

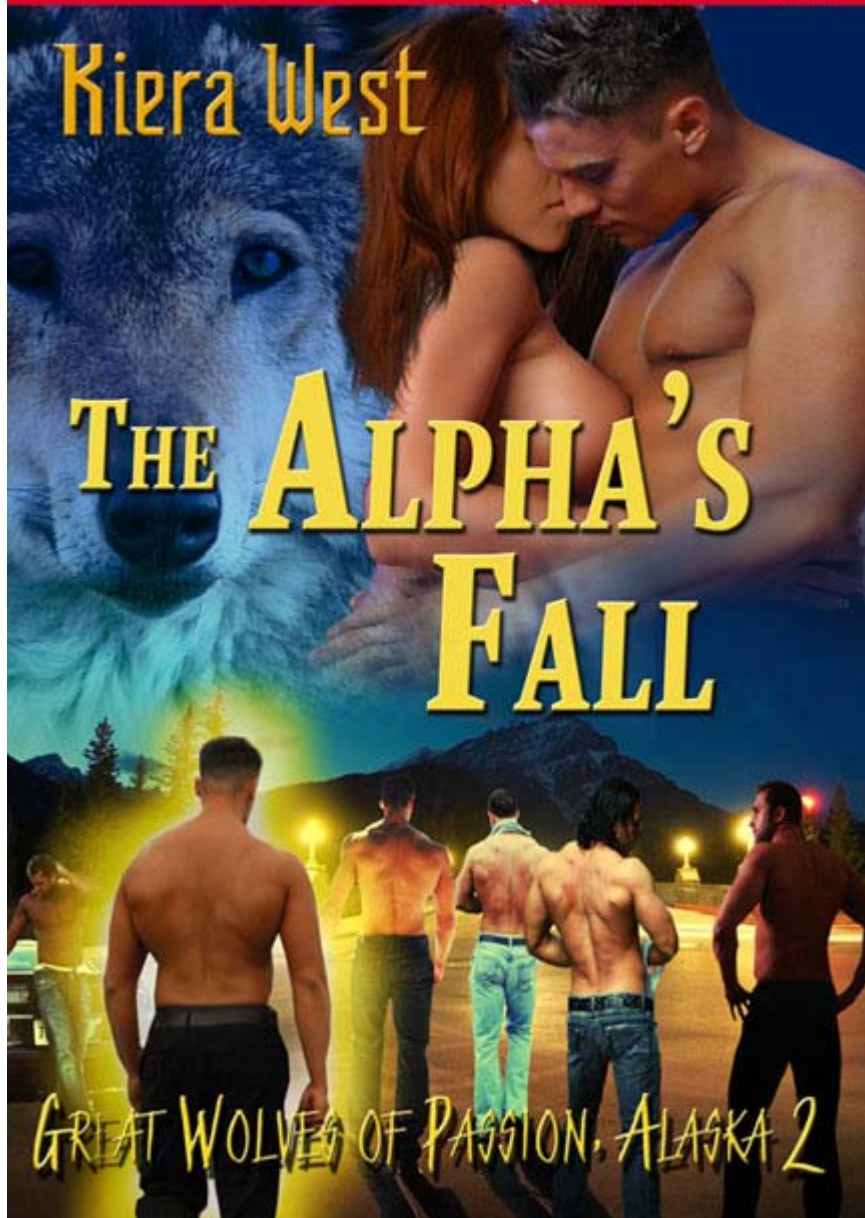
Siren Publishing

LoveXtreme Forever

Kiera West

THE ALPHA'S FALL

GREAT WOLVES OF PASSION: ALASKA 2



Great Wolves of Passion, Alaska 2

The Alpha's Fall

Scientist Eve MacMillan might have bitten off more than she can chew. She has taken on six lovers, all of whom happen to be werewolves. Worse, there is now someone out to get them. Ethan is still recovering from his attack when his brother, Noah, the alpha, makes it clear that he wants Eve. But, she feels him pulling away from her outside of it.

Noah knows he's made some mistakes. He hasn't been paying attention to security like he should. His preoccupation with their mate has left them exposed and his brother fighting for his life. It hurts to ignore Eve, but he has to do it for the good of the pack.

Eve knows exactly why he's pulled away, but now that she realizes her feelings for Noah go beyond lust, this is one woman who is going to teach the leader of the pack a thing or two about love.

Genre: Ménage a Trois/Quatre, Paranormal, Shape-shifter

Length: 26,252 words

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DEDICATION

As always, to my husband, my mate, and my knight in shining armor.
You are all of those things and more to me.

THE ALPHA'S FALL

Great Wolves of Passion, Alaska 2

KIERA WEST

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Chapter One

Eve laid her palm on Ethan's forehead, happy to find it cool and dry. She sighed in relief as she dropped her hand and stretched her back. It had been a long night and would have been even without the revelations the Dillon family had thrown at her. It had been touch and go for a few hours. Even with their amazing speed at recovery, Eve had a few brief moments where she worried about Ethan's survival. He had been brutally attacked and in a way that told her the attacker had not meant to hurt or maim. He had meant to kill.

"Is he doing okay?" Noah's gravelly voice seeped out of the shadows of Ethan's room. She knew he was there. He had been there through the entire night although he had kept his distance. Even during the worst of the night, she had felt him there. His steady presence had been one of the things that had kept her going.

Even without looking, she knew it was him. It had been like that through the night. Odd that she could tell which cousin was behind her. It was almost as if she could tell them by their scent...which was insane. But with each passing hour, her connection to the Dillons seemed to grow stronger. It wasn't something that made her very happy.

She brushed those thoughts aside and turned to face him, but she could barely see him.

"He's doing fine. No fever. I barely had to do anything. It's amazing just how well your bodies recover."

He said nothing for a moment, and the silence stretched. Eve had to resist the urge to fidget. He was stoic, distant, so not the man she thought she knew.

"We do. It is better if we are in our wolf, but as long as we are stable, we can heal ourselves."

His tone was defensive as if waiting for her to attack him. It was strange. Beyond strange. Something pricked at her heart but she wasn't sure what. He was cool, acting almost as if she was a stranger. One thing she knew, though, she would not let him see her pain.

She cocked her head to the side and said, "Are you going to come out of the shadows, or am I supposed to imagine what you look like?"

She felt him hesitate then watched as he came into the dim light. The long night showed on his face. Dark circles under his eyes, his mouth turned down into a grim frown. Eve could tell he'd shoved his hand more than once through his hair. Whiskers littered his jaw, and he wore the same clothes he had the night before.

"Better?" His tone told her he wasn't happy. Heck, he sounded downright snarly. He seemed to direct his irritation in her direction, which was completely unfair. She wanted to confront him, but a clatter outside the door caught her attention.

"Who is that?"

His shoulders slumped and he sighed. The sound of it so lonely and resigned she wanted to comfort him. From the frown on his face, she didn't think he would accept that from her.

"Noah?"

"I have a feeling it's our mother."

Oh, this wasn't good. She had yet to meet their mother and wasn't in the mood, not right now. She was a mess, having slept in the chair beside Ethan's bed. And just how was the woman not going to know

she wasn't involved with all of these men? In the years she had worked with wolves, she knew the scent would be there. Werewolves had to have the same kinds of senses. His mother would know without a doubt she'd had sex with all of them.

"Why is it taking her so long to make it up here?"

Noah grimaced. "Being...involved with us causes some of your more canine senses to develop. Your hearing is probably improving."

She didn't say anything for a moment. Too many things had been thrown at her in the last twenty-four hours. Heck, it had been a forty-eight-hour ride of insanity. Her background had given her the ability to deal with tense situations. A girl of sixteen doesn't graduate from college as valedictorian without being able to roll with the punches. Still, this was almost more than she could handle.

She glanced at Noah. He didn't look like he was in the mood for a confrontation, but then, being Alpha, she was pretty sure he rarely liked it. She knew they couldn't have a good discussion on it at the moment, so she said, "You will explain. Later."

One eyebrow quirked up and for the first time since they had found Ethan, she saw his expression lighten. "Indeed."

The door burst open, bringing with it a rush of cool air and a tall woman. She could see Noah in her height and her eyes. Long, tangled black curls reached half way down her back. But she could see Ethan there, too. They shared a chin and the long, lean body of a swimmer. Eve was pretty sure the woman made an imposing figure any other time. But at the moment, her gaze was filled with a terror only a mother could feel.

"Where is he?"

Her gaze traveled over Eve, pausing slightly, then she moved onto Ethan. Pain etched her features, that physical pain mothers felt for their own children. She rushed to his bedside and reached out but stopped herself from touching him.

"It's okay," Eve said, her voice a low murmur. "You won't hurt him if you touch him. In fact, he might gain some power from the contact."

The older woman gave Eve a thankful look. She brushed her fingers over his cheek. "What happened?"

Eve waited for Noah to explain. She caught a glimpse of him out of the corner of her eye, but he remained stubbornly silent. So she said, "He was attacked just outside."

"He wasn't in his wolf?" His mother whispered the question. Eve could tell their mother was barely controlling herself.

Again, she waited for Noah, who didn't say anything. Irritation marched down her spine. This was stressful enough without having to handle his mother. That was his job as her son. Her voice was sure, but there was a hint of anxiety in it.

Eve sighed. "No. We think he was about to change over."

"Bear?"

Eve shook her head. Their mother set her hands on Ethan and closed her eyes. She sucked in a quick, sharp breath. "You're right. But, someone wanted to make you think it."

Nodding, Eve said, "But the injuries were too uniform. A bear attack would be frenzied. This wasn't. Each slash was precise."

She shuddered, closing her eyes. Eve had the feeling she was very close to losing her composure. In fact, she was amazed at the older woman's restraint. They had such a close family that something like this would be almost too much to take. And if what she had discerned was true, his mother had known since the night before.

Silence reigned in the room, and then their mother drew in a deep breath and looked at Eve. The tired smile the older woman offered her made Eve's heart ache.

"You must be Eve MacMillan. I'm Cherise Dillon, since my idiot son didn't introduce us."

“You were busy assessing the patient.” His voice held a small hint of humor. It was the first words Eve heard from Noah since his mother had arrived.

His mother now turned to him, assessing his well-being.

“Come here,” Cherise said. He obeyed but walked to his mother slowly as if waiting for a blow. But it didn’t come, of course. Instead, Cherise pulled him into her arms. “I was so worried. I knew something happened, felt it, but I didn’t know if it was one or all of you...I didn’t know.”

Eve heard the ragged pain in her voice and felt tears burn the back of her eyes. It had been hours since it had happened, but the storm would not have allowed Cherise to come check on them. Communication was very chancy during a storm like what had just hit them. She could only imagine what it must have been like waiting to come, to find out whether he was okay.

Noah turned his head and rested it on his mother’s shoulder. “I’m sorry.”

His mother murmured something to him that Eve could not quite hear, and she decided it was time to leave. She felt like an interloper and turned away. But in that next instant, a large commanding figure stepped into the room. He was as tall as Noah, the same hair but peppered with gray, same stoic expression, his mouth tightened in worry. He saw the figure on the bed and walked over.

“He is going to be alright because you took care of him.”

He didn’t look at her when he talked but she knew he was addressing her. “I did little. He started to heal very fast.”

Then, when he looked at her, he smiled slightly and in that instant, her breath clogged up in her lungs. This was Noah, the playful lover who had enticed her into bed, at least thirty years from now. It was like looking at him in a time machine. The same eyes, the same nose, that same smile.

“No. Having you here, that helped him. It gave him more strength. Being connected the way you are it’s important that you are here by

his side. I'm Samuel, his father." He must have seen the disbelief she felt in her expression. "You don't understand our kind, but you will. Trust me."

She nodded, unable to really say anything to that. Reality would be dealt with at some point, but at the moment, she was just too danged tired. She still felt as if she was walking in a dream world where there were werewolves, and she was intimately involved with them. God.

Drawing in a deep breath, she said, "Do you mind keeping an eye on him for a few minutes? I want to check on the wolf we found."

Cherise pulled back from Noah and took Eve's hand. "Thank you for being there for Ethan."

She nodded but said nothing else, ignoring the hulking figure watching her walk out the door. If Noah wanted to talk, he would just have to wait. He could have talked to her anytime during the night, but he chose to brood instead. She wasn't about to discuss their situation with his parents in the room, and she didn't have the energy to even think of what to say to him. Eve knew she needed a second or two alone. If she had confronted Noah right now, there was a good chance she would scream or break down in tears. Or both.

She went to Noah's room, not knowing where else to go. She stepped into his bathroom and looked at herself in the mirror. God, she was a mess. Worse, she had dark circles under eyes, and she was pale. Lord, she never had any luck. She meets Noah's mother and father, and she looks like she's been on a three day bender. With a sigh, she turned on the water. There was nothing she could do about it now. Besides, she needed to figure out just what the hell she was going to do about the Dillons.

* * * *

Panic coiled like a cold viper in his stomach. That had been too close. If one of the Dillons had gotten hold of him, he'd be dead. There was no doubt in his mind about that fact.

He finished cleaning the gash Ethan had given him then looked at himself in the mirror and wondered what had brought him to this. He had been in control of his life at one point. When he didn't live here, when he had been away from the family issues.

"Did you take care of Ethan Dillon?"

He didn't turn around and didn't look into the mirror. Facing her was too much to ask. He raised the washcloth to clean off his face and noticed his hand was shaking. Jesus. After what he had been through, he didn't think he could deal with her. He didn't want to face the one woman who had the power to ruin his life.

"I attacked. One of their pack showed up. I think Shane."

Her sighed filled the room. Disappointment hung heavy in the air as her stiletto heels clipped across the ceramic tile.

"You need to take care of them. If you don't, they will control everything."

Then he looked at her reflection in the mirror. At one time, she had been beautiful, still was. But there was an edge to it, one that scared him if he looked too deep. He was a grown man who was afraid of his mother.

"I understand but doing it myself is going to be difficult."

"You will do it."

There was no question in her voice. Of course there wasn't. He would do it, just as he had done everything else, no matter how it sickened him.

"The Dillons owe me," she said. She often did. He had heard it every day of his life. He was sure she was saying it to him before he knew what the words meant.

"I know, mother."

She stepped up beside him. The smile she offered him had nothing to do with happiness and everything to do with the fear he'd lived with for years.

"Just remember that, darling. If it wasn't for them, I'd be in control."

He nodded and looked away as fear crawled into his chest and wrapped its hands around his heart.

She turned to walk out but paused by the doorway.

"You have something else planned?" she asked, her voice deceptively sweet. He had learned at an early age his mother was scary when she was mad, but she was downright frightening when she was sweet.

"I can think of something," he offered.

"Good. Maybe something in Passion. Hurt one of those stupid people they care so much about, it might get their attention."

"Yes, Mother."

She left him then and he cursed himself. But even as he did, he knew he would do it. He was powerless not to. It was the one thing he could count on.

And the one thing that would damn him to hell.

* * * *

"I have a feeling our son did not tell their mate what they were until this happened," his mother said in a deceptively calm tone. Noah knew she was running on fear and adrenaline. And anger. It vibrated in her voice, but beneath it was irritation. He bit back his own irritation and faced his parents.

"It wasn't like we could invite her over and tell her."

His mother crossed her arms over her breasts. "And so you were planning on telling her when?"

"Cherise." His father's tone held a warning. He might be a former Alpha, but it was still within him to order his mother around. But over

thirty-five years together had taught Cherise just what she could and could not do.

“No.” She glanced at his father. “I will not have a damned idiot of a son screwing this up. All of you are the same. You think you know what’s best.”

“She wouldn’t have understood,” Noah said. “She’s a scientist. Her life is based in fact.”

His mother snorted. “Oh, so it’s better that she is walking around looking shell-shocked? That worked out wonderfully.”

“Cherise, you need to be reasonable,” his father said. Noah tossed him a grateful look but knew it wouldn’t last. His father was Alpha, but in this, he would comply with his mate.

“Reasonable? You know what I think happened? Part of the reason our darling sons and nephews didn’t explain things to her was because they felt the poor little woman wouldn’t be able to handle it.” Her voice dripped with sarcasm, telling him she knew that Eve was not weak. She narrowed her eyes at his father. “And knowing the fact they are related to you and your idiot brothers, they thought they could control her with sex.”

Wolves had no problem with their sexuality. It was an innate part of their personalities. It wasn’t as if they could separate it. It was different when your mother was admonishing you for your behavior with your mate. Noah felt his cheeks burn in embarrassment. “You know, you’d think my family would talk quietly and let me rest,” Ethan’s tired voice filtered over them. All three of them looked over at him.

His eyes were barely open, the wounds on his face now merely marks that would completely disappear by tomorrow. But, he was pale, weak, and from the look on his face, a little pissed. Noah could understand it.

“Oh, baby,” his mother said, her voice softening as she rushed to the bed, sitting beside Ethan and taking his hand in hers. “It’s so good to see you awake.”

Ethan shifted his weight, and a look of pain moved over his face. "I would rather be asleep."

His father chuckled as he came up behind his mother, laying a shaky hand on his mother's shoulder. It was then he realized just how dazed his father was. His mother was allowed to show all the emotion because she was a mother, with maternal instincts. His father was a former Alpha, and even Betas knew better than to show any kind of reaction. Just seeing it made the situation somehow worse.

"Noah?"

He came to the bed, ready to be blamed. He had let his brother down, allowed him to be attacked. But instead, Ethan frowned at him.

"Where's Eve?"

His brother looked unreasonably worried about their mate, but he couldn't fault him. It was a feeling they would always share for her.

"Checking on the wolf."

Ethan sighed and seemed to relax. "It wasn't a bear."

That caught Noah's attention. "Eve thought it wasn't either. Said the wounds were too precise. My question is, who is it then? It makes no sense."

"I have no idea. It came at me from the shadows, but I remember hearing Shane say something about it being a bear. I wanted to make sure you knew."

"What's going on?" Eve's voice filled the room. For such a little woman, she could be loud when she wanted to.

He had known she was approaching before she had shown up. Her soft footsteps and musky scent had told him she was walking down the hall. He glanced at her and had to fight the spurt of happiness that filled him each time he saw her. She'd brushed red locks away from her face, and her green eyes sparkled with agitation.

His mother rose from the bed. His parents shared an amused look. "Ethan woke up."

Eve looked at Ethan and frowned. "I had hoped you would sleep longer."

“I tried. But they were arguing and woke me up.”

Noah cast his eyes to the ceiling. He could tell his brother was going to milk this for all it was worth. Even being attacked the way he was, Ethan would be fully recovered by tomorrow. If he could gain her sympathy, Ethan would end up with a playmate in bed, for hours. She was already by his side, taking his pulse. When she wasn't looking, Ethan tossed Noah a smirk. Noah couldn't help but chuckle.

“I think since Ethan said we were keeping him up, we should let him sleep,” he said, taking Eve's hand. “He needs rest to recover.”

She didn't come right away, which annoyed him. He knew he didn't have a right to order her around, not yet. His mother must have read the undertones, because she stepped in.

“I'll keep an eye on him.”

Eve hesitated.

“Eve, I promise to call if there's any worry on my part. Believe me, you'll be the first person I call on.”

With a sigh, his mate nodded.

“I don't need a keeper,” Ethan said, agitation easy to hear in his voice. Noah could understand his brother wouldn't want to look weak in front of their mate.

His mother stood and settled her hands on her hips. “Maybe not, but you are going to explain to your mother just why you were outside changing without protection.”

Before Eve could get in the middle of that argument, Noah yanked her completely out of the room and into the hallway then down to his room.

“Hey, you don't have to drag me around like some sort of doll.”

It was then that he realized just how hard he had tugged on her wrist. He could see the red marks on her tender skin. Mentally, he cursed himself. “Sorry, I forget my strength sometimes.”

She rubbed her wrist and shook her head. “No big deal. I bruise easily. It is the bane of my existence. Try growing up in the desert with skin like mine.”

He watched as she wandered to the window to look out. He wanted to go to her, pull her in his arms, comfort her. It was part of their DNA to be demonstrative, and they gained strength from their mate's touch. But he knew she wouldn't accept it.

"Let's have it."

She looked over her shoulder at him, her mouth turned down in a frown. "Where should I start? Maybe just why you haven't been honest with me from the first moment I met you? I think that would be a great start."

Chapter Two

For a moment, Eve was pretty sure he wasn't going to explain himself. Irritation moved over his features. She had pegged him right from the beginning. The Alpha. And Lord knew an Alpha didn't like explaining himself. They were used to giving orders, not taking them. Too damn bad.

"So?"

He didn't answer right away. If anything, his face lost all expression. "Would you have believed us?"

She wanted to say she would have, but she knew better than to try to lie. There is no way as a scientist she would have. In fact there was a good chance she would start avoiding them. She looked back out of the window, staring over the fresh snow. She couldn't deny it. She could not lie.

"Of course you wouldn't have."

She could hear the condemnation in his voice. But just beneath it, there was anger.

What right did he have to be angry with her? He lied by omission. "You have no right to judge me."

"I had every right."

Annoyed beyond belief, she slipped her hands through hair. Anger welled up in her chest and she had to fight to keep it under control. It wasn't something she was used to. Most of the time, she didn't get angry. In fact, she led a pretty subdued life until she met up with the Dillons. But in the span of one weekend, she had taken them as lovers and was very close to losing her temper with him, not to mention the rest of them.

“Were you planning on ever telling me?”

When he didn't answer, she turned around. “Well?”

“I planned to. At the right moment.”

“At a moment of your choosing, I'm sure.” Hurt and exasperated, she wanted to get something out of him, get him to show some kind of emotion. But he showed her nothing. No emotion, no hint of what was going on in that hard head of his. He was more remote than the top of Denali.

He nodded. Once. That frustrated her even more. “And what about what went on over the last few days?”

When he said nothing, she turned to face him. In all the months she had known Noah Dillon, she had never known him to be this distant.

“Well?” she asked in a voice that sounded shrewish even to her own ears. She hated it and the fact he had the power to do this to her.

“Well, what?”

She barely bit back the scream that shimmered in her throat. Damn it, the man was going to drive her insane.

“Was that all for fun?”

He shook his head as his eyes softened. “No.”

“Is it normal for...your kind?”

He hesitated again and that scream bubbled again. She must have made some kind of sound because he looked at her oddly. He really had no idea how close she was to throwing something at him.

“Once every few centuries, one pack is known to have one mate. We've known for a while we would all share a mate.”

“A mate?”

“It isn't understood why, but it seems to happen within our family.”

“What does that have to do with me?”

“You're our mate.”

He said it as if it were a fact, like the sun rises in the east.

She shook her head. “Not me.”

He nodded. "I knew the moment I heard your voice on the phone."

"You're wrong." No way was she some kind of broodmare for a pack of wolves. Panic surged and she had to fight from completely freaking out. She had built a life and had a career, one that fulfilled her every need.

Except for love.

She pushed that thought aside as he slowly approached her. "You know how you felt with all of us? Do you think you would have allowed us to do what we did to you, take you over and over, if somewhere deep inside of you there wasn't a bit of wolf?"

She snorted to cover the alarm now coursing through her veins. She knew what he said couldn't be true. Hopefully. "You're trying to tell me I am like you?"

He shrugged. "It seems mates who grow up outside the pack have some kind of predisposition, genetically linked to us in some way. Don't you feel it when you're around us?"

It was her turn to shrug because what he said was starting to make sense. And none of it should. She knew she'd seen Shane change form, knew that it was true. But there was a part of her that just wasn't ready to accept the fact that there were honest-to-god werewolves.

He took another step closer, and she panicked and stepped back.

"You're afraid of me now." The resignation in his voice made her heart weep. After everything the man kept from her, she should have these feelings. But the need to comfort, to mend whatever ailed him, overtook her better sense.

"It isn't that. You touch me, and I lose all ability to think."

His lips curved seductively. "Huh. I would have never figured that."

She quirked an eyebrow as she crossed her arms over her chest. "Yeah. Because I have used such good rational thought when it comes to you, your brother, and your cousins."

A gleam entered his eyes that had her worried. It was almost feral. She shouldn't feel the tremor of lust rising her in blood, but she did. It rushed through her, heating her from the inside out. Just from one look.

She shook her head. "No."

She backed up another step as he approached. "This isn't how we should deal with the issue."

"Oh, yeah it is." Before she could react, he reached out and grabbed her. He easily scooped her up and over his shoulder.

"Noah, this isn't smart. We shouldn't be doing this."

"Can't think of a better way to deal with it," he said in such an easy voice she wondered if it was the same man who had been in his brother's room.

"This won't solve anything," she said, even as her body was heating from being so close to him. It didn't matter that she was angry with him right now. If anything, the anger was now transforming into lust. "We'll still have to talk about this."

He ignored her until he got to his bed. He dropped her there. She bounced once and couldn't help but laugh. He pressed her into the mattress with his hard body then stole her breath with a deep, long kiss. His tongue took total possession of her mouth. She shivered. She had never been that sexual of a person, but with the Dillons, just a kiss sent her hormones into overdrive.

She was panting heavily by the time he pulled back. His eyes were dark, almost black, and more intense than she had ever seen before. He said nothing as he slipped his fingers under her sweater, gripping it and pulling it over her head. The raw savage she saw in the depths of his gaze, felt vibrate in the air around him, almost had her coming right there and then.

He had his mouth on her breast before she could even question his actions. As he sucked and teased, his hands moved to her pants. He made quick work of them. Soon, she was laying on the bed, completely nude, her legs hanging over the side.

He pulled her closer to the edge and pushed her legs apart further. She felt exposed, embarrassed. Even with everything she had been through the last few days, she wasn't used to the raw sensuality each Dillon possessed. It spoke to something deep inside her. His heated breath feathered over her cunt the moment before his mouth attacked. He plunged his tongue into her over and over, his teeth grazing over her clit every few licks.

"Damn, you have the sweetest pussy." He ground out every word as if it came from somewhere deep inside of him. She could barely hear him, could barely make out the words. Her head was spinning, her mind devoid of any kind of thought. Tension gathered, and she felt herself moving toward the pinnacle.

Too fast.

It was the one thing that entered her mind. She needed to slow it down. Slow him down. But, she had no control, no ability to even attempt to stop him. She tried to move, to shift away from him, but he didn't allow it. He gripped her tightly, his fingers digging into her skin as he held her still and tortured her with his tongue. She couldn't seem to keep anything straight. Irritation spread through her even as he pleased her, inching her closer and closer to the edge. Panic mingled with the overwhelming need he was building. She tried to back up from the force of her orgasm, but Noah didn't stop. Greedily, he lapped at her pussy, shoving her into the vortex as her orgasm broke through her. Eve convulsed, her entire body shivering with pleasure. Before she could recover, he propelled her over again. It flashed through her, burning her up from the inside out. She shouted his name as she came this time, the strength of it bringing her to tears. Her cunt spasmed, flushed with new cream.

He growled as he stood, the deep, guttural sound filling the room and causing her to open her eyes. She watched through half-opened eyes as he practically tore off his clothes. He stepped closer, his nostrils flaring. He pulled her hips up and thrust into her in one swift movement. The tremors of her last orgasm were just settling, her

pussy still quivering from her last release. She had thought she wouldn't be able to handle another one, but apparently, Noah did. He pulled her up higher, lifting her hips off the mattress as he pounded into her. Each time he drove into her, she felt herself approach her next orgasm, but nothing happened. Frustration mounted as she grabbed hold of the bed sheets.

She growled in aggravation. The release she was afraid of just moments before, eluded her now that she wanted it. Tears poured out of her eyes as she thrashed her head back and forth. In the next moment, tension broke free finally. She screamed this time, unable to keep quiet. She thought it would be enough, that he would gain his pleasure, but something was driving him, pushing him to take complete and utter control. He continued moving in and out of her, his thrust hard, deep, and overwhelming. When she opened her eyes, the fire in his scared her. She wasn't afraid he would hurt her, but the fierceness bordered on primal. She tried to pull back, but his hands tightened on her flesh.

"Don't. Not now. Don't pull away."

The order came from behind clenched teeth, but she sensed something else there. There was an urgency to his need to claim her. In the heat of their lovemaking, she could feel his need for something else, something that was beyond just sex. And it didn't matter. She couldn't deny him if she wanted to. Tension built again, her body pulsating with it, needing the release, but he had changed the direction of his thrusts. He pulled her legs up over his shoulders, making sure she had little to no control at all. Now, he was teasing her. The gleam in his eye told her that he knew she was close to yet another release. But he wasn't going to allow it. He was going to draw it out.

Each thrust took her a little closer, but because of the angle, she couldn't do anything. She hated this, the loss of control to him...to anyone. At the same time, she reveled in it. He would stop if she asked, but the pleasure unfurling in her was different from before. But soon, his movements increased. He pushed into her one last time,

threw his head back, and groaned her name. Just the sight of him in his orgasm pushed her over again. She crashed into it, her body shuddering, barely able to handle the pleasure that he pushed on her.

He lowered her legs, and then pulled out of her before collapsing beside her. Cool air drifted over her body, and she shivered. She was cold, but she couldn't seem to move. She could barely think, let alone order her body to get under the covers or get some clothes on. Thankfully, Noah found strength to pull her up to the head of the bed, pull her into his arms, and cover them with the sheet.

"I'm too old for this." The humor she heard in his voice relaxed her.

She hadn't realized she had been worried. Making love with Noah had always been pleasurable. The short time they had been lovers he had been intense. But this was different. Something was off tonight, and she had a feeling it had to do with Ethan. It was as if he had something to prove. To her and himself.

Using most of her strength, she pulled herself up and rested her weight on her elbow. His eyes were closed, but she sensed that he was still awake.

"What was that about?"

He opened his eyes, and his brows drew down as he frowned up at her. "What are you talking about?"

Eve had to squash the tiny spurt of irritation that threatened to make her lose her temper. She had had enough of evasions and half-truths.

She sighed. "You were a little more...ruthless."

He shrugged, and she wanted to push him. Get her answers. Damn it, she deserved that much. Considering what she had been through in the last few days, she didn't think it was unreasonable. But before she could press him for answers, there was a knock at the door.

"Come on, my boy. Quit fooling around. We need to talk about what happened." Noah's father's voice boomed through the thick door.

She felt herself turn red. When Noah looked at her, he laughed. "You're gonna have to get used to our way." He leaned up and gave her soft kiss. "Besides, you were screaming, so there is a good chance they know. With our hearing, thick doors are nothing."

She collapsed in embarrassment and pulled the covers up over her head. "What a way to make an impression on your parents. Your brother is hurt, and I am busy having sex with their other son in the next room. I'm sure your mother thinks I'm the perfect woman."

Noah tugged on the sheet until she lost her grip. His smile was gentle. "Don't worry, babe. Remember, we aren't exactly normal. We don't hide our sexuality and we aren't embarrassed by it."

"You don't care that your mother knows we were...you know?"

He laughed and gave her another quick kiss. "For someone so smart, you're so naive. No, not embarrassed. How long have you been studying wolves? We might not be exactly what you're used to but a lot of their characteristics are close to ours."

She wanted to ask him more, to discuss not only what they had pulled on her, but the scientist part of her really wanted to discuss the genetic makeup of the Dillon men.

"Ahh, that's going to have to wait."

She frowned. "What are you talking about?"

"I see those wheels working in your head, and I know you want answers. But with everything that has happened, I need to go talk to them. I might be Alpha, but Dad will want some answers, not to mention my mother. Why don't you clean up and join us out there. I'm sure you need some food."

He dressed quickly, gave her another quick kiss, and then left her alone with her thoughts.

She stared up at the ceiling wondering just what the hell she was going to do. Without a doubt, she knew resisting Noah was going to be hard. Hell, resisting any of them was going to be near impossible.

It was so out of the ordinary for her. Seriously, she'd turned into some kind of sex maniac. It was wrong. Everything was happening

too fast, and she could feel the control she needed in her life slipping away from her. She covered her face with her hands. What had she gotten into?

Tears burned the backs of her eyes. How did this get so complicated so fast? Her heart was starting to get attached to each and every one of them. Especially Noah. He seemed to be so strong, so ready to take on the burdens of the entire pack. Still, she sensed a vulnerability that drew her to him. Part of her wanted to soothe, to protect. And she wanted to stay with him, them, forever.

But there was no talk of being anything but an affair. And after the last few hours, she was really worried she was falling in love with Noah.

And that would be very stupid.

Chapter Three

“What the hell is going on here?” his father asked.

Anger and embarrassment, along with a heavy dose of guilt, weighed on Noah's shoulders, burned in his gut. Noah hated the feeling that he was being taken to task for not doing his job. Granted, in his heart, he knew he hadn't. He should have been paying more attention to the attacks on the local wolves. Still, it didn't mean his father had a right to treat him like he was a pup, especially in front of Shane.

He rolled his shoulders as he looked out the panel of windows overlooking Passion. The little bit of sunlight they would have for the day was peeking over the mountains.

“Noah,” his father said. There was no doubt of the demand in the former Alpha's voice. He turned to face him.

“I'm not entirely sure. You know that some outsiders show up every now and then looking for wolves. We've been on top of it for a while.”

“Your brother was attacked. You could not be top of it that well.”

Shame washed over him. He knew he had failed, knew that his pack needed him to keep his head clear. And until four months ago, it hadn't been a problem.

“I don't think you need to tell me what happened. I know. I was here.” And he had washed his brother's blood off his hands.

“So, you plan on doing anything about it? Or are you going to sit around waiting for another attack?”

He snarled at his father, a growl rumbling in his throat. His father deserved his respect, but Noah couldn't allow him to question his

actions. He opened his mouth to shout back, but he wasn't given the chance.

"You will stop this right now," his mother said, striding in between them. His father looked like he wanted to argue, but Noah was pretty sure he knew better. As the former Alpha, he had held a lot of power, but all of them knew the one person they had to answer to was their mate.

"It isn't anyone's fault. If anything, it's your brother's fault. If he hadn't been out there alone, he wouldn't have gotten caught."

He opened his mouth to argue but she gave him the same quelling look she had given his father.

"Good. Now, first thing, why didn't you tell the rest of the pack you'd decided to take your mate?"

He studied his mother for a moment trying to figure out just what she was getting at. Her face showed no expression, no hint of what her mind was putting together.

"You knew from the time she arrived that she was the one," Noah said.

His mother tsked. "I know that, but I had no idea you were planning this. And she knows about us?"

He glanced at Shane, who ducked his head. No one wanted to deal with his mother, definitely not for the way Eve found out. His mother had ruled the pack with an iron fist. His cousins, brother, and Noah might have feared their fathers, but no one wanted to tangle with Cherise Dillon.

"She does now. Shane changed in front of her."

His mother tossed an exasperated look in Shane's direction. "Shane Alexander."

Shane stepped forward knowing that there was no way out of it. If he had been in wolf, he would have had his tail between his legs.

"You didn't see her there?" his mother asked.

"He—"

She shot Noah a look. "I did not ask you."

Noah stifled a sigh and shut up. No matter what he said, there just wasn't enough he could do to protect his cousin. Shane would have to deal with his mother by himself.

Shane colored. "Ethan was hurt, I was protecting him. You know how it is."

She nodded as she stepped closer. She touched his face. "Thank you."

He bowed his head in respect.

She dropped her hand and turned to Noah. "Now, tell us everything you know."

"There have been a few attacks. It hasn't gotten completely out of hand. Truth is, we thought it was the refinery. They wouldn't be above killing off a few wolves to scare us. Or our people."

"Bastards," his father spat out. "No respect for the land or the inhabitants."

Noah glanced at his father and realized that he'd given Noah a pass, for now. "Of course. That's why they want to drill here for what will amount to no more than six months of oil. They think. You and I both know if there is oil there, it's not much. But one thing Eve noticed on the wolves was that they weren't really attacked by bears."

His mother cocked her head and watched him for a second.

"Eve, why don't you think they were attacked by bears?"

He turned around, embarrassed that he hadn't sensed her presence. Every one of his cousins had, but he hadn't. He should have sensed her the moment she walked into the room, but he'd been distracted. Her eyes looked like they were about to glaze over in confusion. She had been thrust in a situation that wasn't normal by any standards, and now she was being questioned by his mother. Damn.

Eve cleared her throat. "It was too deliberate. An attack would be more random. This looked more like they were precisely made. Ethan agreed. Ethan's wounds were very similar."

"You have one in the lab?"

Eve nodded. "The gashes were very similar. Ethan remembers nothing of the attack. Or at least, he can't give us a description."

His mother shook her head. "He had a sense of bears, he said that. But he said there was something odd about it."

"Someone is making it look like bears attacking," Noah said.

Eve looked at him. "Why would they want to do that? I mean, is there a coalition to hunt wolves from the air?"

"No. But there may be someone wanting to make it look like we are getting in their way. That wolves are a problem. We could lose our holding on the land. There is always the other side of it. They might think they can scare off the residents of Passion. Or get them to pressure us to give up the land."

She frowned. "That seems like a waste of time if you ask me."

"Why do you say that?" his father asked.

"Well, there are other ways, much faster and not as dirty, to gain the land. Plus, think about it. These things leave the result open to other people's actions. Granted, they might have some people in the government to help them with the idea there are too many wolves." She rolled her eyes. "Of course they do. They're big business. But still, it leaves a lot open. Businessmen rarely take risks like that."

"Could be they are trying to make us think one of the other Totems are attacking. If that's true, there's a chance they know about us, about our way of life," Shane said.

"That would be disastrous," his mother said.

"I just can't see any of them doing it. Redfoot has said more than once he wouldn't want Noah's job for all the land in the world, and I believe him."

Noah grunted. "They could be trying to scare us away. The attack on Ethan might have been a warning."

She paled just a bit, and he wanted to kick himself in the ass. He shouldn't have scared her that way. Before she drew a breath, Rand was there, his hand in hers and guiding to the sofa. Eve gave Rand an odd look before taking her seat.

He knew she didn't understand yet. From what he could tell of her childhood, she had little attention from her parents and just about no affection. It would probably take her some time getting used to a hoard of wolves at her beck and call. They were a demonstrative group in and out of the bedroom. She was their mate, the one, and they would do anything to make her happy.

"Do you actually think they are that ruthless?" she asked, fear threading her voice.

Noah nodded his head. "They would do anything to get at the oil they think is beneath the surface here."

She sighed. "Do you have any kind of law enforcement?"

He shook his head. "Other than us."

"Have you told the folks in town?"

It amused him that she still called the few buildings that made up the outpost for adventure seeking tourists a town. Granted, they called it Passion, but most of their residents could care less.

"No. But you have a point. Shane, why don't you call Margie?"

Shane chuckled. "Because she won't answer. I can go in, just make sure everything is okay."

"I'll go, too," Eve offered

"No you won't."

One eyebrow rose. "I think I decide where and when I go somewhere. Margie keeps some medical supplies. I would offer to go back to my cabin, but I have a feeling it would be harder to get to than down in the valley. I want to make sure we have enough just in case there are more attacks."

She had a point. They were low on supplies after she cleaned Ethan up. From the expression on her face, he didn't think he had much of a choice. She would fight him, and now was not the time and place to teach her just who was in charge of this pack. She would learn that soon enough.

He nodded. The smile that curved her lips and lit her eyes had his heart tap-dancing. He frowned, not liking that one bit. It was one

thing to understand she was their mate, but he had to get his head screwed back on straight. His job was to take care of the pack, not daydream about their mate.

“I’ll get my gear and meet you out front, Shane.”

It took every bit of his control not to drag her out by her hair and tell her she was their mate. Everything in his DNA told him to do it, do it now. It was if he had no control over his emotions. Damn it, this was not good. For years, he had waited for his mate, had known that they would all share one. It happened once in a few generations, and from birth, they had all known. But he didn’t like the way he seemed tied to her.

“I’ll have Margie put a call out.”

He nodded. “Do that, and make sure they tell them to keep track of any bear movements.”

Shane frowned. “I thought Eve said it wasn’t a bear.”

Noah thought about the Great Bears, shifters from the same Totem. “I would rather be safe than sorry.”

Shane nodded and left. The other cousins all seemed to disappear, leaving him alone with his parents.

“You have a lot to explain, son,” his father said.

“I told you, I have a handle on it.” He couldn’t stop the growl that vibrated in his voice.

“Just make sure you don’t fuck it up.”

“Samuel, language,” his mother said.

His father tossed her a look Noah knew he would pay for later. “Well, he needs to act like the Alpha.”

“If you say one more word, I swear to all that is holy, you will regret it.”

Knowing his mother, she would follow through on the threat. Apparently, his father understood he was skating on thin ice.

“Let’s go watch Ethan.” She walked up to him, rose to her tip toes, and brushed her lips over his cheek. “Get some rest.”

After he was alone, he went over all that had gone on. He had made a mistake somewhere along the way. His father had never had problems like this, so Noah knew it was something missing in him, something that he didn't attend to. For the last four months, all of his focus had been on Eve. He hadn't ignored the threat, but he hadn't really given it the attention that he needed. That was a mistake he could not make again. He needed to keep his mate in her place to be able to protect his pack.

He scented her before she entered the living area this time. She smiled at him, and he watched it fade when he didn't return it. It took a lot of power not to respond in kind. He'd bottled up his feelings the last few months, and he could do it again.

"Make sure that you go nowhere without Shane."

She nodded, a look of resignation moving over her face. He wanted to assure her, but he couldn't. Allowing her to get into his head could be disastrous. He had been too distracted by her for months and for his brother, it had turned out almost deadly. He brushed past her, fighting the urge to take her in his arms and comfort her. He couldn't do it. Too much was riding on the fact that he needed to stay on top of everything.

He would have to make sure he didn't get led around by his dick.

Chapter Four

Eve chewed on her lip as Shane drove his SUV toward town. Normally, she took comfort in the scene as she drove into the small cluster of buildings that made up the town of Passion. In all the years that she had travelled around, she had never found a place that felt more like home. There was one lane cleared of snow into town, but there was no problem with that. Most of the Passion residents would be hunkered down in their cabins with their generators going.

The sight of the town, which was made up of less than ten buildings, usually made her heart bubble over with joy. Today, it didn't happen. Instead, she couldn't seem to keep warm. She hadn't said anything since they left, mainly because she felt like crying. She had no idea why, but every time she thought of the way Noah had behaved, she'd felt so cold.

"Is something bothering you?"

She glanced at Shane. His tone was gentle. He had been very solicitous, much different than his cousin had been before she left. Noah had acted like once they were out of the bedroom, he wanted nothing to do with her. The affection he'd easily offered just the day before seemed not to be there. She wanted to ask Shane what was going on with Noah, but she knew better. Or she thought she did. Noah was the Alpha, and she thought none of them would cross that line.

"No. Not really. I mean other than I am apparently in some kind of strange relationship with six men who are werewolves."

The moment she let that out, she realized just how crazy it sounded. She couldn't stop the giggle that erupted. But soon, it was

edged with hysteria. Even she heard it. Shane parked in front of the general store but kept the engine running.

“Eve.” His voice was tender as he reached for her. He pulled her into his arms, and right then she dissolved into tears. Embarrassed, she tried to pull away, but he tightened his hold. “Just let it all out, babe.” She did then. Tears poured down her face for several minutes. Everything that had gone on the last few days overwhelmed her. She had acted like some kind of sex fiend, taken not just a few, but six, *six*, cousins to bed. Her, the woman with the nonexistent sex life. Now, she realized she was in way over her head. Werewolves? How could it be? How could she handle this?

Soon, though, she drew in a shuddering breath and pulled away. Shane didn’t let go of her until she looked up at him. Apparently satisfied that she had stopped crying, he let her go, but took her hand in his.

“You can ask me anything.”

She sighed. “I really don’t know where to begin.”

“How about I explain?”

She nodded.

“We’ve been around since the dawn of ages. Protectors of the land. There are several packs, not just wolves. Totem animals. Those of us who are here to protect the people who love the land.”

“Totem animals? You mean there are more?”

He nodded. “A few more packs of wolves. There are also Great Bears and Snow Leopards.”

Her brain was going to melt. Any moment now, it would dissolve into goo. How could she put it all together? She had spent her life studying animals, now everything she knew seemed to be turned upside down. Every belief she had in the genetic makeup of the animal kingdom seemed to be upside down.

“Listen, I am sure Ethan can explain it better. You all seem to speak the same language.”

She glanced at him and realized he was definitely uncomfortable.

“Is there something wrong?”

He cleared his throat. “No, it’s just, confined spaces...” his voice trailed off.

“You’re claustrophobic?”

He swallowed and she watched his Adam’s apple bob. “Uh, no. It’s, well, I want to rip your clothes off and take you in the front seat of the SUV. It is taking all my control not to do it.”

Disbelief unfurled within her. A man like Shane being that hot and heavy because they were in an SUV together seemed impossible. “Really?”

He gripped her free hand and moved it away from his thigh. She hadn’t realized that she had been touching him. Heat filled her face.

“Sorry.”

“No,” he said with a smile. “Don’t be sorry, babe. I don’t mind you touching me, but after enduring the lovemaking between you and Noah, it is a little hard not to react.”

“You know?” What was she asking that for? As a veterinarian, she understood wolves, and they had excellent hearing, not to mention scent. The fact that they had heard or smelled their lovemaking made her face burn hotter.

He chuckled. “Sorry, but after having you before, I can’t seem to get enough.” He dipped his head and stole a kiss, a simple brush of his mouth over hers, and she felt her body respond. Her heart sped up, and her nipples hardened.

She drew in a deep breath and tried to gather her thoughts. Then, she decided to ask the question she’d wanted to earlier.

“Before we go in, can you explain why Noah is acting oddly?”

He cocked his head to the side and studied her for a moment. It struck her how wolf-like the gesture was. She had seen more than one wolf study her that way. “Living up to an Alpha like his father is very hard.”

She remembered the scene she had walked into. One she would like to forget. “I heard them arguing. He blamed Noah.”

His expression grew grim. "I know. It isn't Noah's fault at all. We all thought it was something simple. We knew they wanted our land, but we didn't know they would resort to this. Especially attacking Ethan. That takes it to another level of prosecution if we figure out who did it."

She nodded. "It's just...he—" She stopped before she made herself sound like an idiot.

He cupped her cheek. The tender look in his eyes had her heart turning over. "Don't let his actions tonight bother you. A lot weighs on Noah as the Alpha."

She swallowed the lump in her throat and nodded. He jumped out of the SUV and slid over to his side. He helped her step down then shut the car door and followed her up the stairs to the store.

The bell rang, bringing Margie from the back. Eve had met Margie the first day she arrived. In her late sixties, she had long straight grey hair and a cranky disposition. She liked to wear old jeans with ironed on patches and colorful blouses.

"Didn't think I would see any of you around." the older woman said, her irritation easy to hear. "I'm amazed you made it through."

"It's not even snowing now. The Randall brothers got it cleaned up."

She nodded, her small blue eyes studying Eve over her wire frame glasses. "Well, Eve, how are you doing?"

There was something else to the question, as if she knew what they had been doing the last few days. Eve ordered herself not to blush, but she didn't think she succeeded. "Doing just fine. I need to pick up some medical supplies."

"Help yourself."

The older woman turned abruptly and hurried down the aisle. She had always thought her a little strange, but her actions today confused Eve. She rarely asked after her. In fact, she preferred to have Eve just leave her money behind. The General Store ran on a strict honor code.

She glanced around and realized they were indeed the only people there, save for Margie and probably her older-than-dirt husband. The only sign they were in the store was the sound of the television from the back of the store.

From the moment Eve had arrived, she had fallen in love with the little store. There wasn't anything special in it, just the normal convenience store items. But, there was another quality, some kind of home and heart she felt there. It was another log structure, and another thing she liked was that she could see over all shelves. Well, if she stood on her tiptoes.

She heard Margie talking to someone in the back of the store and saw Margie's husband, Hank, lean around the corner and look at her. His gaze moved from her to Shane then back to her. Then, he disappeared.

She frowned, wondering about the strange behavior.

"They know," Shane said, his breath whispering across her ear. She turned and found him very close. So close she could now feel his body heat and smell his unique scent. Then, what he said hit home.

"They know? About us?"

He chuckled, the sound of it slinking down her spine and warming her insides. "Probably, but all the inhabitants of the preserve know about the shifters."

"Shifters? You mean the pack? And the others?"

He didn't answer right away and she looked back over her shoulder. He looked slightly uncomfortable.

"Shane?"

"I know I said I would explain it all, but there's a lot Noah needs to tell you. He can probably clarify it better than I can."

"Do you think he will do that? I have a feeling I'm not going to get much out of him any time soon."

She hated the way her voice sounded. So needy. She was pathetic. Just because some man treated her coldly, she felt lost, as if she would

fall apart at one more moment without his approval. What the hell was wrong with her?

Shane's gaze softened, and she could feel the press of tears in her eyes. What the heck was wrong with her? She had become a cry baby the last few days. She turned around and started once more toward the medical supplies. She didn't need to cry again. Shane would definitely think of her as some weak-willed ninny who couldn't handle any kind of stress.

"He'll talk to you," Shane said. "Give him time."

She sighed. Part of her wanted to give him the time, give him that benefit of the doubt. But there was a part of her irritated by his behavior. Either way, it probably didn't matter. There was nothing permanent, and she wasn't that completely sure she wanted to hang around the anomaly of the Dillon family.

As Shane wandered to the back to talk to Margie, Eve grabbed rubbing alcohol, some bandages, and other little things that would help if they had any more trouble.

Shane returned and made note of what she took, set the paper on the counter then bagged the supplies. "Margie, left a note of what we took," he yelled back.

"Okay." The woman was slowly coming out of the back casting wary glances in Eve's direction. Her attitude now confused Eve even more. She mentioned it to Shane when they walked to the SUV.

He laughed. "Yeah, well, you're our woman."

She stopped as he loaded the bag in the back of the SUV. "What do you mean, *your* woman?"

Shane frowned. "It isn't like we keep women around here. And, we haven't allowed anyone else on our land so I'm pretty sure they knew you were our mate. They've been waiting."

"Mate?" She squeaked out the word. What the heck was he talking about now? Then the conversation she'd had with Noah came back to mind.

Chagrin moved over his face before he glanced around at their surroundings. It was full dark, as usual this time of year. “Get into the vehicle, Eve.”

She realized then even with all her gear she was freezing. Of course, it was Alaska in January. Stupid.

She ignored him as she climbed into her seat. He shut the door and walked around the hood.

Once he’d started the SUV, she asked, “What do you mean, ‘mate’? And the fact that they have been waiting?”

He threw her an uneasy glance. “I think we should postpone this discussion until we get back home before I answer any of your questions.”

“Why?”

“Because there’s a car behind us.”

She turned around and watched the car stop then abruptly do a U-turn in the middle of the road.

“That was odd.”

“Yeah, he probably knew I made him.”

“Him?”

“Whoever was sent to follow us.”

A cold chill settled in her stomach as they made their way back to the Dillon household. She’d been so caught up in the revelations that Shane had revealed that she had completely forgotten the danger of the moment. Stupid. Once again. She was a smart woman. That should have been the only thing on her mind.

It didn’t take them long to make it back. She noticed that several of the trucks and SUVs were gone. Including Ethan and Noah’s parents.

“Why didn’t they just come over as a wolf?” she asked. The moment the words escaped from her mouth, she realized how intrusive that sounded.

“Not a good idea with someone out there trying to kill wolves. At least this way they can protect themselves.”

She nodded and then jumped out, heading to the back of the SUV while Shane plugged the battery to make sure it didn't die. She had barely picked up the sack of supplies when Jason came up behind her and took it out of her hands. He smiled at her, one of the toe-curling, make-a-woman-sweat kind of smiles. She had to remember just how lethal these men were.

"I'll take that."

He waited for her to step in front of him, and then both he and Shane followed her into the house. She stopped briefly to get rid of her heavy outer gear.

When they came into the great room, Noah walked out of the kitchen, his frown deep and menacing. "About time you got back."

His abrupt tone almost had her stepping back. In the next instant, she crossed her arms under her breasts, which was hard with the parka she was wearing.

"I do not like that tone."

For a moment, a deathly silence filled the room. All of them seemed frozen, unable to say or do anything.

"Really?" Noah asked, menace dripping from the word. Not in a scary way. Okay, well, a little scary, but the fact that he thought she would answer to him now irritated her. She didn't answer to any man, and she refused to start now.

"Maybe you should have a bit of tea," Rand offered.

"No, thank you. What I want is some answers, and I want them now." Inwardly, she winced as her voice echoed through the room. She hadn't realized until then just how loud she had gotten.

"I think you should think twice before you start ordering us around." Again, his voice was cold, but there was a spark of heat in his eyes. Was he turned on? Couldn't be. In fact, she had serious doubts about his attraction from the way he acted earlier. Granted, he'd made love to her fiercely before, but there was a distance in him now. Some kind of barrier had been drawn. And she needed answers.

“I didn’t ask your opinion on the subject. What I said was that I wanted some answers. I would like you to explain some of Shane’s statements. I’m not talking about anything else before you do.”

“Talking wasn’t what I had in mind.”

Before she could discern his comment, he took two giant steps toward her and scooped her up, throwing her over his shoulder. Outrage sparked through her. She lifted her torso up and watched as Noah’s three cousins followed them back to his room. Even as she felt alarm quiver through her body, it also warmed seeing the expressions on their faces

“Just what the heck do you think you’re doing?”

“The only thing I know will shut you up.”

Chapter Five

Noah ignored her outraged gasp as he walked into his room. His blood was humming, his body needy to see her, to watch her be taken then take her. It was the most amazing feeling he'd ever experienced.

He had been a wreck since she left. Nothing had prepared him for the way he reacted when she had been gone. He had almost lost control, gone to wolf, and followed them. There was some kind of bone-deep feeling that she was his to protect that he could not fight. He knew without a doubt she was their mate, but he hadn't expected the overwhelming urge to be at her side all the time. It almost unmanned him.

"Noah, you better put me down right now," she said, her tiny fists beating into his back. Damn, the woman had a fire in her he hadn't expected. He should have taken exception to her behavior, but he couldn't. Especially now. No other woman had ever stood up to him, except his mother. Eve's orders had done one thing, and it was to make him lose his own control. But he would never let her know it.

He slipped her down his body, allowing her to slide against him. Her nipples were hard, and there was a flush to her face. He knew she was turned on, could smell in the air. It was so thick, he could almost taste it.

She shivered when he ground his erection against her.

Before she could protest or insist they discuss things, he dipped his head and took her mouth. He didn't try to be tender. There was no way he could do that. Noah knew he didn't have it in him to be gentle. Not with the fear that he had been trying to control the last hour.

He thrust his tongue into her mouth, tasting her, thinking of the way he would taste her pussy. Hot, wet, unbearably erotic.

Before he was ready, he heard Shane say, “Come on, Noah, let us have a taste.”

He stepped away and watched as Eve’s eyes widened when she saw that Shane was already naked. Before kissing her, Shane pulled her shirt up and over her head, tossing it on the floor behind her. He knew they were all running on a hot edge. The need to claim her over and over was something that would override their instincts until they knew she was theirs. Hell, he wasn’t too sure they would ever slow down. He’d never had this kind of need that overwhelmed every rational thought.

Shane stepped toward her, and Jason walked behind her. He started pulling off her pants as Shane took her face in his hands and started to devour her. Noah watched as he undressed. His cock throbbed, his balls were heavy. He didn’t like this craving that was going to direct his actions. He had to do everything he could to control it.

“Take her to the bed,” he said as he shucked off his pants.

Jason guided her backwards to the bed as Shane continued kissing her. Max was already on the bed waiting. Shane lifted her into his arms and put her on the bed. Max didn’t wait. He rolled over on top of her. The sight of his cousins touching her was arousing. They had always been into sharing, but he had worried about how they would handle this. A wolf was usually completely and absolutely territorial about his chosen mate. He had wondered if any of them would be jealous. But the truth was just as he had told her days ago. It was their duty, their need to give her pleasure. It drove every single one of them, and seeing her pleased went beyond anything he had ever experienced.

She hummed as Max kissed her. The sound of it shot straight to his balls. His cock hardened even more, bobbing up against his

stomach. Damn, the woman was sensual, as if she were made for them. Of course, in their minds, she was.

He wrapped his hand around his cock and watched as Max slipped down her body. She moaned, the sound of it filling the room and pulling a groan from somewhere deep within him. Just this little bit had her close to coming, he could sense it.

“Don’t let her come,” he ordered. Although his cousins said nothing, he knew they would listen to him.

He fisted his hands and set them on the bed. He leaned over Eve and bent down to kiss her. She opened her eyes, the green of them darker than before.

“Don’t be a bad girl, or I’ll have to punish you.”

* * * *

Eve watched Noah pull away. Her head was still spinning. She couldn’t seem to keep a thought in it, but who could blame her? There were three men touching her, pleasuring her, driving her out of her mind. Max spread her legs, and the admiration she saw on his face had her whole body heating.

“Damn, look at that pretty little pussy. All wet for us.” He lowered his mouth to her. His breath heated her core, and she felt another gush of cream coat her pussy lips.

As he slipped his tongue into her, Shane and Jason joined them on the bed. Fire blazed through her as Shane dipped his head over her breasts, taking a nipple in his mouth as he teased the other with his hand. She could feel that familiar hum in her blood, one she had not felt before these men. Her body responded in tandem. All they had to do was touch her and she couldn’t seem to control her urges. It was as if she had some kind of connection with them that she had never had before. Even with pleasure threading through her, she felt off, as if something was wrong.

As Max lapped at her cunt, she wondered, why would she worry? It was amazing she could actually think at this point. No woman in their right mind would complain, but there was something missing.

“Let her suck you, Jason.”

Noah. That was what was missing. She opened her eyes and found him standing beside the bed watching them. He had his hand wrapped around his cock. The sight of his large hand pumping his shaft was so erotic she almost came then and there. She had never thought it would turn her on, but seeing his fingers moving over his hardened flesh had her body quivering.

“Gladly,” Jason said as he pulled himself up to his knees. “Eve.”

For a moment, she didn’t respond. She couldn’t seem to tear her gaze away from Noah as he worked his cock.

“Eve,” Noah said, his voice lashing out. “Do it now.”

She turned her head and saw Jason stroke himself once before offering her his weeping cock. Willingly, needful, she opened her mouth. The salty pre-cum hit her taste buds and she couldn’t stop the hum. God, he tasted of sin and heaven. They all did. Something in each one of the Dillon men called to her.

She relaxed her throat, trying to take all of him in her mouth. She enjoyed it, the feel of his cock gliding along her tongue, the way he filled her entire mouth and bumped against the back of her throat. Max slipped a finger into her pussy and took her clit into his mouth. God, she was close, so needy, so ready.

But before she could jump over that edge, Max was pulling away, and so was Jason. Shane lifted his head and gave her a naughty smile.

It was then that she realized that Noah had called a stop to it. So close to release, she hadn’t heard him. She had been in perfect tune with the guys and what they had been doing to her.

Shane lay down and pulled her over him. He took her head into his hands and pulled her down for a kiss. He kept his eyes open, desire deepening the blue of his eyes. She felt it all the way to her toes. Slowly, with practiced ease, he slipped his tongue between her

lips, gliding his hands down her back to cup her ass. He pulled back slightly to take her bottom lip into his mouth. It sent a shower of sparks over her nerve endings.

“Take him into you, Eve. Let him feel that hot little pussy of yours on his cock.”

The dark order from Noah had her turning toward him. He was still fisting his shaft, watching the scene. His face was flush, so she knew it was getting to him, but she knew he was controlling himself. And them. But apparently, her body didn't care. All it wanted was pleasure, the sweet release she knew these men could give her.

She sat up, rose to her knees, took hold of Shane's cock, and without breaking eye contact with Noah, she slowly sank down. Shane groaned, his cock deep inside of her. She sank all the way down on him then threw her head back, closing her eyes and allowing the pleasure of riding Shane to take over. His hands were on her hips as he kept up the same rhythm, slowly, surely, thrusting into her. Eve raised her hands to her breasts and pinched her nipples. Shane groaned.

“Damn.” Shane's voice was tight, the desire easy to hear. She knew he was close and she wanted to push him over the edge, but apparently, the guys had other ideas. He stopped moving and tugged her down to his chest. She wanted to move, needed to. She was so dang close she could feel her orgasm sitting just out of reach. The smile he gave her made her want to scream.

“Not yet.” He gave her another slow kiss as she felt Jason insert one lube-coated finger inside her anus.

She shivered and closed her eyes.

“Add another finger, Jason. She loves getting her ass fucked.”

She opened her eyes and saw Noah standing there, his eyes burning into her. She could feel the wild passion in him, knew that it was taking every bit of his control not to get up on the bed with them.

The bed dipped on the other side of her. She opened her eyes to find Max moving to the head of the bed, his cock in his hand. She

eagerly opened her mouth to take him in. He chuckled and then moaned as she took him completely in her mouth. His hands went to the back of her head, his fingers slipping through her hair. She tried to change the slow pace he'd started, wanting to take him faster, deeper. But he held her head steady as he slowly sank in and out of her mouth.

As Max fucked her mouth, she felt Shane's hands spread her cheeks. Next, the blunt head of Jason's cock poked at her puckered hole. Max moved out of her mouth as Jason sank into her ass. As before, the feeling of being unbearably full almost overwhelmed her. She drew in a deep breath, not sure if she could take it. Noah must have known how she was feeling.

"You can take it."

The simple words whipped through her along with a healthy dose of shocked outrage. She turned to tell him to mind his own business, but when she did, felt herself trapped. His eyes were darker than she had ever seen, the lust in them beyond anything she had witnessed before.

"Beyond that. You want to take it. You like how it feels when two of us are fucking your cunt and ass. You like how it almost makes you come just thinking about it."

His voice rolled over the words and reached out to her. In that instant, she knew he was right. She had never felt so fulfilled before in her life. There had to be something wrong with her, but with the pleasure now flowing through her blood, she couldn't care less. Right now, all that mattered was the connection she felt with these men, especially the one giving orders.

"Go ahead. Fuck her. She wants it more than she wants her next breath."

She was shaking, need coursing through her. Her pussy and ass spasmed. His nasty talk should have been a turn off, but she needed it, wanted it.

“Don’t ya, baby? You want to feel them fuck you until you can’t think straight?”

She drew in a deep breath and swallowed. “Yes.”

At that word, Jason slowly pulled out of her ass and sank balls deep into her with a groan. “Fuck, she’s so tight.”

Shane set a finger on her chin and turned her to face him. “You fit us like a glove.” He kissed her then turned her face back to Max. He sank his cock into her eager mouth. They all started shifting in and out of her, their movements almost painfully slow.

“Yeah, that’s it, suck it,” Max said as he started thrusting harder in and out of her mouth.

She lost herself in that moment, the need to just allow these men to do what they wanted, to pleasure her, to find their own, was all that mattered. Jason smacked her ass then grabbed it as he groaned over and over.

“Fuck, never so good.”

“So tight, so wonderful,” Shane said as he thrust into her, coming.

At that moment, Max lost control and came, his hot cum shooting to the back of her mouth and dripping down her throat. She lapped it up, enjoying the pungent taste of him as he groaned one last time. He pulled his cock out of her mouth then leaned down and brushed his mouth over hers. He spread his fingers over her cheek, a soft smile curving his lips.

“You’re wonderful.”

The softly spoken words filled her with warmth. Before she could answer, she felt Jason’s hands tighten on her ass. Eve hadn’t realized that he had stopped moving. She pushed herself up to her hands and looked back over her shoulder at him. He caught her eye and pulled out of her ass. She felt Shane take one of her nipples in his mouth as Jason started thrusting in earnest in and out of her ass. Again, that wonderful tension built, filled her, pushed her right up close the pinnacle of pleasure. Her body quivered, begging for release, but in the next instant, Jason threw his head back and sank deep into her ass.

“Eve. Fuck. Yes.” His whole body shuddered as he filled her ass with his cum.

Several moments later, he pulled out of her, leaned down, and brushed his mouth over her cheek. “Max is right, ya know.”

Shane lifted her off him, and a cool wash of air poured over her flesh. The pulse of need they had built still hummed through her veins.

“Good job, guys. Now, it’s my turn.”

Chapter Six

Noah's control was being held by a very thin thread. It wouldn't take much to push him over the edge. The problem was that he could feel his inner wolf howling. Watching his cousins take their mate had been almost a little too much to bear. It wasn't that he was jealous. It was that he knew he should have been there, tasting her, taking her with them. But he couldn't. He had to keep control of his needs more than ever now. It didn't mean he would not take his pleasure.

His cousins moved off the bed, and he joined Eve there. She was still flush, and her skin had a nice rosy glow about it. He could still smell her arousal. He had wanted to make sure she didn't come, that he was the one to give that to her.

He crawled onto the bed. Her green eyes flared wide and there was a hint of wariness to them. He knew he had hurt her earlier, but he tamped down on the need to comfort her beyond sex.

"On your hands and knees, Eve."

She hesitated, but before he could complain, she was moving to comply. Ordering her around did not give him the same kind of satisfaction it had before, but he pushed that thought aside. A craving to have her, to feel that tight little pussy of hers tighten around his cock as he released deep inside of her, overwhelmed every other thought.

He smoothed his hands over her bare ass, wishing he had his crop. He knew she would respond well as she had before. Noah just knew he did not have the depth of control to handle it tonight.

Slipping his hand between her legs, he smiled when she shivered. Lord, the woman was a sensual delight. Built just for him, his brother,

and his cousins. Nothing had ever felt so very right. He skimmed a hand over her slit then dipped inside. She gasped then moaned. He knew she was probably very sore from his cousins, but he needed to be inside her. He didn't completely understand it, but it was clear to him his body understood. There was something primal stirring within him, something that told him if he did not find his release deep within her cunt, he wouldn't find it at all.

He took his cock in his hand, placed his free hand on her ass to steady her, and then slowly slipped into her pussy. She was tight but wet. Trying to ease his way in without hurting her, he took his time. Pushing in an inch, withdrawing, he teased her. Then, he would push in a little further, but not far enough to satisfy her. She was panting with each thrust.

She let go of an aggravated groan and turned around. He thought she was going to yell at him. Fire snapped in her green gaze. He never expected the next words out of her mouth.

"Are you going to go any faster?"

For a second he didn't respond, but he heard a snicker over by where his cousins were lounging. She had done it in a tone that told him that she was fed up with his pace. To teach her to behave, he pulled back then thrust into her heavily, pushing his way all the way to the hilt. She closed her eyes and moaned then, his name.

He started to move in and out, a steady pace of thrusts to drive them both mad. He had picked this position for several reasons. One being that he knew he could control the angle of his thrusts to keep her from losing control. She pushed back against him, her ass slapping against his abs. With each thrust into her pussy, her muscles clung to his shaft.

He took her hips in his hands, thrusting into her with a violent force that he barely kept under control. He could feel her orgasm, the building of tension, and knew she could no longer control anything.

"Come for me, Eve. Do it." She did as he ordered, her inner pussy walls clamping down on him as she did.

“Noah.” Her voice was hoarse when she shouted his name. The sound of it, and the second orgasm that slammed through her, pulled his release from him. He plunged deep, his fingers digging into her flesh.

“Yes, fuck.” His balls drew up as he held her in place.

Long moments later, he pulled out of her, and she collapsed on the bed. He lay down beside her, and she turned to him. She gave him a sleepy smile as her eyes started to close. He watched her for a long time, not sure how he felt. Something in him wanted to stay there, bask in her warmth. He was starting to need her in a way that scared the hell out of him. She accepted him. Yes, she was mad right now, but she had allowed him to touch her, love her. Even after finding out what they were she did not try and hold back from them. He had expected some kind of condemnation from her. He had used her roughly. He skimmed the back of his fingers across her chin then down her body. Even now he could see red marks he had left on her flesh. Fuck.

“You always did think too much.”

He turned to find his brother leaning against the doorjamb, his face pale and his eyes a little glazed from the pain meds he had been taking. It was then that he realized his cousins were gone.

“What are you doing up?” he asked, keeping his tone hushed. He didn’t want to wake Eve up. With deliberate care, he pulled the comforter up and over her, and then slipped from the bed. He pulled on his pants, then his shirt, and motioned to his brother to leave the room. They went to Ethan’s room. By the time they got there, Ethan was breathing heavily.

“As I asked before, what the hell are you doing out of bed?”

“I’m fine,” his brother said, but Noah could see the pain in his gaze.

“Yeah, well, make sure you stay that way. I don’t want to go another round with Mom if you have a relapse.”

He collapsed in the chair by the fire and shot Noah a look. "Let it go. I'm out of bed because one, you were going at it in there like a bunch of cats in heat."

The barb hit home, but Noah bit back the growl.

"Sorry."

Ethan shrugged. "Plus, Shane stopped by. Said you might need to talk."

"About what?"

"Got me. We need to keep him from watching Oprah's Network. When he does, he always wants to have discussions."

Noah snorted then his mind turned to the attack. "You don't remember anything?"

Ethan frown turned grimmer as he closed his eyes. "No. I've been going over it in my mind. I can remember getting hit over the head, but then, I can't seem to piece together anything after that. It just seems to be in the shadows."

Noah nodded. "You gave Eve a bit of a scare."

His brother turned his head and opened his eyes. "Really? I've heard she held her ground very well."

"What do you mean?"

"You think any other woman confronted with the fact she had just taken on two brothers and their cousins who just happen to be werewolves would have reacted like she did?"

"She's smart."

"I think the thing you forget is that she is as tough as she is smart. You need to give her credit for her will as much as her brain."

Anger whipped through him. "What the hell does that mean?"

"Shane said you're barely talking to her."

That caught him off guard. "I just had sex with her. I think I've done a little more than talk to her."

His brother said nothing, but Noah knew exactly what Ethan was thinking. "Just leave it alone. I'll handle it my way."

"You always do."

He left his brother there and went to the kitchen. The house was quiet, the cousins out on patrol. For as long as he could remember, Noah had known he would have this job. He knew the duty of taking care of the pack and those other Totem shifters would be his responsibility. In all those years, he had never made a mistake this enormous. He had put the pack in danger because of his pursuit of Eve. It was important for the pack to claim their Alpha mate, but if he didn't keep his head on straight, there wouldn't be enough of a pack to survive.

A knock on the door pulled him out of his thoughts. Concerned, he walked through the great room. A man with long blonde-white hair and an intense black stare stood on his stoop. Damn, Noah wasn't in the mood. He opened the door to his fellow Totem shifter.

"About damn time, Dillon." He didn't wait for an invitation, just stepped over the threshold like he owned the place. The Great Bears always thought they did own the place. "We have a lot to discuss."

With a resigned sigh, Noah said, "Come on into the kitchen, Vic."

* * * *

Eve woke alone. She expected it, but she couldn't stop the disappointment that stirred in her chest. She knew there was something else wrong, something that she couldn't put her finger on. The others had to go out on patrol, but she knew that Noah didn't need to go out until the morning. Before Ethan's attack, she was pretty sure she would have awakened to Noah by her side. Now, though, there was a distance.

With a sigh, she slid out of bed and winced. Lord, she felt used...in a good way. What woman could complain about the pleasure the Dillon men gave her? She found a shirt and robe on the chair near the massive bed. Grabbing them, she walked into the bathroom. Again, she stared at her reflection in the mirror. Her face was flushed,

probably from the heat of the covers. But she knew she was lying to herself. The flush was from the lovemaking.

Never in her life would she have thought herself this sensual. Of course, before now, she would have never thought she would be ready to make love with six men. They filled her every waking hour now, and she didn't know if she was ready for that. The affair, or whatever you called it, would not go on forever. There was no way a group of men would want to share her for a lifetime. Especially Noah.

Without warning, tears burned the backs of her eyes. Again. What was wrong with her? Even during the most stressful times of her life, she'd never been this weepy. MacMillans don't cry. They prove everyone wrong.

She could hear her father's voice and her mother's silent agreement.

Eve drew in a deep breath and ordered herself to stop. It was just lack of sleep and stress. Worry over Ethan, being a sex toy for six men...wolves...whatever the heck they were, would do it to the strongest woman.

She was lying to herself. Ethan was doing fine, and their ability to heal was beyond anything she had ever seen. No, it was Noah. He had never been that distant before. He was so cold toward her. He had given her pleasure beyond what she had ever thought of, but there was a difference in his lovemaking now. It wasn't as tender as before the attack. She didn't understand why he would pull away from her. It wasn't her fault. With another sigh, she decided to get ready and quit worrying about her love life. Things needed to be discussed and she wasn't going to allow Noah to ignore her in that respect.

After a quick shower, Eve found herself feeling much better. After donning the shirt and robe, both of which were much too big for her, she wandered down the hall to the kitchen. Her stomach growled, and she smiled. She definitely needed some food to keep up with the Dillon men. But as approached the kitchen, she heard Noah talking.

"I have it all under control. The pack is patrolling. You don't need to worry."

"I think I have every right to worry. Your own brother was attacked," said a male voice she didn't recognize.

"I am pretty sure they thought they were attacking just Ethan, not a shifter."

"Even so. This has been going on for too long."

Ethan made a sound of disgust. "I can't believe you are going to trying to gain points during this time."

"I don't want your job, don't worry. I am perfectly happy keeping my herd safe and leaving all this shit to you."

She crept closer, trying her best not to be noticed. As she peeked around the corner she saw Noah, leaning against the counter by the sink. He was talking to a man who was even taller than Noah, who topped six-four. He had long white-blond hair that cascaded down his back like a waterfall.

She heard Noah sigh. "Eve, you might as well come in."

The fact that he knew she was there without seeing her told her one of his other senses had alerted him.

She straightened and walked into the kitchen. When she did, the tall stranger turned to face her. Lordy. High cheekbones, along with golden skin and a proud nose, told her he had a bit of Native American in him. What caught her unaware were the darker than sin eyes. They was so dark, they were almost black.

"Eve, this is Vic Redfoot. Vic this is—"

"Eve MacMillan." The other man smiled and offered his hand. The slash of white against his dark skin held her mesmerized. She took his hand. "I've heard a lot about you from Margie."

She swallowed. "Margie?"

She sounded like an idiot. It was hard to concentrate on talking when Vic Redfoot was staring at her as if he wanted to devour her.

"That's enough," Noah said stepping forward and pulling her hand out of the other man's grasp. "Hands off, Redfoot."

Mortified, she gave Noah a look, but he was frowning at her as if she had done something wrong.

“Where are your clothes?”

She rolled her eyes. “Good question. This is the only thing I could find.”

He had the decency to look chagrined. “Sorry. Rand is on his way back from your cabin with some clothes.”

For a second she couldn’t seem to put the words together. When she did, outrage lit through her blood along with a healthy dose of embarrassment. “He just decided to go to my cabin and rifle through my things.”

“No. I told him to.”

She settled her hands on her hips, but laughter from the other man had her stopping and looking at him.

“Now I know why you slipped a bit there, Dillon.”

“Watch it,” Noah warned. “If you want to be able to mate next season, I’d be careful what you say.”

She looked from one to another. “Wolf?”

Vic smiled. “Bear, and I can promise you that you would enjoy our company more than this group of scavengers.”

“Fuck off, Redfoot.”

Her head was whirling, her mind bleeding from even more unbelievable evidence.

“Okay, someone is going to explain it right now. I’m not leaving until you do.”

There was a stunned silence, then a chuckle from their guest. “Oh, this is going to be fun.”

“Noah. Now.”

Chapter Seven

Noah silently cursed his old adversary. Redfoot wasn't that bad of a guy, and unlike many of his pack, he didn't see them as a threat. He knew Redfoot's belief in live and let live. He was the leader of their herd and that was all he wanted. But it didn't mean he would try and gain more territory if he could.

"I mean it, Noah. I want an explanation."

Damn it, his mate was going to be a problem. He knew from the beginning they would have to do something to convince her they weren't lying. Shane had taken care of that by shifting in front of her. But now, she was staring at him and Redfoot as if they were freaks. The muscles in his stomach clenched. Damn.

"Listen, babe, you have to understand."

"I do?" Eve asked as she started to tap her foot. Not a good sign.

"We would have explained it later, but we've just been a little busy."

She sighed and walked toward the coffee maker. After pouring herself a cup, she sipped at it and studied the two of them over the rim of her mug.

"Shane explained a little bit." She glanced at Redfoot. "I take it you're worried that Noah thinks you attacked his brother."

"No. But I wanted to know what the hell was going on." His old friend smiled. "Margie said you're a scientist."

When Eve responded to the smile with one of her own, Noah barely bit back a growl. The moment he sensed her, he knew there would be trouble. Redfoot was what his mama called a charmer. He could talk just about any female into bed, and Noah knew without a

doubt they were looking for a mate. Well, too damn bad. She was theirs, whether she knew it or not. But now, she was studying Redfoot with that same inquisitive look she used when working. It could make a man lose his head, and Noah didn't want to kill his friend.

"We think it might be one of the petroleum companies trying to get their hands on the preserve."

Redfoot's smile dissolved. "That's very likely. They've been trying to gain some traction with my herd."

"Yeah? They've been doing the same with us. What attacking wolves and Ethan has anything to do with anything, I don't know. A warning?"

Redfoot nodded. "Probably. But you should have seen the pattern earlier. You should have let us know."

"It just started this week. I wasn't sure it wasn't some sick bastard who had something against wolves."

"You should have told us. You put our den in jeopardy because you like to control every little aspect of the preserve."

"Don't you dare blame Noah," Eve said. "It just started happening. In fact, it was just three or four days ago, so there isn't any reason to attack him."

Her fierce defense of him warmed his heart. Redfoot's expression went from contemplative to amused.

"I wasn't blaming him. I just thought we should have known about it."

She frowned at him. "They only told me about the mutilations a few days ago."

His smile vanished, and he gave Noah a murderous look.

"Mutilations?"

Damn, he needed to get Eve out of there so that he could discuss this without her revealing everything. If he told them everything, they would freak.

"Eve, I thought you might want to check on Ethan."

Her frown grew darker. "I guess so. I thought you might want my opinion."

"Not in this. This is Totem business."

The moment he said it, he regretted it. Hurt flashed in her eyes before her face lost expression.

"Of course." She offered Redfoot a smile that didn't reach her eyes. It took all his control not to pull her in his arms and beg her forgiveness. "It was nice meeting you, Vic."

She said nothing else as she walked to the doorway.

"And don't leave the house."

She paused for a second, then continued on her way and left them alone in the kitchen.

"You're an ass."

He didn't need Redfoot telling him that. *Fuck.*

"Mind your own business."

"Tsk, what a shame. But then, I don't want a woman like her."

He glanced at his friend. "Yeah?"

"I like to have fun with women like her, but I want a docile, uncomplicated woman. I don't need the stress of explaining myself to my mate constantly."

Noah snorted. "Good luck with that."

"So, the mutilations."

"Yeah. Someone was making it look like bears. Well, at first, it didn't look like anything but a sick fuck trying to get his jollies off. Then they changed."

"Now, someone is trying to peg it on my herd."

Noah shrugged. "Not exactly your herd, but a herd."

Redfoot frowned. "So, if they wanted to try and force you to hand the preserve over, they would use the idea that the wolf population was out of control and that we were murderous fucks. Great."

"Yeah. They could try a court case, although that would take years, so I figure public opinion. But the problem is, the people

around here don't believe it. They would never believe your herd was killing us."

"Like we would need to. The only reason to kill is in defense or for food. Not much meat to your scrawny asses."

Noah smiled. "At least we aren't fat."

Redfoot chuckled. "So, we need a plan."

"Yeah. I guess we need to call in Zane and his group of leopards."

After discussing when and where they would have the meeting, Noah got ready to leave. Part of him told him he should go find Eve and apologize. The hurt he saw on her face still cut him to the quick, but he couldn't do it. She had to learn that as leader, he had things he would never tell her. The sooner she learned her place, the better.

* * * *

"If you don't keep your hands to yourself, Ethan, I'm going to tell your Mama."

Ethan chuckled and held up his hands. "I surrender."

She looked down at him and shook her head. "Who would have thought you'd have so much energy a day after being attacked?"

"It's our way. It wouldn't have been that much of a problem if I had shifted already. Hell, I could have talked you into bed last night if I had been in wolf when attacked."

She nodded but said nothing as she moved away from him and settled in the chair beside his bed. She was still trying to get over the wrenching fear she'd felt the night before as she had worked on him. The blood that had soaked her hands had been her lover's. Or one of them.

She pushed that thought aside. Her brain was starting to do flip flops trying to figure out what the hell she should do.

"Do you think they know about you?" she asked.

Ethan's gaze turned contemplative. "I don't know. If I could remember, I would have a better idea."

She could see the embarrassment and shame in his expression. "It isn't that uncommon for people who have been hit over the head to forget the incident. You know that."

"Yeah. Logically, I know that. But then there is a part of me that tells me that I should be out there with my pack trying to find the answers. And, the best thing for that would be to remember my attack."

"You need to quit blaming yourself. And quit being so hard on yourself, too." She closed her eyes. She was having a hard time being sympathetic, or at least sounding that way. She was still hurting from the way Noah had dismissed her earlier. Her heart still ached at the way he had ordered her out of the kitchen like a servant. He had put up a barrier between them she had never felt before.

"What's he done?"

She turned her head and opened her eyes. "Who?"

"Noah. I know my brother is being a bit of an ass right now."

She shook her head. "No, he has a lot on his mind."

"Yeah, and first and foremost is keeping you safe."

She wished. There was that little part of her, the little feminine part that wanted the big strong man to be worried about her. She knew she could protect herself, mainly because she had been doing it by herself for years. This was something different, though. It was such a novel idea that someone wanted to keep her safe. Her parents had prepared her for life on her own. The thrill that another person would want to take care of her made her happy and warm. But thinking back at Noah's behavior, she realized she had assumed things she shouldn't have about their relationship.

"I think you're mistaken, Ethan. Our relationship isn't like that."

Even she could hear the yearning in her voice. How pathetic. Still, knowing how horrible she sounded didn't help. She was pathetic and needy, something she had not dealt with before.

"Eve, believe me, he is going through something right now that has nothing to do with you. From the time we were kids, Noah knew

he would be Alpha. Older brother of the oldest son. It is a heavy weight on his shoulders, always has been. That was, until recently.”

“Recently?”

“Even before you got here, he was enamored.”

She chuckled. “Ethan, that’s really sweet, but you don’t have to try and make me feel better about myself.”

“No. He was.” He swung his legs off the bed and faced her, taking her hand in his. “You were all he could talk about. When you got here, he was at your cabin practically every day. He couldn’t stay away.”

She shook her head, trying to shake the thoughts Ethan was trying to put in her head. They were too close to the fantasy she’d created.

“Yes. Eve, look at me.” She did then. “When you went out with Shane, Noah was a mess.”

“But, you all said that there wasn’t any jealousy.”

“There isn’t. But you were gone, out in the wild. Sure, it was just a quick trip to town, but he was practically crawling the walls. He wanted you here, by his side.”

She snorted. “He has a funny way of showing it.”

“Just do me a favor, don’t give up on him.”

His voice was sincere, his expression telling her that he was really worried she would desert his brother. “I’m not sure I can keep hanging around if he’s going to be so rude to me.”

“What did he do?”

“I wanted to talk to him and Vic about the mutilations and what might be going on. He told me it wasn’t any of my business.”

Ethan’s eyebrows shot up to his shaggy bangs. “Redfoot was here?”

“Yeah.”

“Well, that is easy to explain. He was worried Redfoot would be sniffing around you.”

“Sniffing around me? Where did you learn to talk like that?”

He smiled. “Noah. It’s always his fault.”

Her humor faded. "That's what's bothering him."

"That he failed. Yeah, Noah was always very serious about his duties."

She had seen that. From the moment she had met him in person, there was an aura of command about him. It attracted her from the first. There was something so strong in his countenance, so comforting that he would take care of everything. She had admired him for it. Then, when she got to know him better, the playful side of him had emerged. He was wicked and funny. It didn't hurt that he was deliciously good looking, but she would probably still be attracted to him.

Then, it hit her. Dang it, she loved him. This was so not fair. What the heck was she going to do now? She didn't want to be in love with anyone, especially a wolf who wanted nothing to do with her outside of the bedroom.

She sighed, the sound lonely and pathetic to her own ears.

"Hey, babe, don't let it get to you. Just wait him out. He'll come to his senses."

He leaned forward and brushed his mouth over hers. The comfort soon turned hotter, his tongue coming out to brush over her mouth. Need coursed through her with such a force it shook her, but Ethan wasn't letting her think. Instead, he pulled her into his arms and on top of him. She could feel his thick shaft hard against her belly. Drawing on what little wits she had left, she pulled back and looked down at him. His face was flushed, but not from fever. Still, he had just recovered from a serious injury.

"Ethan, you should rest."

He shook his head. "Don't wanna."

He took her bottom lip between his teeth and then sucked on it. The familiar heat started to unfurl inside of her. She needed this, needed to be touched and loved and cherished. She didn't know why, but she did. As she gave herself over to the kiss, she lost herself in him. Eve knew she was in love with Noah, but each one of the Dillon

men would always hold a special place in her heart. Ethan seemed to know what she needed even before she did.

“Is this a party of two, or is there room for one more?” Rand asked.

She pulled back from Ethan and looked over at the doorway. She hadn’t even heard the door open, or the fact that Rand had stepped in and closed it behind himself.

“Always room for one more, cuz.”

Rand smiled as he came to the bed. His hands went to the buttons on his shirt, but it was all she saw before Ethan touched his fingers to her chin and pulled her back down for a kiss. Heat flared low in her tummy, causing her to shudder. It was amazing that each of these men could speak to her and know exactly how to get to her. All Ethan was doing was kissing her. Long, slow, easy kisses that melted her mind and her soul.

Rand’s hands skimmed over her rear, and another gush of cream covered her slit. They had barely started and she could feel her body responding. It was shameful she had turned into some kind of sex fiend, but at the moment, she didn’t care. All she cared about was the pleasure they were giving her.

Rand slipped his hands beneath her and pulled her off Ethan and turned her to face him. It took him no time at all to remove her clothes and start kissing her. She settled on her knees in front of him, his cock throbbing against her stomach. Her cunt pulsed, begging for relief. As he slowly drove her insane by kissing her and touching her, she felt Ethan’s mouth on the fullest part of her right cheek.

They sent her senses reeling by touching but barely touching. Her nipples ached, but before she could say anything, Rand tore his mouth from hers and dipped his head to take one in his mouth. She moaned and slipped her fingers to mold to the back of his head.

Ethan came up on his knees behind her, pressing against her back and urging her to turn her head. He took her mouth in a ravenous kiss, his tongue delving into her mouth over and over again. God, she was

melting there, dying from the desire she had for them. Again, there was a part of her that told her she shouldn't be doing this, that she should say no, but her body thrust those thoughts aside.

She needed this. Not just the sex, but the feeling of being cherished, of being loved. She had never thought she would, but her soul was dying for it. The comfort, the affection, the knowledge that at this moment, she was all that was important to these men sent a sharp shaft of need hurtling through her. Rand stepped away, and she moaned in irritation.

He chuckled, but before she could say anything, Ethan was pulling her back on the bed and flipping her over. Without a word, he shoved her legs apart and set his mouth on her. Just like his kisses, he started slowly, licking her slit and drawing in a deep breath.

"Damn, you smell good," he said, his voice vibrating with admiration and need.

"She does. Drives me crazy when she gets wet. I can smell her scent three miles away," Rand said.

Her face flushed with embarrassment as she looked up at Rand.

"Don't be embarrassed," Rand said gently. He wrapped his hand around his thick shaft and gave it a tug. "It's a beautiful thing."

She opened her mouth, but he shook his head as Ethan slipped his tongue up and over her clit, adding a finger to her weeping cunt.

"You don't see yourself. Hot, wet, needing a good fucking. Open up that pretty mouth, honey. Take me in."

She did as ordered easily, leaning her head over the edge of the bed. Pre-cum dripped from the slit at the top of his shaft. Shane dipped his cock into her mouth and groaned.

"Fuck, yeah. That mouth should be registered as a lethal weapon."

She took him in her mouth over and over, but then moved aside to suck on his sac.

He shuddered, his fingers slipping through her silky hair as she tasted and teased him. Power lanced through her veins.

"Damn," Rand said.

“Ah, she is naughty,” Ethan said, admiration in his voice. But she didn’t look, didn’t even try to. She was interested in driving Rand insane.

He kept muttering under his breath as she took his cock back into mouth. So into what she was doing, she didn’t realize that Ethan had moved. With one hard thrust, he entered her to the hilt. She drew in a deep breath then released it on a moan. She pulled back from Rand and looked at Ethan. His forehead was dotted with perspiration, his eyes dark with desire. Slowly, he thrust into her, over and over, just enough to build her up, not enough to satisfy her.

Then without another word, he pulled out of her and moved away. Rand grabbed her and lifted her up off the bed, collapsing into the chair.

“Take me in, Eve.” He ground out the words, telling her that he was very close to edge.

She did, but she took her time. Slowly, she slid down on his cock. His fingers dug into her hips as Ethan came to her, his hand on his cock.

“Open up, bad girl. I want you to suck me dry.”

She licked her lips and then opened them. He thrust into her as Rand pulled her up and started to thrust into her. Ethan held her face steady as he vigorously fucked her mouth.

“Yeah, Eve, fuck. That’s it.”

He bumped the back of her throat a few times, but she ignored it, reveling in the feel of his cock in her mouth while Rand fucked her cunt. The groans grew in volume, and with one last thrust, Ethan came in her mouth.

Rand stopped as Ethan pulled out of her mouth. She opened her eyes as he leaned down and kissed her.

Rand started to move again, this time in earnest. In and out, faster and faster. Ethan slid his hand over her breasts as Rand reached around to press her clit. Without warning, her orgasm hit her, blowing

through her like an explosion. Rand followed her a second later, shouting her name as he pumped in and out of her.

Seconds later, Ethan pulled her up and off Rand and stumbled to the bed. Rand followed, crawling in beside her. It didn't take the cousins long to fall asleep. Ethan was snuggled up behind her and Rand had settled his head against her breast. A sense of peace settled over her as their heat enveloped her, but she knew there was something or someone missing.

Noah. She loved him. She needed him on some kind of level she wasn't sure she understood yet. But he was being a pig head. She started turning over what Ethan had said about Noah, and she realized that she had grown up with the same issues. She had never been allowed to be a child. Not with the responsibility of what she had to live up to. And now, his brother had been injured. Even though it wasn't his fault, Noah saw it that way.

She sighed. He had pulled back from her because of his role as Alpha. She was sure of it. After studying wolves for as long as she did, she knew that his responsibility was serious. Still, it did not give him the right to act like a jackass. Eve wanted him. Needed him. And she was damned if she would sit around letting him screw things up.

It was time the Alpha learned a thing or two about relationships, and she was just the woman to teach him.

Chapter Eight

“What the hell do you mean she isn’t here?” Noah growled as he paced in the kitchen. When he had returned five minutes earlier, he knew there was something wrong. He had stepped in the house and knew Eve was gone. Even without complete mating, he could sense if she was near. Her disappearance pushed him to the edge, causing him to almost lose control of his emotions. He hated to admit it, but he was pretty close to a full-blown panic.

“She said she was going back to her house,” Ethan calmly explained.

“And you let her go?”

Ethan shrugged. “Didn’t seem like I could change her mind. She said she needed to do some work.”

“And of course, you let her because you science nerds understand each other.”

Jesus, he sounded like a little boy. But he didn’t care. He couldn’t believe his brother let her out of the house without any kind of protection.

“She’s not by herself.” From Ethan’s expression, he was laughing at him. “Rand is over there, well, around there. Plus, I had Uncle Devon patrolling the paths up to her house. She’s safe.”

“Like you know what the hell you’re doing. How could you let her go?”

“I didn’t let her do anything. She said she had work. I let her go do it. She’ll be back.”

Noah stopped and leaned against the counter, gripping it with his hands. Panic threaded through his veins. “You’re sure about that?”

Ethan said nothing so Noah turned to face him.

"Have you given her a reason to leave?" Ethan asked quietly.

Guilt coiled in his belly, but he refused to let it bother him. "No."

Ethan sneered at him. "Liar. I know you better than you know yourself. You decided that she's the reason I got attacked."

He snorted. "Why would I do that?"

"Because you think everything in the fucking world revolves around your decisions. You used my attack as a reason to pull away from her, but both you and I know it isn't that."

"Yeah? What would the real reason be?"

"You're a coward."

Before he could think, his fist reached out and connected with Ethan's chin. He took a few steps back to regain his balance. He shot Noah a furious glare. "I should kick your ass. But you know what? I'm not going to help you. You want to be mad, be mad. I'll not be your punching bag."

Anger surged, and he wanted to hit his brother again. He couldn't understand it. Didn't want to. He just wanted to hurt him.

"Listen, I know how you think. The attack would have happened if we hadn't had taken her to bed."

"It's my duty to protect the pack."

Ethan rolled his eyes. "You're always melodramatic. They have been going on for a little over a week."

"Yeah, but from about the time Eve arrived I haven't been paying attention."

"Bullshit. You want to use that excuse, you go right ahead. When you drive our mate away, you will be the one to talk to Mother. I'm not saving your ass." Ethan turned to walk out of the room.

"You think she'll leave?"

He paused and looked at Noah. "You hurt her, Noah. She thinks that all you want is sex. I could read it in her gaze. She senses there is something wrong. Tell her."

He nodded, and Ethan left him alone. It wasn't something he was used to. He would talk to his brother and his cousins, but outside of their group, he rarely expressed his worries. It would make him look weak, and he couldn't have that.

But he couldn't have Eve leaving. It would only cause him to have to go after her and drag her back to Alaska. He hated what he needed to do. He hated it even more that it was his brother who convinced him of it.

With a sigh, he went to the door and stepped outside. It was time that he and Eve talk. He started pulling off his clothes. He needed to run before he confronted her. One thing was for sure, one way or another, that woman was going to learn there was no leaving.

* * * *

Eve poured a cup of coffee in a travel mug and pulled on her parka. She could not believe Rand wouldn't come in the house. He just sat outside as if it wasn't cold enough to kill a regular person. Of course, none of them were regular people. That thought stopped her in her tracks. She still hadn't dealt with the fact that she had become the lover of a pack of werewolves.

She closed her eyes and drew in a deep breath. She would deal with it. Tomorrow. Right now, she was trying to figure out what she should do about Noah. She stepped outside and saw Rand where he had been for the last hour, sitting inside his truck. She smiled at him, and he returned it, his dimples causing a hitch in her stride. He'd wound down the window by the time she reached the truck and handed him the coffee.

"You take it black, right?"

He nodded and took the mug from her. "Thanks, Eve."

"I told you to come inside."

He shook his head. "I can watch better from out here. Plus, I'm a deterrent to those people who might want to come on over and meet

you.”

She frowned. “What are you talking about?”

“Redfoot. I don’t trust him.”

She sighed.

“Why don’t you come keep me company in the truck?”

Why not? she thought. It wasn’t like she had gotten any work done. Her mind kept drifting back to the problem of Noah and what do to about him. And about her feelings. She had never been in love, but now that she was, she wasn’t sure she liked it very much. It hurt too much.

Before she could step away, Rand touched her arm. “Never mind. I have a feeling you’re about to have company.”

A second later, she saw a lone wolf running down the hillside in front of her house. He was big, as big as Shane had been, maybe bigger. God, he was beautiful. His fur was thick, a blend of grey and white. Watching him move held her mesmerized. He was sleek, powerful, and amazing. He slowed down to a trot by the time he reached her yard. He looked at the truck, and Rand chuckled.

“Yeah, yeah.” Rand leaned out of the truck and kissed Eve on the cheek. “See ya later, Eve.”

He was gone before she could object.

“So you came over in your wolf form? What for?”

He said nothing to her. Of course he didn’t. He was a wolf. She closed her eyes and tried to push away the panic. She was in love with a werewolf.

He looked at her, then at the front door.

“Fine, you want to go inside, why not? Just make sure to wipe your paws.”

She turned and walked up the steps and then held the door open for him. Noah prowled around the room, his big wolf body moving with the same sleek power as when he was in human form.

“We can’t have a discussion if you can’t talk.”

He stared at her and she thought she heard a low rumble of a growl. Well, Noah the wolf didn't like being told what to do any more than Noah the man. Too bad.

He moved toward her, slowly, surely as if he were stalking his prey. He stopped within inches of her and sniffed. She would have complained, but she knew it was in his makeup to do that. Then, without warning, he began to change. He bristled, his body vibrating as hair receded and flesh appeared. Just as with Shane, his snout disappeared, his forelegs turning to arms as he stood. Within moments, Noah the man stood in front of her.

"Does that hurt?"

He shook his head. "Not anymore. First few times was hard. Happens around puberty."

She wanted to ask more, to delve into the species as a whole, but she had a feeling Noah wasn't in the mood.

It was the next second that she realized he was standing naked in front of her. "Do you have any clothes?"

He didn't take his gaze from hers as he shook his head. "I don't need them."

He was aroused. It was easy enough to tell since his cock bobbed against his stomach. It was thick, swollen and the head of it already wet with pre-cum.

"I also think I asked you to stick around the cabin."

She crossed her arms under her breasts, fighting the urge to take a step back. She would not show any kind of fear. He would take it the wrong way.

"I have work to do."

He seemed to ignore that comment. "You know what your problem is?"

She shook her head, unable to answer, but did take a step back. Two steps, until she felt the door against her back. He settled a hand on either side of her head, leaning his hard body against hers.

“You don’t know how to take orders. You need to learn how to behave.”

The dark desire threading his voice sent a wave of heat over her nerve endings. God, the man could just look at her, say a few words, and she was ready to rip her clothes off. He had definitely turned her into a nympho.

“I think a little lesson in discipline is needed.”

She knew she should object to his tone and whatever he had planned. But she couldn’t seem to get herself to say no to him. Even as she stood there, pressed against the door, she couldn’t think of anything but pleasing him.

She’d lost her mind because she had fallen in love. Before she had a chance to work through what had just happened, Noah was moving away.

“Strip.”

Her mind wasn’t fully aware of what he said. Something in his voice had lashed out at her.

“I don’t hear you moving, Eve. Take off your clothes.”

“You want me to just take off my clothes. Just like that.”

When he turned to face her, his face was even more impassive than before, but there was heat in his eyes. It flamed a fire within her, sending an inferno of lust raging through her blood. He liked to order her around, wanted it, maybe even needed it in the bedroom. And now, she was going to find out just what kind of lover Noah was.

She did as he asked. She pulled her shirt over her head, then slowly slipped her pants, then her panties down, stepping out of them. His gaze felt like a weight as he watched her movements.

“Good girl. Now, go to the bedroom and get on your bed.”

She hesitated as he turned around to grab a scarf off her jacket.

“Do it now, Eve.” He hadn’t even turned back around.

She did as he ordered, wondering about this need within her to please him. She had very limited experience with men. Little to none. Before this moment she would have never expected to get turned on

by a man ordering her around. But she was. Even now, she could feel the low pulse of need threading through her blood. Her pussy lips were soaked, her nipples hard.

When he turned around and walked toward her, his face was still unreadable and there was a darkness about him. She should be scared out of her wits. Instead the spark that had started earlier was now flaming through her blood, sending a tsunami of need crashing through her. Beyond her belief, his autocratic tone had her body humming.

“Put your hands above your head and slip your fingers through the slats of the headboard.”

She hesitated, and one eyebrow rose as he continued to wait. She knew he would outwait her. There was no doubt in her mind about that. She just didn’t know what there was to gain from waiting. Well, other than stringing out the anticipation.

Instead, though, she did as he ordered, slowly, to let him know she was no pushover. Although, what did she have to say she wasn’t? He seduced her then proceeded to share her with every man in the house. Of course, she wasn’t really complaining.

She never broke eye contact as she slipped her fingers through the slats on headboard. If she hadn’t been watching him so closely, she would have missed the flare of admiration in his blue gaze. His face showed no sign of his emotions, but his eyes told her that he needed this. She knew that as Alpha he needed to dominate, but she realized it was more than that. He needed her submission in bed to feel complete. Eve stifled the panic that flared at the thought. She was scared, but she knew she wanted to do this.

He skimmed his hands up her legs, the rough calluses on his fingers adding to the thrill of his touch. It seemed all he had to do was touch her and her body responded. Hell, all he had to do was look at her and she melted in a puddle of lust.

“As I said before, you need to learn discipline. I would love to tie you up and smack that smart ass of yours red with a crop, but I don’t know if I have enough control for that.”

The words lashed out at her, battering any defenses she had against him. In the last forty-eight hours, her world had been turned upside down. Things she had believed false all her life were true, and she had become some sort of sex toy for six very sexy cousins. But at the moment, that all faded away. She could have ignored him, walked out on him and this weird arrangement, but for just a second, she saw something in his gaze, something that spoke to her. It wasn’t bitterness, or lust, but simple and pure need.

It spoke to her soul, called to her as no other man had been able to do before. Her mind told her it was wrong. She was an independent woman, one who made her own decisions. Even in this, she had made the decision to stay. But there was a tiny part of her who wanted to give up the control, to allow him to dictate her pleasure. It wasn’t as if he would abuse it. At least she didn’t think so.

She knew he was trying to test her in some way, possibly push a wedge between them. Or maybe he was trying to prove to both of them what he needed from her. Was he afraid she wouldn’t live up to the task? Maybe he thought this was the final straw, that she would walk away if he did this. But what he didn’t count on was the fact that she loved him and she was ready to fight for him.

He slipped his hand up her torso, palming her breast as he leaned down. She closed her eyes, arching up to meet his touch. She felt his mouth on hers, felt his breath against her lips. Eagerly, she opened her mouth. He pulled her tongue into his mouth, sucking on it gently. Arousal shot through her blood. He pinched her nipple. The quick, fast squeeze had her moving her legs restlessly. Her cunt dampened more.

As he moved his hand to her other breast, he dove into her mouth, his tongue sliding against hers. There was a wildness about him, restrained, but she could feel it in his kiss and the way his body

vibrated with lust. She could taste it on his tongue. He wanted her, but he was holding back, trying to keep it all in check. Irritation slipped down her spine before she could stop it. She could feel the fever for him build within her. The need to have him inside of her had her burning. She had never felt this uncontrolled in her life. She might not have shown it, but deep in her soul, she wanted to scream and get some reaction out of him. Before she could tell him how he made her feel, Noah pulled back.

“Turn over.”

Her brain didn’t truly compute the words. She was still trying to get her body under control, so it took her a second to figure out what he had just said. She froze, unable to follow his command.

“Now.”

With slow movements, she turned over and looked at him. Still impassive. When she settled on her stomach, she couldn’t help feeling vulnerable. Cool air wafted over her rear, reminding her just how exposed she was.

He joined her back on the bed, skimming his finger down her spine. She arched and then gave him a guilty look.

“No. I love seeing your pleasure. You are one of the most expressive women I have ever met. Don’t ever be ashamed to show me what you are feeling.”

She wanted to tell him she wouldn’t, but she knew that outside of the bedroom, she was afraid to. She opened her mouth to say just that, but he stopped her with his actions. He raised his hand and brought it down on her rear end. Hard. The smack stung, but with it came a flood of heated desire threading through her veins. He did it again, just as hard, on her other cheek.

“You have a problem with following orders.”

Smack.

“You put yourself in danger.”

Smack.

The sting now feathered over her flesh as he spanked her with the palm of his hand. Her cunt pulsed, cream now coating her pussy lips.

He stopped without warning and spread one large palm over her ass. The gentle touch soothed the burning on her skin, but it inflamed her desire. It seemed that all her senses were tuned now to his touch, to the gentleness after the spanking. She felt his breath over her flesh the moment before his lips touched. He kissed her, his tongue flicking out over her skin.

She moaned, unable to control herself. Restless, needing relief, she tried to squeeze her thighs together. Since he was kneeling between her legs, it was impossible. Instead, she flexed her hips, trying to relieve the tension in her weeping cunt.

“You are not allowed to come.”

He did not raise his voice. The quiet command was more effective. Dark, dangerous, and thoroughly arousing. It made her want to disobey just to see what he would do. But at the same time, she wanted to do as he asked. There was a need building within her each time they made love that urged her to comply, to give...to submit. She knew he was trying to dominate her, of course. He would be able to do it without a doubt. She wanted to give him this, needed to. Without it, she wasn't sure he would ever accept her.

He shifted away from her, off the bed.

“Turn over.”

She did so and watched as he approached with a scarf.

“Open your legs. Let me see that pretty little pussy of yours.”

Again, she complied. There was a flare in his gaze, one that told her that he approved hardily. The scent of her own arousal grew stronger.

“Part of your problem is you try to control everything.”

She opened her mouth, but he stopped her with a look. “Do not make me gag you.”

He would do it, of course. She could read it in his gaze. He was ready to assert his command any way possible. He slipped the fabric

over her body, teasing her breasts and nipples before gathering her arms over her head. He tied her wrists together then looped the scarf through the slats of her headboard.

Once he secured the restraint, he looked down at her. “Comfortable?”

She nodded.

He smiled at her then started moving down her body again. Leisurely, his mouth skimmed over her flesh. Her already fevered desire started to heat again. Teeth scraped her nipple before he drew it into his mouth.

“You know what I like about you, Eve?” He pulled on her other nipple, teasing it, tempting her to disobey the command he had given her about coming. With each little touch, her clit hardened. Her pussy dripped. Her body edged an inch closer to release.

“You’re so fucking responsive,” he said. “And you like to be told what to do, don’t you?”

She nodded, closing her eyes as shame moved in on her. What kind of woman would want these things? Only a pushover or a woman who couldn’t stand on her own.

“No. Open your eyes.”

She did as ordered and looked at him. He had positioned himself between her legs again.

“Don’t ever be ashamed of what you want. It’s as natural as breathing. You respond to me this way in the bedroom because there is a need inside of you for it. For me, I like seeing it. I love seeing how wet you get.” He drew in a deep breath. “And damn, you smell good.”

Noah moved his mouth close to her pussy, never breaking eye contact. Her whole body quivered. His eyes had darkened and there was the most feral look in him.

“Remember what I said. No coming.”

She nodded, unable to look away. He closed his eyes and then set his mouth on her. His breath heated her core first, sending little

electric sparks of energy through her. He grazed his teeth over her labia before parting it and sliding his tongue inside her. Again and again he plunged into her, tasting her as if she were a delicacy he couldn't get enough of. She closed her eyes as he teased her clit with one of his fingers. Just the simplest of touches, but with each soft stroke, he pushed her closer. She wanted to come, just completely lose control. She pulled her legs up, placing her feet on the bed as she widened her legs. But, she knew she would be punished, knew that he would tease her unmercifully before he would let her come again.

So she endured the torture. With each lick, each little touch, she shuddered, using every bit of her control not to allow her release to explode. Soon though, he was pulled back and then slipping up her body again. He gave her a kiss, and she could taste herself on his mouth. The sweet, pungent flavor of her desire was overwhelmingly erotic.

He rose to his knees, lifted her hips, and then plunged into her cunt in one hard thrust.

"Fuck, being inside you is like being in heaven. Wet, hot, fits like a glove."

She drew in a deep breath as he started to move. She wanted to come, needed it more than her next breath. His movements were slow and sure, plunging into her pussy with each hard stroke. Her headboard slammed against the wall.

Eve curled her fingers over the silky fabric of her restraint, trying to control herself. Tension gathered, her body begged for release. But he sank into her pussy then stilled as he pulled himself up to his hands. He looked down at her with eyes filled with a craving she knew too well. It beat through her blood and left her lightheaded. Even as she allowed him to dictate her pleasure, she had power over him in a way. He needed her submission, craved it as much as she did.

Noah twisted his hips, changing the direction of his thrusts. Now, they were slow, steady.

“I feel all those little muscles ripple over my shaft. Damn.” He threw his head back and groaned. “Fuck, babe, wrap your legs around my waist.”

She did and realized in this position, she had absolutely no control. She couldn’t move with him, but allowed him to give her pleasure. Soon, she could not hold back, knew that she was about to disobey his command. She tried to stop it, but the release that had been simmering there, building, was now tumbling through her.

He looked down at her. “Come for me. Do it.”

She needed no further instructions. Her orgasm slammed into her, engulfed her, frightened her. He was moving more erratic now. The headboard started to smack against the wall again with each stroke.

“Noah.”

He looked at her, sweat beading his forehead, his entire body straining for release. His eyes were darker than she ever had seen. While he had needed her submission, she knew then what she needed to say.

“I love you, Noah.”

The simple words were apparently enough. He sank into her one more time and came, his groan vibrating in the air around them.

“Eve.”

He arched his back as he spilled his semen inside of her. Just the sight sent her hurdling into another free fall into pleasure with him.

Chapter Nine

Noah wrapped his arm around Eve and pulled her as close as possible as they snuggled in bed. The scent of their lovemaking lay heavy in the air. He closed his eyes and sniffed. It was the most wonderful scent.

He opened his eyes and kissed the top of Eve's head. "You really should rethink your feelings," Noah said. He had been amazingly lightheaded since she had told him she loved him.

She burrowed closer him, her slight weight giving him comfort. Having his mate by his side, committed to him, made everything right.

"Not a chance. You're stuck with me."

He looked down at her. "Eve." He waited for her to open her eyes. "You know I love you, too, right?"

She smiled, the sight of it holding him transfixed. Her joy was easy to see, and the only thought that came to mind was that he had caused that. He was responsible for her happiness at the moment.

"Yeah, but it's nice to hear." He'd known from the start that she was his mate, but he never really understood what that meant. His father and his uncles had talked of it, of the overwhelming need to be with their mate, but Noah had never believed it went beyond healthy lust. Now though, he began to get an inkling of what the woman meant to him and his brother and cousins. He leaned down and brushed his mouth over hers. The sound of her contented sigh had his heart turning over. When he pulled back, she frowned and said, "Just don't act like such an ass again. I won't let you use any problems like that to come between us. I love you which means I want to share

every part of your life. You will not shut me out again. If you do, I promise I'll leave."

The serious expression on her face told him she wasn't joking. "Never again." He kissed her nose.

"I understand your role in the pack, but you couldn't have seen that coming."

He tucked her head under his chin. "I should have. It just doesn't seem to make sense. Attacking Ethan seems rather violent, in a personal way."

"Hm, I think you're right. The attacking of the wolves was a bit impersonal. People who could care less about preserving our environment don't have warm, fuzzy feelings about wild animals. Especially ones that kill livestock."

The last few months rolled over in his head. "You know, I think you were the catalyst."

She pulled herself up to her elbow. A frown marred her beautiful face. "Me? Why me?"

"Your research. You know, if you gained a lot of attention, it would make it really hard to drill."

Her green gaze turned thoughtful. "Oh. I didn't think of that."

"But the attack on Ethan took it to another level."

Before she could comment, her phone rang. She grabbed it off her bedside table, but when she saw the number, she handed it to him.

"It's Ethan."

Fear sank into his gut as he clicked it on. "Are you alright?"

"Yes, but we have a problem." Ethan's voice was grim. Margie's store has been set on fire."

"Is she hurt? Anyone in the store at the time?" Noah asked, rising from the bed and went to the window. He couldn't make out a thing in the dim Alaskan night. Wolves didn't have great eyesight, especially on a cloudy night.

"No, thank God. They got out in time, but there's a lot of damage."

"I'll be down there in minute."

"You have no clothes," Eve said.

Ethan must have heard because he chuckled over the phone. "Shane is on his way over since you left your clothes at home."

"Okay. Are you down there?"

Ethan sighed, his irritation easy to hear over the phone. "No. Mother arrived."

Which was all that needed to be said. Maternal instincts were almost overwhelming for the women of his pack, and as Alpha mate, she was the worst of the lot. Granted, he couldn't really blame her. It was the way nature had made her. His mother wasn't about to let Ethan go anywhere, even though he was perfectly fine.

"I'll see ya later."

After hanging up the phone, Eve took it and placed it back on her nightstand.

"What happened?" Eve asked.

"There was a fire at Margie's."

"Is she okay?" she asked.

"Yeah."

There was a knock at the door. "That's Shane with my clothes. We'll drop you off back at that cabin."

She got out of bed. "That's stupid. I'm going too."

She pulled on her robe as there was another round of loud knocking. Frustration came first. He didn't want her to go, didn't want her to see the destruction. It was in his DNA to protect her from horrible things like that. And he was pretty damned sure that if it wasn't an accident, it was done on purpose. He didn't want her exposed to the person or persons stalking them. He opened his mouth to argue with her, but she ignored his frown and walked to the door, opening it to reveal his cousin.

"Hey, Shane."

Noah walked into the kitchen to see his cousin brush a kiss over her cheek.

“How are you doing?” Shane asked her, ignoring Noah.

“Where are my clothes?” Noah asked.

Shane glanced over and laughed. He threw a bundle of clothes at him.

Noah looked at Eve. “Convince her she isn’t going.”

Shane frowned at her and crossed his arms over his chest as Noah pulled on his jeans.

“I don’t think you should go, Eve.”

One eyebrow raised at his cousin’s tone, and Noah knew they weren’t about to win this argument. She looked from Shane to him and then back to Shane. “Let’s get one thing straight. No one tells me where I can or cannot go. If you don’t take me, I’ll just follow you.”

He shared a look with Shane. They both knew they could fight her, but in the end, she would win. There were things they could keep her from doing, but most of the time, the Alpha mate pretty much did as she pleased. His mother had proven that for years.

“Okay, but if there is a chance of danger, you stay in the truck.”

She offered them both a smile that told Noah she knew she had won a small battle. “Of course.”

* * * *

Eve sat between Noah and Shane, taking comfort in their body heat. It was actually a mild day, not much wind, and a few degrees above the average temperature. It wasn’t the Alaskan winter that had her shivering. The thought that Margie might have been targeted sent icy chills down her spine.

By the time they pulled up to the scene, Eve felt ill. The store she had just visited the day before was nothing but a burnt pile of timber. Smoke still filled the air around the destroyed building, and she could see some smoldering embers. Black soot marred the snow around it. As she took in the scene it was easy to pick out the cousins in the small crowd of residents who had gathered.

“I don’t see Margie,” she said, still searching for the grumpy older woman. “Or her husband.”

“We gave her keys to one of the open cabins,” Shane said. “She and her husband were a little shaken up, but from what I understand, fine.”

They got out of the pickup and Eve studied the crowd. No more than about fifty people had gathered to help. All of them were townspeople she recognized, and while she didn't know them well, she could pick out different people in the crowd. Bernice lived out in the bush with her husband, and they were both pilots who regularly flew out to get supplies for Margie. Colin Michaels was one of the younger residents, a photographer who lived just five minutes from her cabin with his partner Joe. As she continued to study the crowd, she started to wonder which ones were actually people and which were shifters. “None,” Noah whispered against her ear.

She glanced at him. “What?”

“We're the only shifters here,” he said with a smile that had her face burning in embarrassment. “Don't worry. You'll be able to tell soon.”

She wanted to ask him more but they had gotten in earshot of the crowd. But, as they approached the cousins, her mood and theirs grew grimmer. When she saw what they were staring at, she gasped. A large sign was left in front of the store, far enough away that it wouldn't burn.

The message was written in bright red letters. She didn't know if it was paint, or worse, blood. But there was no doubting the message was clear.

Get out, or live with the consequences.

End of Book 2: The Alpha's Fall

**To be continued in
Book 3: Convincing Ethan**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kiera West spends her days writing about sexy shape shifters and her nights dreaming of them. She is married with children Readers can find out more about her writing at www.KieraWest.com.

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