

Sequel to The Billionaire's Mate

The Billionaire's Lady

Having overdosed on a week of sex, Adam comes up with a unique game of visual and verbal teasing to test his and Margot's control. After he breaks the rules, Adam announces that she will be meeting his council that evening and the entire pack the next.

But before the meetings, Margot drops a bombshell of her own. Her brother Matt, a straight-laced, conservative Santa Fe cop, is coming to visit. Margot is worried that he will try to talk Adam out of loving her. Upon his arrival, Adam learns that Matt has secrets of his own.

At the pack meeting, Margot faces off with Leigh Kincaid-Thorne, who'd attacked her twice just the week before. In doing so, Margot proves to herself and the pack that she is more than capable of being The Billionaire's Lady.

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THE BILLIONAIRE'S LADY

Sequel to The Billionaire's Mate

Cooper McKenzie

EROTIC ROMANCE



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Please respect my hard work and creativity and please do not pirate my e-books.

With deep gratitude,

Cooper McKenzie

DEDICATION

To all those who wanted to know what happened next.

And to M.J.J. – I miss you! Especially when it is time to stir the giggles into the M&C!

THE BILLIONAIRE'S LADY

Sequel to The Billionaire's Mate

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Chapter 1

"Draw soft circles around those beautiful breasts. Slow, easy circles," Adam Thomasson's voice deepened more than an octave as their mutual arousal bloomed and filled the space between them with a nearly visible shimmering need. "Use just those pretty fingertips."

As if he guided them, Margot Jackson's fingers lightened their touch and just the pads began to trace over her plump breasts. They stayed clear of her super-sensitive nipples. Touch them too soon and she would explode, and this new game of his would be over before it really began.

"Tell me again why we're doing this?" she murmured, shifting on the wooden chair that still felt cool against the bare skin of her lower back, ass cheeks, and upper legs. Her cunt was crying out for him already, and they had barely begun.

From the way her mate's smile widened, she knew he'd heard the underlying whining tone. Being a shape-shifter, his hearing was far superior to humans. But then so much of him was so much better than any other man she'd ever known, including the man she'd divorced three years before.

"We're playing like this because your sweet pussy is too sore for anything more than gentle fingering. And if I touch you, I'm not sure I can stop at just some finger play. Besides, this will be exciting and fun in its own way," Adam explained as he smoothed one palm down the center of his impressively muscled chest with its light covering of black hair. He stopped near his navel, mere inches away from the crimson head of his cock. "Just relax, enjoy, and do what I say, okay?"

"Mmmm, I'll try." Margot shifted again. "But I'd rather be over there touching you."

"I know, baby. I feel the same way. But think about how much fun it will be to make me lose control by just watching you play with all those sweets bits I can't touch."

The muscles in and between her upper thighs clenched, reminding her that she'd had more sex with Adam in the past six days than she'd had with her ex-husband during their fifteen-year marriage. She had been celibate for the past three years and masturbated only when the sexual tension grew so strong it would no longer be ignored. Playing with herself and her small collection of toys had helped temporarily, but had never been a tenth as satisfying as one of Adam's most sedate kisses.

Since meeting the gorgeous billionaire who had turned out to be a shape-shifter and her mate, all she had to do was think about sex, smile, or say something the least bit suggestive, and he would clear the closest horizontal surface. At least, until this morning when he'd returned to bed after his morning run. With a smile followed by tossing the oversized T-shirt she'd worn to sleep in at him, she'd enticed him back to bed. She didn't care he was hot and sweaty. She planned to work up a sweat of her own before allowing either of them near a shower. When she winced as he slid two fingers into her hot, wet core, he saw the slight movement and froze with his fingers halfway in her. With a concerned frown, he tried to gently pull them from her, but that caused her to flinch again in response.

"Are you okay?" he asked as he brushed his hands from slit to tits then cupped his palms over her generous breasts. "Just a little sore," she admitted hesitantly as she arched her back, pushing deeper into his hands.

"Of course you are. We've been going at it like oversexed teenagers for days."

After kissing her deeply, he climbed from the bed, picked her up, and set her in the straight-back wooden chair from the designer café dining set by the window. He set its twin down a good six feet away. Far enough she couldn't touch him, but close enough to see, and drool over, every inch of his gorgeous, toned nakedness. He now sat sprawled in his chair, looking comfortable and royally decadent in his nudity. One hand rested high on his thigh while the other moved up and down the center of his chest. The curly black hair covering his head was tousled, the ends still damp from his run. His bright bluegreen eyes glowed as they met hers through the early morning sunlight that streamed in the room from the bank of windows beside them.

Margot squirmed, her hips needing to move with the arousal building within her. Over the last week she had grown more comfortable in her voluptuous body that would remain round and curvy no matter what exercise or diet she tried, but she still felt anxious every time Adam saw her without clothes.

Especially in full daylight like this. He was so beautiful, and she felt anything but. This morning, however, sitting naked in broad daylight with him just beyond her reach, she was more turned on than ever before though she could not explain why. She looked away from his heat-filled gaze and felt her juices overflow her cunt as ripples of lust shot from where her fingers touched her tits straight to her empty, needy cunt. Her breathing grew ragged as she fought to keep her eyes open and returned them to lock with Adam's.

"Don't fight it, baby. Close your eyes. Imagine those are my fingers making circles around your beautiful girls. Smaller and smaller circles. That's right. Smaller and smaller until I'm nearly touching those stiff, pink nipples." Margot's eyes drifted shut, his voice hypnotizing her. Without sight, she focused on his deep voice. His words thrummed at the nerves deep in her, like a master guitarist player with a well-tuned instrument. The touch of her own fingers became his as they spiraled up her plump mounds until the sides of her fingertips brushed against the sides of her erect nipples. Then she expanded the circles until she traced around the outer edges of her areolas. Her need surged higher and her hips began to arch forward and back, wanting, no, *craving* more.

She gasped at the intense feeling that shot through her to her core as she gave in and flicked her right fingertip over her nipple. She heard his breathing catch. That small hitch let her know her playing was affecting him as well. That knowledge turned her on even more, and her arousal spiraled higher and tighter.

Opening her eyes, she met his glowing turquoise gaze. Her breathing grew harsh, and she began to pant as she stretched one leg out across the space between them, straining to touch him. She needed to feel him, to confirm he was real and here with her. She needed to assure herself this was not just a dream.

"Please," she whimpered. "I need to touch you."

Her lust coiled tighter between her thighs as he picked up his chair and shifted closer, then closer still. Then he extended one leg until the ball of her foot could rub over the top of his. She pressed against his skin, savoring that small connection as need became an ache that filled her to overflowing. How much longer was he going to torture her? She had to have his hands on her and soon or else she wasn't sure what she would do.

"Shhh, baby. Breathe. Slow, deep breaths. It's too soon to come. Way too soon. Try to relax. Close your eyes and feel my fingers touching your skin. I'm tracing circles on the undersides of the girls. Down over your ribs then your belly to your hips. Now I'm slowly tracing lines back and forth from one hip to the other. Back and forth. Lower and lower with each pass."

Margot's fingers moved as he directed, slowly stroking down her body. Shivers raced through her one after another. Her orgasm was knotted up in her pelvis. She wasn't sure how long she could hold back the orgasm and stay in control, though she wanted Adam to feel as crazy as she did before she came. If possible, she wanted him to come first, though that rarely happened as he always pushed her over the edge first.

His already deep voice had gone even deeper and more growly. She could hear his wolf pushing for release. The knowledge that she, a short, pudgy, unemployed nobody could turn on such a perfect specimen as this man sent her precariously close to the edge of her orgasm.

She was still amazed every time she thought back to that first day when he'd claimed her within minutes of their first meeting. He'd marked her and then fucked her in the hottest sex she'd ever experienced. Since then, the sex had just gotten hotter as they grew to know each other's turn-ons and triggers.

Fighting down the climax that threatened to swamp her, she opened her eyes again. Then she moved the leg not reaching toward Adam to the side as far as it would go. She opened herself up then scooted forward on the chair until her butt reached the front edge of the seat.

When Adam's eyes dropped to her fully exposed mound and parted, wet lips below, her confidence grew. He made a rumbling sound deep in his chest as she ran two fingers from her hips to her inner thighs. Her hand then made a quick trip halfway to her knee before returning to dip further down between her legs. Starting just below her entrance, she slowly stroked between her open wet lips, then up between her folds to the knotted clit which was screaming at her for attention.

His eyes widened and his stark, hungry expression grew as she gasped at the electricity that raced through her body. She could see he was near the end of his restraint. It wouldn't take much more to pull

him out of his chair and across the space between them.

Two could play this game of his, and it was now her turn to be in charge. She would drive him so crazy he *would* come to her, not the other way around.

"Adam, sweetheart, close your eyes," she murmured, her voice soft and low.

"But I'd rather look at you," he protested, his voice so deep and rough she barely understood the words he said.

"Please?"

He gave her an unreadable look just before his lids dropped. Once he was no longer looking at her, she hesitated. Could she do this? Would he allow her to take control, even for a few minutes? He was such a strong presence sometimes he overwhelmed her just by walking into the room. And to have all his sexual energy focused solely on giving her pleasure humbled her. When he reacted so strongly to her fumbling attempts at seduction, it gave her the confidence to expand her horizons.

She stroked her foot over his again. The warmth of his skin against her own somehow reassured her she could do this. She could drive him beyond control. Even if she somehow blundered, he would not get up and walk away. They were, after all, mates for life. If things went really wrong, she knew he would step in and gently take command again. Though she knew this game of arousal and control was not a competition, Margot still wanted his hunger to pull him from his seat first. Then she'd be happy to meet him on the floor between the chairs.

"Put your fingertips on the insides of your thighs. Gently stroke down to your knees. Soft, slow touches. Mmmm, yes. Nice and easy. Now back up to your boys."

When Adam hesitated with his hands, not quite where she wanted them, Margot grinned. "All the way up. Touch your boys. Play with those sexy balls."

As his fingers moved to her words, she pinched one nipple

between her thumb and index finger, sending frissions of erotic pain through her body. Adam's eyes opened when she made a small whimpering sound.

His breathing stopped again as he watched her twist her left nipple with her left hand while the two fingers of her right hand traced through her folds and circled her wet, puffy, dark pink clit.

"Now your cock," she breathed softly. "Use your fingers to trace lines up and down and around that beautiful length. Up and down. Up and down. Mmmm, yes, just like that."

She smiled as his eyes widened at her words then his lids fell closed again. His breathing grew ragged, and she could tell he was close. She rubbed her foot over his, cherishing the small connection of skin against skin.

"Circle the head with one finger. Light touches. Slow and easy. But don't come. Not yet."

He opened his eyes halfway. His blue-green eyes glowed almost silver with his arousal. "Need," he groaned.

Margot smiled at him in response, her own control nearing its limits as well. "Now you know how I feel."

"To hell with this," he said in a voice as deep and rough as an unpaved back mountain road.

Pushing from his chair, he knelt on the floor then crawled the short distance between their chairs. He used his shoulders to ease her thighs wider. He met her wide-eyed gaze with a fierce smile before dropping his gaze to his target and leaning in.

He moved so close she felt warm breath caress her open wet folds, but he did not touch her. Shivers rippled through her at the flow of air over her clit. The spiral of arousal deep in her center tightened even further until she wasn't sure she would survive when it finally went *sproing*.

"Adam," she whined, her hands reaching for his head. "Need... So close."

"Shhh, it's all right. I'll take good care of you," he murmured. His

words sent more gentle puffs of air over her mound, adding yet another layer of near-painful ache to her arousal.

She looked down at the top of his head just as the tip of his tongue swirled a circle around her clit.

"Ohh," she moaned, her hips lifting in the hopes of making a stronger connection.

But Adam pulled back, completely breaking away. A heartbeat later, his hands slid up the insides of her legs to hold her thighs wide apart as his head dropped lower. Using the flat of his tongue, he started below her entrance and lapped at the juices he found there. Then he continued up and over her clit to the top of her slit.

Margot moaned and curled forward over him as her insides knotted impossibly tighter. She was so close, but needed more. Just a little bit more.

"Please," she begged in a barely-there whisper. "Oh God, please!"

When he took her knotted clit between his teeth and nibbled gently, she screamed as her orgasm exploded, sending bolts of lightning from her core out to her fingers and toes and eyebrows. She grabbed his head and held his mouth tight to her as ecstasy rolled on and on and on. He continued gently laving her clit and licking at her cunt with a tongue so talented she envied the women he'd practiced on. When he finally eased back, she was so lightheaded and boneless she could not fight when he pulled her down off her chair to straddle his thighs.

"Touch me, baby girl," he took her hand and wrapped it around his cock. "Help me fly. It won't take much."

Holding his hand around hers, he guided them up and down the top half of his long, thick shaft. After a few gentle strokes, he tightened his hold, causing her fingers to squeeze him tighter. He moved their hands faster and faster until he threw his head back and howled. His pearly white release exploded out of the slit in the head of his cock like water from a geyser.

Several long moments later, when his seed stopped pulsing from

him to cover their bellies and hands, he slumped against her and dropped his head to her shoulder. It took several minutes before either of them moved.

She was ready to drag him back to bed for cuddling and more loving when he lifted his head and asked, "Did I tell you we have a meeting with the council tonight, and the entire pack is gathering here tomorrow?"

Chapter 2

Margot stared at him, shocked at the odd things that came out of his mouth when he was totally relaxed following an intense orgasm. A few days earlier, he'd asked if she wanted Mrs. Nicholas to her bras and panties by hand or if they were okay to be washed in the machine with his boxers.

"We're what with whom when?"

"Wow, that was quite the mouthful for a woman who was completely speechless only moments ago," Adam said, brushing kisses over one cheekbone and then the other before dropping to lick at her lower lip. "We're meeting with the pack council tonight and the entire pack tomorrow. They need to meet you and you need to meet them since you are now their alpha's lady."

"Will Leigh what's-her-name be there?"

"Yes, sweet Margot mine, Leigh Kincaid-Thorne will be there tomorrow night. She is, after all, a member of the pack."

"Do I have permission to kick her ass if she comes at me?" Margot asked, only half in jest.

"Baby, I've told you before, you are my mate and partner in all things. You don't have to kick people's asses yourself anymore. You now have people to do that sort of thing."

Margot giggled as she looked into his eyes. Only he wasn't laughing. He looked deadly serious.

Swallowing hard she said, "Okay. So if she pisses me off, can I have Sam kick her ass?"

Adam nodded as he hugged her. "Tell me, and I'll kick her ass, though I don't think there will be a problem. Not after last week," he said, referring to the wolf-to-wolf talk he'd had with the woman after she'd attacked Margot because Adam had claimed her as his mate.

Leigh had been sure he would give up on his true mate and choose her since the council and his mother were beginning to pressure him to mate with someone.

"So, what should I wear to a pack council meeting?" she pushed from his lap and stood. "Do we need to make any special arrangements for food or drink or anything? Or does Mrs. Nicholas have everything under control as she always does?"

"You'll have to check with her about that, but since tonight is a monthly council meeting, I'm sure she has everything well in hand. As for clothes, I'd say what you're wearing right now is perfect for any occasion, only I don't want anyone else to see all this glorious femininity." He followed her closely, rubbing one palm over her ass as they headed to the shower.

Margot turned and wrinkled her nose at him. Though he didn't see them, she knew other people would notice the extra pounds and inches she carried. She wasn't model material, but she wanted to make a good impression on his friends and pack members. Being too short and too curvy for society's dictates of waif-like stick figure perfection sometimes made her self conscious about her appearance. Especially when meeting a lot of new people at once.

"Naked is not an option. Choose something else." She squealed when he wrapped an arm around her waist and dragged her with him into the walk-in shower.

"Anything you decide on is fine. You do not have worry about impressing anyone. But if you're still worried, that pretty green dress you wore the other day when we went to the lawyer's office will do nicely for the gathering tomorrow night. Tonight slacks and that pretty orangey-colored sweater will be fine. I'll even let you wear bra and panties, if you must." Adam turned on showerhead water and gallantly shielded her from the spray until the water warmed up.

"Really? You'll let me wear bra and panties? How very generous

of you." Margot snarked, reaching down and cupping his cock and balls. "And do I get to choose what you wear tomorrow night?"

"If you'd like." he grinned. "Just remember Leigh and the other unmated females will be here tomorrow night."

"I'll keep that in mind," she said releasing him then turning to pick up a washcloth and the bottle of liquid soap.

After squirting soap on the cloth, she worked up a lather and went to work cleaning her man. Front to back, top to bottom, she washed every inch of him with special attention paid to chest and belly, cock and balls. By the time she finished and rinsed away the soap bubbles, his cock once again stood tall and proud.

Before she could continue teasing him, he took the cloth from her. "You do realize payback is a bitch, right?"

"But I thought you loved me," she purred as he added more liquid soap to the cloth.

"I do love you, but I am not going to fuck you this morning. Your pretty pussy needs to rest. But, you are pushing my buttons a little too hard," he said, turning her to face away from him. She squeaked when he swatted her left ass cheek with a wet hand. "I'm trying to be a considerate and caring mate. You are teasing me until I can think of nothing except fucking you into the tile. Now hold still while I wash you."

By the time he finished washing every inch of her, Margot was thoroughly turned on again. Before she could beg him to forget resting and return to bed for a day of play between the sheets, he rinsed them both off one last time and turned off the water. Pulling her from the shower, he proceeded to dry her as carefully as he'd washed her then smoothed her favorite lotion on her from neck to toes. "Go put something on. You are sorely challenging my determination to leave you alone today."

"The whole day?" Margot whined. She wondered if she would be able to survive the entire day without tackling him to the ground and having her way with him. Hmmm, that idea merited some thought. Later.

"Yes, the whole day. Or at least until after the council meeting. I'm sure by then you will have driven me completely out of my mind without trying just by breathing and being your sexy self." He kissed her shoulder then turned and pushed her toward the walk-in closet that was as big as the living room in the last house she had rented.

* * * *

As soon as Margot disappeared from his view, Adam turned and headed for the bedroom. He pulled on blue jeans and a white button front shirt he'd laid out earlier on the café table. Grabbing his boots, he left the bedroom as quickly and quietly as he could manage. Though he didn't want to hurt Margot's feelings, there was no way he could spend the day anywhere close to her without loving her and hurting her which was the last thing he wanted. He would spend the day at the office, away from the temptation of his beautiful mate.

Once in the hallway he paused and looked back, the pull to return to her side almost more than he could control. The only time they'd been apart more than a couple of dozen yards since that first day a week ago was when he went for his daily run.

She even came to the office with him on the few times he couldn't cancel or postpone face-to-face meetings. While he dealt with business, she would hang out in his office or visit with Sarah Hansen, his right-hand woman. After Margot had relaxed, the two women had become good friends.

Adam dreaded the day when his mother would join them. That thought reminded him that since he'd cancelled his weekly breakfast for that morning, he needed to invite his mother over for dinner, so the two women could get better acquainted in a relaxed, non-threatening setting.

Their first meeting had been only hours after Adam had claimed his mate. The introduction had taken place in a ballroom full of menhungry women at a bachelor's auction where, unfortunately, Adam had been coerced into being auctioned off. Thankfully Margot had been there to buy him. Which reminded him he still needed to make good on the date she'd bought.

But that romantic evening, along with having his mother over to dinner, would have to wait until the pack business was taken care of.

At the bottom of the grand staircase, he paused to put on his boots. Looking up the stairs he wondered if leaving Margot alone for the day really was the right thing to do. Already he felt achy and slightly sick, like he was getting the flu or something.

"Boss? You okay?" Sam approached him slowly, looking even more stoical than usual.

"I'm fine. Stay with Margot. Keep her busy. I'll take the Ducati to work today," Adam said as he pushed to his feet and headed to the kitchen.

"Okay, but-" Sam trailed along behind him.

"No buts, just do it, okay?" Adam snapped as he stalked through the kitchen. He grabbed a peach as he headed out the door to the fivecar garage.

It had been awhile since he'd ridden the motorcycle, and he was feeling the need for speed and the punishing wind slamming into him as he drove to town.

* * * *

Margot heard the roar of a motorcycle just as she reached the bottom of the staircase. Since Adam's house was a good quarter-mile from the main road, she knew it wasn't passing traffic. Adam had snuck out and left without another word.

"Chicken," she muttered as she crossed the foyer toward the kitchen.

Reaching for the cell phone she'd become accustomed to wearing clipped to the waistband of her jeans over her left hip, she speeddialed his cell. Knowing he would not answer while riding, she waited for the beep after his curt, "This is Adam. Leave a message," recording.

"I didn't think you were such a coward, mate of mine," she teased. "See you when you get home tonight. Take care and be safe."

With the press of a button, she hung up. Though tempted to turn the phone off, she instead turned the ringer to vibrate before returning it to her hip. Taking a deep breath, she released it on a sigh. So she had the day all to herself. What would she do? Something frivolous and mischievous that would cause Adam to think twice about leaving her on her own again? Or something productive and responsible to prove she could be trusted when he had to be away?

The stack of decorating books on a side table in the foyer caught her eye. Adam said she could do what she wanted with the house. Maybe today was a good day to call the decorator he'd used for their bedroom and get to work finishing this beautiful house so the inside was a wonderful as the outside. It would keep her busy as well as spend an obscene amount of his money which he seemed to enjoy watching her do.

The only problem she could see was she still didn't know what Adam's preferred decorating style was, and she hesitated proceeding without that bit of information. She wanted Adam to love this home he'd built, not just tolerate it because she loved it.

Since he'd already told her to do what she wanted and he didn't care as long as she was comfortable, she decided to call the two women who knew him better than anyone else for their advice.

Pulling out her phone again, she scrolled through the numbers to the one Adam didn't know she had. She grinned as she pushed the call button.

"Hello, Gwen?" she said a moment later. "It's Margot Jackson. Yes, I'm fine. Yes, he's treating me like a queen. I'm calling because I need your help with something..."

* * * *

"Go home."

Startled, Adam looked up from the quarterly report in his hands to find Sarah Hansen standing in front of his desk, arms crossed over her chest, the look of an angry schoolmarm on her face. How had she gotten in here without him knowing?

He blinked and looked down at the report in his hands. He'd been flipping through it all morning, but nothing made sense. Nothing mattered without Margot here with him. All he could think about was getting through the day and returning home to his beautiful mate. The message she'd left while he'd been on the motorcycle made him smile, but then he began to wonder. Was she missing him as much as he missed her?

"How long have you been standing there?" he asked, surprised she'd been able to enter his office without his notice.

"Not too long and yet long enough," she answered cryptically. "Go home."

"Go home? I've only been here a couple of hours."

"Yes, go home. Or have Margot come here. You're as grumpy as a wolf with a sore paw. If I have one more assistant come to me in tears because you snapped at them, I'm liable to quit myself," Sarah said. "Then you'll have to come to work every day and not just when you can't get out of something."

Adam realized she spoke the truth, but he also knew he could not go home, not without taking Margot to bed, and that would cause her pain. Hurting his mate was the last thing he wanted. He had to stay here and away from the temptation of his mate. Trying to concoct an argument that sounded logical and wouldn't make it sound like he'd lost his marbles, he took a deep breath.

That's when he smelled it. Vanilla, cinnamon and honey. The heady combination that had first alerted him to his mate's presence in his office. The scent that heralded the arrival of his mate.

"Margot?"

He pushed from his seat and was around the desk in three strides. As he did, one of the double doors leading to the outer office opened, and there she stood. His beautiful Margot. His mate. The woman who held his heart in her hands.

It took a moment to make sense of her outfit, baggy blue jeans, a black turtleneck, and an oversized green sweater he recognized as coming from his wardrobe. The clothing concealed every curve from shoulders to thighs. She'd even slicked back her short, sassy auburn hair, and she wore not a speck of makeup.

He chuckled at the notion she probably thought she'd made herself look as appealing to him as a T-bone steak to a vegetarian. But to him, a definite meat and potatoes man, she was a Porterhouse steak with a side of cheesy mashed potatoes, absolutely delectable with or without makeup and wearing too many clothes or none at all.

She still didn't understand her voluptuous figure, with its generous womanly curves, was only a small reason he'd fallen in love with her. He frankly didn't give a damn whether she was size two or size forty-two. Size, like age, was a number and not an important one at that.

As long as she drew breath, he would be attracted to her. When she died, hopefully many, many years in the future, he would be hard pressed not to crawl into her grave with her. Widowed shape-shifters were not known for living long after their mates died, and he now understood why. Who wanted to live when the sun in their life had been taken away from them?

Before he realized what he was doing, Adam took two more steps forward. He stopped when she put up both hands to ward him off. She frowned at him as she said, "Don't come any closer. In fact, go back and sit behind your desk."

"What are you doing here?" he asked as he retreated to sit in the chair he'd left only the moment before.

Turning, she closed and locked the door to the outer office

without another word to him. That was when he realized Sarah had left them, though he had no idea exactly when. As usual, when Margot was in sight, the rest of the world dropped away until only the two of them remained.

"I'm here because I received several phone calls from distraught and tearful women asking, no actually begging, me to please come to the office and do whatever necessary to put the smile back on Mr. Thomasson's face he's been wearing for the last week."

Adam relaxed back in his chair with a wry chuckle. The only other person in the building who had Margot's cell phone number was Sarah. She must have masterminded this little intervention.

"And how do you propose to put the smile back on my face since I've decided not to touch you until tonight?"

Margot smiled, her golden brown eyes glinting with mischief. "That doesn't mean I can't touch you."

Chapter 3

The quiver of sexual power that had hummed through her since their shower ended began vibrating a little faster as his Caribbean blue eyes began to glow warmer as he squarely met her gaze.

"Oh really?" he asked, shifting in his chair as his eyelids dropped to half mast. He continued to stare at her with the sleepy, sexy look that always made her weak in the knees and wet in her core.

Margot dropped her focus from his expressive eyes to his lazy half grin. "Yes, really," she responded, stepping closer to the desk, but keeping the massive piece of furniture between them.

"And how do you plan to do that?" he asked as his smile grew wider.

She didn't answer at first. Instead she slowly circled the desk and his chair until she stood out of sight behind him. Reaching under her sweater into her back pocket, she pulled out one of the pairs of disposable handcuffs Sam had showed her how to use before they left the house. Patting the other back pocket, she made sure she still had the cutters to release him once she finished. Though curious, she had not asked how Sam knew how to use the plastic restraints, nor why he had in his possession more than a dozen pairs in a variety of colors.

"Hold your arms straight over your head and interlock your fingers," she ordered in her sexiest purr.

"Like this?" Adam raised his arms so his knotted fingers were high over his head.

"Yes, just like that."

As soon as his hands were in position, she quickly wrapped the plastic cord around one wrist and pulled it snug enough so he couldn't escape but not so tight the cuff would hurt him. Then she quickly repeated the action on his other wrist. She made sure the sleeves of his dress shirt remained between his arm and the plastic cuffs so he wouldn't hurt himself if he fought the restraints while she played with him until he smiled again.

"Hey, what are you doing?" He fought for a moment, then brought his arms down in front of his chest so he could see what he was fighting against. "You cuffed me?"

A darkening thrill of sexual power shot through her as she spun his chair around until he faced her. Kneeling in front of him, she ran her hands up and down the tops of his thighs, before dropping and repeating the motion on his inner thighs. He cooperated by spreading his legs so she could move even closer. She looked up at him and winked with a wide grin before dropping her focus to the thick bar of erect masculine flesh pressing against the zipper of his jeans.

"Those are to help you keep your hands to yourself. Now just relax and let me put the smile back on your face and relax your bones. This morning's game obviously didn't do a good enough job."

Straightening, she leaned up and kissed him. Her tongue outlined his lips before slipping between them to tangle with his. The long, hot exploration of his teeth and tongue and mouth sent heat shimmering through her.

She pulled away when his tongue pressed to enter her mouth. She brushed kisses on the corners of his mouth, his chin, and then down his neck. His arms came down around her back to hold her closer and keep her from escaping, but she didn't fight him. She was too busy unbuttoning his shirt. Once the edges parted, she shoved them out of her way and slowly kissed a path down the center of his chest. Along the way she took short forays to the left and right to lick and suckle at each of his nipples. When he struggled against the restraints, trying to pull her closer, she moved back.

"Release me, baby girl. I need to touch you," he said, his voice the deep growl that was so sexy, so arousing to her.

"No," she responded with a wink.

She released the button at the waistband of his jeans then eased one hand between zipper and skin, cupping her palm around his long, thick length.

Looking up his body, she raised one eyebrow as she met his hungry gaze with disbelief. "You came to work commando?"

"Umm," he groaned in answer as she slowly, carefully lowered the zipper, keeping her hand over his erection to protect the tender skin.

As soon as the zipper reached the bottom of the track, she took hold of both sides of the waistband.

"Lift up," she murmured.

As soon as he lifted his hips out of the chair she pulled his jeans to his ankles. Kneeling on the bunched up material, she used his jeans as shackles to further hold him still.

Turning her attention to his groin, she trailed her fingertips around and over his scrotum, then up the thick shaft to circle the deep crimson head of his cock. Cupping her hand slightly, she slipped her fingers between his shaft and belly then eased his cock forward until she could lick up the drop of pre-cum that appeared at the slit in the crown.

His hands came down, but because of the cuffs, he could not thread his fingers into her hair and hold the back of her head as he normally did when she loved on his cock.

Tilting her head back, she looked up at him. "Hands behind your head," she ordered gently. She did not move again until he complied.

Only then did she return her attention to the glorious cock in her hands. She swirled her tongue around the bulbous head before parting her lips even further and taking his impressive length into her mouth. She smiled when he groaned in response to her oral loving.

Using mouth, tongue, and fingers, she quickly carried him toward insanity. His hips tried to arch up to meet her, but with his jeans trapped under her knees and his arms behind his head, he could not

get the leverage necessary for such action.

"Harder, baby. Faster. So close," he murmured.

His words encouraged her to take him even deeper. She sucked stronger and increased her speed until he threw his head back and cried out his orgasm. She swallowed his seed easily, savoring the salty-sweet taste of him. The taste had become an addiction she hoped she never had to do without. She continued to hold him in her mouth as he softened, not lifting her head to release him until he made some half-hearted sounds of frustration. He brought his hands down and caressed her cheek with the back of one hand.

Shifting back off the bunched up jeans, she pulled them up until the waistband was around his lower thighs. After she stood up, she took the cutters from her back pocket and released his hands. After tossing the plastic cuffs into the trash, she turned and walked away, hoping he was too relaxed and stunned to chase her.

"Where the hell do you think you're going?" he said, his voice growly deep. He grabbed his jeans and yanked them up as he surged to his feet and followed her around the desk and across the room.

She gasped when he grabbed one shoulder just as she reached for the doorknob.

"My work here is done. I figured I'd let Sam take me home now. Or are you still grumpy? If you are, I do have another pair of cuffs with me," she said with a grin. "We could start all over again."

"You are just asking for trouble, aren't you?" he muttered as he spun her around and backed her into the door. "I'm trying very hard not to hurt you, and you want to tease me? I should strip you bare, lay you over my knee, and paddle your ass."

"This was not teasing, this was offering tender loving care to my grumpy mate. And I think you should get back to work so you can come home early to prepare for your council meeting. After that, I'll let you play with me all you like. I'll even keep the spare set of cuffs if you want," she said, stretching up to kiss the underside of his jaw. "Consider this a nooner to get you through the day without killing

anyone."

Adam growled as he lowered his head and nuzzled his cheek against hers. Then he held her head still as he kissed her until she sagged in his arms. "I'm sorry I can't return the favor right now," he whispered when he finally broke awake, after they were both breathing fast and heavy.

"You can make it up to me tonight." She took his lower lip between hers and worried it with her teeth for a few seconds. "Now get back to work and stop growling at the assistants. I do not want to have to come back here again today. I don't know how many more pairs of handcuffs Sam is willing to spare for the sake of this company."

* * * *

Adam walked in the house from the garage several hours later and immediately knew something was wrong. He'd arranged it so he arrived home with enough time to shower and change before the council was due for the dinner meeting. It was a self-protective move to keep himself from saying to hell with it and throwing Margot down on the nearest flat surface to fuck her until neither of them could move.

Would this intense sexual attraction always remain between them? Or would time lessen the need to be skin to skin with his mate as often as possible?

He frowned as he disseminated the negative atmosphere. The tension he felt in the air reminded him of the last few moments before a strong thunderstorm broke. Margot's scent, usually so sweet and arousing to him, carried a sour note of distress.

Moving fast, he tracked her scent through the house, up the stairs, and down the hall. She'd been in each of the guest rooms. He found her in the one he thought of as the jungle room. The room was painted green and yellow and was decorated with silk plants and vines, animal

prints, and even had a hammock hanging in one corner. This was his second favorite bedroom. Only the southwest-desert-inspired room he and Margot currently used was more to his liking. He couldn't wait to see what Margot would do with the master suite that currently remained unfinished. He hoped she would make it as relaxing as their current quarters.

Margot stood in the middle of the jungle room, her arms wrapped tightly around her middle. Anxiety rolled off of her in waves.

"Baby? What's wrong?" he asked, stepping around to face her. Wrapping his arms around her, he pulled her close. That's when he felt her trembling. Something was really wrong.

Margot didn't answer. She stood passively in his embrace, not fighting him as he pulled her even closer. She didn't respond to his question or even wrap her arms around him. It was as if she did not realize he was in the room with her. Adam kissed the top of her head then rested his cheek on it, surrounding her as completely as he could. He rubbed one hand up and down her back as he waited for her to come back from wherever it was she had gone.

It took several long moments before Margot pulled in a deep, shuddering breath. She held it a moment then released it on a long sigh. He felt her slowly relax under the hands that stroked her with tender loving touches.

He dropped his head so he could rub his cheek against hers. "Tell me, sweetheart," he whispered. "What has got you so upset?"

She took another long, deep, shaky breath before her hands came up to encircle his waist. Lifting her head from his chest, she looked at him with sad, worried eyes.

"My brother is coming to town," she whispered as tears turned her golden brown eyes glassy.

* * * *

"Good, I'd like to meet your brother," Adam responded easily.

"Or don't you want me to meet him?"

Margot heard the suspicious, almost hurt tone in his voice. She was treading into dangerous territory. How could she explain without hurting Adam, or upsetting him so much he would refuse to meet her brother, Matt?

"It's not that I don't want you to meet him, I just don't want him to change your mind about claiming me," she admitted softly, blinking to keep her tears under control. "I've never gotten the feeling he approves of me."

"Sweet mate of mine, nothing he might say or do will make me regret anything having to do with claiming you. Fate and destiny brought us together. The only thing that can separate us now is death, and even then, I'm not sure how long I'll be able to survive without you."

Margot snuggled deeper into his embrace and took another deep breath, savoring his musky, manly scent she had yet to find the words to adequately describe. All she knew was when they were close like this, she would happily stand in his embrace for days and just breathe him in.

"He's flying in tomorrow morning. I'm supposed to pick him up at the airport at ten thirty."

"I'll go with you. We'll take the limo," Adam declared. "He'll stay here. Which bedroom should we put him in?"

"That's what I was trying to decide. He's a cop and really conservative. I thought the blue room might be best. But maybe we should shock the hell out of him and put him in the New Orleans bordello room instead."

"Or we could give him the tour and let him choose. He might surprise you and want to spend a few days here in the jungle." Adam made the suggestion with a gentle smile.

Margot blinked and stared at him, wondering what she'd done to get such a sweet, smart, understanding man for a mate. "I hadn't thought of that. But that means so much extra work for Mrs. Nicholas.

She would have to get all the rooms ready as well as get ready for the pack gathering tomorrow night."

"Sweet, caring mate of mine, don't worry about it. These rooms are ready to be occupied all the time. All he has to do is pick a room and unpack."

Margot nodded before another thought struck. "But the pack gathering is tomorrow night. What will we do with him then?"

"We will invite him to join us. It's not like we're going to shift and have a wolf orgy in the living room. Stop worrying. The council will be arriving in a few minutes, and I still need to get changed."

His announcement made her look down at her own clothes. She still wore the jeans and turtleneck she'd worn to his office earlier, though she'd taken off his sweater that had hung on her like a dress.

"Oh shit, I forgot all about them. Come on, we had better hurry. It is very bad manners for the host to be late for his own council meeting."

Chapter 4

"Welcome to the Twin Rivers pack, Margot Jackson. I believe you will soon be a most treasured member of our pack family," Clyde Barnes said as he prepared to leave at the end of the council meeting, which ended up being more of a cocktail party than a meeting. "If for no other reason than you will be able to keep this young man under control. But are you sure you wouldn't rather throw him over for an older, wiser shape-shifter?"

He winked and grinned with the disposition of a cheerful, mischievous elderly man. The oldest member of the pack, Clyde was respected by all for his wisdom and knowledge. She'd watched throughout the evening as no one disputed anything he had to say. He was the last to leave, and his words of welcome into the pack merely added to the welcome each of the other council members had voiced privately to her at various times during the evening. After meeting and talking to her for only a few minutes, the council had agreed they would happily accept Adam's claiming her as his mate and seemed pleased with his choice.

"Go home, you old coot, before I call your mate and tell her you're looking to replace her," Adam snarked as he joined them just inside the front door.

Stepping behind Margot, he wrapped his arms around her middle and pulled her back until she found herself slight off balance. This forced her to lean back against him and trust he would keep her from falling. When he canted his hips forward and pressed against her backside, she understood why he'd chosen this position. He was trying to hide his impressive erection from their guest.

As soon as her body recognized his arousal, her pussy dampened, and her nipples stiffened in response. The council meeting was over, and it was time to play. When she shifted her hips to the left against him, she heard his breathing catch before he took a deep breath. His arms tightened around her for a second before relaxing again though he did not release her. She forced herself to concentrate on their last guest and not the needs of the man behind her. Another few minutes and then Adam, and her own nearly insatiable cravings, could have her full attention.

"Emily will just laugh at you. She's been threatening to get rid of me for years," Clyde replied with a barking laugh. "Good night, you two. Emily and I will see you tomorrow evening at the gathering."

"Yes, sir," Margot responded politely even though Clyde had told her several times throughout the evening not to call him sir or Mr. Barnes.

"Until tomorrow then, Clyde." Adam said.

Sam nodded from his place behind Clyde and stepped forward. The bodyguard-driver then escorted the older man outside where the limo waited so he could drive him home. Clyde had lost his license a few months before due to his age and failing eyesight. Adam and the other council members made sure he always had transportation to and from council meetings when he needed it. Normally his wife would drive him, though her health was failing as well. Tonight, though, she had a meeting of her own to attend. Clyde had arrived with one of the other members, but Sam had agreed to drive him home.

As soon as the door closed behind them, Adam turned her within the circle of his arms. "I thought they would never leave," he declared as he lowered his head to kiss her. One arm around her back held her close as the other slid between them to tweak an erect nipple through her blouse and bra.

Margot moaned as lightning shot from nipple straight to her wanting cunt. "Me, too," she murmured, reaching for his belt. "I need you so much I'm not sure I can make it upstairs."

Adam reached over and secured the deadbolt. "Then it's a good thing we don't have to," he replied, taking her blouse and yanking the panels apart. Buttons flew across the foyer and made small clinking sounds as they bounced on the marble floor. "Everyone's gone, and we have the whole house to ourselves. We can make love anywhere you want."

Margot paused, impressed by his show of strength as well as his hunger that matched her own. As she reached for his shirt, she knew she wouldn't be able to reproduce his bold action. Instead, she pulled the shirttails from his pants and then pushed his shirt up and out of her way. She had to feel his bare skin against hers and couldn't wait another minute.

She leaned in to lick at one turgid nipple as her hands returned to deal with his slacks. In seconds she undid his belt, button, and zipper. She pushed pants and boxers down together, leaving him bare from armpits to knees. Before she could wrap her hands around his cock and balls, he took several steps back out of touching range.

"Stop, baby. Don't touch me for a minute," he said when she took a step to follow.

Margot made a grumpy sound as she frowned at him. "Why not? I *need* you. Right here, right now," she whined as she took another step forward.

"No, stay over there," he stepped back again. "While we're waiting for me to cool down, you could take off your clothes," he ordered in the deep voice that always sent liquid fire through her veins. The rough, tough, growly voice indicated the wolf in him was straining for its freedom.

"You're killing me," she moaned as she shrugged out of her shirt and tossed it to the floor. A moment later her bra followed, and she cupped her breasts in a move to offer them up to him.

"No, sweet baby, I'm loving you. I don't want to hurt you, and right now I'm so wound up I could do serious harm if I don't take a minute to calm down."

Margot smiled. His words made her want to try something daring and bold and provocative that just might drive him past the firm grip of control he maintained. Taking another step back, she began to hum. Then she began to sway and circle, running her hands over her bare skin from waist to collarbone as she allowed the music in her head to envelope her and take over. She shed her slacks and panties as she continued dancing. Her quickening heart provided the beat to which her body moved.

Once she was naked, her hands started at her collarbone and smoothed down over her breasts to cup and lift them high. Bending her head, she licked at one pointed nipple, then the other, before releasing them again.

Her hands traveled down her body, past her belly, to her hips, and then to the center of her need. They didn't stop there, but continued moving, around her hips to cup the cheeks of her ass. This move thrust her breasts forward so she shimmied, feeling the weight of the globes sway from side to side. Her hands then brushed up her sides, returning to play with her tits again.

Her lust hummed through her veins like lava, heating her from inside out until she had to stop dancing and cool down before she came just from her thoughts and touching herself. She stopped with her back to Adam, and she felt triumphant when she heard the soft rustling of cloth and unintelligible muttering behind her. She squeaked in surprise and opened her eyes when a large, hot, masculine hand took hers and spun her in a half circle before drawing her in close to his body.

"You're too damn tempting, sweet baby." He growled as he guided her around the large foyer in an elegant waltz. They circled the floor once before he danced them toward the staircase. Once there, he released her, taking her hand as he started up the stairs.

"No, I'm not," she denied with a small, knowing smile. "I'm tired of playing games and tired of the teasing. I need you to love me."

Adam stopped several steps up the staircase. "Ever since meeting

you, I've thought about trying something. Sit on the steps, baby," he said, releasing her hand and retreating back down to the main floor of the foyer.

Margot wanted to point out that if he wanted her so badly, he needed to stop backing away from her and get them to a bed, a table, or some other flat surface. Rolling her lips over her teeth, she kept silent. Instead she sat down, curious as to what his intentions were.

"Like this?" she asked.

She held her legs tightly together and folded her hands demurely in her lap. She saw by the gleam in Adam's bright eyes that the effect of such a ladylike posture was ruined by her nudity. She maintained the pose another few seconds as he stared at her like a wolf about to pounce on an unsuspecting rabbit.

"Or like this?" She leaned back with her elbows resting on the step above the one she sat upon. That position arched her back and thrust her tits forward. She dropped her knees out to the sides, and spread her feet several feet apart so nothing was hidden from his sharp-eyed gaze.

Adam dropped to his hands and knees with a hungry growl that reverberated through her core and sent her arousal ratcheting even higher. She tensed for a moment, wondering if she'd pushed him too far. Was he so out of control he would shift and allow his wolf total freedom? He knew that while she didn't mind doing it doggy style, she refused to do it with a dog. Or, in his case, a wolf.

But he didn't shift. Instead he froze with his hands on the bottom step. He took several deep breaths, and she could see he fought to hold onto his humanity. After nearly a minute, he slowly crawled up the stairs that separated them.

As he closed the distance, he licked his lips as if starving and preparing for a feast. When he reached her widespread legs he paused to nuzzle his cheek against the inside of her left thigh just above her knee. Then he shifted and gently nipped the skin of the right before licking his way higher. He shifted his attention back and forth, tasting

her skin with licks and nips and kisses as he worked his way up the insides of her legs.

By the time he reached her apex and brushed the tip of his nose through the hair covering her mound, Margot was nearly mindless with the need. She could not wait any longer to feel him sink deep into her cunt.

"Adam, please," she murmured as she reached down with one hand to try and hurry him along.

But he refused to cooperate with her unspoken plea for a quick coupling.

"Shhh, baby. Don't worry, I'll take care of you," he murmured just before his tongue swiped between her folds from her open entrance up to her clit where he swirled a tight circle before taking the knotted flesh between his lips. After nibbling gently, he pulled more of the surrounding flesh into his mouth and sucked hard on her clit.

Margot screamed as an orgasm swept in out of nowhere and exploded over her like a bomb, catching her off guard. She knew she'd been close but had not realized she was that close.

Adam kept his mouth on her as she bucked and convulsed under him. He licked and lapped and kept her arousal from completely dying away. When she settled slightly, he crawled up two more steps and covered her body with his own. As he moved over her, he brushed the skin of his chest up her belly and over her breasts. When his mouth came into range, she leaned up and kissed him. Pulling back slightly he took his cock in hand and rubbed the bulbous head up and down through her folds, drenching the tip with her juices. Then he positioned it at the open entrance to her core. He shifted his upper body higher so he could watch as he eased just the tip inside her before freezing.

She stared into eyes that turned almost silver with his need and arousal. "Adam, now. Please. Love. Me." She lifted her hips so the head of his cock pushed farther into her slick cunt.

"Are you sure I won't hurt you, baby?" he asked through gritted

teeth. He looked like he had reached the end of his control without a thread to hold him back if she refused him.

Margot lay back on the stairs, finding the rounded front edges were almost comfortable as they pressed into her back. Reaching for his hips with both hands, she made an animalistic growl as she pulled him even closer. Soon half his cock filled her, and still it wasn't enough.

"If you don't fuck me, *and now*, I swear I'm going to...to...hell, I can't even think of what I'm going to do. But you can be sure it will be very bad and very painful. Ahhh," she cried as he surged forward until their pelvic bones pressed together and he filled her completely.

"Better?" he asked with a tense grin that looked more than a little predatory.

Margot nodded and then shook her head. The long, thick length filling her felt so good, but she needed more. "Move, damn it. Fuck me. Claim me," she ordered as tears filled her eyes. "Love me," she whispered. "Please."

"Oh, sweet baby girl, I do love you. More than you'll even know," he said as his hips pulled back until only the head remained in her. After a heartbeat, he pushed deep again just as slowly.

He set an easy pace, a gentle rocking rhythm which he maintained until Margot began to lift her hips in response. Then he began moving marginally faster, but that only made her renewed arousal spiral higher.

Feeling devilish and wanting to make him lose his oh-so-tight control, she smiled as she lifted her hands to her own nipples. Taking the hardened nubs between index fingers and thumb, she began to roll them. That simple touch sent electricity zinging through her. Her pussy clenched around his thick shaft and sent her quickly to the edge of sexual sanity once again.

In response, Adam growled through clenched teeth. His hips began to move back and forth, filling her in faster and faster strokes. All she could do was hold him, so she wrapped her arms and legs around him. As her muscles convulsed with another orgasm, he leaned down to where her neck met her shoulder and bit his claiming mark. She screamed as this orgasm rolled through her even more powerfully than the last one. She barely heard him cry out his release at the same moment but felt the heat of his seed pulse in and fill her.

Long seconds later, he collapsed over her, pressing the steps deeper into her back. For the first time during their loving, she felt discomfort. She tried to relax her muscles and not fight the marble steps, but it didn't help. Then she became painfully aware of the teeth still imbedded in her shoulder though he no longer suckled at the mark.

"Adam," she whispered as she stroked her hand up and down his spine.

He grunted in return as he pulled his teeth from her skin and licked the bite mark closed. Before she could explain her problem, he wrapped both arms around her back and in yet another impressive show of strength, lifted her. He rolled so that he sat on the steps, and she straddled his lap even as they remained connected in the most intimate way possible.

"Better?" he asked as he pushed her head down against his shoulder and began to stroke her with warm, loving touches over her shoulders, back, arms, and sides.

"Uh huh," she murmured as every bit of the tension she seemed to live with her entire life seemed to drain out of her toes. She was left boneless and exhausted.

"Think you can make it to the bedroom before you fall asleep?"

"Mmmm, don't think so," she murmured as she snuggled against his chest.

"Okay, baby. Hold on, and I'll get us upstairs and to bed. But you'll have to explain to Sam and Mrs. Nicholas why our clothes are all over the foyer." Adam chuckled as he brushed a kiss over her hair.

Too relaxed to worry about his threat, Margot shrugged. "I'll just tell them it's your fault. I have no doubt they'll believe me. After all, they both know you."

Adam laughed as he surged to his feet, holding her easily as he turned and started to climb the rest of the stairs to the second floor. "Yes, you're probably right."

Chapter 5

"If you don't sit down, I'm going to take you out to the limo and relax your bones so much you can't move."

Adam spoke through a yawn as Margot stalked by one more time. They'd been up until the wee hours playing with each other's bodies, and though they'd only crawled from bed an hour ago, he still thought a nap sounded like a good idea. They'd arrived ten minutes before, and she'd begun to pace almost immediately, making him more tired.

He was only half kidding in the threat. They'd only been together a short time, but he'd never seen anyone so nervous before. Watching her stalk back and forth was beginning to make him jumpy and nervous. He couldn't get her to talk about why she was so nervous, which meant he couldn't figure out if she was worried about seeing her brother or having him meet the man.

She turned to frown at him. "You wouldn't dare," she said before her eyes flicked toward the windows that looked out onto the runway tarmac. "Matt will be here any minute."

Adam remained still, just lifting one eyebrow in response as if daring her to push him.

"Okay, so maybe you would, but you won't," she said, finally sitting next to him on the bench. "I don't understand why you're not nervous. This is my brother we're talking about."

Adam wrapped one arm around her and pulled her so close she was forced to lean against him. Sitting this way, she also could not see the runway. She felt so good next to him even if she was as jittery as a squirrel on a triple espresso buzz. Holding her settled his nerves so he could think beyond what the next few minutes would hold for their

future. He had no illusions her brother would be suspicious of him. After all, a man of his status and celebrity meeting and moving a woman like Margot into his home the first day was not usual. But then society didn't understand the nature of shape-shifters and their mates.

"Yes, he is your brother. And I am your mate. We both love you and want what is best for you. In this case, it's me. Stop worrying baby, your brother and I will get along just fine," he assured her before he lifted her head and lowered his to kiss her.

Harnessing the lust that urged him to carry her outside to the privacy the limo could offer for yet another coupling, Adam continued this most pleasant form of distraction he could think of. He didn't stop until he heard passengers entering the terminal. Releasing her lips, he ran his fingers through her hair to add a little more tousle to her style. Then he wiped away a lipstick smear with his thumb.

Once he finished, he held still while she rubbed her fingers over his lips as well before straightening his shirt and brushing a piece of something from his shoulder.

Adam looked up as a tall, broad, muscular blond man who looked nothing like Margot stepped through the wall separating the passenger's waiting area from the rest of the terminal. The man paused a moment then frowned at them. At the same moment, he caught the scent of shape-shifter and knew it came from this man.

"I think your brother has arrived," he said, tilting his head in the direction of the serious-looking man who slowly approached them.

* * * *

Margot swiveled so fast it took a moment for her equilibrium to catch up with the rest of her. One look and she launched herself from the bench toward the man watching them with suspicious interest.

"Matthew!" she squealed as she threw herself into his arms.

"Hello, Margot," he said with a grin as he caught her and turned

one complete circle with her held high in his arms.

He returned her hug with one that rivaled an agitated boa constrictor. When he finally set her on her feet again and released her, she watched as he turned to Adam with a serious expression. She began to tense as the two men silently sized each other up. Would they come to blows? Over her? Here in the airport? Or would they wait until they got out to the parking lot?

"You must be Adam," Matt stated in his official "don't mess with me" cop voice. He sounded nearly as official as the night he'd arrested her for underage drinking just two weeks before her twentyfirst birthday. It had been his first solo arrest, and though he'd paid her fine at the end of his overnight shift, it had still taken her nearly a year to forgive him.

"Adam Thomasson. Welcome to New Bern," Adam said, nodding solemnly before offering his hand. Margot held her breath as Matt studied the man a moment before extending his own. The two men shook hands then she watched as knuckles turned white. "Matt Brady," he ground out between clenched teeth as the show of strength continued. "Are you just fucking my sister? Or do you have plans for a future with her?"

The men finally broke their handshake. As if mirror images, the two men dropped their hands to their sides before flexing their fingers. They looked as if they would come to blows if the other made one wrong move.

"Matthew Joseph Brady. What the hell do you think you are doing?" Margot hissed as she stepped in the space between the two men. She faced her brother, but her buttocks brushed against the front of Adam's body. She felt his cock immediately begin to harden in response to the touch.

"Hush, pretty baby. Your brother is just worried about you," Adam wrapped his arms around her middle and dropped a kiss on the top of her head. "Truth is, Matt, your sister is my soul mate. I plan to spend the rest of my life spoiling her rotten," he said.

Margot watched as Matt took that statement in. "Uh huh," he replied, clearly not impressed.

"Come on you two, let's go home. I'm sure Mrs. Nicholas could use some help getting ready for tonight," Margot said, turning the two men toward the exit. Linking an arm with each man, she remained between them as they headed for the parking lot where Sam waited with the limo.

Instead of heading home, Adam asked Sam to drive them downtown to an early lunch at one of her favorite hole-in-the-wall restaurants. Unfortunately, the tension remained high between the two men.

By the time they reached the house, Margot was ready to lock them in one of the unfinished rooms and leave them there until they either killed one another or settled whatever macho crap kept them posturing and acting like six year olds fighting over the last cookie.

As soon as they entered the house, her shredded nerves demanded she escape for a few minutes. "I'm going to go check in with Mrs. Nicholas. Adam, could you please give Matt a tour of the guestrooms and help him get settled? Thanks."

* * * *

Adam frowned as Margot hurried away before he could respond. Her sweet vanilla, honey, and cinnamon scent had been soured with anxiety all morning but had grown even more so since her brother's appearance. He knew their animosity was causing it but didn't know how to break through the icy wall of suspicion her brother seemed to have brought with him from New Mexico.

"She's upset," Matt stated flatly as the two men turned to look at one another once she was gone.

"Yes," Adam answered simply. "She's afraid you will think she's screwing up her life by getting involved with the man who has been named, quote, The South's Billionaire Playboy, unquote. She's also

not stupid and knows something else is going on between us."

With that, Adam led the way up the stairs, slowing as he passed over the ones still marked with the dried evidence of their combined juices. The faint scent drifted to him, and he smiled in remembrance of the amazing coupling they'd shared the night before.

Matt remained silent until they reached the second floor. When Adam glanced at him, the man looked deep in thought, but he held his tongue until they stopped in the hall outside the guestroom farthest from the current master bedroom. It was the bordello room with its red walls and big brass bed.

"You're wolf, right?"

The question caught Adam completely off guard, and he found himself answering without hesitation. "Yes, I'm wolf. Alpha of the Twin Rivers Pack. And you are?"

"Wolf as well. Enforcer for the Santa Fe pack."

"And Margot?"

"She's human. Our parents were best friends. When my parents died in a car accident, hers adopted me. I was five, and Margot was two. She does not know about my dual nature though Dad did. We agreed to keep it from the women, though I think Mom suspected something."

Adam smiled. "She may not know about yours specifically, but she knows about shape-shifters in general. She knows I'm one. She actually thinks it's cool."

"How?"

"She is a curious woman, and her reading is wide ranging and most interesting. Now, back to the tour. There are four guest rooms, but I thought you might get a kick out of this one," Adam said before opening the door. He stepped back to let Matt precede him into the room.

Matt walked several feet into the room before turning a circle, taking in the deep red wall paper and king-size bed before turning to Adam with a grin. "Is there a woman hiding in the closet to keep me

company?"

"No, but maybe you'll meet someone at tonight's gathering of my pack. There are a number of unmated women who might be interested in messing up the sheets with you. But if you don't like this room, we can always move down the hall to the kid's room that has bunk beds and teddy bears or across the hall to the jungle room."

Still grinning, Matt began shaking his head before Adam finished. "No, this is fine, just fine. Reminds me of those old cowboys movies where the hero and the whore were best friends but never slept together."

Adam knew he had to extend some gesture of peace. "I don't want to be your enemy, Matt. I love your sister. She is my mate, and I really do plan to spend the rest of my life spoiling her. If you need to, I can show you my company books to prove my worth."

Matt studied him with a blank expression for a long moment. "I believe you. It's just that even at her age, Margot is too trusting. Her ex was a complete ass who nearly crushed her spirit. All her life she's had to scramble to make ends meet and never knew from one day to the next what her future held. I don't want her to be hurt again. She's too special."

"I agree. She is a very special woman, an angel in human form. You're a good brother, but believe me when I say I will never hurt her, nor will I allow anyone else to harm her. Fate brought us together, and death is the only way I'll let her get away."

Matt nodded with a wry smile. "We'll see how you feel after she stops sleeping because she is overstressed with commitments and worries about things she can't do anything about. I'll warn you now, Margot's biggest problem is she doesn't know how to hurt anyone's feelings. She can't say no to anyone who says they need her help."

"Thanks, I'll keep that in mind. The gathering starts at six. Feel free to take a nap or go for a run if you want. The mansion sits in the middle of fifty acres of fenced woodlands that's protected from intruders."

Matt yawned. "A nap sounds good. Can someone wake me at about four so I can take a quick run before getting ready?"

"No problem," Adam said, as he retreated to the hall pulling the door closed behind himself. "And welcome to the family."

Not friends, but at least they wouldn't be tearing each other apart during dinner. Heading down the hall toward his own bedroom, Adam decided he and Margot needed a nap as well. Or maybe a nice long bath for two would help her relax.

Once he reached their bedroom, he used the house phone to call the kitchen. "Mrs. Nicholas, could you please tell Margot I need to see her upstairs? Thank you."

* * * *

Margot's knees wobbled as she descended the main stairs just before six o'clock. She wasn't sure if it was the new high-heeled sandals she'd decided to wear or the fact she and Adam had spent the afternoon doing what they did best, making wild, passion-filled love before napping and taking a long bubble bath and making love again.

"Wow, sis, you look beautiful," Matt said as he stepped into the foyer from the living room. He looked surprised, like he hadn't expected her to dress up to meet Adam's friends.

A moment later, Adam appeared next to him. "As always, sweet mate of mine, you look scrumptious."

The green dress she wore turned her sage green eyes mossy and brought out more of the red in her auburn hair. As soon as she'd seen the dress on one of the shopping trips Adam had dragged her on, she'd been pulled to it, even though she rarely wore green. The corset-like top with spaghetti straps showed off her broad shoulders and Adam's bite mark beautifully. The full skirt hid her wide hips and not so flat belly while the just-above-the-knee hem showed off her shapely legs to their best advantage. It was a dress that made her feel almost as beautiful as Adam's hungry, appreciative looks did.

Margot studied both men with an approving eye. Though both were dressed casually in slacks and Oxford shirts, the effect was entirely different. Matt, dressed in black from his Santa Fe Police Department shirt to his black cowboy boots, looked rough and rugged, a bad boy ready for action. Adam, on the other hand, in a blue-green shirt that exactly matched his eyes with tan slacks and light brown dock shoes, looked refined and elegant and ready for a round of golf or cocktails on the yacht.

"Thank you, kind sirs. You don't look so bad yourselves," she said as the doorbell rang, announcing the arrival of the first of their guests.

Chapter 6

The pack members arrived in a steady stream over the next fifteen minutes. As they did, Margot met each one individually. Most stared at her exposed shoulder with its prominent claiming mark with interest, but no one questioned either the mark or what a human was doing at their pack gathering.

The last to arrive, Leigh Kincaid-Thorne, followed an older couple through the door. Once in the foyer, she hesitated. After Adam introduced her to Maxwell and Eleanor Kincaid-Thorne, Margot understood why. The young woman didn't want her parents to know there was tension between her and the alpha's new mate. Only after the line cleared and her parents disappeared into the living room did Leigh strut across the foyer. Every pair of unmated male eyes within sight followed her, wondering if they would be the one to talk her out of the slinky crimson halter dress that was even smaller than the one she'd worn the week before during the evening of the bachelor auction.

"Adam, it's so wonderful to see you again," she said in a breathless little voice as she wrapped herself around him like kudzu around a pine tree. With the confident smile of a woman who knew she looked like sex come to life, she leaned up to kiss him.

Instead of returning her effusive greeting, Adam kept his arms at his sides and turned his head so her lips landed just under his ear and not on his lips. "Leigh. Glad you could make it."

When she realized he did not return in her enthusiastic greeting, Leigh released him but did not back away. "I'll catch up with you later, okay?" she simpered before turning on one stiletto heel and strolling away. She ignored Margot, though did glance in Matt's direction with interest.

"Who is that?" Matt asked in a voice gone deep.

Margot turned to look at her brother. "That is Leigh Kincaid-Thorne. She's the spoiled bitch who tried to kill me last week. I would recommend you stay far away from her."

Matt watched as the woman in red entered the living room and joined several other young women. "I'm not sure that will be possible. I'm getting a drink. Can I bring you anything?"

"White wine, please. And can you bring Adam a beer?"

Matt nodded and headed for the bar where the bartenders was filling drink orders as fast as he could. Instead of waiting, Matt walked up the line and stepped behind the bar. Without a word, he began to help the other man.

When no one else entered the front door, Margot looked at Adam. "Do you think anyone would mind if I took my shoes off? They may be beautiful, but they're killing my feet."

Adam frowned as he looked at the sandals that were pinching her feet then his gaze slowly traveled up her body, setting off sparks everywhere it touched. "If they hurt your feet, take them off. No one will care."

"I doubt that, but at least I won't be wincing with every step I take." Margot stepped out of the shoes with a sigh of relief. She picked up the shoes and was surprised when a maid hired for the evening immediately stepped up to take them from her.

"I'll put these in the kitchen for you, ma'am," she said softly.

"Thank you, that would be wonderful." Margot handed the shoes over.

"Shall we join our guests?" Adam took her hand.

"Are you making the announcement now or later?"

"I thought we could mingle for a bit and then make the announcement right before dinner."

"Sounds good," Margot agreed, wondering how she would get

through the next hour before dinner without retreating to the kitchen to hide.

A half hour later, Margot was more than ready for the evening to come to an end. She'd wandered from group to group, pausing with each for a few minutes, trying to find one she might fit in with. Once the pack members realized she had joined them, each group stopped talking and drifted apart, leaving her standing alone once again.

She thought about attaching herself to Adam's side but knew their guests would see that as weakness. More than ever before, she needed to show strength, even if she did not feel it. Adam had explained during their bath earlier that as his mate she would be expected to be in charge of the females even though she was human. She was, after all, their alpha's mate and as such would be expected to lead and guide and counsel the women.

Pausing in the center of the room, she turned a slow circle, looking for Matt. When she found him, she had to smile. He had his hands full with several of the unmated women who had backed him into a corner. He looked bored as they each tried to capture his attention. Instead his eyes searched the room, as if looking for someone else.

When his eyes met hers, he sent her a warm smile and with the hand not holding his beer bottle made their childhood hand signal for "you okay?" She nodded then pointed back at him to ask, "and you?" Once he nodded, she turned and began to make yet another circuit around the room.

Checking her watch, she saw they would not be called to dinner for at least another fifteen minutes. How would she survive until then?

Looking around and feeling like an unwanted intruder no one knew how to deal with, Margot stepped through the open doorway that led to the dark and empty room just off the living room. She needed a few minutes to regroup and relax away from the probing, judging eyes of the pack members. As soon as she stood alone in the darkness, she heard a vaguely familiar voice.

"What does Adam think he's doing by claiming her? There's no way I'll bow down before that human bitch, mate of the alpha or not."

Shifting closer to the door while remaining in the shadows, Margot was not surprised to find Leigh holding court just a few feet away. The other women in the small circle did not verbalize their opinions, but she did see several of them nod as the overly obvious, over-processed, spoiled young woman continued her shrill tirade. She put down Margot's age, size, and even her dress choice for the evening.

When she started in on Adam's mental state and judgment, Margot's temper flared out of control. In seconds she reached the point where she could not tolerate another word. Taking a deep breath and hoping she didn't end up dead from challenging a shape-shifter, she stepped out of the darkness and into the light coming through the doorway. She didn't speak until she stood only an arm's length behind the woman.

"Leigh Kincaid-Thorne, I don't know what high and mighty finishing school taught you that being a trash-talking bitch was appropriate behavior for a lady, but I suggest your parents should sue them."

Margot knew she would only hold the upper hand of surprise for a moment, so she spoke loud enough for anyone in their corner of the room to hear her. Hopefully Adam would arrive before Leigh tore her to pieces.

"Yes, I am your alpha's mate. If that makes me something special so be it. I don't even care you're talking bad about me, but I will not have you talking so negatively about Adam, especially while standing under his roof. In some societies, that would be called treason and is punishable by death. Here, in my home, it's just stupid."

She stopped talking and waited for the other woman to respond. She thought she was ready for anything, until the woman spun around and growled at her. Leigh had begun to shift. Her lower face had elongated and her teeth had grown sharp and pointy. Her eyes flashed with fierce, angry, somewhat crazed fire as the pupils dilated to pinpoints.

"You may be queen bitch now, but it will only be a matter of time before Adam comes to his senses and realizes he needs a shifter as his mate. Then you'll find yourself dead. Until then, if you want me to bow to you then you'd better earn that show of respect." With that the younger woman shifted, and a tawny brown wolf stood in her place, still wearing her scrap of a dress.

"Oh no, you don't." Margot growled, quickly shifting to one side while the wolf tried to shake off the red dress that entangled her, making it impossible to move.

Without her shoes, Margot was able to maneuver to the side. Lashing out with building anger, she kicked the wolf just behind the shoulder, catching her off guard and knocking her over. She followed the animal to the ground, her intent to hold the wolf down while trying to avoid her sharp claws and teeth. She wasn't sure how long she'd be able to maintain her superior position, especially since there was a growing number of potential enemies turning their attention in their direction.

Once she lay on top of the wolf, she worked one arm around Leigh's neck so she could angle her head so she couldn't move. Then, remembering some crazy movie she'd seen years before, Margot leaned in and bit the wolf's ear. She clamped down on the thin triangle of furry flesh and held on long after the wolf stopped fighting her hold and instead began squealing in pain.

"What the hell?" Adam's voice reached her just before his hand stroked her cheek. "Let go, baby. You've proved your point."

It took a few seconds for her to relax enough to open her mouth to release the ear, but finally she did. Then the adrenaline her anger had given her drained away, and she began to tremble. "Adam?"

"Yes, I'm here."

She looked up and found him kneeling on one side of her. Matt

was on the other side, his gaze intent and focused solely on the wolf in her arms. "Um, how do I let her go without getting killed?"

"Don't worry, Margot. I'll take her," Matt said. He moved forward, laying one lower leg across her ribs, just behind Leigh's shoulder. He held her head pressed to the floor with one large hand wrapped around her muzzle.

The wolf made a hungry, whining sound as its attention turned from the woman to the man.

Margot didn't understand when Matt leaned closer to the wolf and took a deep breath before growling deep in his chest. The harsh sound caused the wolf to freeze and then make another sound that didn't sound like pain, but more like need. But then Margot's attention turned to the man picking her up from the floor. Adam set her on her feet then wrapped himself around her and held her securely for a moment. Once her shivers eased, he released her but held her at arm's length so he could visually inspect her to make sure she really was all right.

"She didn't hurt you?" he asked as he stepped forward and wrapped his arms around her again.

"No, I didn't give her a chance," Margot replied, her voice still quivering with reaction.

"So, are you ready to make our announcement, baby girl? Or do you want to wait until after dinner?"

He combed his fingers through her hair then brushed kisses over her temple as he waited for her to answer. Hot electricity shivered through her, turning the last of her anger into the simmer of arousal she had lived with constantly since Adam had entered her life.

"I guess so," she responded in a soft voice. "But don't you think they've pretty much figured it out without a formal announcement? Can't they all just go home now so we can go upstairs and get into mischief?"

"A couple more hours, mate." He tilted her head back for a long, deep kiss that he broke much too quickly for Margot's liking. "Then

we'll get into all the mischief your heart desires. By the way, you did a very good job of proving your status as queen bitch."

Stepping away she broke his hold, then took his hand and laced their fingers together. Her hunger for him had exploded like a summer storm, and she wasn't sure she could be this close to him again until it cooled. "Don't kiss me like that again unless you want me to drag you to your office and mess you up."

Adam chuckled as he lifted their intertwined hands to his lips. While holding her gaze, he brushed a kiss over her knuckles. "Maybe after dinner," he murmured, his turquoise eyes gleaming down at her with the sexual heat she loved.

He winked before leading her to the front of the room. A moment later, Clyde and the rest of the council joined them to form a semi-circle just behind and around them. The hum of animated conversation that had begun once Adam and Matt stepped in and stopped what could have been a deadly fight ceased, and the room grew unnaturally silent. Someone had even stopped the soft jazz music that had been playing in the background.

Margot saw her brother at the back of the crowd near the doorway that led to the empty room she'd stood in just moments before. The unmated women stood in a group nearby. Their attention was divided between the alpha and the handsome stranger who stood guarding the door to the empty room. Matt winked at her and smiled, but seemed distracted. Leigh was nowhere in sight.

"Good evening. Thank you all for coming. I hope you all had a chance to meet and talk to Margot Jackson and her brother, Matt Brady." Adam paused as the crowd nodded though only a few smiled in response. "I stand before you to announce, if you haven't already guessed, that I have claimed Margot as my mate."

That announcement sent a flurry of murmurs through the room before someone began to clap. In a few seconds everyone in the room joined in.

As the applause died away almost a minute later, Leigh emerged

from the empty room and pushed her way to the front of the crowd until she faced Margot and Adam. "I don't know about the rest of the females, but I refuse to acknowledge a human as my queen bitch," she announced with a threatening growl.

When no one else came forward to back her up, she turned to look at the other women. No one moved a hair. The older women looked horrified while the younger, mated women looked confused. The unmated ones dropped their gazes to the floor.

Margot turned to look at Adam. "Can she do that?"

Adam didn't answer. His fingers tightened on hers as he focused on the troublemaker. "Leigh, you were just put down by your queen, or is your memory really that short? Margot is my mate, and you will pay her the respect due the alpha's mate or you can find a new pack that will take you in." Then he turned his attention to the rest of the room. "And that goes for anyone else who thinks a human should not be your alpha's mate."

With his pronouncement, the crowd took a step back from Leigh. Only one man stepped closer. Matt had followed her across the room, taking a position behind and just to the left of the younger woman. When she turned to look around the room a second time, he moved closer until only a few inches separated them.

Leigh froze and took a deep breath. As she exhaled, her aggressive posture eased, and her entire being seemed to soften.

Matt leaned in and sniffed at her neck then straightened again. He cupped one hand under her chin and lifted her face to his. "Do you know who I am?" he asked in a soft, grumbly growl that Margot recognized as that of an aroused shape-shifter.

The thought that Matt could be a shape-shifter boggled Margot's mind. Then she wondered why he hadn't told her before now. Did he think she wouldn't accept him? What else didn't she know about her brother?

"Yes," Leigh murmured before taking another deep breath. "You are my mate."

Matt looked even more serious than Margot had ever seen him before as he stared down at the woman whose head only came up to his chin. "You will stop giving my sister a hard time immediately," Matt ordered, his voice even softer. "And you'll apologize to Margot and your pack for this outrageous behavior you've shown here tonight," he ordered gently.

"Yes," Leigh breathed, looking completely under his control. "Margot, I'm sorry. I'm sure you will make a great mate for Adam. I wish you many years of happiness."

Her announcement sent another ripple of whispering through the room.

Matt nodded, one corner tilting upward. "Good girl," he said as he took her hand then turned to Adam. "Alpha Thomasson, with your permission, I'd like to claim this woman as my mate."

Adam looked from Matt to the woman who couldn't take her eyes off the man beside her. "Leigh, is this what you want?"

The woman nodded, "Yes, Adam. This man is my mate and..." she swallowed hard, "well, you know," she finished with a glance toward Margot.

"Yes, Leigh, we understand. Fate has brought you your match. Matt, are you certain about this? She's-" Margot said.

Before she could finish her statement, Leigh laid her free hand on his chest. "What's she trying to say is that I've been a true bitch. I attacked her twice with the thought that if I got her out of my way, Adam would claim me for his woman," she admitted softly.

Soft gasps went up around the room, but Matt didn't flinch. "That stops now. Otherwise you will find yourself over my lap as I paddle your bare ass until you can't sit down. You are *my* mate and will act with dignity and respect toward everyone, shifter and human alike. Do you understand?"

Leigh swallowed hard before nodding.

"And from now on you will dress like a lady and not a slut." Again Leigh agreed with a silent nod.

"Words, mate. I need words."

"Yes, okay."

"Yes, okay, who?"

"Yes, okay, sir?" Leigh whispered so only Adam and Margot could hear.

Matt nodded, then leaned down. "Good girl," he murmured just before he kissed her.

Around the room sighs were heard as fate and destiny brought together another couple. When Matt finally broke the kiss, he looked at Adam and grinned. "If you don't mind, I think I'll take my mate out for a walk around the grounds."

Adam nodded. "May you have many happy years together," he said in the shape-shifter's blessing of a mating.

Without another word, Matt bent at the waist and put his shoulder into Leigh's middle. She squealed as he straightened, but didn't fight him. A path through the crowd opened to the front door. Everyone they passed smiled and wished them well. Once they were gone and the door closed behind them, the pack turned its collective attention back to Adam.

"As I was saying, I have claimed Margot for my mate. We'll be married as soon as we figure out how to do so without the entire world interfering."

"You could get married right now," someone called from the back of the crowd. "After all, there are two ministers and a judge in the room. All you have to do is decide who you want to do the deed."

Adam looked at Margot. "What do you say, baby girl? Will you marry me? Here? Tonight?"

Chapter 7

Margot's heart screamed "yes, yes," Her head countered with "wait a minute and think this through. You've only known him a week." Her cunt threw in a completely inappropriate "fuck me here and now."

She knew Adam as well as the rest of the pack was waiting for an answer, but all she could think about was getting alone with him. Looking into his beautiful eyes, she said the only thing that felt right.

"Yes, I'll marry you tonight. But I want Matt here. And Sarah and your mother. And I need to speak with you alone."

Adam pulled her into his chest and leaned down. "Thank you, sweet mate of mine," he whispered. Then he kissed her long, deep, and hot enough to raise the temperature in the room several degrees.

After he lifted his head, he looked to the three men who were able to officiate. They'd stepped to the front of the crowd and looked excited at the possibility of being chosen to perform this special ceremony. "You three will all perform the wedding. You have one hour to work out who is doing what." Then he turned to the pack. "Dinner should be ready in a few minutes, please enjoy. Margot and I will be back in a bit. Oh, and could someone call Sarah and my mother and have them join us as well?"

As Clyde nodded and reached for his cell phone, Adam swept Margot up into his arms and headed through the crowd to the foyer. She ignored the laughter and friendly teasing of those they passed. He carried her across the foyer and headed down the hall toward his office. He didn't put her down until they were in the room with the door closed and the lock secured.

"So, what did you want to talk about?" he asked as he pushed her back to the wall then cupped his palms over her tits.

Immediately her nipples contracted, sending shafts of need through her body. She felt her panties grow wetter as her cream overflowed. As usual, being alone with him made it hard to think of anything except getting naked and taking him deep inside her body.

"Um, yes, well. I wanted to make sure this is what *you* want. We don't have to get married, now or in the future. I'm happy just being your mate. I don't have to be your wife, too," she managed to get out before moaning as he drew circles around her nipples before taking the peaks between his thumbs and forefingers.

When his grip on her nipples squeezed painfully tight, she squeaked in protest. Looking up she was surprised to find him frowning down at her like a thundercloud about to split the sky apart.

"Now you listen to me, Margot Jackson, and listen well. I love you. I know it's probably old fashioned, but I want you to be Margot Thomasson, or Margot Jackson-Thomasson if you prefer. I want the world to know that you are my mate, my woman, the one and only lady in my life. Now if you *don't* want to marry me tonight just say so, and we'll do it some other time with all the fuss and insanity that will come with a celebrity wedding."

"No, no fuss. I want to marry you now. Tonight. I don't want to wait another day," she said, reaching between them and undoing his belt. "But first I need you to claim me again. Right here, before you take me as your wife."

As soon as his belt was undone, she pulled the button at his waist free of its buttonhole, then reached for the zipper. As soon as it was down, she shoved his pants and boxers to his knees.

At the same time, Adam reached for the bottom of her skirt and pulled it up, tucking the hem into the top of her dress, baring her from waist to toes and exposing the matching green silk panties she wore.

He reached for her hips and in less than a second the thin material tore under the stress of his pulling on them. After pulling the silk from her body, he tossed the shredded panties over one shoulder to land on the floor in the center of the room.

"You tore my panties," she pointed out as she wrapped one hand around his erection and slid from base to tip and back again. Her other hand reached lower and cupped his balls.

"I told you to stop wearing them," he responded in a deep, growly voice as he slid two fingers into her open cunt.

"But," she tried to argue, but the feel of his cock in her hand and his fingers inside her distracted her so much she couldn't think of a proper rebuttal. "Kiss me," she murmured instead. Releasing his balls, she wrapped her hand around the back of his neck and pulled him down so she could kiss him.

As their lips mated, she shifted to stand on one leg while the other wrapped around his hip, pulling his pelvis even closer to hers.

Breaking the kiss, she whispered, "What is it about your offices that make us so crazy?"

He smiled down at her as his hand left her nipples and slid down her body and around to cup the flesh of her ass. "It's not the room, sweet mate. It's you. Being near you winds me up no matter where we are."

With that he lifted her high against the door. She released his cock and held onto his shoulders with both hands. He held her then for a moment before sliding her back down so that she sheathed his cock in one easy movement. They sighed into each other's mouths as the joy of being one flowed over, through and around them. Adam held her as if he could stand there all day, but her body was screaming for more. Much more.

"Fuck me now. Hard and fast," she instructed, stabbing her fingers through his hair.

"My pleasure," he breathed.

His hips shifted down and back, pulling all but the head from her core. Then he slammed back up into her, deep and hard. Leaning down, he continued kissing her as he set a fast pace. She had no

problem keeping up with him, arching her hips to meet his as she held onto his shoulders as tight as she could.

When she came less than a minute later, her internal muscles rippled around his cock. He muffled her cries with a deep, openmouthed kiss. When she grew silent, he shifted his attention to her neck. With a murmured, "I love you mate of my heart," he sank his teeth into the claiming mark there. Her shoulder muffled his howl of release as her sheath continued to ripple and milk his seed from him.

Once his muscle-clenching orgasm eased, draining all his strength with it, Adam slowly sank to his knees, carrying her with him. After licking the bite mark closed, he rested his forehead on her shoulder and focused simply on pulling in panting breaths as they recovered.

It was several long minutes before either could move. Finally she ran her fingers through his curly hair. "We need to clean up and get back to the party," she murmured softly though that was the last thing she really wanted to do. She would prefer to move over to the couch and cuddle together before taking a nice long nap.

"Mmmm," he replied without moving a muscle. "They'll have to wait until I can feel my legs again."

Ten minutes later, they returned to the party looking a little rumpled, but smiling, relaxed, and happy. Margot moved carefully, afraid to bend over too far for fear of flashing her bare ass the room. No one commented on their lengthy absence, but the older mated couples smiled with understanding, while the unmated ones looked on with envy. Margot could not meet anyone's gaze without blushing.

Sarah and Adam's mother, Gwen, came through the front door about the same time. Sarah was carrying a pair of spike-heeled sandals while Gwen examined what appeared to be Leigh's silk dress. The two women crossed the foyer and showed their bounty to Adam.

"We found these on the steps. Has something happened we should know about?" Sarah asked, looking from Margot to her boss with a wide smile and one eyebrow cocked higher than the other.

"Leigh found her mate." Adam took the clothes and handed them

off to a passing maid.

"About damn time. I thought I was going to have to take a whip to her a couple of times recently to keep her from claiming you instead of the other way around," Gwen said as Adam guided the women into the dining room.

They filled plates from the buffet there then joined Clyde and several other council members in one corner of the living room. Margot kept an eye out for her brother, but he and Leigh did not make an appearance before they finished eating.

"So, are you two ready to get hitched?" Clyde asked with a knowing grin as the catering staff cleared away the last of the dirty dishes.

"Not without my brother," Margot said just as the front door opened. Intimate laughter wafted ahead of the couple who stepped into view a moment later.

They walked in holding hands. Matt was shirtless. Leigh was barefoot and wore his black three-button police department polo. The shirt hung on her nearly to her knees. Leigh's perfectly coifed hair was a mess, and leaves and sticks were visible from both heads. Leigh walked gingerly, as if her ass hurt.

When everyone turned at their entrance, for the first time since she'd met the woman, Leigh looked embarrassed. She turned and hid her face in Matt's chest. He, on the other hand, looked over the crowd with a triumphant grin. When his woman moved to try and hide behind him, he held her securely by his side. Lowering his head close to hers, he murmured something in her ear. Leigh nodded and stopped fighting him, but was clearly uncomfortable wearing nothing but his shirt, even if it did cover more than the dress she'd arrived in had.

"You're just in time, Matt," Adam waved him forward, not surprised when he pulled Leigh along with him.

"In time for what?"

"In time for my wedding," Margot said with a smile.

Matt nodded and took his place beside his sister. "Wondered how

you were going to work this out," he said to Adam.

Margot watched as Adam shrugged. "Figured while you're in town and the pack has gathered and we have an abundance of people willing to officiate, it was as good a time as ever."

She looked at him and wrinkled her nose of dissatisfaction. "If that's how you feel maybe I don't want to marry you tonight after all. Maybe we need to talk about this some more."

She turned, but managed only one step before hard, muscular arms wrapped around her middle and pulled her back against a long, hard body.

He bent his head and licked the bite mark on her shoulder. That single touch drained all of the fight out of her. Lifting his lips to her ear, he whispered, "It was a joke, sweet baby. Do I need to take you back into my office and prove that I love you and want to marry you and be with you for the rest of our lives and beyond?"

A shivery thrill shot through Margot, exploding simultaneously in her heart and pelvis. Turning her head, she looked deep in his eyes. "I love you," she murmured before she closed the last inch between their lips and kissed him.

Again she ignored the sighs and laughter from those around them.

"I love you, too," he said when they finally parted nearly a minute later.

"So are you two getting married or not?" Matt snarked, which earned him an elbow in the ribs from his mate. In response he patted her ass which caused her to gasp, but Margot couldn't tell if it was in pain or arousal.

"Yes, we are getting married," Adam stated. "Mother, Sarah, would you please join us?"

Once the two women joined them at the front of the room, the rest of the pack crowded close as well. After taking Adam's right hand in hers, Margot nodded to the three men who stood waiting in front of them. "Do your thing, gentlemen."

Two minutes later, the three men said in unison, "We now

pronounce you husband and wife."

"You may kiss your husband, Mrs. Thomasson," the judge said, which sent another ripple of laughter through the room at the change in protocol.

"Thank you, I think I will," Margot responded before turning to face her husband.

Two minutes passed as they shared their first deep, passion-filled kiss as a married couple. Long before they separated, catcalls and whistles broke the silence of the room. Finally Adam lifted his head and looked around, "Are you all still here?" he asked, clearly wishing they had all gone home.

Looking at his beautiful wife, all he could think of was getting her alone so they could get started on their honeymoon. Bending, he swept her up high against his chest, careful to keep the skirt of her dress trapped between the back of her thighs and his forearm. Turning, he walked through the path that opened before them leading to the foyer.

At the bottom of the staircase he turned back to the crowd with a happy grin. "There's champagne and dessert in the dining room. Last one to leave please turn off the lights and lock the door."

"Aren't you going to stay and celebrate with us?" Clyde asked with a laugh just before the small woman he'd introduced as his wife, Emily, shushed him.

"No thanks, we have a honeymoon to get started," Margot answered right before Adam turned and carried her upstairs.

Chapter 8

Margot lifted her head from Adam's chest with a groan. She glared at the door where someone rudely pounded. "What?" she demanded.

"It's eight o'clock, and you've got thirty minutes to get up and get dressed. We have to get to the courthouse by nine-thirty," Matt's deep voice responded.

"Why?" Margot pushed herself into a sitting position and tried to rub the sleep from her face.

"Because you have paperwork to fill out to go along with last night's ceremony. Oh, I also need you to be my witnesses."

"Witness to what?" Adam asked without opening his eyes or otherwise moving a muscle.

Margot thought he'd still been asleep until that moment. They'd fallen asleep shortly after the last group of pack members had pounded on the door to say goodbye and wish them well in their marriage.

"Witness my marriage. Leigh refuses to go back to Santa Fe with me this afternoon unless she has a wedding ring on her finger. Now haul your asses out of bed and get dressed. Something nice, okay?"

At the mention of another wedding and Matt's eminent departure, Margot perked up. "He's getting married. To her." She groaned as she flopped back down onto the mattress and curled into Adam's warmth. "Wait a minute. What do you mean you're going back to Santa Fe this afternoon?"

"I've done what I came to do and need to get back to my job. And my mate needs to get settled in her new home, but first we have to get married."

"I'm sure her parents have something to say about this," Adam offered as he stretched then sat up. "Look at the bright side, sweet baby, Leigh will be in New Mexico and can't attack you anymore."

"But she'll be my sister-in-law," Margot whined as she rolled onto her stomach and buried her head into her pillow.

"And he's my brother-in-law. Don't worry, I think he'll be able to keep her under control. He seems like the only one who can. Now get up and put on a pretty dress for your brother's wedding." Adam stroked a hand down her spine and then popped one ass cheek.

"Are you two out of bed yet?" Matt called from behind the door.

Adam rolled from the bed then scooped her into his arms. "Don't worry, we'll be ready. Could you have someone bring up some coffee?"

"There's a tray right here," Matt said rattling the doorknob. "Open up and it's yours."

Margot squeaked and struggled to be released when Adam turned toward the door. "Put me down. I don't want him to see me like this," she protested.

Adam relented and as soon as Margot's feet hit the floor, she took off for the bathroom. She took a quick shower and by the time she dried off, Adam was there with a mug of her favorite tea waiting.

Hand in hand, they walked out of their room and downstairs thirty-five minutes later. Matt and Leigh were standing in the middle of the foyer locked in each other's arms and kissing like the end of the world was eminent.

Matt was dressed in his black boots, black slacks, and a white dress shirt. Leigh was wearing the black shirt she'd ended the evening before in. Margot averted her eyes when she realized Matt had pulled the back of the shirt up and was cupping her bare ass in his hands. It took a moment to realize her skin was a dark pink, as if she'd received quite a spanking at some point in the last dozen hours or so.

"Excuse us, we'll just go on into the kitchen to wait for you. The

couch in the living room is quite comfortable for what you're leading up to," Adam said with a dark chuckle as he turned Margot toward the hall leading to the back of the house.

"Thanks, but we'll wait until later," Matt said, breaking the kiss but not releasing his woman when she made a whining sound at being denied completion.

When she struggled, trying to break his hold on her, he simply tightened his grip until she yelped with pain.

Margot tried to turn back, but Adam wrapped his arm around her. "Leave them be," he ordered in a soft tone.

"But he's hurting her," she argued.

"No, he's disciplining her. Something I think Leigh will need a lot of in the days to come. Didn't you know he was a Dominant male?"

Margot shook her head. "Must be something he forgot to tell me. Like the fact that he was a shape-shifter. Wonder what other tidbits of information he's never shared."

"Well, I like my women submissive but feisty, and I like my bacon cooked about ten seconds from charcoal," Matt snarked as he and Leigh caught up with them.

"Sounds like you got your wish in the woman department. The bacon we'll have Mrs. Nicholas work on."

"Maybe next time. Right now we need to stop by Leigh's house so I can pick out the dress she'll be wearing and so she can pick up what she needs to take with her this afternoon."

Adam looked thoughtful for a moment. "Why don't you wait until tomorrow morning to leave and we can give you a ride home? Santa Fe's on our way."

"On our way where?" Margot asked, once again feeling like Alice who fell down the rabbit hole. Could they just hop on a jet and fly away? Didn't such a thing take planning and reservation and schedules?

"New Zealand. We're going on our honeymoon to one of the few places in the world that doesn't give a flying fig about who I am. After that, maybe we'll hit Australia and Fiji on the way home. If that pleases my lady, that is?"

Margot threw herself at him and began kissing every inch of skin she could reach. Wrapping her legs around his hips, she clung like a kudzu vine. "That pleases me very much," she said before finding his lips and kissing him with every ounce of renewed passion she had left in her body.

THE END

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cooper McKenzie always thought she had been born a hundred years too late, but appreciates air conditioning, computers, and other conveniences of modern day living. She enjoys the slower pace of New Bern, North Carolina, as well as the history and small town community found there. In addition to dreaming up her next story, Cooper enjoys reading everything except scary books, singing in her church choir, and needle-weaving.

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