



TIMBERON CAT  
SERIES: 3

Rescued  
Mate

Yvette Hines

# *Rescued Mate*

Timberon Cat Series: 3

By

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An Interracial Paranormal Erotica

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## Chapter One

The sons of bitches left her for dead. In a stooped position, Dwayne stared down at a woman lying on the ground covered in blood, mud and filth. She was sprawled out with her head turned to the side. Her tangled hair masked her face. The clothes still on her were in tatters. One entire pant leg had been shred from her along with the sneaker he was sure was supposed to be on her other foot. Resting in her open palm was a small branch with a jagged, broken end, a makeshift weapon.

*What was she doing out here?* It had rained for the last two days. He'd been happy to allow his inner cat the freedom to run in the early dawn light now that it had stopped. As an *Amofeli* male, he couldn't tolerate being cooped indoors for long.

The stench of hyena was all over the woman before him and the nauseating smell made his stomach roll. The urge to throw-up assailed him so strongly he had to turn his head in order to gulp in large quantities of fresh air and compose himself. This woman needed his help.

Repelled, he braced himself to face her again. Reaching his hand out, he slipped two fingers below her matted hair and gingerly touched her neck.

*Thank God she had a pulse.* It beat steady and strong. Shifting her body gently, he felt around for broken bones or for blood running from anywhere. He didn't find any broken bones, but he did locate a palm-sized rock below the side of her head. She would have a nice lump on her temple before the day was done.

Glancing at the sky, he saw the gray clouds were beginning to overtake them again. More rain was on its way. He had to move her.

Fortifying his gut he leaned in closer to her, so that he could maneuver his hands under her body. He worked one hand under her shoulder blades and the other beneath her knees and lifted her as he rose. He didn't want to pull her in close to his body, because the disgusting odor of the wild hyena's emanating from her body was making his head swim. The last thing he wanted was to get light headed and pass out making the woman's injuries worse. The urge to protect her was more powerful than the revulsion of the hyena markings.

"Get it together, Dwayne," he instructed himself.

Her weight was barely a hindrance to him as he began the short journey. She was long, but thin. Almost too thin. He normally liked women in his arms that were a little more meaty and curvaceous, but this time it wasn't his choice. Heading back to his small cabin, he tunneled through the woods at a quick pace attempting to beat the rain and allowing the stench to waft passed his nose.

The return trip took longer than when he'd traveled the path out. Not only because he was carrying extra weight and had to watch every step he took not to slip in the slippery sludge coating the forest ground, but because he had been in cat form the first time.

Now, nude and lugging an injured woman, he prayed he wouldn't come upon any hikers or families on camping trips. He would be able to disguise himself using his chameleon-like trait. However, it would appear strange for a woman to be floating in mid-air. With them not being joined intimately, he would not be able to camouflage her as well. The way she smelled now, that would not be a possibility.

It had begun to drizzle by the time he reached his cabin. Stepping up on to his porch, he readjusted the weight in his arms so he could maneuver and get the door open and carry her inside. Once he entered, he stood in the center of his small living room and contemplated. There weren't many options available to him. He needed to get her cleaned up and check on the severity of her wounds, but the thought of lying her down on his couch disgusted him. Placing her in his bed while he got the bathroom ready for her, was definitely out of the question.

It wasn't the injured woman that he detested but the smell at this moment, where ever he placed her would leave the scent of hyena in his home, on his belongings. He had to make a choice.

Strutting toward the couch, he laid her on the smoke gray cushions. He'd consider how to get rid of the couch later. Rushing across the open space, which made up his small kitchen, dining room and living room, he entered the door to the left and turned on the light. In the bathroom, he turned on the water to fill the tub. He didn't need the level deep, just enough get her cleaned up. As he grabbed the towels from the cabinet, he realized that he could still smell the mutant animals on his skin. He would need to wash up too.

Looking down at his nude form, he saw all the cakes of mud, leaves and other debris decorating his skin from carrying the woman. If he bathed first, he would get filthy again bringing her into the bathroom and then they would keep transferring the heinous stench from one another.

With an idea, he shut off the water and pulled the plug, draining the tub. Pulling the curtain he reached in and turned on the shower. Going back to the living room, he stopped briefly in the kitchen for a trash bag. Returning to the couch, he knelt beside her and began a quick and gentle job of removing her ragged clothing. He shoved the items into the bag so he could discard them later. She had no wallet or identification on her.

Staring down at her, he couldn't help but take note that even grimy her body caused desire to course through his veins. The odor of hyena took it away just as fast.

Lifting her up, he went back to the bathroom and brushed the curtain aside and stepped inside with her in his arms, hoping to clean them both. The water was tepid. He didn't want it too hot with her skin still cool from lying outside in the early spring rain.

Mud ran in a dark murky stream down the drain as the spraying water rained down on both their chests. Pulling her tighter to him, he angled her head so the water wouldn't run into her nose. He didn't want her to drown in the process of washing her hair and face. When he stepped closer and angled toward the showerhead and allowed the water to rinse the dirt away, everything went out of control.

"Stop! No!" The wounded woman began screaming. "Help me!" Her voice pierced the silence in the room as her arms and legs kicked, flailing about.

"It's alright." He attempted to stop her abrupt and forceful movements. "You're safe."

"Noooo." She continued to fling and twist, screaming like a banshee at the top of her lungs.

Her attempt to escape from him and whatever vision was torturing her mentally was going to cause her to kill them both. As they struggled, his feet slipped along the muddy porcelain surface beneath him. They tumbled in a blend of arms and legs onto the shower flooring.

Thumping his shoulder hard, Dwayne winced and grabbed the woman by the shoulder. "Calm down!"

~YH~

The deep baritone sound froze Marisol in place. Her heart was racing. Being chased by unruly men that shifted into dreadful hyenas had pumped fear and terror through her veins.

She could feel the consistent pelting of water raining down on her back. Taking a few deep breaths she tried to get her thoughts together.

"It's okay. You're safe." The voice was more soothing than terrifying. But strong hands still held her.

A strong heartbeat greeted her ears and she could tell she was lying on a warm brawny body. But she could still smell the foul odor of the beastly men. *Oh, God, did they capture me and bring me to a place to have their disgusting way with me?*

She refused to die like a weak invalid. Getting her nerve together, Marisol slowly opened her eyes and pushed herself up and away. A masculine chest, sienna in tone and well sculpted as fine marble filled her vision. Her gaze rose past a thick corded neck and met the unexpected face of an acquaintance.

"Dwayne?" she asked, afraid to speak his name too loud and shatter the dream she may have been in and awaken still in the nightmare she last recalled.

Frowning, he lifted his hand and brushed the unruly waves of her hair out of her face. "Marisol." The way he said her name hit her senses like she had tasted the finest cream.

She knew Dwayne. Well, she could say she admired him from afar at Lana, her best friend's wedding over three months ago and the engagement party months before that. Even though they were both best friends to the bride and groom, they had never really spoken much to each other. She'd kept her distance, especially after her failed relationship six months ago. She always seemed to make poor choices when it came to men.

Staring into his light brown gaze, made her scalp tingle. His devilishly handsome face always made her feel breathless like she'd gone for a long run in the cold.

"What am I doing here?" she asked.

"I was wondering the same thing." The side of his lips quirked up in a sexy half-smile. "I brought you to my cabin, but I have no clue why you were even in Timberson County. Want to explain?"

There went his voice again, like the smooth base notes of a saxophone. She closed her eyes and sighed softly.

His hand brushed her hair again, fingering the length and pushing it behind her ear.

Her toes began to curl and heat grew low in her belly. She became aware that they were not sitting in a café discussing this issue. They were naked. Currently, rivulets of water were streaming across their bodies. The fine hairs on his legs brushed against hers as her tight nipples pressed into his chest.

"*Calidad yo,*" she mumbled, attempting to scramble away from him in the tub. She didn't know what to do, whether to cover her breasts and sex or use her hands to get out of the tub, revealing all her goodies. Not that he hadn't already gotten an eye-full. "*Mérida.*" Spanish always came easier to her when she was flustered.

They twisted and slipped against each other. Dwayne's hands clutched her waist as they lay in an awkward side by side position now, while the water still pounded on them both.

"She-cat, why don't you just be still? I'm not going to suddenly attack you just because your gorgeous body is bare before me."

She noticed his statement didn't stop his eyes from roaming the length of her nudity. When his gaze returned to hers, his light brown coloring had darkened. If the heat reflecting in his eyes wasn't enough to convince her that Dwayne was not immune to her naked form then the growing erection pressing against her thigh was clue enough.

"I'd like to put my clothes on."

"That's not possible now."

"Why?" She frowned. Was he attempting to pull some kind of scam on her?

A single eye brow rose high. "First, off your clothing is in the garbage--"

"You tossed my clothes?" she accused. "*¡Usted cola! Usted no tenía ninguna derecha.*"

"Second, I'm not an ass," he growled. "And third, I had every right, since they were in shreds and barely hanging on you."

Shocked she stared at him. He'd understood her. Her ex-boyfriend didn't know any Spanish and refused to learn.

Interpreting her expression, he said, "Yes, I know Spanish. Hell, we're in New Mexico, it's a crime not to. Now, to finish what I was saying. We both are in need of a shower. Can't you smell the funk?"

If she could have rolled her neck in her cramped position, she would have. Instead, she squint her eyes and stared at him. "Excuse me?"

Stroking her nose with the tip of his finger, he said, "That hyena stench on you, sweetheart."

Swallowing, Marisol countered, "Then I will take a shower first if you don't mind."

"It's more efficient if we do it together." His voice was as low and seductive as his touch. "You know conservation of water is important."

Oh, God, is he always so mouth-wateringly captivating? Marisol was glad she had kept her distance from him at the wedding, otherwise there's no telling what may have happened. One hook up at a wedding was probably all Lana would have been able to handle. At the reception, Preston, Kal's brother had announced he and Tresa, Lana's sister were an item. Preston had now been living in Silver City close to Tresa for two months. The relationship would surely be headed to the altar soon.

"How about we plant a tree together sometime? Right, now, though, I'd prefer a little privacy."

He flashed her a smile. "You got it." With the speed and agility of the cat-shifter he was, he untangled their limbs and exited the tub.

Sitting at the bottom of the tub with her knees pulled up to her chest and the water spraying against one shoulder, Marisol could not help allowing her gaze to travel the length of Dwayne's broad back, down to his narrow waist and tight round ass. No, man should be that delicious from behind.

Heading out the door, he called back to her over his shoulder, "Anything you need; soap, washcloth, shampoo or more towels are in this cabinet. Good thing you woke, I really hadn't figured out how I was going to do more than give us both a good rinse." He gave her a lopsided grin and indicated the small wicker-style cabinet built into the wall.

"Got it." She nodded.

"If you need someone to wash your back, just scream. I'm sure I'd even hear you in Timberon City." He gave her a wink.



"I'll keep that in mind." She giggled. Her mother had always told her she could shriek down the Empire State Building if given a chance.

Once he closed the door firmly behind him, she scrambled out of the tub and grabbed the things she needed. Glancing in the mirror for a moment, she had to stifle a scream. She looked as if some mangy animal had dragged her through the woods, which was just what had happened.

Her hair was matted and tangled with leaves and twigs. There were cakes of mud and Lord only knew what else all over her skin with the exception of a few clear places where the water had washed it off. One of her arms was free of grime, but had abrasions and scratches on the shoulder. There were other scratches around her calf on the opposite leg. But, other than the knot on the side of her head, she wasn't badly injured.

*Agradezca a dios.* She was thankful that a few bumps and bruises were all she had. There was no doubt in her mind, the men intended more from the illicit comments they had made towards her. The vile men had grabbed at her, touched her then when she fought back and ran they had shifted into cackling laughing beasts and taunted her while they chased her.

Cold chills made her shiver and caused goose bumps to rise on her flesh. She'd never forget the high-pitched, rough tones of their laughter. At some point she'd picked up a thick stick and had struck one of them in the head before she'd tripped and everything went black.

Taking a deep breath, she took her supplies into the shower and began to scrub away the grunge and dirt, attempting not to wince much as she washed out her injuries. Dwayne had said she smelled of hyena. She couldn't smell anything but the musky scent of forest soil. However, she wasn't taking any chances and washed her body and shampooed her hair three times. She didn't want anything of those men on her.

## Chapter *Two*

Standing beside the bathroom door while Marisol was on the other side bathing herself was not the wisest thing to do. His body was reacting boldly to her, filth and all. It wasn't just her beauty, which was not in sight at this point... But he recollected Marisol's long wavy hair, appearing shining, healthy and cinnamon in color, a brown with soft red undertones that complimented her lightly tanned skin. Her complexion was not as dark as it could be with her Latin Heritage, as if she didn't spend a lot of time in the sun. Her eyes were one of his favorite features. They were the same shade of green as a new leaf and just as vibrant. His memory conjured up how she looked at the wedding coming down the aisle before the bride. She had been tall, elegant and beautiful.

Sighing, he pushed away from the wall by the door and decided to make better use of his time. Crossing the living room, he went into the only other room in the cabin, his bedroom, and grabbed a pair of sweats. There was no need for him to keep strolling around the house naked. He was perfectly comfortable, but Marisol most definitely was not.

Earlier, he'd gone out hunting for game, but hadn't completed his search when he'd come upon Marisol in the woods. Deciding food for both of them would be necessary, he went into the kitchenette and washed his hands in the sink, then removed the two tuna steaks he had brought with him two days ago. He had lettuce and tomatoes in the small fridge for sandwiches, but it would have to work for a basic salad. Marisol seemed thinner than she had been when he last saw her and he wondered if she were sick or on some crazy women's fad diet.

Placing all the items on the countertop he added a basic marinade to the tuna of lemon juice, olive oil and black pepper, salt and dry herbs. It would need a little time to set. While that was happening he had the perfect idea for use of his time.

The couch. He liked it, but it now had to go. After being tainted with hyena odor, he was happy to get rid of it. He would replace it later. Glancing past the two person table to the sliding glass door, a heavy rain caught his attention. He didn't care. That couch was going. This was his cabin and he was determined to be comfortable in it.

Shoving the table to the side and pushing open the glass door, he went back to the couch. Dragging it across the polished wood floor his nostrils flared with the scent of the wild shifters transferred from Marisol's body. He grunted as he managed to get the furniture outside. The rain pounded down on him as he pulled it down the steps to the backyard.

He could still smell them, even as the rain pattered fiercely onto the cushions and started to soak the fabric. His inner cat told him that there was more between him and Marisol than a casual friendship. He paced around the couch as water ran from his head into his eyes, anger swelling inside him. Those bastards had touched her. Their smell may have been on her, but he could tell it was only markings. So at least, none of them had mated with her. Only thing that probably stopped them was her being unconscious. Hyena shifters enjoyed the play, the chase and liked to see the fear of their prey as they tormented them. Yeah, Marisol being out cold would have hindered their enjoyment. The thought of them or any man caressing her skin, being inside of her, made Dwayne's hackles rise.

Enraged, Dwayne felt the urge to destroy something. Anything, he didn't care. He only needed to release the pent up frustration. Eyeing the offensive couch, he grabbed one cushion and dug his fingers deep tearing a hole into it with all his strength. That small victory ignited him more and he continued. One cushion after another he demolished, until cloth and cotton filling spread around him. When that wasn't enough, he shifted and clawed through the back and side of the chair. Ripping through the sides totally obliterated it and then he finished by spraying it, eliminating the hyena scent once and for all.

Sitting on his haunches beside the ruined couch, he panted and tried not to be annoyed as the rain soaked into his fur.

A movement drew his attention to the door where he spied Marisol staring at him and the couch. She was dressed in one of his shirts that she must have located in his room when she finished showering. Her face was blank and he couldn't tell if she were horrified or not. However he didn't feel ashamed of his actions. It was proof to man, beast and her that he didn't take it lightly when someone touched what was his.

*His?* He questioned his own thoughts. He was attracted to Marisol. Hell, it had taken all his strength at the wedding weekend not to approach her. The only thing that had reined in him and his cat was his respect for Kal, his best friend.

Moving back to the house, he decided he'd shocked her enough for one traumatic afternoon. There was no need to add more nudity to it. Strutting past her, he entered the cabin and paused briefly when he felt her hand stroke along the fur on his back. When he turned his head to glance at her, he was overwhelmed with the scent of her fresh body coming through the scent of his generic soap. Sweet and heady like lilies in the springtime.

*Mine.* His cat confirmed.

Needing to be alone, to get his head together before he shifted and pounced on her, Dwayne continued towards the vacant bathroom. Once inside he shifted and closed the door.

~YH~

"You didn't have to cook dinner." Dwayne walked out of the bathroom with a towel around his waist and beads of water still clinging to his sienna colored chest.

He was a sight to behold. No man should have shoulders and a chest that broad. He was very muscular, but lean, allowing him to move with a sleek swagger, instead of being encumbered with a heavy gait like most body builders. Marisol forced herself to look away and not give in to her urge to watch the droplets of water run down his chest and dissolve in the towel. Biting down on the inside of her lip, she finished putting plates on the table. "It's okay. I didn't have anything else to do while you showered but stand in the center of the room." She looked at him and smiled, letting him know she was joking with him about the missing couch. "So, I made myself busy."

"I'm glad you located everything. It's not equipped with much," he said, still standing in the same spot.

She shrugged. "I have a George Grill at home, too. All I had to do was put it on there, it did the rest."

"True."

She caught herself cruising a gaze along his pecs, biceps and abs again. *Oh, man, why won't he go get dressed?* At least he hadn't moved closer to her because she already

felt as if she were overheating just looking at him. Willfully, she pulled herself together and stepped over to the kitchen and got the bowls of salad.

"Well, I'll be out in a minute." He turned and entered his room and closed the door.

She breathed a sigh of relief. Getting two cans of soda from the refrigerator, she set them on the table.

"Are you ready to eat?"

Startled, she screamed and clapped a hand over her heart and face. Dwayne had come out of the room and caught her unaware. "What are you some kind of ca--"

The quick lift of his eyebrow made her rethink her words. "Yes."

Slapping her hands on her hips, she chided him, "Then you need to get a bell or something."

His barking laugh erupted from him, made her join in. She had to admit it felt good to laugh again. She could not recall the last time she had enjoyed a joke. Surely, not with her last boyfriend and after today's ordeal, she was surprised she felt like laughing.

He moved closer to her. Even dressed in jeans and t-shirt, the heat of his body enveloped her. The man was like a furnace. She needed space. He made her nervous. Not because she was afraid of him, but because he affected her, making her feel and desire things. The growing passion she experienced around him scared her more than the pack of hyenas.

"I guess we should eat," she mumbled, glancing from his captivating light brown eyes to the table, then back again.

"We should," he said, but made no move toward the table. Instead, he lifted his hand and brushed her unruly waves from her face.

She was beginning to like the gesture, as if he needed to see her face clearly. Her hair was clean now, but since there was no comb in the bathroom or in his room where she had snagged a shirt, the locks still were left untamed.

His hand continued from her hair to lightly caress along her jaw line. The urge to close her eyes and enjoy assailed her. But, she kept her focus on him.

"Let's eat." He lowered his hand. Stepping to the side he pulled out one of the two wooden chairs at the table and motioned for her to sit in it.

*Wow, a gentleman. You don't see that often anymore.* "Thank you." She sat down.

Claiming the seat across, he said, "Tell me what you're doing here, Marisol."

"Camping. Hiking. Photography." Keep it impersonal, she told herself. Picking up her fork she stared down at her food and then dug into the tuna steak. For the first time in months, she actually felt hungry. It must be the mountain air or being chased by crazed men.

Dwayne began to eat as well, but Marisol could feel his gaze on her. She didn't look up.

"I remember Lana telling me something about you being a photographer."

*He asked about me.* She glanced across the table. "With the economy and cut backs, I mostly do freelance work now. No one really keeps a photographer on staff anymore."

"Sorry to hear that."

She saw the honesty in his face and heard it in his voice. Nothing like her ex's response when he found out she'd lost her salaried position. He automatically thought she was going to start depending on him more.

"Well, what can you do? I think I like freelance better. I can accept the things I like and not do the things I don't like."

"That's a positive way to look at it." Continuing to eat, he commented, "Is that why you're here? Doing a shoot?"

Lowering her gaze to her plate again, she took a bite of her salad and chewed slowly, using the time to gather her thoughts. She needed to figure out how to answer the question and not give more away than she wanted to. She'd always been a private person. Glancing out of the corner of her eye, she saw he was still looking at her. Waiting. He had the patience of a saint--or like a predatory cat.

"No job. I was just here taking some shots. I like nature. It's very calming," she admitted.

Frowning, he asked, "Where's your camera? I didn't see it around you when I found you."

Lifting her can, she drank some soda. "In my car." She returned the beverage to the table, then cleared her throat. "I'd already packed up and decided to take one last hike, when..." Turning her head, she stared at the rain coming down outside the window. "I need to get back to my stuff and go."

Dwayne observed the heavy falling rain as well. "When it lets up, I'll take you to your car. Where were you camped?"

Full now, she pushed her half eaten tuna and salad away and folded her hands in her lap. "I'm not completely sure. I followed an off the road path once I got to your pride's lodge. I guess I drove about ten or fifteen minutes. I figured if I needed anything, I could go to the lodge for assistance."

"Staying near the lodge was a smart choice, because we all roam these parts and have cabins out here. But, it's a wild, untamed area and really unsafe for camping and hiking."

Placing one hand back on the table, she idly fingered the condensation liquid on the side of her can. "Yea, I kinda found that out."

"I already texted Kal and Mr. Walters, or gramps as our pride leader likes to be called. That hyena pack is nothing to play with."

"No? Dwayne, I wasn't out there looking for fun and games, when those asshole--"

Reaching across the table he grabbed her hand. His warm touch stole her words and her breath.

"Sheath your claws, She-cat." His thumb stroked the back of her hand. "The news has been flooded with reports about them terrorizing campers from Texas to New Mexico. We'd already made plans to meet this weekend at the lodge and hunt them down." Lightly, his fingers caressed the length of her forearm and returned to her hand. "You should've told someone you were coming up here."

"What makes you think I didn't?" She wanted to snatch her hand away, but she admitted to herself that his touch was comforting as well as seductive. Even his nickname for her was turning her on. She knew that there were no *Amofeli* females. She'd asked Lana if Kal would change her once they were married. Her friend had informed her that it was only a male gene and the males were not made but born.

"If you had spoken to Lana, she would have warned you to stay away. She knows Kal was driving up to the lodge this weekend. I just got here a day early to relax at my cabin before we all rallied at the lodge." Dwayne slipped his fingers through hers and held her hand.

"Another bad decision on my part." She shook her head, disgusted with her careless thinking.

Squeezing her hand, he cautioned her, "Not a bad decision. Maybe your timing could have been better. But I believe in fate." His voice lowered to that rich tone again.

She felt the warmth seeping up her neck into her cheeks. This made twice that he'd caused her to blush like a teenager with her first crush. Trying to keep control of herself, she pulled her hand away and began fiddling with the buttons of the shirt she wore to keep her hands busy.

Dwayne finished off his food and rose. Taking both their plates to the kitchen, he commented, "The tuna turned out really well."

"Not me." She raised her hands palm out before her, as if attempting to ward off any praise when he looked her direction. "All I had to do was put it on the grill, you had seasoned it already."

Scraping the scraps into the trash, he placed the dishes into the single basin and rinsed them. "Well, I guess we make a pretty good team."

"Possibly." Her desire to confirm his words was strong, but she didn't believe in fate anymore since she'd had no luck so far. It was best for her to just remain neutral.

Crossing the small space to her, he said, "Why don't we see about getting some ointment on your wounds."

She rotated her right arm that had the scratches on it. "It is feeling a little sore. That's probably best."

Following him out of the kitchenette, she thought he would head to the bathroom. Instead he went through the front room into his bedroom. She stopped at the door. When she'd entered his room the first time, it was to get something to wear and he was outside demolishing his couch. Now, to walk into such an enclosed space with him and a bed made her nipples tighten. There was no doubt in her mind or body that she was highly attracted to Dwayne. Hell, she knew that from the engagement party and the wedding clarified it. If there wasn't an attraction, she would not have had to ensure she stayed away from him. During the reception, if he went left, she went right. When it was over, she packed up and got out of dodge.

*Why did you come back to Timberon and Amofeli pride land?* Her mind taunted her.

*Vacation, she answered. How was I supposed to know the whole pride was returning this weekend?*

"I don't know if..." she began, scanning the room, looking for a chair or someplace to sit besides the bed. "this a good idea."

Stooping down to his nightstand to open the bottom drawer, he stared at her over his shoulder. "I don't bite." A sexy smile pulled the corners of his mouth up. "Maybe a nip or two."

His words made her smile. Entering the room, she sat down and balanced herself on the edge of the bed.

Grabbing a red box, he joined her on the bed. Sitting beside her he looked her way.

She knew what he expected as he opened the first-aid box and pulled the emolument out. Considering first if she could push her sleeve up and reveal her arm, she discarded that idea. It would reveal the marks on her arm, but not the ones on shoulder that went around to her back. This was ridiculous. Dwayne had already seen all the goods and goodies when he rescued her and ended up under her in the tub.

"Cat-nip, I get it." She chattered to keep her mind off the fact she was unbuttoning the shirt and pulling her arm out.

Leaning closer, he closely inspected the thin red lines along her skin. "You know, even a little catnip can be very intoxicating."

His words and seductive voice fluttered across her bare sensitive skin causing her eyes to shut. She could listen to him speak all night. He was intoxicating.

First he leaned forward and covered the scratches on her calf and other areas of her leg. Then the cool cream was applied to her forearm first and then moved up her bicep. She liked Dwayne's touch, it was gentle and light, but it still stirred her inside. When he rubbed it onto the curve of her shoulder and coated the few marks on her blade, she relaxed into his touch.

"What truly brought you here, Marisol?" he asked in a low tone.

She opened her eyes and stared at him. He was close. The heat of his body enveloped her even though he only touched her with two fingers. The light brown eyes had deepened to the color of maple like his skin, demanded honesty. In that moment with his body next to hers, she wanted to give it to him.

"I wanted peace and clarity."

"Why, she-cat?" No longer applying cream, his hand moved from the top of her shoulder to below her hair and caressed the base of her neck.

"I ended a bad relationship six months ago. My ex was abusive." She felt the tension in his hand that touched her. "Not physically," she assured him. "But emotionally. It wasn't his fault, he was one out of a string I'd been adding to over the last three years. One bad situation after another."

His finger delved into her hair and stroked her scalp. She wanted to curl up in his lap and let him continue to touch her and comfort her.

It was difficult to continue, but she did. She needed to get this out. Over the last year she had even kept the truth away from Lana. "Losing my job didn't help. My house went next. Then my ex disentangled himself from my pitiful life. I began to lose faith in myself. Doubting every choice I made." Her throat became thick and she struggled to get the words out, but she couldn't stop, it was feeling too good to get it out. Tell someone. Hot tears tumbled out of her eyes and ran down her cheeks. "My appetite almost disappeared. I didn't want to go anywhere. Lana had to beg me to leave my house and be a part of her wedding. I-I-I couldn't even find the strength to be her photograph--"

Her throat was so thick, now it was becoming difficult to breathe, but she pushed on, "*Mi dios. Quise morir.*"

### Chapter Three

Hearing her words and knowing that this beautiful and talented woman had reached such a despairing point that she wanted to die caused every protective instinct to rise up inside Dwayne. He wanted to shelter her, protect her and claim her as his mate for life. "*Ella-gato, me dejó le cura,*" he whispered, wrapping his arms around her slight form, pulling her to him and kissing her.

Sealing his mouth against her lips, he tasted the salty wetness of her tears. Sighing, she leaned into him and opened her mouth and allowed him entrance.

The warm silk of her tongue glided along his. Her savory taste surrounded him, a welcoming announcement to the gates of heaven. Deepening the kiss, he fisted her long wavy hair and held her in place.

Her hands grabbed his shoulders and clutched him, pulling him closer. Their tongues jockeyed for position from his mouth then into hers.

Unaware how long they sat at the foot of his bed, kissing and holding each other, but he didn't care. All he knew was that he couldn't get enough of her. Moving his lips from her succulent lips to her cheek, he kissed a trail to her ear and repeated his words in English. "Let me heal you, she-cat. Let me heal your heart."

Cupping his face, she leaned back and captured him in her green-eyed stare. "Please."

That single word unleashed the lock on his control. He took her mouth again, this time in a fierce kiss. Releasing her lips, he commanded, "Stand up."

For the first time that day, she moved without hesitation. Standing in front of him, she gripped the shirt, keeping it closed around her body. One arm hung out, decorated with scratches. It reminded him to be gentle with her body as well as her heart. She'd been through a lot and he didn't want to hurt her more.

Situating her between his open knees, he pulled her forward and proceeded unbuttoning the shirt from the bottom. Standing there with her bare legs extending out of his large shirt, she was a combination of comfort and sexy. When the first two buttons were undone, he wanted to part the halves and reveal her sex to his waiting gaze. In his mind he still recalled how she looked as he held her nude in his arms, standing in the shower. Now he wanted to see it and her again. But he didn't linger. He continued to move upward.

Once all the buttons were undone, the only thing keeping the shirt closed was the fact Marisol still held it clasped in her fist. Dropping his hands on his thighs, he glanced up at her. "Let me see you, she-cat. I want to drink in the sight of every curve and valley of your lovely body. I'm going to touch you all over and taste you until you scream. Then I'm going to bury myself between your sexy thighs and let you watch my cock disappear one inch at a time."

He noticed her increased breathing and detected the scent of her arousal. The moist spice of her sex perfumed the air between them and turned him on so much he was trembling inside. If it wasn't for her injuries, he would have tossed her on the bed by now and plunged his dick inside her titillating pussy. But he waited patiently. He had to take the night slow, at least the first time.



Her fingers released the fabric as her hand hovered less than a millimeter away from it, shaking. She seized the inside of her bottom lip between her teeth and her nostrils flared.

Still he delayed himself.

Finally, she lowered her hand to her side and the shirt parted and exposed more of her body to him. His gaze lowered and he allowed her to hear his groan of satisfaction. Gliding a hand up the outside of her silky smooth thighs, he caressed her full hips and moved on past her small waist. Her warmth, five degrees lower than his own body temperature, felt cool to him as he stopped below her breast.

Marisol was trembling beneath his hands and felt the fast beat of her heart against the pads of his thumbs. When he pushed the other side of his shirt covering part of her delectable body the tight autumn brown tips of her breasts let him know it wasn't fear she experienced, but the same level of arousal as his.

Her medium-sized breasts filled his hands perfectly. Enjoying the weight of her against his palms, he circled the tips with his thumbs and watched them pucker more. When he grazed the top with his nails, she hissed and moaned, so he repeated it. Knowing her nipples were sensitive excited him. He was a breast man and he planned to spend a large portion of the night suckling them, pleasing them both.

Sliding one hand around her back, he pulled her forward and leaned in. Licking the underside of her breast first, he played with her, loving how she pressed closer to him and silently begged for him to take her in his mouth.

Wasting no more time, he captured the taut tip in his mouth and drew on it lightly, then harder.

She palmed the back of his head, holding him against her. "Yes."

He enjoyed hearing her pleasure, it increased his arousal. As it was, his cock was hard and insistent behind the zipper of his jeans. The more firmly his mouth pulled on her breast, the tighter she held him to her as she arched her back availing herself.

Moving from one breast to the other, he continued to pleasure her. Lowering the hand that was holding her breast, he ran it along her belly until he reached the place he desired most, her pussy.

Slipping his hand between her thighs, he cupped her smooth sex. Running his finger along the seam of her labia, her wet heat greeted him. Still suckling her nipples, he fondled her and located the stiff peak of her clitoris.

Parting her legs, she invited his touch. Ecstatic at her response, he circled her clit and then left it to glide along her slit and entered her. Caressing her slick walls, he pulled out and returned to the distended nub of her desire. On and on, he went from her clit to her opening building her excitement.

Marisol moaned and whimpered, her sounds almost begging for satisfaction.

When her hips began to thrust at his hand and she leaned all of her weight onto him seeking her gratification, his caress became persistent. In and out, around and down his hand went as he suckled, flicked and brushed against her nipple.

"Ahh," she screamed as her body shook in his arms as an orgasm cruised through her body.

Denying himself another second would have caused him to lose his mind. He needed to taste her. Pulling away from her, he removed his shirt from the arm it still covered and allowed it to float to the floor. Scooping her into his arms, he rose and turned,

placing her in the middle of the bed. He snatched his t-shirt over his head and smiled down at her.

She looked charming and luscious at the same time, as she lay there with her skin reddened from the heat of her arousal. Marisol must have become nervous from his perusal of her body, because she began to fidget, lowered her gaze and began to cover herself with her hands.

"You are beautiful, Marisol." He joined her on the bed, aligning his body against hers and laid his lips against the bruise on her temple. "Never hide yourself from me."

Her eyes met his and he kissed her lips softly. When he leaned back, she nodded, confirming his words.

Sliding down her body, he placed kisses on her chin, then each breast, across her stomach until he reached her sex. Shouldering her thighs apart, he made room for himself between her legs. Seeing the bare pink folds of her pussy coated with her erotic cream made him close his eyes and inhale deeply. He allowed the natural bouquet of her scent to saturate his senses to the point he could taste it on his tongue.

That only stirred his cat more. It stretched and clawed inside of him, wanting to claim her as its own in the most elemental ways. Leaning forward, he tickled the opening of her sex with the tip of his tongue and then dragged it up until he could flick her clit. Her taste blossomed in his mouth and made him purr.

The vibrations from his throat rumbled over her sex and he continued to lap up her sweet cream until she gripped his head and swiveled her hips up urgently against his mouth. After she came the second time, he got up on his knees, unzipped his jeans and shoved them down his hips.

When she gasped at the sight of his thick cock, he picked up her hand and guided her to his length. He had to feel her hands on him. She started off lightly caressing his dick with the tips of her fingers. Dropping his own hand, he allowed her a moment to familiarize herself with him. She brushed the tip with her thumb collecting the bead of semen and polishing his crown with it. Soon, the delicate touches must not have been enough for her because she wrapped her hand around him.

"Shit," he growled and bowed his head, dropping his chin to his chest.

Fisting his cock, she pumped her hand up and down his erection. Moving from base to tip, she began to squeeze him every time she arrived at the head. He couldn't take anymore.

Grabbing her hand, he pulled it to his mouth and kissed her palm. Covering her body briefly, he kissed her, then rolled them until she was on top of him. He didn't want to hurt her with his weight, not because she was so slender but because of the injuries on her arm and her shoulder.

She looked shocked by their position.

"Ride me, she-cat."

~YH~

Staring down at the sexy man beneath her, Marisol couldn't believe that he hadn't wanted to bury her underneath his weight and ram himself urgently inside her. That had been her past experience. But she should not have been shocked after he'd given her oral pleasure, something her last lover had never wanted to do.

"*Mi placer,*" she whispered to him as she sat up. Situating her sex above his long, thick length, excitement raced along her spine. On her knees she spread her thighs wide as she balanced herself above his cock.

Gliding his broad head through her juices she licked her lips at the delicious sensation of them touching so intimately.

"Don't tease me," he told her.

"Never." Smiling, she stared at him, enjoying the sexual control of the moment. Lowering her hips she allowed him inside her. Her eyes began to slide shut, trying to savor the feeling of him stretching her, making room for himself inside her.

"No, Marisol. Look at me. Look at us," he commanded. "Watch my cock claim you."

Forcing her eyes open, she stared at him in a haze of sexual enjoyment. Shifting her gaze to their sexes she couldn't help the thrill and amazement that bloomed in her core. She wiggled her hips and pressed down, assisting Dwayne's large cock to fit inside her.

"Ahh," she cried out feeling the stretch of her walls as his length forced its way along her channel.

Taking hold of her hips, he lifted her and pressed her back down working himself deeper. "God, you feel good, she-cat."

Spurred on by his praise, she wiggled her hips taking in the remaining inch or so of his hard shaft. Once he was buried all the way in, she relaxed her walls around him, then flexed them again. When he groaned, she did it again.

They began to move in a pattern and developed a rhythm that belonged only to them. This was their moment, their world and their time. Nothing else and no one mattered, but them.

Giving herself over to this man who had given her pleasure and hope in one afternoon, she began to ride him.

Gripping her hips firmly, he met her thrust for thrust. Words were not needed, just the moans of their satisfaction. When her body began to tighten around him and tremors started to cause her limbs to shake, she knew it would not be long before she climaxed again.

*"Siente tan bueno."*

She wasn't sure which one of them spoke. Her mind had become mush, she wasn't able to register a thing but the delicious feel of Dwayne's cock inciting her to an almost painful ecstasy.

He sat up, pushed her hair over her shoulder, revealing her breast to him. When he took it in his mouth and began suckling her, her body exploded, causing her to ride him with an abandonment built from a need to feel him claim her.

"More," she begged.

Kissing her, he wrapped his arms around her waist and laid them backwards. Holding her tight, he arched his hip powerfully and forced her to take all he had to give. Burying her face in the curve of his neck, she placed her hands flat against the headboard and braced herself against his vigorous thrust.

Licking the side of her neck he drew her flesh into his mouth as he purred relentlessly and came, painting her walls with his liquid pleasure.

*"Mina."* He whispered softly as he stroked her back lightly.

Relaxing against him, Marisol was exhausted. She dropped her hands from the headboard and rested her head on his shoulder, closing her eyes. When she returned to her lonely apartment tomorrow, she would think about why he'd said the word *mine*. Right now, she wanted to enjoy being sheltered and protected, being with Dwayne.

## Chapter *Four*

"All I have are bagels for breakfast, I hope you don't mind?" Dwayne stroked a finger along the side of her face, hating the small bruise that now marred her perfect features.

"I just went to sleep." Marisol groaned as she blindly grasped the blanket and pulled it over her face. He figured she was trying to block him out as well as the sun's rays.

Laughing, he pulled the covers away from her face. "Actually, she-cat, I let you sleep most of the night." He dropped his voice to a lower octave as he said, "Even though at least twice last night I woke up with the need to fuck you again, I didn't."

"Oh, you're so kind," she responded, still not opening her eyes.

"Fine, you can stay in bed. However, when the pride arrives I don't mind telling them you can't greet them because you're in bed."

That got her attention. Her eyes popped open and she threw the covers off. "You will do no such thing." No longer shy about her nudity, or still too groggy to care, she rose. "How much time do I have? When are they getting here?"

Still sitting on the bed, he chuckled. "Soon, but no worries, you have time for breakfast."

"I want to shower first." She swiped up his shirt from the floor and put it on.

He rose and rounded the bed toward her. "Do you need someone to wash your back?" He'd already showered and dressed in sweatpants while she was sleeping, but he'd be willing to get in the water and play with her.

Wrapping her arms around him, she said, "I don't think so. I'll be a lot faster without...distraction."

"What distraction?" he asked her, attempting to appear innocent.

"You are distraction." Leaning up, on her toes she gave him a quick kiss then stepped away allowing her hand to caress his bare chest.

"You know anything you need is--"

"In the cabinet." She waved at him and walked out of the bedroom and crossed the front room to the bathroom.

Occupying himself until Marisol finished in the bathroom, Dwayne made up the bed. Then dug inside one of the four drawers in his small dresser and pulled out another flannel shirt and a pair of sweat pants that had a drawstring inside so she could tighten it around her waist. They would be extremely baggy on her, but they would stay in place until he could get her to the *Amofeli* lodge and G-Mama Walters could get her something to wear. Laying the clothes on the bed for her, he then padded barefoot into the kitchen. He opened the fridge and removed the blueberry bagels, a small tub of butter and individual bottles of juice.

Kal had already texted him this morning and let him know that he'd already arrived at the pride lodge and they would be at his cabin as soon as everyone arrived and Grandpa Walters briefed them and set up the parties. They would find the hyenas today if they were still in the area. He believed they were because the hair on the back of his neck would not relax. Earlier he'd shifted and walked his cat around his property but he didn't find any evidence that anyone had been around his place.

They would pay for touching Marisol. His mate. After last night and the connection he felt when he was joined with her, he had no doubt of their destiny. Now, he just had to convince his skittish she-cat.

Cutting bagels open, he placed them into his toaster oven. While he waited for them to be done, he stared out the patio to the backyard thankful the rain had ceased during the night. His couch was ruined. Thanks to the stinky hyenas, him and the rain. Glancing beyond his grounds he stared along the edge of the trees. The forest was a good distance from his cabin. He'd purposely done that to give himself space. He didn't like to feel closed in or trapped.

His cat was jumpy and pacing inside him. Today something was going to go down, he just knew it. He could sense it all around him, making his skin feel alive as tingling sensation ran over his flesh. His cat wanted him to shift now and start the search, but Dwayne knew it was wise to wait on his pride members. Then he would shift. The only reason he'd put on sweats was for Marisol's modesty. Under any other circumstance he would have been prowling around his house nude, waiting and shifting as soon as the other males arrived.

When the timer beeped, he went back into the kitchen. Buttering the bagels he placed them on a plate. His ears picked up on the sound of a door opening.

Picking up a bagel half, he met Marisol as she crossed the living room heading toward the bedroom dressed only in a towel. She looked fresh and sexy. Her normal cinnamon colored hair appeared chocolate, still damp from her shower. The towel only covered from her breasts down to the top of her thighs.

Oh, man, he loved small towels.

"Don't forget to add more cream to these and your calf," he said, gingerly touching the scratches on her shoulder.

"I won't." She gave him a small smile and said, "That bagel smells really good."

Frowning, he lifted the buttery bagel up to her face. "This bagel?"

"Hmm, hm." She licked her lips and closed her eyes briefly as if savoring the scent.

Tilting his head, he asked, "Are you hungry, she-cat?"

Her stomach growled, answering him. They both laughed.

She rubbed her belly over the towel. "Apparently so." She boldly stepped closer to him leaving only the distance of the bagel to separate them.

Dwayne enjoyed watching her begin to come out of her shell. "Maybe you ought to feed that beast within."

"I plan to." Lifting her hand she rubbed a finger across the top of the bagel and collected some butter and put it in her mouth and moaned.

He practically came unglued with the sound. His half-hard cock sprang to a full erection. He didn't have plans to have sex with her again this morning knowing their time was tight, but it was hard to convince his cat or him that this wasn't a good idea to bury his dick inside her tight sex. "Oh, Marisol..."

"Are you here to tease me with that?" she pouted, pushing her succulent bottom lip out.

"Never." He broke off a chunk of the bread and fed it to her. As she ate it, he fed her another. Her moans seemed to increase with every bite and he was trembling with need by the time she consumed the last piece.

Wrapping his arms around her, he pulled her body against him and pressed his lips to her neck, licking her sweet skin. "I need you, she-cat."

"Then take me, Dwayne." She held both sides of his head and lifted her face to kiss him.

His tongue dipped into her mouth. She tasted of butter and Marisol, her savory flavor and the feel of her fingers stroking him below his earlobes was his undoing. Purring incessantly, he walked them the few steps back until they arrived at the kitchen table.

Lifting Marisol, he gently laid her down on top of it and kept his hand along her spine to keep her shoulders from pressing against the hard surface. She wrapped her legs around his waist and urged him on.

Still kissing her, he reached his free hand between their bodies and fumbled with the waistband of his pants as he finagled it over his insistent erection. Once free he shoved the material down his hips. Grabbing his shaft, he angled it towards her heated paradise and enjoyed her wetness greeting him.

His she-cat had been just as turned on as him. Without preamble he thrust forward, driving his full length inside her tight pussy.

Arching her back, she pressed her hips up and met him as she pulled her mouth away and screamed.

Over and over, he pounded into her. He could not be gentle, not this time. He was too keyed up, too on edge, to give her tender lovemaking.

Marisol didn't seem to mind his fierce passion as she gyrated her hips under him and lowered one hand, clawing at his back.

The feel of her nails turned him on. However, not as much as the sound of her voice as she called out to him.

*"Sí, Dwayne, más difícilmente. ¡Más difícilmente!"*

In response to her words, he cupped her ass and held her in place as he plunged his dick into her slick sex hard as she requested. She contracted around him and began to tremble and he ground his pelvis to hers, keeping himself deep inside her.

When she climaxed, the force of her orgasm shocked them both. He joined her in ecstasy and bathed her womb with his seed. *Mine*, he claimed mentally and his cat agreed wholeheartedly.

As she held onto him weakly and lay below him with her eyes closed, he placed kisses on her forehead over the small bruise, then the tip of her nose and finally her mouth. He enjoyed having her in his arms and he wanted to keep her in his life. Soon, they would need to have an important conversation. It was time for Marisol to stop running.

A movement in the corner of his eyes caught his attention. Holding her tighter to his body, he used his camouflage trait to conceal them both. Thank, God, they were still connected, the only way he could cloak them both.

To keep Marisol still, he pressed the side of his face to hers and whispered softly in her ear words of endearment, praising her. All the while he stared beyond his cabin and to the edge of the forest. Sure enough, the small movement of the bushes became more pronounced as one, then two and so on until five feral men, fitting the descriptions of the news report about the men who had terrorized innocent people, were moving across the opening towards his house.

If he moved, they would see Marisol and his first concern, was keeping her safe. So he watched the mangy bastards strut around his backyard. They noticed the couch and sniffed around it attempting to pick up scents. Satisfied or not, one of them crept up the stairs towards the house and stared through the glass patio door.

A solo man stood right in front of him and Marisol. Dwayne continued to speak softly, telling her how much he loved the feel of her body, having her still beneath him. How she completed him and made his world complete and yet his eyes never left the face of a man with cuts marring his ugly features. Dwayne would bet he was the man that had put the scratches on Marisol and the one she'd struck with the small branch.

He had no fear they could see them. Even as a type of feline, hyenas were too impetuous and rash to patiently scan details and patterns for inconsistency. He was thankful that after a few moments the man left and joined his friends to circle the cabin.

He lifted away from Marisol and pulled her to her feet. "Why don't you go get dressed, the pride should be here soon."

Blushing, she put her hand over her mouth. "Oh, my, I forgot."

Knowing that with him she became so focused on them that she disregarded everything else pleased him a lot. "No worries," he said, kissing her lips. He gave her a firm push in the direction of the bedroom. He was grateful to see her close the door.

Quickly, he rushed towards the front door and was standing on his front porch when the wild men rounded his house. Even if he didn't know they were there, their foul stench always preceded their arrival.

One hand already shifted into his animal form. Dwayne stood ready with his hands by his side and his stance wide. He wouldn't leave his position in front of the door if he didn't have to until his pride family arrived. Not because he was scared, but because he was the only one to protect his mate.

"You all must have a death wish." Dwayne called out.

They continued until they were all standing before him. The one in spotted ragged fur, short legged, awkward gaited animal form made small agitated circles in the back. All of them were so dirty and filthy, he could barely decipher any of their nationalities.

"Where is she?" Scar-face questioned, appearing white by the Anglo shape of his nose.

"Yeah, yeah, where is she?" demanded a man beside him, with a wider nose, rubbing his fingers together as if he wanted to grab something.

"There's nobody here for you. I suggest you remember that before one of you get hurt." Dwayne spoke firmly, warning the men.

The one in animal form clearly understood the threat and danced towards him.

Dwayne crouched a little and his cat was going wild demanding he shift and release him. His cat wanted to fight, but Dwayne knew he had to be wiser. To fight the man, he'd have to leave the door, giving the other four access to his cabin. Instead, he eyed the hyena and growled and hissed allowing the sound to rumble loud from his chest as he scanned his eyes across all the men.

Two men in the back took a few steps back. Evidently, they weren't as dumb as their friends.

"I marked her. I want her," Scar-face demanded.

"I mated her. I got her." Stepping down one step, he hissed loudly, making sure the wild men understood his message. "She's mine."

"We won't leave without her. We want her for our girl. All of our girl." Wide-nose called out, cackling at his own humorless words.

"Then you'll have to get through me. I'll kill all of you before I let you touch her again."

Scar-face and his four friends took a step forward.

"And we'll bury your filthy carcasses." Kal said, coming through the woods along the path that led to Dwayne's cabin with Preston at his side.

The wild pack members stopped mid-stride and glanced behind them as the group of fifteen *Amofeli* males came out of the woods and surrounded them.

That was all Dwayne needed to see. Hissing a warning, he shifted, clothes shredding into pieces as he launched off the porch at the frightened male.

They both tumbled to the ground as the unruly man shifted as well. Clawing and scratching at each other, Dwayne disregarded the milieu that was going on as his lynx latched onto the throat of the hyena.

Dwayne could taste the sour tang of the hyena's fur and it revolted him, but he tightened his hold. Pressing all of his weight onto the mangy animal, Dwayne's cat dug his claws deep into his opponents' side. Tense, Dwayne knew all it would take was a firm shake of his head and he'd rip the throat out of the hyena's throat.

*Amofeli* weren't killers, but they were protectors of what was theirs. Marisol was his mate and this man had touched her. Hurt her. His cat was convincing Dwayne to prove his dominance and send out a warning to all by ending the man's life. Dwayne's jaw locked, prepared to see a final justice served.

"Dwayne, stop. Don't do it." It was Grandpa Walter's voice. The older man stood over them and spoke calmly. "Let him go and we will get him to the authorities along with his friends."

There was a war raging inside him, but Dwayne's mental strength overpowered his animal instinct. He knew his pride leader was right. The sweet floral scent of Marisol greeted him as well. More than anything, Marisol had already been through too much and he didn't want her to see him as a killer. Turning the hyena loose, Dwayne moved away from him quickly.

A few paces away, Marisol stood at the bottom of his steps in her large shirt and baggy sweats. He wasn't sure when she'd come out of the cabin. She rushed towards him. Dropping to her knees she wrapped her arms around his neck and burrowed her face in his fur.

His pride family gathered and restrained the men.

"I love you." He heard her whisper.

Hearing her words, he shifted, sitting on the ground to pull her into his arms. "She-cat, you're my mate. I will never let anyone hurt you again."

"I know." She captivated him with her green eyes and her soft caress along his face. "You asked me once why came to the *Amofeli* pride land and I wasn't completely honest."

Dwayne sat patiently, nude, wanting to hear what she had to say.

Marisol glanced away, then back at him again. "I came here because this was the only place I felt like I was at peace. When I was here with the *Amofeli*. With you. I just couldn't admit it to myself. Because I've ran away for so long. I was afraid to trust myself."

"As long as from here on out, you trust me. Trust us." He lifted his hand and touched his heart, then hers'.

"Always." She nodded.

He wanted to kiss her, but the taste of the hyenas was still on his tongue and he didn't want that transferring to her. "I need a shower. Care to join me?"

She smiled and tightened her hold on him. "I thought you'd never ask."



Clasping her firmly against him, Dwayne rose.

“Ah, Dwayne, would you like us to wait out here for you two?” Preston called after him, jokingly.

Glancing over his shoulder, he looked at the younger man, his best friend’s brother. “Hell, no.”

“Come on, Preston, they have private matters to take care of. I know privacy is something you would know nothing about, the way you and Tresa carry-on.” Kal clapped his brother on the back.

“You got a nerve. Don’t think I don’t know what was going on in your car when you and Lana pulled up,” Preston replied.

Continuing on his path with Marisol, Dwayne called out, “See you guys later at the lodge.”

The two brothers were still taunting each other as Dwayne carried his mate into his cabin to start on the rest of their life together.

*I hope you enjoyed all three stories of the Timberon Cat Series.*

*Secured Heart (Kal and Lana)*

*On the Prowl (Preston and Tresa)*

*Rescued Mate (Dwayne and Marisol)*

Yvette loves romance and writing it is one of her greatest and guiltiest pleasures. She enjoys creating happily ever after stories with lots of HEAT. The hotter the better! Life is busy, it would be great to have a chance to sit down and enjoy a long read. Since that is often not the case, she brings you Short and Sexy, Sensual Erotica. Just long enough to help you meet the *need*. She was talking about your reading need...where's your mind? As an erotic romance author, she tries to show that every woman no matter color, age, shape or size deserves a high level of passion in their life. Whether you like to see them spanked, tangled in a ménage or simply falling in love, she's got it. So, if you like diversity and a good read, check out one of her books. Then send her a few words through e-mail about it so you all can chat. She runs a newsletter group where she posts contests, excerpts, blurbs, covers and news about where she is and what she's doing.

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