

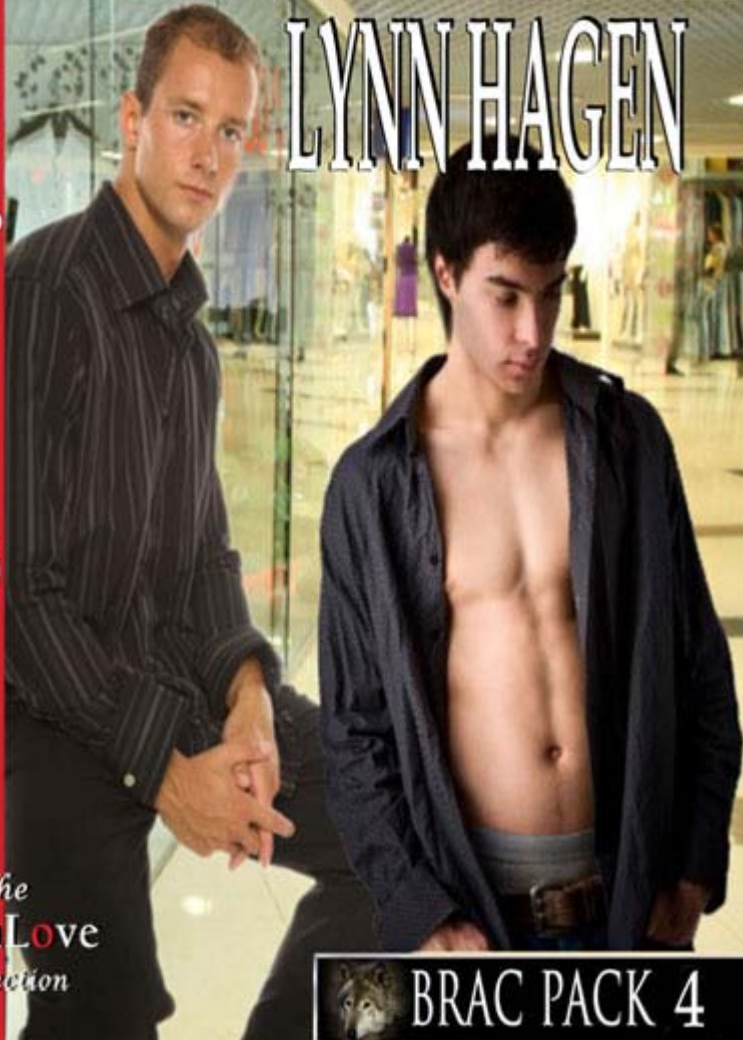
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REMI'S PUP

LYNN HAGEN



 BRAC PACK 4

Brac Pack 4

Remi's Pup

Drew was a hardworking, straight-A student until the night his ex-boyfriend saw something in him he shouldn't have. Drew's secrets led him to a life of drugs and pain, and the road to recovery will be long.

Remi is the jokester of the pack, never taking anything or anyone too seriously—until he meets Drew. But Remi's first days with his mate are spent cradling Drew through his brutal withdrawals.

To make things worse, tension runs high as the psychotic wolf, Jackson, still hunts for the mates.

Facing up to his true identity could push Drew back to drugs. Can Drew get clean and allow Remi's love to save him from himself? And can fun-loving Remi stand up to his most serious challenge yet?

Genre: Alternative (M/M or F/F), Paranormal, Vampires/Werewolves

Length: 23,699 words

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EVERLASTING CLASSIC
MANLOVE



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DEDICATION

To all the Drews out there, never think the fight isn't worth it.

REMI'S PUP

Brac Pack 4

LYNN HAGEN

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Chapter One

Drew ran his fingers over his scalp. This was bullshit. How the hell had he ended up like this? He had been a straight-A student. A good kid. How did his world come crashing down on him so hard? He rubbed his hands over his arms as he paced his apartment, passing that little black box, wishing it wasn't empty. No. Glad it was empty. No...fuck! Maybe one more time. Just one more.

Drew anguished over what he should do. It had been three days since his last fix. He used to be able to go weeks in between, then it became once every two weeks, then once every week, but now he struggled on a daily basis not to give in to the calling. His body itched, his chest tightened, and his head hurt. Just one more. He could stop after that. Just one more trip to forgetville and he could go back to his normal life. What was his normal life? He had a small trust fund to live off of, but with his habit, it was dwindling fast.

Grabbing his coat, he headed to the Midway Mall. Drew cursed his weakness, feeling utterly ashamed. He knew he shouldn't be here, didn't want to be here, but it was calling him, seducing him. Just once more.

Drew looked for the skater boy who always hung around the food court entertaining his peanut gallery. The guy was an ass, but he was

the only one Drew knew who could help him out. Spotting him, Drew tilted his head to the side to let him know he was needed.

“What’s up, *Andrew*.”

God, he hated when Mike spoke his name. He made it sound so dirty. It was bad enough he was here to see the scumbag. He always had to remind Drew *why* he was here.

“Hurting?” Mike sneered.

“Yeah, what do you have?”

They went into the public bathroom and came out two minutes later, Mike heading back to the food court and Drew heading home. His head was spinning. Now that he had what he needed, his heart raced in anticipation. Soon. Soon, he would be okay.

“Hey, kid.”

Drew turned to see a guy nodding at him. Cop? Did he know what he had on him? Picking up his pace, he quickly heading for the exit then burst through the door into blinding sunlight. Shoving his hands in his coat, Drew walked faster, cutting through the parking lot.

Drew looked back to see the guy following him. *Shit*. His fast pace turned into an all-out run. He had almost made it to the street when arms circled around his waist and lifted him from his feet.

“Get the fuck off me.” Drew kicked out, swinging his arms furiously.

“Settle down, kid. I ain’t gonna hurt you.” The guy kept a tight hold on him, and fear gripped Drew, thinking about what he had in his pocket.

“Am I under arrest?” He so didn’t want to go to jail. They would eat him alive in a place like that. Tough prison guys loved guys like him. He would be a brown-haired, hazel-eyed, five foot six, slim build prison bitch. Hell no.

Drew fought harder to get away, but the guy yanked Drew’s back tight to his chest, squeezing him close. His hand stayed in his pocket, ensuring his packet didn’t fall out.

“I ain’t a cop. Calm down.”

"If you ain't a cop, get your perverted hands off of me. You trying to kidnap me or something? I ain't into that shit. Get the hell off me." Drew swung his elbow back, making contact with the guy's stomach. His elbow hurt now. Was he wearing a vest or something? The guy didn't even flinch.

"Calm down and I'll release you," the man promised in his ear.

Drew went limp in his arms like a rag doll. As soon as he was free, he was hauling ass. Damn guy must have read his mind.

"Don't even think about running. You wouldn't believe how fast I am." Drew was set on his feet, running before they touched the ground. He made it about a block before his feet left the ground again. *Dammit!*

"I told you not to run." The man growled.

Drew kicked and punched, trying to rid himself of this guy.

"Okay, fine." Drew finally settled down, he was winded anyway. He needed to catch a breath before his next marathon. "If you're not a cop, what's with grabbing me?"

"I just want to talk to you."

Drew turned around to face the guy. *Abso-fucking-lutely gorgeous*. Were his eyes really silver? Shit, they were. His eyes demanded attention. He even rocked the military cut. It was the color of dishwater blond. That's what his mom had called that color.

Drew let his gaze drop to the guy's chest. His T-shirt stretched across a chiseled chest and abs. He could actually see the ridges from the guy's eight pack stomach. What did a guy who looked like a runway model want with him? To talk? About what? Why?

He asked just that. "About what?"

"You. What you're doing. Getting help. Leaving that poison alone."

"Fuck off." Drew's attention was back on his purchase. He needed to get home. His heart was beginning to race at the thought of getting high. He needed to get out of here.

Drew rubbed his hands up and down his arms. It was starting to

hurt again. "Later." He walked away only to find a shadow. "Look, I don't need your help."

The guy didn't say anything, his expression stoic. He just shrugged and continued to follow Drew.

The apartment building came into view. He had to ditch this guy.

Drew broke camp, running through the parking lot and around the side of the building, jumping a fence and heading to the back door. He made it in, the security door locking behind him.

Tossing his coat on the couch, he crossed to his bedroom, grabbing the black box.

What did that guy want? Couldn't have been to help. He had to be some pervert out to snatch young guys. Thank god he got away. There's was no telling what that man would have done to him, and as good as he looked, no telling what he would have let him do.

Drew grabbed a lighter from his dresser before heading back into the kitchen. The box fell from his hand as he stood there in shock. The guy was standing in his kitchen.

* * * *

Remi knew what his mate was about to do, and there was no way it was going to happen. He grabbed the kid's arm, shoving his sleeve up.

The warrior closed his eyes, not wanting to see what he suspected. Track marks littered his arm like spiderwebs. Remi wished he could heal them, but they were too old to do anything about. It would be a constant reminder to his mate of what his life had been about.

His mate yanked his arm away, shame showing in his eyes.

"How the hell did you get in here?" The smaller man bent down, grabbing the black box. Remi snatched it from him and opened the lid. Drug paraphernalia. A growl ripped from his chest as he pulled the items out, breaking and bending everything, shredding the plastic band into tiny pieces like a crazed man.

“Stop! What are you doing? Give it here!” The kid dove for Remi’s hands, trying to save whatever he could. Remi destroyed it all.

“Give me what you bought.” Remi knew that’s why the kid was at the mall. He had watched the transaction, watched as he shoved a small yellow packet into his coat pocket. That packet needed to be destroyed.

The kid shot into his bedroom, the snick of the lock indicating the man’s intent. Oh, his mate was really asking to get his ass kicked. Remi’s eyes shifted, too enraged to hold his wolf back any longer. His brows furrowed in anger as he kicked the door open, and he saw his mate stuffing something in his closet. Remi grabbed his arm, pulling it back to find a little yellow packet smashed in his palm. He wrestled it out of his grasp and found the bathroom, flushing it.

“No! No! No! What have you done?” The guy was screaming, swishing his hand in toilet water as he tried to save the powder that had already dissolved. Remi grabbed him and hauled him to the bed, blanketing his body over his mate’s while the kid fought, fought hard.

“Fight it, kid. Fight it. Don’t let it win.” He held on as the guy bucked and screamed. Sweat poured down his mate’s temples, his eyes darting around wildly. He could feel his mate’s heart thumping erratically. Remi had never been more scared in his two hundred and twenty-eight years.

The man’s fight was dying down, Remi never getting off of him. He laid over him for hours. The kid occasionally renewed his efforts, but Remi held on until he settled again.

Remi slid to his side, pulling his mate into his arms, caressing his hair and back. “Fight it, baby. Please,” he begged from a whisper.

The guy jackknifed then leaned over the side of the bed and vomited. Remi petted his hair, rubbed his back. His mate began to shake as he wrapped his arms around his stomach. “It hurts.” He cried.

Tears brimmed Remi’s eyes as he grabbed his mate, pulling him into his lap. “What’s your name, kid?” He wanted to take his mate’s

mind off of his pain. He knew nothing would work right now, but he had to try.

“D–Drew.” Remi grabbed the blanket from the foot of the bed and wrapped Drew in it. He grabbed his cell phone from his pocket and called the warrior Storm.

Thirty minutes later, Remi was carrying Drew out, wrapped tight, into the waiting SUV.

“He okay?”

Remi carefully climbed into the back, holding on tight to the young man wrapped in a blue and red comforter.

“No, just get me home.” Remi held Drew tight against his chest, feeling tremors rack his young body.

The ride seemed to take triple the amount of time it normally should have to get from the city to their small town. They pulled into the gravel drive, Storm stopping directly in front of the door. Remi crawled out as Storm opened the back door for him then helped him through the front door of the house.

All noise ceased in the den. All eyes on him. He didn't blame his fellow Sentries. He had disappeared for two weeks, searching for the scent he had discovered clinging to his Commander's clothes. His Commander, Hawk, had told him that he approached a young male at the mall for information when Hawk's mate had gone missing. That's the only stranger he had come in close contact with that day.

Remi had lived in his truck, waiting to spot his mate that Hawk had described to him. Finally, today, he found him. Hawk also told Remi that Drew had asked for money for his helpful information. He suspected drug use, which set Remi on his hunt to find his mate as quickly as possible.

Drew whimpered as Remi took him upstairs, shifting in the blanket.

“Hold on, baby. Almost there.” Remi rounded the corner, finally reaching his bedroom door. He shoved through and laid Drew on his bed. What was he supposed to do? He called Storm again as he

watched his mate scream in pain.

“I need you to find *anyone* in this fucking house that knows what to do for drug withdrawal.” He tossed the phone aside, crawling in the bed and wrapping his body around his mate again.

The warriors Storm, Tank, and Commander Hawk came through the door. Tank took the basin he brought and went into the bathroom as Hawk instructed Remi to strip his mate down to his underwear. Remi wasn’t in the frame of mind to care right now that anyone saw Drew in his boxer briefs or the track marks that littered his arm.

Tank emerged with the basin filled with water. He handed a washcloth to Remi and dipped another himself. They began to wipe him down, washing away the sweat and dried vomit. Tank took the basin to the bathroom and emptied it as Hawk grabbed a sweat-free cover out of the closet. They all sat with him as Drew vomited a few more times, cried that he hurt, and begged anyone to give him one more fix.

Remi was exhausted by the time Drew fell asleep.

“You’ll have to rely on everyone here, Remi. He’s going to try and sneak out, lie and trick people to escape. He’s going to be desperate to get that fix. Hang in there. He’ll make it through. He’ll never be over it, but we’ll all be there for him.” Remi nodded as Commander Hawk sat back. No one should have to go through what Drew was fighting right now.

* * * *

Drew woke in a world of pain. He pressed the heel of his hand against his forehead, nausea threatening to empty his stomach. His whole body ached, and his mouth felt as though he had been sucking cotton balls all night.

“Tank, grab the bucket.”

Who the hell was that? Before Drew could even try to care, he vomited. Hands rolled him over to his side as he threw up absolutely

nothing. His stomach was empty, and trying to hurl your stomach lining hurt like a bitch.

A cold rag wiped across his face and mouth, hands rolling him back. This had to be the bowels of hell. His body sure as fuck felt like it was on fire. "It hurts." Drew's muscles felt as though he had hit the weights for nine straight hours. His stomach muscles cramped, and he was shaking again.

"I know, baby. Hang in there. I got you."

He remembered that voice. The guy from the mall. Drew had yet to open his eyes. They hurt. Where the hell was he? It didn't feel like his bed. "Can I please have something to drink?"

"Storm, can you get him some water?"

How many people were here? Wherever here was.

"On it."

Drew needed to get out of here. The craving was driving into him like a sledgehammer. He wanted to go home. He wanted to stop hurting.

"Lay down. You're in no condition to go anywhere."

Huh? He hadn't even realized he was struggling to sit up.

Drew felt himself being slightly lifted. Something hard pressed against his lips, and then something wet touched them. The water. He took tiny sips, not wanting to throw that up. Drew was laid back down, someone holding him.

He drifted back to sleep.

* * * *

"Ahhhh! It hurts. Make it stop. Please, make it stop." Drew shot up out of his sleep, pain racking his body. The craving was clawing at his skin. He had to get out of here, needed to escape. Drew fought, swinging his arms and legs, biting and spitting. The pain was too much. Too damn much.

"Hold his legs."

Drew felt his legs being pinned down, his arms in a vise grip. “Get off me, damn you. Let me go! You fucking cocksuckers, get off me!” He fought against steel restraints, unrelenting, non-giving. Drew reverted to begging, “Please, it hurts. Just once, just once. Please. I promise, just once.”

“No, baby. Fight it. You have to fight it.”

“Fuck you!” He renewed his struggles, screaming to the top of his lungs. He was still trapped. Exhausted, he lay back, eyes still closed, panting.

“Bucket!”

Drew rolled over and vomited again before passing out.

* * * *

It had been three days. Three days of vomiting, screaming, crying, begging, fighting, cursing, shaking, and fitful sleeping. Remi felt like roadkill.

The Sentries had taken turns helping him hold Drew down, bucket patrol and face wiping. Remi was indebted to them all. The moral support alone helped him handle this.

It was late afternoon on the third day when Drew had finally opened his eyes.

“Where am I?”

“Safe.” Remi pulled his mate closer, running his hands through his hair and watching for any signs of nausea or combativeness. Drew just lay there, looking like he had walked through the fires of hell.

“Who are you?”

“Remi. Someone who cares about what happens to you.” His mate’s voice was raspy, strained from the countless hours of screaming and vomiting. When his nausea dissipated, he would tend to it. For now, he just held him.

“I hurt.”

“I know, baby. I know.”

Chapter Two

Drew sat back and watched as Cecil beat Oliver in another game. They were two guys that lived here. He thought the guy Oliver a bit strange with all his piercings. Cecil seemed cool.

It had been four days since he woke in this house—since Remi changed his life.

He tugged at the cuffs of his long sleeves, a nervous habit he had developed with hiding his arms. Thoughts of escape were forefront, but every time he attempted to leave, someone was there to stop him. Drew got up, wanting to go back to Remi's room. He didn't like being around all these strangers. He didn't like the fact that they all had witnessed his shame.

"Sure you don't want to play, Drew?"

Drew stopped, turning back to the room to see Cecil's arm extended, handing him the controller. He wasn't into video games, much less having every eye on him in the room. Drew felt like a bug under a microscope, everyone watching his every move.

"No, thanks." Drew left the den, wandering aimlessly around the enormous home. He stopped to study paintings of kids playing in a park or ancient cities. One in particular had caught his eye. Two wolves stood facing each other, nuzzling necks, the forest surrounding them and the moon silhouetting their beautifully colored coats. The painting drew him in, capturing his attention. He reached a hand out, lightly petting the fur that looked as though it were real, as if he could actually touch them.

Drew wanted to be one of those wolves. He wanted someone to look at him the way it was staring at its mate. Who would want a

junkie? Who would want someone with all the issues he carried? Even if Remi succeeded in getting him clean, his body was marked, forever carrying the signs of humiliation. He was tired of hurting, tired of fighting. He didn't want to do this anymore. "If only you were real," Drew whispered to the pair. He continued on, wrapping his arms around his midsection, holding the pain in. If only he could go back in time before all this began, before that fateful day that had ruined his life.

"Hey, need some company?"

Drew looked up from his thoughts to find a young guy with long black hair down to his waist, brownish orange eyes that held pity in them. He didn't want pity, just wanted to be left alone. Without an answer, he just continued on.

Drew stopped, leaned his back to the wall, and slid down. Pulling his knees in and hugging them to his chest, he felt so damn lost.

He woke with a start as he felt someone sitting next to him. Had he dozed off? Looking to his right, Remi sat silently in the same position, hugging his legs. Neither said a word.

"You'll rise from the ashes and be a stronger man for this." Remi broke the silence.

Drew laid his left cheek on his knee, staring at the strength he wanted to have, the confidence he used to possess. "I—" Drew's voice caught. He cleared it and tried again. "I wasn't always like this, you know. I was actually pretty good in school, a good kid." Drew wiped the tear that had managed to escape. He was struggling to hold back the tears and pain, only wanting peace right now.

Drew exhaled and then continued. "At first it was pills, to help me sleep. I suffer from insomnia. I found my tolerance was high. It took a large dosage to even take the edge off to relax, let alone sleep. It escalated from there, needing stronger stuff to work. Then one night at this party, me and this"—Drew hesitated, locking gazes with Remi before continuing—"guy I was dating at the time, well, let's just say he saw something he shouldn't have and, after that, he did everything

he could to destroy me. Mike is a dealer. I didn't know it at the time. He gave me something to help me sleep, and then he gave me something stronger, and so on. Until I got to where I am now."

Drew waited for Remi's disgust at his sexual preference. All through high school he was ostracized for being gay. It isolated him, made him work harder in school and at home. Hoping someone would notice and be proud of him.

Someone.

"We'll get you through this. I'm not leaving you out there by yourself. There's a whole house of people backing you up. Use them. Use all of us. That's what we're here for." Drew was relieved Remi wasn't judging him. The guy seemed pretty cool now that he was somewhat calmed. He wasn't so sure about going to strangers for help, other than Remi.

"You want to go upstairs?"

"No. If you don't mind, can we go back with everyone else? I kinda don't want to be cooped up in that room right now." Drew stood and stretched. His muscles sore from sitting in that position for so long.

"Want me to go with you?"

"To be honest..." Drew shoved his hands in his front pocket, looking down at his sneakers, "I don't want you to leave my side." He glanced up to see Remi's reaction.

"Wouldn't dream of it."

"Anyone ever tell you that you look like Gerard Butler?" *Only ten times as handsome.*

Remi rolled his eyes.

* * * *

Drew watched as a guy with blond curls down to his shoulders pointed his finger up into Oliver's face, screaming at him. What the hell was going on?

“What do you mean the movie was gay? What’s wrong with gay? I’m gay. Are you trying to say something bad about gay people? You...you...weenie head!”

Drew stepped back. Whoa, the little guy was bringing out the big guns.

“I didn’t mean anything by it. You just took it the wrong way. Grow up!” Oliver smacked the blond guy’s finger from his face, and all hell broke loose.

The guy Remi introduced as Commander Hawk growled as he advanced toward Oliver as the guy Micah grabbed Oliver around the waist, hauling him from the den. Drew didn’t know what to do. He had never been in this kind of violent situation with men as large as these.

Hawk blocked Micah’s path, his canines punching through his gums.

“He will apologize to my mate!”

“He will. Give me a moment with him, Hawk,” Micah said.

Drew heard none of that. He was shocked. All reasoning fled as he ran from the room, losing himself down the maze of hallways. He couldn’t breathe. He needed air. Were those really canines he saw? No, he had to have been seeing things. He found a side door and bolted through it, out into the rain.

Drew ran for the forest, not caring that the rain was biting cold or that he didn’t even have a coat on. He came to a skidding halt, slipping in the wet grass and landing on his ass as two large wolves emerged from the trees, growling.

Drew flipped over to his hands, pushing himself back up and took off to his right. The wolves ran on both sides of him, boxing him in. Drew slipped again, trying to turn to head in the opposite direction when another wolf cut him off. Three. There were three of them.

Drew fell into a crouch, his eyes shifting and his canines extending, ready to defend himself. A growl ripped from him, his heart pounding, his eyes darting everywhere, trying to find a break

that he could use to run through.

Drew shifted to the left, taking off back toward the house when he ran right into a wall.

Remi.

"Get in the house, Remi. There are wolves out here!" Drew tried to grab Remi's hand to run to safety, but Remi didn't budge.

"Remi, hurry!"

Remi grabbed Drew by the back of his neck, yanking his jaw down. "You have canines. How? How can your eyes shift?" Drew whimpered at the shocked look on Remi's face.

"It's not my fault! Please. Let me go." Drew tried to pull his head from Remi's grip, but he wouldn't release him. Now Remi knew his secret. He would yell at him to get out. Call him a freak. Try to destroy him just as Mike had.

"Stop, pup. Hold still now!"

Drew became still at the command. He felt a compulsion to obey. If Remi had used this voice outside of the mall, Drew wouldn't have made it two feet.

"How? You're human." He continued to examine Drew's small canines with curiosity. "Is this the secret Mike found out?"

"Yes." Drew spoke around Remi's fingers that were poking at his teeth.

"Half-breed?"

"Don't call me that!" Drew snapped his head back, trying to rid himself of Remi's hold.

"Pup or half-breed?"

Drew glared at him. Remi was being a smart-ass. He started shivering from the cold rain stinging his flesh.

Remi grabbed his arm, leading him inside, guiding Drew to their room. The wolf grabbed a handful of towels from the bathroom.

"Strip out of those wet clothes. Can you get sick?" Remi began to towel dry his hair as Drew pulled off the soaked jeans that were clinging to his body. They landed with a loud thud on the carpet. As

he unbuttoned his shirt, he answered his question, “Yes, I can get sick. I’m an addict, aren’t I?” He was wrestling to free himself from the drenched material.

“Hold still.” Remi helped to untangled him and pulled it off, dropping it on top of the denim.

“Take the underwear off, too.” Remi ordered as he stood there waiting, ignoring Drew’s snide remark.

Drew hesitated. He would be standing in front of Remi naked. His erection would tell the man his desires. Remi wasn’t gay, was he? His cock was already bulging in his boxer briefs, showing exactly how he was feeling. He hooked his thumbs in the waistband and yanked the wet underwear down and off, tossing them as well.

Remi was looking directly at his hard on. Drew covered himself as Remi cleared his throat.

“Can you shift?”

“No. How do you know so much about my...creature?” Drew grabbed one of the towels in the guy’s hand and wrapped it around his waist. He felt a little better about being covered, but the towel was tenting in front of him. *How embarrassing.*

“It’s not a creature. You’re part wolf. How could you not know this?”

“I know who I am. My father is full grey wolf, and my mom is human. I call it a creature because it has caused me nothing but problems.” He turned his back, crossing the room and plopped down on the bed. He was tying his best not to react to the fact that he was in a house full of were-creatures. The only one he had ever known was his father. These wolves were huge!

“I don’t understand how you can be an addict if you have wolf in you. We don’t get addicted to human drugs or catch their diseases.”

“Half human, hello?” Drew couldn’t figure out why he was being so damn irritable. He wanted to rip Remi’s throat out, and all the guy had done was help him. Was it the withdrawals?

Drew started tasting it in his mouth as he thought about it. He

could mentally smell the alluring aroma of the drug all the way to his lungs. He began to salivate, needing. His chest tightened as his mind started thinking of ways to get out of here. It started hurting again.

"Talk to me, pup. I can see a change coming over you."

Drew start to rock back and forth. His chest was rising and falling rapidly. He had to get out of here. This wasn't going to work. None of it was. At least the guy had tried.

"Fuck off! I don't need your help. I want to leave. Let me go now!" He charged Remi, knocking into the rock hard chest with his shoulder. Remi stumbled back, not expecting the attack. Drew grabbed the door handle and pulled it open. Dammit!

Someone was standing there. Drew plowed into him, but he didn't even flinch. The guy was almost as tall as the door and just as wide.

"Don't think so, little buddy. I stopped you once outside. I'll do it again." The guy crossed his arms over his chest as Drew calculated the possibilities of getting around him.

"I got it, Tank. Thanks." Remi swung his arm around Drew's chest and pulled him off of his feet, tossing him on the bed. Tank closed the door as Remi crawled over him.

"Think you can get out of here? Think you can escape? Think again, pup." Remi nipped him. "If you're part grey wolf, then you know about mates, about the claiming?"

Drew nodded as he watched Remi from guarded eyes.

"Good. Then I won't have to do a lot of explaining when I tell you that you are my mate."

Drew's eyes grew as big as saucers. He placed his hands on Remi's chest and pushed, trying to get up. This couldn't be. How? Remi wasn't even gay. All his actions and body language said he was a fierce male. He exuded confidence, manliness. He was the perfect specimen of what a male should be. How the hell was he gay?

On second thought, how was Drew his mate? There was no way he would settle for a junkie as his mate. Drew felt in over his head. He wiggled and twisted, trying to get off of the bed.

When Remi wouldn't relent, he bared his canines, growling at him.

"How dare you threaten me?" Remi's canines dropped, his eyes shifting. Drew knew when to submit, when to back the hell up. He had made a grave error in his haste to free himself. He had a full-grown, full-breed wolf hovering over him. Had he lost his ever lovin' mind? Drew whined, baring his throat.

Remi nipped at his exposed neck, showing him who was the dominant predator, and then kissed the sting away.

Remi rolled off of Drew. "Get dressed."

Chapter Three

Remi pulled into the parking lot of the local recreation center. The place was somewhere safe the town's children could play. He was hoping that interacting with these less than fortunate humans would help his mate.

Sometimes helping other people with their problems helped to take the focus off of your own.

They had Cecil, Johnny, and Blair sitting in the back seat. Remi noticed Drew hadn't spoken a word the whole way. Another truck followed them with three of the wolves from the house following close behind.

Everyone got out and closed the doors, heading up the steps and into a large room filled with kids jumping rope, shooting hoops, and making arts and crafts. His mate stayed close to his side, probably not knowing what to expect.

Little kids squealed as they ran to the wolf Tank. The massive warrior hunched down, hugging the little ones and grabbing the basketball. He became a jungle gym for them.

Cecil took Blair off to one corner as they sat in large bean bag chairs. Cecil grabbed a book and scooted close to Blair. Remi was proud of the Alpha's mate for helping the other mate learn to read. Blair had been tossed out onto the streets after his father had decided he was too old to molest anymore. Blair had no choice but to turn to prostitution to survive. No one judged him. His mate Kota had asked Cecil to help him with his illiteracy.

The wolves Storm and Evan walked around, watching everyone and everything that went on, guarding the place. Mates were high

value to anyone wanting to hurt their pack.

Remi took Drew off to the side. "I need you to do me a favor. You see Johnny over there?" Remi nodded toward Johnny. "He used to be a happy-go-lucky pup until his brother kidnapped him and damn near killed him. I was wondering if maybe you could sit with him, be there for him. His brother put that mark on his face when he broke his cheekbone. He thinks he's too ugly now to be seen." Remi watched the emotions that played over Drew's face, his brows creased in thought.

Drew walked over and took a seat and helped Johnny bead a necklace he was working on. Remi smiled at his mate.

* * * *

He looked like he really didn't want to be here. Drew knew that feeling.

Drew slid the next bead over to Johnny as he threaded it on the string. He looked as though he was lost in another world. Drew knew how he felt about ugly marks. He carried his own as well.

Without a word, he slid his sleeve up to reveal his track marks to Johnny. The guy stopped what he was doing and stared at his arm. Drew felt self-conscious, wanting to rip the garment back in place, but in this moment, it wasn't about him. It was about healing someone else.

"How did you get those?" Johnny glanced up at Drew then looked back down at his arm. The guy reached his hand out and ran his fingers down Drew's arm. His arm trembled as he waited for Johnny to pull his hand back in disgust. Instead, he reached up and pulled Drew's sleeve down.

"I got an ugly mark, too."

Drew reached his hand up and traced the scar on Johnny's face. The guy really was handsome. Drew wanted to touch his golden locks. They looked so soft and silky. "It's not ugly. It just shows

everyone that you're a hero. You survived what your brother did. I think it makes you look like a tough guy."

Johnny's eyes grew round, "Really? I look tough?"

"Yeah, I was kinda scared to come over here. I thought maybe you might beat me up." Drew saw that he was getting through.

"I would never hurt anyone. Do I really look tough?" Johnny giggled.

Drew smiled as he saw the deep set dimples on Johnny's face. He was proud that he could help someone. Cecil and Blair came over to the table and took a seat. Johnny smiled up at both of them.

"Drew says I look tough with my scar. Do I?"

"You scare the hell out of me every time I walk by you, buddy." Cecil shivered dramatically.

"Yeah, I'm afraid to be your friend," Blair added.

"You want to be my friend?"

Blair nodded, and all four spent the rest of the afternoon talking and beading necklaces. The necklaces would be donated to the local Medical Center for patients.

* * * *

Remi watched with pride knowing his mate had pulled Johnny out of his dark place.

"We got problems," Storm whispered into Remi's ear.

Remi looked over his shoulder and saw three wolves from the Eastern pack stroll into the center.

"Get the mates out of here." Remi grabbed his cell phone and made a quick phone call as Tank and Evan made their way over to him. This was not a place for this bullshit. There were too many kids around. He feared these wolves would act like assholes and some human children would get caught in the crossfire.

As Storm ushered the four mates out of the back door, the three Brac wolves formed a wall and pushed the Eastern pack out of the

front. If there was going to be a fight, it would be away from the children.

As the Eastern pack backed away, two SUVs pulled up, one stopping in front of them and the other stopping in front of the truck with the four mates and Storm inside. They only lived five minutes from the center, which is why Remi wondered what made these wolves suicidal.

Maverick, Kota, Hawk, Cody, and Jasper stepped out of the one closest to them as Caden, Ludo, Murdock, Gunnar and Loco surrounded the vehicle with the mates. Micah must have stayed home with his mate, Oliver. If he knew Micah, he was chomping at the bit to be here.

Tank, Evan, and Remi joined their Alpha Maverick.

“Why have you come to my territory where our mates are gathered? Do you not know that is an act of aggression to us?” Maverick stood his full six foot nine inches over the three trespassing wolves.

“We didn’t come as an act of aggression. Our new Alpha sent us to find one called Maverick,” the largest of the three said.

“New Alpha? What happened to Jackson?” Remi noticed Maverick glancing over at his mate sitting in the front seat, assuring himself that Cecil was unharmed.

“He was challenged and lost. Most of our pack was tired of his ways and wanted a new leader to guide us.” The three stood in non threatening stances, showing the Alpha that they did not want to fight.

“Who is this new Alpha?” Maverick asked cautiously.

“His name is Zeus. He wishes a meeting with you, sir.”

Maverick stepped away to consult with his Beta, Kota, and his Commander, Hawk. Since Timber wolves had superior hearing, Remi heard it all.

“Do you think this is a setup?” Maverick asked the two. “I don’t trust Jackson’s sneaky ass. With the last stunt he pulled trying to take our mates, he can’t be trusted.”

"We could set up a meeting in a public place with his Beta and Commander present as well. Of course, we would have Sentries placed in strategic locations to assure that the peace remained." Commander Hawk replied.

Maverick turned back to the three wolves. "Very well. Have your new Alpha and his two top men meet me at The Café tomorrow at noon."

The three wolves bowed, looking around to see if it was okay for them to leave. Tank stepped aside to allow them their escape.

"Get our mates home," Maverick ordered Storm.

"Yes, Alpha."

* * * *

The four guys were chatting away in the truck on the way home, retelling their harrowing experience at the hands of the three rogue wolves. The warrior Storm chuckled as he listened to them embellish the tale.

"I thought my mate, Maverick, was going to take their heads off." Cecil puffed his chest in pride.

"No way. Hawk looked like he was going to turn into a wolf and eat them." Johnny giggled.

"Nah, Dakota would have scrambled all their brains together." Blair laughed.

Drew smiled at the ridiculousness of Johnny, Blair, and Cecil. The three were comical together. He just sat there and listened to them, not knowing Remi well enough to say what he would have done. What was his mate like? Was he fierce or coolheaded? Was he playful or serious? Drew had a yearning now to find out. He wanted to know everything he could about the handsome man.

"Remi would have kicked their butts, too, Drew." Johnny squeezed Drew's knee, laughing the whole time. Drew felt warmth toward Johnny for including his mate in the tale of butt kicking. He

wanted to be accepted by them, wanted them to like him.

He decided at that moment that his mate deserved someone he could be proud to call his. He would fight this addiction with everything in him. Drew became excited to see Remi at home. Home. He even liked the idea of calling that chaotic place home.

Storm pulled into the gravel drive and waited for the other two vehicles to join them. "I'm not letting you guys out until I have full coverage just in case the scene back at the center was a diversion for an ambush at home."

When the others arrived, Storm hit the unlock button, signaling to the four passengers that it was okay to get out.

Drew immediately went to Remi, entwining his fingers in his mate's. Remi smiled warmly at him as he led him toward the house.

"Sorry you didn't get to spend more time out today." Remi snaked his arm around Drew's waist, kissing him on top of his head.

"It's okay. I had fun. Thanks. Cecil, Blair, and Johnny sure know how to make a tale grow though." He laughed.

Remi stopped and looked down at him. "Your smile is beautiful. I'd like to see it more."

Drew blushed as he climbed the steps with Remi at his side.

They entered the den in full swing. Some of the Sentries had taken off for patrol as the others grabbed beers and started playing video games and shooting pool. Drew stood there fascinated at the camaraderie everyone was showing.

"Hey, Remi. Were you shaking in your space boots when the little pups showed up?" Jasper teased.

"Fuck you, queeny. Go bake some cookies or something." Remi flipped him off.

"I'll bake you some, all right. Not saying they won't be laced with arsenic." Jasper slapped a hand over his mouth as he looked over at Cecil. "Fuck, Cecil. I'm sorry, little guy."

"Knew you were an ass, Jazz." Remi pulled Drew over to the bar, sitting him down and getting him a soda.

"Are you two always like that?" Drew asked as he accepted the orange soda from his mate.

"It's a love-hate relationship. We love to hate each other." Remi smiled and tapped his finger on the tip of Drew's nose.

"You guys really hate each other?" How did you trust someone to have your back on patrol if you hated them? Drew couldn't figure that out. He sipped his soda as he watched Remi's muscles bulge and flex when he twisted the top off of a beer. Damn, was he hot.

"Nah, it's just fun harassing each other."

"Oh." Why was Drew feeling jealous? Did he think the two slept together? Maybe he wanted that same carefree relationship he had with Jasper.

"What's wrong, pup?" Drew knew Remi could read him. He pressed his lips together before he could blurt out his insecurities. Remi didn't seem the type to answer to anyone, let alone a half-were. Instead, he went with something safe. "Nothing."

"Lying will get you spanked." Remi winked at him.

Drew looked around the room. He knew wolves had exceptional hearing, and even though the noise level was astounding, they would still hear. He didn't want anyone privy to his and his mate's intimate details. If they ever got that far. Drew was beginning to think Remi looked at him more like a kid brother than someone he wanted to fuck into the mattress.

He mouthed *really* to his mate.

Remi smiled and tugged on his ear, taking a swallow of his beer.

Yeah, kid brother.

Drew began to wonder why Remi hadn't claimed him and bound him to his mate? It was something that was done right away when a wolf found his mate. It couldn't be because of his age. Hell, he was nineteen. Although the shifters lived to be one thousand years old, they never claimed a mate under the age of eighteen.

They agreed with that human law. Wolves matured at the same rate as a young humans did until they hit the age of thirty, and then

everything slowed down to a crawl. The aging process pretty much went dormant until they reached eight hundred and fifty, then they looked like an aged human at sixty-five and stayed that way until their death.

Drew began to question himself. Did his mate not find him attractive? Did he not want an addict? Maybe he was a disappointment to Remi? Maybe Remi didn't want the hassle of enduring the struggle Drew went through every day? He became agitated. He wanted to be alone.

Drew slid off of the stool and left the den, walking up to his room. What if Remi never claimed him? Would he have to spend the rest of his life by the gorgeous man's side without knowing the intimacy they should have shared? If Remi bound Drew to him, he would live as long as his mate did. If he didn't, Drew would only have a half life being a half-wolf. He would only live five hundred long, lonely and torturous years.

He squealed as he was spun in the air, grabbing for something to anchor him. Remi laughed, "And where is my mate heading off to?"

Drew clung to him as Remi carried him down the hall and into their room. He held on tight as Remi tried to set him down. Drew didn't want to let go, wanted to stay in his arms forever.

"Drew, what's wrong, love?" He knew Remi could feel him trembling.

"Why won't you mate me? Am I too ugly? Is it because I'm addicted to drugs? Why?" Drew buried his face in his mate's chest, inhaling that musky, manly smell only his mate held for him. No other would ever smell this good.

"Is that what you think? I won't mate you because you don't appeal to me or because you're fighting an addiction?" Remi asked gently as he ran his hands through Drew's hair.

"I haven't claimed you yet, pup, because I wanted to make sure you were ready. You are already fighting one battle. I...I just wanted to make sure this is what you wanted with a clear head. No pressure."

“I want you as my mate, Remington.”

Chapter Four

Drew rushed the ritual words out before Remi could stop him. He had one hour to claim Drew, or he would go through agonizing pain, wishing for death, if Remi didn't make love to him and bite him.

Remi's eyes hooded, laying Drew on his back as he pushed his shirt up, kissing his abdomen. Remi skated his hands up Drew's sides, lifting his shirt up and off in the process.

He attached his mouth to a brown disc as he sucked Drew's nipple, rolling it in his teeth and bringing it to a peak. It pebbled under his ministrations. He lapped at it a few more times. The taste was addictive.

Remi lifted his head, admiring all the milky white skin underneath him. He let out a small growl as he pulled Drew free of his clothes, watching his mate's cock smack his lower belly. Damn, that was sexy. Pre-come leaked onto Drew's stomach, glistening and taunting him. Begging to be sampled.

Who was he to pass up such an inviting invitation? Remi licked his lips as he bent over, cleaning the spilled mess. His mate threw his arms over his head, whining and moaning.

Next he went further below, inhaling Drew's scent at his groin, where his scent was strongest, as he licked the wrinkly sac. Drew moaned again, spreading his legs apart.

Remi licked a path from sac to puckered hole as Drew's hips bucked, a shudder raking through his body. He slid his arms under Drew as he nipped and sucked his perineum and balls.

"You are so beautiful," Remi said in a voice laced with desire. He felt dizzy with lust.

Remi crawled up Drew's body as he drew him down for a kiss. The kiss became heated, all consuming. He couldn't get enough of his pup.

Drew broke away. "Gotta breathe."

Remi grinned at the look of innocence his mate displayed. He watched as a blush crept across Drew's face.

Charming.

Drew wrapped his legs around Remi's waist, grinding his cock into his Remi's denim. "Too many clothes."

Remi pulled free of Drew's legs to quickly kick his boots off, discarding his shirt, jeans, and socks, and then he climbed back on the bed.

Remi's hand circled Drew's cock, licking the glistening liquid seeping out once again. His pup tasted like the food of the gods.

Drew whimpered.

Remi smiled as his tongue swirled around the bulbous head, teasing the sensitive area that held the bundle of nerves. He began to bob his head as he took Drew's full length, swallowing the shaft down his throat, Drew's cock jerking and throbbing in his mouth.

"More. Harder." Drew cried out as his hips thrust.

Remi took him to the root. He felt Drew's hot seed pulse down his throat as his mate cried out his name. Pulling back, he licked the cock clean.

Drew was panting, grabbing at Remi's shoulders.

"Slow down, pup. I'm not going anywhere." Remi assured him in a rough whisper. He glanced up to see Drew's little canines had dropped. Remi's cock jerked at the sight. It was the hottest thing he had ever witnessed. Remi ran his tongue over both small points, delving in to claim the sweet taste.

"Please, Remi. Do something, I can't stand it," Drew pleaded hoarsely.

Remi kissed his neck as he speared two lubed fingers into Drew.

Drew stiffened, squeezing his ass cheeks together.

Remi stilled. “You’ve done this before, haven’t you?” His brow quirked up as he waited on his mate’s reply.

Drew panted out, “Yeah, a couple of times.”

“I told you lying will get you spanked, pup.” There was no way Drew was a virgin. He’d had had a boyfriend, right?

“I’m not, promise. Just been awhile.” Drew crossed his heart with a devilish smile, a smile that made Remi melt on the spot.

Remi moved slower, twisting his fingers until he found Drew’s prostate, and he grazed it.

“Oh, my god!” Drew shot up, crying out in pleasure. “What did you do? Do it again.”

Remi stroked over it again and again, adding a third finger as he watched Drew buck and moan. Remi growled at the sight of Drew in the throes of passion.

Pulling his fingers free, he flipped Drew onto his hands and knees. Remi rubbed his cock head up and down over Drew’s puckered hole, excitement gripping him at the sight of the little pink muscle. Lubing his cock, he pushed slowly in, stopping when Drew sucked in a breath. Remi rubbed his mate’s back as he pushed in inch by slow inch until he was seated in Drew’s ass. He shuddered at the tight grip around his prick.

Drew took a deep breath then nodded his head, signaling Remi to move.

Remi held Drew’s hips as he rocked back and forth, getting Drew’s body accustomed to his thick length. Once he felt the muscle loosen up, his thrusts became more demanding. He kicked Drew’s knees farther apart, pulling his ass closer, deeper. Remi watched in amazement as Drew’s muscle swallowed his prick over and over again, the skin stretched around his shaft.

Remi reached around and grabbed Drew’s cock, stroking it to match his rhythm. Drew dipped his back, mewling and moaning. Remi thrust harder, wanting his mate to reach his climax. Drew cried out, and warm liquid filled Remi’s hand.

“Do you accept me as your mate, Andrew?”

“Yes, Remington.” Drew moaned.

Remi struck, his canines sinking into Drew's shoulder, Drew's orgasm pulsing out stronger.

Remi could feel his soul merging with Drew's. His life ribbons unwound and tangled with his mate's, and their heartbeats synchronized as he felt Drew's lust consume him. They were bound mates now. Drew would be by his side until they died of old age. Hopefully, no sooner.

Remi threw his head back as he roared his release, thrusting harder, deeper. His body jerked as his balls were emptied. He licked the wound closed as he collapsed over Drew's back.

“You're...heavy.”

Remi laughed as he pulled Drew against him, spooning his mate as his softening cock still lay inside him. He pulled the covers over them, snuggling down for the night.

* * * *

Drew lay on the bed drooling as he watched Remi pull on a charcoal grey V-neck sweater and a pair of blue jeans. Fuck, he was hot. He wanted to drop to his knees in front of his mate and worship him.

“Horny again, pup?” Remi chuckled.

They had made love three more times during the night. Drew never seeming to get enough. Drew wanted to use Remi as his new choice of drug. Remi should be fine with that. Sex was a much healthier outlet.

Drew threw a pillow at Remi, embarrassed that Remi could feel the lust running through him. Now that they were mated, Remi would feel what he felt when in close proximity.

Remi walked the pillow back over to the bed, giving Drew a heated kiss. “Get dressed, babe. Gotta fuel our bodies between

sexcapades.” He winked at Drew.

Drew quickly dressed and headed downstairs behind his mate, happy for the first time in a very long while. He would follow Remi anywhere.

He stopped at the bottom of the steps, his smile dropping from his face as he spotted Oliver. Drew didn’t want the guy ruining his happy moment. He didn’t want a confrontation. Oliver had become the bane in everyone’s existence since his arrival. He never had anything nice to say, always reminding the mates that they were faggots. Why Micah didn’t just shoot him was anybody’s guess.

Remi had already disappeared around the corner. Damn, he was trapped. Drew turned to race back up the steps before anything foul dropped out of the man’s mouth. Too late.

“Running to get your next fix?” Oliver snarled at him.

Drew kept going, throwing his hand over his mouth as he raced into his bedroom, straight into the bathroom, vomiting.

He lay on the floor crying and shaking as the craving slammed into him full force.

* * * *

Remi noticed Drew wasn’t behind him. He took the stairs back up to their bedroom as a clenching pain gripped his chest. His palm slammed over his sternum as he tried to catch his breath. What was wrong with him? He quickly realized that it wasn’t him. It was Drew.

He ran into the room to find Drew shaking on the bathroom floor, a foul odor stinging his nose. Remi pulled Drew up in his arms, clenching him to his chest.

“What is it, Drew? What happened?” Remi felt like claws were scraping at his skin, digging in and biting. Was this what his mate felt when his withdrawals hit him? God, how did Drew manage to stay sane?

“Oliver.”

Remi threw his head back and howled. Anger tore threw him. That was it. He had had it with that little menace. Remi carried Drew with him as he descended the stairs, cradling his mate close. He stormed into the den and spotted Micah lecturing Oliver...again.

"You! I've had it with your viciousness. Look what the hell you've done to my mate!" Remi nodded his head down toward Drew's shaking form. "I want him out of this house now!"

Remi gently handed his mate over to Storm, and then he shifted into his wolf form, baring his teeth and charging toward Oliver. It took Maverick, Kota and Hawk to stop him. The other mates scrambled to get out of the way. Micah had shifted, defending his mate.

"Holy shit!" Oliver yelled.

"Get him out of here!" Hawk bellowed.

Tank grabbed Oliver around the waist and raced to Maverick's office.

Remi tried to follow, but Maverick's superior size stopped him. Maverick's wolf form was unrivaled. He snapped at Remi, warning him to heel. Micah paced in front of the archway, stopping Remi from getting through and going after his mate. The rest of the Sentries had barricaded the mates behind them, protecting them from harm.

"Shift back now, Remi," Kota demanded.

Maverick stayed in wolf form until Remi complied. Once Remi was human again, Maverick shifted. The warriors who shifted back stood naked, and the other Sentries blocked the mates' view.

"Have you lost your mind? Since when do we go after someone's mate? I want you in my office in twenty minutes!" Maverick bit out between clenched teeth, his naked form leaving the den. Micah followed.

Remi grabbed Drew from Storm, hugging his mate close. He crooned in his ear, trying to soothe him as he went upstairs to dress. The Sentries listened as they understood what was going on. Drew was hurting. Once Remi came back down with his mate still clutched

to his chest, the questions began.

“What happened?” Kota asked softly.

“Why did you try to attack a mate?” Cody asked.

“Oliver.” Remi never took his eyes from Drew’s. He focused all his attention on his mate as he tried to bring him back from his craving.

“He’s mean,” Johnny shot out as the Sentries slowly moved away from the mates.

Remi knew something had to give before irreparable damage was done. Oliver had some answering to do. What happened to Drew was low even for an angry teen lashing out. It wouldn’t be tolerated.

* * * *

Remi, Kota, Hawk, and Micah were in Maverick’s office, a shouting match underway. Maverick had had about enough.

“Silence!” his Alpha voice commanded.

The room became deathly quiet. “Micah, I agree with Remi. Something has to be done about your mate before he is seriously hurt. One can only pull the tiger by the tail for so long before the tiger eats him.”

“Alpha, every last one of the mates has issues that they are dealing with. Mine is no different. I think that is why the fates gave them to us, to help them heal. I have been working with him. He needs time.” Micah looked defeated. Dealing with Oliver was taking its toll.

“Micah, we are all willing to help when it comes to our mates, but Oliver fights it. I’m sorry, but I have no choice but to confine him to your room until improvement is proven. I have to look out for the others’ well-being,” Maverick said sympathetically.

“I understand, Maverick.” Micah turned to Remi, shame filling him. “I am truly sorry for my mate’s behavior. Tell Drew I’m sorry as well. We all have our fight we’re struggling with.”

Remi nodded as Micah left to confine Oliver.

Maverick didn't want hard feelings between his pack members. Micah was a good warrior, but his mate needed to deal with his issues.

Chapter Five

Maverick left for his meeting with the new Alpha, wondering if this guy was going to be a bigger asshole than Jackson. He waited inside The Café with Hawk, and Kota. Tank, Jasper, Cody, and Loco were hidden around the building, watching.

Maverick stood as an unbelievably large man stepped through the door. With his height, that was saying something. He had to duck to walk through. The man spotted Maverick and nodded. They took a seat as the conversation ensued.

“What are your plans for your pack?” Maverick needed to know if the new Alpha was going to be an ally or an enemy. If Zeus became his enemy, he would have to enlist more Sentries. The guy was too levelheaded and intelligent. It wouldn’t be like Jackson’s crap.

One dozen had been the number of Sentries in the Brac pack for centuries. One dozen was all that was needed. They were fierce warriors with unparalleled skills. These grey wolves relied on numbers. Maverick’s Timber wolves relied on strength.

“To bring order back to my pack. Jackson was sloppy, lazy. The pack suffered because of this. I don’t wish to be enemies. I wish for a truce among our people,” Zeus stated confidently.

They discussed territorial boundaries, pack members, and the boring stuff Alphas talked about, keeping their conversation hushed from the humans’ ears.

As they were shaking hands, leaving The Café, Jasper appeared at Maverick’s side, staring at the large Alpha from the Eastern pack. Zeus ran a knuckle down Jasper’s face as Cody howled in rage. He grabbed Jasper around the waist, hauling him back and taking a

protective stance in front of the redheaded wolf.

Zeus roared at the Sentry. "Mine!"

Maverick rolled his eyes. "Fuck"

* * * *

Cody held Jasper in his arms as they sat on the sofa in the den. "Is he really your mate, Jazz?" Cody's heart was being ripped from his chest. They had been best friends and lovers for over two centuries. Although they both knew they weren't mates, you couldn't tell them that.

Tears streamed down Jasper's face as he nodded. He didn't understand why fate hadn't made Cody his mate. Mates were paired together because of needs and compatibility. Cody knew him like the back of his hand. He was his best friend, his lover, everything. This was some fucked-up shit.

Jasper laid his head on Cody's chest as he thought about a future without his Code-man.

* * * *

Drew answered the door on the second knock.

"Can I help you?" He stood there looking at a tall man with short dark hair and a detective badge hanging around his neck. Drew panicked. He slammed the door in the guys face. Why would a detective come here? Did Oliver's dad file a missing person report? Was it because of his drug use? What could he possibly want?

The knock turned into banging. Drew ran into the den, yelling for everyone to hide. He yanked at the sleeves of his shirt, praying for his marks to go away. He ran over to Cecil and Johnny, tugging them behind the couch.

"Hey, calm down, Drew. Just tell Loco what's troubling you." Drew began stabbing his fingers at the front door as he jumped up and

down.

“Coppers! Hide.”

* * * *

Loco chuckled at the hazel-eyed guy biting his nails. What the hell had him so worked up? He heard the pounding on the front door and walked off to answer it, shaking his head.

“Can I help you?”

“Depends. You gonna slam the door in my face, too?” The detective eyed Loco up and down.

“Nah. Drew’s just seen one too many movies. Come on in.” Loco stepped aside to allow the detective to enter. They only had one person to worry about, Oliver. He was the only underage person in the house. Although he was an unclaimed mate, untouched by Micah, they still didn’t have legal guardianship over him. This could get complicated fast.

“I need to see”—the detective pulled out his notepad—“a Cecil Walters.” The detective looked at Loco as if he should run and fetch him. Loco bit back a growl. This guy was starting to rub him the wrong way, Loco didn’t *fetch* for anyone except his Alpha.

“Wait right here. I’ll go get him.” Loco stomped off, pissed.

The detective nodded.

* * * *

“Can I help you, detective?” Maverick asked as he entered the foyer.

“Detective Keating, are you Cecil Walters?”

“No. I’m Maverick Brac. Cecil’s...boyfriend. Could you tell me what this is pertaining to?” Maverick had no clue what was going on, but no one was getting near his mate.

“No. Not unless you’re Cecil. I need to speak with *him*.” The

detective growled.

"Very well. Loco, please bring Cecil here." Maverick's instincts were telling him to throw this guy out on his ass. Unfortunately, he had no choice if he didn't want the police department at his door. Besides, he was intrigued as to why a detective wanted to speak with his mate.

"Yes, Maverick?" Cecil eyed the dark-haired man at the door.

"I need to speak to Cecil privately if possible." The detective cleared his throat.

"Of course." Maverick led his mate and the detective to his office. He didn't have a good feeling about this guy's presence.

"Cecil, I need to know where you were last night." The detective took a seat on the leather sofa in Maverick's office.

"Here."

"Let me guess, you have a house full of witnesses?" The detective asked skeptically.

Maverick growled. He pulled Cecil closer, his mate visibly shaking.

"Yes."

"How do you know Jeremy Yards?"

"He's my ex-boyfriend. Why?"

Maverick knew as soon as his mate's ex-boyfriend's name was mentioned that this wasn't going to be something he wanted to hear. Jeremy had been nothing but trouble, and it seemed he still was, even though they hadn't seen the jerk since he claimed Cecil.

"He was assaulted last night, beat up beyond recognition. He's naming you as the attacker." The detective looked at his note pad then back at Cecil, a questioning look in his eyes as if he didn't believe Cecil was capable of the crime.

"I was nowhere near him! Jeremy is a violent abuser. I ran from him because of the abuse. He's a big fat liar!" Cecil was near tears. Maverick was fighting not to rip this man apart. The idea that his mate attacked his ex-boyfriend was ridiculous.

“So, you’re telling me you had nothing to do with his assault?” Maverick watched as the detective looked down at his notepad then back up at his mate. Yeah, he was thinking the same exact thing. Jeremy Yards was full of shit. The man had tried to isolate his mate, cutting his friends off slowly. Maverick was surprised Jeremy had allowed Cecil to work and live apart from him. The man was a genuine asshole. Maverick wanted to go find him and show him what a real ass kicking was all about.

“That’s exactly what I’m telling you. Why won’t he just leave me alone?” Cecil buried his face in Maverick’s chest, crying.

“I’ll need to question the residents here. Corroborate your story.” The detective looked at Maverick, defiance gleaming in his eyes, daring the Alpha to refuse.

“You have our full cooperation.” Maverick called Hawk, telling him to bring his men in here one at a time.

An hour later, the guy asked, “Is that everyone?”

“We have one more, but he’s indisposed at the moment. Evan Triamade. I’ll make sure to give him your card and have him contact you.” Maverick offered his hand.

The detective shook it, “Thank you for cooperating, make sure this Evan contacts me.” Detective Keating followed Maverick back to the front door. Once the detective was gone, he breathed a sigh of relief. Cecil had been through enough. If Jeremy insisted in this, Maverick would make sure the guy forgot Cecil on a more permanent basis. Nobody messed with what was his.

* * * *

“I got a present for you.” Johnny jumped up and down excitedly, Drew quirked a brow up at the happy little puppy. Guess Remi was right about Johnny’s natural personality. Johnny leaned in closer and whispered, “For...you know, helping me not be sad anymore.”

“You don’t have to give me gifts, J-man.” Drew ruffled his hair.

He didn't let on that he absolutely loved gifts. He became more excited than a kid at Christmas with surprises.

Johnny pulled out a black box with a bow on top, shoving it into Drew's hands.

Drew froze.

"It's a surprise." Johnny beamed.

His body became on big suffocating vise. He faked a smile, thanked Johnny and walked away, holding the box out at arm's length. His palms became sweaty, and his heart was beating out of his chest. He walked to the foyer, dropping the box, and walked out of the front door.

* * * *

Remi was going nuts searching every room for Drew. How had he vanished without anyone noticing? What set him off? It had to be the drugs. Drew wouldn't leave the house without Remi otherwise. He raced downstairs to grab his keys, knowing where he was looking first.

The mall.

He spotted a black box sitting on the floor in front of the door, a pink bow taped on top. It looked identical to the one Drew had in his apartment the day he tried to use. Remi dropped to one knee and reached a shaky hand down to grab it, pulling the lid off, there was a handmade beaded necklace inside with *Andrew* spelled out in block letters.

Johnny.

Johnny had inadvertently set Drew off. He had to find his mate. Remi pocketed the necklace and took off.

* * * *

Drew was ready to explode. What the fuck did Mike mean he was

out?

“Got something else you could try, though, on the house, for old times’ sake. It’s my own special blend.” Mike gave him an evil smirk.

Drew didn’t trust him, but he was hurting. He grabbed the small baggie from Mike and ran out. *No! Don’t do it. Think of Remi. Think of how proud he’s been of you. Fight it.*

Drew fought a war inside himself. His head was squeezing down on him with pressure. His body was physically jerking with the battle. His palms slapped the sides of his head, pressing in, trying to relieve the burden.

He walked briskly in no particular direction. Up one side street and down the next. He hugged his midsection.

The pain.

It hurt so much.

He wanted to call Remi and tell him to come get him, but the small bag in the palm of his hand burned. He began to sweat profusely. He was losing the fight, and he knew it. Just once. He would do this just one more time.

He was a junkie after all, right? Who could trust a junkie at his word? That’s all he’ll ever be in everyone’s eyes anyway. No matter what they said, he knew how they looked at him, how their eyes accused him of not being worthy enough for Remi. Remi would be better off without him anyway. The wolf deserved better than a track-littered user.

Remi would realize this and leave Drew. That would best for the warrior, to find someone worthy of his love. Drew’s life was a total loss anyway, so why pretend to be something he wasn’t? Once again, Drew came to the conclusion that Remi deserved better. Someone clean, someone with less baggage.

Drew wasn’t that man and would never be that man. He was only good to use drugs, nothing more. Going back to his old life and relieving the burden he put on Remi and the others would be the right thing to do.

Drew clutched the packet firmly in his hand. Just once.
Just once.

Chapter Six

Remi collared the little punk. “Where the fuck is he?”

“I—I don’t know man. He ran out of here about forty minutes ago.”
The kid was shaking in Remi’s grip.

“What did you sell him?”

Mike’s eyes hooded, and his lip pulled up into an evil grin.
“You’ll see.”

Remi felt a chill run down his spine. He wanted to tear his flesh from bone, but he needed to find Drew first. Mike would be dealt with later. This was time sensitive.

Remi threw Mike down and headed back to his truck. He had to find Drew. His mate. If anything happened to him, Remi wouldn’t survive. He loved Drew more than his own life. *No one* mattered to him but Andrew.

Remi drove up and down the residential blocks. Where would he have gone? He was wasting time. He had to think.

His apartment?

Remi floored it as he raced through the streets, making hair pin turns and skidding to a halt as he jumped out. He saw one of Drew’s window’s slightly ajar.

He forced his way into the back door, expecting his mate to be laid out, high, with a needle stuck in his arm, but instead...well. Remi didn’t know what the hell to think.

Drew was vacuuming the rug in the same spot, over and over again. Stark naked. His cock jutted out to full attention. He didn’t think he’d ever seen a prick stick straight out like that. It looked...painful. Drew grabbed the detachable hose and shoved his

dick in it. Remi stood there confused and shocked.

“Fuck!” Drew threw the hose down, stomping on it. “You suck!” Drew burst out laughing, pointing at the vacuum, “Get it? You suck.” Picking the hose up, he began to vacuum again, in the same spot, only this time...huh? One hand was pushing the handle while the other was pumping his cock with such force that Remi thought the damn thing was going to go up in flames. The dry friction had to hurt. Ouch.

Drew detached the hose again, this time trying to shove it up his ass as he continued to pound his prick.

Okay, his mate needed intervention. Now.

Remi slid his arm around Drew's waist as he pulled the hose away. Drew leaned back against his chest as his hand pumped at lightning speed.

“Can't come. Make me come, Remi. Please. My balls hurt.” Drew spun around and began humping Remi's leg, grabbing painfully at Remi's cock hidden behind denim.

“It's attached, love. Don't pull my dick off. We'll both regret it later.” Remi circled Drew's wrist and pulled his hand away. He looked into his mate's eyes to see them glossed over. What had Mike given him?

Drew's little canines dropped as he began to bite Remi in the arm, rocketing his hips into Remi's thigh.

“That hurts, pup. Stop it.” He pulled Drew's hair back with a tug, extracting his teeth from Remi's flesh. Little beads of blood spread across his sleeve.

“Let me fuck you, Remi. Please. I have to fuck you.” Drew shot behind Remi, humping the back of his thigh as he held onto Remi's hips.

Oh, hell no. Remi was a top all the way. He never bottomed for anyone. *Ever*.

Drew began to grunt as he stabbed his cock forcefully between Remi's thighs. Drew snagged his fingers into Remi's waistband, trying to pull his jeans down.

Remi whirled around, crushing Drew's wrists in his hand and biting his shoulder, hard.

"Yes, bite me. Make me come."

Drew was humping air now, his hips jerking as his cock bobbed up and down.

Remi pushed him away as he stripped out of his clothes, pushing Drew back by his forehead with the palm of Remi's hand. "Dammit, pup. Hold still."

When Remi was finally naked, Drew pounced, knocking Remi off balance as he landed on the floor with a thud.

"Where the hell are you getting all this strength from?" As bad as Remi wanted to be angry at his little pup, he was turned the hell on. Thoughts he'd never had before were racing through his mind. He rolled Drew until he had him pinned, letting Drew's cock tap at his ass cheeks. Could he? Even for Drew?

Remi shot up and ran into the bedroom with a horny Drew chasing him. He reached the bedside drawer and snagged the lube before Drew's arms caught him around the waist and tackled him to the bed.

"Mine!" Drew growled.

Drew was going berserk. He shoved at Remi's legs, trying to jam his cock into Remi. Fuck this. Remi wrapped his legs around Drew's waist and heaved him over to his left, dropping him down on the bed. Little shit.

"You wanna fuck me, pup? Do you?" Remi bit out.

Drew's head was nodding up and down in rapid succession.

"Then you fucking do it right."

Remi turned over onto his hands and knees, squirting the lube down the crack of his ass. He had to gently kick Drew back, stopping him from impaling Remi.

"I said do it right!"

Drew rammed two fingers into Remi. Fuck! Remi's eyes burst with white light as pain tore through him. He gently kicked Drew

back again only this time making his mate hit the floor.

“You little shit. You trying to rip me open?”

Drew whined as he looked up at Remi, his cock bouncing up and down as it throbbed. Remi knew Drew couldn't stop himself. He could feel the burning lust his mate was enduring.

He heaved a sigh as he pulled Drew up. “Easy, understand?”

Drew nodded. Remi could tell his mate was straining not to knock him over and stick his cock in his ass, his mouth, his ear. At this point, his mate wouldn't give a damn.

Remi slowly crawled back on the bed, watching Drew over his shoulder.

Drew gently slid two fingers in this time, stretching Remi. Drew lubed his cock and pushed past the ring of muscles.

“Stop, wait.” Remi was panting. How the hell did Drew take it up the ass? Bottoming hurt. The burning began to ease. Remi nodded.

Drew pushed all the way in before Remi could stop him again. He began thrusting, maneuvering his hips until he hit Remi's gland on the down stroke.

“Holy shit!” Remi's head fell back as pure pleasure exploded. This, this right here he could handle. “Go for it, Drew. Let loose.”

Drew's began to thrust with sheer force as he slammed into Remi. His mate screamed to the top of his lungs as he exploded into his Remi's virgin ass. But it wasn't enough. Drew's dick was still iron hard.

“Remi, help me. I can't make it go down.” Drew cried out.

Remi kicked him back, flipping over as Drew jumped on the bed and rammed back in. Remi wrapped his legs around Drew's waist, being careful that his massive thighs didn't crush him. He hitched his hips higher, allowing Drew deeper penetration. “Bite my neck, Drew.” Maybe that would help his mate.

Drew growled and struck. His little teeth stung Remi's neck. Remi came in an instant, his seed shooting out and up.

Drew was pistoning his hips as he came again. This time his cock

softened...somewhat.

Remi let Drew fuck him for what seemed like hours, his puckered hole screaming after a while.

Finally, Drew fell over, exhausted. His cock lay flaccid.

“You are in such big trouble, pup.”

* * * *

Drew lay balled up in Remi’s arms as his mate carried him into the house. His dick burned so bad. He whined as the friction of his jeans rubbed against it.

“You found him. Is he okay?” Storm held the door open as Remi carried Drew through.

“He’s fine. No hard drugs.” Remi headed for the stairs. Even curled up in his mate’s arms, Drew could tell Remi was walking funny. “I want that drug pusher at the mall taken care of. Drew’s source needs to dry up.”

“Is he...is he gonna go through withdrawal? Do you need us to watch over him?” Storm, along with Tank, followed Remi upstairs as he laid an exhausted Drew under the covers.

“No, it wasn’t the same poison. I don’t think this one will have the same affect. He should be fine.” Remi brushed the hair from his Drew’s forehead.

“Call us if you need us. You know we’re here for you guys.” With that, the two wolves left the room.

Remi hissed as he sat on the bed. Drew knew he was in big trouble for this one. “I’m sorry, Remi.” Tears ran down Drew’s face as he wondered if Remi hated him now, if he had ruined what had just started to grow between them. He knew his earlier thoughts were the drugs talking. He didn’t want Remi to find anyone else. Drew had to stop fighting this and realize he needed help. Face the fact that he couldn’t make it go away just by ignoring it.

Drew squirmed as his mate applied to a cool gel, relieving the

burn at his groin. Man, that felt good.

“Hold still. Your dick is as red as Jasper’s hair.” Remi smoothed the salve around Drew’s cock and balls, being very gentle.

“It’s okay, pup. I didn’t expect you to go cold turkey without at least one relapse. I’m just grateful it wasn’t a needle.” Remi gathered Drew in his arms, caressing his hair and kissing the top of his head.

“But I let you down. I, uh, emasculated you.”

Remi chuckled, “No, you didn’t. Believe me when I tell you that you didn’t do anything that I didn’t allow to happen. As far as you letting me down, remember that feeling the next time you want to run off. Call out for me. I’ll always be there.”

“You...let me? Um, did you...” Drew ducked his head as crimson crept across his cheeks.

“Yeah, I liked it.” Remi squeezed him before letting him go. “Come on, tiger. I need to go soak my poor aching ass, and I don’t want to let you go yet.” He pulled Drew in the bathroom with him as his mate filled the tub with hot water. After he sank down, Remi held his arms for Drew to join him.

Drew lay with his back against Remi’s chest, relishing the feel of the heat surrounding his battered cock.

“I don’t think I can have sex again for a long time.” Drew blew out under his breath.

“Somehow I doubt that.”

* * * *

Maverick leaned back in his chair as he closed his eyes and pinched the bridge of his nose. This couldn’t be happening. After agreeing to a truce, the Alpha of the Eastern pack was demanding his mate be sent to him. What the hell was he supposed to do? He couldn’t force Jasper to do anything. It had to be his choice.

And to top it all off, he’d had another dream. This one even more bizarre than the last. He struggled to figure out its meaning, but it

eluded him. All he knew was that Storm was in it, and he had five Asian men standing around him. Did that mean Storm had five mates? No, it had to mean something else, but what?

He was brought out of thought as Cecil entered his office. Thank goodness it was someone he was actually happy to see. His mate crawled in his lap and laid his head on Maverick's chest.

"Do you want to tell me about your dream? Maybe I can help." Cecil asked softly.

"No, baby. These dreams are meant only for those involved. I can't break their trust and confidentiality."

"I understand. I just don't like when you get into your far away moods. It bothers me." Cecil snuggled closer.

"You wanna go get a caramel macchiato?" Maverick smiled, remembering the first time he had laid eyes on Cecil. It was in The Café. His baby had ordered that sugary coffee along with a lemon square. He would forever be grateful to the fates for giving him this little man.

Cecil chuckled. "You remember?"

"Always."

* * * *

Drew slid two cool fingers in and out of his mate. Remi's head was resting on his hands as he lay on his stomach. "What a way to wake up."

Remi moved his ass to the motion of Drew's fingers. He could tell his mate was enjoying it. Drew slid in a third finger, and Remi pushed his forehead into the pillow. Drew spread his ass cheeks apart as his tongue licked around Remi's puckered hole. His mate pushed back, impaling Drew's tongue in him. He tongue fucked him until the need was too great. He had to have his mate. Drew kissed his tight entrance and then lifted his head.

"Lift your hips, Remi."

Remi complied. Drew's cock popped past the ring

"Harder, pup." Drew rocked harder into Remi's tight ass, grabbing his hips and losing himself in his mate. He loved knowing he brought Remi such pleasure. Drew only had sex with Mike a handful of times. It's not like he was that experienced, being a bottom the whole time. Remi was his first experience with topping. Drew decided that he liked both, but bottoming would always be his first choice.

It even made him feel closer to Remi knowing he was his mate's first, as far as topping him.

"Gonna come." Remi's body shook as he came all over the sheets. Drew howled as Remi's tight ass clamped down on him, milking his sperm from his balls.

He slid his soft cock from his mate, falling back.

"Good morning," Drew panted out.

"Morning, pup."

Remi pulled Drew into his arms. "What do you want to do today?"

Drew shrugged. "What's there to do around here?"

"Well, we have the game store, The Café, a book store, rec center, and the Marina's," Remi chuckled as Drew rubbed his face in armpit. "Tell you what, why don't we just bum around and see what we can get into?"

Drew draped his arm across his mate's massive chest. "Sounds good."

Chapter Seven

Drew jumped around laughing as Remi tried to get the fishing line untangled from his arms.

“No, you didn’t just make yourself into a human fishing pole.” Peals of laughter made Drew fall against the railing.

“I wouldn’t say human. It’s not that funny, pup. I hunt, don’t fish.” Remi thought it would be a good idea to rent some poles and spend some quiet time with Drew. The day had been clear, sunny, and warm. His pup had never gone fishing. It was something they both wanted to try.

He wasn’t a fisherman, but how hard could it be? Right? How the hell did those guys on those shows make it look so easy?

“Hold still, let me help.” Drew’s face scrunched up in concentration as he tried to unweave the thin line from around Remi’s silver watch and pinky ring. “How did you get so tangled?” Drew laughed. “Maybe we should just use you as bait.”

“Hush, pup, before I use this line in a more inventive way.” Remi managed to get the last of it off of him, throwing it down.

“No, thanks. My bits and pieces can only take one traumatic experience a year, and that stunt in my apartment was enough to last a lifetime.” Remi saw his mate visibly shudder. “My cock is shriveling just thinking about it.”

Remi laid his hand on the back of Drew’s neck, pulling him in for a kiss. “Smart ass.”

They returned the poles as Remi led his mate around to the different stores. Drew stopped in front of the book store. “Can I get a book? Don’t tell anyone, but I’m a closet nerd.”

"You can get anything you want, love, and your secret's safe with me." Remi held the door open as Drew stepped through, excitement lighting up his face. He would give his mate anything to keep him happy. To see his face with a smile instead of the sadness or pain, he would buy the bookstore.

"Can I help you, gentlemen?"

Remi turned to see a man an inch taller than himself. He had a very friendly face.

"I was wondering if you had books on chemical dependency." Remi was shocked and proud of his mate's choice to learn about his addiction. Seemed his pup wasn't fooling around. Remi had to fight the urge to buy all the books on drugs and help his mate with whatever he needed, but he knew he had to step back and allow Drew this. He would be there though, anything his mate needed.

"Sure, any chemical in particular?" He led Drew to the back of the store, showing him the section he needed. Remi stayed close by but gave his mate the space he needed.

"No." The clerk pulled two books out, handing them over to Drew.

"Anything else?" The guy's eyes softened when he asked Drew. Remi wondered if the clerk had guessed it was his mate. Or maybe he thought Drew was trying to help someone else? Whatever the case, Remi was glad that Drew was finally acknowledging the support surrounding him.

"How about any good gay romance novels?" Drew blushed at his request as the clerk chuckled.

"You'd be surprised at how many women buy those books."

"Really?" Remi asked. What could be so interesting about gay love that would have woman reading them? Sure, this small town didn't seem to care about the gay men who lived here, but the overall acceptance was still not up to par.

The clerk nodded as he took Drew to the adult only section. Remi joined him then, curious at Drew's selection. Drew leaned into

Remi's ear. "Never hurts to get some good ideas," he whispered as he waggled his brows.

Remi smiled as Drew picked three books and headed to the front of the store. He laid his purchases on the counter as Remi fished out his wallet.

"I haven't seen you around here before." The clerk extended his hand. "I'm Murphy."

"Drew. And this is my partner, Remi." They shook hands. Murphy inclined his head at his mate.

"Thank you, Drew. Hope to see you again." He smiled and waved as Drew and Remi stepped out of the door.

"Nice guy."

"Yeah. Wanna grab some hot chocolate?" Remi held his hand as they made their way to the café. Drew took a seat on the soft red couch, peeking inside his dirty novels. He giggled as Remi brought their drinks over.

"What's so funny?"

"Nothing. I'll show you later." Drew stowed his book back in his little brown paper bag.

* * * *

Drew ran into the den, pulling Cecil and Johnny off to the side. "Look what Remi bought me." He pulled the three books from his bag, looking over his shoulder to make sure no one could see.

"Wow, are those smut books?" Cecil tried to grab one from Drew's hand, but Drew pulled back. He nodded his head in quick bursts. "Uh-huh, gay ones. You can read them after me. Okay?"

"What's a smut book?" Johnny looked from Cecil to Drew, his brows drawn down.

Cecil threw his arm over Johnny's shoulder, "Johnny, my man, you have a lot to learn."

* * * *

Blair sat off to the side, watching the three chat in hushed tones as though they were afraid of being caught with porn magazines by their parents. He smiled sadly, wishing he was as innocent as those three. Blair would give anything to redo his life, but fate had chosen a different path for him. Arms snaked from behind him as Dakota pulled him from the couch.

“And what has got my sunshine feeling so down?”

Blair nuzzled Dakota's neck. If redoing his life meant not meeting Dakota, he wouldn't change anything.

“Nothing now.”

* * * *

Cecil, Johnny, and Drew crept along the hall. It was after midnight. They didn't want anyone to catch them. It would be too embarrassing to be caught looking at a porn sight. Drew's book had mentioned something that they were clueless about, and they were dying to find out what it was. . They knew the wolves had exceptional hearing, so even a creaking floor board would give them away.

Cecil put his index finger to his lips as he slowly turned the doorknob. They crept across the carpet as the white light illuminated their faces. Cecil began clicking away as Johnny bounced from foot to foot with his fists shoved at his mouth. Drew waved his hand for Johnny to get his butt over by them before he gave them away.

“Got it.” Johnny ran around Maverick's desk as all three stood there with their jaws hanging open looking at the computer screen.

“What's going on in here?” Maverick asked as Hawk and Remi walked in behind him.

“Oh god! We're busted. Run!” Johnny shot around the desk, trying to run out of the office. Hawk grabbed him around the waist and swung him up into his arms. He pulled him close as he walked

around the desk, looking at the monitor.

Cecil shook his head and chuckled at Johnny's paranoid reaction to their warriors finding them on a pornographic website. He was such a neophyte.

"Uh, guys. I think you need to see this."

Maverick and Remi hugged their mates as they came around the desk.

Maverick's eyes bugged as Remi tilted his head to the side, brows furrowed.

"Cecil, why were you and the other mates on this website?" Maverick couldn't take his eyes off of the screen.

"The book mentioned hermaphrodites, and we wanted to know what it was. Please, get it off of the screen." Cecil shuddered in Maverick's arms.

"If you wanted to know, all you had to do was ask. These images are disgusting." Remi clicked out of the website.

"Believe me, with images like that, I will." Drew shuddered.

* * * *

Remi immediately shifted into his wolf form as he entered the kitchen, circling around Tank, jaws snapping.

"Whoa, Remi, I'm not hurting Drew. Calm down." Tank lowered Drew from above his head, holding him in his arms. "Back the hell up, Remi."

"I'm okay, Remi." Drew reached a hand down to pet his mate. This was the first time he had seen Remi in his wolf form. He was beautiful. "I just needed Tank to lift me to reach a bowl, and I got scared of the height. I'm okay, mate." Drew cooed at him.

Remi backed up, shifting his form. He pulled Drew from Tank's arms, nuzzling his neck and rubbing his back.

"Dude, chill. The squirt needed a large bowl for snacks. I didn't know he was going to freak out when I lifted him. Sorry." Tank

walked out, leaving Remi and Drew alone.

“You okay, pup?”

Drew chuckled, “I’m fine, knight in shining armor. Didn’t realize how damn tall Tank really was until I was above his head.”

Remi pulled a chair to the counter, stepping on it to retrieve the bowl his mate had been after. “I’ll make sure it’s stored *under* the cabinet for you vertically challenged mates.”

Drew swatted at him with the large plastic bowl. “I’ll give you short.”

“Well, babe. You’re only five six in a house full of men over six feet. You’re vertically challenged.” Remi jumped back as Drew swung the bowl again.

“Be nice, pup. I’ll have to spank you.”

“Promises, promises.” Drew poured the snacks as he nibbled on the nachos.

“You and the boys have big plans tonight?” Remi grabbed a handful of chips as he watched Drew grab soda’s from the fridge. He loved seeing his mate with his new friends. Drew’s confidence was lifted and his cravings were almost nonexistent.

“Yeah. Cecil got a horror movie for us to watch. Wanna join us?”

“Nah. It’s your night with the fellas. Have fun.” Remi kissed Drew. “I’m going to get dressed then to find Tank to apologize.”

* * * *

“I can’t watch.” Johnny covered his eyes as the killer hacked his victim into tiny pieces. Bloodcurdling screams bounced off the walls in the den from the surround sound.

“I gotcha, buddy.” Blair pulled Johnny close to his chest as the female ran through the abandoned warehouse, falling a gazillion times.

“Will you stop falling, you idiot.” Drew threw popcorn at the large flat screen television. “Why do woman always fall?”

“Guess their boobies tip them over.” Johnny giggled.

They all burst out laughing as the killer locked her in, cutting the power to the warehouse.

The lights cut out in the den. Cecil screamed, panic seizing him. It was dark, too dark. He felt his way around the couch as he screamed for Maverick, sobbing.

Two big strong arms pulled him up and held him tight. “It’s okay, baby. You’re not in the tunnels. Power’s out is all. Calm down. Someone go see what happened,” Maverick barked out. He didn’t like to see Cecil this frightened. Maverick knew he was having flashbacks, and he wanted them to stop immediately.

“On it,” someone said as he carried Cecil to a window, pulling the curtains back so the moon shown down on them.

“Think of it as a romantic night. Just you, me, and the moonlight.” Maverick rubbed his mate’s back as he waited for the power to be restored.

* * * *

“Is he going to be okay?” Drew whispered to Remi.

“Yeah, he just had a traumatic experience that involved pitch-black tunnels. He’s terrified of the dark now. Maverick has him.” Remi pulled Drew in his arms, keeping him close. It may be a power outage. It may not be. He wasn’t taking chances with his mate. Remi saw that Hawk had Johnny wrapped tightly in his arms while Kota held onto Blair. He knew Micah had Oliver safely upstairs.

Remi could hear Loco whispering into Maverick’s ear. “It wasn’t a power outage. It was cut.”

The mates were immediately escorted into Maverick’s office as the Sentries went on alert. Even Oliver was pulled downstairs and thrust into the office with them.

“What’s going on? Micah woke me and pulled me down here.” Oliver looked from one face to the next for an answer.

"The killer came out of the movie to eat you." Johnny pouted at him.

Oliver rolled his eyes. "Whatever, dude."

"Power outage," Blair offered his brother. Drew saw the way Oliver curled his lip at Blair. What was wrong with the guy? What had caused Oliver to be so black-hearted?

"I heard Loco tell Maverick that it was cut." Cecil moved closer to Drew. He pulled the mate closer to him. Cecil's eyes radiated pure terror. Remi had told him about Cecil's ordeal, so he could understand why the mate was this way.

"Why would someone cut it?" Johnny looked confused.

"To keep the element of surprise," Oliver offered.

"Huh?" Johnny looked even more confused.

They all froze as they heard scraping outside the window, and even Oliver huddled closer to the mates.

"I don't think we should stay in here. I found a passageway while I was sneaking around one night. I think we should hide in there." Oliver crossed the room, hitting a round flower that was carved into one of the bookcases against the wall. Oliver pushed, and the bookcase creaked and fell away.

Cecil shook his head frantically as he backed away. "There is no way I'm going in there." Cecil shook like he was standing naked in a blizzard.

"You'll be safe. You're not alone. Come on buddy." Blair grabbed Cecil's wrist as he pulled him along.

"I think we need to hurry. I have a bad feeling about this." Drew wanted Remi. Fear had his body trembling as he followed the other guys into the passageway.

"Yeah, hurry." Johnny twisted his fingers in front of him. His eyes were wide with fear as Drew coaxed him in. Drew closed the bookcase, praying they weren't making a bigger mistake by coming in here.

Chapter Eight

Remi raced down the hall as he heard glass shattering and wood splintering. It was coming from Maverick's office.

The mates.

As he rounded the corner, Hawk and Kota joined him, Micah not too far behind. They crashed through the door to find the window lying on the floor in a thousand pieces, curtains blowing, and the frame cracked and broken.

Their mates were nowhere in sight.

Howls echoed through the darkness.

* * * *

"Come on, sweetie. Blair's got you." Blair hugged Cecil tight to his side as they made their way through the cobwebs. The wooden tunnel was wide enough for only one person to pass at a time. Blair had to walk sideways to keep Cecil close.

Drew had a tight hold on Johnny. His little body was trembling as he stumbled along. Oliver led the way.

"Where do you think this ends?" Blair asked his brother.

Oliver just shrugged.

There were small lights that had flickered on when the bookcase opened to reveal the passageway. Blair felt like a monster forcing Cecil into the passageway. He knew about Cecil's kidnapping and his near death experience, and he knew he was harming the little guy mentally right now by making him travel through it. But his gut had told him to get the hell out of that office immediately. After being on

the streets, Blair learned to listen to his instincts.

"How much further do you think it is?" Again, his brother just shrugged. "Could you tell me anything? Some of us need reassurance." Blair squeezed Cecil closer. He didn't care what Oliver's problem with him was, Cecil and Johnny were terrified and needed one of them to *act* like they knew what they were doing.

"How the fuck should I know. I never went this far," Oliver spat over his shoulder.

"You don't have to be an ass about it." Blair was really tired of watching his brother take his anger out on innocent people around him. This was not the time for him to be what had become normal behavior for him. The mates were terrified and needed to know what was going on. Blair was terrified but kept his cool so the others wouldn't totally lose it.

"Whatever."

"What the hell happened to you, Oliver? At one time you looked to me to keep you safe, keep you happy. What's with the Goth look and the bitterness?" Blair couldn't take it anymore. He wanted his little brother back. He didn't like this guy in front of him. *This* guy was cold, bitter, and spiteful.

Oliver whirled around, getting into Blair's face, "You want to know what happened to me? Dad happened to me! You left me in the hands of that monster. You. The brother who supposedly had my best interest. The brother who protected me left me unprotected." Oliver turned around and stormed off. They had to pick up their pace to keep up with him.

Blair yelled back at him, "Do you think it was my choice? He threw me out to fend for myself! I tried to tell someone. I tried to make someone listen. Nobody gave a shit. If I didn't care, I wouldn't have sent Dakota to get you. I care, Oliver. I care too much what happens to you. It tore me apart knowing you were there with him." Blair was crying now. He had tried to hold back all the pain he had felt, tried to damn the walls up. But Oliver's bitter accusations tore

them down.

“Whatever. You could have snuck back and took me with you.” Oliver growled.

“To what, the unforgiving streets? Are you crazy? Do you know what I had to do to survive? Oh, yeah. You do. Lord knows you made sure to throw that in my face.” Blair had to calm down. First, they were shouting and that wasn’t good if you were trying to sneak. Second, Johnny was crying.

“Stop it, both of you. As glad as I am that you two are finally getting things off of your chest, this isn’t conducive to us getting away quietly,” Drew hissed out. He pulled Johnny to him, rubbing his back and shushing him.

“Listen.” Oliver held a hand up, tilting his head as he strained to hear.

They all quieted to hear footsteps getting closer.

“Run,” Oliver whispered.

They all began to run as fast as they could in the confined space, the twists and turns slowing them down. They stumbled when Oliver ran into a wall. They were in some sort of a chamber with nowhere to go as packed dirt walls surrounded them.

Cecil was becoming hysterical, clawing at Blair and crying.

“Now what?” Blair asked in a panicked voice. This was so not good. They had nowhere to go, and whoever was after them had only to finish the journey, and he would have the mates cornered.

Blair watched as Oliver looked around for a weapon. There had to be something he could use. His brother was the unofficial leader of this little group, and Blair knew Oliver felt it was his job to protect them. Some of the old Oliver was coming out. His brother pulled at a rotting three-foot piece of two-by-four that was falling away from the structure that was outlined against the far wall, apparently an old bracing system of some sort. He yanked and twisted at it until it broke free. “Get behind me.”

All four ran behind Oliver as he raised the piece of wood.

"Looky. Looky. Little mates lost." Jackson cackled as he came into view. He walked casually toward the frightened group. Drew and Blair shoved Cecil and Johnny further behind them.

"I thought you got your ass kicked and ran out of town, doggy," Blair spat out at him. What was wrong with him? Why was he taunting a deranged wolf? Yeah, he needed a head examination.

"Shut up, whore. I don't need you now that I have the Alpha and Commander's mates."

"Don't talk to my brother that way, you piece of shit!" Oliver swung the two-by-four at Jackson, making him take a step back.

"Damn, mates are getting backbones these days. Used to be a time when they were seen and not heard. Ah, the good old days." Jackson tsked as he stepped closer again. "Just give me the two little twinks, and I'll be on my way. No harm, no foul."

"Try and take them and I'll stake you through your black heart!" Oliver yelled.

"Dumb ass. I'm not a vampire. Should have stayed in school. Now give them to me." Jackson lunged as Oliver braced the wood under his arm and thrust forward. Jackson's claws swiped at him but missed as he slumped down Oliver's body. Everyone started screaming, and Johnny was crying hysterically as Drew kicked Jackson's body away from Oliver.

"I-I killed him." Oliver dropped the makeshift weapon as he slumped against the wall, looking at his hands as if they were strangers to him.

Oliver quickly gained his composure as they heard footsteps again, lots of footsteps, thundering toward them. His brother reached down and grabbed the bloodied weapon as he jumped in front of the mates again. Holding it high, he was ready to swing at whoever came close. Blair was terrified and proud at the same time.

Maverick was the first to round the corner, skidding to a halt as he took in the scene. He put his hand up. "Its okay, Oliver. Put it down. You're safe."

Blair looked over to see Oliver had an unfocused look. His eyes darting around, and Blair knew Oliver wasn't even aware of what was going on. Blair knew taking out Jackson was playing havoc with his psyche. The act was rebelling in his mind, his brain rejecting it.

Micah pushed past and threw his arm up as Oliver sent the piece of wood flying at him, "Stay away from them!"

Micah grabbed him and pulled him in his arms. "I got you. It's okay." Oliver slumped against his mate in a daze.

"Johnny! Where the fuck is my mate? Johnny!" Everyone moved aside as Hawk came barreling through, and Johnny ran to Hawk, wailing and crying Hawk's name. Hawk snatched him up and held him in a tight grip. "It's okay, pretty baby. Daddy's got you." Hawk buried his face in Johnny's hair and released a loud exhale, his shoulders shaking.

Blair and Oliver's heads snapped up as they looked at Hawk.

"Long story." Micah and Kota said in unison.

Blair turned to his brother. "This isn't finished between us."

"Whatever," Oliver muttered as Micah led him away.

* * * *

Remi grabbed Drew, pulling his shirt up and running his hands all over his upper torso. "Are you hurt? Did he hurt you, pup?"

Drew was going to die of mortification if Remi didn't stop. *Geez, the guys were here.* Remi pulled him close, peppering kissing all over his face and head. Drew loved it.

Kota grabbed Blair as Maverick carried Cecil out, leading the way.

As they cleared the bookcase, Maverick looked back. "I had no clue that was here. Who found it?"

"Oliver," Blair volunteered.

"Very smart, young man. Very smart," Maverick praised him. "I believe people should not only face up to what they do wrong, but be

acknowledged for what they do right. Balance.”

Oliver shrugged and looked away.

Maverick dropped down in his office chair with Cecil cuddled in his arms. The Sentries had boarded up the window and cleaned the glass and other debris up.

Hawk slumped onto the sofa, pulling Johnny even closer, Johnny calming him down now. Drew noticed that Hawk didn't care who saw him cry.

“So what the hell did Jackson want?” Remi asked as he kissed his mate.

“Cecil and Johnny,” Drew answered.

Hawk growled loudly.

“But why? I can't figure out Jackson's motives. Sure, an Alpha's mate is a prime target, but Jackson wasn't after territory or even his position. It doesn't make any sense.” Remi asked in a baffled voice.

“Did you know he was a pimp? He approached me a while ago at The Café. I think he thought Cecil and Johnny would rake in the cash as his rent boys.” Kota pulled Blair in his arms.

“Love you, sunshine.”

Blair smiled at his mate, kissing his neck. “Is it really over? Because I was scared shitless?” he whispered to his mate.

“Yes, it's over. I have you, sunshine.”

Blair leaned into the wolf, his eyes closed, shaking his head slightly as if he were trying to rid the experience from his mind.

Drew was taking this all in. He was learning more about the other mates tonight than his whole time here combined. It made his problem seem a little more manageable knowing the other mates were dealing with their own set of issues.

Hawk enveloped Johnny in his arms and stormed out of the office, snapping and growling, his mate whimpering and shaking

“Remind me to *never* do anything to harm that little guy in *any* way. Hawk is nuts.” Drew shuddered.

“It's his job to protect his mate, and Hawk is a workaholic. I'm

surprised he lets Johnny out to play.” Remi chuckled.

“Okay, enough excitement for one night. Everybody off. You don’t have to go to your rooms, but you have to get the hell out of my office.” Maverick lowered his head, speaking softly to Cecil, as he clung tightly to the Alpha. Drew knew how he felt. Tonight was something he never wanted to experience again, ever.

Remi entwined his fingers with Drew’s and led him upstairs.

* * * *

Oliver was leaning against the wall outside of the Alpha’s office. He was shaking badly.

“It’s okay, you’re safe.” Micah ran his hands over Oliver’s hair. “I’m proud of you for defending them.”

“But I killed him.” Oliver whimpered.

Micah pulled his mate into his arms, giving him the comfort he knew Oliver needed right now. His mate may have everyone else fooled into thinking he was an uncaring prick, but Micah knew better. It was a defense mechanism that Micah was slowly stripping away from him. He was safe here, Oliver needed to realize that.

“He’s not dead, mate. He’s a shifter. He’s healing at this very moment.

Oliver stared up at him in shock. “I didn’t kill him?”

“No, Oliver, you didn’t. Come on, let’s get you upstairs. Enough drama for one night.”

* * * *

Jasper stood at his bedroom window, looking out into the night, his heart heavy with the decisions ahead of him. He knew that a shifter was granted only one mate per lifetime, and that Zeus was chosen by fate to be his.

He had no clue about how to handle this. Someone was going to

get hurt. It was inevitable. The one thing he wished was that Cody found his mate soon. His Code-man hurting was unacceptable.

Oh, what a tangled web they weaved when they decided to take their friendship one step further. The price would be paid for it.

Jasper just prayed it wasn't too high.

He turned away from the darkness, knowing that he and Cody would never be intimate again, not with Zeus waiting for him.

Jasper sat on the edge of his bed, the palm of his hands pressing into his forehead. This was one fucked-up situation.

* * * *

"Poor Oliver. I think he's messed up even more in the head now. He's the one who killed Jackson."

"Jackson isn't dead. He's a wolf. He's healing even as we speak. The Sentries pulled him out of the tunnel and have him on lockdown until Zeus comes to get him." Remi closed the bedroom door, guiding Drew over to the bed.

Drew was stunned to hear the wolf was still alive. The event in the tunnel had shaken him. He thought for sure they were all going to die. He may have acted brave but inside, he was terrified. Thank goodness Jackson's plans fell through. He shuddered to think of Johnny and Cecil out in the cold night living a dead life of prostitution.

Remi cupped Drew's face, kissing him repeatedly while trying to get his shirt off at the same time.

"If you want me naked, you have to stop kissing me." Drew laughed as he was brought out of his somber thoughts.

"Hard choice." Remi said against his lips as he kissed him again. Drew's shoulder was revealed as Remi pushed the fabric back and kissed the exposed skin. Remi's tongue trailed down his mate's arm, licking the creamy flesh.

Drew's head fell back. His mouth gaped open as his breath started to pant. Remi was amazed by him. Drew was the man he had only

dared to dream of having.

Remi slowly kissed down Drew's skin, licking his tongue across Drew's back, his buttocks, and then his hip as he slowly undressed him. Remi made his way around to Drew's groin, kissing his prick as he dropped to his knees. He licked and nuzzled Drew, pushing his thighs further apart. Remi's finger teased Drew's starburst as he paid homage to Drew's wrinkled sac. He sucked one side in, swirling his tongue around then releasing it to do the same to the other.

"Remi, please," Drew breathlessly begged. "My legs are turning boneless. My knees are threatening to give out."

Remi walked on his knees as Drew stepped backwards until he reached the bed, Remi never giving up his attention to Drew's body. Remi's hands snaked up, splaying across Drew's abdomen as he pushed him back, Drew landing on his back as Remi licked his way up Drew's shaft.

"You taste so damn good, pup," Remi praised while sucking the length vertically. Remi pushed Drew back until he could climb on the bed and get between his pup's legs, grabbing the base to pull the cock into his mouth. Remi looked up at Drew. His mate was on his elbows, watching with his mouth slightly open, staring at Remi in awe.

Remi smiled then took the cock further into his mouth, sucking on it as he prepared his mate for the breaching soon to come.

"Remi." Drew's breath was catching, his chest rising and falling rapidly as his eyes rolled to the back of his head. Oh yeah, he was loving his pup just right.

Remi opened his mouth wider, relaxing his throat muscle as Drew pushed his shaft slowly down his throat. Drew's hands played over Remi's hair, not long enough to grab.

"So good," Drew mumbled as he pulled his cock back then pushed it down Remi's throat. Remi reveled in his mate fucking his mouth. Drew's shaft was rock hard.

His cheeks giving suction, Remi pulled tight on his mate's cock, bringing Drew's hips off of the bed. Drew's knees fell further apart,

whimpering into the night as Remi's hands skimmed his body.

"Make love to me, Remi," Drew begged to the ceiling. "I need you inside of me. Remind me I'm loved by someone who matters to me."

Remi pulled back until Drew's prick slid from his mouth, placing a kiss to the head before grabbing the slick, the act of preparing Drew becoming a ballet of fingers making love to his tight hole, rimming his starburst as though his fingers were skaters dancing around seductively, calling to their lover in the night.

Remi bent down, kissing each globe before pushing Drew's legs back, and he caressed the soft skin of his mate's thighs, taking his time to make love to Drew in every possible way besides penetration. "You are everything to me, pup. My life, my love, my entire world. Never doubt that." Remi pushed forward, breaching his mate as his head fell back, and his eyes closed at the sheer pleasurable force of erotic ribbons of electricity that made his veins feel as though they were on fire.

Drew wrapped his legs around Remi's body, locking his ankles at the small of Remi's back. "Show me," Drew breathed as Remi fell to his arms, cupping his mate's face, staring into his eyes as he pulled back then pushed forward, taking Drew with him on the trip to another plane, a plane of intimacy that only they shared, only they owned in this moment in time.

Remi began to thrust harder, his right hand going to Drew's hip, massaging the flesh as Drew's tight hole pulled on his shaft, reminding him that Drew was his. His to love. His mate may have once been lost in a world of insecurity, alone and afraid, but Remi had him now.

"Harder, Remi. Make me feel you," Drew pleaded as he raised his lower body into the thrusts, giving Remi a deeper penetration.

Sitting up, Remi pulled Drew's legs from around him and held onto the backs of Drew's knees as he sawed in and out, watching his cock make love to that pink delight. It was an amazing sight. "Don't

come, Drew. I want you to fuck me next.”

“Then you better hurry. I’m almost there.” Drew released his own cock, fighting to stave off his orgasm.

Slamming into his pup, Remi clenched his jaw and growled through his teeth as he exploded. His nerves felt raw, his body jerking at the force of his release. He quickly dropped Drew’s legs, pulling out then sliding next to him.

Drew jumped up, grabbing the lube as he prepared Remi. “Ready? Please say yes. I’m about to lose it.”

“Do it,” Remi panted. He got on all fours, lowering his head as Drew entered him. The pain turned into pleasure as Drew grabbed his hip with one hand, rubbing the other down Remi’s spine.

“I love you, Remi,” Drew confessed as he thrust harder, angling himself until he knew he hit Remi’s gland, making him gasp.

“I love you, too, pup.” Remi was lost in the feeling Drew was drawing out of him. His hands fisted the sheets, his back bowed as he fucked back onto Drew’s cock, his own coming back to life, begging to come again.

“I’m close.” Drew quickened his pace as Remi clenched his muscle, Drew crying out as he came.

Remi grabbed his cock and pumped it fiercely until ribbons of white pearl shot onto the bed. They both fell forward, and Remi reached behind him to still Drew. He didn’t want his mate to pull out just yet. It felt too good having him inside.

Drew pushed his hands under Remi’s shoulders, holding him close as Remi basked in the afterglow.

“Thank you.” Drew kissed between Remi’s shoulder blades.

“For what, pup?”

“Loving me.” Drew rubbed his cheek into his Remi’s sweaty back, tightening his hold. His mate was hanging onto him like he never wanted to let him go. Remi knew that feeling.

Remi reluctantly shifted, Drew sliding from inside. He pulled his mate into his arms, petting his back as he kissed his forehead. They lay there in silence, holding each other.

Chapter Nine

Drew danced around the den playing the video game. He was never into them before, but they were kinda fun. Blair was challenging him. Guy seemed pretty cool.

“Dusted you off.” Blair chuckled, giving Cecil a high five.

“Again.” Drew pouted. He was not going to be bested. “Three games. Winner takes all.”

“What is the winner taking? Oh yeah, if you haven’t figured it out yet, that would be me.” Blair winked at Drew. Drew growled. The smarty-pants was going down.

“Loser has to...” Drew tapped his chin for a moment, trying to think of something good.

“How about the loser buys everyone dinner?” Johnny offered.

“Lame, but okay.” Blair restarted the game.

Drew scrambled with his controller, taken off guard by the quick start. Cheater.

“Go, Drew!” Johnny jumped up and down, pumping his arms in the air frantically.

“I see how it is.” Blair laughed as Drew whooped. He won the second game. He and Johnny high-fived each other.

“Don’t get ahead of yourself, squirt.” Blair once again restarted the game. This time Drew was ready for him. His car raced around the sharp turn, smashing into the wall, then took off again. Little characters were along the desert, cheering them on. Why would people be standing in the desert? Drew quickly got his wandering mind back on the game.

“Oh, yeah, I won. Oh, yeah, you lost. Oh, yeah, Blair’s a loser.”

Drew pumped his arms back and forth as he sang and danced.

"Whatever. Let's go." Blair and Cecil crept out of the den.

"Why are we sneaking?" Drew asked Johnny. He noticed they left the game and stereo on. Must be trying to use the noise as a distraction to cover their leaving.

"Beats me." Johnny shrugged as he tagged along behind Drew.

Drew stupidly followed them as they hit the fob down the row of trucks. One lit up. "Bingo," Cecil whispered.

Drew and Johnny climbed into the back seat and buckled in. Once they were out on the paved road, Cecil cranked the stereo up. Drew watched the scenery go by, wondering how big a fool he was for following blindly. Hadn't that gotten him into trouble before?

Well, he was with the mates. What could happen? Blair was tall enough and old enough. He could defend them. Right?

"There it is." Cecil pointed to a small diner next to the post office. Drew had been in town before with Remi, but he hadn't noticed the diner. He fumbled with his seatbelt as Blair pulled in and parked the truck.

"We'll have to eat fast. Those warriors don't take long to figure us out." Blair and Cecil tapped knuckles. Drew was wondering what he was missing. Something was going on with those two, some shared secret that he wanted in on.

"What's going on?" Drew asked.

"Oh, Blair and I *borrowed* a truck before. Kota and Maverick found us not to long afterward." Cecil giggled as he slid out of the passenger side, allowing the two back occupants to free themselves.

"I didn't even get my food," Blair mumbled.

All four strolled in, grabbing a back booth as if that could hide them from the pissed off warriors who were sure to be here soon. Drew looked around. It was a nice place. Small, though. He guessed it should be in a small town. His eyes quickly snapped back to the table when he noticed four large men a couple of booths over staring at them. *You're just paranoid, stop it. Overreacting. Remember the cop?*

A waitress came over to take their orders. “Hi, I’m Kitty. What can I get for you fellas?”

They all ordered drinks, wanting time to peruse their menus. Drew noticed Cecil helping Blair with some of the items. Must still be early in his literacy lessons, Drew thought.

“I have to tinkle.” Johnny pushed at Drew’s arm for him to scoot out of the booth.

“Take Drew with you,” Cecil warned.

“Why do I have to go with you?” Drew asked as he followed Johnny to the men’s room. The guys at the other table were watching them closely. Drew was starting to think maybe he wasn’t so paranoid after all. There was one in particular who was giving him the evil eye. Drew rubbed his hands up and down his arms as he pushed his shoulder into the bathroom door and opened it, waiting for Johnny to enter.

“Because two men tried to have sex with me in a bathroom when me and Hawk went out on a date in the city.”

Drew gaped at the small guy. Johnny had said it so matter-of-factly, as if it was no big deal. It would have scared the pants off of him.

He stepped up to the urinal next to the bouncing blond-haired mate. “What happened?”

“Hawk beat them up then the cops took him away. It’s okay, though. Maverick got him back.” Johnny flushed as he whistled, going to the sink to wash his hands.

Drew just shook his head. The mate seemed so resilient.

“Not again,” Johnny squeaked.

Drew’s head snapped around to see two of the men from the table where they had been staring at the four mates. He quickly zipped himself up, heading toward Johnny fast. The men weren’t doing anything wrong, so far. All they were doing was using the bathroom. He wanted to get his hands washed and get him and Johnny out of there.

Before Drew could finish drying his hands with the paper towels, he was slammed against the wall face-first. Johnny was yelling for him, but Drew couldn't get free.

"Damn faggots," the man holding Drew cursed.

Drew felt a fist going into his side, the air left his lungs in a whoosh. He had to help Johnny.

Drew's canines extended. They weren't long, but they were enough to turn his head and bite into the arm pinning him. He dug them in deep, yanking his head back and ripping flesh.

"You little shit." The guy tried to punch him in the head while nursing his injury. Drew ducked and ran to Johnny, who was biting and scratching. Drew jumped on the guy's back. His small punches to the man's head were having no effect whatsoever.

"Bite him, Drew!" Johnny yelled as the smaller mate rammed his knee into the assailant's groin. "Hawk taught me that one!" Johnny yelled at the guy.

The man buckled, grabbing his jewels as his knees hit the floor. "Behind you!" Johnny warned as Drew's hair was yanked back, a fist connected to the side of his face.

"Oh, hell no." Drew was seeing stars but could make out long black hair spanning around. Blair was here. "Not on my watch," Blair yelled. Drew watched as Blair and Cecil jumped the one he had bitten. The attacker was pretty big, but the two seemed to be working him over.

"Drew."

Drew spun around to see the downed man rising. Panicking, Drew kicked his leg up, his knee connecting with the guy's nose.

"Yeah, Drew," Johnny cheered as he made motions with his fists like he was punching the guy. "Get him again."

Drew sidestepped around the man, putting himself in front of Johnny. He wasn't a match for the large guy, but he was bigger than Johnny. He could feel little fists grab his shirt as Johnny's hands trembled. "You're not alone this time." Drew looked over his

shoulder to reassure him.

Drew's body felt like it was well-abused. His side was killing him, and the side of his face felt swollen. His upper chest hurt, too, from being slammed into the wall.

"Take that," Blair shouted.

Drew chanced a glance over the other two mates' way. Blair had jumped on the guy's back and wrapped his arms and legs around the attacker, squeezing the guy's neck with his arm. Cecil was ducking and dodging punches.

Drew pushed Johnny into the wall behind him as his attacker finally caught his breath and was coming after him.

The man stopped when a loud growl ripped through the bathroom. Drew looked around the man to see Remi and Kota. Drew wanted to run to his mate, but that would require him going around this big brute.

"Go now," Remi barked at him.

Drew didn't need to be told twice. He grabbed Johnny's hand as he carefully sidestepped the man, rushing toward the door. Drew smacked right into a wall as he ran from the restroom.

Maverick shot his arms out to catch him before he fell back onto his bum. Okay, so it wasn't exactly a wall, per se, but Maverick's solid chest had felt like one.

"To the truck now." Maverick hissed behind a clenched jaw. Drew gulped. He had never seen Maverick this upset, at least not at him.

* * * *

He pulled Johnny behind him as he passed Commander Hawk leaning over the two remaining men in the booth. Hawk was saying something to them, but Drew couldn't make it out. Whatever it was had the two men pale and trembling.

Drew didn't stop to find out what it was. He pulled the diner door

open and led Johnny outside. The warrior Tank was standing in front of a black SUV, his arms crossed over his chest as he shook his head and tsked. "Get in the back." His thumb hitched over his shoulder.

Drew opened the back door, pushing Johnny in before climbing in next to the smaller mate. His hand reached out to close the door when Remi put his hand on it. His mate pulled him out.

"Why did you leave the estate without any of the warriors knowing? Without me knowing?"

Before Drew could answer, Remi grabbed his chin, turning his face back and forth. "I'll kill him."

Drew quickly latched onto his mate, his legs wrapping around Remi's calves as his arms vise gripped around his waist. "No, I'm fine. Please, Remi."

"He hurt you, pup." Remi growled.

"We hurt them, too. We kicked their butts." Drew held tight as Remi tried to gently pry him off.

"And you got yours kicked." Remi managed to get Drew's arms loose, ready to pull him off.

"You can't go." Drew panicked. He didn't want Remi to go to jail. "I'm, uh, having a trauma." Drew jerked his body around while holding onto Remi as if having a seizure. He stuck his tongue out to further the effect.

Remi chuckled. "Don't make me laugh. This is serious, pup."

Drew stopped jerking around but didn't let his mate go. "Can we just go home?"

"Get in the truck." Remi pointed to the one they had *borrowed*. Drew stood to his feet, climbing into the passenger's side. Remi leaned in to buckle Drew's belt. When Remi's arm brushed against him, he winced at the pain in his side from the kidney shot the guy had given him.

"You're hurt." Remi growled. "How bad? And don't lie."

"I'm mated to you. I'll heal. Just need an aspirin...and a nap. Can you yell at me when we get home?"

Remi threw his hands in the air, exasperation on his face. "Fine, but you're going to get a spanking if you keep things like being hurt from me."

"Promises, promises," Drew griped as Remi belted him in, this time being careful of his side.

They made it home in less than ten minutes. Remi pulled him from the truck and carried him inside. "I can walk."

"Hush, pup." His mate nipped his shoulder as he carried Drew up the stairs and into their room. Remi sat him on his feet then undressed him, leaving only his underwear on.

"Get in bed," Remi ordered and then walked off into the bathroom.

He was getting tired of being promised a spanking and his mate not following through. He was going to get what was promised him even though he'd never had one before. The idea of Remi doing it made his cock hard as a brick.

Drew slid his underwear off, climbing onto the bed on all fours. He was going to get his, dammit.

* * * *

Remi filled the glass with water then set it on the counter. Reaching into the medicine cabinet, he grabbed the bottle of aspirin. What had they been thinking? Any number of things could have happened to them. Remi was grateful it hadn't been worse, although seeing the bruises on Drew made him want to kill those humans.

Picking the glass up, he headed back to the bedroom. The glass slid from his hand and hit the floor with a thud, water spilling over the carpet as he gaped at his mate.

"Holy fuck." Remi hissed at the sight before him. He stepped over the glass as the pills dropped to the floor. Two beautiful mounds sat high in the air with a little pink hole separating them.

Bending at the waist, Remi slid his thumb over the starburst. He

kissed each cheek bared to him. The tip of his thumb pushed in, watching Drew's hole welcome it.

"Spank me," Drew begged.

Remi's cock started throbbing at the thought. His mate was out to steal his sanity. His left hand caressed the smooth flesh as his thumb pushed in deeper. Grinning, he raised his hand and let it fly. *Smack.*

"Yikes!" Drew squealed.

Remi kneaded and licked the abused flesh. His hand print standing out proudly on his mate's left globe. The sight of his mark on Drew was maddening. He glanced up at his mate. "It's not a punishment if you beg for it."

"Okay, I'm not begging. Promise. I'm in no way begging for you to get on with it and spank me already."

Remi grinned as he pushed his thumb in and out a few more times before pulling free. He licked the puckered hole before raising his right hand and letting it go.

Smack.

He grabbed Drew's hips, pressing his denim covered cock into his mate's ass and grinding. Both hands rose this time, letting go a barrage of assaults, his mate keening under him. His cock was so ready he wasn't leaking pre-come, but the water main had broken. A large wet spot spread across his jeans as the pre-come poured out.

Kneading his mate's tender flesh, Remi kissed both cheeks before kicking his boots off and undressing. Extracting the lube from under the pillow, kept there compliments of his horndog mate, Remi lubed his fingers.

The only things coming from Drew were groans and whimpers. Drew was rubbing his face back forth over the cover. His fingers opening and closing as they clenched the sheets.

Remi chuckled. "Doing okay up there, pup?"

"Ung."

Two fingers pushed through the barrier, eliciting another unintelligible sound from his mate. As he slid the third finger in,

Remi reached down and fondled Drew's balls. His thumb traced over the curvature then over his perineum.

"R-Remi," Drew begged into the mattress.

"Coming at you now, pup." Remi pulled his fingers free. The bottle of lube lay on the bed. He picked it up and, starting from the base, applied a liberal amount until he reached the head. Grabbing Drew's hips, his crown kissed Drew's starburst as it opened wide for him. Remi's whole body shuddered at the tight grip.

The view alone almost made him orgasm along with the pressure bearing down on his cock.

"God, pup, can't get enough of you." Remi panted. His right hand shot to his cock, circling the base to stop him from coming. He closed his eyes. If he watched his cock fuck his mate's ass for one more second, he was going to come instantly.

His hips involuntarily hitched. Exhaling slowly, Remi pushed all the way in. "This is going to be fast. I can't hold out much longer."

"Do it. Fuck me, Remi," Drew whined.

Remi grabbed his hips and pulled his mate all the way to the edge of the bed and began hammering. His right foot came up and planted itself on the edge of the bed as Remi fucked Drew into oblivion.

"Remi, Remi, Remi," Drew chanted. His mate's head fell back onto his shoulders. His knees slid further apart in an attempt to get Remi deeper.

"I'm there, pup. I'm there," Remi called out as his balls drew up and his load emptied. He fumbled his hand around his mate until he gripped Drew's cock and pumped it fast and hard. Drew cried out, rocking back onto Remi's shaft.

Remi's legs felt like rubber bands. He staggered back a step, letting his cock slip free. He pirouetted, landing on his back. "You're gonna kill me, mate." Remi blew out.

"At least it's not an empty promise anymore." Drew yawned, snuggling close to Remi. "I have one more thing I need to do. It's something I want to do."

"Tomorrow, pup. Talk to me tomorrow about it. Sleep first." Remi yawned as well. He turned over and crawled up the bed then reached down for his mate, pulling Drew up to his chest.

* * * *

Drew pulled his shirt over his head, his hands smoothing the fabric as he looked at himself in the mirror. He reached down and slowly buttoned his shirt. Next, he tucked it in before zipping then snapping his jeans closed.

"It's going to be fine," Remi assured him as he hugged him from behind.

"I know. I'm just really nervous." Drew ran a comb through his hair before he followed his mate downstairs. Cecil, Johnny, and Blair stood in the archway of the den, smiling at him.

"It's the right thing to do." Cecil hugged him, rubbing his hand on Drew's back.

"Thanks." Drew pulled back.

"I'm proud of you." Blair hugged him next, squeezing tightly before releasing him.

Drew closed his eyes at those words. How long had he waited for someone to tell him that? This whole house was healing to his heart. Remi was a healing balm to his soul.

"I don't understand what you have to do, but I hope everything is okay." Johnny pulled him into an embrace, kissing Drew's cheek before stepping back.

"Ready?" Remi asked as he placed his hand on the small of Drew's back.

"No, but I will be in time." Drew smiled sadly as Remi led him outside. Drew climbed into the truck, buckling himself in as he blew out a long breath. His fingers twisting together nervously as Remi climbed in on his side, starting the engine.

"I'm scared," Drew confessed to his hands.

"I know, babe. I'll be there with you. You can do this." Remi pulled out onto the paved road. "I don't know if I say this enough, but I'm proud of you." Remi reached over, twining his fingers with Drew's.

"Thank you. My whole life, that's all I wanted someone to say to me. It seemed no matter how hard I tried, no one acknowledged that. Seems silly to want to hear that, but I did."

Remi squeezed his hand. "Not silly. Everyone wants to know their efforts are being noticed. I noticed. You've come a long way."

"But still such a long way to go." Drew looked out of the window, watching the scenery go by as he thought of the struggles ahead of him. His cravings were still there, sometimes hitting him hard, but it seemed Remi knew and was there to catch him when it seemed he was going to crash and burn. His mate stood by his side, holding his hand through the pain. Drew would love him for that alone for the rest of his life.

Drew's heart beat faster as Remi pulled into the parking lot, shut the engine off, and turned toward him. "Let me know if it's too much. We can always try another time."

"No, it's something I need to do. Just promise you won't leave me." Drew unbuckled his seatbelt, turning to his mate.

"That's something you never have to worry about. I'll always be there for you, no matter how hard it gets. We're in this together. The dynamic duo." Remi kissed Drew's knuckles.

Drew laughed. "I'll hold you to that." He stared into Remi's silver eyes, becoming lost in them. They were so beautiful, so majestic. Remi was his, and Drew still wondered how he had managed that miracle.

"Come on." Remi released his hand, leaned over and kissed Drew passionately. "If we don't get out of this truck, we may get a ticket for indecent exposure and whatever else they can charge us with because I'll have my way with you." Remi wiggled his eyebrows.

"Can't have that." God, Drew loved him so much it hurt

sometimes. He opened his door and slid out. He took a calming breath before joining Remi at his side.

Remi put his arm around Drew's shoulders, pulling him into a hug.

They made their way inside, Drew pressing tight to Remi's side as they entered the room. Drew made two cups of coffee then took one to his mate as they took a seat. He fidgeted with the hem of his shirt that he had pulled free, sipping the nasty java. He wasn't a coffee drinker, but needed something to hold onto.

Setting the cup on the floor by his seat, Drew listened. Remi squeezed his hand before releasing it as Drew stood and cleared his throat.

"My name is Andrew, and I'm a drug addict."

THE END

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lynn Hagen loves writing about the somewhat flawed, but lovable. She also loves a hero who can see past all the rough edges to find the shining diamond of a beautiful heart.

You can find her on any given day curled up with her laptop and a cup of hot java, letting the next set of characters tell their story.

Also by Lynn Hagen

Brac Pack 1: *Maverick's Mate*

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