let this go on. "Eric already sent people to Houston."

Both men turned to her. The shock in their eyes made her scoot back across the floor.

"He already knew about this Zach and the escape route. He sent people out to Houston last night."

"How on earth did he find out about that?" Tony asked.

"I told him." She told them about her vision of Zach and some blonde woman kissing on a rooftop. "Afterward I saw them go to some hotel. Eric traced the hotel name to someplace just outside of Houston." She shook her head. "I'm sorry."

"How would you know something like that?"

*Great.* What was she thinking? Her gaze shifted from one brother to the other as she struggled to think of a way out of this mess. No luck. She was going to have to be honest and hope for the best.



She told them about how Eric had been keeping her prisoner and using her against the Kyron pack, but she didn't mention about her past with Josh. What was the point? It wasn't like them knowing would change anything. They were still going to die, and Gwen was still going to succumb to the moon-rage.

Tony turned to Nico. "I sure hope to hell you called in reinforcements."

Nico pressed his lips together and turned his jeans' pockets inside out.

"I think he lost his cell," Gwen offered.

"You lost your cell?" Tony rose and stepped toward him, his hands waving in the air. "You idiot. Did you at least make it to a phone? They could have traced the call."

Nico shook his head and took a step back.

Tony narrowed his eyes. "Maybe you didn't want to save us." He growled when his brother frowned in confusion. "I can smell her on you, Brother—don't deny it. You had sex with my mate."

Nico straightened, furrowing his brows.

Gwen stepped between them. "Hold on a minute."

Tony took another step toward him. "She doesn't belong to you."

"I don't belong to anyone." Gwen placed her palms on each brother to keep them apart. Nico snarled and pushed her aside.

"Hey—"

"She's mine, damn it." Tony's voice whipped through the air, causing the tension in the room to rise.

"No!" Gwen screamed as Tony threw himself at Nico. Both of them went down in a pile of arms and legs. Punches were thrown; kicks were delivered. Both bodies shimmered as men changed into wolves. Gwen looked around the room in desperation for something to stop the madness.

"Stop fighting!" She tried to reach them, but the chain pulled taut behind her before she got close enough. Even after shifting, Tony was still hurt and not much of a match for Nico. Still, Tony managed to get in a few good swings that left the other brother dazed.

"Stop!" she yelled again. This was ridiculous. They were never going to escape if these two tore each other apart, but what could she do? She wasn't a fighter. Besides, she couldn't even reach them.

She spied the tray of food over on the bed and ran over to it. Maybe there was something there.

Wooden bowls, tankards of water—she should have expected as much with Eric's affinity for the dark ages. His love for all things medieval gave her shivers. Even his casino upstairs had a medieval theme.

She tested the broth. Warm and watery, like always. She glanced over her shoulder. The two wolves circled each other, snarling and showing their long white teeth.

“No!” She grabbed one of the bowls of broth and threw it at one of the wolves. Hot liquid sprayed over his head. The wolf turned to glare at her. His pause gave the other, larger wolf an advantage, and he sent him across the room.

“Damn it—stop! You’re hurting each other.”

They parted. Tony shifted back into his human form as he caught his breath. “I can smell her on you,” he said. “You’ve always taken what was mine.”

His words sent Nico into a rage. His image flickered.

*Good grief.* “Hello, woman in question is standing right here.” It figured no one would ask her for her opinion on the situation. If they had, this whole thing could have been avoided.

“Stay out of this, Gwen.” Tony changed into his wolf form and lunged at Nico.

“I don’t belong to *anyone*, you idiots.” Didn’t they know that all this was useless? They would all be dead by tomorrow night.

Neither man was listening. She turned back to the tray, picked up a piece of bread, and hurled it at the brothers. It bounced off Nico’s head and rolled away. Her efforts didn’t faze either of them.

*Now what?*

She returned to the tray as the brothers continued to fight. Tony’s grunts filled the room, but Nico didn’t make a sound. Muscles cracked and bones popped, and she turned her gaze back to the wolves on the floor. Their images shifted back and forth. They rolled around on the ground, each throwing direct hits and weakening the other. It seemed as if they knew each other’s vulnerabilities and were exploiting them.

This had to end. Now. She grabbed a spoon and waited until the bodies came into range of her chains. They were fully wolf now, two dark gray beasts battling like storm clouds on the floor. When they got close enough, she jumped into the fray, landing on Nico’s back. She drove her fingers into the fur behind his ears and pulled his head back from his brother. Then she jabbed the spoon handle into his neck.

“Don’t make me use this.” Both wolves stilled. Encouraged, Gwen pressed the spoon handle deeper into Nico’s throat. “Can’t you two see? This is exactly what Eric wants—for us to destroy each other. In wolf form, your injuries will take longer to heal.” She frowned at both of them in turn. “You’ll be too weak to fight the real enemy.”

The wolf on the bottom bared his teeth as a low rumble shook his chest. Nico’s grip on his brother eased, and Tony slid out from underneath him. His chest continued to rise and fall as a low sound filled the room.

*Is he laughing at her?* Gwen pressed her lips together and aimed the spoon handle at the wolf across the room. “We stop this now.”

Tony shifted and collapsed on the floor in his human form, holding his stomach. His laughter filled the room. “I have to admit, buddy, the look on your face is priceless,” he said when he caught his breath.

Embarrassed, Gwen threw the spoon on the tray. At least they'd stopped fighting. She rubbed Nico's head and noticed that neither brother had sustained life-threatening injuries. They'd be hurting for a while, but they'd survive. *Thank goodness.*

Nico shifted into his human form. The change in his shape caused her to lose her balance. She swung her arms wide as she toppled off his back. Nico caught her before she hit the ground, and helped her to her feet.

"It was a spoon." Tony wiped his eyes as his brother pressed his lips together.

Gwen touched Nico's arm. "You couldn't see what I was holding. How could you know?"

Nico pulled her into his chest and kissed the top of her head.

She leaned back and touched his cheek. "You know I would never hurt you." *Not consciously.* Who knew what would happen tomorrow night? She pulled away from Nico and turned to Tony. "I think you need to apologize to your brother."

Tony sobered and stared at them both for a moment, assessing. "You're right." He held out his palm. "Sorry, Bro." Nico hesitated, then walked over and shook the extended hand. Tony pulled him into a bear hug and patted him on the back. A warmth spread through Gwen as she saw the brothers together. It felt...right.

Tony looked at his brother. "Why would we both feel this way about the same woman?"

Nico shrugged.

"Maybe we're all mates."

Both men looked at her. "You can't be serious," Tony said. "I've never heard of anything like that happening before."

"Think about it." Gwen began to pace. Her chain dragged behind her, making a scraping noise against the floor as she walked. "You both have always shared women together. Why?"

Nico crossed his arms in front of his chest and frowned.

"No, I think she may be on to something, Bro." Tony rubbed his chin.

Nico lowered his arms and snorted.

"No, Nico, I think I *am* on to something. Just because it's never happened before doesn't mean it can *never* happen." Gwen stopped between the two men. "It doesn't matter. All I know is that I feel the same connection with both of you." Compassion and longing bubbled up inside her. It felt new and strange. There was a uniqueness to each of the brothers that touched different parts of her soul. She didn't know how they managed to get past her defenses, but they did. Now she didn't want to let them go. "Tony." She brushed her fingers down the side of his cheek. He caught her hand and placed a warm kiss in her palm.

"I love the way you speak to me," she said. "Your words have so much emotion and meaning. They warm the cold center of my soul. For too long I have gone

without conversation, without kindness. You fill that need for me. I can't live without it."

He kissed her hand again. The intensity in his gaze spoke volumes. "Nor can I live without you," he said. "I need you more than I need food or air. When I smelled Nico on you"—he shook his head—"it drove me crazy. It won't happen again. I'm sorry." He glanced at his brother. "It isn't like we haven't shared women before, right?" A sly smile spread across his lips. "All those years wasted worrying how our mates would react to our desire to share everything with each other. Never did I consider such a"—he turned back to Gwen, a deep hunger in his gaze—"delicious possibility."

Heat spiraled through her center as she processed his words. She had never been with two men at the same time before. The idea sent a little thrill through her body. She forced both her hand and gaze away from Tony. After turning to Nico, she ran her fingers over a cut on his temple. "You're hurt."

He grabbed her wrist and put it over his heart. He couldn't speak, but he didn't need to. His actions were clearer than anything he could have said.

She placed her free hand over her own heart, letting her own heat flash in her gaze. "You are here too, Nico." She tapped her chest. "I think you always will be." She drew her hand away from his chest and brushed his cheek. "I think we understand each other better than most. Your touch is rough yet gentle. Without words, each movement carries extra meaning for me. It touches me like nothing else can."

He lifted her hand and kissed the inside of her palm. Hot tingles spread over her skin. Two men, both her mates. Each fulfilled a basic need within her. She was so lucky. Suddenly dizziness overwhelmed her. Tony said something, but she couldn't make out the words. She slumped, her legs too weak to hold her up. *No*. She wrapped her arms around her middle, as if the action could calm the tilt-a-whirl in her stomach. Her vision faded in and out, and her mouth went dry.

*Oh God, not another vision.*

Normally, they came to her in her sleep. They were dreams so vivid, so real, that she woke up shaking. Only one other time had she ever had a waking vision. It was right before Josh refused her to become a part of the Kyron pack.

"What's going on?" Tony asked.

"Bring her over to the bed. She's shaking."

"Fuck, what's going on?" She heard some shuffling. "Gwen, can you hear me?"

Strong arms lifted her into the air as her body went limp. She felt the cot press against her back. Blackness enveloped her, penetrated her. Tony's voice sounded far away.

Then...nothing.

\* \* \*

*Anger. Red. Must fight.*

Gwen bit and tore with her claws. She was in wolf form and in danger, but she couldn't see. Everything was red, so red. All she knew was that she had to fight if she wanted to survive.

She barked and snapped, her sharp teeth biting into soft flesh. They wanted to kill her. Little did they know the moon-rage made her strong, unstoppable. Normally, she fought the urge, but this time she embraced it. Her life depended on it.

Something passed over the fur on her back, and she spun around. Why couldn't she see? She clawed at the air, her hand catching fur in the process. A loud *yelp* vibrated around her. *Good*. She'd hurt one.

Rejuvenated, she fought harder. Where were Tony and Nico? She could really use their help. Exhaustion overwhelmed her, but she fought against it. Once she was free and the brothers safe, she would sleep. Now, she must fight.

A figure blurred across her vision, and she bit down hard. Voices echoed out all around her. Then something wrapped around her leg.

Someone was holding her, restricting her movements. She fought harder. Nobody could hold her back. Nobody. She wiggled free and lunged at her attacker. The figure flashed in front of her, and she bit air. She lunged again and came up empty. A growl vibrated in her throat. Although Gwen couldn't see, she could feel the attacker's presence in the room. It was cold and evil. She caught a flash of movement to her right. Gwen snapped at it and bit into flesh. *Take that*. Another arm wrapped around her middle.

So, there were two.

Rage fueled her strength as she fought for freedom. All she knew was if these two caught her, she'd be dead. She bit and clawed at her attackers.

"Go around behind her."

They could speak. She turned and snarled as a figure reached out to her. Something brushed against her leg. She whirled around and snapped. Another blur had her backing away to get her bearings. The figures advanced. At this rate, they were going to trap her. She had to act fast. Something moved off to her left, and she lunged for it.

"Shit, Gwen. Stop it."

She wouldn't stop—not until they both were dead. She bit again and again. Her spirit soared as she sensed one went down. Only one to go.

The rage consumed her, possessed every inch of her being until there was nothing left. She had to survive and find Tony and Nico before Eric did something horrible to them.

She saw a figure move and attacked. Something hit her across the muzzle. She growled and jumped at the blur. Anger consumed her as she tore into flesh. *Die, die*. She would never let them hurt Tony and Nico. It was kill or be killed.

Finally, the second attacker went down. Gwen's muscles relaxed, and she caught her breath. The redness began to fade, inky night taking the place of her

madness. The metallic taste of blood filled her mouth, and she spit on the floor. Her muscles ached, her head hurt, but it didn't matter. She had won. Tony and Nico were safe.

Then a fog lifted from her brain, and she looked around. Both Tony's and Nico's bodies lay at odd angles on the floor. She ran over and nudged them with her nose, but they wouldn't move. She put her head down low to check their breathing. They were dead.

Pain and heartache filled her heart, and she howled at the ceiling of her cell. She was too late. The only two men who had ever shown her kindness were dead. How? Why?

A rhythmic, steady snapping echoed behind her. She whirled around. Eric stood a few feet away, clapping his hands. She narrowed her eyes as he lowered his arms and smiled.

"Bravo, my little killing machine. Bravo."

She turned back to the brothers' lifeless bodies. She did this? But how? She wasn't a monster. Surely she would have recognized that they weren't a threat, wouldn't she?

"Such a tragedy, isn't it?"

She spun back just in time to see Eric bend and pick something up from the ground.

"Now that your mates are dead, you can fully be mine." He began to close the distance between them.

Gwen looked at his hands. Bright metal shone between his fingers. *No, not the collar.* She took a step back and tried to turn into her human form. She couldn't. Panic rose up and gripped her by the throat. She whimpered as reality crashed through her body. She had become a monster.

Eric held out the collar to her. "Come here, my sweet. You may not be able to tell me your visions anymore, but you can still kill better than any in my pack. With a little training, you'll learn who your master is."

Gwen took another step back until her tail brushed against the wall. She was trapped in this room with him.

*Oh God.* Shock slammed into her body as she stared at the bodies on the ground. What werewolf would do such a horrendous thing?

Eric knelt before her and placed the collar around her neck. After rubbing her ears, he stepped back. "Good. Now, to make sure the separation from your mates is complete, we will burn the bodies, just like Josh Kyron burned my Rebecca." He called his guards. "That Kyron bastard doesn't know what it is like to lose a mate, but he will. Once I get my revenge, I will join my love." He smiled at her. "You will come with me, pet. The three of us will finally be at peace."

*No!*

Rage filled Gwen once again, and she lunged for him. The chain pulled taut, impeding her movements. She snapped, but her teeth caught nothing but air.

Eric's sick laugh filled her ears. "Once Josh gets a view of my new killing machine, he will have no choice but to submit to me—or his pack will suffer. Finally, revenge will be mine."

Gwen cowered in the corner and rested her head in her paws. Her vision clouded as Eric's minions moved toward Tony's and Nico's lifeless bodies.

## Chapter Five

“Shh, it’s okay.”

Gwen jerked awake, her eyes opening wide with horror. She couldn’t move; something was holding her down.

“Relax, you’re safe.” *Tony*. There was no mistaking that soothing voice. Relief blanketed her body. It wasn’t real. Tony’s face solidified before her. It was a dream, only a dream. She took a deep breath and tried to relax.

He brushed a stray hair from her forehead.

“I thought you were dead.” She tried to sit up, but strong hands eased her back down.

“Hardly.” He narrowed his eyes and traced her cheek with his fingers. “You gave us quite a scare.”

“Us?”

“You were shaking and mumbling. I tried talking to you, but then you bit me.” He shook his head and showed her the teeth marks on his arm.

She winced. “That’s going to take forever to heal.”

“It doesn’t matter.” He lowered his arm. “For a while you were shifting between your human and wolf forms.” He motioned to a spot over her shoulder. “You didn’t start to calm down until Nico held you.”

That was when she realized she was in the bed, in the cell. They had thrown the blanket over her. Nico’s warm body spooned hers under the covers. He nuzzled his face in her hair. Tony faced her, talking away her tension and running his fingers through her hair. She closed her eyes and let the brothers’ warmth surround her. The whole situation just felt right somehow. Inch by delicious inch of male perfection tangled with her legs, pressed up against her ass, rubbed provocatively up against her breasts...

Her eyes flew open. “We’re naked.” She blinked at Tony. “You’re naked.”

He smiled. “Do you mind?” Tony laced his fingers with hers and brought her hand to his mouth. Between soft, caressing kisses, he explained. “You were wild and started tearing at our clothes. I tried to hold you back, but you kept getting free. Then Nico tried. You hit him in the jaw.”

Gwen turned her head to look at the other brother. “Oh, Nico,” she whispered, her voice filled with pain as she fingered the red mark on his skin. “I’m so sorry.”



She had managed to hurt the only two people in this world who had shown her any kindness. The thought made her sick. She was so unworthy of their affection.

Gwen tilted her head and kissed the mark she'd made. Tingles spread over her skin as his grip tightened around her middle.

"He's just embarrassed that you managed to connect with him." Tony kissed her palm, returning her attention back to him. "Truth was, we were both caught off guard. You can really fight when you set your mind to it."

She pulled her hand from his grasp and looked away. "I know."

"The punch turned out to be a blessing in disguise. You immediately calmed down. Then, through trial and error, we discovered that you were calmest when in contact with our skin." He grinned and waved his hand over the bed. "And here we are."

She frowned and returned her gaze to his. "The moon-rage sometimes comes out during my visions. Nothing had ever calmed me before."

"Well, well." Tony motioned to Nico behind her. "I do believe we have found a first. Although I have to admit that it took both of us to really get you calmed down."

Awareness prickled along the outside of her skin. She shifted her legs and realized just how close all three bodies huddled together. Her mouth felt dry, and her heartbeat quickened. Did they have sex? No, they couldn't have, not while she was having a vision. Her thoughts shifted to the image of both men entering her, possessing her, and her body heated in response.

She felt Nico move behind her and became hyper-aware of his hard cock pressed up against her ass. He spread his fingers out over her abdomen. There was no mistaking his intention. *Mine*, his hands seemed to say. If only that could be true... The thought of both Nico and Tony possessing her, claiming her in every possible way, made her damp with need. She flicked her gaze to his mouth and moistened her lips in anticipation.

Tony's eyes darkened as he brushed his thumb over her lips. "Later," he murmured. "First tell us what happened. Was that one of your visions?"

Tears welled up in her eyes, and she shrank from his touch. "What's the use? We're all going to die tonight anyway." Already she could feel the moon pulling at her consciousness. It was stronger now than before. She guessed the time to be midafternoon. Not much longer before they would all be dead.

"This is ridiculous." She tried to disentangle herself from the men, but Nico held her fast. "Let go of me." Tony pulled her head to his chest and whispered soothing words into her hair. "Damn it, Tony, let go." Nico's hands slipped around to her back, easing her tension. "I swear, Nico, if you don't stop it right now, I'm going to hit you again."

Neither man moved away. Moments passed as she struggled against them, swearing at each of them in turn. Didn't they see how pointless this was? How meaningless? Eric had made her into a monster. She was unlovable, a freak. They

had no right to do this to her. Their kindness gave her hope, and now it would be crushed. Did they have any idea how hard it would be for her after they died?

“Fuck you both.” Her words dripped venom, but she lacked the strength to back them up. Tony and Nico continued to soothe her, each reassuring her in his own, unique way. As Nico slid his hands over her skin, she felt her muscles relax and her thoughts scatter. Tony’s voice rippled through her like a caress, whispering that everything was going to be okay, not to worry. She found herself believing his words, despite her vision. His voice anchored her emotions just like Nico’s caress relaxed her body. Together these men offered her a control over her anger she had never had before. The realization was both exhilarating—and frightening.

After a while, her anger dissolved into despair. She gave up, tears stinging her eyes. “Don’t you see? It’s hopeless. Sex does nothing to tame my rages. Once the moon rises in the sky, I’ll shift. The madness will hit, and I’ll be forced to kill, not knowing who I attack.” She brushed her tears away. “I’ll kill you both, and then Eric will use me against the Kyron pack.”

“Is that what your vision was about?” Tony looked over her shoulder at Nico. “What do you think?”

Nico shifted his arms and held her around her middle in response. *Mine.*

Gwen almost laughed. “So what if we’re mates? It doesn’t matter. My rages won’t know the difference.”

“How do you know?”

“I know. It...it was in my vision.” She sniffed. “I fought and fought, not knowing who it was I was attacking. It wasn’t until the immediate danger had passed and I saw...” Her throat locked with emotion on the words. *I saw you both dead.* The thought of their lives being cut short filled her with such sadness that she couldn’t look them in the eye. It was so unfair.

Tony kissed her forehead and brushed her cheek with his fingers. “What did you see?”

She stiffened her jaw as the image came to the forefront of her mind. “It doesn’t matter. The wheels are in motion. Nothing can change the future.”

Nico kissed her shoulder, making the tears flow freely down her cheeks.

“Wait a minute.” Tony’s eyes sparkled as he looked at his brother. “I have an idea.”

Gwen wiped her eyes. “I don’t see how anything we do now could change the future.”

Tony smiled at Nico. “Are you thinking what I’m thinking?”

Nico’s hand slipped up her abdomen, leaving a trail of fire in its wake. Heat traveled over her body, and passion dampened her thighs. If she could just stay here forever, between these two men...

Nico cupped her breast. A deep craving rose up inside her body as he kneaded and caressed. She felt his hard cock press between the cheeks of her ass. Her inner wolf clawed its way through her body, eager for action.

"I see that you do." Tony turned back to Gwen, his eyes dark with hunger. "It took both of us to fully calm you from your vision. Maybe it will take both of us to calm you from your moon-rage."

"I don't see—"

He put a finger over her lips. "It's worth a try, isn't it?"

Gwen turned onto her back so she could look at each man in turn. "You're nuts."

"Do you have a better idea?"

She turned to Nico, hoping for a little sanity. He raised his brow and waited.

"It's not like we haven't done this before." Tony drew her attention back to him. "In Vegas, we are—"

"Legendary, I know." And despite everything, a smile tugged at her lips. "You told me."

Tony turned back to Nico. "I don't think the lady believes us."

Nico returned his hands to her breasts and tugged on her nipple. A jolt shot through her body, followed by pleasure. Her pussy tightened and wept its need.

Tony cupped her cheek and ran his thumb over her lips. "Maybe we should show her just how legendary we can be."

Gwen's breath caught as his eyes darkened even more. Tony slid his knee between her thighs, opening her to both men. He leaned forward and captured her lips with his. The kiss was slow and possessive. His presence invaded her senses as his tongue invaded her mouth. She whimpered as his taste filled her, and her thoughts dissolved into bliss. His warmth surrounded her, penetrated her, and she wiggled up against his body. The feel of skin on skin sent a bolt of hunger through her center, and her muscles clenched with longing.

Tony rolled her on her side so she fully faced him. Nico palmed her breasts, molding them into sharp peaks as he nipped her shoulder. The men worked in concert, each caress, each kiss fanning her passion into a white-hot flame.

They pulled away together to catch their breath, and she used the opportunity to clear her head. She felt incredible, as if their closeness had connected them on a deeper level. The brothers had talked about sharing women before; would they be willing to do it again? The thought caused her lower abdomen to tighten with need. She put on her best poker face and forced herself to meet Tony's gaze. "Legendary? After I saw you two fight, I doubt anything you do can be qualified as legendary."

Tony's jaw hardened for a brief moment before the humor flashed in his amber gaze. "Is that a challenge?"

She tried to hold back her smile, but her lips twitched. "Perhaps."

Tony's gaze flashed to his brother. "Then I guess we'll just have to show you. You with me, Bro?"

Nico cupped her chin and turned her head toward him. He pressed his lips against hers in a powerful, commanding kiss that left her senses in a whirl. She sighed against his mouth as Tony started a slow, sensual trail downward, using his mouth to worship every inch of her skin.

He kissed a trail over her chest, lingering in the channel between her breasts. She squirmed against him.

"Hold still, sweetheart." Tony laughed, cupping her breasts and giving them a light squeeze. "I love how responsive you are." He worked over her skin, focusing first on one nipple, drawing small sensual circles around the tip with his hot tongue. "You fit so perfectly in my mouth."

She pressed herself closer to his waiting hands. He scraped his teeth over the tip, and she gasped as another spark of pain knifed through her body. It quickly dissipated, replaced by heat and longing. As he moved on his slow journey, Nico worked on her mouth, teasing and coaxing her lips and tongue in an intricate dance. His taste overwhelmed her senses, and awareness clung to every inch of her skin.

"You taste so sweet, my dear," Tony said between kisses on her shoulders and chest. "We could sample you for hours." She gasped as his teeth nipped her breast. "Touch you for hours." He slid his hand between her thighs, easing them apart. Nico slid his hand down her leg, grasping her knee and lifting it up to rest on his thigh. Air whooshed over her pussy as Tony sank lower and kissed a sensual line along her hips. "Perfect," he whispered as his hand slipped down to cup her mound. "So hot." He slipped his finger between her folds and traced the outer rim of her opening.

She gasped as heat rocketed through her body.

"Easy, sweetheart." Tony paused his movements. "Do you want us to stop?"

"No."

Nico smiled and nipped her skin. She gasped as heat spiraled through her body. She reached back over her shoulder and plunged her fingers into his hair. They threaded the smooth strands as he traced hot kisses over her neck and back. His lips awoke the wolf inside her, and she began to crave more of their touch. She wanted to be filled with both of them to the hilt, to have both men possess her in ways she had never been possessed before.

Lust shot up through her body and pulsed in her veins. She leaned back into Nico, eager for more. Her pussy ached with a yearning that left her dizzy. She murmured encouragement as desire fogged her mind and the air around her sparked with expectation. Arching her back, she rubbed her body between the two men, loving the feel of skin rubbing against her back and front. They felt so hard, such a contrast to her soft body. With a hum of contentment, she ran her fingers over each of their skin in turn, urging them onward.

Nico slipped his hands down her back, slowly easing any tension and fear with his touch. When he reached her ass, he curled his fingers into her skin and gently

spread her cheeks apart. She groaned as he pressed his hard cock deeper against her skin, rubbing his length between her cheeks. He reached around and clasped her lower abdomen and pulled her closer. She felt his possessiveness surround her, claiming every inch of her body.

The room became hot, and a light sweat broke out along her temple. She slipped one hand down and ran her fingers through Tony's hair. Nico continued to kiss her skin, building the heat in her lower abdomen.

"Talk to me, sweetheart," Tony cooed. "Tell us what you need."

She gasped as his finger flicked her clit, and pleasure rippled through her body. She parted her legs wider in invitation.

He chuckled. "So eager and willing. Tell me, my sweet, how do you feel about having us both at the same time?" He cupped her knee and lifted it off Nico to place it on his shoulder. Sinking lower on the bed, he positioned his head between her thighs. "One in front." He ran his tongue in a slow, leisurely stroke over her opening. She closed her eyes and hummed with delight, curling her fingers into his hair and holding him close to her body. "One from behind."

She opened her eyes as Nico pulled his hips away. Cool air washed over her skin, and she whimpered in protest. Then he returned and slipped his finger between her cheeks.

Her gasp dissolved into a groan as pleasure rocketed through her system. She looked down at Tony, hunched between her thighs, waiting for her response. Hunger flooded his features, but she knew that both men would pull back if she gave the word. She dragged her gaze over her shoulder to Nico and saw her longing mirrored in his features.

"Yes," she whispered. "That is what I want." *More than anything.* Anticipation rippled through her.

Nico cupped her chin and held her facing him. He kissed her soundly, completely, leaving her weak and breathless. She moaned against him as desire and need blanketed her body. Tony continued to caress her from below, using his fingers and mouth to twist her passion tight, then wring every drop of joy from her, one by one.

Nico broke away from her mouth to kiss a line along her jaw to her ear. He nipped and licked, each movement building the tension inside her body.

"Relax, my sweet. Let us pleasure you." Tony's teeth nipped her clit, using the slight spark of pain to redirect her attention. She gasped and focused her gaze on the handsome man between her thighs. He smiled at her as he slipped his hands up her sides and spanned her waist, locking her in place.

Nico's hands moved up as well, tracing her curves until he reached her breasts. She hummed her approval when he cupped them. Arching her back, she pressed them deeper into his palms. He squeezed them as if testing their weight in his hands. Soon his hands were moving again, pinching and tugging her nipples into tight peaks.

Each time she groaned, they would repeat their movements; each time the fire died down, they would adjust. Soon they knew all the buttons to push and all the triggers to send her lust soaring. She reached up and grabbed the bed frame with both hands, moaning as heat built and passion thickened the air around them. All her life she had been alone. Now she had two men focused on her, only her. It felt new and exciting, like a great adventure.

Nico slipped his hand away from her breast and trailed it over her skin until it finally reached her backside. She opened her eyes and gasped as he cupped her ass and curled his fingers into her flesh. When his finger moved between her cheeks, she stiffened, but then Tony's tongue sliding over her clit distracted her. She murmured encouragement as desire heated and tension built. Nico dipped low, drawing a line to her vagina. He took some of her moisture, then traced the same trail back to her ass. She hummed with pleasure as he teased her opening, urging her to relax further. Again he slipped away, and again he returned to give her more torment. The next time Nico's fingers moved between her cheeks, she wiggled her hips, urging him onward. He nuzzled her neck as he slipped the tip of his finger inside. Sensation overwhelmed her, and her inner wolf growled its hunger.

Looking down, she saw Tony glance up at her from between her legs. He took her clit into his mouth, his heated gaze never leaving hers. Sensations trickled through her body, and she became hyperaware of every touch. He rolled his tongue around her sensitive nub, building her need until she squirmed.

He chuckled, the vibration of his lips heating her to her toes. Then he slipped a finger inside her pussy, and her world came undone. She gasped and clutched the finger with her inner walls, unwilling to let it go.

"Relax, my sweet." Tony's hand stilled as something passed between him and his brother. Nico slipped her knee off his brother's shoulder and spread her wider, leaning her back against his finger. It pressed farther inside her opening. Tony returned his focus on her, kissing and stroking, steadily building her libido. Nico moved from behind, slowly working one, then two fingers into her opening. Sensation blossomed, and she succumbed to the heat blanketing her body. She closed her eyes and began to climb, her muscles tightening with each step. When she was close—oh, so close—their movements stilled.

Nico removed his hand as Tony slid up the bed and encircled her waist with his arms. After a gentle kiss on her lips, he rolled with her onto his back until she was straddling his hips. She broke the kiss and sat up, confusion rippling through her.

"Have you ever been on top before, my love?"

Of course she had, lots of times. It never ended well. The excitement brought forth her rages. She needed to be dominated and consumed to keep the madness from taking over during sex.

Tony slid his hands up and down her bare arms, sending tingles of desire over her skin. Desire shimmered in his amber gaze. "I want you to ride me, sweet." At

her frown, he cupped her cheek. "It'll be okay. You'll see. Nico is right here. We'll both protect you should anything happen."

She turned to look over her shoulder and was met with Nico's hungry gaze. He placed himself behind her and kissed her shoulder.

She closed her eyes and faced Tony. "I've never..." She swallowed the lump in her throat.

"It's okay. We'll help you. Just tell us if it gets to be too much."

She shook her head and opened her eyes. "No, I mean I've done both before, but never at the same time."

His lips twitched. "Then you're in for a treat." He looked down to where their bodies were intertwined. "Ride me, sweetheart."

She rose and positioned his cock at her entrance. His thick head pressed against her opening, causing her to moan. Bracing her hands on his chest, she gently guided herself down. He grasped her hips and rose to meet her, pushing himself in the last inch. She shivered as her body stretched to accommodate him.

He felt so thick, wider than any cock she had ever felt before. Every nerve ending burned with longing, sending white-hot heat over her skin. Nico's strong arms wrapped around her from behind, and he cupped her breasts with his hands. She gasped as Nico's warmth surrounded her. Its tendrils slowly curled around her body and made her his captive. He kissed her neck and teased her nipples, sending a waterfall of sensation through her body.

"Move, sweetheart. Ride me."

She leaned back on the muscular shoulder behind her, exposing her neck to Nico's hungry mouth. Sensations swirled through her body as she began to move her hips. Hands were everywhere, lips everywhere, all seeming to know where she needed to be touched. She closed her eyes, letting the new emotions roll through her body. She felt weak and leaned more into the hard chest behind her. Reaching back over her head, she plunged her fingers into Nico's hair, holding him to her skin.

"Yes, that's it. A hand reached in between her legs and stroked her clit. Emotion bolted up her center, causing her to gasp.

"Fuck, Nico—look at her. Isn't she beautiful?"

Different hands grasped her hips, guiding her up and down as her emotions spiraled out of control. First fast; then, when she came close to the edge, the movements became slow, bringing her back from the brink. Again and again they played this advance and retreat, until she thought she would go mad with longing.

"Kiss me, sweetheart."

She opened her eyes and found her own passion reflected Tony's gaze. She bent low and did as he asked. Excitement rippled through her as she opened herself to him. He held her head steady with his hand as their tongues danced and explored. She shivered as Nico's warm fingers traced up her spine. Up and up they moved, fanning out over her shoulder blades before returning to her hips. Each circle of his fingers set her nerve endings on fire and sent pleasure rippling through her body.

On the last rotation, he didn't stop at her hips but continued the journey down, lingering on the globes of her ass before caressing the crease where her legs began. After slipping his finger between her legs, he withdrew some moisture and returned to her ass. There, he spread the moisture around her opening, preparing her.

A shiver of anticipation washed over her. She'd had anal sex before. At one time, she had thought different positions might help with the moon-rage. They hadn't, and the experience had seemed lacking. This, however, was different. Tony and Nico were different. She had never felt so alive, so needy. These men made her want to embrace her inner wolf rather than run away from it. With them, she felt more comfortable in her skin, as if she was worth something.

Nico slid the tip of his finger just inside her and stopped. She lifted her head and gasped as her nerve endings sparked and excitement raced up her spine. Tony dragged her back to his lips, pulling her concentration away from what was happening behind her. Before long, one entire finger was inside her, then two. The gentle stretching sent tendrils of pleasure through her body, and she sighed her appreciation.

When Nico removed his fingers, she felt empty and abandoned. Soon, however, he positioned his cock at her entrance. At the same time, Tony withdrew his kiss.

"You ready, sweetheart?" Concern flashed across Tony's features. "You can still say no if you want."

*No?* Her brain couldn't even consider the word.

She pushed her hips back toward Nico's cock. First came the stretching, then the heat. Slowly, he inched his way inside her body. She gasped as emotion swirled around her in a pleasurable haze. He gripped her hips, holding her steady as he slowly edged himself in the rest of the way.

They all moaned as he filled her to the hilt. The air around them sparked with energy as her body shifted to accommodate both men. She felt so full, so fantastic, so complete. The wonderful intrusion of their cocks caused her body to be stretched in new and exciting ways, and the warm heat surrounding her made her wolf want to howl with delight. It was as if everything that had happened in her life had been leading her to this point.

They rolled her onto her side and covered her with the blanket. The action was so warm and tender that tears filled her eyes.

"Are you okay?" Tony framed her face with his hands.

She nodded her response, unable to form words over the rolling pleasure in her body.

He kissed away the tears. "Just tell us if it's too much."

Slowly, they moved together in perfect unison, first retreating until only the tips of their cocks remained in her openings, then filling her until she thought she could take no more. She sighed as their hands covered her body. They showered her with tenderness and affection, working together until her whole body strained with longing.



She climbed higher and higher, reaching toward the unseen goal. This time, they didn't retreat when she came close to the edge, but instead moved faster, harder, as if her lust was dragging each of them along in its wake.

The orgasm slammed through her body, ecstasy exploding around her like fireworks lighting up a night sky. She closed her eyes and rode each burst as it ricocheted through her. Curling her fingers, she held on tight and rode each of them out in turn. She felt both men stiffen, then pump harder, faster. Groans filled the room along with the sounds of their bodies colliding. On the next explosion of pleasure, both men cried out, filling her with their release. Over and over they thrust into her, claiming her body and branding her as theirs. Contentment wrapped around her like a blanket. It consumed her body until she felt spent and stated.

When it was over, the men cocooned her body, making her feel safe and warm. Gwen let her thoughts drift. A vision pricked the edges of her mind, and she pushed it back, wanting to focus on the moment. She tried to imprint each man in her memory, each touch on her mind. If she concentrated, Gwen found she could almost believe that this would be her future, not the bloody mess in her previous vision. Almost.

Nico was the first to move. He brushed her hair away from her neck and pressed his lips against her skin. Wrapping his arm around her, he cupped her breast in a possessive manner and rubbed his cheek along her shoulder. He was thanking her, she knew. Gwen could feel it in his touch. Reality crashed through her, and she blinked back tears. This intimacy meant the world to her, yet it could never be permanent. If they were ever fortunate enough to escape this place, no pack would take her in. Being with her would commit both men to lives as outcasts, and she could never let such a thing happen.

Tony opened his eyes. Running his fingers down her cheek, he caught a tear on his thumb and frowned. "Did we hurt you?"

She smiled over his concern and then kissed his full, sensual lips. "No, I'm just really happy right now."

"Good." He lifted her leg higher on his hip and stroked the underside of her knee. The touch was gentle and caring rather than sexual. These men had been so wonderful to her. How could she repay them with such cruelty? If there was only some way she could ensure that the brothers wouldn't suffer like they did in her vision...

Nico tightened his grip around her middle. She turned around and touched his cheek, savoring how his five-o'clock shadow prickled against her fingers. "It was wonderful." She dragged him to her lips, kissing him with all the emotion she felt inside. Then she turned back to Tony. "I had no idea sex could be like that."

He arched his brow. "I told you, we are—"

"Legendary, I know." A giggle bubbled in her throat. She twitched her lips.

"But that would have to stop now that we're mated." He glanced at Nico. "Or will be soon."

She stiffened and placed her hands on Tony's chest. "No." She pushed hard. "We can't do the mating ritual."

"Why not?"

Her body cried out in protest as both men pulled away. The room's cool air felt like a slap in the face, but she ignored it. Resolved, she left the bed and began to pick her clothes up off the floor. "Because I'm damaged."

"We're all damaged, sweetheart."

Nico got up off the bed and helped her gather her things. Once she had them all in her hands, she turned to Tony, who was still sitting on the bed. "I told you. Sex does nothing to curb my moon-rages. It is a constant pull on my spirit. Tonight, when the moon is full, I will enter my moon-rage and kill you both." Tears blurred her vision. "Then Eric will use me against your pack." She threw on her clothes as she continued. "Don't you see? What we did just now will make everything worse." She swore as her shaking hands failed to button her pants. After three tries, she made a cry of frustration and formed fists at her sides. "Mating will make it impossible. I'm going to kill you, Tony." She turned to Nico, emotion swelling her throat. "I'm going to kill both of you." She tried to button her shirt, but tears made the simple function difficult.

Nico approached and placed his hands over hers, stilling her movements. Warm tenderness flowed from his body. She ground her teeth in frustration. He closed his fingers around hers and brought them to his lips, taking his time to kiss each of them in turn. She couldn't stop the tears now. They slipped down her face and crashed to the floor between them.

"He doesn't think you'll kill us." Tony rose from the bed and came up beside his brother. Taking one of her hands from Nico, he kissed the inside of her wrist. "Neither do I."

She locked her jaw and tried to control her turbulent thoughts. Weren't they listening to anything she said? "Then you're both fools." She dragged her hands out of their grips and finished dressing. Turning away, she wiped the tears on her cheeks with the back of her hand and moved to pick up the food scattered all over the floor. Nothing was salvageable. They couldn't eat anything for dinner, but they didn't have to spend their last hours together in filth.

"How do you feel?"

She turned to look up at the men from her crouched position on the floor. They both stared at her intently, as if they were waiting for some reaction.

"Good enough, I guess." She shrugged and continued to pick up the mess. "For someone who will turn into a killing machine in a matter of hours, I'm doing great."

"No, how do you *feel*?"

There was something odd about Tony's voice. Like her answer was really important. She stood. "I don't know what you mean."

Tony exchanged a glance with his brother. “We both felt the moon’s pull wane when we had sex, but the pull seemed to almost disappear in me just now. Maybe...” He waved his hands in the air.

She turned to Nico, who nodded his agreement. Sex together had greatly reduced his moon-rage too. She took some comfort in knowing that the two men would be thinking clearly when the full moon hit.

Tony stepped toward her, then hesitated. “Has the pull of the moon changed for you as well? How do you feel?”

## Chapter Six

How did she feel?

Gwen was so upset that she hadn't thought to take an assessment of her moon-rage. Pressing her lips together, she took a mental inventory of her body. Was anything different? She quieted her mind and tried to let her emotions roll through her. After a few minutes, she sighed and focused on the brothers.

"The pull is still there." She couldn't hide the disappointment in her voice. "It isn't stronger, but it isn't weaker either."

"Well, that's good, right?" Tony took another hesitant step forward. "You told me that the moon-rage increased as the full moon got closer." He glanced at Nico, who rubbed his chin in thought.

"It does increase," Gwen confessed. "I don't feel it increasing now, though."

"Well, then. It worked."

She frowned. "You can't say that. The pull is still there."

"Ah, but you haven't been marked." He smiled as he stood and closed the distance between them. "I think if you were marked—by both of us—it would make a difference."

Would it make a difference? Gwen squashed the flicker of hope in her chest and straightened. "I can't risk it." She looked to Nico. "You have to understand. If you mark me and it doesn't work..." She shook her head. "It would make your deaths that much worse." She felt connected with them. The marks would only solidify and deepen emotions already there. Gwen had heard of mates going insane after their partner's death. Now she understood why. If she felt this strong about the brothers now, she couldn't imagine how much deeper her emotions would run after she was marked.

Nico gathered her in his arms. She found she didn't have the strength to pull away. Instead she squeezed her eyes shut and buried her head against his chest. Who was she kidding? These men were the only ones who'd ever shown her even a sliver of kindness. Killing them would be like killing herself. The marking didn't matter. She was already doomed. She was going to become closer to the brothers; then, thanks to her moon-rage, they would die at her hands.

"It would make our connection deeper, yes, but that might not necessarily be a bad thing."

"How could it possibly *not* be bad?" She pressed her cheek against Nico's chest and listened to the steady beat of his heart. "If we were mentally connected, my

moon-rage could pull you both under. If it consumed you, we'd end up destroying each other. If it didn't, you would be hurting yourselves while trying to defend against my attacks."

Tears blurred her vision as she wrapped her arms around Nico. His quiet strength was the only thing keeping her from collapsing in a pile of grief right now. Nico rubbed his fingers up and down her back. She found the action soothing, comforting. She really didn't want to hurt these men—or their pack. It seemed like there was only one option left, but even if she had the strength to take her own life, she had no weapons, and she guessed that Tony and Nico would stop her before she got too far.

"You're right. Defending ourselves would bring us pain, but our marks would affect you as well."

She wiped her tears and pushed herself far enough out of Nico's arms to stare at Tony. "What do you mean?"

He moved over and sat on the edge of the bed, a wolfish smile spreading across his features. "If we were all mated, we would have a deeper connection with each other. When the moon-rage hit—and I'm not entirely convinced it would—but if for some reason it did, then our minds will have a calming effect on yours." He patted a spot on the bed next to him. "Think of it," he continued when she moved to sit where he had indicated. "Three wills, not just one, working together to suppress the rage."

She ignored Tony's hand and glanced up at Nico, who nodded his agreement to his brother. "What if it doesn't work?"

"Then we lose nothing." He took her hand and drew lazy circles on the inside of her wrist with his thumb. "But if it *does* work..."

She felt the bed dip as Nico sat beside her. She turned to him, hope sparking in her chest. "Are you sure you agree with all of this?"

He reached out and brushed a stray hair from her face, his gaze searching for something in her features. What was he looking for? She couldn't tell. After a moment, he nodded again. She traced the thin line of his lips with her free hand, remembering how they felt against her skin. Heat rose from deep inside her belly, dampening her thighs and spreading tendrils of warmth throughout her body.

She lowered her hand and returned her attention to Tony.

"If it does work, we would catch Eric off guard. It would be our best chance to escape," he said.

*Escape. Freedom.* It had been so long since she had been free of this room. Had run along the boardwalk and breathed the fresh sea air into her lungs. What if she could really escape?

Tony kissed her cheek, then her neck. Nico brushed another strand of her hair away from her shoulder and pressed his lips against her skin. Passion flickered in her chest and twisted through her body. Tony's words flashed through her mind. *If it did work...* Could being marked by both brothers calm her rage enough to let her

think clearly? Would clear minds be enough to give them a leg up over Eric? The idea had merit, but if she could only have a guarantee.

Arms wrapped around her from behind to hold her steady. Hands teased and stroked her breasts, molding them into sharp peaks.

Tony kissed a trail up her neck, then traced the outer rim of her ear. "Once we found a phone, we could call Josh for backup." He nibbled on her lobe. "Then we'd just have to lie low until reinforcements arrived." He looked up at his brother. "To think, we came all the way out here, looking for the reason why Eric was able to counteract our moves. We had thought he'd gotten ahold of our computer files or something. Never did we guess that he would be holding our mate."

Gwen pulled away from the men and walked a few paces away. Wringing her hands in front of her, she tried to think of some way to let them down easy. She could never go back to Vegas with them. Her place was here, in Atlantic City.

Okay, she didn't have any particular attachment to the East Coast. It was damn cold in the winter, and her allergies really kicked in during the spring and fall. Still, she wasn't going to Vegas. She wouldn't give Josh Kyron another opportunity to smash her dreams and leave her alone.

"Is there something wrong?"

She shook her head to dispel her sadness. "No, I'm just tired, I guess. There's a lot to think about."

Tony grinned. "Tired you out, did we?" He winked and nudged Nico. "Did you hear that?"

Nico frowned at his brother, then returned his attention to Gwen. He patted the seat between him and Tony.

"Come back, sit with us," Tony said. "We promise to behave."

Gwen hesitated. She was such a chicken. She knew she should just tell them why she couldn't go back home with them, but why ruin their fantasy? It wasn't like any of them would ever leave this place. With a sigh, she returned to her seat.

Tony didn't seem to notice her distress. "You'd like Josh—and Zach. Nico here saved Zach's life."

Gwen faced Nico and then shrank back at his cold, hard gaze. "What happened?"

Tony's voice filtered over her as she watched something dark pass over Nico's eyes. What was going on? Had she done something wrong?

"There was this rogue wolf named Caleb who thought he could control the rages on his own without sex. Josh wanted to deal with him personally. He took Nico and I along for backup. We chased the sucker halfway across the country before we caught up with him."

Gwen felt a lump in her throat. "How did you find him?"

Nico shot his brother a warning look, but Tony didn't seem to notice. "We followed the dead bodies and finally caught up with him in Texas. Zach and his

future brother-in-law were on a camping trip when the wolf attacked them. Killed the brother-in-law within seconds. He would have killed Zach too. If Nico here hadn't stepped in with his quick thinking, we probably would have all been gone."

Fear and awe sank deep into her chest. If Nico could stop a raging werewolf, then maybe they stood a chance against her. If the marking didn't work and her moon-rage took over, maybe they would be able to defend themselves and survive. For the first time, Gwen started to believe that her vision might be wrong. If the brothers could survive her rage, all hope wasn't lost. "How did he stop it?"

Tony cleared his throat. "Brute force."

She turned to Tony and saw him make a breaking motion with his hands. "Snapped the poor SOB's neck, but not before he got a good chunk of Zach's vocal cords—Hey!"

Nico reached around her and slapped Tony on the back of the head, then gave him a threatening glare.

The lump in her throat got bigger. "Can Zach... Can he talk?"

"Yes. Josh ordered the best surgeons he could find and flew them to Vegas. They managed to repair Zach's vocal cords, although his voice is forever altered."

Gwen took Nico's hand in hers. "They weren't able to repair yours, though, were they?"

A deep sadness flickered across his amber gaze.

"I'm so sorry." She placed his hand on her chest.

"Ah, don't believe him." Tony said. "The rogue never got close enough to Nico to touch his vocal cords."

Shock whipped through her body as she spun around to face him. "What?"

Nico slapped Tony on the back of the head a second time.

"Hey, stop it." Tony raised his hands to deflect the blow and then turned to Gwen. "The doctors say he can talk. He just chooses not to."

She faced Nico. "But why?"

He looked away from her gaze, his jaw set. Silence blanketed the room.

"You're afraid, aren't you?"

He frowned at her and then scowled at his brother.

Gwen placed her other hand in his. "It's okay. I am too. I have trouble relating to people because of my abilities." She brought his hand to her lap. There, she stroked it and waited until his gaze rested on her again. "I've never heard of a wolf single-handedly taking down another in the middle of their moon-rage. You must be really strong."

He shrugged as his fingers laced with hers. Tingles of awareness spread over her skin. She inched closer.

"You probably got a lot of attention. Some good, some bad."

Of course, he said nothing. But he could talk. Tony said so. She wondered about the tone and inflection of his voice, what her name would sound like from his lips.

"He knew Caleb."

She turned to Tony, her eyes widening. "Who?"

"The raging werewolf. We all knew him, but Nico here was the closest." Tony deflected another of Nico's slaps to the head.

"I'm so sorry." She focused on Nico. "It must have been horrible." She pressed his hand to her cheek. "You were very brave, Nico. You did a good thing." She saw the crease between his brows deepen, but she pushed forward.

"You did. He would have killed and killed, not knowing what he was doing. He wasn't...himself anymore." She hesitated, weighing her words. "Promise me, if I become like that, you'll snap my neck too."

Nico jerked his hand from hers, fire lighting his eyes.

She framed his face in her hands. "Promise me."

"He'll do no such thing."

Gwen dropped her hands and faced Tony. "What?"

"It would be like tearing off his own limb." Tony crossed his arms in front of his chest.

Sadness filled her heart. "Then Eric has already won. Once I turn—"

"You might not."

"I have no choice."

Tony touched her shoulder. "Trust us, Gwen. Let us mark you, and you can mark us. Finish what has already been started. Together we can beat this thing."

"There has to be another way. I won't risk your lives like that."

Nico pointed to the ceiling and raised his brow.

Tony followed his gaze. "The vent."

"No, I've tried. Like the door, it's lined with silver."

"We'll knock it out."

"With what?"

He pressed his lips together in thought. "We'll make a lot of noise. Someone from the casino upstairs is bound to hear us."

She shook her head. "No, Eric sealed off this whole level from the casino. It's soundproof, and you need some sort of badge to get inside. No one will be able to find us, let alone hear us." She looked around the room and focused on the tray of food on the floor. "The guards are going to come back for this tray."

Tony shrugged. "So?"

She rose and moved across the room to the food. "They'll have to open the door to retrieve them." She crouched and picked up a spoon, turning it in her fingers. "If



I could make Nico believe that I held something more than a spoon in my hand, maybe I could make the guards believe it as well.”

Nico pressed his lips together and approached. Taking the spoon from her hands, he tossed it back onto the tray.

Tony followed. “He doesn’t want you to put your life in danger.” He held up his hand as she started to protest. “I don’t either. Although you do have a point.” He rubbed his chin and began to pace the room. “We could catch them off guard. If Nico and I take our wolf forms, we’d have the advantage.”

“I could help.”

He stopped walking and turned to her. “Would you be able to control the shift?”

She hesitated. *Would she?*

He nodded as if confirming something. “Then you stay as you are. We don’t want to risk it—especially if we don’t have to.”

Gwen wanted to protest, but she knew he was right. It was too close to the full moon. If she shifted now, she might not have the strength to shift back. What’s worse, she might not be in her right mind, which could put everyone in danger.

“I can provide the distraction, then,” she said.

“We don’t need a distraction.”

“I can keep them focused on me. That will give you and Nico more time.” She glanced at Nico. “Please, let me help.”

Nico exchanged a look with his brother.

Tony rubbed his chin. “I don’t know. I would prefer it if you stayed out of the way.”

“Please.” She grabbed Tony’s sleeves as the door started to open.

“Okay,” he whispered and motioned her over to the tray. “Just stay out of the way once the fighting starts.”

Gwen moved to the tray as Tony and Nico shifted and took their places behind the door. Within seconds, it opened wide, and Amos walked inside. “Where’s the other two?”

Gwen smiled and smoothed her hands over her curves. “I don’t know what you’re talking about.” If only he would take a couple of steps farther into the room.

Amos narrowed his eyes. “Something doesn’t feel right around here.” He pulled his gun from his belt. “Come here. Eric wants to question you again.”

She played with the metal around her neck. “I can’t.”

Amos swore and stepped into the room, closing the door behind him. “Eric is going to be furious.”

Nico jumped out from the shadows in his wolf form and tackled Amos to the ground. Tony followed, holding the guard down in place with his sharp teeth.

“Look out. The gun!” Gwen ran for them, but the chain kept her in place.

Amos fumbled with the gun. Nico snarled. The weapon went off, and Tony staggered back.

"No!" Gwen pulled at the chain around her neck, but it wouldn't budge.

Amos fired the gun again, hitting Nico in the leg. The large wolf staggered and fell to the ground.

Panic seized her chest. "Stop!" She couldn't let Amos kill them. "It's me you want, not them." She waved her hands in a submissive gesture. "Take *me*."

Tony whimpered from the corner. The pathetic sound vibrated around them. He was hurt badly. At least he was conscious. If she could lead Amos away, the brothers could shift and start healing. As long as the bullets weren't silver, they'd be okay.

"No," she said to Tony. "I won't let him hurt you anymore, not for me." She pressed her lips together as she looked at Amos. "Take me to Eric. I'm ready."

A slow smile spread over Amos's face. "That's what I like to hear." He shot Tony and then Nico again.

"What are you doing?" she wailed. "I told you I'd go with you."

"Can't have them trying to escape on me while I'm away, can I?" He unlocked her chains. "Don't worry that pretty little head of yours, sweetheart. It's only tranquilizers. Eric wants to save them for tonight's test." He cuffed her hands in front of her and placed a long chain from her hands to his belt. "I put enough into each of them so they won't move until we get back—just in time for the full moon." He laughed at his own joke. "Or should I say their deaths." He motioned with his head toward the door. "Follow me, dearie."

"What does Eric want from me?"

"What else?" he asked as he stepped over Nico's body. "He wants you to have another vision about his sister. He wants to know if he can trust her."

"I haven't had any other visions about his sister." Only about her lovers' deaths. She bent down and ran her fingers through Nico's fur. "I'm so sorry."

Nico didn't move. His eyes were closed.

Amos tugged on the chain. "Let's not keep him waiting. Shall we?"

She lifted Nico's ear and bent lower. "Stay strong for me. I need you." She smiled as his nose twitched, and then glanced at Tony. After a quick nod, she stood and turned to Amos. "Very well. Let's go."

## Chapter Seven

“Fucking tranq.” Tony took two steps, paused, and ran his fingers through his hair. “Did you see the gun?”

Nico sat on the bed with his head in his hands. He said nothing, of course. He never said anything. Not that Tony minded his brother’s silent presence. He understood why Nico never spoke. If he spoke, he’d have to connect with someone. If he connected, then there was a chance what happened in Texas would happen all over again. Neither one of them wanted that. Still, at some point Nico was going to have to take the plunge and start communicating with people.

Shit, he’d love it if his brother took the plunge right now. He could really use someone to talk to.

“What do you think they’re doing to her?” he asked.

Nico shrugged. Leaning back on the bed, he slipped his hands under his head and looked up to the ceiling.

*Just like talking to a fucking wall.* Tony resumed his pacing. “We failed her, Nico. We totally failed her. Because of us, they could be torturing her.” He paused midstep. “Do you think they would try to force a vision from her?” He turned on his heel to face his brother. “Is it even possible?”

Nico raised his head up from the mattress and met his brother’s gaze. His deep amber eyes mirrored Tony’s own concern. If they tried to wrestle a vision from Gwen, they could do much more than harm her physically. Her already fragile mental state could be fractured, making it harder for her to maintain her sanity.

“Fuck!” Tony ran his fingers through his hair again. Long black strands twisted around his fingers. At this rate, he was going to go bald.

Nico lowered his head back and stared at the ceiling, lost in his own little world. Tony continued to walk back and forth across the room and tried to think of what to do next. They couldn’t escape, not without Gwen. And right now they had no idea where she was.

If he only had a cell phone.

Josh would know what to do. When they didn’t check in at the designated time, Josh would know something was wrong and send help. He just hoped it didn’t come too late.

When the door moved, Tony stepped back, ready for anything. A new guard dragged Gwen into the room and dropped her on the floor.

“What did they do to you?” Tony stared in shock. She looked badly beaten and worn. His heart ached at the bruises and marks on her pale skin. Eric’s goons had taken off her collar, but not before they used it to create huge welts along her neck. Sweat beaded on her skin, and dark circles framed her eyes.

Nico sat up and drew Tony’s attention. Anger flashed across his features. Tony held up his hand in a motion for his brother to stay. The guard had a shiny gun in the belt around his waist, and Tony didn’t want to end up getting shot with another tranq.

The sound of the door closing broke Tony from his trance. He ran over and pounded on the smooth metal. Electricity shot through his system, and he fell back in pain. He clutched his hand to his chest. *Damn silver door.*

“Come back here, you coward!” He shook his fingers as the pain began to subside. He inspected his hand. It was burned, but not too badly. He shouted a few more obscenities at the door before giving up and turning to Gwen.

Nico had already gone to her and was in the process of moving her to the bed. Tony helped. Together, they placed her body carefully in the center of the blankets.

“My God, what did they do to her?”

Nico rubbed his hand over his face and knelt on the ground next to her.

Tony sat on the bed and inspected her body. It wasn’t as bad as he had originally thought. The majority of her wounds were to her neck, although someone had thrown a good punch at her eye. Already it was turning a deep purple. Even though the wounds looked bad, he couldn’t see any bites or scratches that would indicate were-injuries. Had they used instruments to torture her? His jaw hardened at the thought. If his guess was correct, once she shifted, then most of the damage could be healed. Now, if they could only get her to change into her wolf form...

She groaned and put the back of her hand to her head. They both glanced at each other, then waited.

She opened her eyes. “Where am I?” Her voice sounded hoarse and strained. She swallowed and clutched her throat with her hand.

“Back in the cell.” Tony smoothed her hair from her face. “You have to shift, sweetheart. It’s the only way you’ll be able to heal those wounds.”

“No.” Gwen started to sit up but lacked the strength. With a cough, she collapsed back onto the bed and frowned. “No. It’s too close to midnight. If I change, the moon-rage will take over.”

Tony brushed a stray hair from her face. “You have to risk it. You may not survive otherwise.”

“You won’t survive if I do.”

“You don’t have to stay in wolf form long, just for a moment. After, you can switch back. The changing will call forth the magick and speed the healing.”

She closed her eyes and rubbed her temples. “You don’t know what you’re asking.”

Tony wanted to touch her again, but Nico held him back. His brother took her hand, smoothing it between his fingers.

"He wants you to know that we'll be here. We won't let anything happen to you."

She opened her eyes and looked first at Nico, then at him. When she turned that gorgeous gaze on him, lust surged in his veins, tightening his muscles and heating his cock. All he wanted to do was to bury himself inside that soft body and forget everything going on around him. His wolf wanted to possess her, claim her as his. The human part of him wanted to ease her worry and help her release that inner strength. It was tough, but he managed to beat back the surge of emotion. She had to get well first.

Slowly, she nodded. "Be ready for anything. I don't... I don't always have my mind with me when I shift."

"You only need to do it for a couple of seconds."

The edges of her body began to shimmer as she called forth her magick. Nico dropped her hand and shot a worried look at his brother.

Tony nodded. He felt it too. There was a disturbance in the air, and a chill went down his spine. Maybe she was right. Maybe shifting wasn't the answer...

Soon the transformation was complete, and a petite chestnut wolf lay in the bed before them.

Tony swallowed the lump in his throat. "Gwen?"

The wolf's eyes snapped open. Large green orbs—Gwen's color—shone back at him. They seemed...distant. An odd sense of familiarity swept through him and tickled the hairs on his neck. He put his hand on Nico's arm in warning.

"Gwen?"

A low growl vibrated in her throat as she sat up. The wolf backed up until her tail brushed against the wall.

"It's us." Tony held out his hand for her to sniff. "Tony and Nico, remember?"

She snarled again, this time showing teeth. Tony slowly lowered his hand. "Don't you recognize us?"

The wolf crouched low in warning and growled. Both brothers moved back in surprise.

"I take it that's a no." He glanced at his brother. "Now what? Unmarked, we have no way to communicate with her."

Gwen jumped and landed on Tony, taking him by surprise. The weight sent him off the bed, and they both fell to the ground. He rolled out from under her before she could do any real damage.

"Don't just sit there, Nico. Do something."

She snarled and pounced again, toppling them both back down to the floor. "Shit!" She was strong and had a distinct advantage. While he didn't want to hurt her, she didn't have such restraint.

Tony rolled to his feet again and put some distance between them. God, his ear stung. He put his hand to it and felt something wet. He stared in awe at the blood on his fingers. "She bit me."

Gwen snarled her reply. Slowly she circled Tony, looking for some sign of vulnerability. Tony turned with her, always keeping her within his sights. He thought of shifting but decided against it. If he changed into his wolf form, she might think he was being aggressive, and it would anger her more. Besides, the act of shifting would leave him open to attack.

Nico crept up behind her and put his hand on her backside. Gwen turned her head around to him and growled, but he didn't move. Instead he stroked his fingers through her thick fur, his eyes intent on hers.

Her growl dissolved into silence. She tilted her head to the side to study him. Nico curled his fingers into her fur, cupping her ass much like he had during sex only hours ago. The tension in the room eased as he worked his fingers over her back.

Why did she respond to Nico and not him? A ribbon of jealousy wove its way around Tony, and he stepped forward to touch her fur. The wolf turned back and barked at him. Nico curled his hand into her once again. She turned full circle and nuzzled his leg.

Tony couldn't help but stare. "How did you do that?"

Nico smirked as he pressed lightly on her back and urged her to sit. Once calm, Gwen lay down on the ground and shifted back to her human form. There she curled up in the fetal position, her chest rising and falling rhythmically. Her eyes closed.

"How did you do that?" Tony repeated.

Nico picked her up and placed her back on the bed. Tony grabbed the blankets and shoved his brother aside. "I want to know how you did that," Tony said as he tucked in Gwen and sat on the edge of the bed. She looked better, much better. He should have been thankful, but he found he couldn't shake the stab of jealousy in his chest.

"I can't believe she responded to you," he said.

Gwen opened her eyes. "I remembered."

Tony leaned forward, narrowing his eyes as he inspected her skin. "Are you okay?"

She ignored his question and turned to Nico. "You touched me, and I remembered."

Tony caught his brother's smirk and felt like smacking it off his face. Women always responded better to Nico. Just this once, he wished Gwen would have preferred him instead. What was it about Nico's touch that made women fall over themselves to please him?

"You touched me like that before, during..."

“Oh, for crying out loud.” Tony had had just about enough of this. “If you could remember his touch, why not mine? Or my voice?”

She shrugged as something flickered over her eyes. Was she laughing at him? This was too much. Why couldn’t they form a connection like the one he saw between her and Nico?

She looked at him, her face somber. “I don’t know. Maybe I remembered Nico because he wasn’t yelling and swearing.”

Tony pressed his lips together and scowled at his brother. Nico sat on the bed next to Gwen and patted her hand. Both of them stared at him with goofy expressions. “I suppose you two want me to leave.”

Laughing, she sat up and pressed her hand against his cheek. It felt so warm and inviting. His cock immediately responded to her touch. It fought with the sudden urge he had to bite his brother’s head off.

“Something just clicked when Nico touched me. I can’t explain it. It did show me one thing, though.”

“What’s that?”

“If Nico’s touch could have that much of an effect on me, just think how much stronger it would be if we were mated.” She looked at each of them in turn. “I think you were right, Tony. If we mate, then our bond will be much stronger. It might give me the strength I need to fight the moon-rage.” She twitched her lips and lowered her hand. “Who knows? Next time, I might even recognize your voice.”

He frowned and crossed his arms in front of his chest. “Maybe you should mate with Nico. He’s the one you recognized.”

She framed his face in her hands. “No. It has to be you.” Gwen’s gaze shifted to his brother. “*Both* of you.” She refocused on Tony, and he could feel the heat in her gaze. “I need you, Tony.” She leaned in and pressed her lips against his. They felt so soft, so right. His inner wolf howled at him to possess her, to mark her as his.

He tilted his head and coaxed her lips open, eager for more. Her taste, the sweetness of vanilla and female, filled his senses and left him begging for more. He inhaled the rich scent and placed his hand on the back of her head. Her hair felt soft and silky. He wondered if her wolf fur felt the same way. Maybe if he tried harder, it would be his touch she would respond to next time, not Nico’s. While he didn’t particularly mind sharing with his brother—they had shared women before—he felt that Gwen’s connection with his brother was strengthening much more quickly than her connection with him.

What was it about this woman that drove him so crazy? He had never been so jealous of his brother before. They had always been a team. There was something about Gwen, however, that spoke to a deep place inside of him. A place he had kept hidden since the day he became a werewolf.

He broke the kiss, lingering to nibble her lip one last time before pulling away. “You’re right. I think that if you were marked, it would be your best chance against the rages.” He didn’t want to talk about his feelings. What guy did? It was better to

keep that part of him secluded, at least for now. Once they all got out of here, he would deal with the way she was getting under his skin—and into his heart.

Nico shifted on the bed and brushed a stray hair from her face. She touched both their cheeks, and Tony saw the emotion in her eyes as her gaze shifted between them. “What you are doing for me—giving me this chance at a normal life...” She swallowed as her eyes shone bright with unshed tears.

Tony put a finger to her lips. “We don’t know if this is going to work. It’s only a hunch.”

“But—” The vibration of her lips against his finger sent a spark of want shooting down into his groin.

He ran his finger over her skin. “No talking, sweetheart.” On impulse, he kissed her again, slipping his fingers around her shoulders to keep her steady.

Placing her hands on his chest, she outlined the contours of his muscles, trailing her fingers down over his skin. Awareness spiraled through him, twisting around his cock until it pressed against his jeans. She tugged at the button on his pants, then his zipper. She pulled him out and caressed his length until he thought he would die from need. Her hands felt so hot and tight around him. Before he realized what he was doing, he had moved his hips, thrusting his erection back and forth in her able hands.

He continued to kiss her, sliding his fingers down her curves to her abdomen, mimicking her movements. His inner wolf howled with the need to mark his territory, to claim his mate. He curled his fingers into her flesh and tugged her closer. He could sense Nico behind her, unhooking her bra and tracing a path down her neck with his lips. Nico’s actions caused her to tighten her grip around Tony’s cock, and he moaned as pressure built in his lower abdomen. He was close. If this kept up, he wasn’t going to last much longer.

*Need to slow down.*

He coaxed her to let go of him, then stand. Together, he and his brother worked in unison to remove her clothes. It was like unwrapping a present, a beautiful, sexual present. He would pull back a piece of clothing with his fingers, then kiss the smooth skin underneath. Such perfection seemed almost too good to be true. Soon she was tugging at his clothes, eager to do some exploring of her own. He let her. She repeated his movements, first with him, then with his brother. The feel of those lips on his skin was nothing short of heaven. They took their time, learning one another’s bodies, where they liked to be touched and kissed. When she was finally naked, he took a step back to admire the view.

She shifted her feet. “What is it?”

He smiled and extended his hand. “You’re beautiful, sweetheart.”

“You’re just saying that.”

“No, it’s true. Don’t you think so, Nico?”

His brother nodded, his eyes darkening with lust as his gaze roamed over her body.



"Come here." He motioned for her with his outstretched hand. She hesitated, then grasped his fingers. Tony brought her hand to his mouth and pressed his lips against it. He frowned when he noticed the tremble in her palm, and lifted his brow in question.

She shook her head. "I'm just a little nervous, I guess."

Nico glanced at Tony, waiting for approval. His brother motioned to Gwen's waist. Nico turned his attention to the woman between them and wrapped his arms around her middle, stroking her abdomen with his long fingers.

Tony noticed her stiffen. "There's nothing to be nervous about, sweetheart," he said.

"What if this doesn't work?"

"Have a little faith in us." He tugged her toward the bed.

She pulled back. "No—not the bed." She bent down before him, offering her backside to Nico.

*Sweet Jesus.* Tony's eyes widened as he realized her intent. Before he could speak, her hot tongue began its torture. She took her time, first swirling the tip of her tongue under, then over his cock. Her slow, hesitant movements told him that she wanted to please him but wasn't sure how.

"That's it, sweetheart. Nice and slow." She repeated her actions, causing him to groan with longing. "Do that again."

She did. He closed his eyes as pleasure rolled over his body. "Now take me into your mouth." When she hesitated, he opened his eyes. "Go ahead. You won't hurt me." When her soft lips circled his tip, he murmured his approval. He continued to give her soft but firm commands, coaxing her out of her shyness with his voice. Soon no more words were necessary.

Nico rubbed his hips against her ass, causing her to hum with delight against Tony's cock. He felt the vibration all the way to his toes. Her hot breath covered him as she blew lightly over where she'd just licked. Pleasure bolted through his body, causing him to jerk in response. He moaned and laced his fingers in her hair for balance. When she took him deep into her mouth, he shivered with need. He closed his eyes, letting her build the yearning inside his body. She groaned as she moved over him, the vibration of her lips almost his undoing. He bent forward, reaching underneath her to stroke her breasts. Grasping the firm nipples, he pinched and tugged, just the way she liked. She reached up to cup his balls, and his whole body tightened with longing.

"Fuck, that's good." He straightened as desire took control of his movements. Running his fingers through her hair, he held her head to him and enjoyed the way she toyed with his cock. His hunger built until he felt feverish, and soon he was gently moving his hips against her mouth.

Her soft caresses became harder, faster. It was all Tony could do to keep from exploding in her mouth. He opened his eyes and watched her as she took him between her lips. Her hot, wet tongue flicked the sensitive spot on the underside of

the tip, making him groan. This couldn't continue, not if they were to mark her. Tugging gently on her head, he stopped her. Understanding his actions, Nico eased back from her hips and, after one last caress, pulled away. She seemed disappointed.

"You will undo us before we even begin," Tony said as he led her back to the bed. "I want to do this right. There is only one mating ritual."

She smiled as she followed him. Tony sprawled out on the mattress, pulling her down with him. She straddled his hips and rested her hands on his chest for support. He slipped his hand over his cock and then positioned himself at her opening. "Are you ready, sweetheart?"

She nodded. Grabbing her hips, Tony eased himself inside, groaning as sensations rocketed through him. She hummed her approval, her muscles tightening around his cock. He lifted his hips, desperate to bury every inch of himself inside of her. She clenched and unclenched around him, causing a shiver of delight to race up his spine. He guided her up, then down his shaft, the sweet friction heating his skin and consuming his thoughts. God, a man could lose himself in a woman like this. So perfect.

Nico positioned himself on the mattress behind her. After sliding two fingers between her legs, he pulled back and rubbed her juices over her opening. She moaned as he stretched her, and her thrusts became more frenzied. Tony curled his fingers on her hips to steady her.

"Easy now," he said.

"It feels so good."

Tony smiled. "That's the general idea."

Nico repeated the action a couple more times, making sure she was properly stretched and ready. Each time he stroked her ass, she moaned and bit her lip in that way Tony found so appealing. He arched his back, wanting to plunge deeper inside her soft pussy.

When Nico was finished, he reached around her body and toyed with her breasts. The erotic image made Tony groan with longing. Heat spiraled through his body, pulling every muscle taut. He raised his hands over his head and pressed them against the wall for leverage. He needed to hang on just a little longer...

Nico kissed a hot trail over her shoulder. She lifted her arms, then drove her fingers into his brother's hair. The scene was so erotic, so fulfilling, that Tony found himself hovering dangerously close to the edge.

He lowered one hand from the wall and reached between her legs. "You're so beautiful, you know that? So fuckin' beautiful." He pressed her clit as she moved on top of him. She moaned, a deep, throaty sound that heated the air around them. "So perfect, isn't she, Brother? I feel like I'm going to explode."

Nico groaned in agreement as he nibbled on her shoulder.

*Groaned? His brother groaned?*

She moved her hips back and forth, scattering his thoughts. Emotion rose; desperation climbed. He was close, very close. Release had to be held back, however. Mating only occurred when the enjoyment was drawn out, intensified.

Framing her face with his hands, he pulled her down and covered her lips in a commanding kiss, allowing Nico to enter her from behind. She gasped and pulled away, her eyes wide with pain.

"Easy now." He stroked her cheek and kissed her lightly on the lips as the pain faded and her body adjusted. After a moment, he glanced at his brother and nodded for him to pull away.

"Wait. Don't stop."

Tony smiled. "Honey, we weren't thinking about stopping."

She smiled as Nico pulled out an inch more and then filled her body to the hilt.

"Better?" Tony asked.

Joy washed over her features. "Much better."

Nico pulled back, and this time Tony grasped her hips and pulled out as well. Together, they pushed themselves inside her body, touching her deep inside her core. Tony gasped as the strong connection rippled through him. This woman was so amazing, so fuckin' fantastic. He couldn't get enough of her. He pulled back with his brother and entered her again. The three of them moaned with the friction of their thrusts, their voices mingling in the air. Again they plunged deep and pulled back, creating an erotic dance of desire and passion. Soon their movements quickened, and Tony pushed himself deeper into her core. Her scent, her soft skin, everything about her bombarded his senses, dragging him closer and closer to the edge.

She shuddered and tightened her pussy around his cock. He broke the kiss and watched as pleasure consumed her. There wasn't a more beautiful sight in the world. Again and again her pussy spasmed, milking him, begging for him to join her. He held back his own release, mesmerized by the sight before him. How had he gotten so lucky? He watched as her teeth lengthened into the points of the wolf, and he felt his own teeth grow in response. Tilting his head to the side, he offered his neck for her. She braced her weight on his chest, running her fingers over his nipples.

Something inside him snapped. Suddenly desire and craving shot up inside his body and exploded around him. He felt her teeth sink deep into his neck, the movement exposing her shoulder. He drove his own teeth deep into her flesh, humming with approval as her sweet taste overwhelmed his senses. Everything went white as pleasure consumed him.

Somewhere on the edge of his consciousness, he saw Nico sink his teeth into her neck on the other side. They rode one another, drawing out their pleasure in unison. He had never felt so complete, so fulfilled. He knew that their teeth would create unique marks on the skin. In time, they would fade to the human eye, but to a werewolf, the marks would signal that they were mated. That they belonged.

That she was *theirs*.

Tony's whole body shuddered as he gave himself over to the moment. Deep satisfaction swept through him, claiming every muscle fiber, every pore. He dug his teeth deeper. *Mine*. No one else would ever touch or hurt this lovely creature again. He and Nico would protect her with their lives. Once they brought her to the Kyron pack, she would make a home with them, and they would be together forever.

*Mine.*

He dislodged his fangs and watched as Nico did the same. Gwen turned her head and sank her fangs into Nico, eliciting another sigh of bliss from his brother. Still the orgasm continued, the three of them bound to one another in a whirlwind of excitement and rapture, heat, and blood. Tony found the image strangely satisfying. He was very possessive of his brother, and it felt right that he should be a part of this. These two needed Tony for their survival. Nico relied on his words, Gwen his strength. Tony knew he would rise up to the challenge of protecting them. It was in his blood. He would always be there and would give whatever they asked of him. They were together now, three bodies, but one in spirit, and he wouldn't have it any other way.

When it was over, they collapsed on the bed. He shifted and gathered her in his arms, making room for Nico to spoon behind her. Her warm body comforted him unlike anything else ever had before. If only he could stay like this forever.

\* \* \*

Tony jerked awake. He was shivering. Somehow Gwen had dislodged herself from both of them during their sleep. Now she was on the other side of the room, picking up her clothes with shaking hands.

He sat up and leaned his weight on his elbow. "What happened?"

Nico immediately got out of bed and gathered her in his arms. She pushed him away and threw on her clothes, tears filling her eyes.

"Gwen?" Reluctantly, Tony got out of bed and put on his clothes. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Nico do the same. "What's going on?"

She walked a short distance away and crossed her arms, her back to him. He could tell from the way her shoulders shook that she was crying. He glanced at his brother for approval. At Nico's nod, he took a step forward.

"Gwen..." He tried to touch her shoulder, but she pulled away. He watched helplessly as she stormed to the other side of the room, away from both of them. She wiped her face.

"I had another vision," she said. "It was the same one as before." She ran her hands over her face once more before turning to face them. "Being mated has changed nothing about our future."

He swallowed the lump in his throat. "What do you mean?"

"I saw myself change. The moon-rage will take over in a few hours, and I'll kill you both." She threw herself on the ground and put her head in her hands.

"You don't know—"

“Yes, I do,” she cried, tears staining her cheeks. Her voice sounded higher, almost hysterical. “My visions are never wrong, not when the future is this close to the present. I’ll kill you both. Tonight. And there’s nothing anyone can do about it.”

## Chapter Eight

“Wait a minute.” Tony rubbed his chin. “What exactly did you see?”

Frustrated, Gwen waved her hands in the air. “I told you before. I saw myself in wolf form. I was fighting the moon-rage. When I came to, I saw both of you dead. Then Eric appeared and told me I was going to be his killing machine. He was going to put another one of those damn collars on me and treat me like a dog.”

“Did you confirm we were dead?”

“You were lying lifeless on the ground.” Gwen folded her arms in front of her chest.

“Yes, but were we actually dead?”

Gwen unfolded her arms. “You weren’t breathing.”

“Did you check?”

She shifted her feet and frowned in concentration. “Well...not really. Your chests weren’t rising and falling, but I didn’t lean close enough to check your breath. You both looked pretty beat-up. What does this have to do with anything?”

A slow smile spread over Tony’s face. “Because I have an idea.”

Gwen pressed her lips together. Why wasn’t he listening? “You were dead, believe me.”

He glanced at Nico. “Were we? Or were we just pretending?”

She shook her head in confusion. “What are you talking about?”

“How are you feeling?”

Gwen couldn’t quite grasp the sudden change in subject. Weren’t they just talking about her visions? Her health had nothing to do with it. “I’m fine. Why?”

Tony glanced at his brother and took a step toward her. “Fine? No change? We marked you, remember.”

“No, no change.” She did a mental inventory of her emotions. Besides her growing frustration with all the questions, she didn’t feel any different from before. The pull of the moon was still present. She could feel the anger bubbling in her chest. It hadn’t lessened, but it hadn’t gotten worse either. “How many hours do we have until the moon is up?”

“Damn if I know. Wish we had a window.”

Gwen began to pace as Tony’s words echoed through her head. The call of the moon had decreased for him after they had been together. “But the pull should be

more intense, right? It doesn't feel stronger." In fact, it wasn't as strong as it had been an hour ago. She looked up, excitement tingling in her chest. "It isn't getting worse—that means something happened, right?" She turned to Nico. "Do you think I might have more control over my rages now?"

Nico nodded, his expression hopeful. Tony went over to the bed and sat on the edge. His eyes sparkled as he patted the seat next to him. "I have an idea."

"A plan?" She frowned in thought as Nico guided her to the bed. She sat, and he followed.

Tony's eyes sparkled with excitement as he lowered his voice to a whisper. "Eric expects you to kill us, right?"

"Yes. I told you that." What was he getting at? She glanced at Nico before returning her gaze to Tony. "He wants to turn me into this mindless killing machine."

"So you won't be chained during the full moon."

She shrugged. "I guess."

"So..." He rubbed his chin for a moment in thought. "So he'll probably try to listen before he comes inside, just to make sure we're dead, and you're too exhausted to hurt him."

"I don't follow you. The room is soundproof, remember?" Gwen unfolded her arms. "Someone could scream for days and no one in the casino upstairs would hear them."

Tony looked up at the vent above their heads. "Do you know where that goes?" His voice was barely audible.

"Another empty room, I suppose." Understanding dawned, and she lowered her voice. "You think he'd be listening from the other room?"

"I don't think it—I *know* it. The bastard has probably been listening from the beginning." He frowned. "He knows that coming inside while we're in our moon-rages is too risky. He'd want to make sure that at least two of us were dead first." Tony smiled at Nico, who seemed to be following his train of thought.

Gwen flicked her gaze between the brothers. They seemed to be so close that ideas could be communicated with just a thought. Frustration swept through her as she tried to piece everything together. "What are you saying—that I should go into my moon-rage?"

"Pretend to." Tony put his finger to his lips, glanced at the vent, then lowered his voice. "Nico and I will both play dead. Then when Eric comes far enough inside the room, we can attack. We'll have surprise on our side. It will be the perfect chance to escape."

*Escape. Freedom.* Hope sparked inside her. "But we don't know that the marking will work."

"True. We're bonded now, however. So that should help. Nico and I will be able to sense your emotions. If we keep calm, you'll be able to sense us. Hopefully the

calming effect will help keep you from letting the rage take full control of your body.”

Gwen stood and walked a short distance away. “I don’t know about this. There are so many things that could go wrong.” Even though she doubted the brothers out loud, she couldn’t stop the hope growing inside her. In her vision, she just saw their bodies on the ground. She never confirmed they were dead. And in her vision, she never actually became a killing machine for Eric. She pressed her lips together in thought.

What if they were able to escape?

“Once we get out of here, we’ll get in touch with Josh. He can send people over to help.”

“Yeah,” Gwen murmured. The mention of Josh was enough to cool her enthusiasm. There were so many ifs. And even if they overcame them all, she still would have to deal with Josh not wanting her in his pack.

*Later.* She knew there was nothing more important right now than getting the brothers free. They had a chance at happiness, even if she didn’t. She would do what she could to get them out of here and deal with the rest later.

Tony turned to his brother. “I really think it’s a good plan, don’t you?”

Out of the corner of her eye, she caught Nico studying her. The man was perceptive, too perceptive sometimes.

She forced herself to smile. “I think so too.”

Nico hesitated for a moment, then nodded.

“Great. It’s settled, then.” Tony clasped his hands together. “All we need to know now is when the moon is full.”

“I still feel a pull. I’ll know it’s time when I feel the urge to shift.”

“That’s right.” He frowned. “Eric will feel the shift too, won’t he?”

Gwen shook her head. “He hires a few prostitutes to help him through each full moon.” He had tried to use her once, but her moon-rage had kept him away, thank goodness. “He’ll have had enough sex to resist the first night’s pull by now, I think.”

Nico touched her arm. She jumped. Where had he come from? She hadn’t seen him cross the room. “What is it?”

Concern etched his features as he tilted her chin, forcing her to meet his gaze. He frowned.

His eyes were so deep, so dark. Gwen felt like she could get lost in their depths. The intensity of his stare made her uncomfortable. She fidgeted. He released her, and she rubbed her arms as a chill branched out over her skin.

“Is there something wrong?” Tony asked.

“No.” Gwen forced herself to lower her arms and smile. “I’m fine.” She glanced at Nico. “Really.”



Tony rose from the bed. "Nico is normally a good judge of people's emotions. He thinks you're upset."

She forced herself to pat Nico's arm with reassurance. "I'm just nervous, Nico, that's all." She turned back to Tony. "The pull's stronger now. It's almost time."

Tony nodded. "We better get ready, then."

\* \* \*

*Anger. Red. Must fight.*

Gwen bit and tore with her claws. She was in wolf form and in danger, but she couldn't see. Everything was red, so red. All she knew was that she had to fight if she wanted to survive.

Something pulled at the edge of her mind, a calming force, but she pushed it away.

*Kill. Fight.*

She growled and snapped, her sharp teeth biting into soft flesh. They wanted to kill her. Little did they know the moon-rage made her strong, unstoppable. Normally she fought the urge, but this time she embraced it. Her life depended on it.

"This isn't working. We're not having any effect on her."

Something passed over the fur on her back, and she spun around. Why couldn't she see? She clawed at the air, her hand catching something in the process. A loud *yelp* vibrated around her. Good, she hurt one.

Rejuvenated, she fought harder. Where were Tony and Nico? She could really use their help. Exhaustion overwhelmed her, but she fought against it. Once she was free and the brothers safe, then she would let her exhaustion save her.

"Fight it, Gwen."

Something passed across her vision, and she bit down hard. There was a yell, and then something wrapped around her leg.

Someone was holding her, restricting her movements. She fought harder, wriggling free and lunging at her attacker. She bit into flesh as another arm wrapped around her middle.

"Shh, Gwen, it's us. Search your mind. Feel us there." The voice was warm and familiar. It brushed against her ear.

She felt something soft press against her back. She listened to the voice and tried to do what it said. Taking a deep breath, she attempted to calm herself. The red still clouded her vision, but she found she could think a little clearer.

"That's it, sweetheart. Don't forget the show. Eric's watching."

She snarled at her captor's name and snapped at the arms around her. They fell away. She bucked the presence off her back and whirled to face both of her attackers.

Something was different. The wolves she was facing looked familiar. No longer did she want to hurt them. Remembering what the calming voice had said, she crouched low and barked. If the voice wanted her to put on a show for Eric, she would put on a show.

She attacked but fought only halfheartedly. Still, she was amazed at how the wolves reacted to her bites and scratches—as if she hit them full force. The calming presence in her mind strengthened as she fought, and she remembered the plan. Circling the brothers, she showed them her teeth and went in for the kill.

Tony went down, but she had little time to see if she'd actually hurt him. She had no idea how much strength she gained in her moon-rage; both wolves had at least superficial injuries. Who knew how many internal injuries she'd caused before she got a grip?

“One more left, my little killing machine.”

Gwen turned toward Eric and barked. How dare he call her that? She should rip his head off. She was just about to do just that when Nico landed on top of her. She rolled on the ground and somehow managed to wriggle away, but not before he nipped her heel. A low growl vibrated in her throat as she walked in a wide circle and flashed her teeth. Anger pumped through her body with each step. Her eyes locked with Nico's, and her tail flicked in the air. He lowered himself into a defensive position. She lunged at his side. Nico jumped to the side but was too slow. With a swift push, she knocked him to the ground and put her teeth around his throat. Red flashed across her vision.

*Fight. Kill.*

The wolf's soft growl caught her attention. She fought the urge to clamp down on Nico's neck. Gathering her strength, she pulled away. He didn't move.

She surveyed the room. Both Tony's and Nico's bodies lay at odd angles on the floor. She ran over and nudged them, but they wouldn't move. Their chests remained still. *Shit.* Her muscles froze in panic until she remembered the plan. Tony had said that they were both going to hold their breath to make it look more realistic. She put her head down low to pretend to check their breathing.

*They are alive.*

A rhythmic, steady snapping echoed behind her. She whirled around. Eric stood a few feet away, clapping his hands in the open doorway. She narrowed her eyes.

He lowered his arms and smiled. “Bravo, my little killing machine. Bravo.”

She glanced at the bodies and didn't have to try very hard to look panicked. God, she hoped this worked.

“Such a tragedy, isn't it?” Eric bent low and picked something up from the ground.

“Now that your mates are dead, you can fully be mine.” He closed the distance between them.

Gwen looked to his hands. Bright metal shone between his fingers. *The collar.* She took a step back and whimpered.

Eric held out the collar to her. "Come here, my sweet. You may not be able to tell me your visions anymore, but you can still kill better than any in my pack. With a little training, you will learn who your master is."

Gwen took another step back. Eric was close to Tony and Nico now. Just a few more steps...

Eric knelt before her and placed the collar around her neck. After rubbing her ears, he stepped back. "Good. Now, to make sure the separation from your mates is complete, we will burn the bodies." He called his guards.

No! Why weren't they moving? She lunged for Eric, but the chain held her back. She snarled and clawed at the floor, pulling the chain taut behind her. Her teeth came within inches of her captor but caught nothing but air.

Eric's sick laugh filled her ears. "The Kyron pack has prospered at the expense of others for far too long. Once Josh gets a look at you, he'll have no choice but to bow to my leadership, or his pack will suffer. Finally, the Wright pack will get the respect it deserves."

The brothers attacked in a blur, taking Eric and his two men by surprise. Nico took Eric down quickly, digging his teeth into his leg and dragging him to the ground. Eric screamed and flickered between wolf and human forms, his body in too much pain to hold one shape. Nico went in for the final attack, but Amos blocked him. Nico snarled at the large brown wolf as he circled, showing his teeth.

Tony wasn't doing as well. The second guard, while stunned, quickly recovered and managed to deflect his blow. Turning into his wolf form, he attacked Tony, and the two rolled around on the floor in combat. Growls and snarls filled the air.

The third guard bolted for the door.

Gwen changed back into her human form and pulled on the chain. This wasn't supposed to happen; they were supposed to get away. Somewhere in the distance an alarm sounded.

*Shit.* "They're coming!" *Where's the key?* She scrambled over to the Eric and tried to search his body. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Tony take down his guard and move to help Nico. The constant changing of forms made it difficult, but she managed to wrap her hand around a metal key ring. Crying in triumph, she pulled it out of his pants pocket.

Eric solidified into his human form and grabbed her wrist as she pulled away. Twisting her arm behind her back, he took the keys from her and undid the collar. In desperation, she tried to pull away, but he only twisted her arm harder. Pain sliced through her body as he dragged her to his chest and circled his fingers around her neck. "Stop now, or the girl dies."

Tony and Nico stopped. Amos scrambled to his feet and changed back to his human form. The brothers changed as well.

"Get away from her," Tony growled.

Eric laughed. "I don't think so. She's my ticket to destroying Kyron and everything he holds dear." He edged her toward the door and motioned to Amos. "Get help."

Amos frowned at Nico. "I can finish them off."

"Amos!" Eric barked. The guard flinched and left the room.

Nico caught Gwen's gaze. A calming presence flooded her mind. Lust followed, the basic instinct consuming her body in a wave and then ebbing away. Its absence left her hollow, cold. Angry.

She understood what Nico was asking of her. Taking a deep breath, she let the moon-rage take control.

A dam burst inside her, and hatred poured through every inch of her body. She shifted, the movement taking Eric by surprise. His grip loosened around her throat and arm, and she pulled away. Spinning, she snarled and bit the leg Nico had attacked earlier. The flesh had begun to heal with the constant shifting of forms, but the skin was new and soft. She bit down hard, tearing flesh as red blanketed her vision.

*Fight. Kill.*

"The alarm—We have to get out of here."

Peace flooded Gwen's mind, washing away her fury. She glanced at Tony and Nico, sensing the connection between them. They were using the bond to calm her emotions—and it was working. She looked back at Eric and blinked as the last of her anger left her body.

She placed a hand on his bloodied chest, felt for a heartbeat, and frowned. "He still lives."

Tony grabbed her arm and pulled her toward the door. "Later. We might not get another chance."

Reluctantly, she turned away and followed Tony down the hall. Nico brought up the rear, protecting her from behind. After backtracking twice, they made their way upstairs and to the door that led into the casino.

Tony put his hand on the knob and hesitated. "Eric doesn't use his casinos as cover for the wolves like Josh does. Knowing him, the alarm probably wasn't heard up here." He glanced at his clothes. "We look a mess. I'm afraid we're going to attract attention from the humans. It's going to be hell explaining it to the authorities."

"Do you know another way out of this place?"

He frowned at her. "No, I suppose not. Here goes nothing." He twisted the knob. "Stay close."

Screams filled her ears as they entered the casino floor. Chips flew everywhere as people scrambled for cover. Fortunately, no one thought to try to slow them down.

Gwen caught the casino guards coming directly toward them. They wove in and out of the slot machines. Somehow, the trio managed to outrun them and burst out onto the boardwalk.

*Snow.* Gwen paused just outside the door. It was snowing. The flakes were small and light, only a dusting on the ground. She stood stunned, trying to remember the last time she had seen anything so beautiful.

“Fuck! Come on!” Tony grabbed her arm and hauled her down the boardwalk. Luckily it wasn’t the busy season, and they easily navigated the shops and casinos. They darted into an alley, then paused to catch their breath.

“Now what?” Gwen asked.

Tony peeked around the corner. “Now we find a phone.”

Nico pulled a small device from his pocket and held it up in the air. A sly grin spread out over his features as the cell phone dangled from his fingers.

“Where the hell did you get that?”

Nico motioned toward the boardwalk behind them. He flipped open the phone and started to push some buttons.

“Give me that.” Tony snatched the phone away and dialed Josh’s number. “You don’t talk, remember?” he said as he held the phone to his ear.

Gwen shivered, and Nico wrapped his warm arms around her as Tony relayed the information to Josh. She closed her eyes and tried not worry. Josh probably didn’t even remember her. Opening her mouth, she let the tiny snowflakes fall onto her tongue. She didn’t want to think what this phone call would mean—that soon she would be alone again. For now, she wanted to enjoy her freedom.

“Her name is Gwen. She’s a psychic of some sort.” Gwen opened her eyes and found Tony watching her, a smile tugging on his lips. “Eric was using her to determine our movements,” he said into the phone. “She’s with us now, though.” He winked, and Gwen’s stomach started to rock with unease. “Don’t worry; we’ll keep an eye on her.”

*So much for living in the moment.* Dread filled her chest as she watched Tony. He nodded. What was Josh telling him? That he knew her? That she was a freak?

“Will do.” He slapped the phone shut. “Josh wants us to lie low until he sends in help. He’ll call Zach and pull him out of Houston before Eric’s men get down there.”

Gwen shoved her hands in her pants pockets and looked at the ground. Nico’s reassuring warmth surrounded her but did little to calm the queasiness she felt. “Oh.”

Tony crooked his finger under her chin. “Hey, Josh wants to meet you.” He glanced up at his brother. “I think he suspects we’re mates.” He flicked his gaze back to Gwen. “He’s a little weird like that. Sometimes I think he can sense our thoughts. And other times...” He shrugged. “We better get out of here.” He gave the phone back to Nico. “Any ideas on where we could hide out?”

Gwen mentally shook away her anxiety as Nico unfolded his arms from around her. She had only a short time with the men before she would have to bolt. As much as she cared for the brothers, she couldn't face Josh, not after how he had rejected her so completely.

Nico's calming presence filled her mind once more. Leave it to him to sense her distress. She looked up into his questioning gaze and wondered how he could read her so completely. Then she remembered—marking her had made her emotions an open book to them. She'd have to remember that in the future. She ignored the handsome wolf and turned back to Tony.

"Before Eric caught me, I used to work at one of the local hotels," she said. "It's off the boardwalk, so I'm sure they won't think of searching it right away."

Tony nodded. "Let's do it, then."

She stepped away from Nico and turned to go. A hand brushed her shoulder and made her pause.

"Are you okay?" Tony's eyes narrowed as he studied her face.

She stepped back from him. "Of course. Why?"

He trailed his fingers down her neck, hovering over the mark. "You became very nervous as I talked to Josh."

She tore her gaze away. "I guess I'm just ready for all of this to be over."

He leaned in and brushed his lips against hers. She let the heat and passion he felt flow into her until it consumed her too. Nico came up from behind, looped his arms around her middle, and spread his hands over her abdomen in a possessive gesture. She felt their concern for her, their desire.

But would it be enough for them to break away from their home?

No, she couldn't ask such a thing.

To be wolf was to be part of a pack. Living alone, isolated, was torture. She should know. Asking them to leave Kyron pack would be like asking them to cut off their right arms; she could never do it.

But for now... For now, she would live in the moment. She'd collect memories to keep her warm on all those cold, lonely nights. She reached up and threaded one hand in Nico's hair, tugging his head down to her throat. His hot breath blew over her body, making her squirm as expectation rippled through her. Desire and hunger wove around her, and she soaked it up like a flower eager for sun. She relaxed, opening herself to Tony's invasion of her mouth.

Cradled between the two men, she felt safe, loved. How was she ever going to be able to give this up? After having a taste of what it felt like to belong, she didn't want to walk away. She wanted to hold on to the brothers, to bury herself in their strength and warmth.

Tony broke the kiss and traced her cheek with his finger. "It will be over soon enough."

Sadness washed over her as she felt Nico pull away. It was better this way, she knew. Her relationship with the brothers was only temporary. After they escaped, she wouldn't be able to go back to their pack with them, and she couldn't ask them to leave their home and family for her. The relationship was doomed before it even began.

"I know." She forced herself to smile. "Let's go. I'm freezing."

Nico picked her up in his arms and motioned to the chain-link fence at the other end of the alley, opposite from the boardwalk.

"What are you doing?" she asked as she looped her arms around his neck.

Tony laughed. "I think he doesn't want you to overexert yourself."

She frowned. "I can climb the fence on my own, you know."

Tony brushed a hair from her cheek. "We know. It's just that the feelings we got..." He shook his head. "It was like you were pulling away."

"I never—"

He placed a finger on her lips. "It takes a lot of getting used to—feeling each other's emotions." He smiled. "Just humor us, okay?"

"We'll attract attention."

"We'll stick to the back roads."

"There they are."

They all turned to see a group of Eric's guards at the end of the alley. Gwen tightened her arms around Nico's neck as the guards advanced.

Tony spun around. "Time to go." He shot past them and climbed over the chain-link fence at the other end of the alley.

She screamed, burying her head in Nico's neck as he jumped the six-foot fence. As soon as his feet hit the ground, he started running again. Gwen looked up from his neck and back at the fence. *How did he do that?* It didn't take the guards long to scale the fence as Tony had. "They're coming!"

They raced through the streets behind the boardwalk as the sun began to dip toward the horizon.

## Chapter Nine

Gwen looked through the sliding-glass doors and over the balcony to the small indoor quad beyond. She wanted to go out and scan the crowd for Tony and Nico, but she didn't dare. It was far too dangerous.

It had taken them a long time to lose the guards. After making sure no one was following, they had retraced their steps back to the hotel that was so familiar to Gwen. Fortunately, the hotel manager's hatred for Eric had outweighed his uneasiness in their appearance. A room in back had been secured, but not until they promised to disappear by morning. The manager still had a business to run, after all.

Gwen heard the door close and glanced up. "You didn't find anything, did you?"

Nico's tall frame appeared battle weary as he approached. Gwen motioned to a nearby chair for him to sit down and then resumed her vigil. She wouldn't feel safe again until she had both brothers back in the room.

"I don't know why you two insisted on checking out the hotel before you rested. I told you this place was secure." Gwen stared out onto the quad, searching for Tony. "I wish you two would trust me. The manager is human and has nothing to do with this. He hates Eric as much as we do, probably more. Eric and his crew have been extorting the local hotels around here for years." She huffed as she turned to face to him. "He's no better than the mob."

Nico ignored the chair she offered and crossed the last of the distance between them. She flinched at the concern on his features and held up her hand before he could touch her. "I'm fine, honest. Just a little edgy." She rubbed her arms to wipe away the chill that crept over her skin. Nico ignored her and wrapped his arms around her middle in a comforting gesture that she was beginning to associate as uniquely his.

She eased away from his embrace and turned back to the window. He continued to caress her sides as she scanned the crowd below. It was tough getting used to not having privacy in her head. She really had to learn to get a better handle on her emotions—especially if she was going to leave them once she returned them safely to their pack.

She focused on the people milling around on the ground. One couple strolled arm in arm; another woman pushed a baby carriage. A woman stood off to the side, talking with two men. They were laughing and joking around. It made her think of her, Tony, and Nico. They could be happy together. Each man touched her



differently, fulfilled different needs. Nico's calming presence was such a blessing, his touch so reassuring. With him, she felt more confident, more in control. Then there was Tony's voice... Nothing could make her feel more alive, more beautiful. She craved that voice—along with that mischievous look in his eyes when he had an idea. He gave her excitement and made her believe in the impossible. Her life would become so empty when she finally let them go.

*Why can't things be simpler?*

Nico pulled her back into his embrace and rested his chin on her shoulder. Damn, she was letting her emotions get the better of her again.

"I guess I just want this to be over." She reached back and ran her fingers through his thick hair, hoping to reassure him that she was fine.

Nico tightened his arms around her and looked out over the balcony to the ground below. She could feel his warm breath on her shoulder, his longing wrapping around her like a caress. Underneath it, she felt his concern for her, his need to keep her safe.

She moistened her lips as her libido took control. Sexual energy, like the rages, followed the moon-cycle. Each emotion would always be fighting the other for domination.

For once in her life, desire won over madness. She had lived through her first night of the full moon without losing her mind or getting stuck in her wolf form. If she stayed with the brothers for two more nights, she would survive this moon-cycle. But would she have the strength to leave them after that?

She forced her thoughts back to the issue at hand. "We should be able to get help from the humans on the boardwalk if we need it. Nobody around here likes Eric. All he wants to do is control everything around him. It's almost as if he feeds off the power trip. Your pack leader must have done something big to get him all riled up like that." She turned her head to look at him. "Eric seemed to be obsessed with Josh and his mate."

Nico shrugged and brushed her hair from her shoulder, his fingers tracing the mark he had made on her neck. She guessed it was healed by now, invisible to everyone in the human world. Wolves, on the other hand, would recognize her as belonging to Nico and Tony. She would carry a part of their scent, along with their marks, for the rest of her life.

She inhaled deeply. *That may not necessarily be a bad thing.*

Nico pressed his lips against her skin, and she closed her eyes as passion once again took hold. Reaching back, she held his head to her shoulder as he ran his tongue over the mark. Her skin tingled, and hunger stirred like a flurry of snowflakes swirling through her body. She could feel his emotions like the winter wind, stirring her own lust. He slid his hands over her arms and laced his fingers with hers. He guided their arms up and locked her fingers behind his head. Then he returned to her body, slipping his hands underneath her shirt. He ran his fingers over her belly. The flutter of his touch sent tingles of awareness over her skin. She

gasped as he freed her breasts, cupping them in his hands. He felt rough yet gentle, caring. She shivered as pleasure raced through her. Arching her back, she leaned her head against his shoulder, giving herself over to the sensations.

Nico seemed to sense the release of her tension. He tore his mouth away from her shoulder and turned her around. Their gazes locked, and Gwen shivered under his heated gaze. He inched forward, closing the last of the distance between them, and covered her lips with his. His taste filled her mouth and scattered all rational thought. She sighed as fire burned through her body, pebbling her breasts and causing her pussy to tighten with need. She could feel his restrained desire and knew he was holding back. How sweet. Unnecessary, but sweet.

She broke the kiss. "You're being cautious with me, aren't you?" She framed her hands around his face and locked her gaze with his. "Did you hold back before?"

He grasped her wrist. Turning his head, he placed soft kisses in her palm. Gwen noticed he was avoiding her gaze.

"You did." She fanned her fingers over his skin, enjoying the feel of his stubble beneath her fingers. "Don't hold back. I can take it." She smiled. "I'm a wolf, not a human, remember. If you get too rough, I'll just kick your ass."

He frowned and covered her hands. She laughed and dragged him closer, covering his lips with hers. She could still feel him holding back, hesitating. She wrapped her arms around his neck and wiggled her body against his, making sure her hips moved suggestively. She moaned as his cock hardened and pressed into her belly. Suddenly there were too many clothes between them. She tightened her grip around his neck and lifted her leg, trying to press herself closer. He slipped his fingers around her knee and held her there as he deepened the kiss.

"Yes," she whispered and nipped his lower lip. "Help me take off these clothes."

He leaned back and caught her gaze, a question in his eyes.

"I need to feel your touch on my skin." She ran her fingers along the base of his neck. "I don't want there to be anything between us." She bit her lower lip seductively. "Especially not these clothes."

The dam broke, and she was flooded by his hunger for her, his craving. He covered her mouth and swept her up in it, consumed her with it. Grabbing her shirt, he broke the kiss and lifted it over her head, then tossed it aside. Crouching before her, he feasted on her breasts, causing her to moan as excitement slid over her skin and took control of her senses. He teased and stroked with his mouth and his hands, and she could do nothing to stop the waves of ecstasy that crashed around her. She arched her back, pressing her breasts closer to his mouth. Ecstasy wound through her, driving into each fiber of her muscles and bubbling in her veins. She felt alive, truly alive. What the man couldn't say with words, he showed her through actions. Each flick of his tongue, each caress of his fingers drew her up, wound her tight, left her wanting more.

She helped him take his shirt off and lowered herself until they were eye level. Taking her time, she explored his body using both her hands and her mouth. The

fine hairs of his chest tickled her fingers, his sweet skin tasting of sea and male, a burst of sensation in her mouth. She ran her tongue over his nipple and was encouraged by the murmur of enjoyment that escaped his lips. It was the same noise she had heard before, and she wondered if she could get him to cry out or say her name. Make him talk.

After all, Tony had said Nico could talk; he just chose not to. Something to do with their past and Texas. She could change that. What if she gave him such intense pleasure that he forgot himself and said her name? He would be forced to talk to her then, wouldn't he? The challenge was too tempting to ignore.

She continued to work her way lower, exploring the dips and planes of his rock-hard abs. When she reached his pants, she eased him back until he lay on the floor. Straddling him, she undid first the button, then his zipper with her teeth. He threaded his fingers in her hair and whispered his delight. She smiled to herself as she slipped his pants, then his boxers down around his knees. His cock sprang forth, eager and ready. *Good*. Her eyes feasted on the sight before her. If she could make him forget his more reserved ways, would their connection deepen? If lost in his own enjoyment, would he let his walls down and let her in?

It was worth a try.

She brushed the tip of his cock with her tongue, tasting the salty bead of moisture there. His groans became louder as he curled his fingers into her hair. His longing radiated off him and heated the room. She took him into her mouth, a slow, torturous slide of her lips down his shaft until he reached the back of her throat. She flicked her tongue along the underside of his cock, eliciting another murmur of approval. Slowly she eased back, making sure she touched every last inch of skin as he slid from her mouth. Again she took him in, this time cupping his balls and slipping quicker down his shaft. He untangled his hands from her hair and framed her face.

She looked up and locked her gaze with his. Desire and passion poured out of him, filling her mind and her body with heat and delight. When she had started the seduction, she had hoped to lower his defenses. Now, in this moment, she felt her own walls crumbling. It should have scared her, but Gwen realized that this was what she wanted: to feel close to someone, to have that special connection.

She watched his face as she moved over his shaft, watched his lower lip slide between his teeth, his eyes narrow in pleasure. Tension built as she quickened her movements. His groans were more frequent now. They echoed through the empty room with the sweetest sounds she had ever heard. He was close; she could feel it. His rising passion wrapped around her, making her feel calm, powerful, in control. He slipped his hands from her face and rested them on her shoulders as his hips moved slightly in time with her mouth.

Suddenly he eased her back and sat up, the dark craving in his gaze scattering her thoughts. Standing, he helped her to her feet, then ran his knuckles along her jaw. She clasped her hand over his to still his movements.

"What is it?"

The kiss was rough and possessive. Gwen's body shivered as he ran his fingers down the length of her back, then slid them inside her pants. He broke the kiss and ripped her pants as he took them down, leaving her wearing nothing but her small, lacy bikini underwear. With a wicked gleam in his eye, he crouched before her and traced the outline of the panties with his tongue. She closed her eyes as his wet tongue ran over her skin, creating a line of fire right above her curls. She could feel his own hunger building, the tension rising around them like an incoming tide.

Excitement and anticipation heated the air. Gwen's body responded—heat pumped through her veins, and her breasts felt more full and heavy. Fire burned in her belly, then dipped lower to settle between her thighs. She opened her eyes and reached for him, but he grabbed her wrists and placed her hands at her sides.

"What is it?"

He pulled back and stood, his face hardening in silent command.

"You want me to be still?" Excitement tingled over her skin. "I don't know if I can. I want to touch you. I need to..." Emotion choked her. She had never needed anyone like she needed Nico now. It made her feel vulnerable and confused. What was she doing?

His eyes darkened as he cupped her neck in his hands. He ran his thumbs over her jaw and locked his gaze with hers. *Relax*, his eyes seemed to say. *I'll take care of you*. He leaned forward. It was a slow, deliberate movement, aimed to build the tension between them. Gwen's confusion drained away as her own desire rose in response. When his lips finally took hers, her whole body responded. She rested her hands on his forearms and let him claim her mouth. He brushed his tongue against her lips, urging her to open herself to him completely. With a sigh, she tilted her head, giving him better access. He invaded her senses, exploring her mouth with a possessiveness that she could feel all the way to her toes.

Nico slipped his hands from her face and cupped her breasts. He toyed with them, feeling their weight, tracing their edges. Each rotation, each featherlight touch sent her senses into overdrive.

He broke away from her mouth and kissed a hot, wet trail along her jaw. When he reached her ear, he ran his tongue along the outer rim. She spread her fingers along his chest, feeling them ripple at her touch. Longing turned her muscles to liquid, and she leaned against him for support.

He slid his hands away from her breasts and over the planes of her abdomen. When he reached her panties, he pulled away.

"Is something wrong?" she asked.

He stared at her waistline as if to study it. The intensity of his gaze made her slightly self-conscious.

"Hey."

He looked up from her waist, his features softening.

"What is it?"

He slid his finger between her panties and stomach, tracing a line along her skin. She hummed as her muscles tightened underneath his touch. If could just move a little lower... Excitement rippled through her, and she wiggled next to him. He paused at her hip and considered her.

"What is it?" she asked again. "Is everything okay?"

He took her hand and raised it above her head. Then he urged her to turn in a slow circle before him. When she had done a complete rotation, she studied the awe in his features. Then something occurred to her.

"You normally have sex from behind, don't you?"

He looked up from his study of her breasts and blinked at her.

She smiled. "Tony is the one in front. You're always behind." When he nodded, her smile grew. "Why is that?"

He shrugged; his gaze shifted back to her breasts.

She bent down to meet his gaze. "Why? Does Tony make you have sex that way?" She frowned when he shook his head. "It's your choice?"

He took another step back and confirmed her suspicions. How odd that this man would always choose to have sex from behind. She wondered if it had to do with his muteness. If he never talked, never saw a woman, then an emotional connection wouldn't be made. It was sad, but on some level, she understood where he was coming from.

"You watched me back at the casino," she said. When he raised his head, she continued. "You watched me as you made me come with your fingers." Memories flooded over her as new passion sang through her body. "Was that...?" Her throat constricted, but she forced out the words. "Was that the first time you were in front?"

He turned and walked to the window. His jaw hardened as he stared through the glass.

"It was, wasn't it?" She approached him from behind, but he didn't turn to face her. "Would you like to try it again?"

He faced her, then reached out and brushed his fingers down the side of her cheek. His amber eyes sparkled with gold flecks as his inner conflict played across his features. Gwen waited patiently for him to make a decision.

"I know how you feel." She ignored the frown he gave her, and gathered her courage. "It's hard forming relationships. For most of my life, I've pushed people away. It was easier. I wouldn't be hurt if I never connected with anyone. No one could use me or hurt me if I kept my distance." She rested her hands on his forearms. "You don't have to be behind me, you know." She lowered her gaze. "That is, unless you want to."

He framed her face in his hands, bringing her gaze to his. There was a dark intensity in his stare, something powerful and needy. Heat blanketed her skin, causing her pussy to tighten with lust. He captured her mouth in a searing kiss,

melting her body until she was putty in his hands. Over and over he claimed her mouth, and she could do nothing but hold on in the tidal wave of emotions.

Sliding his hands down her curves, he drew her underwear off her in a swift, fluid motion. She watched his expression, felt his reverence as he traced her soft curls with his fingers. Lifting her knee, he knelt low and hooked her leg over his shoulder. She wound her fingers into his hair for balance as he cradled her ass in his palms. Before she could form a coherent thought, he slid his tongue between her folds and over her opening. Her pussy clenched as his hot, wet mouth touched the most intimate part of her body. He used his fingers to stretch her apart, then teased her by pressing just inside her opening.

She gasped as he retreated, then repeated the torture, this time drawing lazy circles along her outer rim. Closing her eyes, she lost herself in sensations. Being marked definitely had its advantages, she realized. He could sense what she liked—and what she didn't. Soon he had her muscles twisted tight with longing.

He spread her lips wider apart with his fingers. Cool air brushed over her skin, and she shivered in anticipation. He ran his tongue around her opening, focusing on her clit. Every last nerve ending sparked into a red-hot flame, causing her to hum with joy. She heard something move in the room, but her thoughts scattered as he plunged a finger deep inside her.

In and out he moved, stroking the most sensitive part of her walls. She involuntarily pushed her hips against him, eager for more. He was relentless. A press here, a touch there, and soon she felt her body stretch toward that unseen goal.

She groaned and pressed her hips against his face. He murmured in response, pressing a second finger inside her. The beautiful stretching sensation left her locking her jaw to keep from screaming in pleasure.

She opened her eyes and moved her hand to the wall next to them for balance. Their gazes locked, and time stood still. He continued to tease her, adding a third finger. Each brush, each press made her tremble in his hands. She moaned, never breaking away from the intense stare of the man below. She shivered as she felt that look dip deep into her soul.

His strokes becoming more needy, more urgent. She rose higher and higher, her emotions whirling and rising around her like a roller coaster climbing to its peak. All the while, they stared at each other. She had never felt so exposed, yet it somehow felt right.

*Click, click, click.*

She reached the top. He held her there, teetering on the brink, for what seemed like an eternity. *If I could only...* Then he shifted his position, releasing the tension. Her orgasm roared through her body, exploding around her in a burst of light. She gasped as her pussy tightened, milking his fingers and his tongue. Delight wrapped around her like a blanket, and she felt his love, his commitment, his dedication.

She rode him hard, taking everything he could give. He continued to watch her as she came, adjusting his movements and lengthening his strokes to maximize her enjoyment. The release took her breath away, and everything ceased as her spirit was buoyed on the ocean of sensation he'd created for her.

When it was over, she ran her fingers through his hair. He rested his head on her belly and wrapped his free arm around her hips possessively. After kissing the top of his head, she looked up...and found Tony watching them.

Was he hurt that she was with Nico? Her own emotions were so intense; it was a little hard to tell.

*Shit.*

Her gaze slipped down from his face, gliding along his muscular chest until it reached his cock, jutting out of his pants. He stroked it with large, able fingers, causing a bead of moisture to form at the tip of its head. She moistened her lips as her libido roared, and her pussy wept with longing. Glancing up, she caught his gaze. Soft amber eyes stared back at her. His need and desperation penetrated her mind, and her craving once again began to grow.

He stroked harder, each slide of his hand darkening his gaze. A shiver of excitement ran over her spine. Nico lowered her leg and stood. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw him shed the rest of his clothes, but she remained focused on Tony.

"So nice of you to join us." She held out her hand. "We missed you."

He slowed his hand over his shaft and frowned, as if remembering himself. "Did you?"

She turned her back to Nico and rubbed up and down his chest like a cat. "Of course."

Tony started to put his cock back into his pants. "It looked like you two were doing fine on your own."

She reached behind her, grabbed Nico's hand, and dragged him toward Tony. "I was worried about you. We didn't know where you were."

"Yeah, looks like you were *real* worried." He glanced at Nico standing behind her. "The hotel checks out. Eric's goons don't know we're here."

Gwen could feel his tension and wondered where it came from. She placed a hand on his cheek. "Kiss me."

"I—" The air electrified around them. Tony's anger subsided as his hunger surrounded her, penetrated her. It made her light-headed and needy.

"Kiss me," she repeated, dragging her finger over his lips. Torment and confusion radiated off him like a beacon, and she wanted to ease him, reassure him. "I know you want to. I can *feel* it."

Tony grabbed her arms, pulling her away from Nico and into a hard, possessive kiss. She melted against him, threading her fingers into his hair and hanging on for her life.

He invaded her mouth, his taste filling her, claiming her. She opened herself to him, and his yearning washed over her, fueling her desire. When he finally broke away, she felt raw and breathless.

"We were worried about you, Tony." She reached down and freed his cock, then took it in her hand. "I didn't know where you were, if they caught you..."

"I—" His words dissolved into a groan as she stroked him from root to tip. His longing, his need to belong, tumbled over her. She knew what that felt like. His emotions mirrored hers. Gwen wanted to reach out to him but wasn't sure how. She was more comfortable using sex rather than words to comfort, yet she sensed that Tony needed some type of verbal assurance from her.

"I don't know what I would have done if they'd caught you." She bent over and ran her tongue along the underside of Tony's erection. She could feel Nico exploring her ass, tracing the globes with his fingers. She briefly considered turning her body so Nico could face her front, but then dismissed the idea. For now, she would let things flow more naturally. There would be time later to address Nico's issues. Right now she could sense that both men craved the familiar. She craved it too, yet for entirely different reasons. Gwen needed to feel loved, liked she belonged. Desperation clung to her like a wet towel as she thought of the future. She wanted—no, needed—these memories if she would ever survive on her own.

Nico eased her legs apart. Slipping his hand along her skin, he found her clit and pressed it between his fingers.

She gasped, taking Tony's cock fully into her mouth. He murmured his approval as she covered his shaft, lacing his fingers through her hair and brushing it from her face. She opened herself to the emotions in the room, learning what the men liked and didn't like. She could hear Tony's groan, feel his excitement. It fueled her, fed her, completed her.

Nico spread her legs farther apart, positioning himself at her entrance. He pushed against her but hesitated. She arched her back, pressing her ass up in the air and exposing more of herself to him. With a moan, he entered her, filling and stretching her body. She hummed with excitement as she ran her lips down the cock in front of her. Looking up, she saw Tony watching.

"That's it, sweetheart." He groaned as her fingers wrapped around him. "You feel so good." With a murmur of pleasure, he slipped his hands out of her hair and down to her shoulders.

She quickened her movements, keeping pace with the thrusts behind her. Each time she took him into her mouth, she was entered from behind. Pleasure poured into her body, filling her up until she felt like she was drowning. The whirlpool of emotions swirled and twisted around her, driving her forward. Voices filled the air, moans of ecstasy. Two distinct cries of passion mingled into one and echoed off the walls. She no longer knew where one of them ended and the other began.

She placed her hands on Tony's hips to steady herself and felt his muscles tighten. He thrust against her mouth, urging her to take him fully. Tension and



yearning filled the air and made her greedy. She cupped his balls and took him deep into her throat. He moaned, his hands curling into the flesh of her shoulders. She shivered as Nico drove himself balls-deep into her pussy from behind. He tightened his fingers on her hips, digging his nails into her skin. They felt sharp, like the claws of a wolf. Sparks of pain shot over her skin and drew out her pleasure with each long thrust. Her body tightened, clamping around his cock as it claimed her body.

Her orgasm was a surprise. Instead of the blast of sensation she expected, she felt release, the loosening of emotion, the sense of floating. The men thrust in unison, and she felt as if she was riding on a sea of delight. Forward and back the pushing and pulling raised her spirit higher. Their lust cocooned her and made her feel safe and loved. Both men followed, first one, then the other. They poured themselves into her, giving her everything they had. Tony's taste filled her mouth as Nico filled her from behind. Their orgasms took hold, and she rode them, blending their sensations until they became united in body and soul. All her life she had wanted to feel connected, like she belonged. In the space of this moment, she did.

She belonged to both Tony and Nico, and they belonged to her. Love poured through their bond, washing away any question she might have had about their commitment or intentions. She too could feel her love for the men vibrate through every fiber of her being. It wrapped her in warmth and safety, and her whole body shook with the realization.

She loved them.

When it was over, Tony picked her up and brought her over to the bed. Nico pulled back the blankets as she was lowered. A soft pillow pressed against her head. The brothers got in on either side of her, and then the blankets covered them all. Cocooned by their heat, Gwen didn't know if life could get any better than this. She snuggled between them and pushed the doubts about the future from her mind. A calming peace washed over her, and she closed her eyes.

\* \* \*

She was watching this time. An observer rather than a participant. Gwen recognized Josh Kyron right away. He was chained to a bed, half-naked. He looked ragged and worn. What had happened?

A woman dressed in a maroon silk top and leather skirt paced in front of him, whip in hand. Gwen recognized her as the same woman from her previous visions—Eric's sister. They were talking. Gwen tried to move closer but found she couldn't. She was like a spirit without a body, forced to watch from a distance.

The woman paused at the foot of the bed, considering him. "You will have to surrender your men and your territory to us," she said. "There's no other way."

"I won't do it, Lydia. You know I won't. Eric will have to kill me first."

"Silence." She cracked the whip and strode to the side of the bed. "Don't you get it? It's finished. You're finished."

Josh studied her for a moment before speaking. "You're lying. You don't like him any more than I do."

Pressing her lips together, she sat on the edge of the bed. "Don't you see? I have no choice." Her voice was barely above a whisper. Gwen had to strain in order to hear it. Lydia rolled up the whip in her gloved hand and ran the end of the handle down his naked chest. "The psychic has already seen us together. She saw me appeal to you for help." The whip made its journey down to his torn pants and circled his erect cock. "He knows. If I don't give you over to him, he'll have us killed."

"He'll kill us both either way."

"What did you do to Rebecca to make him so angry?" Gwen could see the jealousy in her gaze.

Josh's eyes darkened. "I told you to never ask me about that."

"Then all is lost." Lydia stood and walked a short distance away. Her frown didn't hide the sadness in her eyes. This woman looked as worn and tattered as Gwen felt. Eric must be working her hard, too hard. "Eric is my pack leader. I must obey him." A single tear dripped down her cheek. She swatted it away with her hand and schooled her features until she wore nothing but a blank mask. Then she turned to face Josh, letting the whip fall to her side. "How I wish things could be different."

"It can be, mate." Josh's voice sounded rough with arousal. "It's the insanity of the moon-rage that binds you to him."

*Mate? They are mates?*

"No." She took slow, seductive steps toward him, her features turning to stone. "I will not give in to temptation, Josh Kyron." Her greedy gaze roamed over his body. "There's too much at stake." The loud *crack* of the whip vibrated through the room as she snapped it in the air. "Even now, his limo is coming from the airport. I will not betray my brother."

\* \* \*

Gwen's eyes flew open as she struggled for breath. She was still in bed, cocooned by both Tony's and Nico's warm, hard bodies.

She had to get out of here. If what she had seen was true, Eric would be on his way to Vegas.

She thought about warning the brothers, but then they would want to travel to Vegas themselves and bring her with them. As much as she wanted to save the Kyron pack, she didn't want to face Josh, not like this. Not when he knew she'd betrayed him and his pack. Not when he'd rejected her so completely.

With a wistful look at the men beside her, she gently eased herself from the bed. Tony groaned and pulled the pillow up over his head. Nico remained motionless. Tossing on what was left of her clothes, she took one last look at her lovers, then carefully opened the door.

It was better this way. She knew she could stop Eric, tell him a false vision. It would mean that she would be captured again, but it would be worth it. Eric would think his sister was safe and wouldn't leave for Vegas. Josh would be safe. Tony and Nico would be safe.

It had to be this way, she knew, but it didn't make it any easier. With a small sigh, she slipped out of the hotel room and into the hallway beyond. Gathering her strength, she went out in search of Eric Wright.

## Chapter Ten

“Fuck!” Tony stopped running and bent over to catch his breath. Nico leaned against the brick wall and closed his eyes.

“Where the hell could she have gone? We’ve searched *everywhere*.”

The cold air set Nico’s lungs on fire, but that wasn’t what was causing the pain in his chest.

She was gone. *Gone!*

They had awoken to an empty room. No note, no nothing. He closed his eyes and tried to calm his swirling emotions.

If they found her, he was going to kiss her senseless. Then he was going to kill her.

Never before had he felt such pain, such ache. She was in danger; he could feel it in his bones. Her emotions seeped into his every pore. He felt her worry and apprehension. It gave him a shot of adrenaline and fed his concern. What had the little fool tried to do? Did she have a vision?

“The emotions are stronger here. She must be close by.”

Nico nodded. Back at the hotel, the connection had deepened for all of them. Losing an arm would have been more preferable to losing her now. He didn’t know how it had happened, but he had let the wall around his heart down in Gwen’s presence, and she had managed to slip through and take up residence. Now both he and Tony could feel her pull, her anguish.

*Where are you, Gwen?*

Tony kicked the wall beside him and let out a frustrated cry. “Why would she do this? Why?” He stormed to the other side of the alley and put his hands on the wall of the casino.

Nico wanted to tell him that he didn’t know why she’d left, but he suspected it had something to do with the nervous sensations he sensed earlier. Even when they were safe, she was jittery. When she spoke of her past, she never looked either of them in the eye, and she toyed with her fingers. She had accused him of holding back, yet he could sense her doing the same. There was a sadness in her eyes, a nervous tremble whenever they’d mentioned Las Vegas. Was she scared about leaving her home? She shouldn’t have been. Through their bond, she would have felt that he and Tony would have done anything to make her feel comfortable in her new home. He had thought that strengthening their bonds through sex would have calmed her. Maybe it did...

Tony rested his forehead on the wall between his hands. "She's fading, Nico." He punched the wall. "Fuck if I know what's going on." He swung around and pressed his back against the wall. "Why couldn't she talk to us first? She should know she can trust us." He placed his head in his hands. "You feel it too, don't you? She's holding something back from us."

He nodded. Last night, even as Gwen had urged him to open up and trust her, he had sensed she was holding back, refusing to let her guard down completely. She wanted them to trust her, yet she herself couldn't trust them. If they ever got her back...

Tony lowered his hands. "You have to try. Your connection is stronger with her than mine. I'm useless."

Nico frowned. The connection between him and Gwen wasn't stronger, just different. Couldn't Tony see that? His brother had the gift of words, of voice. He could soothe her with words like no one else. Nico saw how her eyes filled with desire when Tony spoke with her. He saw how words could form an intricate connection between two people. Up until now he hadn't wanted any part of it. Now he did. He wanted that with Gwen. There was something special about her, and he sensed that once she fully let down her guard, he could give her the confidence she needed to rediscover herself. If only he could get her to open up to him, to talk about her secrets. Then she would start to heal. He sensed that her leaving had something to do with her past, and he cursed himself for not getting her to open up about it with him last night. If he ever wanted to help Gwen, he had to learn to talk again.

A stab of jealousy shot through him. He could talk once, but it had been so long since he'd tried. It was easier to stay mute, less messy. Nobody wanted to have a relationship with a mute. At least not a permanent one.

Except Gwen.

He thought about how she'd coaxed him to open up to her last night and how she'd promised she wouldn't hurt his trust. Anger began to rise, calling forth his inner wolf.

*God, Gwen!* If they didn't find her by tonight's full moon, she wouldn't have the strength to stop her moon-rage. Last night, it had taken both Tony and Nico working together to give her the tools to prevent the insanity. Tonight, without them by her side, she'd be as good as dead. It was Texas all over again.

Texas had hurt him and Tony. Neither of them had any idea how hard it would be to see their closest friend, Caleb, descend into the madness. They sensed that the wolf was beyond help even before Josh had told them. With Nico being the largest and strongest, it had fallen on his shoulders to put his friend out of his misery. He blinked back tears as he thought of that night, the carnage, the craziness. Although Caleb had been beyond understanding, it was still the most difficult thing he had ever done. If Gwen became like that...thing, he wasn't sure he'd have the strength to do what must be done.

Nico closed his eyes and tried to calm his turbulent thoughts. The wolf inside whimpered but began to fade. All wasn't lost—yet. She couldn't have gone far. He

had heard of mates tracking one another by the strength of their emotions. The stronger the feelings, the closer the proximity. Could they use their bond to find Gwen before she got herself into trouble?

Taking a deep breath, he concentrated on her scent, her emotions. *Why did you run away, little one?* After a moment, he opened his eyes and straightened.

"What is it? You felt something." Tony stepped away from the wall.

No, not felt, Nico had *realized* something. There was only one thing that would have made her leave without speaking to them: Gwen had had another vision—one where they were in danger. She was trying to stop it before it happened. There was only one source of danger that Nico could think of, and that meant... He fisted his hands and headed for the boardwalk.

"Shit, man. Wait up!" Tony scrambled after his brother.

\* \* \*

Nico stormed into Wright Casino with one thing on his mind. Opening his emotions, he scanned the room and found what he was looking for. Gwen wove her way through the poker tables toward the back of the room. Toward security.

"I see her." Tony nudged his arm. "Let's go."

They couldn't use their heightened speed for fear of attracting attention. As a result, they reached Gwen just as she caught the notice of one of the guards.

"Take me to Eric. I have a message for him."

The guard frowned. "Who are you?"

She straightened. "My name is—"

Nico grabbed her arm and pulled her away.

"What are you doing?" Tony whispered as they cornered her against a wall.

She swallowed, then lifted her chin. "I'm here to see Eric. You can't stop me."

"Hey, don't I know you?" the guard asked.

Gwen tried to look between them, but Nico held fast and gave the guard a furious glare. Crooking his hand under her chin, he forced her to meet his gaze. He opened himself to her, searching for her emotions. He felt...nothing. It was almost as if she put up a barrier to her inner thoughts. Could she even do that? He hadn't heard of it happening before.

Fear clutched his chest as he pushed harder. Again he hit a wall. She was closed to him. *How? Why?*

She pulled her head from his grasp and focused her gaze on Tony. "Look, I appreciate what you are trying to do, but—"

"I do know you." The guard cocked his gun, causing the people around them to scream and scatter. "You're that psychic bitch. Eric will be happy to know you've returned."

He lunged for her and Gwen ducked and scrambled until she was out of reach. "I have a message for him."

Frustration hardened the guard's features. "That's great. I'm sure you can tell him once he gets back—if you survive that long." He motioned to his buddies on the far side of the room. "Amos would like to speak with you about a few bruises he received earlier." He glanced at each brother in turn. "All of you," he amended.

Gwen formed fists at her sides. "Eric has already left?"

The guards closed in on them slowly. With a glance at Tony, Nico swung into action. He took the first two down easily, but four more came to take their places. He quickly realized he and Tony would be outnumbered. Their only chance would be to run. Taking another down, he caught Tony's glance and motioned toward the door.

Understanding, Tony grabbed Gwen's elbow. "Come on."

"No." She shook her head. "You don't understand. I have to stop Eric. He's going to—"

"Shit, woman." Tony parried an attack and swung her up onto his shoulder. "Get out as soon as you can." He shouted and ran toward the door.

Nico nodded. With a fierce cry, he blocked the path of two guards who moved to follow them. He unleashed his fury and fought like there was no tomorrow, pulling up chairs and tables and hurling them at the approaching guards. There were just too many.

He glanced behind him. Tony and Gwen were almost at the door. They needed more time. With a shout, he threw himself at the nearest guard and tore at his arm. Four more circled him, raining punches down all over his body. Pain blossomed, and he unleashed his inner wolf. Everything went red.

He only hoped Tony could make it out in time.

\* \* \*

"Nico should be back by now." Gwen stared out the window of their hotel room. It took some convincing, but they'd managed to get the hotel manager to let them stay the night. Tomorrow, however, they had to move on. This town was becoming too dangerous for all of them.

"Don't worry about him. He's been in worse situations and can handle himself."

She frowned as she watched the crowd in the quad below. "I *am* worried about him."

"Don't be. It'll take him a while to escape and come back here. He'll have to loop around the boardwalk and make sure he's not being followed. When the coast is clear, he'll come."

She could sense the tension and frustration in Tony's voice, feel it in his thoughts as he paced behind her. Both brothers had put their lives in danger to save her. It seemed like such a waste when the only thing she'd ever brought them was pain. Even if they all survived, she'd only hurt them again when she refused to go back to Vegas with them. "You shouldn't have saved me."

"That's the thanks we get for saving your life? That we shouldn't have bothered?" He stopped pacing and grabbed her shoulders, forcing her to focus on him. "What were you trying to do out there?"

She swallowed the lump in her throat and looked away from his piercing gaze. "You don't understand."

"Then make me understand, Gwen." He hooked his finger underneath her chin and drew her back to him. His voice softened. "Help me understand."

She played with her fingers, unsure of how much to tell. "I had another vision."

"What? What was it about?"

"Eric." She walked a short distance away.

"Why didn't you tell us?"

"I didn't think there was anything you could do." She forced herself to meet his gaze. "Eric left for Vegas. He plans on destroying his sister—and your pack."

"He what?" Tony ran his hand through his hair and stared at the ceiling. "Shit, this is bad. We need to call Josh."

*Josh.* Gwen shook off the cold feeling that sank into her chest.

Tony raised his brow. "There's more, isn't there?"

"I thought if I could get here in time, I could stop Eric before he left."

He narrowed his eyes and studied her face. "Why did you think you could do this on your own? Why didn't you tell us?"

"I don't know. I thought I could handle it." *And I didn't want to put your lives in any more danger.*

"Oh, sweetheart." He wrapped his arms around her and pulled her into a warm embrace. "We're bonded now. A team. Don't you get it? You can trust us." He pulled away enough to look at her. "When you left without a word or note, we thought..." He shook his head. "The emotions you left behind were unbearable. We didn't know if anything had happened to you." He trailed his fingers down her arm, causing sparks of sexual awareness to fill the air between them. A small thrill ran through her bloodstream and burrowed itself between her legs.

He laced his fingers with hers and brought them to his mouth. After placing a soft kiss on the back of her hand, he continued, "I don't know what we'd do without you, Gwen. If you don't want to consider me, think of Nico. He was a mess."

Tears stung her eyes. "I didn't mean to hurt you—either of you." *But I'm going to, and it's only going to be worse later when your pack denies you because of your association with me.*

He pulled her close and placed her hands on his hips. Then he framed her face with his fingers. "You don't ever have to deal with your visions alone again, Gwen." He kissed first one cheek, then the other. "You never have to be alone again."

Fire burst in her lower abdomen and spread throughout her body. She felt weak in his hands, boneless. How could he be so kind to her? So gentle? Didn't he know she was a freak?



“Kiss me, Gwen.”

She hesitated, then stood on her tiptoes and brushed her lips over his.

He frowned as his hands slipped to her shoulders. “Like you mean it.”

She inched back from him. To kiss would lead to other things, more intimacy and later, more pain.

He curled his fingers into her shirt. “It’s Nico, isn’t it? You prefer to be with him over me.”

She looked up into his amber eyes, but the words of refusal wouldn’t come. How could he think such a thing? The truth was that she needed Tony as much as he needed her, perhaps more.

So she kissed him with everything she had.

Sliding her hands up his chest, she leaned into his warm body and tasted his lips, his tongue. Her mind fogged with longing, and her hips rubbed suggestively against his cock. He slipped his hands down her body and cupped her ass, squeezing it, holding it against his erection. With a groan, he lifted her into the air and spun her around until her back was against the wall. He was a perfect fit, a perfect match. She melted against him, going soft against his hard muscles. He kissed her mouth, her jaw, her neck, and all she could do was hold on and ride out the waves of emotion.

“Fuck, Gwen,” he murmured against her neck. “What you do to me. You’re like the air.” He trailed his tongue around the mark he’d made on her shoulder, sending shivers down her spine and desire pooling between her thighs.

“Tony,” she whispered.

He slid her to the floor just long enough to tear her clothes from her body and toss them away. His followed. “I know you formed a special bond with my brother, but I need you too, Gwen.” He stroked her breasts and then trailed his hands down her curves to hug her ass. “Don’t leave us.” He lifted her up in the air, and instinctively wrapped her legs around his waist. “Don’t leave *me*.”

Her heart melted. Tears stung her eyes as she brushed a stray hair from his face. She started to speak but found her throat closed with tenderness. What had she ever done to deserve this? She slid her fingers over his neck and across his shoulders, enjoying the strong male muscle beneath her fingers. They fit so perfectly together, her and Tony. Breaking his heart would be like losing a part of herself.

“Promise me.”

“Tony, I—”

“Promise me,” he repeated.

How could she deny such a plea? Instead of responding, she kissed him deep and hard, pouring all her emotion into the effort. He invaded her mouth, sending a bolt of joy through her system. She gasped as he buried himself deep inside her.

“Tony—”

He locked her hands above her head, immobilizing her. "Promise me." When she didn't respond, he claimed her mouth in a bruising, punishing kiss. "Promise me, damn it."

Gwen didn't want to lie, not to him. Her heart ached at the fierce intensity of his gaze. How could she keep lying to someone she cared about so much?

"I can feel you holding back, Gwen. Don't do it." He rested his forehead against hers. "Please," he whispered.

She clenched her muscles around his cock, holding him like her arms couldn't. "Tony, I won't—"

"Fuck, don't lie to me, Gwen. I can't take it."

She blinked, stunned. Her emotions. He could probably feel her lie even before she spoke it.

"Just don't say anything." He kissed her again, pushing himself so deep that he touched her womb. "For the love of God, *don't speak*."

He let go of her hands and thrust with wild abandon, almost as if he knew her thoughts, her fears, and tried to push them away with his passion. His desperation and longing filled her soul, crying out for her.

She couldn't think, couldn't breathe. So she clung to him and rode out the tumult of emotions, letting the moment claim her in both body and soul.

Her orgasm hit hard and fast, racing over her like cars on a motor speedway. Again and again pleasure crashed down over her, leaving her gasping for air. She could feel his need and desperation peak through their bond, and for a moment, they were as one. He buried his head in her hair as he emptied himself inside her. Over and over, he whispered her name like a prayer.

"Gwen..."

Tears spilled on her cheeks, and she let them fall. Kissing his neck, she drove her hands into his hair and clung to him, unwilling to face reality.

"Don't ever risk your life like that again." He lifted his head and kissed her temple. "You hear me?"

The door crashed open, and before either of them could react, Nico's bloody and battered body fell into the room. Gwen screamed. Tony disentangled himself and rushed to his brother. Gwen wanted to follow, but her legs couldn't hold her weight. She fell to her knees and then sat on the floor, stunned. She blinked at Tony crouching next to Nico.

"I thought you said he knew what he was doing." Her tears flowed freely now, but she didn't care. *Nico*. It looked like a truck had run over him, he was such a mess.

"He did. He does." Tony slammed the door with his foot and rolled his brother onto his back. "These look to be man-made wounds, thank goodness. He'll heal. Get me the blankets." Tony continued to work over him with a hardened jaw as he examined the wounds.

Gwen sat still for a moment, frozen in fear. *What if Nico dies?* Tony said the injuries were man-made, not were, but how could he be so sure? Oh God, what if her actions had caused his death? She wouldn't be able to live with herself.

Tony lifted one of Nico's eyelids and then the other. "He's trying to say something. Where're the blankets?"

His frustration set her in motion. She gathered the blankets from the bed and moved to the closet to get more. Wrapping one around her naked body, she handed the others to Tony. He grunted and tucked one over his brother before wrapping the other along his waist. "What is it, man? Were you followed?"

Nico shook his head. His lips moved, but no sound came out.

Tony let out a long string of curses. "You have to shift, man. There's so much damage."

Gwen carefully knelt beside the brothers to get a closer look. Even though Tony said that there weren't wounds from weres, Gwen still couldn't bear to see Nico in such a battered state. His hair was tangled and bloody, presumably from the cuts along his hairline. His face looked bruised, and his clothes were stained and torn.

She ran her fingers along his cheek. "You're safe now."

"Gwen..." The word came out barely a whisper from Nico's lips.

Tony looked up from his brother and stared at Gwen. "He talked." He allowed himself a half laugh. "Well, what do you know? He talked."

Gwen turned Nico's head to face her. "I'm here."

With a struggled breath, Nico reached up and ran his finger over her lips. "Safe," he whispered.

"Of course." She wiped the tears from her eyes and tried to smile, for his sake.

She needn't have bothered. He had already passed out.

## Chapter Eleven

After Tony confirmed he was still alive, Gwen had him move Nico to the bed, where she kept a silent vigil. Tony checked outside to make sure they hadn't been followed. He came back an hour later with some fresh clothes for all of them and proclaimed the area secure. It seemed like, with Eric out of town, no one was in any particular rush to track them down. Tony then used the cell phone to call Josh and give him an update.

She listened as he told Josh everything. Well, everything he knew: how they were mated, how Lydia was going to capture him, how she would eventually betray Eric. She listened while Tony spoke and wondered if Josh would expose her for a fraud. A few short words from him and her world could come crashing down around her.

She waited for it, waited for Tony's reaction, but it never came. Josh hadn't mentioned their past. Did he remember? He must have recognized her name. Maybe he hadn't brought it up because he had other things on his mind.

After a while, Tony signed off and flipped the phone closed. "He wants to meet you, Gwen."

Ah, so that was it. Josh wanted to wait until he could see her face before he threw her out again. Well, she wouldn't give him the chance. Once she confirmed that Nico was okay, she would go.

Her chest ached at the thought. She didn't want to leave them any more than they wanted her to leave, but what else could she do? She couldn't ask them to leave their pack, their family. It was better this way. She was a loner; she'd survive on her own. Somehow.

Tony closed the distance and gently massaged her shoulders. "Don't worry; the information we gave him is valuable to our pack. He's impressed with your abilities."

She pushed the ball of fear aside and focused on the way Tony's fingers worked the knots out of her shoulders.

He kissed the top of her head and motioned toward Nico. "How's he doing?"

She stroked the side of his face. "About the same. I thought I saw movement earlier, but..."

"Do you want something to eat?" he asked. "I could get takeout."

"I'm not hungry."

"You need to eat." He pointed at his brother on the bed. "I know that he will be hungry when he wakes up."

"I don't know."

"I need to secure plane tickets anyway. I'll bring something back for us." He kissed the side of her cheek.

She grabbed his arm as he started to move away. "Be careful out there."

"Hey, it's me." He smiled. "Don't worry; I'll be fine." And then he was gone.

Gwen returned to her vigil: stroking Nico's hair, holding his hand, willing him to move. Minutes dragged as she looked for a sign of life. He shifted in and out of his wolf form as she waited, each flash healing more of his wounds. When he finally settled in his human form, he looked whole again, more like Nico. Her eyelids grew heavy, and she rested her head on his chest.

"What are we going to do with you?" she whispered against his skin. He didn't answer, of course. She threaded her fingers in the fine hairs of his chest and closed her eyes, feeling the steady beat of his heart against her cheek.

She must have fallen asleep, for she awoke with a start when she felt a hand on her head. Jerking up, she looked into Nico's soft amber eyes.

"You're awake," she said.

"I am."

"And you're talking." She rubbed her eyes. "I don't think I'm dreaming."

He brushed a stray hair from her face. "You're not."

"But how...?" His voice sounded low and gravelly, probably from years of silence.

He cleared his throat. "Like Tony said, I could always talk, just never found the need to."

"Why now?"

He shrugged. "Seemed like the right time." He ran his fingers over her cheek. "We were so worried about you. Thank God you're safe." He cupped her head and dragged her down until his mouth covered hers. Fire erupted underneath her skin, spreading quickly over her flesh. He tilted his head and nibbled on her lip. With a sigh, she opened to him, allowing him entrance. He took full advantage of her offer, using his tongue to explore and claim her in ways that left her dizzy. She pressed her hands lightly against his chest to steady herself against the tumult of emotion roaring through her body. She savored the feel of the smooth, velvety skin over hard muscle. He toyed with her, nipping her lips until she opened herself completely. Sliding his hands down her neck, then her shoulders, he gently pushed her away.

"Why did you leave us?"

She told him about the vision and her plan to stop Eric. "At the time it seemed like a good idea."

"You should have told us."

She smiled. "That's what Tony said."

"Tony." He sighed. "Where *is* my brother, anyway?"

"Out getting food."

"Good, I could use some food." He traced the line of her neck with his finger. "The next time you have a vision, you tell us, you hear? We're a team now."

She nodded, then looked away. Tears filled her eyes, and she blinked them back. Tony had mentioned the same thing about being a team. If only they were right and she didn't have to be alone anymore.

"There's more, isn't there?"

"I don't want to talk about it." She leaned away, putting distance between them.

"Is it my brother? I know he can be...difficult sometimes. You have to know he means well."

"No." She swallowed the lump in her throat.

He pressed his lips together and laced his fingers with hers. "Me?"

"No." She leaned close, kissed his lips. "No."

"Then what makes you so sad?"

She looked away, unable to speak. She realized that she could no more tell Nico she was leaving than she could tell Tony.

"I can feel you pulling away again." He tapped their hands on his chest. "Here."

Her heart fluttered, and she forced herself to meet his gaze. "I'll tell you why I'm sad if you tell me why you decided to talk again." She tapped her chest. "And be honest."

The door opened to reveal Tony carrying bags of takeout. "Sushi, anyone?" He stopped at the foot of the bed. "You're awake."

"It seems so."

A broad grin spread over Tony's face. "And you're talking." He turned to Gwen. "Well, I guess we have reason to celebrate, don't we? Oh, I got the tickets." He held up a newspaper. "I also got us some reading material for the plane."

"What's that?" Gwen asked.

Tony waved the paper in the air. "Looks like Lydia's antics made national news."

Nico straightened. "You're kidding."

"Wish I was." He tossed the paper onto a nearby end table. "We can catch up on the way out there so there won't be any surprises. We leave at first light."

Gwen pulled her hands out of Nico's grasp. "First light? That's too late."

Tony sat on the bed next to her and winked. "Don't worry; I talked to the hotel manager. Everything's in place. There's plenty of time for dinner." He held up a pair of chopsticks. "And entertainment."

Gwen frowned. "I don't think I've ever used those before."

Tony glanced at his brother. "Then I think we may need to show her, eh, Bro?"

Nico reached into one of the bags and pulled out another container. "Are they still looking for us?"

Tony shook his head as he opened one bag after another. "Eric's gone, and there's a full moon tonight. I think most of them have left to find their protection against the rage. They'll probably resume again at daybreak."

Panic sprouted in Gwen's chest. "What time is it?"

"We have a few hours yet before the moon hits its peak." He discarded a bag and opened another. "Ah, here we go." He handed a second pair of chopsticks to his brother.

Nico took the thin sticks from Tony and turned them over in his hand. "Interesting idea, Brother."

Gwen frowned. "What about me?"

Tony smiled. "What about you?"

Before she could form a proper retort, Nico grabbed her hand and pulled her on top of him. He covered her lips in a powerful, possessive kiss, leaving her muscles weak and her mind fuzzy. Rolling her onto her side, he continued to kiss her senseless as his fingers moved to undo her clothing.

When she finally was able to break away, she placed her hands over his. "What are you doing?"

He smiled. "Having dinner."

She pointed to where Tony was unpacking food behind him. "The food is over there."

"Ah, but what fun is that?" He laughed when she crossed her arms and frowned at him. "Just you wait, my dear."

Tony piled up the little takeout cartons on the edge of the bed. "What's going on? I thought you would be ready by now."

Nico's lips twitched. "She's resisting."

"Really?" He put down his chopsticks and the rest of the food. "We'll have to do something about that, then." He moved to the other side of her. Before Gwen could stop them, both had their lips and their hands on her. She gasped as her skin flamed and hunger sparked in her abdomen.

It started small and faint, a ripple in her stomach. Together they fanned it until her whole body burned with passion. Piece by piece, they removed her clothing, then disposed of theirs as well. They moved in unison as they carefully flipped her over onto her back.

She cupped her hand around Tony's head and tried to drag him to her mouth. He avoided her grasp and reached over her for one of the takeout boxes.

"You're eating?" she asked.

Nico took the box from Tony. "Trust us." Together they arranged the sushi on her body, draping it over her nipples, in the channel between her breasts, around her belly button...

"This is ridiculous. It's cold."

Tony tossed his box to the floor. "It won't be for long." He leaned over her body and traced his tongue over her skin, circling a piece of shrimp. With a flick of his tongue, he flipped it into his mouth.

"Hey, save some for me." Nico bent over, slowly running his tongue around her sensitive nipple. Gwen gasped as he nipped the tip, bringing the second shrimp between his teeth. Shifting up the bed, he bent over her head and offered it to her.

Skeptical, she looked at him. "I don't know about this."

"Try it." Tony ran his tongue over her body again, picking up some more food. "It's delicious." He ran his fingers down her leg, easing apart her thighs. "So much better this way, don't you think?"

Tony brushed his fingers along her inner thigh, the featherlight touch easing up toward her center. She gasped as his warm fingers brushed against her opening. Nico lowered his mouth to hers, offering her the shrimp. She hesitated, then wrapped her lips around the tail and sucked it into her mouth, drawing him closer. Their lips met, and she bit down on the shrimp, cutting it into two pieces. He tilted his head and flicked the food to the side of his mouth, then nipped her lower lip. She hummed with delight and arched her back as desire raged through her body like wildfire. She moved the shrimp aside and focused on kissing him back. When they were finished, she was breathless.

They returned to her body, savoring and teasing, each taking turns feeding her until Gwen thought she would explode from longing. After the last bit of food was consumed, they returned to bed on either side of her.

Tony was the first to kiss her, his lips hot and searing, burning her skin and stealing her breath. Nico kissed her shoulder from behind, tracing the outline of her skin with his tongue, lingering around the mark he made on her skin.

Hands touched her everywhere: stroking, caressing, building her passion. She wrapped her leg over Tony's hip, hooking her heel into his thigh and tugging him closer. He groaned and shifted, his cock pressing against her lower abdomen. She reached back and spread her hands over Nico's hip, curling her fingers into his flesh. He nipped her skin as he pushed from behind.

One stroked her nipples, teasing and pinching them into tight peaks of sensation. She gasped as hunger roared through her body. Tony reached down between her thighs, parted her lips, and found her clit. A gentle press, a light touch, and her body wound tight in anticipation. The air crackled with lust as she ran her hands over each man. One felt rough, the other smooth. Both were warm and inviting. Needy.

"Hang on, sweetheart." He positioned himself at her entrance.

"Wait." She pressed her hands on Tony's chest. He stilled his finger.



She reached up and caressed his cheek. "Since we are trying new things tonight, I'd like to make a request."

He captured her lips, sending tendrils of happiness stretching through her body. "For you—anything."

She smiled, feeling the heat rise to her cheeks. "I want to feel you from behind."

He arched his brow and glanced at his brother. "I don't think... We've just never done that before. I'm not sure—"

"I know." She kissed him again before turning to Nico. "Remember my promise?"

Nico's eyes filled with longing, causing a tendril of lust to wind its way through her body. He nodded.

"Will you do this for me?"

He glanced at his brother. Something passed between them that she couldn't quite catch. Nico returned his focus to her lips, running his thumb over their smooth surface. "For you, anything."

She turned toward him fully and leaned back toward Tony. "It will be okay, I promise."

Tony nuzzled next to her and pressed his hardened cock against her ass. "Are you sure this is what you want?"

She reached behind and cupped his cheek with her hand. "I'm sure." She turned her head and pressed her lips against his. "I'm very sure."

"We should give the lady what she wants, then."

Gwen turned to face Nico. Before she could speak, he pressed his lips against hers. Hands and mouths returned to her body, each stroke eliciting a groan of want. One nibbled her ear, the other her breast. She reached out and explored on her own, feeling the hardened flesh beneath her fingers. The air heated, and desire pooled between her thighs.

She felt Tony leave, the cool air rushing against her back. Before she could ask what was going on, Nico covered her mouth, scattering her thoughts. By the time she could catch her breath, Tony returned to her side. Something cold pressed against her ass, and she jerked away.

"Just lube, sweetheart," he whispered in her ear.

She relaxed, allowing him to enter. Suddenly both men moved closer, cocooning her in their warmth and protection. They mirrored each other's movements, entering and retreating with their fingers. Her body tightened as nerve endings sparked to life. She savored the friction, her small hums of enjoyment filling the air around them. Then they pushed together, filling her up from both front and behind. She gasped as her body stretched and heat burned up her center. They retreated; then, in unison, they entered again, this time using two fingers.

She moaned and spread her legs farther apart, urging them deeper. Hot hands massaged her nipples, forming them into taut peaks. Whose hands touched her, she didn't know. It didn't matter. Again and again they entered her, each time spreading her muscles wider apart. Heat raced over her skin, and longing burned deep in her belly. When they pulled their hands away, she felt alone, desperate...

Hot air puffed past her ear. "Hang on, sweetheart."

Before she could ask, they positioned themselves at both entrances and penetrated her, one from each side. She gasped at the momentary sting, her nails curling into flesh, but soon the pain gave way to the sensation of being full, complete. She groaned as passion wound through her like a top. They lay perfectly still around her, giving her time to adjust to the intrusion. Between them, she felt protected and cherished. She looked up and caught large amber eyes watching her. Holding his gaze, she ran her fingers over Nico's lips. At a time like this, words weren't necessary. Everything she needed was in his gaze.

She wiggled her hips, urging them to move.

They both pulled back, and she whimpered at the sense of loss. When only their tips were left inside, they both steadied her with their hands and pushed as one. Her gaze locked on the amber eyes in front of her. The gaze was so intense, so deep, that she felt totally exposed before him. She hummed her enjoyment as the sweet stretching turned on every pleasure switch in her body. Then they moved back, and she reached up, touching Nico's face. Their gazes locked, and she saw her own hunger mirrored in his eyes. She stretched back to spread her fingers over the tight ass of the man behind her. The steady rhythm built, the soft moans turning to groans and cries. Faster and faster they moved, always in unison. She held on for dear life, keeping her focus on the man in front of her. Nico's jaw hardened, and his gaze darkened. Still, he didn't look away. There was intensity and possession in their depths. He devoured her with that gaze, and she felt its power rumble through her body.

Pleasure and tension snapped in the air, building her need. The sensations they created caused her mind to go numb with want. She curled her fingers over the hard muscles cocooning her body, using them to ground her as they lifted her higher. They thrust harder, faster, and she could no longer think past the growing libido, the heat. Her body went weak as they filled her again and again, stretching her muscles as far as they could go.

The orgasm came fast and hard, like a sonic boom. She cried out as white light flashed, and she became oblivious to everything but her own ecstasy. Time slowed, and she savored the moment, letting them string out the emotion until she was too weary to sustain it. It was only then, as she was coming down, that she felt both of them find their own release, first one and then the other. They said her name, each voice branding her as theirs, and she wouldn't have it any other way.

\* \* \*

Tony was the first to shower. Gwen wanted to rest, but both men insisted they leave the hotel. Despite the owner not caring for Eric, neither of them trusted him to keep his word. "*Every man had a price*," Tony had said.

"*Even honest men made mistakes*," Nico had added.

So they agreed they would go to the airport and stay there until their plane arrived.

While Tony showered, Gwen snuggled in Nico's arms, enjoying his unique scent, his quiet warmth. Something had happened between them during this last round of lovemaking. With Nico's trust, their bond deepened. It was a precious gift, one she didn't take lightly. They didn't talk; they didn't need to. It was what she liked best about Nico. Words weren't necessary.

He ran his fingers through her hair as her head rested under his chin. She wished they could stay like this forever, but she knew that was impossible.

"Why did you start talking again?" she asked.

"I told you. It seemed like the right time."

She frowned. "Seriously?"

He sighed as his hand paused at the base of her neck. "I just never found the need to speak to anyone before."

She pulled back enough to look into his amber gaze. "But you do now?"

He ran his thumb down the side of her cheek. "I did once I found you."

"Oh." Gwen wasn't quite sure what to say. She hadn't realized how deep their bond was or how much she affected him. Normally people scoffed at her or turned her away, never before had someone *changed* because he wanted to be *closer* to her. The idea made her feel a little uncomfortable.

He traced her temple with his fingers as he told her about that night in Texas. "For the first time in a long time, I needed to talk to you. After the incident with Zach, I never wanted to get close to anyone again."

"You did with your brother."

He pressed his lips together. "That's different. Tony understood my pain and accepted it. He also tolerated my muteness."

"He was the one who formed relationships."

Nico nodded, then brushed a stray hair from her face. "It was safer that way, less messy. If someone succumbed to the madness, I wouldn't have to think twice about what needed to be done."

"That's a lot of pressure on Tony."

Nico shrugged. "He needs to feel like he's needed. As long as I was mute, he had purpose."

"But now you can talk."

He rubbed his thumb over her lips. "He has a new purpose: you."

She pulled away from him and stood, desperate to put a little distance between them. She didn't want them to be this close to her—it would only lead to their pain. "I could still succumb to the insanity of the moon-rage."

He sat up in bed, the sheet falling to his hips, showing off his wide expanse of muscles. "But you have already proven you won't." When she shook her head, he continued, "Last night, remember? Not only did you resist the rage, but you used and manipulated it so you could get away from Eric." He held out his hand, urging her back to bed. "That took great strength."

She hesitated. "But that doesn't mean tonight..." She couldn't finish the thought. It was too painful.

*Untouchable, unlovable.*

The words of refusal stung in her ears. Josh wasn't the only one to turn her away. Almost every pack leader in North America had turned her from their doorsteps—except Eric, of course.

"You are stronger now. Our mating has given you even more power to resist tonight's moon. And Tony and I will always be here to help you through the moon-cycle."

She let herself be tugged back to the bed and into his lap. "So is that why you decided to talk? Because you think I'm safe?"

"Because you belong to me." He found her hand, kissed her palm. "Just like I am yours. We are mates now. There should be nothing between us."

*Nothing between us.* He was so sweet, just like Tony was so understanding and compassionate. Why did they have to be a part of Kyron pack? Why did she have to be such a freak? If only things were different, and she were a more normal werewolf...

Then she never would have met them.

She opened her mouth to speak but found her voice cut off with emotion.

"Did I miss anything?" She jumped at the sound of Tony's voice. She turned and found him leaning against the doorway to the bathroom, his arms crossed in front of his chest. Her gaze slipped over the rippled planes of his chest, down to the hotel towel around his waist. *Such a shame...*

"You would have if you had given us five more minutes." Nico kissed her softly on the lips and then hopped out of bed. "My turn."

When he was gone, she watched Tony pick up the boxes from the floor. The small towel around his waist did little to hide the lean, muscular body as he bent over to retrieve the chopsticks.

*Have mercy.* If only he would open up to her like Nico did. She felt the potential for a deeper connection with Tony, yet he held back from her. Why? She bit her lower lip in thought. "Why do you think Nico started talking again?"

He shrugged. "Who knows why he does anything?" He bent down to pick up a bag and paused, raising a brow in her direction. "Does it bother you?"

“No.” She thought for a moment. “No. I just think it’s odd that he should start now.”

Tony tossed the bag and the boxes in the wastebasket and sat next to her on the bed. His soft hair was wet and glistening in the light. She smiled and brushed a stray lock from his face.

He traced his fingers down the length of her arm and laced his fingers with hers. “I’m learning the mating mark does strange things to you.” When she frowned, he laughed and continued, “In a good way. It makes you see things that weren’t there before, want to try things.” He cupped her cheek in his hand. “You want to be a better person and form the deepest connection you can with the one you love.”

She stared into his dark eyes and tried to comprehend his words. “Love?” She had never considered the possibility before.

He twisted his lips into a smile. “Does it scare you?”

“A little,” she confessed. “Okay, a lot.”

He leaned forward until his lips hovered over hers. “It scares me too.” He barely touched her lips, just a whisper of a press, but it was enough to start a raging storm of emotions in her belly. Tilting his head, he deepened the kiss and pulled her into his lap, wrapping his arms around her. She felt his hunger, his longing. It scared her. She remembered Nico’s words. Tony had always been the helper, the leader. He would need to keep his head clear enough to help his brother once Gwen left.

Reluctantly, she pulled away. “I’m sorry.”

Confusion etched his features; then he frowned. “It’s Nico, isn’t it? You prefer him.”

“No.”

He dug his fingers into her hip. “I’m a grown man, Gwen. I can take it.”

“It’s not like that at all.”

“No? What’s it like, then? Really—because I want to know.”

*Because you’re the strong one. I need you to stay strong for me and your brother.*

“Gwen’s turn.” Nico leaned against the doorway, all male perfection wrapped up in a tiny towel.

Tony sighed and loosened his grip. “You better go.” When she hesitated, his gaze became hard. “You better shower now, because there won’t be another chance until we get to Vegas.”

Gwen let herself be shooed into the bathroom. Her heart hung heavy in her chest as she turned on the hot water and stretched her aching muscles. A quick glance out the window told her it was still dark outside. The moon had crept up into the sky and almost reached its apex. She could feel its lure, its pull. The urge to shift was strong, but she managed to hold it in check. Stepping under the warm spray, she let the water rain down over her body and wash away her fears and insecurities.

Tony said he loved her. Nico said he spoke because of her. Such trust. With trust came responsibility, and Gwen wasn't sure if she was up to the task. Especially when they learned about her past—and that she planned to leave them in the near future.

There was unfinished business between them. She couldn't let them go away when Tony felt like she didn't care about him. He was her rock and Nico's salvation. He had to know how much he was needed.

And Nico—he was so sweet, so fragile. He had talked because of her. If they separated, would he regress and lose what ground he'd gained?

Her whole body ached as she got out of the shower. Despair filled her chest and turned her muscles to lead. It would be over soon. If Eric didn't find them, Josh would. They couldn't keep up this happy charade too much longer.

As she toweled her hair, anger replaced despair. How dare Eric do this to her? For months she had been abused and battered. He only cared about her visions and how he could use them to bring Josh Kyron to his knees. It was unspeakable to use and chain up fellow wolves like that. She was nothing more than an animal to him, a means to an end.

How dare Josh have turned her away? He had known how much she needed the protection and care of a pack. If she had been integrated with other wolves, she wouldn't have been desperate, she wouldn't have turned to Eric, and this would have never happened. Instead she was left to fend for herself, to be alone. He didn't know what alone meant. The man had his whole pack to care for him. Had anyone ever turned him away? She doubted it. Josh Kyron probably didn't know what the words *alone and desperate* meant. She had had no one to care for her, no one to love her.

Until now.

She pressed her lips together in frustration. How dare Nico and Tony assume she would happily go back with them to Vegas? There was nothing for her in that city. At least there wouldn't be when they chose their pack over her. What would happen to her then? She'd be kicked out of Vegas again; that's what. Nico was a fool to think that she could offer him the security he needed to trust again. Tony was an even bigger fool to think they were a team, that she could trust him. Everyone she had ever trusted had let her down. These men would be no different.

Her jaw ached, and she moved it from side to side. Closing her eyes, she scrubbed hard with the towel, as if she could wipe away the selfish world around her. Red spotted the edge of her vision. Whipping the towel up over her head, she looked in the mirror. A wolf's face sat on her human body. She was changing.

So what? It wasn't like there was some mandate that she should remain human during the full moon. If the brothers wanted to take her with them back to Vegas, they should be fully aware of just what they were getting.

Dropping the towel, she gave herself up to her inner beast, letting the anger build.

## Chapter Twelve

“There’s something wrong.” Tony stopped pacing and rubbed his chin. “She’s too quiet.”

“She’s had a rough time. There’s a lot to adjust to.”

Tony stared at his brother, who lounged on the bed. “A lot to adjust to?” He glanced at the door to the bathroom. “I suppose.” He resumed his pacing. “I can’t help but feel that something is off, though. Don’t you feel it?”

Nico tilted his chin toward the ceiling and closed his eyes. “I see what you mean. I also feel something wrong with the bond.” He opened his eyes and focused his gaze on Tony. “But the full moon is making all of the sensations murky. It’s hard to tell what’s coming from her and what’s coming from you.” He grinned. “It could be self-projection.”

“Shut up.” Tony went to the bathroom door and raised his hand to knock. Then he lowered it. “I can’t just barge in on her.” He ran his fingers through his hair. “Fuck it.” He turned the knob and opened the door a crack. “Shit.” He walked away, leaving the door ajar. “She’ll think I’m a pervert.”

The door flew open to reveal a petite chestnut wolf staring at them.

“Gwen!” Nico stood from the bed as the beast snarled.

“I told you something was wrong,” Tony said from the side of his mouth.

“How bad is the rage, do you think?”

“I don’t know. This can’t be good.”

They both edged away from the beast, who watched them with bright green eyes.

“What do we do now?” Tony asked.

“Damned if I know. The last time a wolf raged on me, I killed it.” Nico flashed Tony a wry smile. “I don’t think that’s an option here.”

Tony took another step back. “Maybe she’ll snap out of it.”

A low growl vibrated throughout the room. Gwen flashed Tony her teeth and stepped forward.

“Or maybe she won’t.” Tony took another step back.

“I thought she’d be able to resist it.” Nico edged around the room until he stood next to his brother.

"I did too. Gwen's stronger now than last night. She shouldn't be as affected as this."

They continued to circle, projecting soothing thoughts. Gwen growled and sputtered as she watched them, but didn't attack.

"Normally there is something that triggers the moon-rage. Something that makes people more susceptible."

"Like what?" Tony stopped moving when Gwen flashed her teeth at him. He remembered their conversation before she had gone into the bathroom. Could his profession of love have done this to her? Damn, he knew he should have kept his big mouth shut. He pressed his lips together in frustration.

"You tell me." Nico frowned at the wolf in front of them. "She was sad about something earlier, wasn't she? Something made her go seek Eric out."

"It was the vision."

"I can't shake this feeling she's holding out on us. There's something else going on."

Before Tony could answer, Gwen attacked. They separated, leaving the wolf to pounce on nothing but air. Tony felt his body begin to morph as his wolf form screamed to take control.

"Fight the rage," Nico said. "It doesn't do anyone any good if we both lose our heads."

His brother was right, of course. Tony fought the shifting instinct and managed to hold his human form. "Everything is okay, Gwen. It's only us."

The wolf barked and leaped again. Tony barely made it out of the way before she sank her teeth into his leg. "This isn't working. Do you have any bright ideas?"

"She only responds to touch in this form." When Tony raised his brow, Nico added, "I realized it when she had changed previously."

Sneaking up behind her, Nico laid his hand on her back, close to her tail. Gwen spun around and snarled at him. "Do what I did." When his brother frowned, he snarled. "Just do it, will ya?"

Tony did what he was told. Gwen turned in a circle, but this time, she didn't growl. Instead she tilted her head to the side.

"I think you may have something here." Tony held out his hand, palm up, and urged her to sniff it. Gwen took a hesitant step forward. "That's it."

Nico made a wide circle around her and crouched next to his brother. "Good. I think she's remembering. Keep projecting calming thoughts."

Tony tried, but it was hard. Especially after the conversation they'd just shared. If his outburst of love had caused her to enter one of her moon-rages, he'd never forgive himself. He kept preparing himself for her attack, but it never came. She sniffed his hand, hesitated, then licked his palm.

"That's it," he cooed. "Relax, girl. It's only us."

Nico rubbed her behind the ears.



Her form flickered. Encouraged, Tony continued to offer soothing words as Nico stroked her back. Finally, she changed back to her human form.

Tony caught her before she landed on the ground, and cradled her in his arms. His body sagged in relief. She had shifted back, and no one had been hurt. This time, she wouldn't succumb to the insanity. If only she would open up to them fully; then they could work together to prevent this from happening again.

He pressed his lips to her forehead and felt her tremble beneath him. "She's shaking."

Nico stood. "Bring her over to the bed."

Arguing could be heard from outside the door. They glanced at each other. Nico hurried to peer through the peephole. "Looks like they finally found us." He turned away from door. "They're questioning the neighbors."

"Shit." Tony pivoted on his heel to scan the room, Gwen still in his arms. "What do we do now?"

Nico moved to the window. "The fire escape." He opened the window and looked down. "It's narrow. We're going to have to work together."

Tony glanced at Gwen in his arms. She was naked and unconscious. It probably took a great effort to fight off the moon-rage. He couldn't let Eric's goons take her back to the cell beneath the casino. She had seemed so defeated when he first saw her. He wrapped her in a blanket and then grabbed the bag of clothes and moved to the window. "Get out there. I'll hand her to you."

Nico squeezed his large frame through the opening, then turned back to Tony. "Give her to me."

"Take this first." Tony tossed the bag to his brother.

Nico caught it, then dropped the clothes on the landing beside him. "Come on. We're running out of time."

"Gentle." Tony frowned as he bent toward the window. When Nico reached for her shoulders, Tony hissed and jerked back. "Be careful."

"I *am* being careful. *You're* being an overprotective idiot."

"You're an animal."

Nico let out a small bark of laughter. "Last time I looked, we were all animals."

This was true. Tony clutched her tighter to his chest. He knew he was being too hard on his brother. It was just that time was short and he was so used to getting his own way. He hardened his jaw. "Fine, take her." He eased her toward the window. Nico slid his arms around her shoulders and hoisted her effortlessly through the opening. Tony scrambled out onto the edge and saw how his brother cradled Gwen close to his chest, like a parent would a child. *Of course he would be careful with her.* They were a team, and Gwen meant as much to Nico as she did to him. Tony put a cap on the jealous spark in his chest. There would be time to deal with his jumbled emotions later. For now, he had to make sure they all got to safety.

Tony closed the curtain and the window behind him. Just in time. As the window slid into place, he heard the door to their room open.

"They're coming," he whispered.

Together they worked quickly, maneuvering their way down to the street. Tony thanked the heavens they were only on the fourth floor. Once their feet hit the pavement, they moved to the shadows of the building and listened for Eric's men. Nico handed Gwen to Tony, crept down the alley next to the building, and peered around the corner. Tony tried to be patient as he waited for his brother. Cradling Gwen to his chest, he looked down at her peaceful face and thought about what an ass he had been. Of course she would gravitate toward Nico over him. He was never afraid to express his thoughts and feelings, and Tony wasn't the most approachable wolf in the pack. Could he change that, or had he missed his chance with her? He pressed his lips against her forehead and vowed that if they made it out of here alive, he would make a greater effort to reach out to her, to strengthen their connection. When Nico finally made it back to them, Tony raised his brow in silent question.

"They're congregating by the front door."

"Good. Then we'll go the opposite direction. It should give us a little head start. It's only a matter of time before they fan out their search to the surrounding areas."

They broke out into a run. Sometime during the night it had stopped snowing, but the air was still cold. It burned his lungs as he followed Nico first down one street, then another.

Tony adjusted Gwen in his arms as he ran. "How far to the airport?"

"Beats me. We're going to have to hail a cab." Nico paused. "Want me to hold her?"

Tony tightened his grip around Gwen. "I've got her."

Nico frowned and continued to move down the street. "We're not in competition, you know. She loves both of us. Can't you feel it through the bond?"

Tony risked a glance at the bundle in his arms. Did she? He wished he had Nico's confidence. His brother and Gwen seemed so good together. Tony couldn't help feeling that she only tolerated him because of Nico. Now that his brother could talk... Would she think Tony was unnecessary?

It was a sobering thought.

Like his brother, Tony had avoided relationships since the night they'd saved Zach. He realized that night the futility of forming close relationships. They only brought pain and suffering. Nico understood this, so Tony kept him around.

Then there came Gwen. Before he could stop her, she had managed to slip past his defenses and into his heart. Now he told her that he loved her. It was a statement of fact, yes, but he noticed she'd never returned in kind.

An ache surfaced in his chest. If Gwen loved him, she would have said so. She would have opened up her secrets to him and asked for help. Didn't she know that taking care of others was what he excelled at? Just look at Nico. If Tony hadn't

taken him under his wing, Nico would have been lost in his own private hell. It was so ironic. If Tony hadn't taken such good care of Nico, then his brother never would have been in a position to form a connection with anyone, let alone Gwen.

Tony pushed the surge of despair back and continued to run. He would deal with this later. Right now he had to get her to safety.

They burst out onto a corner, and Nico hailed a cab. They maneuvered Gwen into the backseat and gave the driver an extra fifty to not ask questions. Tony began to relax a little as they sped toward the airport. Nico kept looking behind them, but nobody followed. Tony sat with Gwen's head in his lap, stroking the long silky strands of hair away from her face.

"How long do you think she'll be out?" Tony asked.

Nico tore his gaze from the window. "I don't know. I sense she's at peace, though. Don't you? Maybe it just takes a long time to recover from the rage."

"Maybe." Tony traced his fingers across her temple. *Maybe she just doesn't want to snap out of it.*

"Why did you start talking again?"

Nico stared. "What do you mean?"

"I always urged you to talk on your own, but you never did. Why now?"

Nico glanced at the bundle in Tony's lap. "Did you really have to ask?" He turned back to look out the window. "I did it for her. She needed to hear my voice."

"I needed it." All those years of living in silence...

Nico looked away from the window to glare at his brother. "You what?"

"You heard me." Tony looked down at Gwen. "So many years together—I could have used a little conversation." *And you could have shared in some of the responsibility.*

"You seemed to be doing fine on your own."

He looked up and met his brother's gaze. "Yeah? Well, looks can be deceiving."

"You loved the responsibility of taking care of me. Admit it."

Tony did, damn it. That was the whole problem. He fought for control over his anger. "Somebody needed to take charge. You sure as hell weren't going to do it."

"That's not fair. Caleb was my best friend."

"He was my friend too." Tony steeled his jaw and brushed a stray hair from Gwen's face. "My only friend."

Nico turned in his seat so he could fully face his brother. "If you have something to say to me, I suggest you just say it."

"People always prefer you. You were closer to Josh, to Caleb—"

"You forget I had to *kill* Caleb."

"He thought of you as a brother." Tony saw Nico flinch but didn't care. "Even after Texas—when you took your vow of silence—people were drawn to you. Now it

looks like Gwen..." His throat constricted around the words. *Even my mate prefers you over me.*

"Don't be an idiot. She needs you, Tony." Nico returned to the window. "We both do."

Did they? Tony felt more like a third wheel than any real part of this trio. Before Gwen, he'd been needed; he'd had a purpose. Tony was his brother's emotional stability and Nico's link to the outside world. Now that his brother was talking and there was Gwen in his life... It seemed like there was no room for him anymore. Everything he had ever done, the very way he defined who he was, had been wiped clean. It shook him to the core. If Tony wasn't Nico's champion, who was he?

What was to become of him?

Gwen groaned. Tony adjusted his legs and slapped Nico on the shoulder to get his attention. His brother turned and glanced down at Gwen. They held her between them as she came awake. Her eyes flickered open and focused on Nico. Her face immediately brightened. "Where am I?"

Tony couldn't help the pang of jealousy. He gave his brother his best I-told-you-so look before focusing on Gwen. "Safe. We're on our way to the airport."

She sat up and flashed a brilliant smile. "Thanks." Her gaze fell to her lap. "I-I just wanted to thank you. For earlier. I don't know what happened. The moon-rage got the best of me, I guess." She looked at the floor.

"Think nothing of it." Tony crooked his hand under her chin and lifted her head to meet his gaze. "Although I wondered why you seemed more susceptible tonight than last night."

She shrugged. "Maybe because you weren't with me."

"Or maybe because you were thinking about something that made you emotional." Tony bit back a curse as he watched her flinch. Had his words affected her that much? He should have taken Nico's vow of silence. Maybe he would.

Nico glanced at his brother before refocusing on Gwen. "Is there something you want to tell us?"

"Of course not."

More lies. He could feel it. Anger sparked in his chest. Why was she avoiding the truth?

The cab pulled up in front of the airport, they got out, changed into the clothes they brought with them, checked in, and navigated the airport to their gate. All the while Tony ran over the events of the past few days, wondering what she could possibly be keeping from them.

It was obvious that something was wrong. With each step closer to their plane, Gwen became more agitated. He wished she would just be honest with them, but didn't push. There would be time enough once they got on the plane.

"Hey, there they are."

Tony turned to see a few familiar faces emerge into the hall. "Eric's guards." He turned to Nico. "I thought you were checking to see if we were followed."

"I was." Nico grabbed Gwen's hand. "We weren't. They must have sent some people here on the chance that we would try to escape." He pulled Gwen away from the men. "Come on."

The three of them began to walk quickly down the hall. Thank goodness it was too early to attract much of a crowd.

"Stop them!"

The footsteps got closer. Tony glanced behind them and swore. "Run!"

They raced down the hall, turning at the appropriate time to head toward their gate. They had to make it onto the plane. There were two flights east, and theirs weren't direct. He just hoped that Eric's goons didn't think to check the flight times.

Luck was on their side. They arrived at the gate as the plane was boarding. Tony presented the tickets, and they rushed inside. Urging Nico and Gwen forward, he lingered and saw the attendant stop the guards.

"You need a ticket, sir."

"But I need to speak to—"

"Ticket, sir."

"Fine, I'll buy a ticket."

"This is a full flight, sir."

Tony slipped into the cabin of the plane as relief swept through his body. He collapsed into the seat next to Gwen, exhausted. They were safe—for now. When the plane landed he would have to give a full report to Josh and deal with this Eric situation. Gwen's life would always be in danger as long as Eric remained alive. Tony and Nico would have to give up some of their pack duties to make sure she had a full-time guard around her. He smiled at the thought. It would be tough convincing Josh, but Gwen was worth it. He glanced at her curled up beside him.

She was definitely worth it.

As soon as the plane took to the air, Gwen slept—or pretended to sleep. It frustrated him that he couldn't question her, but he didn't push the issue. Once they were safely back in Vegas, he and Nico would make sure she told them the truth. Now that they were mates, they shouldn't keep any secrets.

But what if her secret was one he didn't want to know? What if she favored Nico over him? It was possible. Nico's quiet manner always seemed to please women. His brother deserved such happiness—even if it meant that Tony had to give up his own. He could never be with another wolf, and the moon-rage would drive him insane, but spending time as a third wheel to Nico and Gwen's relationship would drive him insane as well. He was doomed either way.

Between the two of them, Nico had suffered more than Tony over the incident in Texas. He just wished Gwen trusted him enough, liked him enough to form a relationship with him too.

But he supposed he deserved what he got. Whenever he opened himself up to relationships, he always got hurt. Always.

A dark cloud settled in his mind. He really should have known better. Once they got settled in Vegas, they would be safe, and he'd have more time to make Gwen tell him the truth. If it was what he suspected, he would leave. It would pain him, but it was for the best. He wouldn't be in a relationship where he wasn't wanted.

His heart was heavy when they finally landed. Nico and Gwen got the luggage while he called Josh on the cell to arrange transportation.

"Got a limo, I hope," Nico said when Tony arrived in front of the airport with Gwen. They looked like they had been laughing. Her spirits seemed to be brighter.

Tony bit back a growl as jealousy knifed his chest. "Josh didn't answer." He opened the phone and tried another number. "Zach's not answering his cell either."

"That's odd." Nico hailed a cab, and Gwen got in as the men put the luggage in the trunk. "I wonder what's going on."

"Probably busy." Tony threw himself into the back of the cab. He flinched as Gwen's thigh rubbed against his. "Kyron Casino," he snapped at the driver.

When the cab started, Gwen put her hand on his leg. He caught her questioning glance but ignored it. If she hadn't wanted to talk to him on the plane, he didn't want to talk about it here. Instead he stared out the window at the rolling landscape.

## Chapter Thirteen

Gwen didn't understand Tony's foul mood. When he shook her off, she glanced at Nico, who only shrugged and looked out his own window. Their silence bothered her. There were only a few precious hours before Josh would send her away, and she didn't want to spend that time with two brooding men. She didn't break the quiet in the cab, however. What she had to say to them was better said in private.

So she let them brood and instead went over her good-bye speech in her mind. She wondered if they would understand her decision and her actions. They couldn't go with her, of course. Their place was here in Las Vegas, with the pack. She saw how much Kyron pack meant to them. Every time they spoke of their pack, she could see the loyalty in their expressions and their reverence for their leader in their eyes. On some level, she was jealous. Gwen had always wanted a family. When her parents had learned of her unique abilities, they deserted her. Everyone had deserted her. She would be forever thankful for how the brothers had made her feel accepted and loved. That was why she could never ask them to give up so much for her. At first, they might want to go with her, but in time they would resent her for drawing them away from those they loved. She didn't want their beautiful bond to turn into something they all regretted.

No, she had to go. It would be painful at first, but they would realize she had made the best choice for all of them.

Her thoughts weighed heavy as the cab pulled up to the casino. It was large, not gimmicky like the Venetian or the MGM, but classier like the Wynn. It was on the extreme south end of the strip, just beyond the Excalibur. Far enough away for a little privacy, if someone needed such a thing.

Josh didn't come out to meet them. No one did. Instead there was a message from the pack leader at the front desk. Tony grabbed the paper and headed to the elevators. Gwen wondered if the relationship between the brothers and the rest of the pack was as strong as she originally thought. If it was as close as they implied, wouldn't there be people here to receive them? A tingle of hope settled in her chest. Maybe there was a chance for them to be together after all...

Nico pressed his hand on her back and steered her inside the elevators. As Tony hit the button to go down, Gwen wondered what Josh was up to and how strong of a hold he had on her mates.

"Are we going below ground? I thought only the staff went there."

Nico winked at her. "We are the staff."

When the elevator stopped, the door in front of Gwen remained shut. She jumped as the wall behind her disappeared and revealed a large, luxurious casino floor. The decor looked opulent, and people here showcased themselves in expensive-looking dresses and suits as they sipped their cocktails and threw money on the gaming tables.

"Welcome to Kyron Casinos," Nico announced. Tony glared at his brother as he stepped from the elevator. They were immediately met by a burly man who nodded and took the note that Tony had gotten upstairs. After a quick glance, he led the three of them through the casino and toward another elevator.

"This is where our pack likes to hang out," Nico explained as they navigated the tables. "It's soundproof, completely secluded from the upstairs. No one here questions it if someone... You know."

A loud roar echoed through the room. Gwen stopped and turned as one man stood from the poker table. His image flickered between man and wolf as he picked up the table and turned it on its side. Security immediately surrounded him and escorted him to a room off the back. The table was righted, and the chips redistributed. People resumed chatting. Within seconds, it was as if nothing had ever happened.

"What's going to happen to him?" she asked.

"He'll probably be fined for the table," Nico answered over his shoulder. "But Josh is pretty lenient about these sorts of things. That guy will be back in the casino by the end of the week."

They made it to the elevator, and the big, burly man hit the button for the tenth floor.

"This part of the hotel is reserved for Kyron pack members only," Nico explained. "Josh likes to keep his pack close."

Tony glared at them over his shoulder. His frustration surrounded Gwen and penetrated her thoughts. Why was he acting this way? Had she done something wrong? She wondered exactly what the brothers had talked about while she was recovering from the moon-rage. Whatever happened, she was going to have to straighten it out before she left. The last thing she wanted to do was to leave on a sour note.

When the doors opened, the burly man led them down a short hallway and slipped a key card through the only door Gwen could find.

"Welcome home," Nico whispered in her ear as he ushered her inside. Tony remained behind to talk with the guard.

As beautiful as the casino was, this was more so. Josh had clearly spared no expense when it came to housing his pack. The room had a clean, modern feel. Cream-colored walls surrounded her, decorated with crimson accents. She strolled around, admiring the rich furniture and expensive art. A girl could get used to living like this. The fact that Josh hadn't immediately thrown her out had given her hope. Maybe things wouldn't be so bad after all.



As Nico went to the mahogany bar, she wandered down one of the hallways. Pictures of the brothers dotted the walls—first from their youth, then as adults. She paused at a picture of them and Josh and one other werewolf she didn't recognize. They looked happy together. Very happy. The small spark of hope she had had in the lobby began to fizzle. What was she thinking? She could never ask the brothers to leave all of this. She continued down the hall until she found herself in one of the bedrooms.

This room was also modern. The bed took center stage, with the dark marble floor raised underneath it to help set it apart from the rest of the room. Black and emerald dominated here, the colors reminding her of a dark, thick forest. Gold trim was used sparingly and added a spark of life to the otherwise brooding room.

"This belongs to Tony," Nico said when he found her. He handed her a glass of white wine and motioned out into the hallway. "Mine's the same, but in blue, right next door. What do you think?"

She sipped the wine so she wouldn't have to speak. The place was big—much bigger than she'd anticipated. It looked comfortable, although it could stand a woman's touch. It didn't surprise her, knowing what she did about the brothers. She imagined the things she would alter and add to put her own mark on the room, and a sadness developed in her chest. She could have been happy here if things had turned out differently.

A door closed in the living area, and they went out to see who it was. Tony poured himself a drink and settled on the couch. "We don't have much time. That message at the front desk said we were to go to Josh's office right away to debrief." He glanced at them together in the doorway, took a long sip of his drink, and looked out a nearby window at the strip below. "If you want me to leave the room..."

"Why would we want that?" Gwen crossed the room to sit next to him.

He glanced at her but said nothing.

Gwen touched his arm. "Tony, if there's something bothering you, then tell us."

He frowned at his brother and then returned his gaze to the window. "I just thought you and Nico would want some alone time. You've been rather close lately."

She turned to Nico, who downed the rest of his drink and went to the bar for a refill. Putting her glass on the large glass and wrought-iron coffee table, she refocused on Tony. "What are you talking about? *You've* been acting weird ever since we left Atlantic City." She felt the cushion dip as Nico sat on the other side of her.

"Yes, Brother, why don't you tell us what's going on?"

Gwen didn't miss the look of death Tony shot his brother. "I liked you better as a mute."

Nico's low chuckle brushed over her ears.

Tony took a long sip of his drink, then put it next to Gwen's on the table. "You two don't need me anymore. Not like you used to."

"Is that what this is about?" Gwen slid her hand to his thigh and was relieved when he didn't pull away. "You think we don't need you."

"You don't." He shifted his gaze to Nico. "You can form your own relationships now. With time, you may even be able to forgive yourself for what happened in Texas." He focused on Gwen. "And you can forgive yourself for telling Eric your visions."

"That's ridiculous. I can't believe you can think we'd ever stop needing you." She reached out to touch his face, but he pulled away. How could he believe such a thing? She would never knowingly hurt him. The anguish in his eyes felt like a knife to the chest. She reached for him again but then hesitated as he turned away. "I love you, Tony." She glanced at Nico. "I love both of you." She swallowed the lump in her throat as she returned her gaze to Tony. "You must have felt it through the bond."

Tony stood and glanced out the window at the people below. Silence draped over them. *Now what?* She never had to deal with anything like this before. She glanced at Nico. He took her hand and pressed his lips to her palm.

"Go to him." He motioned to Tony. "Tell him the truth."

Gwen steeled her emotions and approached Tony by the window. "Tony..." When he didn't respond, she blinked back tears. The bond between them grew cold and hard. She could feel his confusion and his anger. It was as if he was closing himself off to her emotionally. What had she done?

"For years I was the one taking care of him. Now he doesn't need that anymore," he murmured.

"Oh, Tony." She put her hand on his elbow, coaxing him to meet her gaze. "I'm so sorry."

Grasping her fingers, he closed his eyes and brought her hand to his mouth. Soft lips pressed against her palm, causing heat to pour through her body. Shivers of longing tingled along her spine. He lingered over her skin as if he was savoring her taste. Gwen ran her fingers over his cheek as heat swept through her body and dampened her panties.

After a moment, he lowered her hand. "You don't need me anymore either."

"Tony, I—"

He held up his hand. "You're no longer in danger, and your moon-rage is getting better. Soon you'll be cured. When that happens you will be free to do what you wish, go where you wish. You won't have to stay here."

"Listen to me." When he tried to turn back to the window, she placed both of her palms on either side of his face. "Listen, Tony." Finally, he focused on her. "I still need you."

"You have Nico."

She shook her head. Could the man be any denser? "We *both* need you. It takes the three of us together to break the hold of the moon-rage, but even if it didn't, you

can't leave." She let her hands slip from his face and slide down his muscular arms. "If you left, it would be like a part of me left too."

"Then why are you so sad all the time?"

She pulled her hands back and turned to walk away. Nico blocked her path, his soft amber gaze curious. She looked from one brother to the other. "I'm not sad." She tried to push past them.

"You forget we can feel your emotions." Nico's voice left her feeling exposed, vulnerable. He placed his hand on her arm. "We know you are hiding something. Tony thought it was a preference for one of us over the other. If not that, then what?"

Gwen looked at each of them in turn. She wished she had more time to think about what she wanted to say, but fate had other plans. She grabbed her wine from the table and took a long sip. With shaking hands, she replaced it and sat back on the couch. Nico sat next to her and placed his arm around her shoulders, causing tears to sting her eyes. Tony sat on her other side and took her hand. "If you need us, we're here for you, Gwen. Always."

Gwen took a deep breath. Keeping her gaze fixed on Tony, she told them of how while most werewolves were made, she was one of the few who were born of this race.

"I thought wolves were sterile," Tony said.

"Most of the time, yes. Pure-breeds are extremely rare."

"You're a pure-breed? That explains the psychic abilities," Tony said.

"Yes, unfortunately. We are rare enough that other wolves don't understand us. Many fear us." She sighed. "When I started having visions, my parents didn't know what to do with me. I was passed around from relative to relative, but no one wanted a kid with such volatile emotions. Eventually my parents went to their pack leader..." Her voice faltered.

Nico's arm around her tightened. She could feel his support and Tony's concern, through their bond. It gave her the strength to continue. "In the end, I was abandoned and left to survive on my own." She steeled herself against the memory of that fateful morning when she had been driven out into the woods.

"What did you do?" Tony's voice brought her back to the present.

She shrugged. "I learned to fend for myself." She pressed her lips together for a moment in thought. "At first I went to other were-packs, but their leaders' reactions were all the same. No one wanted me."

Tony glanced over her shoulder at Nico before refocusing on her. "If you came to Kyron pack, we would have taken you in." Nico ran his fingers over her arm. She could feel his silent agreement through their bond.

"Don't be so sure."

Tony frowned. "What do you mean?"

"Josh turned me away too."

Tony glanced at Nico. "It doesn't make any sense. It doesn't sound like him."

Gwen shrugged and eased herself away from Nico. "All I know is what happened. He told me that until I got control over my emotions and moon-rages, I was a danger to everyone around me—including his pack. He couldn't risk it."

Tony shook his head. "There must have been something else, something he didn't tell you."

Gwen wrapped her arms around her middle. "He was much kinder than the rest. He said to come back once I gained more control." She patted Nico's hand as he touched her arm. "It's okay." She took a deep breath before continuing. "I worked my way east, learning various trades to keep myself fed and sheltered. Eventually I ended up in New Jersey."

"That's when you went to Eric," Tony said, piecing it together.

"Not right away," she said. "I lived on my own for a long time, migrating from town to town on the East Coast." She sighed. "When I finally approached Eric, I was desperate."

"How did you survive all those years with the rages?"

She shrugged. "I made sure that I was alone and secluded during those times."

"Well"—Tony lifted her hand, kissed her palm—"you never will have to worry about being alone again."

"Didn't you hear me? Josh kicked me out of the pack. He doesn't want me around."

"That was before." Nico pulled her close until her back thudded against his chest. He kissed her temple. "Things have changed."

She shook her head. "He's going to kick me out again. I know it."

"Then we'll go with you." Tony's hand slipped from her hand to her thigh, sending heated tingles through her body. "We're a team, remember?"

She pushed her craving aside. "I can't ask you two to leave your pack."

"You're not asking us." Nico ran his fingers through her hair. It felt so good, as if with each stroke, he was wiping away the tension. "We're volunteering."

"But—"

Tony put his finger over her mouth. "You are our mate. Where you go, we go." He pressed his lips against hers in a soft, soothing kiss. "We'll protect you."

She could see the old Tony come back and take charge. The anger and hurt drained away, showing the warm, caring man underneath.

"Don't worry, sweetheart. I'll take care of everything." He slipped his hand from her mouth, down her neck and chest, burning a trail of fire in his wake.

Nico leaned over her shoulder, his warm breath brushing against her ear. "Let us show you how much you mean to us." He ran his tongue over the outer rim of her ear.

Tony found her nipple. He pinched it through her shirt, then rolled it back and forth between his fingers until it formed a sharp peak. "Let us convince you to stay."

Delight shot through her body, overwhelming her thoughts. The men inched closer and took turns tugging off her clothing piece by piece. They explored her body, setting every inch of skin on fire. When she was completely naked, Tony stood and held out his hand toward her.

"Come here."

She put her hand in his. "What are you doing?"

A smile tugged at his lips. "Put your hands on the ottoman."

"What?" She tried to pull her hand away, but he held her fast.

Nico stood and began to disrobe.

"Do you trust us?" Tony asked.

She jerked her gaze back to him and saw comfort and reassurance in his gaze. "Yes."

"Then put your hands on the ottoman."

She studied the red cushioned ottoman a short distance away, then did what she had been asked. Nico positioned himself behind her and stroked her ass with his rough hands. The friction sent heat racing through her veins and made her sigh with pleasure. As Tony disrobed, Nico curled his body next to her. Reaching around, he caressed her breasts as his hard cock slipped in between the cheeks of her ass.

"As much as I liked fucking you from the front," he whispered. "I greatly prefer your behind." He grabbed his cock and rubbed it between her cheeks. Desire rolled over her, turning her limbs to water. She closed her eyes and moaned her approval.

Tony knelt before her. "Whatever happens, promise me you'll keep your hands on the ottoman."

"What's going to happen?"

"Promise me."

She looked at him for a moment, excitement rippling through her body. Whatever these men had in mind, she knew she could trust them. She could feel their excitement and anticipation and found her own passion rising. "Okay."

Tony kissed her until her senses were in a whirl. Energy filled the room and heated her body. He slipped something to Nico behind her.

She broke the kiss. "What was that?"

"Do you trust me?" Tony asked.

She swallowed and forced herself to relax. "Yes."

"Good."

A dark blindfold covered her eyes.

"What are you doing?"

Strong hands covered hers on the ottoman. "Don't move." *Tony*. She'd know that sexy voice anywhere. As the blindfold was tightened around her eyes, he

continued, "Without the ability to see, your other senses will become heightened. Your pleasure will become greater." He kissed her cheek, then her neck. Gwen discovered a hyperawareness of his lips as they moved over her skin.

As Tony worked in front, Nico worked from behind. He kissed a trail of heat down her spine. Inch by inch he moved down her back, spanning his fingers out on either side of his mouth. When he reached her ass, he kissed each cheek, then kneaded them with his fingers. "Spread your legs, sweetheart."

She did as she had been asked and was rewarded when Nico ran his finger over her opening. Pleasure blossomed through her body. She gasped at the intensity of the emotion. Without her sight, Gwen was able to focus more on their touch. She concentrated on how they moved their fingers across her skin, how the contact made her skin burn and her muscles tighten in her lower abdomen. When they used their mouths, she concentrated on how their hot, wet tongues slipped over her body. Hunger rose up inside her, and it felt as if every nerve ending was on fire.

Tony brushed her hair from her face, then kissed her again. "Everything is more sensitive, isn't it?" he asked.

She nodded.

He kissed her cheek, then her neck. "That's what I thought." Slipping his hands underneath her, he toyed with her nipples. "Both pleasure and pain are heightened when you're blindfolded." He squeezed her nipples, causing a bolt to drive up her middle. She gasped as it immobilized her, then dissolved into a wave of delight. She murmured her approval as he tugged and teased. Desire dipped low into her abdomen, making her pussy clench and weep.

"You like not being able to see, don't you?"

Nico slid his finger up between her ass cheeks and slipped the tip in from behind. Sensation spiraled through her, causing her to groan.

"I see that you do." Tony pinched her nipple again, and a wonderful mixture of joy and pain rocketed through her system.

"Just focus on my voice and our touch." Tony tugged both her nipples at once, and heat blanketed her body.

Nico repeated his movements, slipping down into her pussy, then back up to her behind. "She's so wet, Tony. I'm not sure I can wait much more."

"Patience, Brother. We have to prepare her first."

Nico removed his finger. When it returned, it was cold and wet. She gasped, arching away in surprise.

"It's just lube." He took his time entering her, letting her enjoy the new sensations he created. Once one finger was fully sheathed, he added a second, stretching her body and making it come alive.

Tony held her hair back from her face. "I saw how much you enjoyed tasting me before. I was wondering if you wanted to do it again."

With the blindfold on, his voice sounded deeper, more seductive. *Yes.* She imagined the enjoyment of taking him in her mouth, of making him lose control, and couldn't stop the ripple of excitement that ran through her body. She nodded.

He stood and positioned himself at her lips. "Here I am, sweetheart."

Nico pushed his cock deep inside her body as she took Tony into her mouth. The brothers' groans filled the air, twisting through her body and heightening her longing. She flicked her tongue along the vein on the underside of Tony's cock. He swore, his fingers tightening in her hair. She felt so powerful, so in control.

The men pulled back in unison, then filled her again. This time Gwen relaxed her throat, eager to take as much of Tony as she could. He shuddered as he slid himself over her tongue. She felt his body heat wrap around her as he reached underneath her and teased her nipples. Pain lanced her pleasure, then lifted it to new levels.

"That's it, sweetheart." Tony continued to whisper to her, using his voice to further stimulate. "You're so beautiful. You know that?"

Gwen moaned as the men pushed forward, stretching her body even farther than before. Heat spiraled through her, causing her to arch her back, pushing her breasts closer to their able hands.

"Look at her, Brother." Tony's voice ran over her like running water. So smooth, so delicious. "Such soft skin, such perfectly round hips—" They pulled back, the sweet friction making her muscles clench with longing. "So hot and wet. I can't seem to get deep enough inside of you." His voice rose and fell in a hypnotic trance, lifting her enjoyment to new heights. The men pushed forward, filling her, moving as one. She tried to focus on Tony, running her tongue under his head and sucking the salty bead of moisture from his tip. It was difficult to hold her concentration. Desire wrapped around her, distracting her.

Tony's words dissolved into a groan. He straightened and wove his fingers in her hair. She wanted to touch him, tease him more, but she knew she promised to keep her hands on the ottoman.

Nico grabbed her hips, thrusting himself so deep that his balls slapped against her body. Together the men moved, surrounding her, filling her. Without the ability to see, she focused on her other senses—the sounds of their cries, the delicious friction of their cocks, how Tony's fingers curled into her hair as she took him into her mouth.

Nico bent over her back, reached around, and teased her breasts. She gasped against Tony's cock as both pleasure and pain filled her body. Never before had she felt anything so intense. She shook as raw lust pumped through her veins. It robbed her of her thoughts, and every nerve ending came alive with longing. She stretched, her body winding tight. The men thrust faster, harder, filling her with their aching need.

The orgasm marched through her body like an army, conquering and consuming. She shook as it overtook her, eating away at her sanity and leaving

nothing but pure, raw emotion. She felt both men come together and struggled back to reality long enough to swallow Tony's passion. His salty taste filled her mouth, and once again ecstasy rolled through her, making her feel greedy, powerful, and complete.

When it was over, the men removed themselves and the blindfold, then moved to the couch. Together they spread out on the furniture, tangled up in one another's arms. As she lay sandwiched between Tony and Nico, she didn't think life could get any better.

Tony ran his fingers through her hair. "I'll never doubt your love again, sweetheart."

She smirked against Nico's hair. "Good."

Nico raised his head, his gaze locking with hers. "And you should never doubt our commitment."

Her smirk faded. "You would really leave your pack for me?"

"In a heartbeat," Tony said.

Nico didn't say a word. The look in his eyes said it all. Gwen would never be alone again.

\* \* \*

They gathered as asked in front of Josh's office. The large mahogany door loomed before Gwen, and she felt an unsettling in her stomach. She turned to go, but Nico pressed his hand in the small of her back.

"Where you go, we go, little one," he said.

Tony took her hand. "You'll never be alone again." He rapped on the door, then opened it.

Gwen swallowed the lump in her throat as a spacious room spread out before them. Taking a deep breath, she stepped inside. The plush crimson rug felt soft underneath her feet. The dark wood furniture suggested that whoever owned this office held great power. Her gaze roamed over the expensive paintings, the fresh flowers, and the opulent bar before settling on the oversize mahogany desk.

She gasped. Josh wasn't sitting at the desk, but someone else. Someone she didn't know. He had wire-rimmed glasses and thick jet-black hair. He frowned at the computer screen as he listened to someone on his cell.

"Yeah. I've got it. Damned if I know."

*That voice...* It sounded so strange. Could this be the were who Tony and Nico had spoken of? She focused on his neck, and sure enough, a long scar ran along the side. Images flashed through her mind, images of this man and a blonde woman on a rooftop. *Her vision...* Why was Zach in Josh's office? And what had happened to the blonde?

He motioned everyone to be seated as he continued to listen. "Where are the rest of them?" He sighed and typed a few keys on the keyboard in front of him. A lovely blonde came out of the back room and handed him some bottled water. *It's the*



*woman from my vision.* Noticing the crew, she smiled and shook each of their hands in turn. "I'm Chloe. Zach's mate." She glanced at the man on the phone. "Sorry about this. We've both had a rather busy morning."

Zach hung up his cell and stood. He rounded the desk and covered each of the brothers in a bear hug. "It's about time you two got back here. Things have been crazy."

"Zach." Tony patted his back as the were stepped away from the hug. "You made it out of Houston."

Gwen felt the rush of excitement and awe run through the brothers. She felt like an intruder and wondered if she should leave. Glancing at the door, she caught Chloe's gaze. The woman smiled reassuringly.

"We barely made it out alive." Zach leaned against the desk and opened his water. "Thanks to you two, we managed to make it out just before Eric's goons hit the ground."

"Thanks to Gwen."

Zach turned as if just noticing her. "Ah, the psychic." He sniffed the air, and a question lit his eyes. "All three of you are mated?"

The brothers filled Zach and Chloe in on what had happened in Atlantic City. Through the entire exchange, Gwen fidgeted. At one point, she caught Chloe watching her from her perch next to Zach. She avoided the blonde's curious gaze.

"Well, it's settled, then. You have to stay," Chloe said to Gwen once the brothers had finished their tale. "There are way too many men around this place. I could use a little female companionship."

Gwen stared at her in shock, unsure of how to respond. No one had ever asked for her companionship before. It felt...refreshing.

"Where's Josh?" Tony asked.

"Gone." Zach sighed and took a sip of water. "After he got the phone call from you, he wrote a couple of notes and then disappeared."

"Disappeared?" Nico frowned.

"He left this for you." Zach pulled a thin envelope from the top of his desk and handed it to Gwen. "He left the other one with the front desk to make sure you would come to his office right away. I think he knew what was going to happen."

"Why would he just leave without telling anyone? Especially when Lydia has been creating havoc all over the strip?" Nico asked.

Gwen could feel the heat creep into her cheeks. "Because of my vision." She could feel everyone's eyes on her. "I had a vision that Lydia would betray Eric and join Kyron pack."

Zach ran his hand over his face. "Okay. I'll get some of the others together and compile a list of potential places they could have taken him. We'll meet back in two hours to form a plan of attack."

Chloe put her arm around his waist. "I'll help you. I can pull in some of my hotel contacts and see if they can't lend us a hand."

Zach kissed her temple. "Thanks." Gathering himself, he turned to the others. "We'll meet in conference room four in two hours."

The brothers speculated on what had happened as they went back to the room. Gwen barely heard them. Her head was spinning with all the new information. What had she done?

Once back in the suite, the brothers went to change, and she sat on the couch and slipped her finger under the flap of the envelope to open it.

*Dear Gwen,*

*If you are reading this, I know everything is going according to plan. Lydia has contacted me, saying she wants to meet in private. I suspect it's a trap but have no choice but to go to her. If what you have foreseen is true, then I have to try and reach her. With her help, maybe we can talk to Eric and finally put an end to this idea of revenge he has carried with him for so long.*

*In case my pack didn't make it clear, you are welcome to stay with us for as long as you wish. It has never sat well with me that I had sent you away, but at the time I was forced to do what was best for my pack. You and I both know what would have happened if you had stayed. You had to leave—for both our sakes.*

*Now I hear that you have mated with Tony and Nico, and that with their help, you are able to control the moon-rages. This is good. I know all too well what can happen when an unmated wolf suffers too many moon-cycles without his mate.*

*I only hope that mine will come to her senses before it's too late.*

*But if not, then know that I never hated you, nor did I ever wish you ill. Take care of Tony and Nico for me. They are special wolves, but they are hurting. I have seen your strength and determination and believe that they have found what they need to heal themselves in you. You'll never find more loyal or more worthy mates.*

*Best,*

*Josh*

Gwen wiped the tears from her cheeks as Tony entered the room. At his raised brow, she handed him the letter. When Nico arrived, the paper was passed to him.

"It's because of me that he's in trouble," she explained.

Tony raked his hand through his hair. "No, he would have left to find her anyway. Fuck." He sat next to her and leaned his head back on the couch.

"I can't believe Lydia is his mate. Why didn't he tell anyone?" Nico handed the letter back to Gwen.

"Why do you think? It would have made us all vulnerable, and he knew it." Tony leaned forward and rested his elbows on his knees. "How long he must have suffered in silence."

"I feel awful." Gwen wrapped her arms around her middle.

"Don't." Nico joined them on the couch. "He wouldn't want that."

"It's true." Tony rubbed her shoulders. "You can see it there in black-and-white—you're a part of us now."

She allowed herself a small smile. "A family."

"Yes, a family." Nico kissed her temple. "Ours."

"This is your home. You'll never have to be on your own again," Tony added.

No, she didn't. Warm tingles spread over her skin as the brothers teased and caressed the tension from her system.

Tony glanced at the clock. "We have a couple of hours until the meeting..."

Nico smiled. "That we do. And I don't think we've shown Gwen the entire house yet."

"What are you talking about? I walked through the place when I was here earlier."

"But *we* haven't shown it to you." Tony slipped his arm around her middle and pulled her closer.

Before she could think, the men continued to tease and caress. Heat and longing rose up to claim her, sending ripples of delight over her skin.

"What do you think we should show her first, Brother?" Tony asked. "The kitchen table, the balcony—or perhaps our hot tub?"

"The hot tub, Brother," Nico whispered as he drew her shirt up over her head. "Definitely the hot tub."

Heat rippled through her body as the brothers continued to remove her clothing. Their fingers slipped over her skin, washing away the last of her doubts. These men knew all her faults and loved her anyway—just like she loved them. For the first time in her life, Gwen was surrounded by people who truly cared about her. It was a wonderful feeling. She opened herself up to Tony and Nico and felt their love pour through the bond they shared. Her heart filled with joy and wonder. Finally, her wolf was at peace. She was *home*.

 THE END 

## Loose Id Titles by Suzanne Rock

*Cria*

### **The KYRON WOLF PACK Series**

*Up on the Housetop*

*Down on the Boardwalk*

## Suzanne Rock

After over a decade in the scientific world, Suzanne Rock needed a creative outlet. She tried scrap booking, cooking, crocheting, painting, and piano, none of which held her interest for very long. Then one of her friends suggested writing. Thrilled with the idea of creating her own worlds, she opened up her lap top and never looked back.

Suzanne writes paranormal and erotic romance. When she's not writing, she can be found playing with her two daughters, testing her husband's latest kitchen creations, or curled up with her favorite romance novel in her central Massachusetts home.

Suzanne loves to hear from her readers. When not running the famous 'Cover Clash' at the Embrace the Shadows blog, she can be found feeding her internet addiction on Twitter and Facebook. For more information, see her website at [www.SuzanneRock.com](http://www.SuzanneRock.com).