



Draeqer Legacy

a shifter novel

JADEN SINCLAIR

**Draeger's Legacy
by
Jaden Sinclair**

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Natasha Millard never knew what hit her when she caught the eye of Drake Draeger. She didn't understand the hunger that his dark eyes held for her, or comprehend how much that hunger would consume her. And she had no clue what to do when he claimed her for himself, forsaking her father. The Draeger Legacy has come full circle. The claim has been made. Who will survive the burn of the mating?

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Draeger's Legacy

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Chapter One

Hanging lights broke through the darkness of the night. A band played soft music and shifters both male and female danced and talked, reacquainted themselves with old friends and new. It was a special party, one that eighteen-year-old Natasha Millard was determined to enjoy.

Finally, she was able to join in the special parties her father held. Finally, she was allowed to dress up and come out of her room to drink the sweet wine and sample the fine pastries. And yet, even though she was of age, her father still made it very clear that she was not to engage in conversation with the males unless her nanny stood next to her.

Ah, her nanny. Just the thought of that bitter old woman following her around, keeping her cold icy eyes on Natasha's every move had her wanting to sigh and return to her room. The old woman just refused to let her have any fun. Always harping about the place of a lady such as herself. Hell, this was the modern days, not the old days where you had the coming out balls and chaperons everywhere you went. Yet, that was how her father still treated her. At eighteen, she still had to have her nanny on her heels, guarding her.

"You drink too much of that, then you'll be as silly as the rest of them." As usual, Elli Piper, her nanny and faithful lap dog to her father, took the wine glass from her hand before she could take a sip of the refreshing drink. "A lady never—"

"Yes, I know," Natasha snapped, turning on the woman. "A lady never drinks, talks to people she doesn't know and shuts up in a corner until someone might notice her." She crossed her arms over her breasts, narrowing her eyes on her. "I've heard it all before and so many times I'm sick of hearing it. Elli, I'm eighteen. I think I can have a drink at my father's party."

Elli smiled. A chilling sight with all the wrinkles on her face and the coldness in her gray eyes. The way she looked, Natasha wondered if the

woman was ever pretty or always a fright for sore eyes.

At five-three, Elli had a slight hunch to her back. She always had her salt and pepper hair pulled back into a tight bun at the back of her head, pulling the sides of her wrinkled face back. Sometimes her hair was so tight her eyes would slit, and those were the days Natasha really worked at staying away from her. Just because, every time she saw her she would start to laugh.

Oval shape face, thin lips, it was a wonder at times how she became a nanny in the first place. Natasha swore that it was the only thing she could do since she appeared so drab in the black dresses she wore.

“Oh, so you think just because you’re eighteen that you can drink and flop around with whomever you please?” Her shrill voice had Natasha rolling her eyes. At one time, she would’ve cringed at the sound, but tonight it just irritated the hell out of her. “Not on my watch. You’re a lady and you’re going to stay one until your father sees fit for you to mate.”

“I doubt that day will ever come, thank you very much.” She took the glass back out of her hand, drinking a large amount of the liquid.

“Never doubt a thing, young lady,” once more her glass was taken from her hands, but this time it was by her father. “And Elli is right. You shouldn’t be drinking. You’re still too young.”

Philip Millard glared hard at Natasha. She instantly lowered her eyes to the ground, hands fisted into the long cream silk of her dress. As always, her father could make her feel like a small child with a glare—his show of disapproval.

Her father just turned fifty and still he moved like a shifter of youth. He stood at six foot even, built strong, tough, and carried himself as a man who silently demanded respect. His thick black hair only recently showed a hint of his age. Specks of gray touched the sides and a few wrinkles around the eyes. Besides that, her father still looked like he was in his thirties.

“If you didn’t want me to at least enjoy myself, why did you bring me home?” she asked, holding back her anger. For the past three years, she spent away from home in a boarding school, only coming home for weekends and holiday. And then she was guarded by her childhood nanny.

“Not now, Natasha,” he snapped, causing her to jump at the sharpness of his tone. “We’ll discuss this later.”

She looked up at him. Pain deep inside her chest hit, just as it always did when he brushed her aside. “It’s funny how each time you push me

away it always feels like the first. You think by now I would be use to it.”

She brushed away from him quickly, leaving her father to stand with her nanny. With each step she took, she kept telling herself not to cry. To cry would be to show weakness, and weakness was never tolerated. But how could she not cry when she was once again brought home for a fancy party only for her father to show his friends what a perfect little home he had.

Bullshit!

Their home was anything but happy or perfect. He wanted a son. She knew that from the day she turned five and heard him in a drunken slumber bitching to one of his friends. His mate failed him. She died giving him a daughter, not the son she promised. A daughter was fragile, needed to be protected from the monsters like himself. Useless, you found a reason for them.

Natasha was fragile, delicate, just like her mother, Amy Millard. Natasha even looked like her. They both were only five-three. Heart shaped faces, sensual lips, narrow cheekbones, dainty hands, and body. Some used to say Natasha was a porcelain doll and her father treated her as if she might break like one any second. But where Amy had the dark colored hair, Natasha had her father's soft wheat silk upon her head. She kept it long, parted in the middle, cascading down her back in a drape of silk. It was the only thing of her father's she had. The only thing reminding her at times that she was his daughter.

Hugging herself as she walked, Natasha smiled at the few who seemed to have the courage to speak to her. It was another thing she noticed the last few times she was home. People around her seemed afraid to talk to her. It was as if she had this sign over head telling all around: *Beware. Philip Millard's daughter was home. Keep at least one hundred feet away if you valued your life.*

She hated how they all treated her. Don't talk, or daddy will get upset. Don't look at her, or her father will growl and demand you back off. Pretend she isn't around, and everything will be just fine. That was her life and it didn't seem like things were going to get any better.

* * * *

“You think you can keep it in your pants tonight?” Allen Draeger asked his son while reading the paper. They were together in the back seat of the limo, facing each other, or, as Drake like to think of it—facing the paper.

Drake Draeger glanced from the tinted window to his father. One

eyebrow went up in small amusement. His father had made it clear that the last girl Drake enjoyed his father didn't approve.

"Why, would you like to join me next time?" Drake tossed back, slumping down low in the seat.

With a snap of the paper it closed, Allen looked hard at Drake, and Drake smiled back in his cool manner. For the past few months a battle of wills had been raging in the house. At twenty-two, Drake was trying to make his own way in the world and thought he was doing a pretty damn fine job of it. He had his own money, grounds with a house and the start of his own business in the stock market. It was amazing to him how well he learned how to buy, sell and trade stock and make a shitload of money doing it. Money his father didn't know about.

"Your smart ass ways, the playboy shit, stops now, Drake," Allen growled. "I'm tired of bailing your ass out of messes like the last one."

Drake shrugged his shoulders. "There wasn't anything to bail my ass out of. She was willing, the mood hit me. I fucked her. End of story."

"That girl was the daughter of one of my good friends," Allen's voice rumbled in his anger over being reminded about what Drake did.

"Come on, Dad," Drake sighed, "I didn't ruin her. I wasn't her first and sure I'm not going to be the last."

His father growled louder this time and Drake backed off. He liked to push his father to a certain point and always knew when to pull back before things got too far out of hand.

"This is going to stop," Allen stated in his authoritative voice. "You're too damn old to be out playing like a bitch in heat. Its time you went to a Gathering and found a mate."

Drake resisted the urge to roll his eyes at the man. For the past six months all he wanted to talk about was Drake going to a Gathering and finding a mate. Have babies, settle down. That was it. Live life to the fullest was out of the question. Too many responsibilities for a man like him. blablabla! He was sick to death of hearing this crap.

"I'm not interested in the Gathering," Drake breathed out. "Watching the public matings makes me sick. Don't understand how any male could let his daughter go through with that."

"It's our way, Drake."

"Well maybe the way needs to be changed." He couldn't keep the passion from his voice or the interest. "Would you let a daughter be publicly mated?" He stared straight into his father's eyes, cocking his head to the side. "Didn't think so. So why in the hell would you want me to do it to another man? The ways can be changed," Drake said, then

blew out a ragged breath and went back to looking out the window.

They were heading to the Millard home. Philip Millard was one of those guys who believed that the Gatherings were an important part of their history. To bring your children together in the natural way with a public screwing was okay. And yet, his own daughter had yet to show her face at one. Drake thought of him as a hypercritic in the biggest manner.

There were rumors that his daughter was too fragile to go to any of the Gatherings. Others said she was still too young and wouldn't be able to handle the demands of a male. Drake would put money down that the bastard just didn't want his daughter there. That like so many other fathers with some money, he wanted to save his only child for something important—treat her as a damned investment. That had him snorting to himself.

The limo turned into the drive. It stopped and the backdoors opened. Drake stepped out, looked up at the night sky, and closed his eyes. He took in the fresh scent of the night deep into his lungs. He could make out all the sweet scents of the night and the warm bodies of many young ladies around—ladies that he had no desire to greet or meet—mostly because tonight was a meeting as well as a party for the new members of the Gathering Cabinet.

His father wanted to join the cabinet with the intention of putting some civilization into it. It was all too barbaric, too harsh for the females, too raw. And without any kind of order in it then more fathers were going to keep their daughters away, and that would lead to many new problems. One being, males would start hunting again, taking females from their families without a care to anyone or anything around them.

“Let's find our host,” Allen remarked, getting Drake's full attention.

Drake followed his father out into the grounds. Trees were lit with hanging lights. Pits held roasting meat, tables lined with food and many bins with ice cold drinks sat around in spots all over. Shifters a many stood around talking, eating, and drinking. They laughed, joked, teased, and flirted. Drake could feel the relaxed manner in which they celebrated the night.

As he walked behind his father, Drake ran his hand through the long locks of dark black hair from his eyes. He kept it long on top, parted and feathered back, somewhat shorter around his neck to irate his father. Allen liked all things in order, including one's appearance. But Drake liked his hair long, free blowing in the wind.

He stopped when the soft breeze of the night blew the most subtle,

sweetest scent he ever did smell right up his nose. It went through his body, tantalizing each cell, each nerve ending and pooled together right between his legs. His cock thickened, hardened, and became so painfully hard he almost moaned aloud in pain.

He could feel the animal inside wakening. Hunger gripped him, wrapped a powerful fist into his soul and squeezed. He couldn't hold back the low vibrating growl from slipping from his lips, or stop the red haze from glazing over his eyes when he looked out for the one that carried the scent.

Many different girls stood around talking, smiling, laughing. They all seemed to be having a good time. With another deep breath, another sharp intake of the scent and Drake was instantly in tune with the pain of the one that called out to his soul.

She was hurting. He could feel it, sense it. Pain and loneliness hung onto her scent, overpowering the sweetness of her naturalness.

Closing his eyes again, he reached out to her.

He doesn't love her. He doesn't care. She's only a tool for him to use.

Drake pulled back, sucking in as much air into his lungs as he could. Her sorrow was something he wasn't use to feeling. Most of the girls he knew didn't hurt like the one he was picking up on now. Sure, they were bored and looked for things to not only entertain themselves with, but they also knew how to get attention from the ones they wanted. He felt the feelings of the girl—her loneliness—nothing more.

Closing his eyes again, Drake took a deep breath, trying to pinpoint where she was. The urge to go to her, to see her face was just too damn powerful to ignore. He had to find her. See for himself the kind of pain that she was in, and fix it if he could.

Drake opened his eyes just as the scent grew stronger. It was like a gust of wind blowing right by him. And with that wind, opening his eyes he saw the vision of his life.

A vision to live for. That was what she was. Her arms hugging her slender frame, she walked right past him, head down, long hair blowing around her. The long cream dress she wore wrapped around her body like fine silk. He saw the outline of slender legs, could see the narrow hips and small waist. Breasts that pressed against the material, stretched by the way she hugged herself. Just the simple sight of her had his blood boiling, cock throbbing, and the animal need to take and claim. Drake wanted her and it wasn't for just a single night.

Instead of catching up with his father, he turned and followed her.

He felt her pain—as intense as his own.

Taking two glasses of wine from a tray, Drake followed her to the other side of the grounds. For a few seconds his heart began to pound in his chest with the thought that she was going to head so far away from the party that he might get to be completely alone with her. But no such luck. She stopped at a table that held snack food. Still hugging herself, she looked down at the food, touching nothing.

Drake went up behind her, raised his arm over her hand, and lowered the glass down right in front of her face. “Sometimes a drink helps ease the pain.” She jumped, swung around and huge blue eyes stared at him. Quickly she looked around. “Expecting someone else?”

“Oh, um, I...” It seemed that she couldn’t get a word out.

Drake nodded, dangling the glass in front of her again. “Have a drink. Might help you form the words.”

He saw her hand shake as she took the glass from him. He took a drink and just about held his breath until he saw her take a tender sip. Her lips touched the rim of the glass and the tip of her tongue touched her lips. The action he felt to the tip of his cock.

He cleared his throat. “I’m Drake.” Again, she looked around, and he did also. “Something wrong?”

“My father doesn’t want me to socialize alone,” she answered. The sweetness of her voice slid over his senses like fine silk. Drake wanted to wrap himself up in her voice and never walk away. “I suppose I have my reputation to think of.”

“I doubt your reputation could be tarnished at a party like this,” he snickered taking another drink. “The whole damn place is lit up like the fourth of July.”

She smelled like the air after a rainstorm. Fresh, clean, sweet. Drake found it very hard to drink his wine and act like everything was normal. Inside he was raging to conquer, to take. She was his, now he just had to figure out the best way to handle the take. Right now, it was a struggle to not pull her into his arms, mark her and just walk away.

“Why are you staring at me like that?” she asked, her blue eyes widening, body tensing.

God. Her scent is going to drive me nuts. “How am I staring at you?” He tried to keep his voice even, innocent sounding even. Must’ve failed because she shivered, put the glass down, and rubbed her bare arms.

Drake couldn’t help but watch that movement. The cream of her skin had his mouth watering. Even the tips of his fingers itched to touch

her, to feel the softness of her skin.

Drake knew women. He'd had his fair share of experience in his lifetime, but there was something about this woman that drew him in and threatened to never let go. He wanted her, but not just for a night in his bed. No, Drake wanted to hold her each night. To love, shelter and care for her. Hell, he wanted her to have his children!

"I have to go." Before he would convince her to stay, she turned and ran away-literally.

Drake stood still watching her go.

"If you have your sights on that one, forget it." A young man came up to him, beers in his hand instead of the fine wine. "No one is to get near Natasha Millard."

Drake turned his head sharply at the young man. Looking at him closely he saw that he wasn't as young as he sounded. A golden shifter. That was what they were called for the golden locks on top of their head. Not many were around, but one stood in front of him now.

He was the same height as Drake, the same built, only where Drake was darker, this one was golden. Hence, the golden shifter.

He smiled at Drake, extended a beer to him before offering his hand. "Jason Laswell."

Drake took the beer then the hand. "Drake Draeger."

"Ah, so your father is here also for the secret Cabinet meeting." Jason nodded, taking a drink from the bottle. "So am I."

"How do you feel about the subject at hand?"

He had to ask the question. Lately all of the shifters were split when it came to the Gathering. Half wanted to keep things the way they were and half wanted change. Drake leaned more to the change, but after seeing something he wanted he was once again torn.

"The change is needed," Jason said. "If things keep going the way they are then we're never going to have females at the damn Gatherings."

Drake agreed. "So what'd you mean no one gets near her?"

James Laswell's blue eyes lit up. "You're interested in a very unattainable prize, my friend." He shook his head, taking another drink. "He keeps her away most of the time, guarded when here." He shrugged. "No one gets near her unless Philip Millard wants you to."

"Thought he was all about keeping the old ways."

James snickered this time. "He is, as long as it has nothing to do with his daughter. Rumor has it he's setting up a mating for her—one that benefits him, not her."

Drake turned his attention back towards the large house where Natasha Millard had run. He could still smell her. Still pick up her scent and follow it.

But he didn't follow it. At least not yet.

The meeting was about to start and Drake had to be there. As first born, heir to his father it was his duty to stand by his father's side. The thought at first bored him. He didn't want to be in this kind of meeting, but knowing now that the father of his desire would be there ranting about keeping things the same intrigued him. Drake wanted to see the man for himself and hear what he had to say.

Following James to the house, Drake kept his mouth shut, eyes, and ears open. His father waited for him with his usual scowl in place.

"Where've you been?" Allen demanded.

"Gathering information," Drake answered, walking past him into the room.

The room they were all led to was a large ballroom of sorts. Tables, chairs, food, and drink were all lined up for them. Cards had also been placed along the large circle table, where all the families sat. Drake took his seat, looking around at all the different families. Half he didn't know, others he heard of. Laswell, whom he'd just met, Vanderburgs, he'd heard of, and Jenaro had been mentioned a few times in the past. How those three families stood about the change, he wondered.

"Thank you all for coming to this meeting," Philip Millard stormed into the room like a man of power. Drake watched his movements, never taking his eyes off the man. "The business at hand is the change to not only the Cabinet but to the Gathering itself."

Drake linked his fingers together, over his belly, slumped back in the chair and stretched his legs out crossing them at the ankles. He ignored the irate expression his father cast him. He knew he was acting like a punk, and he was doing it on purpose. Pushing people was what he did best, and it was what he was going to do.

"Now it has come to my attention that half of you all want a change to both, especially the Gathering," Philip went on. "Now I ask you all, why mess with something that works?" He smiled at them all.

Drake glanced around the room. Some were mumbling to themselves, others nodded at the statement. Okay, time to stir things up then.

"If things work so well, then why is there a lack in how many females show up at the Gathering?" Drake spoke loud enough for everyone to hear. "Including your own daughter." *He had him!*

Philip Millard turned his full attention to Drake. “Young Draeger. I’m sure your father has explained how things work at these meetings.”

“He has a legitimate question, Millard,” Allen added, coming to Drake’s aid. “Why is it that if change isn’t needed, why is there a decline in the females?”

“And his daughter,” Drake stood up, facing the man. “You really can’t expect us to keep you on the board, and keep the old ways going, if you don’t follow the rules.”

“The boy has a point!” someone yelled, and others agreed.

Drake caught James Laswell’s eye for a second. The man smiled his approval and nodded towards Drake.

“My daughter is currently spoken for, not that it’s any of yours or anyone’s business for that matter,” Millard added, gritting his teeth.

“That’s funny.” Drake shrugged. “I didn’t pick up another scent on her when I spoke to her earlier.” He crossed his arms over his chest, narrowing his own dark eyes on the man.

Millard’s face turned red. Others stood up, speaking at once about the change and how everyone needed to follow the rules. Arguments began, but Drake was immune to it all. Instead, he had a silent face off with Millard.

The meeting was getting fast out of control. Millard came up to Drake, standing nose to nose with him. “Stay away from my daughter, Draeger,” he warned with a low rumble to his voice. “I’m warning you now.”

“Be careful, Millard,” Drake growled back. “I take threats as personal as I do challenges.”

Millard snarled and Drake lost his control. He showed his own teeth, let lose the pent up frustration. A deep, loud growl left his lips and he pushed Millard away. The older man went flying backwards, landing on one of the large tables with food. All the talk stopped in the room, all watched the scene.

Drake changed some. He didn’t let his animal completely out, but enough that his hands and face changed. What caused this kind of rage to erupt inside him he couldn’t say. But what he could answer for was the fact that he didn’t like this man telling him to stay away from *his* woman. That was what Natasha Millard was as far as Drake was concerned. She was his!

Millard came up to his face, snarling and changing. A pure animal fight was about to happen. But it didn’t. Someone shot a gun and Allen came up in front of Drake, backhanding him so hard that it seemed to

knock the haze right out of him.

Drake cleared his head and pushed his father away. He was ready to kill and didn't give a fuck who it was. But he also had enough common sense to walk away, which is what he did.

He turned from the group and stormed right out of the room, slamming the door behind him. As fast as his long legs would carry him he went back outside, but he didn't join the party. Instead, he walked around the house, following the scent that he was deeply falling in love with.

He found a tree he could climb, and he pulled his ass up it. He followed her sweetness all the way to the top. Her room it seemed was on the top. Drake positioned himself just right. He was able to see into her room, watch her pace the floor hugging herself like she did when he first saw her.

She was everything he never thought he would want or need. Soft, delicate, beautiful. There was nothing to keep him from her, not if her father was passionate about keeping the old ways going.

Drake stiffened when Millard busted into her room. He looked so pissed. In fact, Drake knew he was by the way the door bounced off the wall, leaving a crack in the plaster. Natasha jumped and took a few steps backwards away from him.

"I told you to stay out of sight!" Millard yelled, rushing up to her, grabbing hold of her arms roughly. He shook her, pushed her back, and backhanded her so hard she went flying onto the bed with a scream.

Drake had to really hold on to his self-control. Every nerve in his body was ready to bust through that window and rip the bastard's throat out for hitting her.

"I didn't do anything wrong!" Natasha cried, holding the side of her face. "I came back to my room right after I saw you."

"Lies!" He grabbed her again, his hand going up for another slap. This time, Drake was poised to pounce.

"You'll leave bruises!" an old woman shouted as she came in, stopping Millard from slapping Natasha again. "And how will you explain that to the men who are demanding your attention and hers?"

Millard shoved Natasha away again. His breathing labored, anger speared all over his face directed at her. "Have her packed up, Elli. She goes back tonight."

Millard turned and left the room. The older woman went to Natasha, but Natasha brushed her aside, coming to her feet. "Don't touch me."

"I told you, girl, what was expected from a lady and a daughter."

The woman took a large suitcase from the closet. She placed it on the bed, opened the lid, and went to work at packing things. "Obedience is required or punishment suffered."

"I'm not a dog, Elli, I'm his daughter!" Natasha raised her voice at the woman.

"And being his daughter he expects more from you. Now change. You'll be leaving within the hour."

Natasha snorted. "Out the back door just as I came in. What a surprise."

Natasha disappeared and Drake started his climb down. So Millard was sending her away again. Well that was just what he needed then.

"What the hell are you doing up there?" Allen demanded.

Drake dropped down to the ground, brushed his pants off and his hands. "Checking something out."

He started to walk away, but his father grabbed hold of his arm, stopping him. "What scheme do you have planned this time, Drake?"

Drake jerked out of his father's grip, facing him. "You wanted me to take a stand, I did. You've hounded me for a mate, well prepare yourself, Father. I'm about to get my mate."

"What're you talking about?" His father frowned, clearly not understanding what was going on.

"Millard wants to keep the old ways, so we'll keep them for now. And I'll show him just what happens when you refuse to change a damn thing." He closed his eyes, breathing in deeply of the night. He could still smell her, knew just where she was in the house. "I'm going to get my mate and I'm getting her tonight. The old fashion way." He opened his eyes, and looked directly in his father. "I'm going to take her."

Chapter Two

Natasha followed Elli down the stairs, to the back of the house and into the waiting car. She kept her head down, didn't even bother looking at her father. He stood at the back door making sure she got into the car. He said nothing to her, only spoke low to Elli before she also got into the car.

The door closed, her fate once more sealed. She was heading back to the boarding school that was more of a home to her than this place. Granted it didn't matter where she went at the moment. She didn't have friends. Males seemed to be afraid to talk to her, and in truth, she was scared to be around them. Over the years growing up some with her father, she saw the hungers that fueled him—heard the way he took his women, and now she feared the mating altogether.

Even tonight, the male that had approached her seemed to either not know who she was, or just didn't care about speaking to her. But he also frightened her. He was so dark, so forbidding. Now granted his hair appeared soft and she wouldn't mind touching it, but the rest of him sent shivers down her spine. Large in body, shoulders as wide as her father's, legs thick, his build lean and she wondered for a second about his chest and belly. Was he hairy, or only had a small amount on him? Below the waist, she didn't even want to think about.

"It's best for you to go back to school," Elli said. Natasha turned from staring out the window to the old woman. "You're safer there. No males to worry about tarnishing you."

"You really think being locked up in a boarding school with no friends and no family is best?" Natasha asked her, holding back the tears that threatened to spill. "I have no life, Elli, no friends, nothing. I don't even have a father."

"He protects you the only way he knows how," she said with a sharp nod. "And you should be thankful he provides for you as well as he does. An ungrateful child such as you should be thanking him for his kindness, not throwing it back in his face."

"And just what did I do this time to deserve the treatment I got?" Natasha crossed her arms over her chest, taking a deep breath. "I dressed up like he wanted, showed myself to his party, and went back to my room. What do I get for doing everything he wants? Slapped and shipped off once more." She took a deep breath, calming not only her nerves but

the anger that threatened to spill. For so long now Natasha held in her anger, the resentment, everything, but she felt like it was all starting to crack around her. “This is the last time, Elli. I’m not coming back when he decides there’s a use for me again.”

“Talking like that will only get you into more trouble.” The car began to slow down. “What’s wrong?” Elli demanded from the driver.

“Someone’s blocking the road,” the driver answered.

Natasha sat forward in her seat, looking out the front of the car. Sure enough, a large black limo was parked right across the road blocking all traffic.

The driver stopped the car and put it in park. She saw the limo driver leave the vehicle. Natasha couldn’t make out much about the man. He had a hat on, dark sunglasses and a black suit with leather gloves. He walked towards them, and something in her gut felt off. Something wasn’t right.

“Elli, I think we should get out right now and leave,” Natasha said.

Elli waved a careless hand at her. “Don’t sound like a child.”

Their driver rolled the window down. At the same time, the back door of the limo opened and out came another guy. Before Natasha could figure out who it was she heard someone cock a gun.

Natasha covered her mouth with her hand, holding the scream from coming out when she saw another man point a gun at the driver. The back door opened on Elli’s side, and a man jerked her out. For a few precious seconds time felt like it was standing still.

“Pop the back, please,” the man with the gun said to their driver.

A pop, and the trunk was opening. Natasha watched as her bags were taken out, and then Elli got shoved inside, the trunk hood closing behind him. Not being a brave girl, Natasha knew that if she stayed put then something very bad was going to happen.

She shoved her door open, knocking the one with the gun back a few steps. As fast as she could she took off running—away from whatever was happening back there. She stumbled to the ground when she heard a shot go off. She screamed, fearing that her driver was dead because of her.

Desperation took over. Adrenalin pumped fast and hard in her veins, giving her the strength to run, to get away. Hearing someone chase after her only fueled it.

Just when she was about to reach a pasture, a strong arm wound around her waist, and pulled her off her feet and back against a brick wall of a chest. She knew then a big, strong man held her—very easily.

She screamed again, kicked her legs out, and twisted her body. But it was no use. His hold on her was too tight. She wasn't going anywhere.

He stopped running with her, turned her around, and walked back toward the cars. As he walked, he wrapped his other arm around her, pinning her arms to her side. Fear overwhelmed her, but it also gave her the strength she needed to fight him to the end.

The walk back to the cars didn't take as long as it took her to run from them. She saw her driver on the ground, holding his leg, which was bleeding. Natasha whimpered at the sight. She also heard banging coming from the trunk of her car.

"He'll live," the driver with the gun said to the one holding her.

"Get the bags and let's get the hell out of here."

She knew that voice! Heard it tonight at the party, but couldn't place a face or name with it since he was holding her against his chest facing away. The one holding her turned and walked back to the limo. The back door was still open, and instead of him, letting her go to get inside he kept hold and slid into the backseat with ease with her.

Another man was sitting in the back waiting on them. "I hope you know what the hell your doing?" he snapped. "This could start a war."

"I know what I'm doing. Now you want to hand me the stuff?"

The older man took a deep breath and picked up a small bag on the floor. Natasha watched him, still struggling with the tight hold that gripped her. Her eyes widened when the man brought out a syringe and some liquid in a tiny bottle.

"No!" she moaned in desperation, twisting harder in the iron arms.

"You're only going to sleep," the one holding her whispered, brushing some hair from her face and away from her shoulder. She felt his warm lips touch her shoulder. "I'm not going to hurt you."

That hand which just touched her face moved down to her waist. He pulled up her shirt, pushed her slacks down some to show her hip. His grip got tighter, his hold more snug as she felt the other man draw closer with the needle.

"Please don't!" she begged again. It punched her skin and she jumped.

"Everything's going to be alright," she heard him say in her ear again.

Instantly things started to spin, her eyes became heavy, and they felt like lead. Natasha couldn't fight anymore. Darkness was coming, sleep taking her away, just as the limo started up to take her away also.

"Make sure someone calls about the old woman," the one holding

her said. "Left her in the trunk."

Natasha slumped back against him, weak, fighting the sleepiness. With another kiss to her shoulder and one to her cheek, she lost the fight and gave in to the peace of whatever drug they just gave her.

* * * *

Drake looked down at Natasha as she finally gave up fighting. The drug worked every time, putting the user into a deep peaceful sleep. It was something he had to use a few times during his heat. A safe, sleeping drug for shifters. Perfect for a fighter.

"She's beautiful," Allen remarked. "I can see why Millard has kept her well hidden from the male population."

Drake glanced up at his father for a second. His full attention was on Natasha. He turned her on his lap, cradling her like a child. Damn if she wasn't delicate feeling in his arms. So light, so soft.

"You do know he'll come for her," his father went on. "The full moon is in one week. You don't have much time."

"I'll make sure he can't take her away," Drake said.

"Don't force her, son. You do that and she'll only resent you for it."

Drake touched the side of her face that her father had slapped and saw a light bruise forming on her cheek. "He doesn't deserve her."

"Let's hope you do." Drake looked up quickly at his father. "She's a prize, Drake. I don't think she's the kind of lady for your darker side."

Drake looked back down at her. Again, he touched her face, running his fingers over every feature—her cheeks, her nose, lips, forehead, chin. *She is perfection.* "She's my light. She'll tame it."

The rest of the ride was done in silence. Drake kept staring at Natasha. Kept touching her, assuring himself that she was indeed real, and that she was his. Well, sort of. He still had to mark her, mate with her, claim her as his own. As his father said, the full moon was a week away, not much time to get to know her. She would be going through her cycle two days before his heat, meaning they were going to have a small problem. Time sure as hell wasn't on his side. A week wasn't long enough to convince any female to be a mate.

"I see you've gotten the gates up and working." His father's voice tore him from his sleeping mate on his lap. Drake looked up just as the limo turned into the long drive. "The house is coming along good then?"

"It's livable."

They pulled up to the front door. Allen got out first, held the door open for Drake. He stepped out with Natasha passed out in his arms. A quick shift and her head rested on his shoulder.

One cook and one man to run the rest of the house was all Drake hired. He couldn't cook and needed to eat, and the other, well he just thought having a man to help him oversee the house would be nice.

Nelly, his cook came out with a big smile on her face. She was a plump shifter in her late fifties. Dark brown hair pulled back into a bun, skirt, white blouse, and apron all the time. Tony, his other servant quickly joined her. Tony was much younger; in fact, he was about the same age as Natasha. He needed a job; Drake needed the help, so they fit perfectly together.

Tony greeted him with a quick nod on his way to the trunk for the luggage that awaited him. Neither asked about the girl in his arms.

"I'll keep you posted on what goes out about her," Allen stated with a nod. "I'm sure there are going to be calls coming in. You keep low and keep her well hidden until you finish your claim. If you're serious about this, Drake, then you need that claim before facing her father. Remember, he has the power to banish you."

"I'm only following his rules," Drake said. "He can't fault me for that."

Allen nodded and got back into the limo. Drake turned and went into the house, Nelly right on his heels.

"Well I do have to say I didn't expect this," she remarked. "You were heading for a meeting and bring home a mate."

"An unwilling mate," Drake told her.

The house was still in a major state of remodeling and building. He fell in love with the grounds and took the house as is, knowing that the place was going to need one huge ass make over.

Walking inside, you were greeted with fresh marble flooring, a brand new staircase with oak banister. To his left an open dining room, still in a state of being worked on. Beyond that the kitchen that was finished. To his right, a front room, uncompleted, to the back of that the living room which was somewhat finished. He had two wings of rooms upstairs. Each had its own private bathroom. A total of fifteen bedrooms in the house, and each were going to be re-decorated. Why he decided on taking such a huge house, Drake couldn't say. He just fell in love with the place.

Nelly went right up the stairs with him to the master suit. Tony followed, lugging all three of Natasha's bags up the stairs without one complaint. When he reached the double doors to his room, Nelly was right there opening it up for him.

There was a large king sized bed to the left of the room with a soft

cream silk comforter and plush thick pillows. The bed faced the door to the closet and bathroom, which was side by side. In fact, you could go from the closet right into the bathroom if one wanted to. A small balcony overlooked the large wooded backyard, which was still being cleared out. A pool that had seen better days was getting a makeover, and the small pool house already had its turn. Tony now lived in it.

Drake went right up to the bed and gently put Natasha down in the center of it. He sat down next to her and Nelly went to work at unpacking her things. Tony quickly exited the room, closing the doors behind him.

"She's pretty," Nelly remarked. "What's her name?"

"Natasha," Drake answered, touching her face again, brushing hair away.

"Lovely name."

With a sigh, he forced himself away from Natasha. He stood up and went to the bags Nelly was going through. He flipped through some of the clothing wrinkling his nose at the plain panties and bras. In fact, most of her things were boring as hell.

"I have the same thoughts," Nelly said. "A beauty such as her should have silk and lace, not things like this."

Drake picked up one of the plain pairs of panties. It was cotton. Same as the bra. "Burn them all, and get her new ones before she wakes." Nelly nodded. "Get the silks, lace, and color. She needs to have pretty things, not this shit." He tossed the panties back into the bag and went on to the next. The couple of nightgowns she had were also boring. Long, up to the neck gowns that hid everything. "Get rid of this shit also. Get her better stuff to sleep in."

"What about the rest of her clothing?"

"Leave them for now. I'll replace all of it later, but I want her sleeping in better shit. My mate deserves silk and lace. The dainty stuff. Camisoles and those low hip panties. I want to see that on her. Even the baby doll nighties."

"Then I better head out now if you want all that before she wakes." Nelly picked up one of the bras and panties. She nodded to herself, tossed them back with the rest, and picked the bag up.

Not trusting himself, Drake finished the unpacking. He hung everything up in the closet next to his things. He had to smile a bit at the sight. He sure as hell didn't think he was going to have female things in his closet so soon.

Once finished, he finally went back to Natasha. She still slept and

would until late in the night. He looked down at her. Man, she seemed so damn tiny in that huge bed and fuck if he was carrying stone between his legs. So hard from just looking at her that he couldn't stop himself from sitting back down next to her and lowering his lips to hers. He kissed her lightly before pulling back and moving to the foot of the bed.

He took her shoes off, socks and felt her legs. In fact, he skimmed his hands up her legs to the waist where he pulled at the snap of her jeans, tugged the zipper down, and gently pulled her jeans from her.

Peaches and cream. That's what her skin reminded him of, had him thinking about. Again, he lowered his face and just rubbed his lips over her bare legs. The sweet scent that came off her was toxic. He didn't trust himself to remove her shirt. Drake knew better. If he did that then he wouldn't be able to stop until she was completely naked. Then he would just be tempted to touch her and feel her and he really wanted her awake for that.

With great willpower, he stood back up and walked away. She wasn't going anywhere.

Walking away was the hardest thing he did. Drake wanted so much to go back into that room and stay there, but he didn't. He closed the doors and walked down the stairs heading for the kitchen. Tony was there, putting the food away. He gave Drake a quick smile before tossing him a beer out of one of the sacks.

"Thanks." Drake raised the bottle up in the air before twisting the cap and taking a deep drink. Tony didn't speak much, which was pretty much why Drake liked the boy so much. Nelly did enough talking for all of them. "Got a job for you."

"I'm listening."

"Want you to keep your ears open. Philip Millard is going to be putting out the word about his daughter. I have her." That had Tony stopping what he was doing. "She's my mate and I'm following his law, his rules as to my claim. I need you to find out what ever you can about what he's up to where she's concerned. Think you can handle that?"

Tony nodded. "I can do that."

"How long does it take someone to shop for shit?" Drake couldn't still the growl from his voice. He set the bottle of beer down on the table and stood up.

Tony chuckled, "You sent Nelly shopping. She's going to be a while."

"Better not be. Not sure how long before she wakes up."

"I was only gone for less than an hour." Nelly walked in from the

back door with four large begs in her hands. “You sound like it’s been hours. Mind you, I think I could’ve stayed there and bought everything in the store. It was hard picking. Everything would look good on her.”

Drake shook his head and followed Nelly out the kitchen to the dining room where she stopped and turned on him. “You’re not going up with me.”

“Nelly...”

“Don’t Nelly me. If I’m going to change her then you don’t need to be up there watching. She’s a lady, not some hussy that you’ve been known to mess around with.”

“That’s my mate!” Drake knew he sounded like a small child right then, but didn’t give a shit.

“Not yet she isn’t. Now go eat a sandwich or fix her something. You can go up when I come back down.” She thumped him, turned, and walked away. “But don’t trash my kitchen!” she yelled.

“When did she take charge?” Drake frowned, watching her go up the stairs and disappear.

“When you gave her the run of the kitchen,” Tony answered, brushing past him.

Drake didn’t go back to the kitchen and fix something to eat. Instead, he went up the stairs, to his room and paced back in forth in front of the doors.

The time it took Nelly to change Natasha and open the doors for him was a lifetime. It really did feel like it took forever. Nelly smiled at him and Drake quickly went into the bedroom closing and locking the doors behind him.

A short, soft pink nightie replaced her clothing. It was snug around her breasts, thin straps on the shoulders and a free flowing skirt. For one split second, he wondered if Nelly bothered with panties, but knew better. Natasha was a lady. Of course she would have matching panties on with the new outfit.

“Go take a shower Drake,” he said to himself.

Drake forced his feet to take him to the bathroom instead of over to that bed. He closed himself in, took several deep breaths, and willed the raging need to take his mate back.

* * * *

Natasha slowly came back to her senses. She felt different, drugged, tired and realized she was without clothes. Raising her hand to her face, she groaned. When she moved slighting in the bed the first thing she felt was silk under her bare legs.

It took a lot of strength for her to open her eyes and when she did, she was shocked.

A room, not her own. Clothes, she knew without a doubt she didn't own, and a bed she saw, that sure didn't belong to her father or the boarding school where she lived.

Sitting up, which was a slight struggle, Natasha looked down at herself and gasped. She definitely wasn't in her home, her bed, or in her clothes. Panic began to set in then at the sound of a shower running nearby.

Pushing her legs to the side, she squirmed to sit up fully and touched her forehead when the room began to spin. Water shut off, but she didn't have the strength to get up off the bed and make a run for it. Whatever the drug was that they gave her seemed to have zapped all of her energy leaving her weak and helpless.

"You're awake." Natasha turned and gasped again. Standing in the bathroom doorway in nothing but a towel was the man from the party who dared talk to her. "I was hoping we didn't give you too much." He rubbed another towel quickly into his hair before tossing it inside and heading for her.

The room spun around again when she tried to look for something to cover herself. She almost swayed her little butt right to the floor if it wasn't for him rushing to her, steadying her.

"Easy now." His hands were warm, hot on her bare legs, sending shivers down her spine from the contact. It was the first time anyone really ever touched her. "Don't need you falling on the floor. That drug can sometimes be a bit much."

The mention of the drug had her cringing away from him, but it wasn't far. He knelt down at her feet, close—so close she could smell the male scent that belonged only to him.

"Why am I here?" Even her voice sound drugged.

He stood back up, went to the bathroom and soon she heard water running again. He returned with a glass of it in his hand and went right back down to her feet at the floor again. He handed the glass to her and she took it, sipping the liquid. Natasha almost sighed at the pleasure of the drink and the way it took care of her dry throat, but didn't. Not with him touching her legs, rubbing up and down them.

"Please don't." Again she cringed away some, looking around the room, at anything but him.

"Don't what?" His hands moved higher up her legs, causing Natasha to squirm. "Touch. Feel."

Again, she pressed her hand to her forehead and took a deep breath, “Who are you and what do you want?”

Reaching up, he took the glass from her hand, and then heard it touch the nightstand next to the bed. She jumped when he took hold of her hand, pulling it away from her face. “Drake, remember? Drake Draeger.” She pulled her hand from his and once more, both of his hands went to her legs. “And I have what I want. You.”

The simple statement stole her breath away. Natasha looked at him as if he lost his mind. Her eyes widened, mouth opened, but nothing came out. She was speechless. So she shook her head no.

He reached up, touched her cheek and Natasha turned her head away. Her breath caught in her lungs when he reared up and kissed her cheek. It was the same side that her father had slapped her.

“I never knew pure raw rage until I saw him slap you,” he said. The statement had her turning her head to face him, which was a small mistake. It put her just about nose to nose with him.

“You saw that?” she whispered.

“He had no right to do that.” He delivered another kiss to her cheek. Light, gentle, pecks that stole not only her senses but her breath.

“Please stop.”

“I like touching you,” he said, his voice lowered, lips moving from her cheek down to her chin and lower still. “You’re like silk.”

Down the side of her throat his lips moved, all the way to her shoulder. She shivered at the gentleness of his touch, the heat from his breath.

“Please stop,” she breathed out. The feelings, the sensations he was making her feel confused her. She couldn’t think, could barely breathe.

“I don’t want to stop,” he mumbled ever so lightly. His lips closed over her shoulder, a gentle bite followed by a suck and Natasha jumped again, scooting away from him.

Drake also moved. He repositioned himself on his knees, between her legs dangling on the side of the bed, hands on her hips. The dark intent in his eyes frightened her. Natasha couldn’t stop shaking. There was just something about him that had her wanting to run as far away as she could get.

“I frighten you,” he stated.

“Yes,” the word left her lips on a breath.

What little breath she had left, he stole it. Drake rose up and kissed her full on the lips. Everything and anything she might’ve been thinking about went right out the window. He stole her senses just as he stole her

lips, her breath, and her mind. Thinking was impossible.

Her first kiss. Drake was her first kiss and it was mind blowing. He slanted his head, pressed his lips against hers, and sipped until she opened her mouth to draw breath into her lungs. Once she opened her mouth, he slipped his tongue into hers.

Natasha couldn't stop the moan from slipping from her lips. She couldn't stop him from rising up, coming over her and pressing her back down into the bed. His body rested on top of hers, the heat of his flesh warmed her from the inside out as the kiss deepened.

She didn't know what to do with her hands. Hell, she didn't know what to do at all for that matter. Drake flicked his tongue inside her mouth touched her own tongue and seemed to go even deeper with the kiss. She jumped again when his hand touched her legs, his hips wedged themselves between her legs, and she felt him go up under the gown, all the way to her hips.

Where she got the strength, she didn't know, but somehow Natasha pushed at his bare chest, breaking the kiss. She didn't have the strength to push him off her completely.

"What'd you want from me?" she asked.

He kissed her again, and then began to skim his way down her body, kissing parts as he went. He didn't answer her, only moved down until he was once more on his knees between her legs. When her skirt started to go up, Natasha put both hands between her legs and sat straight up, shaking her head.

"Shhh," he soothed. "I'm not going to hurt you."

"Why am I here?" Now she sounded desperate and couldn't help it.

He stopped, looked up at her, and the darkness in his eyes had her once more shivering. He was so dark, so forbearing. "The moment I saw you I knew you were the one. I picked up your sweet scent. It called to me and then I saw you and I could feel your pain." He picked one of her legs up and kissed the inside of her thigh before putting it over his shoulder. "I knew without a doubt that you would belong to me."

"What?" the word squeaked out.

Drake took a deep breath and rubbed his lips over the inside of her thigh, eyes on her. "My father and I went to that party for a meeting to change the way the Gatherings are held. Your father doesn't want to change it." Up and down, he rubbed his face on her leg. "He wants to keep things the way they are and not follow the rules."

"What're you talking about?"

His hands went up under the skirt again. She felt him take hold of

her panties and instead of pulling them down he yanked hard, ripping them off. She jumped at the roughness of the action.

"I'm claiming you as my mate, by your father's rules and by the rules of our clan." Again, he rose up and covered her body with his own. "I saw you. I took you. And very soon I'm going to claim you as my own."

Natasha's eyes widened, she pressed her hands on his chest and shook her head. He shifted, wedged himself between her legs, and pressed her into the mattress, upper body held up by his elbows, hands free to touch her face, brush the hair out of her eyes.

"Don't—don't do this," she whispered, shaking her head. "Please. Send me back to my father."

Drake cocked his head to the side, his dark eyes roaming over her face. "I can't send you back. I won't."

Tears formed behind her eyes, one slipped free. She knew he couldn't send her back. Deep down she knew. A reputation was everything to her father and with her being taken that reputation would be tarnished if she was taken back. No other male would have her as mate.

"Don't cry." He brushed the tear away then kissed the spot where it landed.

"I can't help it." She sniffed back more tears, which threatened to spill. "I don't know what to do. I don't know what you expect from me."

"Just be my mate."

Again, she shook her head, "Please, don't ask me to do that." Another shift of his body and she felt that part of him press against her. Once more, she widened her eyes and tried to push him away.

"I'm asking that, Natasha." His voice thickened, became slightly harder. "I'm demanding it." He took hold of a leg, hiking it up to his hip. "I don't want to be the bad guy here. You're my mate and I will claim you." A knock on the door saved her. At least that's how she felt at the moment. "What?" Drake yelled.

"Got information already," someone yelled through the door.

Drake glanced at the door then back at her. Natasha couldn't stop herself from breathing out a sigh of relief when he pushed away from her. She stayed put, watching him walk over to a dresser, drop his towel, and open the drawer. Her mouth went dry at the sight of his backside. The firm roundness of his rear, the strength in his back. Damn if he wasn't powerful!

He grabbed a pair of sweatpants from the drawer, slipped them over

his legs, and turned towards the door. Natasha watched him go, her eyes going down to the large tent at the front of his pants.

“I’ll be back in a few minutes. We’ll finish this talk then.”

Natasha covered her face with her hands the second he left. She cried for a few moments before sitting up and going to her bags on the floor. There were only two, making her wonder about the third. She didn’t have time for that.

All of her clothes were gone. Opening up the door next to the bathroom, she discovered where they all were at—hanging next to his. As fast as she could she dressed in a pair of jeans, long sweater and put her sneakers on. Dressed now, she felt less vulnerable than before.

Running away wasn’t normally something she did, but then being kidnapped didn’t happen every day either. Being shifter though did have some advantages. One being she could jump out of a window and land with a light thud if needed, which was just what she was going to do. Even though her reputation might be damaged some, if she got back to her father before any of this got out then things should be okay. She’d go back to school and forget about all of this.

First, she had to get the hell out.

Opening the window, she crawled out to the ledge and looked down. Wind picked up, blowing her hair around her face. Where the courage came from, she couldn’t say. The need to take charge of something in her life hit. So closing her eyes, taking a deep breath, Natasha took the jump and landed with a soft thud to the ground. A smile on her face, she stood and took off running. She had to get the hell out of here and fast before Drake Draeger went through with what he said and claimed her as his own.

Chapter Three

“He called the Chairman of the Gathering Cabinet,” Tony said, walking down the stairs with Drake right behind him. “That’s it so far.”

Drake knew that Philip Millard wouldn’t waste too much time in trying to track down who took his daughter. He just didn’t think that the man would call the Chairman himself for help. Hell, the man wanted to keep the old ways going for life, as long as it didn’t involve his daughter it seemed.

Drake opened his mouth to speak but instead stopped two steps away from the foyer. He turned, looked up in the direction of the bedroom where he left Natasha and then back to the front door.

“Tony, close the gates.” Drake rushed to the front door, threw it open, and ran outside.

He sniffed the air, picked up her scent at the back of the house coming quickly to the front. Drake followed in the direction of her scent. Around the house she came, skidding to a stop when she saw him.

Her blue eyes widened in shock. Clearly, Natasha wasn’t expecting Drake to learn of her running so soon.

“Where you going, Natasha?” he asked.

“You can’t keep me here Drake,” she huffed.

“Can’t I?” He cocked his head, narrowed his eyes on her, and took on step forward. She took two back. “I trust you know what it means to challenge me, and what a chase will result in.” Another step. “I don’t want it to end or start like that.”

“Then stay away from me!” She pointed her finger at him, and he grinned.

“Not going to happen.” He shook his head. “And I will warn you, honey, if I have to chase you down then I’m going to take something for my effort.”

Her face paled. “What?”

Drake couldn’t help himself. He licked his lips and roamed his eyes over her body on purpose. “A taste.”

“You’re out of your mind!” Natasha turned and ran and as much as Drake hated it, he loved it at the same time.

He went after her, took off running, chasing. The excitement of the chase fueled his blood, gave his cock new life, excited him. He couldn’t wait to get his hands on her and boy was he going to have his hands on

her now.

The plan was to give her time. To ease her fears, seduce her slowly and hopefully before her cycle kicked in to mate her. Well sometimes shit just doesn't go as planned and sometimes you just have to play the cards you were dealt. If Natasha wanted to run, then Drake was more than willing to chase her down.

He pounced—up in the air, and down on her. He wrapped his arms around her waist when he came down, landed on the ground taking the brunt of the fall. Natasha screamed and began to fight him. Drake was slightly shocked at the fight she gave. The first time he saw her she appeared very timid and afraid of her own shadow. Now she acted like a woman who knew exactly what she wanted and was willing to fight for it.

A foot to his gut loosened his grip enough for her to crawl a few feet away, but not enough that Drake couldn't take hold of her ankle and drag her back. He had to give her credit. She could become a damn good fighter if need be.

"Let go!" she yelled. He flipped her over to her back and her legs went wild.

Another hard kick to his chest and she was once more free. Natasha stumbled back up to her feet and Drake was right there to take hold of her. He grabbed the back of her jeans mere seconds before she was running again. He jerked back and she went flying into his arms where he held her tight against his chest.

"I must say," he panted, trying to catch his breath. "I'm impressed with the way you fight. Didn't think you had it in you."

He stood up, her in his arms. She just about made it to the woods behind the house. As tiny as she is, he can take a guess and say she would more than likely slip through the bars on the fence.

"Go to hell!" She twisted and turned in his arms, causing Drake to tighten his hold on her.

Back to the house, this time entering from the back door instead of the front. Nelly was in the kitchen, hand over her breasts, shocked expression on her face.

"Help me, please!" Natasha pleaded towards Nelly.

"Save your breath," Drake told her. "Nelly isn't going to help you."

Out the kitchen, through the dining room and back up the stairs he went, holding Natasha tightly. Back into the bedroom, he went over to his dresser, shifted Natasha to his left side, and opened the top drawer. He dug until he found what he was looking for--his ties.

“What are you doing?” she asked.

He heard the fear in her voice and ignored it. Drake couldn't give in to her fear right now. Maybe before she ran he would've, but right now, he needed to make sure his mate stayed put. Drake also dug into the drawer he gave her and pulled out a new set of low cut lace panties. The pair she'd worn he'd ripped.

He tossed it all onto the bed before letting her go. The moment her feet touched the floor she backed away from him, pressing herself in the corner between nightstand and window.

“Take-em off.”

She shook her head, “No.”

“Natasha,” he gave her a warning growl. “Don't make me do it for you. Take them off.”

He saw her hands shake, the color drain from her face. Inside, Drake hated having to take this step with her. He didn't like pushing her like this, but he had no choice. Now that he knew she would try to run given the first chance, he had to take measures to stop her. At least until he made his claim. Once she bared not only his mark but carried his scent upon her body, could he let his guard down? Well, maybe a little. Something told him that his little mate was going to be a handful all the time. At least once she got her self-esteem and backbone back.

“I—I don't have any, um, you ripped them off.” She shuddered, her face reddening.

Drake tossed her the lace panties. “There you go.”

“You expect me to put these on if front of you?” she gasped, the red on her face going brighter.

“Well I sure as hell ain't going to let you out of my sight now. Not after you jumped out the window.”

Those damn blue eyes of hers teared up. Drake was starting to wonder if she could make herself cry on a whim, if it got her what she wanted.

“Pl—please don't make me do this in front of you.”

Drake crossed his arms over his chest and leaned to one side. “You know, I've only spent a few hours with you so far and I'm starting to think you play the pity game to perfection. Does it work on your father or just the people at your school?”

“I don't know what you're talking about.”

“Sure you do,” he grinned. “You do the lady thing for your father, act all proper, sweet, and delicate, but I'm thinking deep down you're a survivor. You know what people want, and how to go about getting it.

Being strong willed and tough gets you nowhere unlike the ‘I’m weak act’.” He went up to her, his arms going over her head on the wall. Natasha’s eyes narrowed on up at him. “You’re father most likely beat that willpower of yours out, or at least out of his sight. I see the fire, Natasha. I can smell the burn. You want to fight, then fight, but don’t try to play both sides with me.”

He should’ve seen the slap before it landed on his face, but didn’t. The blow had him swaying slightly to the right and her ducking under his arm.

“I’m not a toy for you or my father,” she stated. “I don’t put on an act and I’ve had enough of males like you doing what they want with me.” That fire he sensed in her eyes now—bright blue passion just tempting him to take. “My father expected me to be the obedient child, and I am, but if you are expecting me to give my kidnapper the same obedience then you can go straight to hell.”

Drake smiled at her, rubbed his cheek, and advanced slowly towards her like a prey. Natasha backed up.

“I don’t want your obedience, honey, I want everything else.”

Drake stuck fast. He lunged, grabbed hold of her waist, and jerked hard towards the bed. She went flying, landing on her back. Before she could move, he was upon her, flipping her over to her stomach, pulling, and yanking at her clothes. Natasha screamed, fought, kicked, and slapped at his hands.

Material ripped, jeans tore and in the end, Drake had his way. Natasha lay naked on the bed, under him. She fought still as he grabbed the first tie and went to work at tying her wrists to the bed. He kept her face down, his body pressing hers into the mattress as he worked to get both of her wrists down. She screamed and cried at the same time.

“You bastard!” she yelled, jerking on her wrists when he finished. “My father will rip your throat out for this!”

“He might try.” Drake turned himself on top of her. He sat on her ass, bracing most of his weight on his knees and began tying her ankles as well. He spread her out on the bed, stomach side down. When finished, he simply got off the bed and whistled. “Now that is a very pretty sight.

Natasha pressed her face into the pillow, screaming again. She was naked, tied to his bed, spread out. He couldn’t say he blamed her one bit.

“You know, it just dawned on me that I should give you some kind of punishment for jumping out that window and making me chase you down.”

Natasha's head came out of the pillow fast. She turned to look at him, hair spilling over her shoulder and into her face. "This isn't punishment enough! I'm naked for Christ sakes."

"Never been naked before?" H raised both eyebrows up at her, blinking in an innocent manner.

"I've never been alone with a man before!" she yelled at him. "Why would I be naked in front of one?"

"Good point." Drake tapped a finger on his lips, acting as if he was thinking about what he was going to do. "Okay, I'll give you this one as a small punishment for running, but the warning I gave you below still stands. I get you, I taste you."

"What?"

He saw her swallow, read the panic in her eyes, and ignored it once more. It would do no good falling for that dainty act she's use to playing on everyone. Drake saw the passion, the fire, the willpower hidden behind the way a lady is suppose to act shit her father shoved down her throat. He knew that once he gave Natasha a taste of what real life could be like away from a man like her father then she would bloom into a woman unlike any. Already he saw the strong will in her slipping free. Maybe a few more pushes and she'll blow that cool top of hers.

Drake crawled onto the bed slowly, and he moved slowly on purpose. He wanted the anticipation, the excitement, and the fear to all blend together. He wanted her to not know what he was going to do, and then it turn into her dying to feel the next move.

He stretched out on top of her, making sure she got a nice good feel of his hard cock. He pressed it into her ass, elbows holding most of his weight. "I'm going to taste you Natasha," he said low in her ear. "I'm going to kiss your body. Work my way down to that very tempting ass and move my way to your pussy."

"Oh God!" she groaned. "You can't be serious."

"I'm going to taste you. My head, my mouth is going to be between your legs, licking every drop of the sweet cream that I know will be there." He felt her shiver under him and grind his cock more into her ass. Thank god, he still has the sweatpants on. "I'm going to suck your clit and use my fingers to show you just how pleasurable it's going to be once I come inside you."

"You're out of your mind."

"And I'm not going to stop until you scream in pleasure. I'm going to taste with my mouth your orgasm and feel it with my fingers."

"You're crazy!"

“Have you ever had an orgasm?” He rubbed his face into her hair.

“I can’t believe this is happening to me.”

Drake pushed hair over her shoulder and kissed the middle of her back. He skimmed his way down, kissing and licking as he went. He also slid his hands down her sides, touching the side of her breasts, down her ribs to her hips. At the round globes of her rear, he closed his eyes and brushed his lips over the mounds. Soft, silk and oh so smelling sweet. That was his mate. She made his mouth water to taste, cock throb to concur, the beast wanting to take, and the man inside calm all in the same breath. Not once did he ever feel such a conflict as what he was feeling now.

He kissed her ass, licking and sucking at the flesh. Drake parted the flesh saw the tiny entrance to her rear and gave it a kiss. He licked and teased the pink ring, working his way downward.

Drake thought quickly on how he was going to do this. Going underneath her might be the best, but he also wanted her up on her knees. He released her ankles and had her up on her knees, that cute little ass in the air for him.

He held her up easy, spread her legs, and moved down with his mouth to the one place he hungered for the most.

Her pussy bare, the folds not quiet damp, but he did spot a bit of dew forming. Leaning in, Drake gave it a kiss, inhaling the sweet scent. His cock lurched, throbbed more and the feeling of an impending climax formed in his balls.

“Relax honey,” he purred against her. “You’re going to love this. I promise.”

* * * *

Oh god, Oh god, Oh god, Oh god! She couldn’t breathe. Couldn’t think, couldn’t move, and didn’t know what the hell to do. Natasha held her breath while Drake kissed her body. Her ass up in the air, his hands holding her by her hips, mouth touching parts of her body that she knew for a fact shouldn’t be touched.

He kissed between her legs, her pussy. She kept it shaved, kept it clean and smooth, but never did she think that someone touching the bare folds would feel like this. It was sensitive down there. Each touch he gave it seemed to become even more so.

“You smell so damn good,” he moaned against her.

Natasha closed her eyes and tried to take several deep breaths. What was she going to do? He kidnapped her, had her tied naked to his bed, was touching and kissing her and what sucked the most was that she was

starting to like it. The way he was making her feel, the manner in which that small little knob hidden began to throb. It all started to drive her nuts. She couldn't decide if she wanted to pull away from him or push harder towards him.

"You're clit is getting harder." He touched it and Natasha's breath came out in a rush.

The sensations, the tingling she felt blew her mind. The breath she held left her lips in a rush and a moan threaten to escape as well by the way he touched her clit, rolling it around.

"Does this feel good?"

How the hell was she supposed to answer him? Natasha could barely think and he wanted her to talk now?

Another kiss down there, a lick and then lips closed over the very spot he was teasing. Natasha couldn't stop herself from crying out this time. She yelled as he licked, sucked at her pussy. It was the first time ever she'd been touched down there. That first touch, the first sensation, stole all thought, all reason, all speaking right out the door.

He licked at her as a cat would milk. Sucked, slurped between the folds of her pussy until Natasha could do no more than push her face into the pillow and scream. It felt good, it felt shameful. She wanted more, she wanted him to stop.

Fingers parted her further; his tongue pushed at the entrance and worked its way inside. A moan vibrated against her flesh, wetness coated not only her pussy but also the inside of her legs. She could feel it, just as she felt this strange pressure building. When he growled against her, she shivered, and when he changed positions, coming under her and bringing her pussy down to his face, Natasha lost it.

She screamed again into the pillow, her body shaking, shivering from the intent pleasure of his mouth. She could feel her womb contract; vibrate to his tongue moving in and out of her. It was the first, and something told her not the last.

His tongue left, but the mouth stayed. He lapped at her, teased her over sensitive clit, and every so slowly, so gently, one finger replaced the very spot his tongue had been. This time when she screamed, she didn't have the pillow muffling the sound. Natasha reared back as much as she could. The action grinded her pussy into his face, and she didn't care. He moved his finger in and out, twisting it as his lips closed over her clit, sucking and pulling on it hard.

She couldn't breathe. Air wasn't getting into her lungs, and yet she wasn't passing out yet. Faster his finger moved, stopped and another

joined it, then a third. A stretching sensation, mixed with the licking and the sucking had the tears once more coming into her eyes. The buildup he was creating, she couldn't handle. She knew without a doubt that if he didn't stop she was going to die. She was going to stop breathing, pass out, and die.

Like a tidal wave hitting the beach, it hit. Natasha reared up again, mouth open, a high pitch scream leaving her lips as it hit her. Pleasure—unspeakable pleasure washed over, sending her so high she couldn't breathe. Tears fell from her eyes, her body shook, womb contracted and she grinded herself as hard as she could on the mouth that was giving her so much pleasure.

The orgasm, which gripped her in such a tight hold, there was little she could do to ease the pressure. She cried like a child, shivering, shaking with the intensity of it. When Drake finally let her go, all Natasha could do was lay where he put her. She was too spent, too drained to fight him. All she could do was work on her breathing, steadying her pounding heart and later make sense of what just happened.

Drake slowly slid from under him kissed her backside again and moved hair from her sweaty face. She felt him leave the bed, heard the water, but couldn't open her eyes to see. She was too drained, too tired to think, let alone move.

"Go to sleep," he whispered, kissing her shoulder. "I'll take care of everything."

* * * *

Drake sat at the table in the kitchen, early reading the morning paper eating his breakfast. Scrambled eggs, steak, fresh coffee, and some juice. Didn't get any better than that. Well, maybe if he had mated with his mate instead of sleeping next to her warm body with a raging hard-on.

Nelly was working on some breakfast for Natasha. Her back was to him, but she kept making her disapproving noise and glancing over her shoulder at him. After about the sixth time, Drake sighed and lowered the paper.

"Okay, say it," he grumbled to her.

"Have nothing to say," Nelly told him.

Drake growled, picked up his coffee cup, and went over to the pot, pouring himself another cup. "I didn't do anything, Nelly. She's still untouched."

"Tony told me about her father." Nelly turned the hand with the spatula on her hip, eyes narrowed on him. "You took her to spite him."

Drake frowned and sipped at his coffee. "Did not."

She snorted again at him. "What would you call it?"

"You don't think that I could stumble across my mate and it just happens to be his daughter?"

Nelly turned back around to the stove. He watched her put another steak on a plate then reach for the bowl with eggs in it. "I think you would do whatever you have to in order to get your way."

"Nelly, that's bullshit and you know it." He sat back down at the table, picking up his fork and knife. One large bite and he was tossing the silverware down on the table. "She has nothing to do with the change to the Gathering. I stumbled upon my mate and I did just as her father claims all males can do. I took her. The man can't have it both ways."

"She's too delicate for you." Nelly shook her head, turning back to him. "I don't want to see you hurt or break her."

"You make me sound like a monster."

"You can be at times." Drake growled, and Nelly crossed her arms over her chest. "Drake, look at you now. Hell, if I didn't know you better I'd be scared of you. You're scowling, eyes dark. Knock the shit off."

"I didn't hurt her," Drake said again. "I don't want to hurt her, Nelly, I just want to love her."

One eyebrow went up on her face, "Then you better start changing your ways and take a softer approach. All the growling and chasing down isn't the way to show anyone you want to love them."

Drake sat back in his chair, cup in hand again, one leg crossed over the other, ankle resting at his knee. He waited for Nelly to turn back to the cooking, finish up and plate it all. Placing the dishes on a tray she turned with it hand and placed it on the table in front of him.

"Take her breakfast to her, and I expect to see her down for at least dinner."

Drake snorted, "Only if I can trust her not to run. Right now I have her in the best possible position there is." He finished his coffee, stood up and took the tray. "Tied to my bed," he tossed over his shoulder on his way out.

Natasha was still sleeping when he entered the room. When she'd passed out last night, he'd cleaned her up and put a fresh set of panties on her, covered and let her sleep in peace. He was very tempted to join her in bed, but decided that after he had a taste he couldn't trust himself to not go further.

Placing the tray on the nightstand, Drake pulled the sheet down her body. He touched her back before moving up and freeing her wrists.

Once that was done, he sat down next to her and rubbed her back.

"Natasha, time to get up." She moaned, squirming away from him. "Come on honey, breakfast is ready." Another groan and his hand went up and down on her ass.

"Hey!" She came up off the bed eyes wide open. He smiled, cocked his head to the side, and looked down at her bare chest. She squealed, crossing her arms quickly over her breasts. "Knock that off!"

"Can't help it," He licked his lips, grinning at her. "You're too damned tempting."

She growled and rolled away from him off the bed. Still covering her breasts from his view she walked into the bathroom, slamming the door closed. Drake laughed softly and shook his head, then turned and stretched out on the bed, hands behind his head, ankles crossed. He sat and waited.

"Can I have something to wear please?" she called out from behind the door.

"Why? I like you as you are."

"I'm not coming out in only a pair of see through panties."

"You want something to wear you're going to have to come out and get it yourself."

He heard her growl again behind the door right before it opened and she once more came out with her arms crossed over her breasts. Drake watched her go right into the closet, closing that door also. He chuckled, got up, and went right in there with her.

Natasha jumped and moved fast as she pulled on a large sweater. When she grabbed for a pair of pants, Drake took hold of her hand stopping her.

"You've got enough clothes on for the moment," he pulled her out of the closet and back to the bed where he gave her a push down next to the food. "Nelly wasn't sure what to fix you for breakfast. You might want to let her know what you like."

"Never has anyone asked me what I want to eat," she said, her eyes locked on the food. "And it sure wasn't anything like this."

"If you don't like it, I'll have her fix you something else."

She shook her head, picked up her fork and knife and started in on the meat. It amazed Drake that he was getting pleasure just by watching her eat the food. The enjoyment he saw on her face warmed his belly.

"This is good," she stated with a mouthful of eggs.

"I'll make sure Nelly knows you enjoy her cooking." He moved behind her, taking up a lounging position around her backside. He

touched her hair, letting the links run through his fingers.

“Think she’ll teach me?”

“How to cook?” She nodded. “Don’t see why not.”

She finished the food and stood up so fast he didn’t have time to grab for her. Drake tensed, waiting for her to bolt out the door. But she didn’t.

Natasha stood in the middle of the room turned and crossed her arms over her chest again. “So what now?”

Drake slowly sat up. He didn’t stand, just sat on the edge of the bed. “You know what.”

“I don’t know you Drake Draeger. I know nothing about you. So why would you think I’d willingly mate with you?”

He took a deep breath, willing himself to keep calm. “I would like for you to be willing, but keep in mind one thing, Natasha. Your cycle could make this unwilling for you.”

There was that fire in her eyes again, but somehow she managed to hold it back. “So what if I have my cycle here. It doesn’t mean I have to sleep with you.”

“And my heat?” He met her in the eye. “You think I’m going to stand by and go through that alone now that I have you?”

Her face heated up. “You’re not doing that—” She pointed to the bed. “—to me again.”

Now he had to smile. “You enjoyed that last night. In fact, I counted at least two very nice orgasms. And yes honey, I plan on doing that again very soon.”

“This is all it’s about?” she huffed. “You kidnapped me so you can get your rocks off?”

“Honey if I wanted to get my rocks off, I wouldn’t have had to kidnap you. Finding a willing woman has never been a problem for me.” He stood up slid his hands into his pockets. “I took you for mate. You want to wait until your cycle fine,” he shrugged. “I just thought you might want a more gentle touch for the first time, but I’ll play any way you want me to play. Just let me know.”

“This isn’t a game!”

“Can be.”

“Argh!” She turned and his heart gave a leap. Drake thought she was going to bolt and took a step in her direction, but she didn’t go out the door. Instead, she turned back around to him. “Did you think I was going to run again?”

“That’s my first thought.”

“Trust me, if I run you won’t be that close to me,” she sneered.

Drake narrowed his eyes on her and closed the distance between them. He backed her right up against the wall, pressing his body into hers, hands over her head. “And trust me honey. If you run again, I’ll tie you up and feast on that sweet pussy for a solid hour. Do you think you can handle my tongue, my fingers fucking you, drawing out orgasm after orgasm?”

“Don’t,” she breathed out.

He touched her cheek. So soft her flesh, so delicate feeling. “Can’t wait to feel those orgasms wrap around my dick, milking my own release from deep in my soul. I hunger for you Natasha,” he lowered his voice. “Hunger for you unlike anything I’ve ever hungered for in my life. Don’t let that hunger boil out of control. I don’t want to hurt you.”

“Then let me go.”

Drake shook his head lowered it and pressed his forehead to hers with a sigh. “I can’t do that. I’m sorry, but I can’t let you go, Natasha. I just can’t.”

She surprised him by pushing him away. “Then I can’t go along with this kidnapping.” He took a step back. Her chin went up, “I’m not coming to you as a willing mate, Drake Draeger. I’m not acknowledging a claim. You kidnapped me, therefore, I’m unwilling to everything that is you.”

Drake narrowed his eyes on her and bit the inside of his mouth. A tick started in his cheek and the beast inside him howled to come out and take. “Then Natasha Millard, let our games begin. But I promise you one thing,” he held his finger up. “I’ll have all of you before the full moon.”

He left the bedroom before more could be said—before he did something that he might later regret.

Chapter Four

Philip Millard stood in his office staring out at the night sky hating what he saw. Four days until the full moon, and forty-eight hours before the females of their race went through a needing cycle. Which meant his daughter was going to be having her cycle soon with the male that took her.

She was ruined. The bastard that did this was going to pay with his life.

“Nothing.” Ellie walked into the office with the simple word. Allen took a deep breath, turning around to face her. “No one has any idea where she’s at.”

“This rests on your shoulders,” he told her. “I blame you for this fuck up.” Elli didn’t flinch. “Someone has to know something!” he yelled.

“If they know, they’re not going to talk. The laws state a kidnapping of a female is allowed, and with you on the Cabinet still that law has to be upheld.”

Philip lost his cool and charged Elli. He grabbed her by the throat, shoving her up against the wall with a snarl. “Don’t quote the laws to me you bitch. I wrote the fuckers, I know them better than you do!” A hard yank and Elli went flying across the room, landing hard on the floor. “Boris!”

The door opened, and in walked a male of great worth. He was also a hunter, one that always found what he was seeking. Philip looked at the male. He stood at six foot at least. Short, spiky black hair, cold, gray eyes. He had the body of a large football player wearing pads. He was that thick in the body. He also was a cold-blooded killer if need be.

“You find her,” Phillip said. “You find her, kill the bastard that took her, and then you can keep her. She’s useless to me now.”

Boris said nothing. He nodded, turned, and walked right out.

“You do this and the clan will turn on you,” Elli stated, her voice a bit scratchy after the way he grabbed her.

Philip looked Elli right in the eye. “Who’ll know?”

* * * *

Drake sat outside, on the freshly poured patio watching the crew work on the pool that should’ve been done a week ago. Half of the guys were painting the pool and the other half were on the other end fixing

cracks and sealing spots. In his hand, he clutched a bottle of beer. Between his legs, one raging stiff motherfucking dick!

Four days—four miserable, painful goddamned days until her cycle. Until she might need him, depending on how she handled it. Some females he heard had to be restrained when they went to a safe house. They tried to get free in order to mate. Some he heard just slept through it as if it wasn't anything big.

Well however Natasha's cycle was, he had four days to wait. Now what should he do in that time? Well, Drake thought he could always keep doing as he did last night, but then that wouldn't work. Not since he informed her that if she ran, and when he caught her, he would do that anyway. So that one was out of the question right now. He had Nelly on his ass implying that he was going to rape Natasha any second and Tony walking around keeping his eye on him.

Fuck! Was this his house or theirs?

Drake finished his beer placed the bottle next to the others on the iron table and reached for another at the cooler next to this bare feet.

"Hitting them kind of heavy, aren't you?"

He turned, ready to fight but eased up when he saw whom it was. James Laswell from the party.

"How'd you know where I lived?" Drake asked the man, watching him closely as he took a beer and sat down on the other chair.

"Asked around." James twisted the cap and took a drink. "I will say you're somewhat hard to find. But this place is great."

Drake frowned. It was another one of those things he noticed himself doing. Frowning and scowling a lot.

"Thought you might be interested to know there's this strange rumor going around," James said. "A hunter has been put on to locate Natasha Millard." James sighed, sat back in the chair, and put his feet up on the table. He looked right at Drake. "Rumor she was kidnapped."

"Really?"

James nodded. "Also heard that Philip Millard is, shall we say, going mental."

"That's interesting."

James and Drake seemed to have a small stare off before James busted out laughing. Drake held his breath waiting.

"Man I can't believe you did it. I mean, you really did take her?"

"Don't know what you're talking about." Drake twisted off the cap of another beer, downed half of it, and looked back at the pool.

"Bullshit!" James went on. "I saw the way you looked at her at that

party. I remember the fight you got into with her father. Hell that alone spread through the party like wild fire, man. Everyone's talking about how you stood up to the fucker. And hey," he held up his hand and lowered his head, "I'm not here to judge or turn you in. Not my place especially if she's your mate.

Drake studied James Laswell. He was a different breed of man, not just shifter. There was something about his funny, lazy personality that had Drake at ease around him, and that never happened with people. Drake was normally a loner. The only friends he had either worked for him or his father. True friends, he didn't have.

"He doesn't want to change things, but also doesn't want to let his daughter be part of the world." Drake shook his head, the bottle touching his lips. "Can't have it both ways."

"No, he can't," James sighed. "So have you mated her yet?"

"Kind of a personal question."

James shrugged, staring at the pool work also. "Just asking."

A few minutes went by with nothing said. Drake saw the workers finishing the painting. Heard them say they would start filling it in a couple days after everything dried. He was ready to get into it. Ready to swim laps, enjoy the cool water during the hot summer he was sure they were going to have.

"I can see why you picked this place," James said. "It's very relaxing."

Drake snorted. "You got a mate?"

James shook his head, "Not so lucky yet." He turned to Drake. "You don't have many friends, do you?"

"People don't like me." Drake rested his head back on the chair, turned, and put his feet up on the table. "They think I'm scary. The big bogie man or some shit."

"Is she scared of you?"

Drake thought about it for a second. "I think she was at first, but she sure as hell isn't now."

"So what're you going to do?"

Drake closed his eyes, rubbing them in complete frustration. Even talking to James, drinking, and trying to relax he couldn't. The urge to go upstairs, to see her, smell, and touch her was very powerful. Hell, he didn't know if he was going to be able to wait the four days for her cycle before he had her.

"I don't know," he groaned. "I really don't know."

"Sounds like you're in a pickle, my friend." Drake glared at him and

James smiled back. "Want some advice?"

"From you?" James nodded. "I don't even know you that well."

"Drake, I think we're more alike than what you see. If Millard wants things to remain the way are, then he has to follow those rules, including for his own daughter. He refused you took matters into your own hands. I'd do the dame same thing. But you also have to watch your back. There's a reason why he was able to break his own rules so easily now. He's one sneaky, conniving bastard who's used to getting his way all the time. So watch your back."

"That's the advice?"

James smiled big. "Naw, man. Go old school on her. Mind seduction works wonders."

Drake couldn't help himself and laughed, "I don't think it's going to be that simple. Not by a long shot."

* * * *

Natasha paced the bedroom, her anger, and frustration getting the better of her. The moment Drake left she dressed. Jeans to go with the sweater she now wore. Every clothing item she wore was baggy, covering every inch of her body. After last night, she couldn't seem to face him, not after what he did to her.

Still the thought of him kissing, licking, touching her between her legs had the rush of blood flowing in her veins and the heat spreading across her face. She admitted to herself that it had felt good, but she sure as hell wasn't going to tell him that. No sir! If she did that then he'd want and expect to do it again and that just couldn't happen.

"What am I going to do?" she groaned, hugging herself, stopping her pacing in front of the window.

She caught sight of Drake below. Tight cut off shorts, no shoes, no shirt, and his hair flowing freely in the wind. He's so dark, so dangerous. The kind of male she always stayed away from, not because her father told her so, because she never felt safe around males like him. They took without care to others. Took what they wanted, never worrying about the consequences of their actions. Drake was like that in so many ways. She felt when he looked at her that there were hidden demons inside him. Demons that threatened to come out in a moment's notice.

His muscles bunched when he moved. Powerful, thick muscles that had her finger tips itching to touch. They didn't look real, and yet she knew they were.

Seeing another man with him, Natasha got a moment of hope. Her first thought was that someone else here might be able to help her leave.

When she spotted his smile at Drake, and Drake laughing back, that hope diminished. They were friends, and she was pretty damned sure a friend of Drake's wasn't going to help her leave.

Natasha jumped at a knock on the door. She swung around quickly, moving away from the window. The door opened and in came the woman she had seen last night when Drake carried her back into the house. She had a tray in her hands.

"Thought you might be hungry," she said, taking the tray over to the nightstand. "And since you didn't come down, I brought something up for you."

Natasha looked at the tray of food. A large triple stacked sandwich, which had ham, turkey, and chicken, cheese, lettuce, and tomato. Bowl of fruit and a large glass of ice tea.

"I'm fixing lamb for supper, do you like that?" she asked.

Natasha went over to the bed. Her mouth watered at the smell of the food. She nodded her answer, picking the sandwich up.

"Well you just let me know what you like and dislike. It's my job to cook around here."

"I like your cooking," Natasha looked up at her before taking a bite. She moaned with pleasure. "At school the food was boring. No flavor to it. Can you teach me?"

"Sweetie I'll teach you anything you want." She smiled. "I'm Nelly by the way. The young man you see around here that's all quiet is Tony."

"Who's the one outside with Drake?" Natasha ate and talked at the same time. It was rude, and she had better manners than that.

"That I'm not sure. Hey, how about you come down and finish your lunch in the kitchen. When you're done, if you want I'll teach you how to make these cookies I'm doing now. Spicy pumpkin bread cookies with an orange glaze frosting you just drizzle over the top while they're still warm."

"I thought I couldn't leave the room."

Nelly snorted, "Don't you worry any about him. Come on, you need to get out of here anyway so Tony can do his job."

Nelly took the tray, and with part of her sandwich in hand, Natasha followed her out.

The kitchen smelled heavenly. Natasha sat down at the table; Nelly placed her food in front of her and went over to the stove, taking out a tray of fresh bread. Natasha watched her every move as she ate. Back home, she wasn't allowed in the kitchen, she had to stay away because it wasn't her place to be there. That was for the staff. Thinking about it

now, she thought her father was grooming her for something big. A lady doesn't go into a kitchen, doesn't dirty her hands with cooking and cleaning. Speak only when spoken to crap. It meant something.

"You make it feel very comfortable in here," Natasha said, getting Nelly's attention.

"It's a kitchen Sweetie. Everything starts in a kitchen in my eyes."

"My father didn't want me in the kitchen. I could always smell the things that were cooking and baking, but was never allowed to go in and see it. He told me it wasn't my place."

"Sounds like he had grand plans for you."

The tears formed again. Natasha put her sandwich down and wiped her eye before it could slip free. "Yeah, I guess he did."

"Well you have a chance at a new life." Nelly smiled, but it didn't reach her green eyes. "And no one will keep you out of the kitchen or any part of the house for that matter."

"This is your new home." Natasha turned to Drake's voice. He stood at the back door. He wasn't alone. The one she saw from the window stood behind him. He walked inside, went over to the sink, and started to wash his hands. "Any idea when the guys are coming back to finish the dining room, Nelly? Got people waiting to bring furniture and shit."

"They said sometime today," Nelly answered.

Drake shook off his hands, grabbed a towel, and turned back around. Leaning back against the sink, he stared at Natasha as he dried his hands. She swallowed hard at the intent look she saw in his eyes, which chilled her.

"This is James Laswell," Drake said. "I've invited him to stay for a few days, but he's refusing me."

"I'm just fine where I'm at, thank you very much," James said.

"Well we have plenty of room if you change your mind," Nelly said. "You are staying for dinner?"

"Only if that's what I smell."

Natasha felt his eyes on her. She kept her own fixed on her play, rolling a grape around. She couldn't look at him. Every time she did, her mind went back to what he did to her in that room. The way he touched her.

"You're blushing," he whispered right in her ear, walking around behind her to the fridge. His warm breath sent another shiver down her spin.

Saying nothing, she pushed away from the table and left. Only when she had some distance away from Drake did she breath normally.

Natasha didn't understand what it was about him. He seemed to take up all the air in a room.

She went across to the other side of the house. A sitting room, backed to the living space and right up to a built in bookshelf. The shelves were lined with books. Taking several deep breathes she tried to focus on the volumes, to see what they were and pick one to read. After all, what else was she suppose to do?

"You do know that running away only makes things worse." Natasha turned. James Laswell stood in the middle of the doorway separating the living space from the large sitting room. "A male doesn't go through all this trouble for the hell of it either."

Natasha gave him her full attention, arms crossed over her chest. "And what would you know about this?"

"I know he's risked a lot for you."

"No, he risked his skin for something he can't have."

One golden eyebrow went up. "Can't have? Kind of harsh there."

"How should I act when I've been kidnapped and threatened?"

"Threatened?" Drake came up behind James. With a nod, James turned and walked away, shaking his head. "I never threatened you, Natasha. Only stated a fact."

"And I say you threatened me, to keep me here against my will."

"If you want to run, feel free to try again. I'm not going to stop you from running, only catch you before you get away."

She lost her cool. Natasha went up to him with the intent to slap him again, only it seemed Drake was ready for it this time. He caught her wrists and before her hand could make contact, he pinned it behind her back. He held her close, tight, chest to chest and took the steps needed to push her up against the wall.

"Should I add another to it?" His voice was low, deadly sounding, eyes darkening further. "Should I add that every time you hit me, I get to have my head between your legs also?"

She raised her chin up at him, which she more than likely shouldn't do. Drake could possibly take it as a challenge. "You're nothing more than an animal." She struggled against him, tried to get her wrist free. "And you're a damn bully."

"I can be, and so much more. You have no idea."

"Oh I have a pretty good idea about you."

He released her wrist, but his hand fisted into her hair, pulling it back, exposing her neck. Hot, full, scorching lips touched her exposed flesh sending sparks of pleasure down her spine. Up to her chin, over and

down to her right shoulder. A tug from his other hand on her sweater exposed her shoulder. Those hot lips of his closed over her shoulder. She felt the sharp graze of his teeth followed by a hard suck.

"I can mark you right now," he said low in her ear. "Mark you as my own and think nothing of it." He nipped her shoulder and Natasha whimpered.

"Don't," she breathed out. She closed her eyes, working at not panicking—it would do no good if she did.

"Excuse me."

Drake turned, and Natasha was able to lower her head and look.

Nelly stood there, a disapproving look on her face. "The crew is finally here to work on the dining room."

"I'll be right there," Drake said. He turned and kissed Natasha quick, and deep. It was so unexpected she didn't have time to react, and when she did, it ended.

He didn't say another word to her. Pushed away and walked out of the room. Only when he was gone did she let out the air she was holding in a rush, touching her forehead. What was she going to do? What the hell was she going to do?

* * * *

Drake oversaw the men working in the dining room. He was determined to get it finished so the furniture could be placed, then he could enjoy hosting nice dinners in his home. It took all day for them to get the floor down, and the walls finished. By the time they left, it was too late to have the furniture delivered, but at least the room was done.

Heading up for a fast shower before dinner, he thought about what he told Natasha. He also wondered why he was holding back from the mark. If he marked her now it sure would take out some of the fight she had over this whole claim. Right?

He walked into the bedroom and right off, she stiffened. She was sitting on the bed reading a book, but when he walked in her whole body changed. She sat up eyes got huge, breathing increased. There was also a very faint scent of desire in the air and it sure as shit didn't belong to him.

Drake kept his mouth shut and went right into the bathroom. Nice how shower to clean the dirt off, and maybe a cold one to cool the ragging hard-on and desire he still seemed to carry around at the moment. Damn if that fucker didn't go down for shit. Masturbating was out of the question. Didn't help.

Finishing his shower, he grabbed a towel, wrapped it around his

hips, and took another for his chest and hair. Opening the door, he half expected her to be gone. It shocked him a little to see her sitting on the side of the bed now, book closed, eyes watched every move he made.

"I expected you to dash out the door," he told her, going into the closet, leaving the door open.

"And give you the excuse to maul me again," she snorted. "No thank you."

"Come on, Natasha." He came back out in fresh jeans, not zipped or buttoned and a shirt in hand. From the way her blue eyes widened he knew she could see a part of his cock as it pressed against the front of his jeans to be free. "You make it sound like you didn't enjoy it."

"Maybe I don't like you touching me."

Oh, that was a challenge if he ever heard one. Drake growled low at the back of his throat, tossed the shirt in his hand to the floor, and went right up to her.

Natasha jumped and made a dash for the door, but he caught her before she even took three steps. She screamed, twisted, and turned when he wrapped his arm around her waist, picking her up.

The ties he used last night were now folded on the nightstand. He picked one up, sat down on the edge of the bed with her on his lap. He tried to pull her arms back but she kept fighting him so Drake shoved her down on the bed face first. He pulled both arms back, tying them with his tie.

"You bastard!" she yelled. "What the hell do you think you're doing?"

"I'm going to show you how much your body likes for me to touch you," he told her, jerked her back up, then settled her on his lap, facing away from him.

He held her easy. A wrap around with his legs and hers were pinned beneath and Drake was able to part them. To hold her in place he slid one arm between hers at her back. This action had her breasts pushed upward.

Drake rested his chin on her left shoulder reached around and pulled the sweater up. Natasha squirmed as much as she could. Swiftly he jerked the sweater over her head, down her bound arms, using it to keep her arms in place.

She had on a new bra—white lace. The cups pushed the mounds up, tempting and teasing him to touch the swelling and he did. Drake ran the tips of his fingers over the tops of her breasts and around, only touching what the bra didn't cover. Natasha's breathing quickened. The rise and

fall of her chest told him all he needed to know as to how much his touch affected her.

“Your skin is like touching fine silk,” he said close to her ear, rubbing his face into her arm, kissing her ear. “I could drown in you.”

“Drake, stop this,” she panted.

“Not yet.” He flatted both hands right under her breasts and slid downward. “How much you want to bet by the time I touch your pussy you’ll be wet.”

She shook her head no, “You don’t excite me.”

“Wanna bet?” He pulled at the snap of her jeans, tugged until the zipper slipped down. Natasha’s breathing got faster and the scent of her desire grew stronger. “I don’t have to strip you naked or have my mouth on you to give you an orgasm. Did you know that?” Inside one hand went. Inside her jeans, cupping her lace covered pussy. A gasp slipped free from her lips and she went forward a bit.

“I can feel your heat,” he whispered right before licking at her earlobe.

Again, she shook her head, so Drake took the full step. He pulled his hand back and reentered her pants, only this time he went right inside her panties. He touched her clit and she jumped. Slowly he teased the nub, moving his finger around it, never really touching it.

Her juices coated his finger, the desire he smelled got stronger. Teasing her further, he moved two of his fingers down farther into her panties and rubbed up and down along the slick slit. She got wetter, hotter, and his cock pressed hard into the curve of her ass. He wanted inside her so badly it hurt him physically.

The scent of her became too toxic, too much for him to just sit and play. With a deep growl, he stood up, dropped her on the bed, and yanked her jeans and panties right from her body. Her eyes widened in shock, but that couldn’t seem to sway him at all.

Dropping to his knees, he took hold of her legs, jerked her to the edge of the bed and had his face buried in her pussy. He parted the folds, licked her from ass to clit, and growled low at the sweet taste of her.

“Drake, you promised!” she cried out.

His answer to that was to plunge his tongue as deep as he could inside her. She cried out, her legs closing around his head, hips twisting and turning. He held her down easily, was able to hold her and keep her open at the same time.

He fucked her with his tongue, sucked at the juices and tried not to come all over himself. The control was soon slipping. He knew that now.

There was no way in hell he was going to be able to hold out until her cycle, when she would be forced to come to him. Drake knew without a doubt that their time was coming soon. If he couldn't just simply touch her without having to bury his face in her flesh, then he knew he was going to be inside her before that four days bullshit.

"Oh god, stop, oh shit!" He felt the climax around his tongue.

Keeping the motion going, he touched her clit and moved his finger as fast as he could over the nub. She screamed and closed her legs tightly around his head.

When he pulled his tongue out he gave her one more long swipe from ass to clit before moving upward on her body, kissing, and licking as he went. She breathed hard and fast. When he reached her breasts, he pushed the bra up, releasing the mounds.

Even with his jeans on, between her legs on the bed, he could feel the scorching heat of her pussy. It took a hell of a lot of will power to keep those jeans on, not free his cock, and just sink into her.

Drake closed his lips around one nipple and cupped her other breast in his hand. He sucked on her breast, nipped and pulled on the nipple until she squirmed under him again.

"Drake, stop please," she begged breathlessly.

He popped her breast from his mouth and looked up at her. "I want you Natasha," he spoke low. "I want to be so deep inside you that I'm hurting with the need."

A single tear slipped free from her eye. He watched that tear fall all the way down her cheek onto the bed. That tear was the cold water he needed. All the desire, the need left his body, his cock went down, and the guilt over what he done finally hit him.

He reached behind her, released her wrists, and rolled from on top of her body.

"I'm sorry," he sighed. "I'm so sorry."

Drake stood up picked his shirt from the floor and walked out of the bedroom with the guilt eating at him.

Chapter Five

Natasha sat at the table, half listening to the conversation between Drake and James Laswell. Once she heard that her father might use her for a political mating she sort of shut down.

Sure, deep down she knew he was up to something, but to use her to stay on the cabinet and run things the way he wanted was wrong. Then her memory chose that moment to remind her also about what Drake did to her yet again. He said he would only do that thing again if she ran or hit him. Well she didn't do either, so why did he break his promise?

Nelly fixed a large super. Roasted lamb, new potatoes, baby peas, homemade bread, and a pie. It was great, but Natasha couldn't seem to eat much, not with the anger boiling inside. She wanted to scream, yell, and hit something or someone. Hell, she just wanted to vent over being used. Always used, that was her life.

"I think it's time for me to call it a night," James stated. Natasha glanced at him quickly, then back down to her plate. "Thanks for the dinner. Tell Nelly it was great."

"Will do." Drake nodded. "And let me know what else you find out."

"No problem. Take care, Natasha."

Natasha kept her head down. James left by the back door. She waited until she heard a car start before facing Drake.

"Okay, let me have it," he sighed, slumping back in the chair.

Thunder boomed right then followed by a clash of bright lightening. Natasha looked up at Drake slowly. When she looked at his face, her body reminded her of what he'd done once again—broke a promise.

"You promised me that you wouldn't do that again unless I did something to you," she said.

Drake looked at her. His dark eyes piecing it seemed right into her soul. "You did do something. You challenged me. And as much as you might try to sit there acting like I offended you, keep in mind that you did enjoy it."

The dam blew!

Natasha lost it. Her temper got the better of her. She stood up and shoved the table right at Drake before running out the back door. Thunder hit again followed by the lightening. She didn't care if a storm was coming. Didn't care about what would happen once he caught her.

All she did care about was getting away from everything.

Her father was going to use her. He wasn't willing to change the way things went at the Gathering. He didn't want her to have any say in anything in her life. He wanted to use her for his own gain. Just like Drake seemed to want to do.

"Natasha!" he bellowed her name.

Her name seemed to carry on the wind that was quickly picking up. Natasha ran for the woods, making it before she could hear him call for her again, this time much closer. She stopped and turned, waiting for Drake.

"Why you running?" he asked.

"You want to use me just like he does," she huffed. "So why don't you just do it and get it over with."

"I never said I wanted to use you."

Natasha went up to him and slapped him. Drake just stood there, his head turned from the blow. And she wasn't finished. She started to pound on his chest, tears falling from her face, the frustration over the whole kidnapping and her life with her father came pouring out. She couldn't stop herself from hitting him and crying at the same time.

Drake let her. He stood there letting her hit and beat on him as she cried. She broke. The years of holding herself together, being the perfect daughter for him collapsed, just as she did now, on the ground at Drake's feet.

She hung her head, cried into her hands and the rain came down. The cold water from the sky pounded on top of her head, mixed with the tears that fell from her eyes. Drake lowered himself to his knees in front of her. He pulled her into his arms. She fisted her hands into his shirt, buried her face against his chest, and cried.

"I could never use you," he sighed. "All I want to do is love you Natasha. That first second I discovered you all I wanted to do was wrap my arms around you and protect you." She raised her face up to him. "To take away all the pain I felt inside you."

His hand moved to her face, holding her look. Slowly he lowered his own to her, lips touching lips so lightly, so gently she almost thought she didn't feel them.

The gentleness of his touch surprised her. Since she'd been around Drake, he'd only been hard, taking and demanding from her. Now it seemed that something changed with him. A gentle side showed and she didn't know how to handle it.

He kissed her fully on the lips. Pressing, teasing her with the tip of

his tongue until she opened to him. Still he didn't really demand from her. His tongue slipped inside her mouth, touched hers as his head slanted, deepening. Natasha got lost in the kiss. She didn't even realize that she was being laid down on the ground until she felt it touch her back.

The rain beat down on them, but with Drake hovering over her she didn't feel it. All she felt was his lips upon hers, a kiss so deep, so intense that she felt it deep within her soul. For the first time since she saw him, talked with him, Natasha didn't mind his hand upon her body.

He backed away from her for only a second. Only long enough that she saw him raise up and pull his wet shirt from his body, tossing it to the side. Hands returned to her face, his lips took hers again, and tongue mating with her own, he stole her breath away. Natasha gripped him on his sides, held on as he devoured her with his mouth.

The thunder boomed, lightening followed, but she felt and heard only Drake. He kissed her with such skill that nothing else mattered around them. This kiss was so much different from the others. She could feel something in him change, but couldn't put her finger on it.

His hands moved from her face, down her throat cupping her breasts through the wet shirt. She gasped into the kiss, arched into his hands, and didn't fight the pleasure, the sensations that raced through her veins. She welcomed them this time.

Lower his hands went to the bottom of her shirt. He pushed it up and Natasha raised her arms up for him. Still he kept kissing her, only to stop when he pushed her shirt over her head, tossing it away.

Hands went back up to her face, lips moving from her own lips down her chin and throat. He pushed gently at her head, pushing he back enough to give him full and better access to her throat. Natasha gave it. He kissed, licked his way down her throat to her chest where he touched the top swells of her breasts. The straps at her shoulders slid down, the clasp at the back was released, and the last bit of protection she had was gone.

Drake didn't waste a second at closing his mouth over one nipple, sucking it deep into his mouth, teasing it with this tongue and teeth. All the while, he closed his hand over the other, squeezing, kneading the flesh. Rain still beat over her heated body, hit her face, but Natasha didn't care. It took everything she had now to stay focused on what he was doing to her. How he was making her feel.

A harsh tug, one that had her gasping loudly before he released the breast and he moved his mouth to the other. He was driving her nuts with

this detailed exploration of her body. The attention to her breasts made her clit throb. She could feel herself getting so wet she was sure her panties were soaked.

Once he was finished giving her breasts the same amount of attention, making the nipples so painfully hard and sensitive, Drake went lower. He kissed her belly, flicked his tongue around and in her belly button. A shiver raced down her spine at the feel of him working at her jeans.

Natasha closed her eyes when the snap came free, the zipper lowered and he tugged and pulled them down her legs. She couldn't look at him while he took her jeans, shoes, panties off. She couldn't face him naked.

However, she did open her eyes when he picked up one leg, draping it over his shoulder. Hot breath touched her wet pussy. Natasha looked down, meeting his dark, intense eyes right before he opened his mouth and licked between the swollen folds of her pussy.

Natasha moaned at the pleasure, arched into his sweet kisses. This time she didn't fight it. She gave into it.

Drake licked her from the small entrance of her ass all the way to the throbbing clit. She moaned loudly again, when he flicked the nub, torturously teasing it with his tongue before sucking it into his mouth. The moment he did that, two fingers slid deep inside her pussy.

He moved them in and out while he sucked hard on her clit. The pleasure raced through her blood, heightened nerve endings she didn't know she had, and kept her on the edge of a climax. The rain on her body did nothing to cool the burn that he was creating.

Natasha opened herself up wider for him. She parted her legs, giving him free rein to do what he wanted, and still it wasn't enough. He moved his fingers in and out fast, joined one more, stretched her, and still she wanted, needed more.

She sat up some, fisted her hand into the long locks of wet dark hair on top of his head, and pressed him harder into her pussy. Drake moaned and growled, giving her what she needed with a harder pull to her clit.

"Drake, please," she begged, not sure what she was begging him for.

He seemed to know. A hard twist of his fingers to her pussy and one finger going right into her ass pushed Natasha over. She screamed into the night, into the rain while her release washed over her. It was powerful enough that she fell back down to the wet, cool ground, trying to breathe through the pleasure of it.

She felt him kiss his way back up her body, fingers still deep inside

her, pumping, drawing out the orgasm. He was naked, just like her, and Natasha couldn't recall when he might've taken his own jeans off.

She felt the heat of his flesh, the slick, powerful muscles of his chest, legs, belly touching her. Natasha couldn't help herself. She rubbed her legs up and down over his, up his hips and somewhat over his sides. Hard, soft, power, that's what she felt when she touched him. She even rubbed her hands up and down his bare chest and down his belly to a small patch of hair that formed there, going downward.

When she felt his cock touch her for the first time, she stiffened and Drake was there, kissing away her fears. She tasted herself on his lips, tasted his hunger as well. He lowered his body down to hers, trapped her hands for a second between their bodies before she pulled them out.

He kissed her so deep and moved his cock up and down along the slit of her pussy. It sent shivers of anticipation through her body. It seemed that every one of her nerve endings was on high alert, focused right between her legs, right where he was about to enter her.

The first nudge had her hunger surfacing quickly. Natasha returned his kisses, dug her nails into his shoulders, and waited for whatever it was to come. Drake only entered her a small bit before he took hold of her wrists, prying her hands from his shoulders. He pinned them up over her head, linking his own fingers, hands with hers.

The thrust came. It stole her breath, filled her with a burn, pain, stretching that she just didn't think she could handle. She cried out into the kiss, dug her nails into his hands, and stiffened. He was huge. The burning pain hit her so unexpectedly, tears came to her eyes—tears that he quickly kissed away.

"Give it a few seconds," he panted into her ear. "I promise you the pain will go away."

Natasha shook her head. "I can't do this. It hurts."

Drake looked into her eyes. For the first time since she'd been with him, she saw tenderness in his dark eyes. "Yes you can. *We* will do this together."

She gulped and nodded. Sure enough, the pain slipped away, but the full, stretched feeling didn't. Slowly he withdrew and just as powerful as the first one, Drake thrust back into her. The burn was still there, the full feeling, but the pain was gone. She stared at him with wide eyes as he moved like that again, his eyes lock still on hers.

He moved, his chest brushed against hers, teasing her nipples. Pelvic bumped against her clit with each inward thrust. Once more, her body was coming alive in the same manner as when he touched and kissed her

between her legs. Yet, this time it felt different—more powerful, more intense.

“You feel it?” he asked, his voice getting that harsh sound back. “Because, baby, I can feel it.”

He let go of one hand, moved the free one down, and picked up a leg, placing it right under his arm. A deeper, harder penetration came, one that stole her breath.

Natasha closed her eyes, arching into the trusts. Drake picked up speed. It felt like he was letting loose of something. His body slammed into hers, lips on her throat, tongue licking the mixture of sweat and rain.

“God, you feel like heaven,” he moaned against her chest, his forehead pressing right over a breast. “I’m not going to last much longer.” He sounded desperate.

A grind from him and she did. Natasha cried out, arching her back, welcoming the orgasm. She shook from the power of it. Over her Drake growled right before his teeth sank into her shoulder. He swelled inside her, stretched her even further, tighter than she was now. His seed hit her, warming the burn, but not taking it away.

He sucked on her shoulder, arms going around her, holding her tight before rolling over, putting Natasha on top. Both were breathing hard, but it seemed like Drake didn’t want to let her go. Not only was he still deeply embedded inside her, hard still, his teeth still held her shoulder and arms held her tight. Natasha didn’t mind it really. She sighed, resting her head on his shoulder. When he finally did let her shoulder go, she shivered from the loss.

“I’m sorry,” he sighed, sounding hurt.

“About what?” she mumbled, feeling for the first time content and safe.

“I should’ve done this in a nice, warm, comfortable bed.” Natasha raised herself up, looking down at him. “Your first time should’ve been in *our* bed, not on the wet ground in a rain storm.”

Natasha couldn’t help herself. She smiled at him. “Then if it bothers you that much, take me to the bed.”

Surprise filled his eyes, and soon it filled hers. Drake stood up with her in his arms. His cock slipped free and she whimpered softly from the loss.

“Then the bed I’m going to take you to, and not let you go until neither one of us can walk.” Natasha sighed, wrapped her legs and arms around him. He held her like a child, but it didn’t bother her. “Thank you.” Drake held her tight, his face buried in her wet hair.

“For what?” she asked.

“For the gift you gave me.”

* * * *

True to his word, Drake carried her back into the house. They both were naked, wet, and dirty. A shower should've been his first thought, but it was the furthest from his mind.

In the bedroom, he placed her in the middle of the bed, and she kissed him with as much passion as he kissed her. They rolled around, getting the bed as wet and dirty as they were. Outside the storm raged on. Thunder followed by bright lightening and heavy rain. It matched the storm that was building in the room.

His hungry for her didn't slow down. Drake had her riding him, his hands on her breasts, hips bucking upward. She took him deep, fucking him so slow and with a bit of hesitancy, that he felt it deep in his soul, which was right where she lived now. He felt it, knew it without a doubt. He had his mate and he was going to do everything he could to keep her happy, safe, and protected.

“Am I doing this right?” she asked, breathing hard as she moved on top of him.

“Every way and anyway you do it is right,” he told her. “Fuck, if you don't feel good. So tight I'm trying my hardest not to come right now.”

Natasha lowered herself to him, kissing him lightly on the lips. “Then I'm not doing it right if you have to control yourself.”

Drake laughed, “Oh you minx.” He flipped her over to her back, pinning her hands over her head, spreading her legs wide with his own. “Words like that can get you into so much trouble.”

“All talk Drake,” she sighed.

He withdrew and shoved as hard as he could into her. Natasha's blue eyes widened, mouth opened but no sound came out. “You're right. More action is needed.”

He did it again, thrusting powerfully, and fast. She came in a second. The moan slipped free, her pussy contracted tightly around his cock and Drake went with her. His seed shot deep into her, shaking with the pleasure of it, and still his hunger wasn't satiated. In fact, it reminded him of his heat.

“I can love you all night long,” he panted, running the back of his hand down the side of her body.

Natasha had her eyes closed, breathing hard. She said nothing, not even when he pulled out and turned her onto her belly. Drake rubbed her

backside, loving the firm, silken texture of her ass. He slid his middle finger between the globes, seeking the small entrance of her ass. It surprised him that she didn't say stop or no when he played with it. Past lovers didn't want him to fuck their asses. Only a couple let him, and he was pretty sure that was because they feared he'd dump them. Well he did, after he got what he wanted. Before Natasha came into his life, Drake was a dick. He only thought of himself, no one else. Now he was thinking about his mate and what kind of pleasure he could give her.

"Tired?" he asked, moving his fingers down to her pussy, collecting her juices and moving it back to her anal ring.

"You want more?" she asked.

He heard the tiredness in her voice. Deliberately he slid that finger as far as he could into her ass. "I want this," he whispered in her ear.

Drake felt the shiver that went through her body. She turned and sat up. He saw the fear in her eyes. When she touched the side of his face, he closed his eyes and leaned into the touch.

"Will it hurt?"

Hope surged through him. Always in the past, he had to beg or just take. Never did one offer it like Natasha was doing right now.

"Only if you tense up." He opened his eyes, meeting her blue ones.

She surprised him once again. Natasha lowered back to the bed turned over and raised up on her knees before him. She offered herself to him, to her mate. Drake didn't question why her change of heart. He kissed her rear, parted the flesh, and licked her. Again, she shivered at his touch.

He brought back all the juices, slid two fingers deep into her rear. He moved them in and out, making sure to tease her clit with the other hand. By the time he had her nice a wet she was shaking with the need to come. Deliberately he kept her on the edge, not letting her come just yet.

Positioning himself, the head of his cock posed right at the small ring of her ass, Drake held his breath, tilted his hips, and pushed. She was tight—o fucking tight that he wondered for a second if this was going to work. With a rush of air from her, her anus gave. A slight pop and he had the large mushroom head inside her, the shaft slowly stretching her.

"Fuck if you're not tight as hell!" he moaned with a growl, breathing hard to go slowly for her.

"Oh my god, Drake," Natasha gasped.

"Do you burn for me Natasha?" He couldn't get his voice to soften for her. His voice sounded harsh to his own ears.

“Yes,” she breathed out. “Please don’t leave me hanging like this.”
“Never.”

One surge and he was fully embedded in her ass. Natasha screamed and climaxed. He could feel the orgasm through the thin tissue separating ass from pussy. Before he got started though, he grabbed a couple of the pillows, putting them under her hips.

Keeping a hand between her legs, he teased her clit. Rotating his hips, coercing sweeter sounds from her, Drake pulled out and plunged back in. A steady in and out motion and soon he was fucking her pussy with three fingers.

Natasha fisted her hands into the bedding, her upper body dropped down to the bed. Each forward thrust she would moan and the harder he fucked her, the louder she got.

“I’m close,” he grunted. “Fuck I’m going to come.”

He swelled, pressed his thumb on her clit, and came hard, heavy. Drake yelled right before he bit her shoulder. Natasha also screamed. He felt the orgasm and still he pumped, moved his hand over the clit, drawing it out for both of them.

When it finally ended, he dropped to her side on the bed, breathing hard, dirty, sweaty, and exhausted.

“I never thought it would be like that,” she stated. “Elli always told me that the male just took what he needed or wanted, never giving the female that kind of pleasure.

“That woman is a fool then,” Drake said. “A male who gives a shit about his female always makes sure she enjoys what they do together in bed.” He sat up, grabbed her up in his arms, and kissed her hard and deep. “Now let’s go take a shower before you get sick. The last thing I need is for my mate to get sick right before her cycle.”

Once more, her eyes widened. “You mean take one together?”

Drake smiled. “Someone has to wash my back.”

Taking hold of her hand, Drake led her into the bathroom. He started the shower, got the water at the right temperature, and let Natasha get in first. He was right there, standing at her backside washing away the dirt from outside and his seed from her ass. He even washed her long hair.

When she was finished, she surprised him yet again by turning around, moving behind him, and washing his body. The instant her hands began to touch him he became hard as stone again. She smiled, blushed, and shook her head. Drake only shrugged and washed his hair.

Then she downright shocked the fuck out of him. Drake was rinsing his hair when her mouth closed around the head of his cock. He almost

got soap in his eyes. Shaking off the water, he looked down.

Natasha was on her knees before him, his cock in hand and in her mouth while the other hand cupped the sac between his legs.

“Fuck me,” he gasped. “What’d you doing?”

She released him and looked up, licking her lips. “You don’t like this?”

“I never said that. But where did you get that idea from?”

She shrugged this time, “Thought that since you did that to me, I could do it to you. Is it wrong?”

His mouth went dry, “Honey it’s not wrong, you only shocked me. Guess I never thought you’d think of doing it yourself.”

“Then you like it?”

“Love it is more like it.” Her mouth opened and she took him inside again, sucking hard and deep. He felt the tip touch the back of her throat. “Oh, fuck me I’m going to die.” She moaned against him and Drake was lost.

He spread his arms out, holding onto the sides of the shower as he spread his legs for her. She sucked, pulled at his flesh and he closed his eyes, trying to get some control. However, control was out the fucking door. It felt so damn good to not give in. Her tongue flicked at the underside of his shaft, teeth raked ever so gently over the head and her hands rolled his balls. Yes, he was going to die from the pleasure.

When he felt the familiar tightening he tried to pull back, but Natasha wasn’t giving him up. She held on tightly with her hand and with her mouth, pulling at him.

“I’m going to come if you don’t stop,” he told her, breathing hard.

Her answer was a moan and another hard pull. Then he felt her nail scrape against the entrance of his ass.

“Fuck, Natasha, don’t push me there.” He couldn’t stop the growl from slipping. “Oh shit you’ve got to stop, I’m going to come!”

Somehow, she took him even deeper into his mouth, and even down her throat. One finger went right into his ass. Drake came, and came hard. He yelled, or howled, he wasn’t too sure of the sound that came from his throat. His climax shot out of him, down her throat where she drank up every drop he had to give. The finger in his ass moved in and out, heightening his pleasure to a point that it almost felt painful.

Not once in his life had a lover given him that kind of pleasure. He couldn’t breathe, felt weak in the knees and ended up dropping to the floor with her. While on his hands and knees, he tried to steady his breathing.

"You okay?" Natasha asked, concern filled her voice.

"Where'd you learn how to do that?" he asked.

"From you." He looked up at her and she smiled, the shyness back in her eyes, in her body language. "You did that to me. Thought I could do the same thing to you. I'm sorry if I did it wrong."

Drake shook his head. "You didn't do it wrong. I've never felt anything like that before." Her face lit up. "In fact, I loved it." He kissed her quickly. "Feel free to do it any time you want."

The blush on her face got redder. Drake chuckled, stood up, and turned the water off. They dried off, and together stripped the bed.

Both were so tired as they climbed into the bed. Drake pulled Natasha into his arms and she went willingly, sighing with her head on his chest, body curled up to his side. He held her tight, feeling for the first time in years at peace.

"What do we do about my father?" she asked.

"I don't know."

"He's going to send someone to find me, you know that, right?"

"I'll deal with it when the time comes."

"Maybe I should call him and tell him about this."

Drake turned his head, kissing the top of hers, "Don't think about it right now. Get some rest. We'll figure it out."

A few minutes went by and he was starting to drift asleep when she spoke again. "Drake?"

"Hum."

"Does this mean I'm not your prisoner anymore?"

"You never were. Now go to sleep."

Again, some time went by, and she spoke again. "Drake?"

"Do I need to love you again so you'll go to sleep woman?"

Natasha giggled, "I wanted to ask you something."

"Okay, one more question, then go to sleep."

"Okay. Will you tie me up again and kiss me down there and do the rest of it?"

That had him opening his eyes, looking down at her. "Natasha if you don't go to sleep then I'm going to tie you up and torture you until you do." She giggled again, snuggled closer, and closed her eyes with a sigh. Drake closed his again and waited until she was relaxed next to him. "Yes, I'll tie you up again and have my complete way with you any time you want." He felt the shiver and smiled.

He was just about out but was starting to feel hot. Drake frowned, eyes still closed. He could hear the storm raging still outside. A brutal

storm that came so unexpectedly he wondered what kind of damage was going to be done to the grounds come morning. That wasn't what had him coming out of a light sleep.

No, heat was. He felt so hot that he had to kick the sheet from his legs, only to discover that the heat he felt wasn't from his body.

Turning in the bed, he touched Natasha. She was burning hot and shivering at the same time.

"Natasha." He cupped her face, giving him a slight shake. "Honey wake up." The only answer his received was a moan. "Damn it!"

Drake was out of the bed, fast. He stopped to grab a pair of shorts from the drawer before going to the door and yelling at the top of his lungs for Nelly. He just had them up his legs and was back with Natasha when Nelly came in, tying her robe closed.

"What in the world is wrong?" she asked.

"Natasha is burning up, call the doctor, and get his ass out here right now," he demanded. "And I don't give a fuck about the weather. Something's wrong."

He didn't look to see if his orders were being carried out. He knew Nelly and knew she would do all she had to in order to get the doctor out here.

He touched Natasha's forehead. Scorching heat touched back. Mumbling a few swear words, he left her side and went into the bathroom for a cool rag. Drake didn't waste time in wiping down her heated flesh. Natasha whimpered and tried to get away from him. She shivered.

"Don't you do this to me," he told her, wiping down her throat. "You snap out of this shit right now or no tying up. Do you hear me?" he couldn't help but snap at her.

Nelly came back in, a large bowl with towels on her arms. "I called him, but he can't get out until the storm lets up."

"Fuck," Drake growled.

"He told me to tell you to get the fever down as much as we can. Once he gets an opening he'll be here ASAP."

"Great."

"Now you just calm down," Nelly said, her voice taking an authoritative tone. "We'll get it down, don't you worry."

Drake nodded and let Nelly push him away from the bed. She pulled the sheet away from Natasha and covered her body with cool, wet towels. Natasha whimpered and groaned and it tore at his heart.

How could this have happened? He wondered. Did coming together

out in the rain cause her to become sick? If it did then he knew he wasn't going to forgive himself.

"Drake, go down and fix us some coffee," Nelly said. "It's going to be a long night and we need to keep focused."

Drake nodded, but didn't move.

"Go on. I won't leave her alone."

Again, he nodded and this time turned and left the room for the kitchen. Guilt hung heavy over his head, on his shoulders. He pushed it aside and went to work at fixing the coffee. It was about the only thing he knew how to do at the moment.

"I'm not going to lose her." He shook his head. Not after I just found her.

Grabbing the pitcher, and two cups he headed back to the bedroom with the determination that he was going to break this damn fever or die trying. No way in hell was he going to let his mate go. Not after he finally had her.

Chapter Six

Jacob Sager, a private shifter doctor, walked out of the bedroom, putting his equipment back into the black bag he carried. He was a middle aged man, newly mated and trusted by a lot of shifters to do his job and keep his mouth shut—one of the reasons why Drake liked him.

“I’ve given her a shot, a large dose of antibiotics. She’s pretty sick, but I’m thinking it’s caused by stress and lack of nutrition. She’s underweight and exhausted. She also still has a high fever, so you’re going to need to keep an eye on that. Once she loses the chills, she’ll start burning from the inside out. Try to keep her cool and give her the medicine I’m leaving. Also, try to get some broth down her. As much liquids as you can.”

Drake rubbed the back of his neck. He was tired as well, but his mate came first. “How underweight would you say?”

Sager shook his head. “Not sure. I do know she’s way too thin for a female, and I’m afraid her cycle is closer than what is normal. It should be hitting in about a couple days, but the first stage of it is happening now. But don’t worry,” he held his hand up before Drake could speak. “She’s too sick for her body to do the demands.” He took a deep breath, and frowned. “Drake you do know that Millard has the word out for her. He’s hunting for his daughter.”

“I can trust you won’t tell him she’s here either.” Drake narrowed his eyes on the man, bracing himself for a fight.

“Not my place, and I don’t tell about my patents either, but I do want you to know the word is out. I’d be careful right now with who you let know she’s here.”

Drake crossed his arms over his chest, “Have you heard anything about this hunter?”

Sager shook his head, “But I have heard that Millard is calling another meeting. Something about the last one was interrupted.”

“Thanks, doc.” Drake put his hand on the man’s shoulder.

“You take care of that girl and get some meat on her bones. I’ll come back after the moon night to check on her.”

Drake nodded and walked the doctor out. After he closed the door, he turned and went to the livening room to make a call. “Dad, it’s me. What’s going on?”

“Drake, kind of late to be calling.” Allen Draeger sighed on the

other end of the phone. True it was late or very early in the morning to be calling, depending on how you wanted to look at it.

"I just heard Millard is having another meeting," Drake went on. "I'm coming. What time is it and where."

Allen's sigh went deeper, "It's not a good idea for you to be there, Drake. If he suspects you have his daughter he could challenge the claim."

"He can't challenge what's already happened. She's mine, Dad. The claim has been made. She has my mark."

Allen groaned, the sound meaning he was getting out of bed or sitting up. "Well that will help your position once it comes out that you do have her. I don't think Millard is going to let it go. You took his daughter, Drake."

"I followed his law. If he isn't willing to change the Gathering then he has to live by the rules also. No fair treatment."

"The meeting is set for tonight. His place again."

"What time?"

"Ten."

"I'll be there." Drake hung up and turned. Nelly stood in the room. "Is she okay?"

"I'm going to fix some broth."

Drake nodded. "I'll go up and check on the fever."

He brushed past her, only to stop when she spoke. "I'm sorry I questioned you about her. I see it now that you care deeply for her."

Drake turned his head, meeting Nelly in the eyes. "I love her Nelly, and I thought I'd never love anyone ever."

Nelly smiled. "I know you do, Drake. It shows in your eyes."

Drake lowered his head and left the room. He took the stairs two at a time. Natasha was in the center of the bed, the blanket up to her chin. He saw her shiver, went over to the bed, sat down, and touched her forehead with the back of his hand. She was still hot.

He picked up the glass of water on the nightstand, raised her head up, and pressed the glass to her lips. Natasha opened her mouth, took a sip, and not once did her eyes open.

A fresh bowl of water with towels sat on the nightstand also. He picked up a towel, dunked it, and wrung out some of the water before pulling the blankets down her body. He washed her heated body, trying to ignore her whimpering and protests. He washed her down several times before covering her back up and taking the bowl into the bathroom to dump. With a fresh bowl, he came out and Nelly was there with a cup

of hot broth.

“I hate to leave her, Nelly.”

Nelly nodded as she sat down on the bed. “You need to go to that meeting. You need to change things, Drake. Don’t worry, I can handle things.”

He went back up to the bedroom, checked on Natasha then showered and changed. Dark black jeans, black shirt, and a black jacket. A quick kiss to her forehead and he was out the door.

This time, Drake drove himself. He thought about how he was going to present himself and worked at calming his nerves and the animal side. His gut screamed that something was off here. Millard calling another meeting to discuss the Gathering wasn’t sitting well with him.

The drive took an hour. When he turned into the drive the feeling he had during the whole trip over intensified. He parked, got out, and was a bit surprised when his father met him at the door.

“Ready?” Allen Draeger asked.

Drake nodded, “Let’s do this.”

Together they walked inside. They entered the same room and sat in the same seats as last time. Millard and the rest of the Cabinet board sat at a long table in front of everything. This time there were no refreshments for them. Drake took a seat next to his father and waited. He checked the room out. Faces from the night before were there and new faces.

“We’ve called this meeting for the sole purpose to inform you all that a crime has been committed,” one of the men on the board stated. “A member’s daughter has been taken.”

Drake glanced at his father then found the eye of James Laswell. James was seated across the room from him.

“She has been promised to another.” That statement had a few mumbling to themselves and Drake crossing his arms over his chest.

“What about the law?” Drake blurted out. Everyone in the room became silent and they all looked right at him. Drake stared at Millard. “You yourself had written that a male has the rite to take a female and claim her. How can you hold a meeting and demand one of us or better yet accuse one of us of taking your daughter, if you uphold the law?”

“A promised female cannot be claimed, Mr. Draeger.” Millard stated.

“Says who?” Talking started up again, louder. From the corner of his eye, he saw James Laswell stand up.

“Are you saying that if we promise our females to another, then they

can't be claimed, even at a Gathering?" James asked. "Kind of pointless then to have a Gathering at all."

Shouting began and only the head member of the board banging on the table stopped it.

"Millard, you expect us to sit here and bend the laws, our rules for you," Drake went on. "Why? I've yet to see you uphold them yourself."

Millard's face reddened and Drake worked at not smiling.

"For your information, Draeger, my daughter was promised the day she was born to another," Millard stated. "I plan to uphold that agreement."

"Even if she is claimed by another?" James shouted, getting men to agree with him loudly.

"Gentlemen please!" the head cabinet member yelled.

Drake stood up, "If Millard doesn't uphold his own law, then I stated the law should be changed for us all and he be removed from the board."

"You rotten son of a bitch!" Millard yelled, standing up also. "You took her didn't you?" He pointed a finger at Drake.

Drake met him in the eye and said nothing. Others around him began arguing about the law, the removal of Millard, and a few others of the members. Order went out the door at the movement and in the center of it Drake and Millard faced off.

"I think you went too far this time," his father said.

"Not quite," Drake said. He tore his eyes from Millard, spread his arms out, and shouted, "Listen to me! Everyone listen!" The room slowly quieted down. "The Gathering has been a major part of our world. Us males rely on it to find our mates, but when our mates are withheld from us, what are we to do? Men of power decided if our females attend, and the current barbaric way helps them to chose no, then it's time for a change." Again, the talking, and loud conversations rose. "We need to stop the public mating!" Drake yelled.

"A new Cabinet needs to be made," James shouted also.

Over half of the males in the room agreed. Drake turned his full attention back to Millard. The man was glaring at him. If looks could kill, Drake would fall down dead.

"Without a mark from a male, no female can be promised to another." He pointed his finger at Millard. "That's your law. Are you going to break it?"

Again, the council's head banged the table and order slowly returned. "Millard, has your daughter been marked by the promised?"

one of the board members asked.

Millard sneered, "No."

"Then the promise is void." The man banged the table in a final decision. "And as the chairman of this board I am in agreement with Mr. Draeger's statement. In fact, there are a few of his statements that I agree with. We are not animals and therefore should not act as such. A change is due, one that will help with us staying true to who we are. The laws and rules we set up years ago were designed to make sure of our productivity, but now it must be tweaked. I'm putting to a vote for a change to our mating law. The public matting for all to see is out, but that does not mean..." He had to raise his voice and hand before the group started to get too loud. "That doesn't mean you cannot mate your female at a Gathering."

Drake shook his head and sat back down. "They didn't hear shit I just said," he growled.

"Some heard," his father said. "And you've started the change."

They spent all day arguing, and changing the laws. A few fights almost broke out, harsh words were shouted, and one board member resigned. Drake kept his eye on Millard though. The man seemed like he was on edge, and Drake knew without a doubt he was pissed off.

"Well, you've started it," James said to him. "Now if we can only get it finished."

"You didn't really think this was going to happen overnight, did you?" Drake poured himself a cup of coffee. A woman served him a tray of food during the proceedings.

"To be honest, I really didn't think you were going to get the change you did." James poured himself a drink. "Millard isn't happy about it and a few other important families aren't either."

"They'll get over it."

"So when are you going to let him know?" He nodded in the direction Millard stood in.

"Maybe when I have my first born." Drake turned and headed over to his father. He heard James laugh behind him.

"I must say I'm impressed," his father said. "Two major changes. That's something to be proud of."

"Long way to go."

"Drake you're not going to change things in a snap of a finger. Stuff like this takes time. I doubt either one of us will see the changes we want in our lifetime."

Drake took a deep breath. "I don't want to have a daughter and

worry about some animal raping her in front of men like this.” He looked around the room with disgust. “I want to know that when her time comes she’ll be claimed with respect.”

By nightfall, the new law was in place. It wasn’t what Drake wanted, but as his father pointed out it was a start. No more public screwing. Now if it he could get them to take the rest of it out he would feel at ease.

Drake headed for his car. He was tired, hungry, and worried about Natasha. He reached his vehicle when Millard stepped out of the shadows.

“You took her, didn’t you Draeger?” he said.

Drake crossed his arms over his chest, head cocked to the side, “That’s the second time you’ve accused me of taking you daughter Millard. Why?”

“Only a male who has something he might lose puts up a fight such as you did in there today.”

Drake snorted, “I put up a fight for future children, mine included. Tell me something, Millard. What the hell would you do if some male walked into your house, grabbed your daughter, and just fucked her on the table in front of your eyes? With the way the laws are now, any one of us could do just that and there isn’t fuck you can do about it.”

“I swear to you now, if it was you who took her I’ll make sure with everything I have I’ll bury you.”

“Threatening me now?”

Millard did take a threatening step and went nose to nose with Drake. “I’m promising you.”

“You know, Millard, as long as you keep pushing, keep threatening, no one is going to come forth and admit to taking your daughter. I know I sure as hell wouldn’t tell you shit. Now get the fuck out of my face.”

“Do we have a problem here?” James Laswell came up to them. His tone of voice made Millard take a step back.

“No problem, Laswell,” Millard said.

“Oh we have problems, Millard.” Drake yanked his car door open, all his gaze riveted on Philip Millard. “We have major problems.”

Drake got into the car started the engine and peeled out of the drive. He drove fast with the need to see Natasha, to check to make sure she was fine. She was his only concern at the moment, his only thought.

The sun shined bright when he pulled into the drive. As exhausted as he might be, the need to see her seemed to push it away. Drake parked in front of the house got out and rushed inside. He didn’t even let anyone

know he was home as he raced up the stairs, two at a time. He opened the door and just about lost his breath.

Natasha wasn't in bed.

"Drake, is that you?" Nelly's voice came from the bathroom.

He gave a silent sigh. "Yeah, Nelly."

"Good, come in here and give me a hand."

Drake turned, went into the bathroom. Nelly had Natasha in the tub. Her eyes were closed and her body shaking. He took off his jacket, tossing it onto the counter and kneeling down at the side of the tub.

"I just finished washing her," Nelly said. "You get her out and dried, I'm going to change those sheets. Think the fever broke, but she has the chills now."

Drake picked Natasha up from the tub wrapped a towel around her quickly and held her close. She pressed her face into his neck, shivering. He dried her off, put another towel around her body, and carried her into the bedroom as Nelly finished changing the bed.

He placed her on the bed, covered her up to her chin, and touched her forehead.

"How'd the meeting go this time?" Nelly asked.

"We got one law somewhat changed," he told her. "Still have a long way to go."

"You'll get there. Want something to eat?" Drake answered her by shaking his head. "Well then why don't you lie down and get some sleep also. You look like you're about to fall over or something."

Nelly left, and he sat on the side of the bed, bent and took his shoes off. Damn he was tired. So tired it took a lot of energy just to strip down.

The second he slipped under the blankets, Natasha was there. She curled up against him, shivering. Drake sighed, wrapped his arms around her, holding her tight, and close, giving her his body heat. Even though she was sick, his body hardened for her— hunger that no matter what was always there.

He didn't give into the hunger, or the need to rest. With his mate close by his side, Drake let the sleep take him. His body relaxed, expect for his damn cock. Eyes closed and darkness took him.

How long he was asleep before waking, he didn't know.

Drake slowly came back to his senses when he felt a hot, wet mouth suck his flesh inside. He opened his eyes, looked down and the air just held his in lungs. Natasha was between his legs, his cock in her mouth.

"Oh fuck," he moaned. "Natasha, what are you doing?"

"I burn," she said against him when she released his cock. "God

Drake, it burns.”

Again, she took his cock into her mouth, sucking the flesh hard. He reached up, grabbing the headboard of the bed tight and arched with a moan. All the way down her throat, she took him, pulling, moving her head up and down.

She drove his hunger, his desire, and lust so high that he was powerless to stop the climax. It rushed out of him fast, stealing his breath, making him feel weak and helpless under her.

And under her, he was.

Drake didn't even get a chance to come down from that high when he felt her crawl on top of him, his cock in her hand, posed at the entrance to her pussy. She was wet, hot silk that seemed to just milk him.

He took hold of her hips, helped guide her down onto him. Fuck if she wasn't tight. He could feel the scorching muscles of her pussy part, contract around him, and that pressure of climax once more quickly collected in his balls.

“Shit, I'm not going to last,” he groaned, closing his eyes at the sweet tormented pleasure.

Never once did he ever experience a female close or during her cycle. Always he heard the rumors. Deep down he did want to go through it once. The sexual need that he heard the females go through, the demands they make on a male was something he really did want to do. And now he was.

Her hands pressed on his chest, eyes closed, mouth open, head back. The sight of her passion as she took him into her body filled him with so much joy and love that he thought for the first time ever he might cry with pleasure. Natasha touched him in places he never thought could be touched. She had his heart, his soul, and for as long as she wanted, she had his body as well.

A gasp from her parted lips and she had him filling inside her. Natasha didn't stop for a breather. No, she moved and moved hard and fast on him. Control from her—out. She rode him hard, fucked him with a need that overwhelmed even him.

Once more, he had to hold onto to the headboard instead of her. He bucked up, growled with each slam downward of her body. He was so close that he ended up biting the inside of his mouth to still the orgasm.

“Drake, please,” she begged.

Her plea pushed him over. With an arch from him, he yelled and it wasn't just from the pleasure that raced through him. He came hard the second she lowered herself down and bit him right on the chest above his

left breast.

The pain mixed with the pleasure. His seed shot out of him in waves of pure, raw ecstasy. It drained him and fueled him at the same time.

“More,” she demanded her voice weak.

Drake sat up. He linked her legs over his arms and just moved her again. He kept her on top, but this time he controlled it.

Her arms went around him and he kissed her deep. He moved her fast, hard on him once more. This time it was her making the noise. She whimpered at each thrust, each power slap he gave to her. This time, when she came, he held off, pushing her higher.

“Drake!” she cried out and he moved again.

Drake flipped them over, him coming over her, his cock surging into her hard. He fucked through the orgasm times two. His mouth moved over her throat, moving to his mark. Nails dug into his shoulders, raked down and around his hips to clamp on his ass. He hissed at the pain but welcomed it also. It started his downfall.

He swelled, the sensation raced down his spine and his seed once more shot out. Harder her nails dug into his ass and he didn't mind. He closed his mouth over the mark, bit her, and enjoyed the scream that came from her lips, just as he enjoyed the tight contractions of her pussy around his cock. She clamped down so hard on him that he couldn't move, even her legs wrapped around his waist, holding him tight to her.

“Thank you,” she sighed, her hold on him loosening.

Drake raised up enough to look down at her. Natasha's head turned to the side slowly, her eyes closed. He felt her release under him and smiled.

“I love you Natasha,” he whispered, kissing her lightly on the lips.

Natasha smiled. “I love you too,” she breathed out.

* * * *

Millard walked into his office, slamming the door closed. He went right up to the bottle of whisky, poured a large glass, and took a heavy drink, hissing at the burn. He looked out the window, watched the other members of the board leave. Pissed off was such a mild term for how he felt right now. The meeting didn't go like he wanted, he didn't get the things he needed and no one seemed to know what the hell happened to his daughter.

“Tell me you have something,” he said.

“One that was here tonight carries her scent.” Boris stood in the far corner of his office hidden by the dark shadows.

“Which one?”

“The one you were talking with.”

Millard fisted his hand so tightly the glass shattered. Dark liquid hit the rug, glass dug into his hand. He breathed hard, heavy, his anger boiling over to a point where he only saw red.

“I want that bastard dead,” Millard stated.

“After the full moon it will be done.”

Chapter Seven

“The first new Gathering is scheduled for the week before the next full moon,” Allen Draeger said as he sat down across from Drake in the new dining room at the new table.

Drake was still very tired. He didn’t get a lot of sleep last night, mostly because Natasha woke up once more and took what she needed from him. It also surprised him to be a bit sore, on not only his chest where she bit him again, but his cock was also a bit tender.

The fever finally broke during the fourth or was it the fifth time she woke and crawled on top of him? He couldn’t remember. Hell, he didn’t care. He just wanted to be there for her and was going to do anything he could for her.

Nelly fixed a large breakfast and took up a tray for Natasha. His father showed up out of the blue with information about the changes the Cabinet was finally making. Drake’s mind was on the upcoming full moon.

“Drake, are you listening to me?”

Drake raised his eyes, looking down the table at his father. “No.”

“Didn’t think so,” Allen sighed. “I asked you if you’ve ever heard the name Lanz Martin before.”

Drake reached for his cup of coffee, “Nope. Who is he?”

“Human,” Allen stated. “One that is causing some trouble around here.”

“How so?”

“He saw one of us.” That statement had Drake sitting straighter in his chair. “And it’s causing some major trouble.”

“I’m listening.”

“He’s telling anyone that will listen that there is such a thing as a werewolf and he’s going to prove it.”

Drake rubbed his face, set his cup down and slumped once more in the chair, “I don’t need this shit right now.”

“No you don’t, and it just gets better.” Allen crossed his arms over his chest, lowered his head, but his eyes stayed fixed on Drake. “Millard is also causing more trouble. He has a hunter out there looking for his daughter and the one who took her. After you left heard some talk that the hunter was there, sniffing to see who had her scent upon them.”

“Shit,” Drake hissed.

“Yeah, so I’m going to take a leap here and say he’s going to be on your ass soon.”

“Millard can’t do shit.” Drake stood up, anger giving him the energy he needed to fight off the tiredness in his body. “He has no rights to her.”

“Just because he might not have the rights doesn’t mean he can’t fight for them back.” Drake glared at his father. “He can challenge your claim Drake. Don’t mistake his cunningness. You’ve embarrassed him twice now not only in front of the Cabinet but also in front of his peers. He will want to honor his name.”

“First off he has to figure out if I have her or not.”

Allen also stood up. He fixed his suit jacket and tie, “He isn’t stupid Drake. Stop thinking he is. Millard knows you have his daughter, he just can’t prove it yet. So watch your back.”

“What are you going to do?”

“I’m going to look into this Martin guy,” Allen said. “I think it needs some looking into. We don’t need some human trying to bring us down or think he’s the next messiah who should rid the world of the beast.”

“Watch your back.”

Allen smiled. “I always do Drake.”

His father left and Drake stood in the large front room staring out at the yard. The storm the night before did some damage. Trees limbs were everywhere, a few of the smaller trees cracked or broken. But the yard wasn’t what was on his mind. His mate was.

Natasha was better. The fever broke last night, Nelly was up there feeding her, but she worried him. the doctor stated she wasn’t eating enough, so that meant her damn father more than likely made sure she ate very little to keep her tiny figure. He shook his head at it. Females were expected to be slim, dainty all the time. There were too many things he needed to change with his kind, and as James and his father said; it was more than likely he wouldn’t see the changes in his lifetime. He could only hope that one day his children would take over where he started and left.

“Drake.” Drake turned. Nelly stood in the open doorway with an empty tray in hand. “She’s away and looks better. She also ate everything. Go up and see her.” Nelly smiled.

Drake nodded. “Have Tony call someone out for these trees.

Nelly nodded, turned, and stopped. “She had a cycle, didn’t she?”

“Yeah.”

Nelly shook her head, “Two days before a full moon. That’s usual.”

“Doc thinks it is just because of the sickness and stress she’s been under.”

“Well I can agree with the stress.” Nelly walked away. “We all are under a lot of it right now.”

Drake headed upstairs. When he opened the door, he smiled. Natasha was awake and sitting up in the bed, the pillows stacked up behind her head, covers folded on her lap. She was dressed in one of the new short and much sexier nightgowns he bought.

He went right up to her, kissing her deep, lingering his lips over hers for a few seconds before pulling away. “How you feel?”

“Embarrassed.” Her face turned a light shade of red.

“Why?” He smiled, sitting down on the side of her.

“I had my cycle early. I can’t believe I just crawled on top of you and just—” She couldn’t finish what she was saying. She brought the blankets up to her face, covering herself and bending over.

“Well I really didn’t mind.” He chuckled when she groaned loudly in the covers. “Natasha it’s alright.” He pried the blankets from her face and she sat up, but this time she had tears in her eyes and one falling down. “What’s wrong?”

“I have to be the worst kind of female for a mate,” she whispered, looking away from him.

Drake took hold of her chin, making her look him in the eyes. “Why would you say that?”

“I’m so weak,” she rushed out. “I got sick.”

“Shhhh.” He pressed a finger to her lips. “First off to me you’re the perfect female to mate. You complete me in ways I never thought possible. Second, just because you get sick doesn’t mean shit. Every one of us gets sick at some time. It happens. Now we just make sure you start eating better so that it won’t happen again so bad.”

She nodded, sniffed, and smiled shyly at him. “So has my father tried anything yet to get me back?”

Drake sighed. “Unfortunately, he has someone hunting for you. I just don’t know much more than that right now.” She shook her head, eyes lowering again. “He promised you to another.” That had her looking up at him. “Discovered that at the second meeting we had.”

“What’s that mean?”

“Nothing,” he shrugged. “He can’t promise you to another, especially if you don’t have a mark.”

“Does he know that I’m with you?”

Drake shook his head. “No, but I’m sure he suspects it.”

“When are you going to tell him?”

He smiled at her, “When I’m damn good and ready, or maybe never.”

Natasha’s face lit up and a smile spread across her face. He reached out, touched the side of her face with his knuckles. She closed her eyes, pressing into the touch.

“Did you mean what you said last night?” she asked.

“Yes.” She looked at him, blue eyes wide open. “I love you Natasha, and as soon as you’re well I want to make our mating as solid as we can get it. I want you to marry me like the humans do.”

“I—I don’t know what to say.”

“Say yes.”

“Yes,” came soft, low from her lips before she flung herself onto his lap, her arms going around his next, hugging him tightly.

Drake left her to take a nap. He smiled all the way back down the stairs, into the kitchen and out the back door. For the rest of the day he worked outside with Tony. Before supper, he did a quick hose down outside, changed clothes that Nelly handed him and took dinner up to Natasha to eat with her.

Tender roast, rich gravy, mashed potatoes, steamed vegetables, and more of her fresh bread on a tray. Drake loaded the plate up for Natasha and made sure she ate it all. Once her stomach was full, she fell right to sleep. Drake took a fast shower and joined her for a nice sleep that his body was demanding. He only had one more day before the full moon. Before his animal side surfaced, took over, and took Natasha. Drake half looked forward to it finally but also regretted it. She was still healing and he didn’t want to hurt her.

When morning came, Drake rolled over in the bed, reached for Natasha, and touched empty space. Instantly he was awake and up, tossing the blankets, looking for clothes. He was running out of the room, down the stairs only to stop at the bottom when he smelled the scent of food cooking.

Drake followed his nose and his ears. He heard talking, dishes moving around and breakfast cooking. The table in the dining room was set for two. A pot of coffee resting next to his spot, juice in a tall glass, biscuits in a bowl.

“Morning.” Natasha’s bright smile and cheerful voice had Drake stopping dead in his tracks. In her hand, she held a large bowl of scrambled eggs and in the other hand a tray of sausages. “Nelly is teaching me how to cook, so be honest when you try this. She thinks I

did good, but I'm not sure."

"You cooked?" Drake asked, frowning as she placed the food on the table.

"Yes and I love it." She was definitely in a good mood. The smile never faltered on her face one second. "For lunch she's going to show me how to do fried chicken and for dinner I have a special treat for you. So sit down and try the food."

He did. The moment his butt was in the chair, she handed him the bowl of eggs. Drake tried everything she fixed, and he made sure she ate plenty as well. With a wink when she glanced up at him he ate like there wasn't going to be a next meal.

"I'm going to take it that you like my cooking."

Drake nodded, whipping his mouth. "You're a natural baby."

"My father didn't want me in the kitchen. Forbid it in fact." She sipped the juice in her glass. "Use to lecture that it wasn't a place for a lady, and if he caught me as a little girl then I got a whipping for it."

"But he also didn't want you to eat much either." He sat back in his chair, cup of coffee in hand. "The doctor who treated you when you were sick expressed how underweight you are."

Her face dropped. "My father believes that a female should be slender. I have to weigh a certain amount at all times, even when I was at school."

"Well I want you healthy," he sighed. "So I don't give a shit if you put on some pounds, as long as you stay around and not get sick like that again."

She nodded, stood up, and began to collect the dishes. "You know that's what I pay Nelly for."

"I don't mind," she shrugged.

Drake shook his head and stood up collecting the rest of the dishes. Nelly raised one eyebrow at him when she saw he had them. "Don't start," he growled at her.

"You know, she might be good for you after all. Take away some of that caveman in you."

"I have work to get caught up on. Can I trust you not to corrupt her too much?" he asked Nelly.

"I make no promises." Nelly answered.

Drake gave Natasha a kiss on the cheek. "I loved breakfast and can't wait for lunch." She blushed again and he kissed her once more before leaving her with Nelly.

* * * *

Natasha spent the whole day in the kitchen, only resting when Nelly insisted. She was still tired from the fever but had to be out of that bed. Lying around seemed to make her feel useless and that was one thing she definitely was tired of being.

By lunchtime, she had to go up for a nap. She could barely stand, and her eyes felt like lead. The bed was heavenly when she lay down on it. Sleep came instantly, her mind filled of dreams of the children she wanted with Drake. She could see them all running around in the back, swimming in the pool laughing with him.

After a two-hour nap, she felt ready to take on the world. Splashing water on her face first, Natasha left the room and went back down to join Nelly in the kitchen. A sandwich waited for her and she ate it in bliss.

Drake still worked, and Natasha went to work at learning how to fix the next dish—fried chicken. Nelly showed her everything she needed to know, including how to cut up the chicken. With the last batch cooking Drake showed up.

“Man does that smell great.” He smiled, coming up behind her, wrapping his arms around her waist, looking over her shoulder. “Love chicken.”

Nelly huffed, “You love anything that is food.”

“Won’t argue there,” Drake nodded.

“Make yourself useful and set the table,” Natasha said, turning a chicken leg over in the skillet.

Drake chuckled, gave her a kiss on the neck, and took the plates Nelly was holding out. She smiled at Nelly when he left, going into the dining room.

“I swear girl that is the first time I’ve ever seen him set a table since I started working for him.” Nelly said.

She also fixed mashed potatoes, gravy, biscuits, and some roasted vegetables. Natasha sat down next to Drake, poured him some ice tea, and waited until he took the first bite. She held her breath, watching him.

“You’re a natural,” Drake sighed. Natasha smiled and began to eat her own food. “The pool is finished and ready. Want to go for a late night swim?”

Natasha just about choked on her drink. Quickly she covered her mouth with her hand and swallowed. “I don’t have a suit and am pretty bad at swimming.”

“Who said anything about suits?”

She felt her face heat up and had to look down at the plate of food before her. The idea of being in a pool with Drake had her feeling

nervous for some reason. It shouldn't since he had not only seen her naked, and had touched, not to mention she became the aggressor during her cycle.

"Come on." Drake stood up, tossed his napkin onto the table and was over her chair, pulling her to her feet before she could think of a good protest.

They went outside. It was a nice warm evening, the sky not too bright, soft lights in the water. Drake took her over to the side to some lounge chairs. He sat down pulled her between his legs and began to undress her. Natasha let him. She stepped out of her shoes when he picked her foot up, and stepped out of the jeans when they slid down her legs. Her shirt went next. He left her bra and panties on, stood up, and began to undress.

Naked he leaned close and whispered in her ear, "You're not still afraid of me are you?"

Before Natasha could answer, Drake turned and dashed into the water. Slowly she walked to the side and sat down, putting her feet in the water. She watched him swim under water to one side of the pool and halfway back before coming up for air.

He swam right up to her, grabbing hold of the sides of the pool next to her legs. "Not getting in? The water feels great."

"I...I..." Drake took hold of her legs and pulled her in before she could think up a good reason for why she was sitting on the side.

She couldn't help herself and freaked out. Panic gripped her and she tightly wrapped her arms around his neck.

"Hey, calm down," Drake said. "I'm not going to let you drown."

Natasha couldn't control her breathing or still the need to get out. "Okay, I lied. I can't swim at all and I'm scared to hell of the water."

"Okay."

She began to shake and it wasn't because she might be cold. "My father wanted me to learn how to swim and use to throw me in the water. He thought sink or swim would work on me. It didn't."

"I'm not going to let you sink, so relax."

Natasha nodded, but she didn't loosen her hold on him. Drake swam backwards towards the shallow end of the pool. When she felt her feet touch the bottom she let go of the tight hold but didn't release him completely.

"The trick to swimming is floating," he told her, prying her arms away from his neck and turning her around, back pressing to chest. "Now relax so I can teach you how to do this."

Natasha swallowed hard and tried to relax against him. Drake picked her up cradled her in his arms and had her lying on top of the water. It was hard to relax, to enjoy the water when all she thought about was going under. She stared up at the night sky, the stars shining brightly, and the moon, which was just about full. She felt the water under her, felt her body swaying to the motions. She relaxed her arms and legs going out from her body.

“You’re floating,” Drake whispered in her ear.

Natasha lost her concentration and almost went under the water, but Drake was there to help her. When she looked around, she saw that she was once more in the middle of the pool. Drake had a grin on his face, one that was very knowing and smug. Natasha couldn’t help herself and splashed him in the face.

He let her go and instead of her sinking to the bottom, she kept on floating. Drake dove under and Natasha watched him swim around her. She screamed when he jerked her panties down her legs from under the water. When he came back up, he had that look in his eyes that told her he was on the prowl.

Drake swam her back to the side of the pool, to more shallow water. He picked her up, sat her down on the edge, and parted her legs. She watched him, breathless, as he lowered his head, eyes locked on hers, and kissed the inside of her thigh. Air rushed from her lungs at the contact. She slid her hands into the long locks of his dark hair and Drake moved his lips closer to pussy.

The first kiss had her gasping. The second breathing hard and by the first lick she was throbbing in need. Natasha couldn’t help herself from spreading her legs wider for him, from moaning when he touched her clit with the tip of his tongue. He teased her, and she pulled at his hair as punishment.

With a deep chuckle from him, the rest of the air in her lungs rushed out. Drake parted the folds of her pussy and dove in. He licked her hard, slurped, and sucked at her clit a few times before his tongue slipped as deep as it could inside her. It teased and tormented her until she was yanking hard on his hair, trying to get him to go back to her clit.

“Drake, please,” she begged. His tongue slipped free, lips closed over her clit, pulling at it hard. “God, yes!”

Natasha released his hair and lowered herself down on the concrete. She fisted her hands into her own long wet hair, breathing hard and heavy from the intense pleasure he was giving her. She was so close to climax that it almost felt painful.

Fingers teased her. He rubbed them along the entrance of her pussy and rear. Natasha began to shake with the need of release. Looking back down at him, she was amazed to see his dark eyes watching everything she did. They were so dark, so intent looking that she shivered.

"I can't stand this," she told him.

Another growl and those fingers entered her. Two into her pussy, one in her rear. Natasha lost it all. She screamed, arched her back, and wrapped her legs tightly around his head. The orgasm that hit knocked the wind out of her, so powerful that it left her weak and unable to do anything but wait for it to end.

Gently he scooped her up and returned with her to the water. Natasha was so limp she hung on him like a rag doll, her head on his shoulder. His cock touched her belly, hard and slick. One of his arms held her close, and the other hand went between their bodies. One touch to her clit, then he slipped inside her and Natasha breathed hard again with need.

She nipped at his neck when he took his cock and teased her with it. Up and down the head went between the slit of her pussy a couple of times before he posed it right at her entrance.

With his hands on her hips, she let him guide her downward. She moaned, fisted her hands once more into his hair, and wrapped her legs tightly around his hips.

"Use the side of the pool to move," he told her.

Natasha sat up moved her hand to the inside where all the leaves were collected and the water went to be cleaned before venting back out with the rest. She planted her feet on the sides as well and lowered herself the rest of the way onto him.

His flesh parted, stretched her to a burning sensation. She never felt so full in her life like she did when she took him into her body.

With his guidance she moved. Up and down slowly, water swaying with the movement. Drake's dark eyes went from her face, down to where they were linked together and back up to her face. Then he moved from her hips up to her back, and with a twist her bra was gone. Both of his hands closed around the mounds, squeezing them as she kept moving up and down.

"I'm close," he let out on a sigh. "Fuck me hard baby. Make me come."

Natasha closed her eyes and moved hard, faster upon him. Drake groaned, moaned, and squeezed her nipples between his fingers.

"Drake, I...I..." She couldn't finish her statement. She felt her

womb contract, and she couldn't keep the steady motion going.

"Don't stop." His groan was high, his cock swelling, and teeth upon her shoulder.

Drake's bite heightened her climax. Natasha wrapped her arms, and legs, as tight as she could around him, holding on as they waited for the pleasure to end. He held her close, shaking lightly.

"What's it like?" she asked after some time passed. Drake still held her close in the water and she rested against him, taking the warmth of his body.

"What's what like?"

"The full moon heat."

His hand rubbed up and down her back. "Its intense," he sighed. "And sometimes can be painful if you don't have your mate."

"Has it been for you?"

"Was last month."

She was quiet for a few moments before speaking again. "What will you be like?"

"Demanding, but don't worry. I don't think anything you can't handle will happen." His hand felt good going up and down her back. It soothed her, relaxed her. "I better get you out of the water and up in bed before you get sick on me again."

He moved, but she stopped him with her hand on his chest, "Drake what're you going to do about my father. I'm worried."

He touched her face and she closed her eyes, pressing into the touch, "Don't worry about him. I'll handle your father and the claim."

"I don't want to go back there," she whispered, opening her eyes.

"And you won't. I promise," A light kiss and she was hugging him tight. "Nothing but death will ever part us Natasha. I swear it to you." She nodded. "Now let's get upstairs. We're both going to need to get as much rest as we can before tomorrow night."

Chapter Eight

The full moon hit and it knocked Drake right on his ass. In all his years he never felt the need hit like a fist in the gut which he felt this month. The need raged within him, and right beside him, to help him take it all away, was his mate.

Natasha walked into the bedroom just as the first wave hit. He fell to his knees, gasping to breathe through the pain, through the hunger of the heat. She stood before him and just the sweet smell of her scent eased some of the pain.

He glanced up at her, she down at him. One of the new robes he had bought for her covered her slim figure. Pale pink silk. The color had her hair looking golden. He watched her hands go to the knot, the tie pulled, silk falling to the floor. In the moonlight, Natasha stood naked before him.

“For you, Drake,” she said softly. “Only for you.”

A growl slipped from his lips as he stood up, taking her off her feet. Instantly she wrapped her arms and legs around him, holding him tight. Drake couldn't even wait for the bed. He turned and pushed her up against the wall. One swift thrust and he embedded his cock to the hilt inside her.

Natasha moaned loudly, her eyes closed and he moved. He didn't want to take her hard, to be rough with her, but it seemed that he couldn't control himself. He pounded hard into her, took her with a hunger he just couldn't pull back.

“Drake, its coming!” she cried out.

Her nails dug into his shoulders. He felt the shutter that went though her body, her pussy contracted around his thrusting cock, and still Drake moved. He wasn't nearly close to his release. The release that would end his heat for the month.

Pushing away from the wall, he went over to the bed, and sat down on the side. Natasha kissed him and he moaned in bliss. He held her close and she moved. Up and down, grinding slightly, driving him mad with the need to come.

With a deep growl, he turned and dropped them both down on the bed. Instantly he was moving within her, thrusting fast. Drake burned from the inside out. The heat washed over him like waves beating upon large bolder rocks in an ocean.

But it still wasn't enough. There was still something missing and he knew just what that something was.

Stopping, pulling out, Drake flipped her over to her stomach. He gathered her juices, brought them back, and worked them into the entrance of her rear. Just the thought of taking her there again had the animal inside surging to the surface.

"I need this," he growled, his voice raw, thick and deep. The words sounded strange to him.

He felt her relax and posed instantly. As gently and as slowly as he could he pushed into her. A loud gasp left Natasha's lips but it was followed by her pushing back against him. A growl, followed by a snarl, and Drake was deep inside her rear.

Drake took her like the animal he was. He surged into her, stretched, pounded into her ass harder than he should. Natasha eagerly met him thrust for thrust.

He could feel it. His heat built then seemed to gather in one spot in the center of his chest. It rushed down his body, pooled between his legs and seemed to rise higher with each stroke.

Natasha cried out. He felt her pleasure and it seemed to suck his release from him.

Drake reared back, arms spread out to the sides, head tossed back. He yelled at the top of his lungs, which turned into a very deep howl of bliss. His climax rushed out of him and with it the heat. Right before it was completely over; Drake leaned over her and bit her shoulder.

Time felt as if it was standing still. It took a lot for Drake to release Natasha's shoulder and pull out of her body. Not to mention what it took to roll off her. He breathed hard, fast, trying to get his body under some kind of control.

The heat was over. The pain was gone the animal inside back where it belonged. All there was left was just him and Natasha.

"You okay?" Drake asked, rolling over to his side, touching her back and moving up and down massaging her.

Natasha turned her head, facing him, eyes closed. "Tired and sore."

He smiled. "I'm sorry. Should've been gentler with you."

She smiled back. "I wasn't complaining."

He leaned closer, kissing her on the cheek, "Don't move an inch. I'll be right back."

With a loud groan, Drake got up off the bed and walked into the bathroom. He cleaned up quickly then brought back a cloth for Natasha. Not letting her get up he washed her also, and when he was threw, he

tossed the cloth into the bathroom.

“Now my next decision is with or without the panties tonight?” He tapped a finger on his lips. Natasha laughed.

“How about just come to bed.” She yawned. “I’m very tired.”

“Deal.”

Drake pulled her into his arms with a sigh. It felt good having her by his side. He had no trouble relaxing or letting his body pull him into a deep peaceful sleep.

* * * *

It happened so fast, Drake didn’t have the chance to prepare for it, or defend himself from it.

Natasha screamed. Drake opened his eyes, saw arms yanking her from the bed, from his arms, and tossed to the other side of the room. He lunged from the bed and ended up colliding with another shifter in full form. Together they went right through the window and Drake was the one to land on the ground hard. Air was knocked out of his lungs, slowing him down.

He caught sight of Natasha from the corner of his eyes. She was yelling, legs kicking out, a sheet wrapped around her. Someone carried her away, tossing her into a car. The sight helped to give him the energy he needed to stand up and fight the motherfucker who dared to come into his home and take his mate.

Drake looked up at the wolf before him. He stood close, breathing hard, snarling down at Drake with drool coming out of the large mouth. Pushing back the pain in his side from the fall, Drake slowly stood up, facing the one that challenged him.

“Let me guess,” Drake said. “Millard sent you.”

The answer he got was the shifter lunging at him, pushing both huge paw hands right in the middle of his chest. Drake went flying backwards, hitting the ground hard once more.

The other came for him, and by the time he reached where Drake landed, Drake was transformed and ready. He gave his own snarl, own warning growl, just before lunging after the one who came to kill him.

Their bodies collided and unfortunately, Drake didn’t get the upper hand. Once more, he was on his back, the other over him. A hard blow landed on his side, knocking the air from him, sending shards of raw pain through his body. Another hit to the same side, and something cracked.

Drake howled in pain, turned to that side and swung as hard as he could, backhanding the male right off of him. This time standing up was

a bit difficult, but Drake managed to before the male attacked again. His side felt on fire. Pain he never could've imagined gripped him in an iron fist, but he breathed through it, fought to get the upper hand, fought to get free.

The male was all-animal. Drake never in his life had to fight so hard or block as many hits as he did now. He caught himself several times protecting his side. He knew without a doubt that he had a cracked rib and if he took any more hard hits to the side it was going to turn into a broken one that could puncture his lung.

Drake managed to land a kick in the male's gut, giving him enough time to get back up on his feet. He snarled at the male before advancing, swinging a large fist at his face when he was close enough.

"Drake!"

The yell from another seemed to distract the male. Drake moved behind him, wrapped one arm around his neck, and the other on top of his head. With a ferocious growl, Drake twisted both arm and hand in opposite directions, snapping the male's neck.

James Laswell came running around the corner skidded to a halt at the sight of Drake holding the male by his throat. Standing up, Drake bent over, took hold of the windpipe, and ripped it out.

"Son of a bitch," James gasped.

Breathing hard, Drake slowly changed back into his human form. He was bruised; a few cuts on his sides, one deep cut on his leg, and his ribs were killing him. The flesh he still had in his hand dropped to the ground, as did he from exhaustion.

"Jesus, Drake, what the hell is going on?" James caught him before he slumped to the ground completely.

"Millard," Drake managed to get out. He swallowed a few times, took a couple deep breaths. "Millard sent him to kill him. He took Natasha."

"Yeah, well I've got even worse news for you." James stood up, pulling Drake with him. "Let's get you inside. Think that cut on your leg is going to need a few stitches."

* * * *

Natasha was taken back to her father's home, wrapped in nothing more than the bed sheet she grabbed a hold of when her abductor had yanked her from her bed. She sat in the back of the car between two males, silently, tears falling down her face and her hand gripping the sheet for life. The last place she wanted to be or go to was back there—back to the house.

They drove fast, cutting the time in half. The sun was coming up by the time they reached the house.

Day after the full moon all males were resting from exhaustion. In the past, after she came home from being taken to the safe house she was expected to be quiet until her father woke up and came down for lunch or supper.

The car stopped in front of the house, back door opened and Natasha was forced outside. She held onto the sheet tightly as strong arms pulled her up the stone steps and into the house. She didn't even get to look around. Her escorts took her right into her father's office where they shoved her inside and closed the door.

Philip Millard sat behind his oak desk, a drink in hand, feet up on the top with ankles crossed over. Nothing was said; he just sat there, drinking. Natasha could feel his eyes upon her, but she didn't have the courage to look up at him.

"I should be happy to have you back," he finally said. "But from the looks of you, I'm not."

Natasha looked up at him then. Feet went back to the floor, glass hit the top of the desk loudly, and he stood up, his large body towering intimidating. Her mouth dried up. Fear overcame her and it took a lot to stand in place, to not back down or back away from him.

He came around the desk slowly, almost as if he was stalking her. "Have you nothing to say?"

"He acted according to the laws," she said to him.

Philip moved fast. He came at her, the back of his hand connecting hard with her cheek, knocking her down to the floor. She cried out, holding her face, crying.

"I had great plans for you." His anger came through in his voice. Raw, low, deadly. "You could've become the lady of a great house."

Natasha looked over her shoulder at him and lost her breath. He pulled his belt from the loops of his slacks, eyes full of anger and hate. "Instead you become some damn animal's whore!" He yelled the words before taking the first swing.

The sheet did little to protect her from the blows her father delivered with the belt. Natasha cried out with each hit. Screamed with how hard they became. He hit her so many times that she lost count and prayed, sprawled on the floor for it to end. It had been years since her father beat her so. The room echoed with the snapping sound of the belt.

When it was over she could barely breathe from the crying, screaming in pain. Natasha lay on her stomach, the sheet barely covering

her rears. Over head, her father panted.

“Get up and clean yourself off.” Phillip was still breathing hard. “Wash that damn scent off of her and have her dressed.”

Another glance over her shoulder and Elli stood next to the closed door. She nodded at her father, who walked past her, out of the office.

With shaking legs, and arms, Natasha managed to push herself up. She pulled the sheet up and whimpered loudly at the pain in her back. Elli reached out for her when she made it to the door and Natasha jumped back as much as she could.

“Don’t touch me,” she told Elli.

Natasha wasn’t sure if her legs would carry her up the stairs to her room, but they did. By the time she reached the bedroom she felt as if she was going to pass out. With Elli right behind her, the door closed and she slumped to the floor, crying softly.

“Self pity will get you nowhere,” Elli stated, going into the bathroom, starting the water. “Your father has high expectations for you and you just pissed them all away.”

“Elli, go away,” Natasha groaned. “I don’t want you here.”

“Well that’s just too bad.”

“Get out!” Natasha screamed, picked up a lamp, and threw it at the old woman as hard as she could. It smashed right next to her head, causing Elli to jump and stare at Natasha as if she didn’t know her.

Surprisingly Elli did leave the room. Natasha waited a few minutes before getting back up on her feet. She dropped the sheet, headed into the bathroom, and turned to look at her backside.

The belt didn’t cut her skin, but it sure as hell bruised her flesh. Red stripe marks across her ass, some on her legs and a couple on the lower part of her back. A few of those stripes were turning blue, black, and purple. Covering her mouth from the sick feeling that came over her, she turned and saw her face. The cheek her father had slapped was also turning into a bruise.

“What am I going to do?” she whispered to herself in the mirror.”

* * * *

“Yep, you have one cracked,” James stated to Drake after looking over his ribs. “Maybe even broken. You need to go to the damn hospital.”

Drake shook his head, holding back the groan that threatened to slip from his lips every time he took a breath.

“I agree.” Nelly walked into the kitchen, first aid kit in hand. She sat down across from him, opened up the box, and brought out some

alcohol. She also had a sewing kit in hand.

"I can't," Drake panted out. "I have to get Natasha back before Millard ships her off where I can't find her."

"I can do that," James said.

Again, Drake shook his head, "My fight. My mate. Stitch it up Nelly."

Nelly glanced up at James before pouring the alcohol right on the deep cut on his leg. First contact and Drake was howling in pain

While Nelly worked on his leg, James helped to wrap a bandage around his chest. The only thing that kept Drake from passing out was the thought that he would kill the motherfucker if he hurt Natasha. Millard did enough harm to her over the years; starving her in order to keep her figure slim and dainty. Beating her so she would be obedient. It all pissed him off!

"You never said what the bad news was," Drake said once James was finished.

"Yeah, well it's not good. In fact, it's a bit worse than Natasha being taken back by her father." James said.

"What?" Drake couldn't keep the irritation or anger from his voice. What should've been a very enjoyable night and morning was turning into a damn nightmare.

He saw James nod Nelly away. She finished wrapping a bandage around the stitches, stood and left the kitchen. James took her seat. He appeared nervous, as though he didn't know how to say whatever it was he needed to say.

"I was coming over here because I just heard some bad news."

"I'm listening." Drake hissed when he moved his leg. Already it began to hurt like a bitch.

"Your dad, man," James sighed. "He's dead."

Drake stilled, looked up quickly at James, and frowned. "What'd you say?"

"He's dead Drake." James licked his lips rubbed the back of his neck and met Drake in the eye. "There's this guy who's been causing a lot of trouble. Martin I think the name is and he's been killing a few of us off; wants to prove to the world that there are werewolves out there."

Drake growled and stood up. Pain from his leg and side hit, but it only numbed his senses. "My father went out to see that fucker alone?" he frowned. "Why would he do that?"

"I don't know," James shook his head. "But I do know that there has been a few from the Cabinet who's gone missing and all trails are

pointing to this Martin guy.”

Drake turned to the window over the sink. He leaned forward, staring out at the daylight, watching the sun rise. Tears formed behind his eyes, but they didn't fall. Drake wasn't the kind of male to cry, but damn if he didn't want to right now for his father.

A human killed him. A fucking, no good, low life human killed his father.

Drake couldn't still the yell that came forth. He swiped everything off the counters of the sinks and sunk down to the floor, crying for the first time in more years he could recount. He lost his control and sobbed like a baby.

It felt like a lifetime that he spent on the floor, crying, screaming, and yelling. When he had it all out of his system, he pulled himself back up to his feet, turned on the water, and washed his face.

“I'm okay,” he said to James.

“Then get your ass changed and let's go get your mate.”

* * * *

Natasha walked down the stairs, bathed, dressed, legs still shaking and feeling weak. She dressed in a pair of tan slacks, a loose fitting cream colors sweater that hung from one shoulder, pumps on her feet and her long hair brushed down her back, parted in the middle. To hide the bruise on her face she put on some make-up to conceal it.

Breakfast was being served in the dining room and her father was already seated at the head of the table reading his paper acting like nothing changed. Natasha took her place in the middle, keeping her mouth shut as usual.

The moment she was seated servants came from the kitchen with the plates. Her father ate eggs, bacon, toast, and some fruit and drank his coffee and a glass of orange juice every morning. Natasha was allowed only a bowl of fruit and a small glass of juice.

“You've gained some weight I see,” Philip stated, snapping his paper closed, placing it on the table next to him. “You need to lose them before you're presented to the males that wish to mate with you.”

Natasha looked up at him. He forked some eggs and held it up to his mouth when she spoke, causing him to stop. “I'm already mated.”

His fork dropped and he slammed his hand hard on the table, knocking over one of the shakers. “That little bastard who took you is *not* your mate. I forbid it!”

“He claimed by your laws.”

Her father flew out of the chair so fast it fell over backwards.

Natasha was also out of her seat, backing away before he could touch her or hit her again. She kept the long table between them, facing off with her father for the first time in her life.

"You cannot follow the laws that you created." She pointed a finger at him. "It isn't right."

He got a hold of her, jerked her to the end of the table and his hand went up. Natasha prepared herself for the slap, but it didn't come, thanks to the doorbell ringing. Instead, she got a push away from him.

Natasha watched him fix his clothes straighten his hair and turn away from her. She followed him out to the front door, hanging back as he opened it.

Charles Addison walked into the house. He is the head member of the Cabinet with the power to kick out any shifter. He could change all the laws, disband the Cabinet, or have the shifters that were breaking the laws punished. Charles Addison is a powerful shifter, one you wanted on your side. He always had a cane in his hand, even though he didn't need one and dressed in suits with his black hair slicked back from his eyes.

"Charles, what're you doing here?" Philip asked, standing back as Charles walked into the house.

Natasha stayed put as the man walked inside. He looked around, his eyes landing on her. The way his eyes narrowed on her had her shivering.

"So it's true then," Charles said. "You have her back."

"Yes, she's home, now what are you doing here?" Philip asked again.

Charles shook his head, which he'd lowered. "You've broken the law Philip."

"What are you talking about?"

Philip took hold of Charles' arm and led him away from Natasha. They went into his office, the door closing on her. Natasha pressed her ear against the door, listening as best as she could to the conversation inside.

"Drake Draeger staked his claim to your daughter a week ago," Charles said. "He wants her back."

"To damn bad," Philip remarked. "She's my daughter and he kidnapped her for Christ sakes."

"According to the law, the one that *you* signed, that is allowed. Males may take their mates any way they chose."

"Not my daughter!"

"Philip, my hands are tied here. He has a claim. She belongs to

him.”

“Forget it.”

“Listening at closed doors will only get you into more trouble.” Natasha swung around to see Elli standing behind her, the stern expression on her face. “It isn’t proper to listen to things that are closed to your ears.”

“You know, Elli, I’m getting really tired of you always being there to tell me what’s proper and what isn’t.” Natasha crossed her arms over her chest, narrowing her eyes on the woman. “Was it proper or right for my father to beat me just because a male did what his law stated he could? Take and mate me? I belong to another and nothing my father can say or do is going to change that.”

“A female of your breeding doesn’t belong to those under your class.”

Natasha lost her cool for the first time in her life. She slapped the older woman right across the face, shocking not only herself but Elli also.

“How dare you,” Natasha stated low. “How dare you judge anyone.”

Natasha brushed past her and went right for the front door. She yanked it open, only to be shocked once more by seeing Drake standing on the steps with James Laswell right behind him.

“Drake!” she gasped, flinging herself into his arms. She hugged him tightly, him back to her.

“Where is he?” Drake asked, his voice low, deadly.

Slowly Natasha pulled back, meeting his cold dark eyes. “In his office.”

Drake moved past her and she noticed he walked with a limp. Natasha followed him, showing him the way to her father’s office. Elli seemed to stand guard in front of the door. When she saw Drake, her eyes widened and her head went up.

“I’m sorry, but Mr. Millard is unavailable at the moment,” she said.

“Too damn bad.” Drake pushed her aside opened the door and walked in. “Hello Millard. We have some business to discuss.”

Natasha watched her father’s face drain of all color. His eyes also widened and if she wasn’t mistaken fear and shock spread over his face as well.

“Draeger,” Philip gasped softly.

“Surprise.” Drake extended his arms, a cruel smile spread on his face and those dark eyes of his made him appear dangerous. “I’m still alive, but the bastard you sent isn’t I’m afraid.”

“What are you talking about?” Natasha asked, looking at her father. “What did you do?”

“What’s going on here Millard?” Charles demanded.

“Nothing,” Philip answered.

“He sent someone to my home.” Drake took a step forward, or more like limped forward. “Took my mate from my arms.” He took another step. “He ordered the male to kill me.” Drake hit her father right in the nose, knocking him to the ground. Blood spurted over the rug, staining it.

Natasha covered her mouth with her hand, staying put, watching the scene unfold before her eyes.

“What?” Clearly, Charles Addison was just as surprised as she was.

“Take a guess who was the one to die tonight,” Drake sneered before landing a hard kick in her father’s ribs.

Philip groaned loudly in pain and James came up behind Drake, pulling him away. “That’s enough.”

“Not nearly enough!” Drake yelled.

Charles held up his hand, but it seemed that Drake wasn’t going to be swayed. His anger showed clearly on his face and it frightened her some.

“Did he beat you again?” he asked her, keeping his eyes fixed on her father. Natasha’s throat went dry. She couldn’t answer the question, fearing what he might do. “Did he beat you!” he yelled so loud she jumped and took a step backwards.

“Yes,” she whispered, hugging herself, swallowing hard.

Drake lunged at her father, who was struggling to stand up. James quickly put himself between the two men, holding Drake back.

“She is my daughter and I can discipline her anyway I chose.” Philip pointed a finger at Drake. “Now get out!” He waved to the door with one hand and pressed a handkerchief to his nose with the other.

“Oh, you don’t get away with this that easy,” Where Natasha found her voice in all of this, she didn’t know, but the time to stand up for herself was long overdue. She walked up to her father, standing between him and Drake. “You’ve broken every law that you’ve written, and gotten away with it. You’re not going to get away with it with me any longer.” She shook her head. “I’m accepting the claim made to me by Drake Draeger. I’m acknowledging him as my mate in front of the head to our Cabinet. Before them all I swear upon my mother’s grave that if you ever lay a hand on me again I will let my mate enforce his right to kill you with his bare hands. Another of *your* laws, Father.”

Natasha turned her back to her father took Drake’s face in her hands:

“Let’s go home.”

Drake nodded, shrugged James off, and wrapped his arms around her. He turned, headed for the door, and stopped once more.

“Philip Millard,” Charles booming voice stilled everyone in the room once more. “It’s my duty to inform you that you are no longer a member of the Shifter Cabinet.”

“You can’t do that,” Philip said.

“Oh, as a matter of fact, I can,” Charles told him. “You’ve broken the one law that I can’t turn my head from. By our rules, your daughter was claimed and mated. You don’t have the right to take her away from her mate. Therefore, your punishment stands.”

“I demand banishment also,” Drake added. “He sent someone to kill me.”

Charles nodded. “That request must be made to the Cabinet.”

“Then I make it.” Drake met her father in the eye. “You should’ve given more thought to the change in the laws, because you’re fucked now.”

With a squeeze to her, Natasha left the office, past Elli and walked out of the house that never was a home. She didn’t look back, only got into the backseat of the car with Drake behind her, James got behind the wheel.

“Home?” Natasha asked.

“Home,” Drake sighed, his head going back on the seat.

Closing her eyes, she snuggled up against him. Drake wrapped one arm tightly around her. “I knew you’d come.”

“I told you before. Only death will keep me away from you. Nothing more.”

“Then don’t go do something stupid and get yourself killed.”

Drake chuckled softly, “Yes, ma’am.”

Chapter Nine

Drake sprawled out in the middle of the bed, naked, sore, tired, and waiting for his mate to come out of the shower.

Instead of going straight home, James took him to the hospital. The stitch job to his leg was pulled out, the gash cleaned and restitched. His ribs were x-rayed and rewrapped as well. He indeed had one cracked rib and several bruised pretty badly. Orders were to stay in bed for the next couple of days and rest.

The water turned off and instantly he was hard. Just thinking about the water dripping from her body, maybe a drop or two falling from a pert nipple and he was more than ready to be deeply buried inside her. Hell, it didn't matter to him that his leg was throbbing or that anything exerting was out of the question. He wanted his mate, needed to assure himself that she was indeed here with him once more.

Natasha came out of the bathroom with a towel only wrapped around her slim body. Steam from the shower fanned around her, making her appear more angelic than she already was. She rubbed her hair with another towel, vigorously, with her head down. The sight had his balls tightening up, threatening to spill.

"So, when will the window get fixed again?" she asked, tossing her head up, the wet long locks of her hair spilling out around her, some sticking to her wet shoulders. When her eyes met his she smiled, "Drake that isn't what you're supposed to be doing. Resting is the order from the doctor."

Drake shrugged and took hold of his thick shaft, stroking up and down. "It has a mind of its own and is desperately thinking about you." She licked her lips and he twitched. "Damn, don't do that baby."

"Do what?" Natasha blinked her eyes several times and he had to laugh even though it hurt slightly. The way she tried to look all innocent made her look cute as hell.

"Tease me with that sweet mouth of yours," he purred. "I don't like to be teased."

"Really?" She cocked her head to the side and the sun shined bright on her bruise face. He had yet to see what other damage her father inflicted upon her. She tossed the towel in her hand back into the bathroom and went up to the foot of the bed. Holding his breath, Natasha crawled slowly upon it, right between his spread legs. "I'll have to

remember that.”

She slapped his hand away. Drake held his breath, watching her take hold of his cock, moving her tiny hand up and down the length in the same manner he had done.

“You know, I do understand that you need to rest and heal,” she stated, her brow coming together in a frown that had him instantly on guard. “But I really would hate to let something like this go to waste.”

“Is that so?”

“Yes.” She pushed it up and licked the underside from his balls to the tip. Drake let the air he was holding out in a rush. “I think I might just have to play with it some. You don’t mind, do you?” Both of those eyebrows went up this time, the question so innocent he knew she was going to kill him with pleasure. Drake couldn’t answer her, only shook his head no. She smiled, “Good.”

Her mouth closed over the large plum shape head and she sucked only that. He moaned, fisted both hands, pressing them against his forehead. Her tongue flicked back and forth over it when she pulled it out. It drove him nuts, made him crazy with need, but also filled him with hunger for more.

Down her tongue went again, and back up, flicking the head before she sucked it back into her mouth. Drake breathed hard, ignoring the slight discomfort in his side. Now the pleasure was too much for him to worry about the pain.

A moan from her, a deep low growl from him, and Natasha took half of his length into her mouth, and down her throat. At that moment, he knew he just died a happy man.

He grabbed onto the headboard, looked down at her, and watched her watching him as she moved her head up and down. She pulled on the shaft, and he fought to hold back an impending climax.

“Move up here,” he told her, reaching for her as best as he could. “I want to taste you as you taste me.”

Natasha released him, “Are you sure you can do that with your rib?”

“Fuck my rib, I want you.”

She moved her body over his, turned around and gasped at the first kiss to her pussy. Drake yanked the towel away from her body brought her pussy down closer to his face and began to lick her. Once more Natasha had his cock in her mouth, sucking it hard, grazing it with her teeth. In turn, Drake opened her pussy up and dove in like a hungry cat to fresh cream.

He sucked, sipped, and teased her clit the same way she had teased

his cock before taking it into her mouth. Her moaning around his shaft vibrated, sending shards of raw pleasure racing down the length, to gather in his balls. He was so close he shook with the need, but held it back. The pleasure too intense now for it to end.

Harder she pulled on his cock and harder Drake in turned sucked on her clit. Two fingers he pushed deep into her, and one teased her ass. She wiggled, squirmed and grinded herself on his face. He made a loud smacking sound with his lips, flicked her clit again with the tip of his tongue, and fucked her fast with his fingers.

“I want this again.” He pushed lightly against the anal ring. “You going to give it to me again?”

She moaned her answer against him and Drake pushed his finger deep into her ass. He closed his lips once more on her clit, pulling at her. Natasha screamed, or at least it sounded like one. She shattered over him, and he felt the tight muscles of her pussy contract around his fingers. She gave him one more scrape along the shaft and his own release came forth, and she drank it down.

Releasing her pussy, he trailed kissed along the roundness of her ass cheeks, slowing down his fingers. When Natasha released his cock from her mouth, she didn't stop giving it attention. She still kissed, licked, and moved her hand up and down the base. Maybe only a minute after his orgasm and he was once more hard again.

“Ride it,” Drake ordered her, slipping his fingers from her pussy, but not her ass. “Fuck me, Natasha. Fuck me hard, mate.”

Natasha moved down his body posed his cock at her entrance and slowly lowered herself down. He saw the bruising on her lower back and closed his eyes, pushing the sight away.

Fuck if she wasn't tight as the first time he came inside her. He felt the snug muscles of her vagina part, stretch for him.

Fully embedded inside her, Natasha moved and moved fast and hard upon him. She gasped with each downward motion, and Drake was right there with her. But it wasn't enough. He wanted to see her face, watch her expression as she grew closer and closer to her orgasm.

“Turn around,” he barked the order at her.

Natasha stopped, turned herself around on him, hands flat on his belly. Her blue eyes were glazed over in passion. Not waiting for him to tell her to move, or even see if he was ready, she moved again. She thrust upon him hard, taking what she needed, what he asked for—took them up to a new high.

Drake reached up cupped her breasts and matched her thrust for

thrust. Her mouth opened, sounds came forth, head tossed back. It was such a beautiful sight, seeing her in the throes of passion upon her.

"God I love you Natasha," he breathed out.

Natasha cried out, her body lowered over his and her mouth bit down on his chest, right on the mark that she put upon him the night of her cycle. Drake yelled, swelled and came once more deep into her. Now he wished like hell they could conceive a child right then, but knew they couldn't. Their chances of a baby only came with her cycle and that was going to have to wait another month. Damn if he didn't wish he would get her pregnant right now.

Drake wrapped his arms tightly around her, holding her close. He was at peace finally and it was all because of this one woman in his arms.

"Love you, Drake," she sighed.

"Love you, Natasha," he said. "Forever."

* * * *

Two months later

"Martin's house is on the other side of town." James sat down at the kitchen table with a tired sight. "He's just recently married and we all suspect has taken over a dozen males and killed them, but we can't prove it."

"You look like shit, James," Drake stated.

James snared and flipped him off, "Let's see how well you do if you didn't have a mate for the full moon."

"Go to a Gathering. Heard things have changed and more females have showed up."

"Not nearly enough." James looked around. "Where's Natasha?"

"Nelly took her shopping. She still refused to go back to her father's place for her things." Drake sat forward in his chair. "You got pictures of this place?"

"So you are interested." James sat back in his chair, arms crossed over his chest. "Revenge won't bring him back. It'll only cause you trouble."

"Who said anything about revenge?"

James made a tscking sound, shaking his head. "Give me a break here. I do think I've learned a few things about you in the months we've been friends, so stop bullshitting me please." He pointed a finger at Drake. "Natasha finds out, she's going to have your nuts."

"Only if you tell her." Drake rubbed his jaw and sighed. "I need to see him. I need to look at the bastard that killed my father."

“Why?”

“I just need to. I need to see what it is about this one human that can bring down a male like my father.” Drake shook his head. “It isn’t right, James. He’s human. Weaker than us.”

“I don’t know man.” James shook his head also. “This doesn’t feel right to me. You go and do something stupid then that fucker comes after you. Then what? You want to risk Natasha like that?” James looked down at his watch. “We need to go. The meeting starts in half an hour.”

Drake nodded and stood up. A Cabinet meeting to decide the fate of Philip Millard. After Drake walked out with Natasha, Millard was placed under shifter arrest. He was taken from his home and locked up, waiting for a trial of sorts.

James drove. The meeting was held on the outskirts of town. Night was coming by the time they reached the place, and everyone was gathered outside. Millard was surprisingly clean but cuffed and standing in front of the Cabinet, the members seated at a long table. Once Drake showed himself and stood next to Millard the meeting began.

“Philip Millard,” one of the members called out, silencing all talk. “You have been brought before us, charged with breaking claiming law and threatening the life of another who had made a claim.”

“And a request of banishment has been made,” another added.

Drake felt Millard looking at him, but kept his face forward. Having a conversation now with the man wouldn’t get him anything.

“We have come to a decision,” Charles spoke up. “Banishment it is. All of your withholdings will go to your daughter and you will be sent to another colony until the end of your days for the breaking of our laws.”

Now Drake turned to face the man. “And if you come back here I will kill you for what you’ve done to her.”

They faced off. It was Millard who cracked a smile, shocking Drake slightly. “One day, boy, your time will come when everything you love is gone. I just hope I live long enough to see it.”

Millard was taken away. Drake nodded to the Cabinet turned and walked away also. James drove him back home. Standing outside, Drake watched him leave before turning and getting into his own car. He didn’t go inside to check on Natasha or let her know what the outcome of her father was. Instead, he left for a hunt all his own.

Lanz Martin’s home was not what Drake was expecting. A middle class, small house, two- stories high with a garage. In fact, the damn place was nothing more than a damn farmhouse—the place where his father died.

Drake parked his car down the dark road walked to the property and watched the place. No one inside—good. He went to the house, picked a lock, and entered.

The house appeared just as it seemed from the outside—a simple farmhouse. Drake looked in every room, every closed door, and tapped on walls until he found what he was looking for; a hidden door behind a bookcase.

Not giving a damn about damaged, he tore the shelf away from the wall, smashing it as he went. The door behind it was locked. Drake took step back and kicked it in. Going down he could smell the stench of death. When he flicked a light on he saw the proof of what his nose picked up.

An iron torture table rested in the middle. Thick leather straps, blood everywhere. He could almost hear the screams of pain from the ones that had suffered in this room.

He saw red. Drake had never been so pissed in his life as what he felt right now in this moment. Males were dying in this room by a man who wanted the world to believe that there were werewolves.

Drake sniffed and almost gagged. Cooking meat hung in the air, but it wasn't the kind one wanted to eat. He followed it to discover a walk in furnace complete with chains hanging from the ceiling to hold a body. This time, Drake did lose it and vomited on the floor.

Bones were still on the floor along with some cooked flesh. He couldn't stay in this room and rushed out, slamming the door closed. He also lost his cool. Tears fell free again with the knowledge that his father not only died, but his body burned in that room. Nothing left of his father but the memory in his head.

It took a few seconds for him to get himself back under control. When he did, Drake went to work at making sure not another male would suffer his father's fate.

He found some lighter fuel, poured it on top of the bed, and lit it. Using the fuel, he squirted a trail into the furnace, turned it on, and kept going with the trail up the stairs. He used all six of the bottles he found, spraying it all over the place on the first floor. When he walked out the same way he came in, the whole house was in a blaze.

Drake just walked away.

He never looked back at the house on fire. He simply walked back to his car, got in, started it up, and pulled away.

* * * *

Natasha found Drake out in the back, sitting on the side of the pool

with a beer in hand and three more empty bottles next to him. Biting her lower lip, she went outside and sat down close to him.

"Missed you at dinner," she said.

Drake finished off his drink, "Sorry." He set the bottle down with the others and took hold of another, twisting the cap off.

"James called and told me about my father," she went on. "I think I'm going to sell the house. My mother had another place in Cape Cod that I'll keep, but I really don't think I want anything of his." He said nothing. "I'm sorry about your father." Drake stiffened. "There's been some talk about males going missing and your father's name was among the names."

Drake put his bottle back down and hung his head. "I found the place where this bastard was taking them all. He tortured them. Then if they died, which I sure as hell hoped they did, he would burn the bodies to get rid of them." He looked at her, and the pain she saw in his eyes had her shivering. "I burned it Natasha. I burned that motherfucker's house down to the ground."

Natasha gasped, covering her mouth with her hand. She didn't know what to say to him, how to comfort him.

Drake looked up at the sky and she saw one single tear fall free. "I've never in my life wanted to hunt and kill another like I do this man. I want to see him bleed at my feet for what he's done."

Natasha took his hand, getting his full attention back on her. "Don't start a war Drake. Let it go."

"It's already been started." He touched her cheek with his other hand and she leaned into it.

He stood up, pulling her to her feet also. Words weren't needed then. Drake led her back into the house and Natasha followed willing; through the kitchen, dining room and up the stairs towards their bedroom. Once inside Natasha stood in the center of the room watching Drake. His dark eyes met hers and he began to strip in front of her. The shirt first came up over his head to land on the floor. Next, he kicked off his shoes and pulled the belt at his waist free.

Again, she shivered and began to undress also. When she got down to her panties and bra, Drake held up his hand for her to stop. He stood naked before her, hard, powerful, and very aroused. He came towards her or it felt more like stalking towards her. Her mouth went dry just from the intent expression he had on his face, and dark eyes.

"You promised me something, remember?" he asked.

Swallowing hard, Natasha nodded her answer. Speaking at this point

was not going to happen.

“You going to give it to me?” He walked around her, standing right behind her. So close, she could feel his body heat, but he didn’t touch her.

“Yes,” she breathed out.

“I have something new for you.” His breath tickled her ear and sent shivers of anticipation down her spine. When he finally did wrap his arm around her waist Natasha sighed and rested her head back against his chest and shoulder. “You ready to play.”

Again, she nodded.

Drake turned her towards the bed, walked her over, and positioned her up on her hands and knees, ass raised high. She looked over her shoulder at him, watched his every move. Drake opened the nightstand drawer and brought out something very strange looking. It was a plastic replica of his cock, she realized.

“Ever seen a vibrator before?” he asked. She shook her head. “Well this is going to drive your orgasm even higher, I promise.” He tossed it on the bed along with a bottle of something. He took hold of her hips, kissed one satin covered cheek and growled low. “I can smell your desire.”

He yanked down her panties, and kissed her ass. He kissed down one leg, helped her raise it up, and then moved to the other, removing her panties. A quick kiss to her clit made her gasp, and Drake only chuckled.

He touched her pussy, rubbing back and forth from clit to the entrance of her ass. It felt so good, had her quickly wanting more. When he replaced his hand with the length of his cock, Natasha thought she might scream with frustration. So quickly, he had her at the point of needing him inside her. It was crazy. Drake hadn’t done his normal things with her, the kissing or touching like he always did, and still she was ready for him.

The quick impalement had her breath leaving her lungs and her upper body dropping down on the bed—unexpected, powerful, and filling. Drake moved hard and fast within her, building the fire deep inside her womb, but before she could reach it, he stopped and pulled from her body.

She whimpered, and stilled when she heard the loud buzzing sound. Natasha stiffened and jumped when he touched her with the vibrator.

“Relax. It isn’t going to hurt you, only heighten your pleasure,” he purred in her ear.

Drake rubbed the vibrator up and down her slit, stopping to tease her

clit, which throbbed in need. True to his word, it felt good. He teased her with it until she was wiggling her ass, trying to get a harder touch.

“You ready for this?”

Natasha nodded. “Yes!”

He began to enter her with the vibrator. Natasha opened her mouth to scream, but nothing came out. It vibrated inside her, touching places she never thought were there. In and out, he moved it and she struggled to breathe through it. So close to her release she fisted her hands into the bedding, climbing higher and higher to it.

Once more Drake stopped, only this time when he stopped he left the vibrator deep inside her. Natasha couldn't stop her body from moving, or from her hips bucking, trying to get the thing to move. The humming from the toy radiated all through her body, and when the first cool drop of something touched her rear, she climaxed.

“Hey!” Drake laughed behind her. “You're not supposed to do that yet.”

“Deal with it,” she panted.

He parted her cheeks, and the thick swell of the head of his cock touched her anal ring. Natasha gasped. Already she could feel another climax starting and welcomed it with open arms.

“Oh I'll deal with it alright,” he growled.

He pushed, she held her breath, and with a deep growl, he entered her. Not once since they came together did she feel so full, so stretched, and tight. Drake sunk into her slowly and the vibrations from the vibration had her climbing quickly to the pleasure.

When he began to move inside her, he also reached around, took hold of the vibrator, and moved it. In his cock went, out the vibrator and vice versa. It drove her crazy. New sensations hit, every nerve in her body felt like it was on high alert and burned. She cried out with each thrust from him, gripped the covers so tightly her knuckles turned white.

“Drake!” Natasha screamed his name right before the wave hit.

Just like tidal wave crashed into rocks. Rush after rush of pleasure consumed her. She shook with the force of her pleasure, and still Drake moved. He surged into her ass powerfully and moved the vibrator quickly into her pussy. One wave led to another. She was blinded by the pleasure and helpless to do anything but hang on for dear life.

A howl from him, the vibrator pushed deep inside her, and teeth clamping down on her shoulder. She felt his cock swell into her ass, felt the seed that left his body. Drake wrapped his arms tightly around her body, hugging her close. His whole body shook with the release she felt

filling her. Reaching up, Natasha fisted her hands into his hair, holding him just as he held her.

Both were walking on shaking legs into the bathroom. Drake filled up the large tub and together they took a long soak. She laid back into his arms, sighing in pleasure as he held her.

“You happy?” he asked her, kissing the mark on her shoulder.

“Very,” she sighed, rubbing her hand up and down his arm. “But you know what would make me even happier?”

“What’s that?”

She turned her head to look him in the eye. “A baby.”

Epilogue

Three years later

Drake paced the floor, back and forth in front of the closed bedroom door. Tony and James leaned against the wall acting like nothing out of the ordinary was going on. Something out of the ordinary was happening and it was happening right now!

Natasha's scream came forth again. He turned with the intent of going inside to her, but one hard look from James with that damn eyebrow of his going up and he stopped. He made a deal with her that he wouldn't go in until she was about to deliver.

She wanted a baby. Wanted one desperately and they worked at it. Even went so far as to going to the doctor to find out why it wasn't happening. Nothing was wrong with them, but Natasha's cycles weren't normal. Some months she'd have her cycle after his heat, or a week before the heat. They never knew when it would hit, making conceiving a bit harder. But after three years, they finally had their wish. She became pregnant was about to deliver their first child.

Another scream and he started growling.

"You promised her," James pointed out. "Not until it's about to come."

"I can't just stand out and listen to her screaming," Drake stated through his teeth. "I've had enough of this shit!"

He moved faster than James did. Drake entered the bedroom, his eyes going right to his mate upon the bed, panting, gasping, and grabbing on to anything she could. Marry was helping the doctor at the foot of the bed.

Drake went right over to her, taking her hand.

"What'd you doing in here?" She asked him, breathing hard.

He picked up the wet cloth on the nightstand and wiped her forehead. "I can't stand to hear you screaming and not knowing what's going on. So be pissed at me later if you want, but I'm not leaving."

She opened her mouth with the intent of yelling him he supposed but ended up crying out.

"It's a big one," The doctor stated. "Marry I'm going to need to snip her in order to get the head through. Had me my kit please."

Drake closed his eyes and forced himself to not look down. He didn't need to see them cut her at all. If he saw blood, then there was a pretty damn good chance he might draw some of his own.

"This has to be a boy," Natasha stated between taking deep breaths. "Only a son of yours can be this much of a pain in the ass!" she screamed, arching her back, sitting up.

"Don't push yet," the doctor stated.

"I'll remind you of this when you ask me for another child," Drake stated. Natasha gripped his hand harder, "Ouch!"

"Okay girl, push!" the doctor ordered.

Natasha sat up, Drake moved to help her better and she pushed with a yell.

"Good, now hold that push for ten seconds," the doctor said. He counted and at ten she breathed out, dropped back to the bed with eyes closed. "Good girl. Okay, again."

This went on for what Drake thought hours. Every so often, he looked down to see if anything might've changed.

"Perfect," Doc stated. "Now give me one small second, I need to turn the baby just a bit to make this go easy. Breath through it."

Natasha nodded and took several deep breaths. Drake hated to admit it, but what he saw right now was starting to scare the shit out of him. He never knew what having a baby was all about. Never heard of the pain females went through and after seeing this wondered why they would do it over again.

"Okay Natasha, one hard push. Let's get this baby out."

Natasha opened her eyes, with Drake's help sat back up and pushed. He counted with the doctor and watched as a dark head slowly emerged. Natasha breathed out took another deep breath and pushed again. Amazing! It was purely amazing watching his child come into this world.

The head came out and the doctor had her stopping for a second or two. Mouth and nose were cleaned out, and with another scream, Natasha pushed out the baby.

Drake didn't realize he was holding his breath until he let it out with the birth.

"We have a boy!" the doctor announced.

Drake was handed a pair of scissors but he just stared at the child in awe as he was cleaned off and then gave his first yell. A tap on the shoulder and he quickly cut the cord. When Nelly took the baby, Drake turned his attention to Natasha. She was out cold.

"She's fine," The doctor put his hand on Drake's shoulder. "It was a hard birth and normal for her to go right to sleep."

Drake nodded, knelt down and kissed Natasha gently on the cheek,

then forehead. "Thank you for my son."

She moaned, turning her head towards him, "You name him," she breathed. "Name your legacy."

"Would you like to see your son?" Nelly had a small bundle wrapped in her arms, crying.

Drake took it and for the first time came face to face with his son. He had Drake's dark hair and boy did he have a head full of it. When he opened his eyes, Drake got another shocker. The baby didn't have blue, but dark eyes just like him.

"What're you going to name him?" Nelly asked.

"Dedrick," Drake said, staring at him. "Dedrick Allen Draeger."

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