



KRIS NORRIS

# Couote Savage

HUNGER MOON

*Phases*

# ***Coyote Savage: Hunger Moon***

***A Phases Story***

**By Kris Norris**

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*To the ladies of the Phases books—Cheryl, Mia, Brynn, Abigail and Bron—  
thank you for allowing me to be part of this fabulous collection. I'm honored to  
be among such fabulously talented authors...I only hope I do you all proud.*

*To Kyle, Jared and Sydney. Thank you for not complaining about fix-your-own  
dinners and late nights while I finished this. You three are my greatest joy and  
I'm lucky to have you in my life and supportive of my passion.*

*To Chris—as always, your wisdom and sense of humor has helped make this  
book more than just a story. Raising a toast to my soul sister!*

*And the dead sheep are for Bron...you know why and I love you for it. You rock!*

## *Chapter One*

“Are you completely inept, or are your breasts just blocking your vision?” Darrin Carson crossed his arms over his chest, looking down at her with a contemptuous grin on his face. “There are coyote tracks all over the place, not to mention a bloody trail leading into the forest. That’s more than enough evidence—even for you, Rebecca.”

Sheriff Rebecca Savage glanced down at the paw prints in the snow, clenching her jaw as she took a deep breath. As much as she wanted to smack the spoiled brat up the side of his head, losing her cool with the mayor’s son wasn’t going to help her position any. The guy was an ass at the best of times, and down right nasty when he got worked up, but he’d also crossed a line she wasn’t going to simply ignore.

Rebecca rose, tugging on her jacket as she met his glare. A hint of smoke clung to his clothes, and she wished he’d take a step back. “I realize you’re distressed over the loss of two of your sheep, and I know you’re used to getting your way...but if you ever speak that way to me again, I’ll make sure those balls you’re so proud of are hanging from my rear-view mirror.”

Darrin glared at her and took a step closer when a hand closed around his shoulder.

Mayor Richard Carson nodded. “Now, now, son. I’m sure the good Sheriff is doing all she can. There are certain protocols that must be followed before she can issue special hunting permits.” He gave her a nauseating smile. “Or before she can lay charges against that mockery of a ranch those Brady boys are running. About time someone closed down that disease-infested refuge.”

“I know this situation is upsetting, Mayor, but—”

Crunching snow drowned out the rest of her words, and she turned as a red truck rumbled up the driveway, skidding to a halt in a billow of white powder. Both doors opened in sync as

two men jumped out of the vehicle and stalked up the driveway, their feet barely making a sound on the soft snow. Though she knew it was far from professional, she couldn't help but watch the ease of their movements. The way their long strides ate up the distance or how, even beneath jackets, their firm bodies bunched the fabric, accentuating the muscular frames she imagined hid beneath the smooth leather.

A tingle raced down her spine, but she knew it had nothing to do with the cold. The men stopped at the edge of the scene, hands shoved in their pockets, mouths pulled into tight lines.

Rebecca stepped forward, bracing for the argument about to start. "Caden. Talon. Thanks for getting here so quickly." She blocked their way when they tried to move past her. "Easy, gentlemen. I asked you here so we could dispel any doubt, not so you two could start a family feud."

Caden glared at the two men standing behind her, pulling back slightly as he looked down at her. A tremble of need fluttered through her stomach as she stared into his amber eyes. She'd never seen eyes quite the color of his and Talon's. They reminded her of the sky as the sun rose above the horizon, burning the gray into a brilliant gold.

He reached forward, looking as if he was going to touch her shoulder, before dropping his hand and sliding his gaze quickly toward his brother. Talon gave her a hint of a smile before returning his focus to the men standing behind her.

Their expressions hardened again, and Caden motioned toward the men. "We aren't planning on starting anything, Sheriff. And I believe they started the feud."

Rebecca shook her head and turned back to the mayor. "Now that we're all here, let's look at the facts."

"The facts are simple." Darrin sneered at Caden and Talon. "One of *their* coyotes killed our sheep and dragged their carcasses away, just like the bloody cowards they are."

A low growl drifted on the winter air, making the hairs on the back of her neck stand up. She glanced at the brothers, positive she saw a flash of red amidst the amber, before the illusion faded. She furrowed her brow, not sure where the growl had come from, when the mayor stepped forward, regaining her attention.

"What my son means is...there is more than enough evidence that coyotes are to blame for the incident."

Caden and Talon moved as a unified front, matching the mayor's step and taking two more. They fisted their hands at their sides, a tremble of what Rebecca guessed was rage rolling through them.

Talon crossed his arms on his broad chest, looking every inch the hunter in the gathering. "This isn't the work of coyotes, and you both know that. You're simply trying to turn the rest of the town against us, and our refuge."

Rebecca stepped between the men again. "Now, Talon, no one is—"

"Still hell-bent on defending those worthless creatures, I see." The mayor motioned to the bloody patch of snow. "If your animals are innocent, then perhaps you can explain how their tracks got all over my property or why I'm missing two sheep!"

She raised her hands, trying to calm the men down, but they didn't seem to notice she was there.

"Coyote tracks?" Talon huffed and stuffed his hands in his pockets again. "And to think you call yourself a hunter—"

"Are you insulting my father?" Darrin scowled and pushed at Talon's chest, but only succeeded in knocking himself backwards slightly. "The two of you are no better than those cur you call pets—"

"Enough!" Rebecca pushed her way forward, shoving Darrin back when he made a move toward her. She glared at him, one hand palming the hilt of her pistol while the other connected with his chest. "I said, enough."

The dark edge to her voice halted the man in his tracks, and his gaze slid to the hand on her gun before meeting her eyes again. He grumbled something under his breath but took a step back.

She clenched her jaw, meeting all of the men's eyes before releasing a long sigh and shaking her head. "When I said we were going to talk about the facts, gentlemen, I meant that I was going to tell you what I thought and how I'm going to proceed." She speared the mayor with her gaze, waiting until his attention shifted to the snow before continuing. "Better." She took a deep breath. "Okay, let's start with the obvious." She pointed at the blood splattered across the crisp snow, noting how bright the dark red patches were back-dropped by the pristine white. "It's obvious that something took your sheep." She held up her hand when both the mayor and Darrin opened their mouths. "I said I was going to talk."

They snorted in protest, glaring at the other two men before nodding and turning the edges of their mouths down into the beginnings of a frown.

“As I was saying, something took your sheep, but quite honestly, this doesn’t look like a coyote kill to me.”

“What?” Darrin threw up his hands then waved at the snow. “What the hell do you call all these tracks, not to mention the blood? It has coyote written all over it!”

Rebecca continued, ignoring his outburst. “I agree that it would be easy to mistake this for the work of a coyote, but if you look a bit deeper—”

“Deeper!” It was the mayor’s turn to look at her as if she’d lost her mind. “This is a simple case of grab and go by a natural predator, not a murder investigation, Rebecca.”

She hardened her expression. While she didn’t mind people calling her Rebecca, in this instance, it only served as a reminder that some of the older men still didn’t accept her as their sheriff.

The mayor matched her grim look for a few moments before begrudgingly nodding. “Sheriff.”

“Perhaps not, but seeing as you want to escalate this to involve the Bradys’ ranch, it’s also not as black and white as you imagine. For example, the tracks—”

“Coyote,” said Darrin.

“Possibly.” She knelt beside one in the snow. “But the ones on the packed surface are too distorted to identify and the ones in the deep stuff are too hidden to make a positive match.” She glanced up at the men. “These tracks could be anything from a Labrador retriever to a Timber wolf.”

“Or more likely, a coyote,” finished the mayor.

“Yes, it is possible, but that’s not the only aspect that seems out of line. Take the kill, for instance...or should I say the lack there of. Why isn’t there a carcass for us to analyze?”

“Because they dragged the poor animal away, where they most likely buried it for later,” said Darrin.

“They? I only see one set of tracks. Are you suggesting a single coyote came in here, killed one sheep, took it away and buried it then returned to repeat the process?” She shook her head before anyone could answer. “One coyote wouldn’t cache food like that. A pack, maybe,



but not a lone male, and it would have to be a male as all of the females are in the midst of breeding right now. Which brings up another point. Why only a single male?"

"They often hunt alone." Darrin shrugged it off. "I've seen lone coyotes lots of time."

"In the summer, yeah, but this time of year?" She stood up, still keeping herself between the two sets of men. "February is a lean month for animals—a time when most of the loners pair up with either a mate or another small group to increase the chance of a successful kill." She nodded where the full moon had just dipped below the horizon. "They don't call this the hunger moon for nothing."

"Alone, not alone, I don't really care." The mayor crossed his arms and looked at her. "All I care about is what you're going to do about the current situation? I'm down two sheep, and it's very likely that the cur that did this will come back for more."

"I'd like to start by eliminating some venues." She turned to the brothers. "Caden. Talon. Is there any way one of your residents escaped the compound and did this?"

Talon glanced at Caden first then motioned to the evidence. "Ignoring the fact that, as I said before, this isn't a coyote kill, I can assure you that all of our animals are present and accounted for." He looked over at Darrin and his father. "We have a number of security measures in place to prevent such an incident from happening. Our coyotes didn't do this."

Rebecca nodded. "Thanks for your honesty, Talon. I hope you and Caden understand that I had to ask."

"Honesty?" Darrin practically jumped into her personal space as he waved his hands in the air. "Are you serious? As if they're going to stand here and admit one of their bloodthirsty vermin is responsible. What the hell kind of question is that?"

Rebecca moved to answer, but Talon beat her to it.

"It's called mutual respect. The Sheriff knows we wouldn't lie. Besides, we keep a detailed inventory of all the animals under our care. You're welcome to come out to the ranch and see it for yourself." Talon raised an eyebrow at Darrin. "Do you and your father do the same? Can you tell us exactly which sheep are missing?"

"Of course." Darrin flashed him a smug smile. "The two your coyote stole."

Rebecca shook her head. She'd have better luck slamming her head against the hood of her Jeep than getting these four men to be civil. She looked up and found herself staring into Talon's eyes. He squinted slightly, as if trying to read her thoughts, then glanced over at his

brother. She noticed something pass unspoken between the two before Talon backed up, giving her some room to move in front of Darrin.

She took the opportunity, stopping only an arm's length away from the man. "We're not here to call each other names. We're here to fix a possibly dangerous situation." She diverted her attention to the mayor. "If I'm going to find a solution, there are a few things that need to be done." She glanced back at Talon and Caden. "If you boys don't mind, I'd like to take you up on your offer and visit the ranch. That should satisfy everyone's curiosity." She turned back to the mayor. "While I'm at the ranch, I'll have Deputy Bobby Blake come out here and scour the woods bordering your land. If a predator did take your sheep, the remains should be somewhere close by. I'll also head into the park and survey some of the noted ranges of the local coyote population—see if I can find any evidence that they're traveling off their normal routes and venturing into town." She paused, knowing the Carson men wouldn't like her next comment. "But either way, you're going to have to open yourselves up to the possibility that this is the work of another kind of poacher."

"Oh it's poachers all right," said Darrin. "Coyotes."

Rebecca bit back the insult practically jumping off her tongue and glared at him. This kind of behavior was the very reason she'd refused the man's advances just after her father had moved here to take the sheriff's position. Though she'd told Darrin it was because she was heading off to university in a few months, the real reason had been her inability to enjoy being in the same room as him. How the hell did women actually make it to his bed? The mayor grunted and she glanced over at him.

"That's all well and good, but while you're off...*investigating*...my livestock is still at risk. I assume you'll understand why I feel the need to take certain measures to protect my investment." The man gave her a stiff grin and turned toward the house.

Rebecca cursed under her breath and took a step forward. "I understand your concern, Mayor, but need I remind you that hunting, even on your own property, requires a permit."

She met his scowl when he looked back at her across his shoulder.

"I know for a fact that Bobby hasn't issued a single one this year," she added.

The man shrugged. "Then I'll head into town and get one."

She cleared her throat when he turned again, drawing his attention back to her. "I'm sorry, but under the circumstances, I can't authorize any additional hunting permits until I get this situation cleared up...for safety purposes, of course."

"What!" Darrin didn't wait for his father to trudge back through the snow before stomping his feet and stepping into her personal space, again. "Two of our sheep are dead and more are likely to follow, but you're not going to allow us the right to defend our way of life?" He snorted in disgust. "I never thought you'd let your personal feelings about hunting interfere with your job, *Rebecca*."

"It's Sheriff, Darrin, and this has nothing to do with my views on hunting, or coyotes for that matter. But it has everything to do with the safety of my officers. How the hell am I supposed to send Bobby, or my other officers, into the woods if I know half the town is running around, shooting at anything that moves because you've worked them all up into a frenzy?" She brushed him back. "I will not put my men at risk so you can justify killing every coyote from here to the Alaskan border." She paused and took a deep breath. "Trust me. If a coyote is responsible for this, I'll see that the animal is humanely dealt with, but I won't sanction a blood bath just to ease your pride."

Darrin looked as if he was going to argue when his father tugged on his sleeve.

"Easy, son. The Sheriff is right." He flashed her another sickening smile. "We wouldn't want to lose another lawman to a terrible accident, now would we?"

The man's cold, casual tone made her stomach heave, swirling the snow-covered landscape as the blood drained from her head. She felt a moment of dizziness before two, strong hands closed around her shoulders, effectively moving her aside as a wall of male flesh moved in front of her. It was quickly followed by another silhouette until all she could see was the brown tinge of their leather jackets and the deep blue of their jeans.

Another growl lit the air, making her jump. It seemed to come from nowhere and everywhere at the same time, making the air vibrate with its intensity. The gravelly sound was quickly followed by a softer one, then Caden's voice.

"Are you threatening the Sheriff? Because that sounded like a threat to me."

The low timbre of his voice flowed across the short distance, soothing her taut nerves and changing the nauseating feeling to one of anticipation. She snagged her bottom lip, hoping to

regain her senses while she still had time to save her dignity. She pushed between the two men, but that was as far as she got before Talon wedged her against Caden.

Caden glanced at her, the red tinge back in his eyes, or was it just the reflection of the rising sun? She looked over at the mayor, and for the first time since she'd returned to Beckett Falls, she saw uncertainty glaze his eyes.

The emotion passed, and he drew himself up, grabbing Darrin by the jacket. "This meeting is over." He tugged at the younger man as he marched up the walkway to the porch.

Caden gave the men what looked like a snarl before turning back to her. "I don't care if he's been the mayor for twenty years, I don't trust him." He brushed some flakes of snow off her shoulder. "Perhaps you should take some extra precautions for a while...make sure you're not alone."

The image of her sandwiched between the men, only minus the jeans and jackets, swam through her mind and she had to look away before they read her intentions. She nodded, clearing her throat a bit. "I'll be careful."

Caden sighed, glancing over at his brother.

Talon brushed a finger down her side. "I'm sorry for moving you so roughly. I didn't hurt you, did I?"

She laughed. "Hurt me? Please. Surely you two don't think I'm so fragile that a simple lift and spin would damage me?" She shook her head in feigned exasperation. "And here I thought you two saw me as a tough, bad-ass cop."

Talon winked at her, sweeping his gaze down her body until he landed on the side of her hip. "I don't know about tough, or bad, but I've certainly been looking at the *ass* side of you."

Rebecca stifled a giggle as a hot feeling crept up her cheeks.

Caden grinned and trailed a finger down her jaw line. "Why look...I do believe the Sheriff is blushing...I don't think I've ever seen you blush."

"You two are impossible, you know that?" She motioned to the vehicles parked in the snow, wondering why she could still feel the warmth of his touch grazing against her skin. "Let's get out of here. You can laugh at my facial oddities once we're at your ranch." She headed for her Jeep, all too aware of the extra sway of her hips.

## *Chapter Two*

Caden Brady skidded the truck backwards then headed down the driveway, slamming his hand on the steering wheel. He saw his brother wince out of the corner of his eye, but it didn't matter. He knew Talon was just as pissed as he was, the only difference was that Talon was still thinking about getting into Rebecca's pants, instead of worrying about how they were going to stop good, old Mayor Carson from stealing their ranch out from underneath them. The man had been hounding them for nearly two years, and if this latest stunt got enough public support, he might just succeed in getting their refuge permits revoked and their ranch closed down.

"You know, Caden, if you don't stop frowning like that, your mouth might stay that way. And you'd look pretty stupid in your coyote form with that look stuck on your snout."

Caden huffed and gave Talon a hardened stare. "Perhaps you should spend more time thinking about how we're going to stop Mayor Carson from stealing our land and a bit less about how you're going to convince Rebecca to join us in bed."

Talon shrugged, glancing at her Jeep following close behind. "Go ahead and brush it off, but I know you feel the pull of the moon as much as I do. Hell, it was all I could do to scent the kill site over Rebecca's pheromones, and even then I was too distracted to decipher anything remotely useful. It's mid-February—the height of mating season—and it's been forever since we even had sex, let alone thought about taking a mate." He nodded at the slight tremble in Caden's hands. "It's time to face facts, bro. Either we find a way to get Rebecca to see us as more than just a couple of awkward teens she used to know and accept us as her mates, or what happens to the ranch won't really matter...we're dying inside without her."

Caden sighed at the hurt expression on Talon's face, looking back at the endless white road. They'd known years ago, when Rebecca had first moved to town with her father, that she

was their intended mate. But being eighteen with their shifting abilities still new, they hadn't been able to do more than watch her from afar before she'd headed off to university.

He grunted, choosing not to meet Talon's gaze. "Well, if you have any suggestions, I'd love to hear them. Otherwise, it'd serve us better to get our heads out of her pants and on the task at hand."

Talon growled. "I swear, if Darrin puts one finger on her—"

"We're not about to let anything happen to her. But if we want to keep her safe, we need to know why Carson and his son are so hell-bent on getting our ranch. I just can't see his hatred toward coyotes being his only motivation. I think he's using it as an excuse—one the town council will believe." He gave Talon a sly smile. "You know how much folks here distrust coyotes."

Talon nodded toward Rebecca's Jeep. "From the way Darrin was talking, it doesn't sound as if Rebecca shares those views."

"Well, we'd better hope she fucking loves them, or there's not a hope in hell she'll agree to sleep with us." He shook his head. "Damn, I don't even know if she'd be into two normal guys at once, let alone a couple of misfits like us."

"Only one way to find out."

Caden chuckled. "You always did have more luck than sense. But perhaps instead of blindsiding her for a threesome, we can get an idea of her feelings while she's looking around the compound. She can't hide from us forever."

Caden prayed he was right as he turned up the dirt road that led to their ranch. Even with the windows up, he could hear the high-pitched yips of the animals residing within their compound. Though it was rare to see coyotes in their natural habitat, the animals pranced along the fence edging their land, as the truck rolled to a stop.

He jumped out and took a deep, soothing breath. The smell of pine and winter infused his senses, but they weren't enough to mask the scent of each coyote in their pack. The animals whined at the fence, and he finally managed a smile. Their unconditional love and respect always humbled him and he found himself standing at the enclosure, down on one knee as he greeted his native brothers.

"Wow. I didn't realize they were so tame."

Rebecca's voice snapped his focus back, and he quickly pushed to his feet, taking two steps back. He stared as she neared the fence, her eyes wide, but unafraid, her attention on the dark-brown male watching her from behind the wire. The animal pawed at the ground, but didn't move, looking at her with the same intensity it did him and Talon. Caden eased his fingers around her arm, keeping her from getting too close.

"They aren't usually that good with others. They recognize Talon and me, but generally growl at strangers."

Rebecca raised her eyebrow at him, looking back at the coyote still standing by the fence. A slow smile spread across her face, and she brushed off his hand, bending down on one knee as she eased closer to the animal. "Guess he doesn't see me as a stranger."

Caden chuckled, eyeing the animal, but it simply tilted its head and sat on its hunches, wagging its tail. "Looks like you've made a friend." Caden knelt beside her, jabbing her playfully in the ribs. "Or should we be worried that you've been sneaking around here at night, playing with our coyotes?"

Rebecca laughed, following his lead when he stood up and joined Talon by the truck. Caden moved so they formed a triangle, allowing her just enough space that she wouldn't feel smothered.

Talon motioned toward the large male coyote still waiting nearby. "Is it just me, or are you part coyote?"

Rebecca glanced at the animal. "Well, they are cunning hunters with exceptional adaptability, so I'll gladly be half coyote." She snorted and crossed her arms on her chest. "Not all of us share Darrin's perspective...or his father's. If they had their way, there wouldn't be any predators left in the wild."

Caden merely nodded, too overwhelmed by the simple beauty of her to care where the conversation was headed. He drank in her features, starting with the cascading waves of chestnut hair, loosely tied at the sides. He hadn't seen it fully down since she'd returned, and he longed to run his hands through the silky tresses, wrapping the strands around his fingers as his brother peppered kisses along her shoulders and back, skimming her skin until she moaned for more and finally took his aching cock deep into her velvety mouth.

Pressure built inside his crotch, and he cursed under his breath for allowing his thoughts to get him hard...as if he hadn't been hard for her for the past several years, the last one being

the toughest. Having her in town, but not at their side, had taken a toll on both men, and he realized Talon was right. If they didn't get Rebecca to accept them for who, and what they were, what happened to the land, and the refuge, wouldn't matter. They'd fade into nothing without her.

"Caden? You okay?"

Rebecca's soft voice drew him back, and he prayed she couldn't see his arousal bulging out from below the edge of his jacket. He looked at Talon, hoping the man would indicate if he'd missed anything important, and relaxed when his brother merely nodded at his groin.

"Sorry, I was just thinking about the meeting this morning." Anger reared again, and he fought off the urge to pound his fist on the truck's hood. "Those men have no sense of honor."

"Honor no, but they do have support on their side." Her expression saddened. "There are a lot of ranchers around here who have lost some of their livestock to coyotes, whether we want to acknowledge it or not. And they stand up for each other. For now, I have the legal means to keep them stuck on the sidelines, but if I can't find any evidence soon as to who or what's really behind this, my hands will be tied."

"So you believed us when we said it wasn't our coyotes," said Talon.

"I believed you when you said it wasn't a coyote kill, let alone one of yours." She leaned back against the truck, gazing at the animals playing beyond the fence. "There's a lot about Mayor Carson and his son that rubs me the wrong way, and to be honest, that little display of theirs looked staged. But I don't have any reason to doubt his accusations, or any proof. It's more of a gut feeling."

"And you're telling us this because..." said Caden.

"Because it's your land he's after." She angled her head slightly and looked at them. "I don't suppose you know why he's so determined to close you down...besides the obvious hatred for your guests?"

"We've been trying to figure that out since he started ranting about the refuge two years ago. If it hadn't been for your father standing up for us..."

Caden let his voice fade when he realized he'd brought up the one subject he knew she didn't like to talk about. Talon cast him a nasty look as Rebecca's body stiffened and the color drained from her cheeks. She'd had the same reaction at Carson's ranch when the man had dared



to toss her dad's death in her face, and he couldn't believe he'd be so thoughtless as to bring it up again.

He clenched his jaw and reached for her arm, hoping she wouldn't yank it away. "I'm sorry, Rebecca. I know you'd rather not talk about your dad."

"It's okay. And it's not like I can avoid his death forever." She gave him a tight smile. "But I'll try."

She stepped forward and headed back to the fence. The large male had rejoined the others, but the pack hadn't ventured far from the driveway. Caden inhaled as she eased by him, drinking in the sweet fragrance of lightly scented soap and clean cotton. But what held his focus was the subtler essence nearly hidden by the crisp smell of winter and the heady bouquet of trees. This aroma was earthy and warm, like sun-ripened berries in the early morning dew. He forced down a swallow, cursing under his breath when Talon let out the moan he'd only just crushed.

Rebecca glanced at them over her shoulder, but didn't acknowledge the edge of lust he knew glimmered in their eyes. Talon was right. The hunger moon was nearly at its peak, and all the animals felt its pull. The need to find their mate was always the strongest during those few winter days, and he knew they'd never make it through another year without the woman they'd secretly loved by their side.

He cocked his head toward their prey, wondering why Talon hadn't ventured over to her, when his brother sneered at him and shifted his feet. Caden didn't hide the smile that broke free when he realized Talon's cock was obviously getting the better of him.

Caden took a deep breath, and made his way across the short distance. "You seem quite taken by them. I didn't realize you liked coyotes so much."

The smile she flashed him nearly had him doubled over in pain as his shaft thickened and pulsed, pushing against the zipper until he didn't know how the small metal teeth managed to stay together. It didn't help when her gaze swept down the length of his body, lingering on his crotch before slowly creeping back up.

"I think they're beautiful animals. I just wish they didn't have the reputation they did. It's going to be hard to convince the council that most of what they've read simply isn't true when sheep are disappearing. You said you had records...something concrete I could show to help your case."

“Like Talon said, we keep records of how many animals we have, when we hope to release them and where. We also have sensors that set off an alarm if any of the animals manage to break free. We can show the council that they haven’t been activated in the last few years. But all that will prove is that it wasn’t a coyote from the refuge...it won’t discount the ones in their natural habitat.”

Talon joined them, shouldering up beside Caden, as he handed Rebecca a clipboard. “And Carson will most likely claim that the proximity of the refuge encourages the wild coyotes to venture into the town. In the end, it’s our word against his, and we all know how the council will vote when the time comes.”

“Don’t count anyone out yet, boys. I plan on getting to the truth, regardless of who’s ultimately involved.” She handed Talon back the clipboard. “Would you mind faxing that information over to the office when you get a chance? It’s better than nothing, and as long as there’s evidence that the refuge isn’t behind any of the livestock disappearances, I’m not sure what the mayor can do. Forcing me to hand out hunting permits is one thing—closing you boys down is another.”

She turned back, scanning the area as the animals rested in the snow. Caden watched her survey the fence line, smiling at the way her brow scrunched up into a vee as she tried to decipher how the gates worked. He was just about to offer to show her when his breath caught, the cold bite of the air freezing his throat. He glanced over at Talon and motioned toward the snow by the entrance. Talon followed his stare and Caden watched the man wince, then turn his head and curse. A few stray coyote tracks dotted the path in front of the gate, the paw prints larger than normal. Apparently, they hadn’t swept the damn things away after their visit the previous night.

Caden wanted to lunge forward and grab Rebecca’s arm before she noticed them, but there wasn’t any way he could do that without raising suspicions. Instead, he held his ground, trying to think of a viable answer. He didn’t have long. He’d no sooner glanced back at Talon than Rebecca took a few steps forward and bent down, tracing one of the prints with her fingertips. Something akin to a sigh drifted along the breeze and she looked over at them, one eyebrow raised slightly.

“Looks like you guys have had some company. They’re definitely coyote tracks, but I’ve never seen any this large before. Have you seen the animal that made these?”

Talon stepped forward, saving Caden from tripping over his tongue and making a complete fool of himself. “Some of the mountain breeds can get between eighty and a hundred pounds...for the odd male. There have been a couple of large ones around a few times, but they disappear as soon as we try to get a better look at them.”

Rebecca nodded, still tracing the paw’s outline with her hand. “Well, I hope your ranch is as far as they got, because if the mayor gets wind that there are some big males around...his head is going to pop clear off.” She chuckled and stood up, finally turning to face them. “Thanks for the tour, boys. I appreciate your help.”

“Don’t you want to see the rest of the place?” Caden gestured toward the house, wanting any excuse to keep her around. Just being close to her made his skin tingle and his senses go wild. “As I recall, you haven’t had a proper visit since you got back.”

“I’d really like to, but I need to get to the park and check out some of the local packs before a new snowfall erases any evidence. Can I take a rain check? Maybe later this week?”

Caden felt his heart plummet into his stomach. “Of course.”

Rebecca thanked him and headed for her Jeep, her feet crunching on the snow. Talon nodded at her and Caden shrugged. As if he had a clue how to delay her? He grunted at his brother’s expression and pressed forward, walking to the driver’s side of the vehicle.

“So you’re heading into the park now?” said Caden.

Rebecca just laughed and nodded. Caden resisted the urge to face palm. Hell, she’d already told him that...twice!

He looked at her clothes. “Are you sure you’re going to be warm enough? We have extra gear in the house if you need some. It’s always colder up along the ridge.”

“I’ve got more sweaters and supplies in the back. But thanks for the offer.” She paused, looking as if she wanted to add something, but then jumped in the Jeep and shut the door.

Caden stepped back, waving as she drove down the driveway, finally disappearing around a bend. Talon shook his head as he moved beside him, still looking down the road.

“Are you warm enough?” He asked as he looked at Caden. “Seriously? That was the best you could do?”

“Well, I didn’t hear you come up with any grand lines that had her swooning at our feet.”

“You saw how taken she was with the coyotes. Why didn’t you offer to take her in the pen?”

“Oh yeah, that would have been a great idea. Then we could have spent the rest of the day explaining that the only reason she didn’t get attacked was because we can communicate with the animals, and that they see us as their alpha males.” Caden kicked at the snow. “Do you really think she’s ready to know the truth?”

“At least she’d still be here...and maybe if she knew a bit more about us, she wouldn’t be so damn cautious.”

“Or maybe she’d run screaming down the driveway.”

Talon sighed. “I’m just trying to find a way to break the ice.”

“Then how about the next time you actually suggest it, instead of standing there willing your erection away.”

“Hey, you’re always saying that you got the brains out of the two of us, so I pretty much leave the ‘intelligent’ side of the conversation up to you. Don’t worry. I’ll step in when it gets all hot and heavy.”

“Based on the way you stumbled over here, I’d say it’s already ‘hot and heavy’ with you.”

“See Caden. That’s your problem. Always thinking with the wrong head, at the wrong time.” He patted his brother on the back. “Next time, listen to your cock a bit more and that brain of yours a bit less.”

“Just shut up and get in the truck.”

“Why?”

“‘Cause we’re following her.” Caden opened the door and climbed in. “I don’t care how good she is at taking care of herself, something in the way Carson talked about her dad’s accident made my skin crawl. I just don’t think we should let her out of our sights for a while.”

“Fine by me.” Talon buckled his seat belt, grabbing the window frame when Caden spun the truck around and headed for the park. “This is going to involve us shifting, isn’t it?”

“The lady wants to see some coyotes...we wouldn’t want her to be disappointed, now would we?”

“Have I ever told you that all your ideas that sound great usually end up with us getting shot at?”

Caden just sighed and picked up speed. He had a bad feeling Rebecca had made a powerful enemy today, and if she wasn’t careful, she’d be the one on the wrong side of a bullet.

## *Chapter Three*

“Great job, Rebecca! I think you outdid yourself this time!”

Rebecca cursed as she trampled over logs and pushed through bushes, following her earlier trail back through the thick underbrush. “You couldn’t just take down the information and keep your distance, no...you had to get all hot and bothered over them—*both* of them. Thank god they couldn’t smell how aroused you were. Now that would have been embarrassing. Great way to start an investigation. Fan-fucking-tastic.”

She grunted when her shin grazed a rock, and she kicked at the snow in frustration. What was it about the Brady boys that knocked her senses loose, replacing them with an overload of hormones? Hell, she’d just about begged Caden if he and Talon would accompany her to the park, before her tongue had caught up with her brain, and she’d managed to keep her mouth shut. Now she was stuck wading through the snow as she made her way back to the Jeep, thankful she hadn’t found anything to substantiate the mayor’s claims.

She paused, wondering what it was about the Carson’s that irritated her so much. She knew they had different opinions and she could accept that, but there was something about the two men that immediately put her on the defensive. And the mayor’s comment about her dad...

A tight feeling wove through her chest, and she braced her hands on her knees in an attempt to lessen the sting. Over a year had passed, and she still couldn’t think about it...couldn’t accept the part she’d played in his death, or hadn’t played. If only she’d visited when he’d asked...

Tears stung her eyes but she pushed forward, allowing the cold, mountain wind to freeze them on her skin. She could wallow in self-pity later. For now, she had a job to do. She pressed on, stopping at the edge of the next bend. A tingling sensation built along the back of her neck,

and she turned, certain she was being watched. A lone eagle cried overhead, and she sighed. Apparently, spending hours in the snow, watching groups of coyotes romp across the landscape had the same effect as standing between the Brady boys...common sense disappeared and she was left feeling confused and breathless.

She turned back, running over the next course of action in her head when a twig snapped a few feet away. She pivoted, barely getting her hands up to defend herself, when she was slammed to the ground, pain sparking through her left shoulder as she impacted the crusty snow. A loud hiss sounded in her right ear, followed by pressure and pain along her side. She rolled with the blow, pushing to her feet just as the animal regained its footing and spun around. She stared into the eyes of the cougar, fear making the image blur at the edges. She held her breath, frozen for a moment before her instincts kicked in. Knowing there wasn't enough time to fumble for her pistol, she swung her rifle off her shoulder, jamming the long shaft in the animal's jaws as it leaped at her, knocking her back on the snow.

The cat roared, trying to dislodge the barrel from its mouth, but she held it in place, trying to find a way to roll the beast off her. A spray of snow pelted her face when it pawed the ground next to her, releasing its grip as it reared back.

Rebecca scooted backwards, swinging the gun toward the cat when a flash of brown and gray obscured her view. She jumped and tried to stand as two huge coyotes halted in front of her, blocking the cougar's path. The cat hissed, flashing its large canines as it paced to the left, trying to find a way around the dogs. But the coyotes worked in tandem, keeping the animal caged as they snapped their jaws and bared their teeth, growling at the cat.

The cougar attempted to lunge through the center, but the brown coyote attacked from the side, catching the cat's hind leg as the gray animal snapped at its neck. A cry of pain echoed along the ridge as the cougar howled in fury, retreating slightly from the coyotes. Yips and howls rang out in the distance, and Rebecca knew another pack was racing to join in the fight.

The cat roared again, but backed up, finally turning on the trail and loping out of sight. The coyotes stood their ground, growling at the retreating cougar until it disappeared. Both animals scratched at the snow in what looked like an act of defiance, then turned to face her, their eyes gleaming gold in the setting sun.

She took a shaky breath, holding the rifle at her waist as she watched them tilt their heads and yip. Something in their eyes looked familiar, but she couldn't seem to place it. She bridged

her weight on one hand and pushed to her feet, the rifle still aimed in the direction of the two canines, but when she tried to back away, pain buckled her leg, and she slammed down on one knee.

The darker coyote took a step forward, a gust of wind rippling its coat. It was beautiful, with varying shades of brown across its back and a pure white bib along its neck. Its long ears twitched when she whimpered. Then it lowered its head and the sound of bones popping and joints creaking lit the air. She stared at the animal, unable to move as its body shifted, its thick fur slowly fading into sinewy muscles and taut skin. Paws gave way to hands and feet, and the tail disappeared on a gentle swoosh.

Bright amber eyes stared back at her, the familiar gleam stealing her breath. She could only stare as Caden uncurled his body and moved to her side, gathering her in his arms. She glanced over his shoulder, drawing a harsh breath when the other animal shimmered into the mist, leaving Talon crouched in the snow. Naked.

“God damn it. That fucking cat scratched her.”

Rebecca reluctantly shifted her gaze back to Caden, the worry in his voice confusing her. What the hell was he talking about? She was fine, just tired and apparently hallucinating. That’s why she was having trouble keeping her eyes open. Talon was at her side by the time she blinked back the fuzzy images.

He lifted part of her jacket aside. “Only one of the cuts is deep. The rest are pretty superficial. But she’s losing blood, and after being out in the cold all day, her body is sure to be weakened. We need to get her out of here.”

Caden nodded and picked her up as he turned to face his brother. “You should go ahead and get the first-aid kit and blankets ready. And warm up the truck. If she’s not already in shock, she will be.”

Talon gave her a tight smile then bolted off, morphing back into the gray coyote in mid-stride. She watched him bound through the snow, certain she was losing her mind. A hysterical giggle bubbled free. She had to be dreaming. She must have fallen asleep in the Jeep after wading for hours through the thigh-high snow. There was no other explanation.

Caden glanced down at her, jostling her in his arms as he pulled her close. The change in position flung her hands against his chest, and she couldn’t hold back a moan as her fingers connected with strong, taut muscles covered by smooth, honey-kissed skin. She swept her gaze

upwards, taking in the sleek ridge of his shoulder and the sensuous spot where his neck met his jaw. A shadow of stubble followed the strong line, and she had the sudden urge to run her tongue along the rough skin.

Conflicting realities tumbled in her head, and she squinted at him, trying to maintain some focus. “If this isn’t a dream, then what the hell is going on?”

Caden flashed her a wicked smile as he started off across the snow, one hand gripped around her back as the other cradled her legs. “Do you want it to be a dream?”

“It’s the only sane answer.”

“Sane, maybe, but not the only answer.”

A mixture of fear and excitement warred inside her, and she wasn’t certain which one she wanted to win. “Do you actually expect me to believe you and Talon can—can...”

“Can shift our physical form between that of a human man and that of an overly large coyote?” He shrugged. “It might sound crazy, but it’s the truth.”

Rebecca shook her head, repeatedly chanting *I’m not crazy* under her breath.

Caden only chuckled. “No, darling, you’re not crazy. But you are losing a fair amount of blood, and if we don’t get you back to the ranch and stitched up, you aren’t going to feel much of anything for a while.”

“Blood? Stitched up? What the hell are you talking about?” She felt fine, except for the numbness creeping up her right side and the increasingly heavy feeling in her head.

“Great. You’re already in shock.” He dropped his shoulders slightly and picked up speed, calling out a series of yips that reminded her of the vocals she’d heard earlier from the packs. Another voice answered from just over the next rise, and Caden launched them both over the small protrusion, landing beside their truck.

He shuffled her into Talon’s arms before yanking open the door and grabbing some clothes off the nearest seat. “Next time, maybe we should hide some supplies in the park in case we have to shift before we get back to the truck. It’s bloody cold out here without any fur.”

Talon climbed into the backseat with her huddled on his lap. “Hey, I warned you that all of your brilliant ideas end in pain and suffering.”

“No, you said we always get shot at...need I remind that no bullets were involved.”

“Right, because fighting off a hundred and fifty pound cougar was so less threatening than a gun.”



“Hey, we outnumbered the beast. It wasn’t even a contest.”

Talon feigned annoyance, glancing down at her as Caden donned the last of his clothes. Talon’s eyes sparkled a deep gold in the waning light, and she found herself relaxing against him, content to drink in the heady scent of the forest mixed with the warm essence that was all him.

“Hey, sweetheart, don’t go to sleep on us, yet.” He gave her a gentle shake. “We need to fix you up before you close those beautiful baby blues.”

“Please let me be dreaming.”

Talon smiled, and her stomach flip-flopped. The man was dangerous on a bad day and down right deadly when he smiled. God help her, but she wanted to kiss him. Wanted to take those full, pouty lips with hers until she could taste the spicy scent filling the truck. She could picture it, the long lean body she’d watched materialize in the snow pressed against her as Caden’s strong form moved in from behind, wedging her between equally hard cocks. Two sets of hands would caress her body, each taking their turn discovering her most sensitive areas—the sensuous curve where her breast joined her side, the delicate hollow at the base of her neck, or the soft spot behind her knee. Heat rose in her cheeks, and the world dimmed slightly.

Talon’s smile turned carnal and he bent closer. “Keep looking at me like that, and I might forget you need medical attention when I strip off your clothes.”

Caden reached back and slapped Talon’s head with a handful of bandages. “Try not to scare another life out of her, and hold this on the wound. We need to stop the bleeding so we can stitch the cut back at the ranch.”

“Do you think we should take her to the hospital instead?”

“Do you really want her mumbling about us turning into coyotes when she’s under the influence of Demerol?” Caden leaned back and started the engine. “We’ve stitched our fair share of lacerations. It’s best if she stays with us until we have a chance to explain things when she’s more coherent.”

Rebecca grunted and tried to push herself up. “You do realize I’m sitting right here.”

Talon held her tight when she tried to roll off his lap. He raised a finger and shook it at her. “Just lie still.” His eyes softened. “Please.”

The low timbre of his voice soothed something primal inside her, and she relaxed against his chest, savoring the feel of his fingers against her skin, even if it was to hold a thick piece of

gauze in place. She took a deep breath, snuggling into his warmth as the truck lurched forward, the low drone of the wheels along the snow-packed gravel lulling her into a groggy daze. It wasn't until a swirl of cold air buffeted her face, she realized Talon was carrying her up to their house, the tell-tale howl of a lone coyote echoing in the background.

Talon glanced down at her as he jogged up the steps. "That brown male you met this morning sure has a thing for you. He hasn't stop calling since we arrived. Maybe you are half coyote."

"What the hell? Why are you...?" Some of the foggiess had lifted and she tried to squirm out of his arms when a wave of pain rolled down her body. "Oh, God."

"Looks like the shock's wearing off, and the pain's setting in." He paused as Caden opened the door for them. "Easy, sweetheart. We'll get you something in a second."

The next several minutes passed in a blur as the men settled her face down on the couch and gathered their supplies. She'd resisted when they'd stripped off her shirt and bra, but had finally relented to hiding the bare essentials with a thin towel so Caden could get a clear view of the damage the cougar had left behind. It wasn't until Talon had removed her shirt that she'd realized how much blood she'd lost.

"But, I didn't think..." She glanced at the boys just as Caden slipped a needle in her arm. She winced and pulled back, feeling the medication slowly wash through her. "What?"

"It's like Demerol, darling," said Caden. "You're not going to like it much when I stitch that cut, even with some freezing."

"Where did you get all this stuff?" Damn. Had her tongue suddenly doubled in size? It felt as if she was talking around a stump.

"We need it to treat the injured coyotes we take in." Caden smiled at her. "Don't worry. I'll be gentle."

His words evoked another warm rush, only this one wasn't from the drug. Heat poured out from her core and settled, uncomfortably, between her legs. She shifted slightly, suddenly aware of how sensitive her clit was and how plump her lips felt. A low moan drifted her way, and she looked over her shoulder at the men.

"What?"

Talon pulled his lips tight, and she could tell he was trying hard to concentrate on holding the cut together as Caden tugged at a stitch. The men exchanged a look, then inhaled, the gold in their eyes darkening into a burnished bronze.

The image blurred for a moment, as the drug played with her head, but she managed to shake it away. "I'm waiting for an answer."

Talon looked at her, his face twisting into a grimace. "We're a bit busy here."

"Not so much you can't tell me why you keep looking at me as if I'm dinner or why I keep hearing one of you moan."

He grunted and met her stare. "You *were* in the woods when we shifted from our coyote forms, right?" He didn't even acknowledge her nod. "That means we're part coyote."

"Yeah...and quite frankly, I'm still not convinced this isn't all a hallucination and I'm not really back in my Jeep asleep at the wheel...but go on."

"Just because we aren't wearing the fur any more doesn't mean we aren't *still* part coyote."

Rebecca grunted. Her head ached, her feet tingled and she couldn't tell if her words were coming out as pure gibberish, yet Talon thought she was still capable of thinking. "I've been attacked by a cougar, saved by two mystical half-breeds and pumped full of some animal form of Demerol. Do you really think I can decipher your riddle right now?"

Caden chuckled, elbowing Talon in the side. "Go on, bro. Explain it to her."

Talon glared back, then turned his gaze on her. Fingers of arousal wove through her belly and into her pussy at the predatory look in his eyes. There was no mistaking the animalistic side of the man, now, and she wondered if she'd just pushed her luck too far.

Talon inhaled again, the bronze tone in his eyes nearly hidden by the black. "Let's just say—you smell divine. And I don't mean your perfume."

Awareness dawned on her, and she drew a sharp breath, even as more moisture eased from her slit to coat her sparse panties. She looked from one man to the other and back again, reading the truth in the way they surveyed her half-naked body.

She forced a swallow past the increasing thickness in her throat and simply nodded. "So you—you retain some of the traits while..."

"Human?" Talon suggested. "All but the physical form."

"So..."

Talon held her gaze. “Keener eyesight, greater range of hearing and of course...a keener sense of smell.”

She could only nod as she snagged her lip with her teeth.

Talon leaned closer, brushing those kissable lips along the shell of her ear. “This morning, at the Carson’s ranch...damn. It was all we could do to use our senses to confirm that coyotes hadn’t been in the area. Your pheromones blocked out every other scent. I swear even Darrin seemed to notice your state of arousal.” He nipped at the skin, making her gasp. “Tell me. Was it Darrin or us that got you all worked up?”

She wanted to deny his claim, but the drugs spoke for her. “You.”

“Me?” said Talon. “Or Caden?”

Something inside her snapped, and she blurted out the truth. “Both.”

The predatory look returned, only this time both men shared the same expression. Caden tugged at her side again, then straightened, patting her gently on the back.

She tried to look at the wound, but the room tilted when she turned her head. She sighed and relaxed on the cushions. “Are you done?”

Caden chuckled, and it was as if her body reacted on command, tightening her nipples against the rough terry as shivers raced along her spine. She wanted them—and they knew it.

“I’m finished stitching your side,” he said, leaning in alongside Talon. “But we’re far from done, darling.”

He nodded and Talon moved, scooping her up in his arms as he headed down the hall, his hands staying clear of her wound. The towel slipped off, pressing one breast against his chest as the other jiggled from the motion. She felt the coil inside her abdomen tighten and knew that excitement had won the war. But what about them? Did they want to share her? Did they even want to have sex with her?

Questions melted into numbness as her eyelids started to droop—of all the times to be sleepy. She tried to suppress a yawn as Talon laid her gently on the bed, his body hovering over hers. He traced a finger along her jaw, down her neck and across the swell of one breast. Her breath caught and held as he circled her peaked bud, before finishing the journey down her ribs, stopping at her waistband. Their gazes clashed as he popped open the button and slowly lowered the zipper. Caden’s hands joined Talon’s as they both gripped one side of her pants, not waiting for her to raise her hips before pulling down the fabric and tossing it to the floor, taking her socks

in the process. Their mouths tightened, forming small lines around the edges, and she knew they could see the wet spot centered in the black lace.

“Lace.” Talon’s voice sounded strained, the word barely escaping his clenched teeth. “It had to be lace.”

“Talon—”

He silenced her with a finger across her lips. “As much as we both want to join you, you need to rest more. But mark my words.” He leaned even closer, his warm breath washing across her face. “Come morning, the moon won’t be the only thing going down.”

Rebecca watched as the brothers backed away, though their movements made it obvious they were still the hunters. An array of emotions filled her head, but exhaustion claimed her and she drifted off to the sound of the coyote still calling in the distance.

## *Chapter Four*

Rebecca groaned, rolling her head to one side as she fluttered open her eyelids, squinting at the bright light filtering through the large windows beside the bed. The sun was already up, bathing the room with a warm glow and making patchwork shadows along the floor. Yips and barks droned in the distance, followed by a solitary howl.

She tensed, memories of the previous day shuffling in her mind. She'd been wading through the snow back to her Jeep when...

She bolted upright, wincing when a dull pain stabbed through her right side. Shock kept her from jumping off the bed as she traced her hand up her ribs, fingering the bandage taped to her skin. It couldn't be. The cougar, the coyotes...the men.

A mixture of anger and disbelief got her moving, and she swung her legs over the side of the bed, grabbing the headboard as she pushed to her feet, tightening her grasp when the room tilted beneath her. She closed her eyes, waiting for the motion to stop before taking a tentative step forward. A cool draft breezed over her and she looked down, finally realizing she was dressed in her black panties but nothing else.

*"Come morning, the moon won't be the only thing going down."*

Anger tipped the scale and she marched forward, snagging a stray shirt off the back of a chair as she headed out of the room. She worked at the buttons as she stalked down the hall, drawn by the faint echo of voices near the end. The boys had more than just a bit of explaining to do, and without cougars or wounds to distract her, she was damn well going to get some answers.

She rounded the corner and stumbled to a halt, her breath hitching as she took in the scene. The men were talking near the fire, dressed only in jeans, the tops of which hung open, baring an inch of pale skin between the two edges. The rest of their clothes were stacked on a

chair just off to the right, the arms of the shirts grazing the floor. The light from the fire danced along their bodies, accentuating the strong, rippling muscles in their arms and the firm lines across their chests and stomachs.

“Damn.”

Though she’d barely breathed the word, both men turned their heads, those golden eyes matching the blaze of the fire. She felt the heat flash through her, making her toes tingle against the cold wooden floor. Liquid arousal rushed along her veins, and she knew the moment her moisture eased along her silky lips to dampen her panties. The brothers closed their eyes on a low grunt, inhaling deeply before staring at her again, their mouths curling into matching feral grins.

They moved slightly apart, twisting until they were fully facing her. Their gazes swept down her body, lingering at the edge of the shirt before slowly creeping back up, their tongues darting out to trace their upper lips. They both took what looked like an involuntary step forward, before Caden seemed to snap out of the haze. He flicked his brother in the wrist, stopping the man in his tracks. Talon glanced over at him then sighed, stuffing his hands in his pockets.

Caden nodded at her. “You’re up. That’s good.” He cleared his throat as if it was a strain to talk. “How are you feeling?”

Rebecca gave herself a mental slap to get her head back on track. Getting lost in the gravelly tones of his voice or the way his eyes pleaded with her wasn’t going to get her any answers, though the increasing bulge in his pants certainly looked promising.

She crossed her arms on her chest, wincing as the movement tugged against her side. “I’m fine, thank you.”

Talon’s mouth pulled tighter as his gaze fell to the bottom of her shirt. “Yes, you are.”

Caden slapped him on the back of his head, murmuring something she couldn’t make out. She stared at the men, not sure what the issue was until she realized her previous motion had raised the hem of the shirt until it barely covered the crotch of her panties.

She lowered her arms, determined to stay distant until they’d talked. “Now that we’ve all agreed to the state of my health, perhaps you boys will tell me what the hell is going on. What happened yesterday...was it...real?”

Talon looked at his brother, raising an eyebrow and motioning toward her.

Caden stepped forward on a sigh. “Are you going to run screaming out of the house and down the driveway dressed like that if I tell you it was?”

“Of course not. I’d toss heavy things at you first and hopefully knock you both over the head.” She jutted a hip to the side. “And I’m not really the screaming type.”

Talon matched Caden’s step. “God, I hope that’s not the case. We plan on hearing you scream...a lot.”

Caden rolled his eyes at her and turned to his brother. “Can you get your head out of your pants for one second—just one?”

“Like you weren’t thinking it,” he said.

“Of course I was thinking it. I just had the good sense not to say it out loud.” Caden looked back at her. “It’s not that we don’t take your concerns seriously, darling, it’s just...damn, you look delicious in my shirt. And with the moon full rising tonight and it being the height of the mating season...”

Rebecca sighed at the pained look on both of the men’s faces. This was obviously more than simple attraction for them, though she didn’t know if she was prepared to think of anything beyond ordinary lust. Though she’d secretly desired them since she’d first met them years ago, she’d never imagined they’d be attracted to someone like her. Someone who never seemed to quite fit in.

She gave them a soft smile, hoping it would ease some of the tension. “Look, this is strange for all of us. I mean, I never imagined people could, you know, change into animals.”

“It’s not that common.” Caden leaned against a chair. “From what our grandfather told us, it’s something that happens only once in several generations to families whose ancestors inherited *the gift*.” He held up his hand, halting her from asking her next question. “Before you ask, I have no idea what this gift is, no one does. It’s been lost through the ages due to the rarity of the condition. All I know is that there hasn’t been a shifter in our family for nearly two hundred years.”

“But both of you can shift?”

“They say it’s because we’re twins,” said Talon, joining in. “Fraternal, but twins all the same. We share the same DNA, the same abilities...the same desires.”

Rebecca nodded, still not sure how to process the information. “When did you discover...”



“That we were different?” said Caden. “Eighteen. That’s the age most shifter’s powers evolve. They’re inherently unstable at first, so we weren’t able to pursue any kind of relationship with you back then. Not until we were able to control the change.”

She ignored the plug about a relationship, knowing she had to concentrate on the facts first. “So you can control when you change? You’re not tied to the full moon or anything?”

Caden laughed. “You’re thinking of Hollywood werewolves, darling, not shifters. And I’m pretty sure wolf shifters can control their impulses, too. It’s just that the moon exerts a certain pull on us, making us want to change more often during the full phase.”

“Like now, with the hunger moon.” She smiled at his guarded nod. “So there are other people who can turn into different animals?”

“The elders say you become your spirit guide animal. For us, coyotes.”

“Which is why you have the refuge.” She inhaled sharply as all sorts of pieces fell together. “That’s how you knew it wasn’t a coyote kill site at the Carson ranch and why I found those large prints on the outside of your compound. This is more than just a refuge. It’s a place for you to roam.” She paused then smiled. “I don’t suppose you’d show me?”

Caden looked at Talon then back at her. “Show you? As in, shift? Here? Now?”

She gave him what she hoped was a come hither look as she nodded. “They do say seeing is believing. And yesterday, I was too shocked to really appreciate the phenomena.”

Talon crossed his arms on his chest. “We usually get naked to shift. It makes everything less confined.”

“Then strip. As I recall, you saw nearly all of me last night.”

“All but the best part,” said Talon, reaching for the waistband of his jeans. “All right. Just remember, we’ll expect the same privileges once we’re done.”

A tendril of heat wove through her stomach, tightening the coil already curled inside. She looked at the men, and years of desire rolled the answer off her tongue. “Deal.”

The feral smiles returned, and both men fisted their jeans, slowly lowering them over tight abs and lean hips. She could only stare as they inched the denim down, finally freeing two hard shafts that sprang up to their bellies before descending again to hang perpendicular to the floor. She resisted licking her lips as she stared at the twin cocks, the slits already coated with drops of pre-cum. God help her but she wanted to taste them—both of them. A growl sounded in the room, and she forced herself to drag her attention back to their faces.

“Don’t worry, darling, you’ll get all of that and more once we’re done.” Caden kicked his pants beside the chair. “But I believe you asked for a show before breakfast.”

Rebecca snagged her lip, not sure what would happen next. There’d been too much adrenaline flowing the previous day to remember the event as more than shadowy images. But as the air seemed to pick up static, prickling the hairs on her arms, she knew she was in for something magical.

The men stood there, hands by their sides, heads held high and closed their eyes. She didn’t think anything was happening until a wave of distortion rippled through their bodies, making it look as if their skin was undulating from within. A loud cracking noise broke the silence, followed by creaks and pops as their limbs began to shorten and their faces began to lengthen. Fur sprouted from their skin, rapidly thickening as they fell onto all fours, their claws clicking against the wood. Ears unfurled on their heads, and a tail appeared on a swoosh of air. There was one last moment of transition, before the two animals who’d come to her rescue the day before stood before her, tongues hanging to one side, eyes boring into hers.

“Oh. My. God.”

She eased forward, drawn to the elegant beauty of the creatures. They matched each brother perfectly. Caden’s coyote was shaded in browns, the darkest the same tone as his hair, while Talon’s animal was every hue of gray, mimicking his lighter hair and paler skin.

“You really are coyotes.” She knelt down, not sure if they could understand her while in their animal form. “Can you understand what I’m saying?”

Caden yipped, sitting on his haunches as his tail brushed across the floor, sending puffs of dust into the air. Talon barked then chased his tail, making her laugh.

“Can I touch you?”

Talon didn’t wait for another invitation. He pranced forward and dropped to the floor, rolling on his back. Rebecca giggled and stroked his belly, sighing at the feel of his soft fur against her fingers. She reached her other hand up to scratch Caden behind the ear as he drew close, his cold nose nuzzling her wrist.

“Okay. I think you boys have been more than patient with me.” She stood up and moved over to the couch, sitting down as the coyotes watched from in front of the fire. “You can turn back now.”

Talon yelped and darted off, circling the room a couple of times before heading behind the couch. She wasn't certain where he was going until she felt his paws beside her shoulders. She turned to look at him just as he started to change, only this time his animal form simply ghosted into a man.

He smiled at her apparent awe. "We slowed the process down before, so you'd get a better look. It only takes a split second to change." He nodded toward the hearth. "I believe Caden wants your attention."

She turned to find the large coyote sitting at her feet, its head tilted to one side as if trying to read her mind, and she wondered what it'd be like to see the world through his eyes.

"He thinks you're the most beautiful creature he's ever laid eyes on," said Talon, tracing his fingers up and down her arms.

She stole a quick breath when the animal sniffed the air, and what she swore was a grin captured its lips before the coyote faded into a misty gray as the man materialized on his knees in front of her. Her gasp filled the room and Caden looked up at her, his eyes blackened with lust, his lips still curled in a carnal smile.

From behind, Talon nuzzled her ear, settling his hands on her thighs. "Open your legs for him."

A wave of excitement raced through her as she gently drew apart her legs. The shirt hitched up higher, revealing a hint of black beneath the white edge.

"Do you have any idea how damn delicious you smell?" Caden inhaled, licking her knee. "I have to taste you. But first..."

He straightened, one hand spearing through her hair as he planted the other on the couch next to her head, securing them both in place. His mouth hovered inches from hers, his lips close enough she could have touched them with her tongue. But she waited, heart racing, breath stalled until he inched forward, lightly brushing his mouth against hers. The soft brush of skin fluttered the butterflies in her stomach and she closed her eyes, slightly parting her lips as he made another pass, this time licking the line of her bottom lip. She whimpered and he advanced, slipping his tongue inside, tracing every contour. He tasted like coffee and vanilla, and she reached for him when he finally retreated, bringing his luscious mouth back to hers.

Caden smiled as she took control, tracing his lips this time, then delving inside, lingering in the warm feel of his body pressed close to hers. Then he was gone, pulling back as he

motioned behind her. She twisted, opening for Talon as he leaned over the back of the couch and took her without hesitation, his kiss more demanding than his brother's. He didn't wait for her to join him, he conquered, only allowing her to taste him back when he'd had his fill. She gasped in a deep breath when he finally released his hold, her gaze snagged by his.

"I knew you'd taste as good as you smell." Talon drew a finger along her chin, ending with a tweak to her nose. "But I think Caden wants to put my claim to the test."

Words jammed in her throat, and she returned her attention to Caden, watching as he palmed her legs and inched his hands up, skimming her skin until he could hook two fingers around her panties. He yanked, and the lace tore, strands of black falling to the floor. Talon groaned behind her and raised his hands to the front of her shirt, settling on the first button. His spicy breath washed across her ear followed closely by his tongue.

"Do you know how long we've dreamed of this? How many times we've imagined having you in this very spot?" He flicked the first one open, drawing the cool cotton apart to reveal a patch of skin by her collarbone. "We've wanted you for as long as we've known you. But without control of our animal form, we couldn't risk your safety. For years we've waited, hoping you'd return." He moved his lips lower, kissing a path down her neck. "And now, you're finally here."

He moved to the next button, popping it free and opening her shirt more. The curve of her breasts were exposed, with only the nipples still hidden behind the fabric. Rebecca held her breath, caught between Talon's slow progress and the way Caden just stared at her pussy, licking his lips as if it was killing him to wait. His gaze finally clashed with hers as Talon opened the third button, fully exposing her breasts to them.

Caden groaned when Talon's fingers circled each nipple, making the skin pucker beneath his touch, but never actually making contact with the peaked buds. She watched Caden swallow, noting the effort it took him to complete the simple task.

"Boys—"

"So pretty," said Caden. "I love watching you react to him." He chuckled when Talon cupped each breast and pinched her nipples, making her squirm around him. "Now be a good girl, and open wide for me. I'm starving."

Rebecca didn't have a time to move her legs farther apart before Talon slid his hands down to her thighs and pulled them open, exposing her clit to Caden's gaze. A low growl

hummed through the air as he lowered his mouth and planted a kiss on the delicate bud. Shivers tingled along her skin and she tensed, making her clit pulse. Caden moaned against her thigh, his breath making it twitch again.

“Damn, that’s hot. Do that against my tongue.”

He lowered again, dipping his tongue to her cleft and sliding it through her crease, lapping at her cream before swirling it around her nub. She did as he asked and fluttered it again, moaning when he nipped at the quivering bud.

Talon groaned behind her, bending over her shoulder to take one nipple in his mouth. Heat engulfed her breast and she arched into his attack, silently begging him to take more of her. He followed her lead, sucking in more, plumping her other breast as he drew on her nipple. The coil inside her continued to wind tighter as both men assaulted her with their tongues, bringing her hard and fast toward her first peak. But just as she neared the edge, they both backed off, and she had to bite her lip to keep from screaming. She reached down and threaded her fingers through Caden’s hair, urging him back to her aching clit. He chuckled against her weeping flesh, shaking his head as she tried to press against him.

“Not yet, darling. There’s too much I want to experience before I’m ready to let you explode on me.” He glanced up at her. “Perhaps Talon can give you something to help keep you occupied?”

Her mouth watered at the thought and she held Talon’s gaze as he stepped to the side of the couch, his beautiful shaft bobbing into view. She only broke his stare to take a quick peek at the magnificent rod, not wanting to destroy the sensuous connection between them. She reached out, trailing her fingers up his thighs and scoring a path across his sac but never touching his cock. His face contorted into a grimace as his jaw clenched, making the vein in his temple jump.

“Tease,” he said, hissing out a breath as she flicked her nails across his sac again. “I suggest you don’t tempt the animal in me, sweetheart.”

She chuckled, loving how the sound made his cock rise to his stomach before dipping back down. “Why’s that, Talon? Do you bite?” She blew a warm breath across the bulbous head, smiling when another drop of pearly fluid beaded from the thin slit. “But seeing as you asked so nicely…”

She opened her mouth and placed a wet kiss on the tip, licking at the smooth juice that stuck to her lips. He tasted like spicy cider and earthy musk rolled into one, and she couldn’t help

but wrap her lips around the crown and slide down his length, taking him deep to the back of her throat.

“Fuck. I think I’m going to come just watching you deep throat him.” Caden returned his finger to her pussy, softly rimming her sex. “Luckily, I also have something to hold my attention.”

Rebecca tilted her hips, trying to push him inside her, but he moved with her, proving his control over the situation. She sighed around Talon’s cock, unable to do anything but take what Caden would give her. But she didn’t have to wait long. She’d no sooner nibbled her way down to Talon’s sac and taken one heavy globe into her mouth, than Caden slid his finger inside her channel, slowly pumping it back and forth. Her walls quivered at the new sensation and contracted around him, desperately trying to keep him from retreating.

“Damn. I’m only using my finger, and you feel tight. I can’t wait to see how snug you’ll be around my cock.”

He bent in and lapped at her clit, making her moan. Fire erupted inside her veins, and she wasn’t sure how she kept from bursting into flames. She cried out when his teeth scraped the sensitive tissue, seeking Talon’s cock in refuge. She locked her lips around the head again and started pumping his shaft, using one hand to cover the part she couldn’t reach.

Talon grunted and wove his fingers through her hair, lightly pulling her into a steady rhythm. She relaxed her jaw and let him set the pace, humming when she felt his balls pull tighter. He was getting close, but so was she.

“Damn. I’ve never felt a mouth as sweet and as hot as yours.” Talon pumped a bit harder, obviously no longer able to meter his thrusts. “That’s it. Take as much as you can.”

Rebecca tried to go a bit deeper, but Caden relentless assault on her clit had her perched on the edge of release. The muscles in her stomach tensed, and she swore they were starting to cramp. A quick flick inched her closer when a second finger join the first. Flashes of light pulsed behind her closed eyes, and she sucked harder, wanting to taste her prize. But just as she felt him thicken against the back of her throat, he pulled back, easing his erection free.

She grunted and reached for him, but he shook his head, tracing her lips as she pouted at him.

“As much as I love your mouth, I want my first time to be inside you.”

His words made the fire flare higher and she arched back, needing just a few more passes of Caden's tongue and fingers to send her into climax. But Caden retreated, leaving her hanging on the edge, her clit pulsing, her body strung tight. She released a cry of anguish and speared a glare at him, but he merely tsked at her, easing one finger free as it circled her ass, nudging the entrance.

He didn't speak, just raised an eyebrow in question. She worried her lip between her teeth, not sure whether to give him permission. Though she'd realized that agreeing to be with both men meant eventually submitting to a proper threesome, she wasn't certain she was ready. She'd only tried anal sex once, and it'd left her feeling more than a little sore.

"We won't do anything you don't like," said Talon, kneeling down beside Caden. "Trust us."

"I'm just not sure..."

Her words morphed into a moan as Caden eased his fingertip inside her ass, probing the tight ring with short, easy strokes. The unusual sensation rippled through her groin, culminating in her sex, making the finger still pumping her there feel larger. Her head fell back against the cushions as she arched up, sinking the rest of his finger inside her ass. Heat filled her tight channel, building a new layer of arousal. The climax she'd been reaching for intensified, becoming darker and more urgent. She grabbed Talon's head, weaving her fingers through his hair as she'd done with Caden and anchoring them both in place. The men chuckled and she felt Talon's finger join Caden's inside her pussy, working her higher as Caden's other hand pumped her puckered hole, joining the two sensations until she couldn't tell which part of her was more aroused.

"My turn to test the theory," said Talon. "Though I can already tell you're going to be even sweeter than I imagined."

Rebecca forced her eyelids open, holding his gaze as he lowered between her legs and swiped his tongue through her engorged folds, circling the tip around her clit. She screamed and tensed, so close to coming tears streamed down her face. She heard herself begging for release, but she was too lost in the sensations to care. Talon mumbled something about how he loved to hear her beg, then gave in to her request and sucked her clit into his mouth.

All at once, the coil snapped, and she was flung headlong into release. Sounds and images blurred into gray as her body contracted around the fingers still inside her. She couldn't

tell which part went over first, only that she'd be lucky to come out the other side intact. Time ground to a halt, her only thought centered on the men who possessed her.



## *Chapter Five*

It felt as if hours had passed by the time she finally opened her eyes, her body spent, her lungs barely sucking in enough oxygen. Her first image was that of Caden and Talon, perched between her legs as they slowly pulled their fingers from inside her, licking the juice still clinging to their skin. An empty feeling seized hold, and she heard herself whimper.

Caden rose, his cock head bulged in need. “Don’t worry, darling, we’re far from done.”

He moved over to the couch, lying back as he motioned to her with his hands. “Ride me. I want to see you pleasure yourself on my cock.”

She wanted to tell him she was far too exhausted from her climax to do anything but spread her legs wide and welcome him inside, but Talon’s hands on her waist gave her a renewed strength. With the man’s help, she hoisted herself up, straddling her legs over Caden’s thighs. He reached for her breasts, cupping each one as she rimmed his shaft around the entrance to her sex, allowing only the tip inside. She started to sink down when a thought popped into her head.

“What about protection?” She looked at both men, hoping it didn’t sound as if she didn’t trust them. “I mean, even if we’re all clean...and I am...there’s still the issue of pregnancy.”

Caden shook his head, thrusting up slightly and burying another inch inside her. “We’re both clean. Our medical reports are in the filing cabinet if you want to see them. And you can’t get pregnant unless we make you our mate.”

“I trust you’re both fine, but how do you make...”

The rest of her questions were washed away when Caden raised his hips and hilted his cock inside her channel, sending her over again. Pulses of light flashed before her eyes as he started up a rhythm that would surely kill her. She reached for his shoulders, screaming when Talon added his finger to the mix, countering Caden’s thrusts, taking her ass in hurried strokes.

Caden released one breast and grabbed her neck, pulling her down to him. His mouth claimed hers, and she surrendered, giving him the connection he sought. She heard him moan and his pace increased, as if her full acceptance had pushed him past his limits. Talon quickened his motion, keeping time with Caden. The combination overwhelmed her, and she screamed out another release, drenching Caden's cock until some of her cream eased down her inner thighs.

"Fuck, you're beautiful when you come. Do it again."

Caden's words seared her, and as if on command, another coil began curling inside her. Talon reached his other hand around her waist, trailing it down her stomach.

He cursed and brought his lips to her ear. "I can feel him moving inside you with both hands now. Damn, that's hot." He dropped his one hand lower, skimming the pad of his index finger across her clit. "Come for us, sweetheart."

Her body replied, tightening around Caden's shaft and Talon's finger as the coil snapped and she broke, feeling Caden follow her. There was a moment of intense pressure as his cock swelled inside her then it exploded, splashing her walls with hot cum. She opened her mouth, but only a harsh groan pushed free as she fell forward, collapsing on Caden's chest.

His body continued to jerk against hers until the last of his release was emptied inside her, and he relaxed against the arm of the couch, his breathing the only sound in the room. "Oh, darling, that was amazing." He stroked his fingers along her back, soothing her taut muscles.

She moaned when Talon removed his finger, suddenly feeling empty despite Caden's semi-rigid shaft still inside her. She found the strength to push onto her elbows, smiling at the lust gleaming in his eyes. He looked sated but still eager.

She heard Talon sigh behind her and realized he hadn't found his release yet. She looked back at him and raised an eyebrow, not sure where the vixen inside her had come from, but ready to give him the same pleasure he'd shared with her.

Talon smiled as he traced her jaw with his finger. "I'd love to take you up on your silent offer, but—"

"The only *but* in the equation is the one that's just been ravished."

She whimpered as Caden pulled free and moved up on the couch, swinging his legs free. God help her but she wanted more. Despite multiple orgasms she wanted to feel Talon deep inside her, binding her to him as Caden had just done.

She shook her head. "Please, Talon. I need you."

A wicked smile tugged at his mouth and he nodded, moving in behind her. Anticipation reared inside her when she realized he wanted to take her from behind. Sweat beaded her body as he smoothed his hands down her spine and across her ass, circling her tight pucker, but not penetrating it.

“As much as I’d love to take you here,” he said, tapping the entrance. “I know it’s already taken a beating. And I only want you to know pleasure when we all join as one.”

She wanted to protest, to tell him she was more than ready, but then his cock nudged her entrance, and all over thoughts vanished, her mind centered on the hard length slowly burrowing inside her. She felt every inch of his thick shaft push through her swollen channel until it was fully seated. Talon’s hands moved to her hips, gently gripping each side as he allowed her a chance to get accustomed to his width. He was thicker than Caden and just as delicious.

She held her breath, finally wiggling her butt at him in the hopes he’d do something...anything, but keep her waiting. He answered her with a light tap to her ass, and she jerked at the sudden contact. She looked over her shoulder at him, but the gleam in his eyes was the only reply she got. A tremble raced through her. She’d never been spanked but the idea of the two men taking turns paddling her ass suddenly seemed appealing.

Caden leaned forward, gaining her attention. “Unless you want Talon to pull out and make your spanking fantasy come true, I suggest you behave yourself and be patient.”

“But how?”

She cursed when he chuckled, vowing to slap that arrogant smile off his face, but he chose that moment to devour her lips in an all-consuming kiss that stole her breath, and her will. She melted against him, content to spend eternity trapped between the two men, when Talon slowly dragged his cock back through her pussy, stopping with the flared head still wedged within her. She gasped and Caden took the opportunity to deepen the kiss, swirling more sensations around in her head. It was then she realized this wasn’t a one-night stand, or even a fling. It was something far deeper, more permanent than she’d dreamed possible. They were possessing her heart—stealing a part of her soul.

The inklings of fear nestled in her subconscious, but Talon banished it with a firm thrust, reclaiming the lost inches. Emotions tumbled inside her, bringing a new rush of tears as yet another climax neared.

Caden brushed away the moisture. “God, we love you.”

His words whispered over her skin as Talon reared back again, stopping just shy of pulling out then pushing back in again. She could hear the honesty in Caden's voice, mirrored by the surprising gentleness of Talon's coupling. Somehow he'd managed to make the primal mating something much more intimate, and she knew she'd lost her heart when he paused, his cock bottomed out, his body strung tight, and placed a delicate kiss between her shoulders.

Her armor cracked and she gave in, surrendering to Talon as she had to Caden. Talon tensed for a moment, then inhaled roughly, scraping something sharp along her skin. She heard Caden mutter something that sounded like *not yet*, and Talon growled, but the scraping ceased and she felt him straighten as his grip on her hips tightened.

"This is it. I want to feel you come for me. Now, sweetheart."

Talon slammed into her, all semblance of tenderness and control gone. Her arousal soared at the loss of his composure, the vixen in her purring that she'd driven him past his threshold. She reached for Caden, needing him to anchor her as her body soared one more time toward an erotic peak. He met her head on, reclaiming her mouth and swallowing her scream when Talon's relentless thrusts sent her careening over the edge, nothing but fleeting images following her ascent. Her breath mixed with Caden's and she collapsed once more, the leather cushions cooling her heated body. She thought she heard Talon yell her name as his release coated her walls, but she was already fading. Soothing hands danced along her skin and she drifted off, content to let them carry her to bed when they were ready.

\* \* \* \*

Rebecca sighed, staring up at the ceiling as birds chirped in the background. She couldn't remember the last time she'd felt so content, and she hated to spoil the sensuous atmosphere. But it was nearly noon, and while she'd texted Bobby to let him know she'd be in late today, it was only a matter of time before he started calling her.

"I know what you're thinking, but there's no reason you have to go into the office today." Talon curled over her back, dropping kisses along her spine. "Even the Sheriff needs a day off every now and then."

She hummed when his lips reached the back of her neck and arched into the light nip he left on her shoulder. If it wasn't for the fact that the mayor was likely in her office, yelling at Bobby, she'd gladly spend the next twenty-four hours wrapped in Caden and Talon's arms. But her time was running out.

She glanced at Talon over her shoulder, smiling at the way he licked her skin. “As much as I’d love to stay, we all know that’s just not possible. Carson and his arrogant offspring aren’t going to simply wait for me to figure this out. They’re determined to run you and your refuge out of town—the sooner the better in their eyes.”

Talon shrugged, trailing his fingers along her collarbone. “It’s like you said...without any proof that the refuge is responsible, there’s little he can do. At least for now.”

An unsettling feeling rolled through her stomach, and she knew better than to ignore it. “I don’t know. I think it’d be unwise to underestimate how determined he is.” She met his gaze. “I get the feeling he’d go to any lengths to see you boys gone.”

Caden sighed as he walked through the doorway, handing her a cup of tea before sitting on the edge of the bed. The mattress dipped with his weight, and she wished they could forget about the tea and the Carson’s and go back to what they’d been doing all morning.

Heat crept into her cheeks when she recalled how wantonly she’d behaved. Even after making love to both of them, she’d hungered for more. They’d been complete gentlemen, running her a bath and bringing her food, but she’d forgone the crackers and cheese and had decided to feast on them first. She giggled as she recalled Talon’s expression when she’d covered his cock in bubbles then spent several minutes blowing each one off. Of course, she’d made up for his patience with a blowjob worthy of his magnificent shaft, but even now, she wanted them. Apparently, the hunger moon didn’t only apply to food.

Caden brushed his thumb along her jaw, circling the sensitive spot below her ear. “Darling, if you keep looking at me like that, I won’t be responsible when I have you down on your knees again with my cock in your mouth. I’m still hard from your attention in the bathroom.”

Moisture flooded her core and both men groaned as some eased down her slit, making her labia feel puffy and slick.

“Fuck. You just smell so bloody good.” Talon slipped his hand down her body, knocking the covers back before settling his hand between her thighs.

Rebecca batted at him and twisted away, stumbling onto the floor. She held up her hand when the boys jumped up to follow her, knowing she had to gain control before she fell prey to their desire...again.

“Wait!” She backed up a step as their feet hit the wood, their eyes full of determination. “Just hear me out for a moment.” She took a deep breath, cursing when the scent of musk and sex assaulted her senses. She didn’t need the added distraction. “I know what you’re both thinking, but…” She palmed Caden’s chest when he advanced on her. “I can’t let Carson or Darrin ruin everything you’ve worked so hard to achieve, just because I don’t want to leave.” She released the breath she’d been holding when Caden’s shoulders drooped a bit. “I promise I’m not leaving because I’m not interested in seeing where this can go. I really just need to do my job.”

The boys exchanged a look and she swore they somehow communicated without talking. Talon nodded, crossing his arms in reply. She nearly giggled at the image he made—stern expression with body language to match, all with his cock standing at attention, begging her to lick it.

Caden cleared his throat. “How about we make you a deal? You allow us a few minutes to take care of your obvious need, and once we’re done, Talon will drive you back to the station.”

“Drive me?” She snorted and tapped her foot on the floor. “I don’t need a bodyguard.”

“Perhaps not, but you do need a vehicle.” A victorious smile spread across Caden’s mouth. “Or had you forgotten your Jeep was still parked at the trailhead, which I’ll gladly retrieve for you.”

She cursed, hating that she’d forgotten that minor detail. “It’s not that I don’t want to play, it’s just—”

“Based on how wet you smell, darling, it’ll only take a few minutes to make you scream in release.” Caden stepped against her, pulling her into his chest with a hand around her ass. “And we’ll be satisfied with that, for now.”

He didn’t wait for her to accept his deal, merely lifted her up and carried her back to the bed, laying her on her back with her legs splayed around his waist as he stood between her thighs. He smiled down at her, his fingers teasing the ticklish flesh on her hips. “Have you ever wondered what it’d be like to have one man fuck you while another licked you until you came?”

She nodded, not trusting her voice not to crack as he placed his thick shaft at her entrance, swirling the moisture around with the tip.

Caden groaned, slipping just the tip inside her before pulling back and circling her clit again. "I've never felt anything as hot and wet as you, darling. You're amazing." He dipped in again, grunting this time. "So tight. Damn, I'm only in an inch and it feels as if you've got a death grip on me." He nodded at Talon. "I'm not going to last long."

Talon joined them, flicking his finger over her bud, smiling at her unbridled cry. "I don't think you're the only one who isn't going to last long." He bent down and ran his tongue between her folds, ending with a light lick to her clit. "I'll never get enough of you, sweetheart. Never."

A new wave of tears prickled her eyes, and she couldn't help but wonder if she'd ever get enough of them? If her heart would ever be free from the tight feeling she got whenever she thought about this being nothing more than a random meeting? Though Caden had gone so far as to whisper loving words, it'd been during the height of sex, and she knew better than to bet on a promise made when hormones outweighed common sense.

But as Talon swirled his tongue around her clit, matching Caden's easy thrusting, she knew she was already lost. They'd won her heart when they'd stood between her and a cougar, and the mind-blowing sex had only cemented that feeling on the most intimate level.

Heat billowed out from her core as both men picked up the pace. Talon tortured her nub with steady flicks of his tongue, pausing every few strokes to nibble and suck at it, while Caden lifted her hips, changing the angle and penetrating her deeper. She fisted Talon's hair, weaving the caramel-colored strands around her fingers as she tried to hold him over her clit and relieve the bone-breaking pressure. But no matter how hard she pulled, he continued at the same pace.

Talon growled against her flesh, and her arousal skyrocketed. He paused to glance up at her, his face glistening with her cream. The sight almost pushed her over the edge, but the steely look in his eyes warned her he wouldn't be cheated from his prize.

He raised one eyebrow, licking some of her juice from his lips. "You might wear a badge during the day, sweetheart, but at home, we're your alpha males. That means you'll come when we're ready, and not before."

"But—"

Her voice shuddered into a scream when he pinched her clit at the same time Caden plunged hard and deep, and the climax crested inside her. Her breath panted out as she tried to

climb that last bit of distance, but the men worked in perfect tandem, keeping her balanced on the edge, waiting.

Rebecca released Talon's hair and slammed her fists on the bed, not sure whether to scream or cry. She resisted, fighting against the rising tide, then gave in, riding the never-ending wave until her *alpha males* had decided they'd played enough.

The boys kept her hanging, thrusting and licking until Caden threw back his head, the cords in his neck straining as his cock pulsed inside her channel. Talon smiled against her skin, lapping at her one more time before sealing his mouth around her nub and sucking it hard.

Colors exploded in her head, and she wasn't sure if she yelled their names or if the sound was only in her mind. Male voices echoed her release, and she let herself drift, not wanting to return to earth.

Warmth seeped into her veins, and for a moment, she considered Talon's earlier suggestion. Maybe she did deserve a day off? Then her phone rumbled in the distance and she knew their magical interlude had just ended.



## *Chapter Six*

Talon pulled the truck against the curb across from the station, eyeing the entrance as a strange feeling crept along his spine. He rolled down the window and scented the air, detecting a tinge of smoke amidst the cool winter pine. But there was something else, something slightly wild that piqued his senses, putting his instincts on alert. He turned to Rebecca, instantly overpowered by the essence of womanly warmth and fragrant soap still lingering on her skin. He sighed, knowing he'd never figure anything out with his head still back in their bedroom.

Rebecca smiled, and his body trembled. God help him, but he loved her. He only wished he knew if she shared the emotion, or if this was nothing more than a chance to act out a fantasy. He gave himself a mental shake. Of course, she wouldn't declare her love yet. Hell, it wasn't her fault they were governed by instincts she'd never really understand, or that they'd been drawn to her long before they'd been able to let her know. There'd never be another woman for them, but they needed to give her time to adjust to the notion of being their mate. His canines ached with the need to seal their bond, but he knew Caden was right. It had to be Rebecca's choice, not just theirs.

"A dollar for your thoughts?"

Talon shifted his focus, grinning at the breath-taking beauty of her face. Damn, but he could spend several lifetimes staring at that. He winked at her. "Dollar? Man, inflation sucks." He looked back at the station, trying to remember what had bothered him when they'd first arrived. "Is Bobby on shift with you today?"

"Unless he's already out on a call, though I doubt that. He was still in the office when I texted him from the ranch." She wrapped her fingers around his hand. "Thanks for the lift. I hope Caden's okay going back for my Jeep. Coyote or not, it's a pretty long way."

Talon chuckled, threading his fingers through hers when she went to pull back. “I’d be more concerned about him driving your Jeep naked, than running through the snow. Can you imagine the mayor’s reaction if he happened to see Caden?”

“Let me worry about the mayor.” She sat back, giving him a small half-smile when he released her fingers. She glanced at the station then back at him.

Talon held up his hand, halting her before she began. “Don’t even say it. There’s no way I’m heading back to the ranch without being guaranteed of your safety.”

Rebecca laughed and gave him a knowing look. “I’m the Sheriff. There’ll never be a guarantee of that, Talon. But I’ll be fine.”

“Of course, you will. I’ll just help make sure.” He shook his head when she huffed at him. “You won’t even know I’m around. I promise. As long as Blake’s inside, I’ll hang out here.”

Rebecca rolled her eyes, but her smile said differently. “Are you guys going to be this protective all the time?”

Talon furrowed his brow, not sure why she seemed so surprised. “You’re our mate...we’d die for you.”

Her features softened, and he thought her eyes looked glassy, but she turned away and jumped out of the truck. She darted around the front and headed for the building. He cursed, wondering why the hell he’d let the whole mate thing slip, when she spun around and returned to his door.

She stepped up on the rung, bringing her face nearly even with his. “I don’t want you to freeze anything important out here. I’ll put the coffee on. Just give me about ten minutes to settle things inside.”

She leaned forward and took his lips with hers, moaning against his mouth when their tongues tangled. She was still smiling when she pulled back and ran to the station, leaving him even more breathless than before.

Rebecca stepped inside the building, her lips still tingling from the soul-searing kiss Talon had given her. Thank god it was the middle of winter, or she might have burst into flames long ago. She passed the hallway, rounded the corner and sighed. Darrin was pacing in her office

while Deputy Blake sat at his desk just outside of the room, looking as if he wanted to be anywhere, but there.

“Sheriff. I’m glad you’re here. I was starting to think you’d just vanished!”

Rebecca chuckled. Bobby had a knack for overreacting to anything out of the ordinary.

She headed to the coffeemaker, talking to Bobby over her shoulder. “It’s only been twenty minutes since I answered your text. A girl does need a bit of time to recover after a day of tromping through the woods.” She motioned to Darrin. “How long has he been waiting?”

“About thirty minutes.” Bobby winced. “He’s very...”

“Irritating?” she said. “Don’t worry, I’ll take care of Darrin. Did you find anything in the woods?”

Bobby glanced at her office then nodded. “It was the weirdest thing. I didn’t find the sheep, but there was a large dog carcass hidden in some deep brush at the edge of their property. It looked as if something had attacked it. When I went back and questioned Darrin about it, he got extremely upset and told me I’d made a mistake...that they didn’t keep dogs. I was going to bring it in, but when I went back, the carcass was gone. But I swear it was there.”

“Easy. If you say you saw it, I believe you. I just don’t know why he’d lie about something like that.” She sighed. Nothing was making any sense. “I’ll go talk to him. Do me a favor? Do a search through our database, and see if you can find any unusual reports associated with either the Carson’s or the Brady’s ranch filed by my dad starting about two years ago.”

Bobby nodded, though his expression marked his confusion. Rebecca took a deep breath and headed for her office door. Darrin stopped pacing and glared at her when she walked in.

“About bloody time,” he said.

“Good afternoon, Darrin. What can I do for you?”

“You can start by telling me where in the hell you’ve been. I’ve been waiting here for nearly an hour!”

Rebecca shrugged, walking behind her desk. For some reason she felt the need to keep something between them. “Investigating. Is that all?”

Darrin snorted and crossed his arms. “Really. Are you sure that’s *all* you’ve been doing? You haven’t, maybe, been out at the Brady ranch?”

His voice made her skin crawl, but she pushed the feeling aside.

She leaned against the back of her chair, meeting his gaze. “I was out at the ranch, checking their security as promised. I have more than enough proof that their coyotes aren’t to blame for your loss of sheep. We’ll have to consider another explanation.”

“I had a feeling you’d see it that way.” Darrin smirked at her. “I hear they like to share their women. I don’t suppose you’d know anything about that?”

She ignored the contemptuous tone to his voice, keeping her expression neutral. Though she didn’t plan on hiding her burgeoning relationship with the men, she’d be damned if she’d let Darrin taint it. “What the Brady boys do in their private life is just that—private. As is what I do.” She waved at the door. “Now if you don’t mind, I have work to do. I’ll call your father as soon as I have more information. I’m looking into a lead as we speak.”

She sat at her desk and started flipping through papers, hoping he’d get the hint. His breath against the back of her neck took her completely off guard. She hadn’t heard or seen him move.

“I’m more man than they could ever be.” His lips coasted over her skin, ending in a light lick to her neck. “You’ve put up a good chase, but it’s time you realized who the winner is.” His hand brushed down her arm.

She spun, knocking him back as she surged to her feet. “Don’t touch me!” She flicked at her arm, wishing she could erase the feel of his fingers on her, even just her jacket. “Now I suggest you leave before I find a reason to toss your ass in jail for the night.”

Darrin laughed, heading past her on his way to the door. “I like a woman who makes the hunt worthwhile. Enjoy this little victory...it won’t last long.” He took a step out then turned back. “And my father will find a way to shut those boys down. It’s only a matter of time.”

Rebecca crossed her arms as he sauntered out of the office. Bobby popped through the doorway holding some papers. She shifted her focus to her deputy.

“I’m not sure if this is what you were looking for, but I thought you might want to check it out.” He paused, grimacing. “You might not like it.”

She took the papers and spread them out on her desk, skimming through the sheets, stopping on the third page. “This doesn’t make any sense. According to this report, the Mayor had his consulting firm organize a number of seismic tests on land adjacent to the Brady ranch. But he never had the company file their final analysis on their findings.” She looked over at Bobby. “He knows better than to break protocol when it comes to government money.” She

flipped to the next page and her breath stalled. “This is a police report filed by my dad. Looks like he questioned the Mayor on the report, but he never went through with any charges.”

Bobby looked away and a deep chill wove down her spine.

She tapped him on the arm. “Do you know why he never finished this or why the original report isn’t on my computer?”

“The original report isn’t in the database. I only found it because it was attached to your dad’s police file. And he never finalized anything because he was still investigating when he...died.”

Tears stung her eyes, but she managed to keep them at bay.

Bobby toed the floor, looking sheepish. “I’m sorry, Sheriff. I should have mentioned it, but in all the commotion, I guess I forgot. Your dad hadn’t really told me much about the situation, only that he didn’t like the way the Mayor ruled the town. I figured he must have just decided it wasn’t worth it, yet.”

She patted Bobby on the back, gathering the sheets together and stacking them off to the side. “Thanks. And I know how much you helped my dad. There’s just one more thing. Is the file on my dad’s death still in the back?”

“Exactly where you asked me to put it.”

“Great. Why don’t you go for lunch? I’ll cover the desk.”

Bobby shuffled his feet, glancing at his watch. “Are you sure? I’ll be okay for a while if you’d like me to stay.”

“Don’t worry about me. I’ll be fine.”

\* \* \* \*

Talon sat in the truck, drumming his fingers on the dash as the radio played in the background. Ten fucking minutes had never taken so long to tick by. He checked his watch again, smiling when the number finally changed. He grabbed the keys and opened the door, when he noticed Deputy Blake walk out of the station and head down the street, whistling to himself. Talon frowned, the uneasy feeling skittering down his spine again. With Blake gone, that left Rebecca alone.

He crossed the street and stepped inside. “Rebecca?”

She didn’t answer and the inklings of fear pitted his stomach. He stalked forward, listening down a hallway. A cool breeze drifted along the corridor, ghosting over his skin and

ratcheting up his unease. He clenched his hands and headed for the main room. He'd just rounded a corner when he slammed to a halt. Rebecca was in her office being stared down by large cougar. She didn't have her gun, which meant she'd either locked it in her desk, or it'd been knocked out of her hand.

He ran for the door, watching as she grabbed a chair and held it in front of her, keeping the animal back. He fisted the door, rattling the glass as he tried to force it open. Rebecca barely spared him a glance as the cat lunged, scratching at the chair's legs. He shook it again, scanning the room for something to use, when he saw Bobby's chair tucked under his desk. A roar sounded from inside the room, and he knew he had only one chance.

Talon shucked his jacket and shirt and grabbed the chair, raising it behind his shoulder then launching it at the glass wall of her office. The legs impacted the surface, shattering the glass as it crashed through, bouncing across the floor and pushing the cougar back. Talon followed its path, running at the broken pane and diving through. As soon as his feet left the floor he changed, landing on paws on the other side, his pants falling to the floor as he leaped in front of her, growling at the cat.

The animal hissed at him, flashing its teeth as it sized him up. He snapped back, all thoughts centered on keeping the cougar as far from Rebecca as possible. They danced around the room, the cougar gaining ground. Something rattled behind him, but he didn't turn to look, lunging at the cat as it shuffled to the left. The cougar lashed out, catching him across the side, but he kept moving, ignoring the flash of pain. He laid his ears back, growling again, when a shot shattered the wall beside the cougar. He hopped back, but the cat was already running, leaping through the broken window and loping across the floor before it disappeared down the hallway.

Talon turned to give chase when Rebecca fell to her knees beside him, hugging him around the neck, her body trembling. His need to comfort her took over and he shifted back, wrapping his arms around her as he pulled her close.

"You're hurt."

Her voice was thick and he could tell she was holding back tears. He eased away, glancing at the scratches across his side. Though his skin was streaked with blood, the lines were already starting to heal.

He shushed her, drawing a finger along her chin. "It's nothing. As soon as I changed, it started to heal."

She furrowed her brow and tilted her head, a sigh of relief feathering from her lips. “Thank god.” She looked out through the broken window. “I don’t even know how that cougar got in here or how the door got locked. One minute I’m going over some files, the next, the damn thing knocks me down as I’m headed for the doorway.” She stared into his eyes. “That’s the last time I lock my gun in my desk, protocol or not.”

He gave her a light squeeze hoping the simple gesture would ease some of the tension bunching her muscles and crinkling the lines across her forehead. He stood up, still cradling her against him as he righted the toppled chair and ushered her into it. She fell into the seat, finally shoving her gun back in the holster.

A genuine smile captured her lips as she stared at him. “As much as I love the view, baby, you might want to put some pants back on before anyone decides to investigate.”

He sighed and gathered his stuff, quickly dressing before joining her at her desk. “You do realize that wasn’t a chance encounter, right? There’s no way a cougar just happened to get this deep into town and picked your building to visit. I felt a breeze down the hallway by the door when I came in. I bet my ass there’s an open window back there.”

“But it doesn’t make sense. Who would release a cougar in here just to hurt me?”

“That wasn’t an ordinary cougar, sweetheart.”

The color drained from Rebecca’s face as she stared at him, wide-eyed. “A shifter?”

“It’s next to impossible to scent the difference in their animal form, but it’s the only reasonable explanation.”

Rebecca shook her head, letting it fall back against the chair. “You do realize the irony in that statement. But wouldn’t you know if there were other shifters in town?”

“Not unless it was someone we spent a lot of time with. We can mask our ability somewhat, but only for short periods of time.”

She nodded and rocked back, gathering the papers on her desk. She looked up at him, sadness creeping into her eyes. “I was going over my dad’s file...the one about his death. I thought I might be able to find something I’d missed before.”

Talon felt her guilt as a palatable sensation, and linked his hand through hers. “It wasn’t your fault. You weren’t even here.”

She shrugged, trying to gain some distance, but he didn’t allow her. “Maybe if I had been, he’d still be alive.” Her shoulders drooped slightly. “He wanted me to work with

him...watch his back, but I was too busy making a name for myself in the big city to play the role of deputy. If I'd bothered to give him just a bit of my time, I might have been there when..."

"He was shot by a hunter?" Talon said.

"It wasn't a hunter that shot him...no way. My dad was too smart for that, regardless of what this stupid file says. I've read it a hundred times, but I'll never believe it." She met his gaze, anger burning bright in her eyes. "I think he was killed because he was asking too many questions about a report he found—one he wasn't supposed to see. Did you know that Carson was running seismic tests on the edge of your property?"

"Seismic tests?" Talon shuffled through his head, but came up empty. "I don't know anything about seismic tests. Why was he doing that?"

"I'm not a geology expert, but it's generally to look for deposits like oil or diamonds. It seems my dad confronted Carson when he realized the proper reports hadn't been made, but he was killed before he got any answers...at least, that's what I'm guessing, seeing as he never filed any charges." She stood up and paced the room. "Who owned the land before you bought it?"

"It belonged to a native group. The only reason we were allowed to purchase it was because of the refuge. Otherwise, it would have been turned over to the park's department."

"But if Carson found a loophole around that, then manages to get your permit revoked..."

"He can purchase it for next to nothing and do whatever the hell he pleases with it," finished Talon. "Damn. I knew that bastard smelled wrong."

Rebecca stopped walking and touched his arm. "It's just a theory, but it's a place to start. Unfortunately, I don't see how it ties in with the cougar attacks. You can't seriously think that the Mayor is a shifter."

Talon shook his head, banging the desk. "Caden and I have spent too much time around the jerk for him to have shielded himself this entire time."

She sighed and took a deep breath then sat up, sniffing the air. "Wait a minute. Do you smell that?"

Talon inhaled, detecting an array of scents, one of which was Rebecca's sweet essence. "I'm assuming you're not talking about your arousal." He smiled at her glare. "I smell a number of things...the orange cleaner they use on the floor, the metallic scent from the gun, a hint of smoke from outside—"



“That! The smoke, but I don’t think it’s from outside. I smelled it before...the other day at the Carson’s farm—like old cigars.”

Talon froze as all the pieces fell into place. He looked at Rebecca, feeling his heart swell as the truth shone in her eyes. He reached for the phone. “I’ll call Caden—”

“As much as I appreciate you riding to the rescue...again, I can’t let you and Caden risk getting involved. It could be all it takes to get those permits pulled.”

Talon cupped her chin. “The refuge won’t mean anything if we don’t have you to share it with.” He blew out a long breath, praying he wasn’t going to scare her to the point she’d run from them. “We meant everything we said last night. We love you...have for years, ever since we first saw you and knew you were the one.” He stepped closer, nuzzling his nose on hers. “We want you as our mate, and if we have to lose the refuge to obtain that, it’s what we’ll do.”

“Talon—”

“He’s an ass for letting it slip so soon, but he’s also telling you the truth.”

They both turned as Caden stepped through the rubble, stalking to Rebecca’s side. He ran his hands along her arms, his face masked with worry.

“Are you okay? What the fuck happened?”

Talon stopped him with a hand to his shoulder. “The cougar came back for another round.” He stopped further questions with a hard stare. “I’ll fill you in later, as soon as Rebecca gets it through her thick skull that we’re a team.”

“Fine. I get the whole group thing, but I can’t let you throw everything away for me.” She shook her head when they both tried to reason with her. “Look, I’ll make you a compromise. You can drive me over to the Carson ranch, but—” She pointed a finger at them. “You have to promise to stay in the truck unless things get ugly.”

“Deal.” Talon escorted her to the door.

“I’ll call Bobby on the way...have him meet us there. I just hope I’m right, or we’ll all be looking for a new place to live.”

## *Chapter Seven*

Rebecca walked up the pathway to the Carson's house, Deputy Blake at her side. She wasn't certain what she was going to say to the mayor, or to Darrin, but she wasn't leaving until she got some answers. She only hoped they were the ones she wanted.

"Are you sure this is a good idea?" Bobby looked back over his shoulder at the growing darkness. "It's just my word against Darrin's, and I can't prove the carcass was ever there."

"The fact Darrin hid evidence from you is grounds enough. Besides, I have a feeling they're getting desperate. Just be ready."

"For what?"

"The unexpected."

Bobby gave her a guarded nod and they stepped onto the porch. Bobby moved forward and rang the bell, tapping his foot nervously on the frozen wood as they waited for someone to answer. When everything remained silent, Bobby rang it again, following with two loud raps to the door. A noise sounded from the back and he looked over at her in expectation.

Rebecca weighed the choices, reluctantly nodding at Bobby. He gave her a tight smile and bounded down the stairs, stumbling through the snow toward the back of the house. She didn't like splitting up, but she didn't want to risk not catching the men in the midst of falsifying evidence. She tried the doorbell one more time, peeking through the glass when the snow crunched behind her.

She turned, gun already drawn as she watched the magnificent cat halt on the path, its green eyes shining in the dim light. The full moon illuminated it from behind, casting a long shadow across the snow.

She straightened slightly, hoping she hadn't just made a huge mistake. "You know, Darrin, if I didn't know any better, I'd think you were ashamed of your human form. Or are you just worried that I can beat you if you're not armed with claws?"

The cat hissed, its tail swishing across the snow, billowing up a small cloud of powder. It snarled at her then jumped, landing on the edge of the porch in one, smooth movement. Its muscles rippled and stretched, shifting and changing until she was staring at the man behind the beast, his eyes just as cold as the cat's had been.

He snagged her gaze and held it, his lips curving into an evil grin as he rose, seemingly oblivious to the cold wind that buffeted the land. "Very good, Rebecca. Though I suppose my little stunt at the station was a bit too obvious. But I had to do something to remove the stench of those Brady boys." He chuckled. "Fear is an excellent agent to cleanse the body of its other scents." He glanced down toward the driveway, sniffing the air. "I suppose they're around here somewhere, the cur that they are."

"This is police business. But I didn't come alone."

Darrin laughed, waving her words off as if they were flies. "Deputy Blake? Please. I could snap his neck in a second. He's nothing like you, sugar. You're feisty. I hope you'll be this hard to tame in bed. I want my time with you to be memorable."

"Then you shouldn't have shifted back, because in this form, I hold the power."

"Why? Because you have a gun? Even if you hit me I'll just change and be on top of you before you get a second chance. You might want to consider that and decide what fucks you—the man or the cat." He took a step forward.

"Darrin! That is quite enough."

Darrin halted in his tracks as his father rounded the far corner of the porch, his footsteps echoing his tone. A low growl drifted along the air and the mayor glared at his son.

"Don't you growl at me. If I'd left you to your own devices, you'd have been arrested long ago for your perverted acts and would be stuck in a cell somewhere." He walked up to his son, staring down at him as if he were a petulant child. "Now go finish your job while I deal with the good Sheriff."

"I'm not some guard dog you can boss around, father. Besides, the Sheriff and I have our own business to attend to."

“Can’t you ever think past your dick?” The mayor slapped Darrin in the back of the head. “Now stick to the plan, and I might let you play with the lady before the night is through.”

“Not this time, Carson.” Rebecca held her ground, her gun still aimed at the two men. “I know it was Darrin who killed your sheep and made it look like a coyote attack. Bobby found the poor animal he’d butchered in the back, and took pictures on his phone to prove it. What did you do, steal a dog from the shelter then release it so its tracks would be left on your property?”

Carson smiled a toothy grin. “Touché, Sheriff. You’re smarter than I gave you credit. Your old man always did brag about you, but I never thought you were as good as he claimed. Too bad you didn’t care enough to come a bit sooner. With you watching his back, I might not have had the opportunity to kill him.”

He paused, but she didn’t allow herself to react to his revelation. She’d suspected his involvement and knew showing any emotion would only shift the power to him.

He sneered at her apparent lack of interest and just continued rambling. “But your effort’s a bit late. I’ve already got Deputy Blake in the barn. Once Darrin does his thing and we pawn it off as a coyote kill, there’ll be no saving your lovers’ ranch.” He smirked at her. “Oh, we know all about your sleepover last night. Darrin was there—watching. Funny how we never put together that those boys were shifters.”

“Then you know that they’ll never let you get your hands on their ranch. Besides, it’s protected land. Even if you did get their permits revoked, it’d be turned over to the park’s department.”

“My dear, Rebecca. There’s always another way, if you have enough money. And once I get my hands on their ranch, I’ll have more money than I ever dreamed possible.” He scowled. “Those boys have no idea what they’ve got. All they see are those wretched animals...but I suppose they share a certain bond with the vermin.” He laughed. “All this time they’ve been sitting on a fortune of diamonds, if only they’d had the balls to do something about it.”

“You have money, but you’re still a cold hearted bastard.”

He tsked. “Now, now, Sheriff. Language.”

She ignored him, turning her attention to Darrin. “So this is all about money? I had you pegged for something much more interesting.”

Darrin grinned at her, petting his cock as it bounced between his legs. "I'm only in this for one reason, sugar. And since you seem to have a thing for shifters, I'm betting you're going to enjoy all my games."

He took a step forward, but Carson grabbed his arm.

"You're playing into her taunts. Do you really think she doesn't have some sort of plan? I bet she's taping this conversation for starters. Too bad it'll never see the light of day." He smiled, drumming his fingers on his chin. "On second thought, Blake can wait. Why don't you show the lady how charming you can be?"

"With pleasure." Darrin took a step forward.

She fired, hitting him in the shoulder.

He flinched, staring at the dart sticking out of his arm. "What the fuck?"

She backed up, knowing she needed just a few more seconds. "I came prepared. It's like you said. Bullets won't put you down."

He roared and leaped at her, changing in mid-air but landed in a heap at her feet as the serum took effect, not fully human or cougar. Carson yelled and aimed something at her, but didn't get a chance to fire when a blur of gray raced toward him, knocking him down. The man screamed, his arm clamped in Talon's jaws as the coyote growled, pinning him to the deck.

Rebecca ran forward, kicking Carson's gun away and drawing her other, pointing it at his chest. Her hands shook as she stared at the creep, her finger half compressing the trigger. Talon held firm, waiting, but she couldn't move, couldn't think past her anger, knowing she had her one chance to atone for her dad's death. The cold wind howled around her as she stood there, wanting to kill the bastard, but not sure if she could. Carson begged for his life, tugging against Talon's hold, but nothing registered until Caden's voice whispered in her ear.

"He's not worth it, darling. Let it go."

She shifted her gaze slightly and saw the pained look in Caden's eyes. He didn't ask for the gun, just stood there, watching her.

She sighed and lowered the pistol, tossing a pair of handcuffs to him. "Cuff him, before I change my mind."

Caden smiled and her stomach somersaulted. She watched him flip Carson over, handcuff him and drag him away, Talon yipping at his heels. A war of emotions battled inside her, and it was all she could do not to run out and howl at the hunger moon. But she held back, silently

walking toward the barn. Just a bit more paperwork and she could close two cases. But solving her father's murder meant she was free to move on—go back to the city and her old life.

A desolate hollow opened in her heart at the thought, and she knew she had a decision to make...one that would shape the rest of her life.

\* \* \* \*

“All right, Rebecca, this is it. Last chance to back out before you make a complete fool of yourself.” She stared at her reflection in the rear-view mirror, wishing the nagging voice in her head would shut the hell up. She'd already gone over all the scenarios, and she'd finally realized it only came down to one thing—love.

She got out of her Jeep and took a fortifying breath. Cold air filled her lungs as she made her way up the driveway and across the porch. Her hand shook as she reached for the doorbell, hesitating for only a moment before pressing the button.

The chime sounded in the house, but she didn't hear any footsteps. She sighed and turned, wondering if she'd waited too long. If the boys had decided she wasn't their mate after all. Panic flared inside her, making her stomach roll. She moved over to the railing and stared at the waning moon. Just a sliver was missing, but it mirrored the growing emptiness in her heart. If only she'd returned last night.

Rebecca headed for the stairs when a flicker of movement caught her eye. She looked up, instantly pinned by the sight beyond the fencing. A large coyote stood on a small rise, its head tilted up as if staring at the moon. Another waited off to its side, equally magnificent, but with its head lowered toward the ground. She squinted, searching for something to confirm if it was Talon and Caden, when the first coyote started to sing. A rich, mournful howl echoed through the night, its melancholy tone misting her eyes. The second animal joined in, its voice adding harmony to the song. It was heartbreak and love rolled into one and she knew they were singing to her.

Tears pooled and fell as she listened to her lovers pour out their hearts, wishing she could go to them. She took a step, the wood creaking beneath her feet. The song cut off as the coyotes turned, their bright eyes glowing in the darkness. She stood there, holding their gaze, not sure what to do when they barked and charged the fence. Long, powerful strides propelled them across the snow, and she held her breath as they jumped, clearing the eight-foot wire and landing in a puff of white on the other side.

Her heart jack-hammered in her chest, beating twice its normal rate as the animals crouched low, their bodies shimmering into the familiar curves of their human partners. Her pulse pounded in her ears as the men rose, their skin gleaming in the reflected light of the moon. The air felt charged as they closed the distance, stopping at the bottom of the stairs.

Rebecca backed up a few steps, giving them room to move onto the porch. They followed her retreat, but stopped an arm's length away, neither speaking. She could see the uncertainty in their eyes as they watched her, not unlike their brothers still sitting beyond the fence. She'd hoped that they would take control, like before, but realized it was her turn to lay her heart on the line.

"Hi."

*Damn!* Was that the best she could do? *Hi?*

She took a deep breath and just let the words flow. "I guess you're surprised to see me, when I didn't return last night, even after all you'd done at the Carson farm, but...I needed to think things through. To be honest with myself." She shivered as the wind picked up, blowing snow devils along the open fields. "I've never been one to believe in fairy tales or white picket fences, but I'd never really thought I'd ever be with two men at the same time. It's just not something little girls picture." She snagged her lip, wishing they'd just take her in their arms and make it all better. "But I've come to realize, it's what I need—the two of you—in my life."

She felt a tear cascade down her cheek and winced, hating to show that side of herself. Caden reached forward, catching the tiny drop on his finger, and she knew she had to risk it all.

She held her head high, letting go of the last of her doubts. "I love you...both of you. Whether you're men, or coyotes or somewhere between, I'm yours—if you'll still have me."

They stood there, staring at her until she thought her heart would stop then moved in sync, picking her up and carrying her inside. Strong hands caressed her body as they headed for the fireplace, removing her clothes the instant her feet hit the floor. Caden pulled her into his chest as Talon pressed against her back.

Caden nuzzled her neck, inhaling as his lips teased her ear. "You never stopped being ours, and I think it's time we showed you just how deep that goes." He nipped at her lobe, following the line down her neck and across her shoulder, ending with a light scrape of his canines across the soft hollow below her collarbone. But then he stopped and captured her gaze. "Are you certain you're ready for all we have to give you?"

Rebecca smiled and wrapped one hand around Caden's neck while the other snaked over Talon's buttocks. "I thought you said coyotes had better hearing? Or weren't you listening when I said...I'm yours."

She leaned in and nipped at his bottom lip, loving how his eyes darkened. Though she didn't know all of what lay ahead, she had a pretty good idea of the main parts, and she trusted her lovers to introduce her to the rest.

She laughed when Talon patted her ass as she finally released Caden's lip, licking at the fullness. "I know the full moon's over, but I'm hoping you're both still hungry."

Talon chuckled in her ear, beading her skin with tiny bumps. "We'll never get enough of you, sweetheart. But I'm willing to try." He ran his fingertips along her arms until he reached her waist. "There's nothing I want more than to lick every drop of honey from your body, but if we don't get inside you soon, we won't be responsible for the consequences."

Moisture flooded her folds at his words, and she blushed, knowing the men could scent her arousal. Their joint groans only heightened her desire, and she followed their lead, kneeling down on the plush shag rug as Caden reclined on his back. He reached for her, and she climbed on top, straddling his thighs. Strong fingers caressed her back as Talon curled over her, brushing her hair back as he dropped kisses along the top of her spine.

"You're so damn beautiful. I love everything about you. How soft your skin is, or how your body reacts to the lightest touch." Talon skimmed down her sides and across her stomach, resting one hand on the apex of her slit. "I love the way you give yourself completely to us, accepting both the man and the beast."

Rebecca held her breath as he slowly drew her drenched lips apart, baring her nub to the cool air of the cabin. She felt it pulse, drawing a strangled groan from Caden.

He slipped one hand up her thighs, circling the small bud with a single finger. "I love it when you flutter your clit. Do it again with me inside you."

She smiled at his request, pushing up until his cock nudged her sex. A wave of feminine power poured over her and she rotated her hips, teasing him with just a hint of penetration. Caden growled, but didn't move. She palmed his chest, tracing the plated muscles as she slowly lowered down, wanting to feel every inch of him joining with her. Caden's face twisted with pleasure and she knew he was fighting his instinct to dominate her.



She leaned forward when he was fully seated, brushing her lips over his. He reached one hand behind her neck, holding her still as his mouth embraced hers, the passionate kiss stealing her breath. She gave herself over to him, rediscovering every inch of his velvet heat as Talon cherished her from behind, massaging her muscles as he gently began preparing her for his entrance. His slick finger circled her ass, softly bridging the tight hole until he could slide the digit back and forth.

A deep moan rumbled free, and he added another finger, increasing the pressure building low in her belly. Caden started moving, an easy rhythm she knew was designed to distract her from Talon's actions. She flowed with the men, accepting each new layer of seduction until Talon finally moved in behind her, splaying her knees farther apart.

"That's it, sweetheart, stay nice and wide for us. Let us give you the ultimate pleasure."

She tensed as his cock pushed against her ass, not sure she could accommodate his width, but Caden soothed her fears by drawing small circles on her skin, making it tingle with need. Talon kept pushing, finally sliding past her tight ring of muscles and burrowing into her ass. Pleasure erupted in a fiery blaze, starting in her butt and culminating in her pussy. She cried out, rising to her hands as the men waited for her body to adjust.

"I'm not one of your broken animals. So either move or I swear I'll neuter you both when you go all coyote again!"

Caden chuckled, cupping her chin. "You are too alpha for your own good, our little mate."

He nodded at Talon, and slowly retreated, leaving only the head of his cock lodged inside her. "We'll let you win this time, but don't get used to it."

She didn't care about alphas or winning, all her thoughts were centered on the coil winding tight inside her groin, threatening to burst with the slightest motion. She looked back at Talon, then shifted to Caden. "Make me come, and I guarantee we all win."

A devious smile spread across Caden's face, and he surged forward, filling her in one smooth stroke. She arched around Talon's hands, her voice keening into a scream when Talon pulled back, hovering at the edge before reclaiming the lost inches.

Colors swirled in her vision as the boys took turns filling her, driving her higher with every plunge. She twisted in their arms, so close to the edge she wanted to howl. Caden levered up, pulling her close as he licked the skin just a few inches below her collarbone.

“Now, darling. Come for us, and let us take you as our mate.”

Her climax wavered when she realized he intended on marking her in the most primal way. She looked into his eyes, heat filling in her heart at the love shining back at her. She leaned into him, baring her neck as Talon fingered her clit, pushing her into orgasm. Her voice echoed off the walls as Caden sank his canines into her flesh, binding her to him in a way she knew time wouldn't erase. Pleasure streaked to the wound as he pulled back, licking the hurt before collapsing on the rug, his cock exploding inside her.

She rode his release, turning to Talon and offering the other side. He dropped a sensuous kiss on her lips before sealing his mouth to her skin, and taking her over the edge once again.

Minutes ticked by before she finally could open her eyes, humming at the sated feeling creeping into her muscles. Two sets of hands brushed her skin, and for the first time since she'd moved to Becket Falls, she felt as if she belonged.

“Now that's the look of a satisfied mate,” said Talon.

“Looks like Darrin was right,” added Caden. “You are feisty.” He winked when she raised her eyebrow at him. “But don't worry, we'd never want to tame you—at least not in bed. Now at work...”

She batted his chest and closed her eyes, feeling the familiar warmth spread through her. And once she'd regained her strength, she'd show them just how feisty she could be. After all, in spirit, she was part coyote.

## *About the Author*

Kris sees herself as somewhat obsessive and feels she tends to push the boundaries of common sense sometimes. Her friends graciously see her as passionate and adventurous. After all, speed limits are only a guideline and shouting is just her way of rising above the chaos.

Kris loves the outdoors. If she's not on her computer—or chasing after her three kids— you'll find her out on a trail somewhere, either running or riding her mountain bike. Kris took up adventure racing a few years ago, and does her best to enter one or two races every year.

Kris started writing some years back, and it took her a while to realize she wasn't destined for the padded room, and the voices chattering away in her head were really other characters trying to take shape. (And since they weren't telling her to conquer the human race, she went with it.)

Kris loves writing erotic novels. She loves heroines who kick butt, heroes who are larger than life, and sizzling sex scenes that make you squirm in your seat, and leave you feeling just a bit breathless.

Kris loves to talk to her readers and can be found at <http://www.krisnorris.ca>.

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***Taken by the Pack* by Cheryl Dragon**

**Phases: Book One**

Danny loves Alaska, but it doesn't seem to love him back. The full Wolf Moon sparkles over Fairbanks, but he's alone for those long nights. He wants to come out of the closet and date, but his frail family might implode. All he wants is the right man in his bed.

Brandon and Justin are lovers and wolf shifters native to Alaska. They're out to protect their way of life, and sometimes that means extreme measures. When Danny's brother proposes aerial wolf hunting, Danny enters their sights. Danny was the closet case in high school, and now, he'll be their sex toy. The shifter pair is ready to do whatever it takes to stop the hunting and maybe add a sexy human man to their pack.

***New Orleans* by Demi Alex**

*Who makes life-altering decisions based on a fortune cookie?*

Sans her family and sans a job, Lilly Marie is completely alone in the world. With only a broken heart in tow, she has nothing to lose by packing it up and starting over in the sultry Big Easy. And after all she's been through the past year, encountering an eccentric woman in Jackson Square and *actually* following her instructions to "step onto Bourbon Street and into her future" doesn't seem so weird. Who is she to question "destiny" when she'd uprooted herself because of a tiny piece of paper tucked inside a cookie?

What Lilly doesn't expect is for a hero to save her from a rampant bicyclist and whisk her away to a place called *El Destino* to meet his family—"family" being four of the handsomest men Lilly has ever seen. Whether it is fate or coincidence, the sizzling and sexy men of *El Destino* take her into their capable hands to prove that there is no such thing as happenstance, and that undeniable passion and true love can cure any ailment, including a broken heart.

***Alpheli Solution* by Anny Cook**

Bootcamp class seems to be the answer to her prayers. In her wildest dreams, she doesn't consider meeting not just one, but two hunky vampires who take her—in the car, in the shower, in the living room, in the hot tub, in hand—as they teach her everything she'll need to know about her new vampire life.

For centuries, Pierre has loved and pursued Julian with no success. After a hostile takeover of Julian's financial assets, Pierre is positive Julian will have nowhere else to turn. Julian, though, chooses to teach the Vampire Bootcamp class rather than surrender to Pierre on unequal terms. When one of Julian's students approaches him for help identifying her sire, Julian is stunned that she is his alpheli—an extremely rare mate whose blood will allow him to subsist on real food. What will that mean to his love-hate relationship with Pierre?

There are just one or two problems. Danamara is descended from Pierre's bloodline. And she's on someone's hit list. Julian and Pierre find unexpected erotic rewards and eternal love when they join together in a brutal war to protect their alpheli's life.

### ***Belonging to Them*** by Brynn Paulin

On the run from her past, Rayna Halliday is devastated when her old car breaks down in the middle of nowhere. She soon finds that her ex has managed to block her credit cards, her accounts and even her cell phones in an attempt to exert his control over her. Giving in to him is something she refuses to do.

When the owners of O'Keefe's Gas and Repair come to her rescue, they make her an offer that tantalizes the forbidden desires within her—she can find a way to pay for the car repairs, or she can belong to them for two weeks and they'll see to her repairs for free. At the sexual mercy of four gorgeous men for two weeks... Why not? She can have fun and get things straightened out, all at once. But there are two problems heading her way: an ex on a rampage and her heart that's in for more than just fun.

### ***FU*** by Mia Watts

When a screw-up by the Fullerton University Housing Office leaves Parker Galloway shackled up with four sexy men, Parker thinks four just might be her lucky number...as long as she can get Kei Yamamoto to join in the fun.

But will taking advantage of FU's mistake end up getting all five roomies kicked off campus, or will it be the closest thing to heaven Parker has ever experienced?

### ***Oriana and the Three Werebears*** by Tia Fanning

Oriana Ricci has taken over the family business—flying cargo and rich tourists around Alaska's barely inhabited Kodiak Archipelago. When her plane malfunctions and she's forced to make an

emergency landing, she finds herself stranded in the middle of a National Wildlife Refuge. With no civilization for miles and no hope of rescue, she thinks all is lost... Until she stumbles upon the entrance to an underground bunker.

Jack, Jordan, and Jonathan McMathan own and operate a secret intelligence firm contracted by the US Government. Hidden away in an old Cold War spy station located the middle of the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, the brothers are not only able to do their top secret jobs safely without fear of discovery, but are better to protect their other, more personal secret: They have the ability to shift into Kodiak bears.

Like a fairy tale gone bad, the brothers return home to find their lunch tasted—or eaten, their computer chairs adjusted—or broken, and a beautiful blonde sleeping in one of their beds. This situation poses a big problem for the brothers... Their location is now compromised. But more importantly, what are they to do with the lady?

## ***The Not Quite Wicked Series***

### ***Wolf in Men's Clothing* by Dakota Rebel**

Little Red Riding Hood has nothing on Rhys. On his way to his grandmother's house, Rhys' car breaks down in the middle of nowhere. Fortunately for him, there is a big, bad rescuer watching and waiting to sweep him off his feet.

### ***Just Right* by Bronwyn Green**

When Department of Natural Resources officer, Gwendolyn Locke, hits a black bear on the way home from work one night, her entire view of reality changes. She discovers that shape-shifters exist, and she's just become Goldilocks to three gorgeous, very aroused men who also happen to be werebears. Being snowbound has never been so hot.

### ***Open Sesame* by Mia Watts**

Alister Baban overheard a business discussion that netted him and his Uncle Cassimer a lot of money. When the Simsim Group stock crashes and declares bankruptcy within weeks, the owners immediately suspect the Babans of playing dirty.

Oz Adamo, one of four brothers who owned Simsim Group, agrees to abduct Alister to obtain information and win back the lost pensions of former employees.

Tied to a bed and lusting after his captor, Alister fights the sexual attraction he has for Oz. They want information and he isn't about to give it. But Oz loves a good challenge, and shrewd, serious, sexy Alister is naked and his—at least for now.

### ***Heart of Ice* by Brynn Paulin**

Kai is perfectly unhappy with his life. Cast into a role as shop boy and forced into marriage to save his family, he sees nothing good in his future. In fact, his betrothed, Gerda, seems to hate everything he enjoys. Especially winter and his attraction to dominating his partners. His prospects look grim...until the Snow Queen arrives.

Wyn has spent her life alone, living vicariously through those who love winter. When she learns of Kai's predicament, she knows she must save him. If only she could save herself. She craves his dominance, but there's one tiny thing standing in their way. No human can touch her without experiencing chilly agony. And that might bring any relationship to an icy death.

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