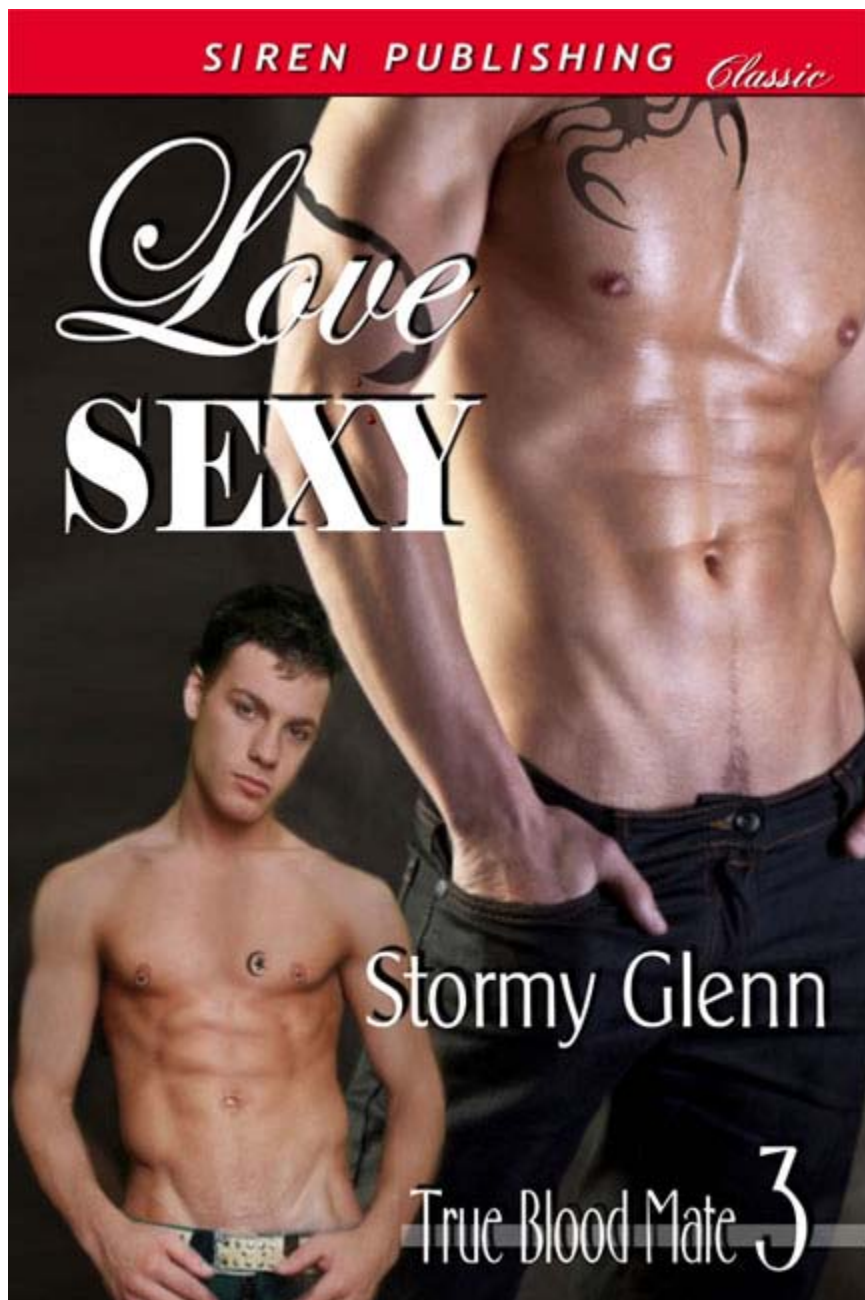


SIREN PUBLISHING *Classic*

Love SEXY

Stormy Glenn

True Blood Mate 3



True Blood Mate 3

Love Sexy

Logan Stone lives a lonely existence as the beta of his wolf clan. It's his job to protect his people and follow out the orders of his alpha. That doesn't leave much time to find a mate or fill the empty hole in his heart. When he spots a set of sexy eyes staring at him during the moon festival, Logan knows he has met his mate.

Finding Love Star is not as easy as keeping him. Love may be fascinated by all things wolf but when Logan goes feral during their mating, Love runs for his life. Logan has to call for help to find Love, only discover his mate is hiding right under his nose at the Stone Clan compound.

Instead of convincing Love of the merits of being mated to a wolf, Logan has to depend on Love to protect himself even as he tries to shield the man from the dangerous world he has just entered. If they survive the interference of well meaning friends and a coyote shifter bent on killing Love, they just might have a chance of finding out what fate has planned for them.

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

Length: 54,735 words

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EROTIC ROMANCE



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DEDICATION

To those on my yahoo group for giving me great ideas and listening to
me rant! You all are the best!

LOVE SEXY

True Blood Mate 3

STORMY GLENN

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Chapter 1

“Someone stole my tail again,” Love Star grumbled as he flopped down in the seat across from where his friends sat. He crossed his arms over his chest and stuck his lower lip out. He was pissed. That was the third time this week that someone had taken his tail.

He liked that tail, too. It was one of his favorites—long and black and it had just the right amount of swing in it to match the sway of his hips. Love had spent hours in front of his full-length mirror perfecting the sway of his hips until he had it just right.

“Have you ever thought of not wearing a tail, Love?” Matt asked.

Love rolled his eyes. “Oh, please, I would look ridiculous without my tail.”

“Well,” Matt said as he waved his hand toward Love’s butt, “if you won’t leave the tail at home, you have to expect people to try and take it.”

“Why can’t they just leave it alone?” Love asked.

“Love, you don’t want them to leave it alone, remember?” Drea smirked. “That’s why you started wearing the ears and tail in the first place.”

“I wanted them to look, not take.”

“Maybe you should attach the tail to your pants then.”

Love rolled his eyes. “Really?”

Drea chuckled. “I’m just saying, Love. If you don’t want people to steal your tail, then you need to secure it to your ass a little better.”

“It would just be better if it was real,” Love grumbled, “and then no one could steal it from me. I could bite them if they tried.”

“Yeah, I don’t see that happening anytime soon, Love.”

“It could happen!” Love insisted, frowning at Matt. Neither of his friends seemed to understand the fascination Love had for all things wolf. And Love wasn’t sure he wanted them to know. It was a little weird and a lot obsessive.

“Hey, I have a great idea,” Matt said. “My family is having this little get-together later tonight back at the house. There’s going to be food, dancing, everything. Do you want to go?”

Love glanced around the bar. It was supposed to be a happening place, only nothing was happening. He was bored out of his mind. Anything had to be better than hanging out in a bar that was almost empty. The place was dead.

“Sure,” Love said, “I’m in.”

Love reached up and checked the placement of the black furry wolf ears on the top of his head. Satisfied that they were right where they were supposed to be, he held out his hand. A lollipop was slapped into his hand, a deep chuckle coming from Drea.

Love ripped off the wrapping and shoved the sweet tasting treat into his mouth. The fruity flavor of cherry exploded across Love’s tongue. He groaned and closed his eyes, loving the taste and the texture of the little round lollipop in his mouth.

“Damn, boy,” crooned a voice right over Love’s shoulder, “I’ll bet you’d moan just as loud with something else in your mouth.”

Love didn’t even open his eyes. He was enjoying his lollipop too much. He just held up his hand and lifted his middle finger.

“Is that an invitation, boy?”

Love opened his eyes and looked across the table at Drea and Matt. He rolled his eyes then plastered a sexy little smile on his face. Turning in his seat, he peered up at the man standing beside his chair.

The tight leather pants really did nothing for the man. Neither did the black leather vest, which was the only covering the man had on the upper half of his body. Love knew the man thought he was drop-dead gorgeous, but he didn't have a tail or ears, which put him at the bottom of Love's attraction list.

"I don't know. Can you give me what I want?"

"The name is Mick Red." The man palmed his crotch. "And I have more than enough to give you exactly what you want."

Love seriously doubted it. "Then show me your tail."

"My what?"

"No tail?" Love pouted. "Ah, too bad. How about some ears then? Personally, I prefer black furry ears, but I suppose any type of wolf ears would do."

A disgusted look came over the man's less than handsome face. "Are you one of those guys that like to fuck animals?"

"No, which is why I won't be fucking you."

Satisfied that he had said his piece, Love stuck the lollipop back into his mouth and turned around in his seat. This guy, whoever he was, didn't hold any interest for him. He liked dominant men, but he liked ones that were naturally dominant. Not ones that had to prove it to other people.

"You little freak!"

Love had just enough time to process the angry words before the man's hands landed on his shoulder. Love cringed and yelped as he was yanked out of his seat. He dropped his lollipop on the floor as he was tossed across the floor.

Love skidded to a stop several feet away. He shook his head to clear it then pushed himself up. His eyes widened when he looked back across the floor and saw his friends attacking the man in leather. He chuckled when the man dropped to his knees under the assault.

Go them!

Love checked to make sure his ears were still perched on his head then jumped to his feet and raced back across the room. He hopped onto the man's back and started pulling on his hair. He had the deep satisfaction of hearing the man grunt in pain right before someone grabbed him and tore him away.

"Hey!" Love shouted.

"That's enough!" a rather large man shouted.

Love glared up into the face of the big blond-haired man who held him. He stuck out his lower lip and pointed to the man on the floor. "He started it!"

"I don't care who started it," the man growled as he set Love on his feet. "I'm stopping it."

Love realized that he had to crane his neck back to look up into the man's face. While that wasn't unusual for him, he didn't like the way it made his ears start to slip off his head. Love growled and kicked the man in the shin.

"Ow!" the man shouted as he grabbed his shin and started hopping around. "What the hell did you do that for?"

"You made my ears slip."

Duh!

"Ears? What ears?"

Love glared. He reached up and repositioned his ears on the top of his head. By the time he was done, the man had stopped hopping, which was good because a man as big as he was shouldn't be hopping. It just made him look odd. He was still glaring at Love as he rubbed his shin, though.

"You're fucking nuts."

Love stuck his tongue out at the man. He wished he had his tail as he turned and flounced away. It would have made his exit more memorable. As it was, Love had to make do with swaying his hips enough to get a few wolf whistles and one smack on his ass as he walked out the front door.

Love realized he had left the building without his friends the moment the door closed behind him. He rolled his eyes, wishing he could gain control of his temper. It was a battle he'd been fighting since he was in diapers. It was a losing battle.

Love walked over to the car he'd ridden in with his friends and leaned back against the hood. He would have to wait until his friends came out of the bar before he could leave. Matt had the keys. Worse yet, Matt had all his lollipops.

* * * *

It was a dark and stormy night...well, it was getting dark anyway, Logan Stone thought to himself. He waved to the guards as he drove through the front gates of the clan compound. He pulled his motorcycle into a spot in front of the main building and turned the engine off.

Logan could see a small crowd of people off in the distance. The monthly moon festival was in full swing. They were smaller versions of a Lyken Gathering, which only happened once a year and all the clans were involved. The moon festival was more local clans.

He usually enjoyed these little social gatherings, but lately they seemed like a meat market masquerading as a party. Every unattached wolf in the clan, and a few who were not clan, came to these parties to hook up, find a mate, and just generally get laid.

It seemed like a futile attempt to Logan. For years, he had enjoyed the monthly moon festivals. He'd find a date or two, take them somewhere, fool around, and say goodbye before the morning sun even rose. Unless they were mated, wolf shifters were pretty indiscriminate with who they slept with.

As time went by and more people came and went from his bed, Logan began to grow disenchanted with the monthly gatherings. He still hooked up with the occasional date just to relieve his ache, but he was more interested in finding a mate than he was in getting laid. He

wanted to find the same bliss his alpha, Asher, had recently found with his mate.

Shaking his head, Logan climbed off his motorcycle and walked towards the crowd. The place seemed fairly packed. Logan wasn't surprised. The monthly moon festival was the highlight of the month, a place to see and be seen for all of wolf kind. He imagined most of the clan was here.

"Hey, Uncle Logan, can I get you a beer?"

Logan stopped to smile down at his nephew. "Yeah, Matt, that'd be great, something cold, hmmm?"

Matt Stone was a sweetheart, barely twenty-two, and graduating from college in just a few months. Logan knew Matt's father, Reed, was terrified that Matt would leave their little commune after college to go away to someplace more exciting. Logan wasn't so sure.

"Hey, Matt, how are things going at school?" Logan asked as Matt started to walk away.

Matt turned back, his light blond curls bouncing around his face as he grinned from ear to ear. "Oh, I love it. My friends and I came down earlier. Pop said I could bring them since it's spring break and all."

Logan nodded. Matt would have needed either his or Reed's permission to bring someone to the compound. They were in charge while their alpha was away on business. "Are you planning to stick around town or move off when you finish school?"

Matt laughed. "Do you actually see Pop letting me leave?"

"If that's what you really want to do, I'm sure he would. Do you need me to talk to him?"

Matt shook his head. "No, I'm actually pretty happy right where I am." Matt leaned in close and cupped his hand around his mouth. "Don't tell Pop but I'm planning on taking over when he retires."

"Your dad, retire? Do you think that will ever happen?" Logan laughed, but he was pretty serious. Reed was third in command, the

clan enforcer. Sometimes Logan thought Reed took leadership more seriously than he did.

"It would if he could get over Mother leaving and find himself a date."

Logan couldn't help laughing again. It was a very well-known fact in their clan that Reed hadn't tried to find a new mate since his wife had left years ago. Matt had been just a baby when it happened, and no one had seen Barbara Stone since.

He patted Matt on his shoulder and moved on towards the crowd, nodding and saying hi here and there. He didn't understand how Reed could have gone all those years without companionship. Logan understood Reed's need to provide for his son, but he needed to care for himself as well. Maybe Logan should have a little talk with him.

"Any luck finding your mate yet?" Matt asked.

Logan stopped walking to turn and look back at Matt. He shook his head. "Not yet, but the night is still young and so am I."

"There's a few new wolves here tonight, some very pretty ones. Maybe you'll get lucky."

Logan shrugged even as he glanced around the area looking for the people in the clearing. He wanted to find his mate, all unmated wolves did. It was a driving need ingrained in them since before birth. Logan just had a hard time finding a mate that his wolf liked as much as he did.

Finding a mate was an uneasy process. His wolf had to be mated as much as he did. Logan liked simple relationships with men who understood that he was the boss. His wolf liked pretty boys who needed high maintenance.

As beta of his clan, Logan didn't have a lot of time to give a mate. He had made the decision long ago that a high maintenance mate wasn't for him. Now, if he could just convince his wolf of that.

"I'm not much into pretty boys, Matt. They take too much work. But, we'll see," Logan said.

Just as he reached the crowd, Logan caught a flash of blue out of the corner of his eye. He turned to look over the multitude of partygoers, feeling more intrigued than he had in ages. Logan's eyes widened in amazement at the breathtaking sight before him.

A set of steel blue eyes rimmed with black eyeliner momentarily locked on Logan. He felt too stunned to move. The man staring at him through the crowd was the most gorgeous creature Logan had ever laid eyes on.

Short, spiky black hair, narrow chest, lean hips, slender legs...he was perfect. Logan was fascinated, intrigued, and instantly hard as a rock. He wanted to reach through the throng of people and grab the vision before him, bringing the man into Logan's space.

He could feel the instant connection to the smaller man. Logan's inner wolf sat up and roared, then panted. It wanted out. It wanted to claim its mate. Logan suddenly knew that the sexy man was his future.

Logan groaned. He could tell just by looking at the gorgeous little guy that he was trouble. He had high maintenance written all over him. His wolf growled and clawed to get out, to claim their mate. Logan just wanted to turn in the other direction and pretend that he had never seen the man.

Before Logan could come to a decision, the man was pulled from view by a hand on his shoulder. A sudden possessive streak shot through his body. Logan couldn't control the deep growl that escaped his clenched teeth.

The muscles in his shoulders tensed, and his hands fisted. Logan could feel the tension pass throughout his body as his wolf prepared to fight for their mate. The hair on the back of his neck stood up. Logan had an overwhelming urge to tear into who ever belonged to the hand that was on the man that he suddenly considered his.

Moving swiftly through the crowd, Logan made his way to the middle of the clearing where several people were dancing. He could

see the black haired man struggling against a much larger man in leather, his small fists beating against the man holding him.

Logan growled again. This time he didn't try to suppress his roar. Instead, he let it have free reign, getting louder as he quickly covered the ground between him and the object of his desires. The crowd of people between them parted in panic, clearing the way for Logan.

He grabbed the larger man around the throat with one hand and held him suspended several inches above the ground. With his other hand, he grabbed the arm of the smaller man and pulled him close to his side and safety.

"Mine!" Logan growled at the man he held by the throat. Even as he fought to control the wolf inside fighting to get out and rip the man to shreds, the softest, most delicious scent he had ever smelled wafted through the air.

"We were just dancing," the man choked out.

His words dragged Logan from his longing for more of the wonderful smell. He had never scented anything so fantastic, so arousing, in his life. His wolf roared again, clawing at Logan's insides to get out.

"I never agreed to dance with you," the small man at Logan's side shouted.

Logan hid his smile when the little man's hands curled into fists and he went for the man in Logan's grip. Seems his little mate had a temper.

"He's mine," Logan said. He frowned in surprise, and just a bit of confusion, when the man laughed harshly.

"You'll regret that decision." The man's sinister eyes turned to look down at the small man pinned against Logan's side. "Love's human. He can't be trusted. Pretty boys like him never can."

Logan glared at the slimy man for a moment then tossed him several feet away. "Leave," he said as he watched the man climb to his feet. He watched until the man ran from sight before looking down at Love.

Love's deep blue eyes were wide, making them look enormous against his face. His entire body trembled. His hands gripped Logan's arm with white fingers. Logan could smell the fear and anger rolling off of Love in great waves, but the man continued to glare after his assailant.

"You're safe now, Love," Logan said as softly as his rough whiskey voice would allow. Logan nearly fell over in shock when Love pushed away from him only to glare up, his eyes shooting flames.

"I didn't need your help," Love said as he repositioned the fake wolf ears on top of his head. "I could have gotten away from dick head just fine on my own."

"Dick head?" Logan asked. One dark eyebrow shot up and a small smirk moved across his lips. He couldn't help but chuckle when Love rolled his eyes. The man was simply intriguing.

Chapter 2

“Yes, dick head. His name is Mick Red. You know, Mick Red...Dick Head...pretty much the same thing. Besides, I had to call him something.” Love stroked his hands over the broad chest in front of him and gazed up at the tall, muscular man. “So, what should I call you? Delicious comes immediately to mind.”

Love watched the stunned expression on the man in front of him with amusement. He would bet his mother’s purple poodle that no one had ever talked to the powerful man in such a manner. And yes, the damn poodle was purple. Love’s mother had a sense of humor and a dye kit.

He knew the man standing in front of him was strong, powerful, and dominant. Love could feel it in the tingling of his skin. He could see it in every tight muscle, every thick limb. Love wondered just how powerful the large man was.

Love hoped that the sexy man was top material. He loved strong, possessive tops. While they were very high maintenance, they were also very domineering. Love liked feeling that he belonged to someone, and it had been a long time since he’d felt that way.

“Delicious sounds pretty good, but can you back up what comes out of that pretty little mouth of yours?” Logan asked. His arms wrapped around Love’s waist and pulled him tight up against his body.

Oh yes, the big man wanted to play. Love allowed softer lines to take over his body as he leaned into the man. He could feel the heat of arousal roll off him. It warmed Love like nothing ever had.

"I would never say anything I couldn't back up, sexy," Love purred. He laid his hand on the man's wide chest, groaning softly at the hard muscles he felt through the black cotton shirt he wore.

"Logan."

"Huh?" Love said as he glanced up into the deepest golden eyes he ever encountered. They were pure amber in color, mesmerizing. Love could drown in their deep shimmering depths.

"My name is Logan," the man said. "Logan Stone."

Love laughed. "I prefer sexy."

Love heard a small growl come from Logan as he leaned down and inhaled the scent at Love's neck. Logan's breath blew against Love's neck then rubbed his head against him. Love giggled and dipped his head. "That tickles."

"Does it? Are you ticklish anywhere else?"

Love tipped his head back and sent Logan his sexiest lust filled look. "I wouldn't want to ruin the surprise." Love giggled again when Logan's golden eyes darkened and he growled low in his throat. "So, tell me," Love drawled, "what's a big, bad, sexy topky man like you doing at a party like this?"

"Hunting." Logan grinned. "What else?"

Love chuckled. "I think you found what you're hunting for."

He watched, fascinated, as one dark eyebrow on Logan's face shot up. "Are you sure of that?"

"Positive."

"It could be just a simple adrenaline rush," Logan countered, grinning widely. "We did just go through a dangerous situation."

"Pheromones and all that?" Love asked. "In that case, you shouldn't mind if I go home with someone else, should you?"

Love pushed himself away from the large man and started to turn away. As hands reached for him and lifted him off the ground, Love let out a loud laugh. He was gently tossed over Logan's shoulder, one hand wrapping around his waist, the other slapping him on the ass.

“You’re not going home with anyone except me ever again,” Logan growled as he carried Love through the crowd towards the edge of one of the buildings. Love nearly came in his pants when he felt Logan’s large hands caress his ass through his jeans.

He couldn’t wait to get rid of his jeans and feel those hands against his bare skin. Hell, he couldn’t wait to feel all of Logan against his bare skin. As big as Logan was, Love had no doubt that he could cover his smaller body from head to toe, and then some.

Love yelped in surprise as he was suddenly lowered to the ground. He barely had time to steady himself on his feet before hands were pulling at his clothes. Within moments, Love found himself standing before Logan naked as the day he was born.

The low rough rumble emanating from Logan told Love that the man liked what he saw. It vibrated through Love’s body, energizing him, arousing him. He looked up into Logan’s eyes, and his breath caught in his throat.

Logan’s amber eyes had gone deep golden brown. His lip curled back, showing off his perfect white teeth. But it was the savage snarl on Logan’s face as he gazed down at his naked body that really set Love off.

Love held his arms out to his sides. “If you plan on just staring at me, this relationship is going to take more work than I thought.”

The moment the words were out of Love’s mouth he wished he could take them back. Logan’s eyes flashed to his as a slow, wicked grin crossed his lips. Some intuitive gut feeling told Love that he had just become the prey to a hunter.

Going purely on instinct, Love turned and ran. He didn’t get two steps before two large arms encircled him from behind and pulled him back against Logan’s hard body. Love’s felt a shudder shoot through his body as long teeth scraped across the back of his neck.

“Logan,” Love groaned. “That is so fucking hot!”

His hands moved back behind his head to wrap around Logan’s neck. He tilted his head to one side, giving Logan unobstructed access

to the side of his throat. It was a submissive gesture. Love knew that, but he was helpless to stop it. Something in him demanded that he submit. Love could no more deny that powerful demand than he could have stopped breathing.

Long fingers encircled Love's hard cock, stroking him furiously just as sharp teeth bit into the soft flesh between his neck and shoulder. Shock rocked through him as he realized Logan bit him, but he still cried out as the combination of pleasure and pain overwhelmed him.

A thick thigh moved between Love's legs and pressed tightly against him from behind. Small keening sounds escaped from his lips. Every touch of Logan's hands and body against his was like a burning flame. Love wanted to be consumed. He wanted to burn for Logan.

His hands clenched in Logan's sunlight blond hair, pulling at the long locks in desperation. He could feel Logan sucking on his neck, marking him, claiming him, but he needed more. He needed...he needed...

"Logan!" Love begged. "Fuck me!"

The teeth in his neck withdrew. Love was pushed down onto the ground, landing on his hands and knees. Before he could protest the rough treatment, Logan's fingers pushed into his tight hole.

"Aaahhh, fuck yes!" Love cried out.

Logan began stretching him, adding another finger, then another. Some part of Love wondered where the man got lube, but he was too overcome with burning sensation to really care. He was just thankful because he felt pretty sure Logan was about to fuck him into the ground.

Love felt Logan pull his fingers away and press his massive cock into him. He could hear Logan's heavy breathing as he thrust into Love's tight grasp. The rough material of Logan's jeans brushed against the back of his thighs. He could smell Logan's arousal permeating the air around them.

Love groaned, his head dropping forward. He could feel the small bar piercing just under the head of Logan's cock when the man thrust into him. It seemed to know right where Love's sweet spot was located and pegged it every time.

Having sex wasn't something new to Love, but despite what Mick had said, he didn't fuck anything that walked. Still, there was something distinctively different about being fucked by Logan. He felt like he was being claimed and not just fucked, like somehow Logan was placing a stamp of ownership on him.

Everything felt different, more intense. As Logan pounded into him, Love felt every movement of Logan's body, every single breath that came out of Logan's mouth. Love could feel his orgasm building deep within his body and knew that it was going to be spectacular. Logan was going to consume him.

When Logan's teeth bit into his shoulder again, Love knew it was over for him. His fingers curled into the cold dirt beneath him as streaks of pleasure exploded throughout his entire body.

"Logan!" Love screamed as his cock erupted, shooting ropes of pearly white seed over the ground beneath him. The intensity of his orgasm surprised Love. As his arms and legs began to tremble, he wondered if he would be able to hold his body up.

The problem was solved for him as two large arms wrapped around his waist. Love's mind began to melt as he was lifted into the air and impaled on Logan's cock for one last massive lunge.

Love heard a loud roar from the man behind him. A moment later, Logan's hot release filled his ass. Love cried out and another, smaller orgasm tore through his body. He let his head fell back against Logan's shoulder. His hands fell limply to his sides. The only thing keeping him from falling to the ground were the two large arms wrapped around him, the bent knees between his legs, and the pulsing cock in his ass.

Love cried out softly when Logan's hand wrapped around his cock again and fondled him. He didn't think he had another ounce of

seed in his body. He knew he didn't have another orgasm in him. The last two had wiped him out.

"Too much," Love whimpered as Logan stroked him. He was so sensitive that he could almost feel every contour and crease in Logan's hand. Unbelievably, Love felt himself harden again. His mind, what was left of it, reeled. He was totally at Logan's mercy. He was held suspended above the ground with only Logan to keep him from falling.

"Again," Logan growled into his ear.

Love shook his head rapidly. He couldn't do it again. He didn't think he'd survive it. But Logan wasn't giving him a choice. Logan pulled out of Love and turned him around, laying him back on the ground before he lifted his legs and pushed back into him.

Love lifted his eyes to Logan's. He was shocked to see a glow in the man's golden eyes. Logan's teeth were bared, the breath coming out of his chest more of a deep rumble than anything else.

Lifting his head, Love licked the flesh of Logan's neck, nibbling at the soft skin. Logan was so sweet, so tangy. Love could taste the strength in him, the power. Love cried out and filled Logan's hand with his seed.

Love could feel every fiber of his being soak up all that the man was as Logan thrust into him. He didn't understand it, but he accepted it. Love didn't know why he hadn't seen it before. Logan was everything that was dominant alpha male, and Love wanted it all, every last domineering drop.

Love pulled his lips away Logan's neck and leaned his head back to look up into Logan's golden eyes. He wasn't surprised by the possessive glint in them. Love expected it. He wanted it.

What did surprise him was the tender look on Logan's face. If Love didn't know better, he would think that Logan had been as affected by their lovemaking as he had been. Love wanted to believe it. He needed to believe it. He needed to know he belonged to Logan.

* * * *

Logan watched his mate pull his clothes on as he buttoned his own jeans. There was no doubt about it. Love was one of the most beautiful men he had ever seen. Everything about him from the top of his gorgeous black haired head down to his dainty little feet shouted perfect mate.

As much as he desired Love, Logan wished for a mate that was a little less perfect. He had no doubt he was headed for trouble with his new mate. Love was everything that Logan didn't want in a mate.

He was beautiful, sexy, and just about damn perfect to look at. Logan knew that meant high maintenance. He had never met a pretty man that didn't want to be the center of everyone's attention. If they couldn't get that attention, they created it.

Logan could just see what his future would be like. Instead of helping his alpha lead the clan as beta should, he would spend his time chasing after his mate making sure he stayed out of trouble.

As his mate buttoned up his shirt, Logan grimaced. As much as he desired his mate and everything that came with finding him, Logan knew that he would have to set down the rules of their relationship as soon as possible. He had better things to do than to chase after Love.

"Love," Logan said. "We need to talk."

"Oh?"

Logan was surprised to see the small smile that had been working itself across Love's lips. His mate took a deep breath and let it out slowly. Logan was curious about the small mysterious smile on Love's face and promised himself that he would ask him about it later.

Right now, he needed to set down the rules to his new mate. Love had to understand that he was the boss in their relationship. If he was going to be cursed with a gorgeous mate, Logan knew he at least needed to have control over him. The faster Love understood that, the better.

“Well?” Love asked as he stared at Logan.

Logan felt like squirming under Love’s direct gaze. The man seemed to be totally focused on him, something Logan didn’t feel from many people unless they wanted something. Logan wondered what Love wanted.

“What’s with the ears?”

Love reached up and touched them. “You don’t like them?”

“Uh, I guess I never really thought about it.” Logan shrugged, not sure how to answer the man considering the anxiousness that was starting to come across Love’s face. “They look kind of cute.”

Love grinned. “I have several pairs in different colors, but black is my favorite. It matches my hair better, don’t you think?”

“Sure.” Logan couldn’t take his eyes off the ears. They were black, furry, and totally fake. He’d love to show Love what real ears looked like.

“I have tails, too, but people keep stealing them.”

Logan blinked. “People keep stealing your tails?”

Love nodded. “I’ve had three stolen this week alone. It’s really aggravating. Do you know how hard it is to find quality made tails? It’s not like these things grow on trees.”

“Can’t you just”—Logan waved his hand through the air—“go to a store and buy them?”

“Oh no, the tails I wear are made of much better quality than those store-bought ones. I order mine online to match my ears. I mean, seriously, if you’re going to wear ears and a tail, they need to be the best quality.”

“Well, that makes sense.” Just not to Logan. He stared at Love and wondered if the man was slightly off his rocker. The man didn’t even have a normal name. Who called themselves Love? “Is your name really *Love*?”

“Love Star,” the man replied, “so named by my mother, Moon Star.”

Logan gaped. “Your mother’s name is Moon Star?”

Love frowned for the first time since he'd met the man, his forehead wrinkling. "Yes, do you have a problem with that?"

Logan quickly held up his hands and shook his head. Apparently *Mom* was not a topic of discussion. "None at all," he replied. "I just wondered if you were serious. You have to admit, Love and Moon Star are unusual names."

"And Logan Stone isn't?"

"Not in my family."

Love grinned and bounced over to press his body against Logan's. "Tell me about your family."

Love sounded like he was really interested, which surprised Logan. Not many people really wanted to get to know him. Instead of answering Love's question, he pressed his palm against the man's chest, right over his heart.

"Is that why you have a tattoo of a star and moon over your heart?"

Love nodded. "Mom would have killed me if I got *Mom* tattooed on my chest. A star over a glowing moon seemed more appropriate." Love's fingers moved up Logan's chest to his right shoulder and down his arm. "Your tattoo was quite impressive as well."

Logan smirked. It was more than impressive, and he knew it. It was huge. It also symbolized his life, a black scorpion crawling up over his shoulder and down his chest. The tail of the scorpion wound down Logan's arm with the stinger ending in the crook of his elbow. A trail of blood drops dripped down from there.

"Let's see," Love mused as his fingers traced the scorpion, "a deadly black scorpion? I think that conveys how lethal you can be but also how resilient and adaptive. It shows power, strength, and intelligence. The blood drops, though, they confuse me. Do they represent all of the people you've lost?"

"You could say that," Logan replied. "They represent all of the people I've battled in my life." He carefully watched Love's face for his reaction.

“I’m sorry,” Love whispered.

“Why should you be sorry?” Logan asked, confused by not only the question but the sadness he could see in Love’s face. It seemed like an odd reaction to him. Life was what it was. Logan learned at an early age to fight for what he wanted and to continue fighting to keep it.

“It doesn’t sound to me like you’ve had a very happy life.”

Logan was about to reply and explain to Love about the realities of his life when another mysterious little grin swept across the man’s face. It made Logan very nervous. So did the hand that Love stroked down his cheek.

“I guess I will just have to make it my mission to make sure your life is happy and full of joy. Don’t worry, Logan, I’ll take good care of you.”

Logan was so screwed, and he knew it. He knew Love was trouble, and the man just admitted it. Maybe not in so many words, but the truth was plain for anyone to see. Love was going to make his life hell.

Logan saw only one option open to him. He’d have to keep Love under lock and key at all times just to make sure he didn’t cause any trouble. That was going to be harder than it seemed, but between Logan and his inner circle, he knew he could do it. After all, how much trouble could one little man be?

“Why don’t we head back to my place, and we can discuss it?” Logan asked.

The faster he got Love out of the public eye, the better. He could already feel the stares boring into his back. People were going to start asking questions pretty soon, questions Logan didn’t want to answer right now.

“Do you have a tub because I love bath time,” Love said, “all those bubbles and naked skin?” Love shivered. “Yum.”

Ah hell! Love was going to be the death of him. He’d probably want caviar and champagne while he soaked. Love would just have to

learn that Logan worked for a living. He didn't live a luxurious life. As of tonight, Love didn't either.

Logan's mind reeled as he escorted Love through the crowd. Person after person looked towards them in curiosity as they moved through the throng of people. Logan just glared until they glanced away.

"Uh, Logan?" Love asked hesitantly.

"Yeah, babe?" Logan asked as he pressed his hand into Love's back to keep him moving.

"Why are people staring at me?"

Logan glanced back over his shoulder. Love was right. People were staring. He gave a little shrug and turned back to Love. "I'm walking out of here with the most gorgeous man in the place," Logan replied. "Why else?"

Love grinned up at him, his face flushing. "Really?"

"As if you didn't already know that." Logan smirked. How could Love not know how gorgeous he looked? Logan was surprised men, and women, too, weren't throwing themselves at the man's feet.

"Can we stop by my room and grab a few things?" Love asked as he wrapped his arm around Logan's waist.

"Your room?" Logan asked.

"Yeah, some friends and I came down for spring break. We're sharing a room in the guest building," Love said. "I just need to pick up a few things, if that's okay?"

Logan nodded and started in that direction. "Which building?" They had several guest buildings, all for the purpose of housing visitors that came to stay at the large clan compound.

"Right down over there," Love said as he pointed to one of the buildings.

"I know the place." It was one of many buildings in the huge compound.

Logan turned towards the main road leading to the guest building, wondering what in the hell he was getting himself into. He supposed

he'd find out. It wasn't like he could give Love up now that he'd mated the man.

Love belonged to him, pure and simple, and Logan knew he'd just have to deal with it. That didn't mean he wouldn't set down the law with Love because he would. Logan had too many responsibilities and didn't have time to chase after his crazy little mate, no matter how sexy the little man was.

Logan stumbled when he felt Love's hand on his ass. He quickly righted his steps. Logan opened his mouth to yell at his mate for being affectionate in public, but the sounds of Love's laughter filled his ear.

Logan felt surprised at how good the expressive laughter made him feel. His heart suddenly felt lighter, filled with more optimism and hope for the future than he felt in days, maybe even months.

Unable to let loose of that feeling or to dampen Love's obvious joy, Logan merely grabbed Love's hand and moved it back up to the middle of his lower back. He turned his head slightly so Love would hear his words as he spoke.

"Careful there, Love," he said loudly.

"Spoilsport," Love said, but he kept his hands where they were for the rest of the walk.

Logan was almost disappointed.

"Which room is yours?" Logan asked as they stopped in front of the building Love had indicated.

"Second floor, third door down from the stairway," Love said and pointed. "Right over there."

Logan walked over to the stairway Love pointed at. He arched an eyebrow as he watched Love glance up the stairs then back at him, biting his lower lip. Love's entire body bounced where he stood. The man looked like an excited little kitten. If he had a real tail, it would have wagged a mile a minute.

"Want to come up to my room and see my etchings?"

Logan chuckled. If Love had been trying to hide his intent, he would have been totally transparent. As it was, Logan found it impossible to deny the man. “Etchings, huh?”

Logan laughed as Love grabbed his hand and dragged him toward the stairs. Love’s enthusiasm was contagious. Again, Logan marveled at how light hearted he felt. He didn’t know if it came from Love’s animated personality or the fact that he finally found his mate, but he found he liked the feeling.

“Just what kind of etchings are we talking about here?” Logan asked as the climbed the stairs and walked down to Love’s door. “You’re not trying to get me up to your room to take advantage of me, are you?”

Logan’s cock went from semisoft to rock hard in a split second as Love paused in the act of unlocking his room door and glanced over his shoulder. Love’s sensual grin only added to Logan’s level of arousal.

Love’s eyebrows wiggled. “I’m the man your mother warned you about.”

Chapter 3

Love's hands shook so much he could barely unlock the door. The heat coming from the man who stood behind him burned Love's body. He couldn't remember being this horny in all his life. He just had Logan. He wanted him again.

Love finally got the door unlocked and pushed open. He rushed into the motel room and turned to face Logan. Love once again felt stunned by the masculine beauty of the man before him. Logan was simply gorgeous.

It wasn't just his height, which was impressive. It wasn't even all the thick muscles that covered Logan's body. Something shined in Logan's eyes that drew Love like a moth to a flame. He wanted more than anything to explore the sparkle and see what was behind it.

The moment the door closed, Love stepped forward and pressed his body against Logan's. The smoldering flame he saw in Logan's eyes as he looked up at him startled Love. No one ever looked at him like that before. It made Love's toes curl.

"You mentioned etchings?" Logan questioned.

"I lied." Love rested his hands on Logan's chest, drawing them down slowly. He could feel each defined muscle under Logan's shirt. "I just wanted to get you upstairs where there was a flat surface."

Logan smirked. "Who says we need a flat surface?"

Love let out a strangled yelp as Logan reached down and wrapped his arms under him, lifting Love into the air. Love realized that he was now eye to eye with Logan. He grinned and wrapped his legs around Logan's waist, squeezing until their bodies pressed together.

"I like this."

Logan swung Love around and anchored him between the wall and his body. "I like this better," Logan said before his tongue slid over Love's lips, licking the corner before delving inside.

Oh yeah, Love could get on board with that. He wiggled as close to Logan as he could get, wrapping his arms around the man's neck. His hands gently caressed Logan's neck and upper back even as his lips attacked ferociously.

He couldn't seem to get enough of Logan. He needed more. He needed naked skin under his hands, pressed against his body. Love pulled at Logan's shirt until the man got the idea. Laughter filled him as Logan braced him against the wall. A strong leg pushed between his thighs to hold him in place as Logan pulled his shirt over his head and dropped it on the floor.

Love wasted no time in following Logan's example. He pulled his shirt over his head and tossed, not caring in the least where it might land. Love's eyes followed the trail of golden hair from the middle of Logan's chest muscles down his stomach and abdomen. He groaned in protest when the trail stopped suddenly, the rest hidden under the edge of Logan's pants.

He reached for the buttons of Logan's jeans. He felt too overwhelmed, too needy. He needed to draw the process out, make them both wait. He needed to torture Logan. His fingers trembled as he made himself slow down and open Logan's pants gradually.

"Think we could lose the pants?" Love asked. He meant for Logan to lower him to the floor so they both could remove their pants. He was shocked when he felt Logan's hands on his ass. A loud ripping noise echoed through the room and cold air rushed across his skin.

"Logan!"

"Want me to stop?"

Love shook his head. It was too late for his pants. He might as well enjoy the ride. Besides, he had other pants. When Logan's large callused hand wrapped around both of their cocks, Love could have

cared less if he never wore pants again. He just wanted the intense pleasure to continue.

Love gripped Logan's shoulders. His breath panted in and out of him in great rapid heaves. Each stroke of Logan's hand around his cock was like a strike of lightning through Love's body.

Love never felt anything like it. Sure, he'd masturbated and had jacked off with other men before, but nothing in his past prepared him for the feelings Logan invoked in him. Love wanted to crawl right up Logan's body and kiss him until they both passed out. Then he wanted to climb into Logan and never come out.

Love felt a connection to the man unlike anything he'd ever felt. He knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that Logan was the man for him. He didn't know how he knew, and he wasn't ready to question his feeling, but he knew. Logan was his.

Feeling his body getting closer to release, Love leaned forward and did what he really wanted to do. He plastered his lips to Logan's, his tongue exploring, licking. His hands gripped Logan's hair, holding the man to him.

Love felt frantic. He could feel Logan's lightning moving through his body at a rapid pace, arousing him to new levels of passion and desire. His balls drew up close to his body. His heart suddenly froze in his chest, his breath caught in his throat.

Love pulled his lips from Logan's and leaned back to look into the man's deep golden eyes. Time stood still for him as he tried to read the look in Logan's eyes. He could see passion, desire, possessiveness, even fascination. But there was something more, something that added a sparkle to Logan's gaze.

It was that sparkle that Love concentrated on as time shot ahead, and the passion radiating throughout Love consumed him. Love held Logan's gaze as long as he could, and then his release took over. He tossed his head back and cried out as he filled the space between them with his release.

Love distantly felt Logan's teeth bite into his shoulder. It was the second time Logan bit him, both times heightening Love's level of desire. He didn't know why he liked the feeling of Logan biting him, but he did. It seemed to have a direct connection to the amount of pleasure he felt. Logan could bite him whenever he felt like it.

Love's hands tightened around Logan's hair as the man's body stiffened. He groaned in protest when Logan pulled his teeth free. Opening his eyes, he caught the beginning of Logan's release as the man's eyes darkened then he roared, his spunk adding to the wetness between them.

Love was mesmerized. He couldn't look away. Logan looked glorious in his release. His golden eyes darkened. His jaw was clenched. His nostrils flared. Love could feel the man's hand clench on his butt cheeks, and he wished they were somewhere with a large mirror so he could watch it all from every angle.

"Logan," Love whispered.

He gently stroked his hands through the soft golden blond hair at the nap of Logan's neck. The moment felt loving, tender. Love leaned forward and gently kissed Logan. His hand stroked the side of the man's face.

Logan seemed to be with Love for a moment, relishing in the closeness they shared. His hands were gentle, soft, stroking Love's naked skin. His eyes looked dazed. Love felt the connection with him, gloried in it. He could see growing affection and something more in Logan's face.

Then Logan shook his head. The emotions Love thought he saw in Logan's face fell away to be replaced by a stone mask of indifference. Love frowned, unsure of what exactly was happening.

"Logan?"

Logan lowered Love to the floor and stepped back. "Get your stuff," he said sternly. "We need to get going."

Love felt his heart clench with pain. Logan acted so cold when moments ago they both burned each other up. He didn't know how to

deal with this new Logan. He wasn't sure he wanted to. He much preferred the passionate Logan of moments ago.

"Is something wrong?"

"I have things to do, Love, and I don't have time to sit around and play with you. I work for a living."

Love felt like he'd been dismissed when Logan turned away and walked into the bathroom. He heard the water turn on and assumed Logan was cleaning himself up. Love bent down and grabbed the remains of his clothes. He held them against his naked body, feeling like he needed a shield against this new Logan, this colder Logan.

Love still stood next to the wall when Logan walked back into the room a moment later. The gold of Logan's eyes had turned to a dull, pale yellow. There didn't seem to be any life in them. More than anything, that made Love's heart ache.

"Are you going to get dressed or go as you are?" Logan asked.

"I could stay here," Love whispered. That wasn't what he wanted to do, but if Logan had things to do, he'd try and stay out of the big man's way.

"No." Logan crossed his arms over his chest like he dared Love to argue with him.

Okay.

Love moved to his backpack and pulled a clean pair of jeans. He turned away from Logan as he pulled them on, adding a simple black cotton shirt and a pair of tennis shoes. Lastly, he grabbed a fresh pair of ears and perched them on his head.

Considering Logan's strange attitude, Love felt funny being naked in front of the man, and he felt naked without his ears. He wished he had a tail to add to his outfit, but he was fresh out until he got home.

He felt like he dealt with two separate men. One showed loving care and a passionate nature. The other Logan seemed cold and unfeeling. Love didn't know which one was the true Logan, but he could hope.

Love grabbed his backpack and shoved his stuff inside. He went into the bathroom and added his toiletries then walked back into the main room. He placed his laptop inside the green bag then zipped it closed.

“Is that everything?” Logan asked.

Love nodded. It wasn’t much, but he only expected to be here a few days. It was just a weekend getaway. He only brought with him the essentials, some toiletries and a few changes of clothes, and his most important possession, his laptop.

“Good,” Logan said as he turned toward the door. “You won’t be coming back.”

Love blinked. He wouldn’t? When had that been decided? True, he wanted to spend some time with Logan, but it wasn’t like they were moving in together or anything. He still had to go home at the end of the weekend.

“I won’t?”

Logan walked across the room and grabbed the backpack, swinging it up onto his shoulder. He took Love by the arm and started out of the room. “No. You’ll be staying with me from now on.”

“From now on?” Love asked slowly, a flicker of apprehension inching up his spine. He liked Logan, sure, and he really wanted to get to know the guy better, but he didn’t know if he was ready to move in with him. “You do realize that I have a life back home, right—an apartment, friends, school, a job?”

“Your friends are more than welcome to visit, assuming I approve of them. Whatever can’t be packed up of your apartment you don’t really need anyway, and I’m sure we can find you something to keep you occupied.”

“Occupied?” Love asked. He felt confused by the high-handed way Logan seemed to be taking over his life, and just a bit angry. Sure, he liked the guy, but he never said he would turn control of his life over to him. “What the hell are you talking about?”

“I guess you could say that I’m the vice president for my family’s business and—”

Love stopped walking and turned to look at Logan. “I’m happy for you, but what does that have to do with me?”

“Everyone works in the family business in some manner.”

“And?”

“You’ll be expected to put in your part, too.”

Love stared at Logan. He felt like he listened to someone speaking a foreign language. Logan made no sense. “Logan, I have a job. I told you that.”

Logan dropped the backpack to the floor and crossed his arms over his chest. He regarded Love in only what could be seen as an indulgent look. “And what kind of job do you have?”

Love opened his mouth and started to tell Logan exactly what he did for a living, but the smirk on Logan’s face made him change his mind. “I work in a hospital, and I go to school.”

“Perfect,” Logan said. “You can help out in the infirmary. I’m sure our doc will enjoy the help. He can teach you a lot, too. Before you know it, you’ll be able to heal people just like him.”

Love seethed. Yes, he had a job and attended school, sort of. He was a registered nurse. He was also attending the university to further his education and become a doctor. “Why do you insist on treating me like a simpleton?”

“Am I?” Logan asked.

“You know you are.”

“That is not my intention, Love.”

“Just what exactly is your intention then?”

“Love, I don’t want to argue with you, but—”

“Good.” Love crossed his arms over his chest. “I don’t want to argue with you either.”

“Love, I really don’t have time for this.”

Love’s heart ached a little, but Logan’s message was getting through to him. It wouldn’t be the first time he’d fallen for a guy that

didn't want him for long term. Somehow, Love doubted it would be the last.

He seemed to be glutton for punishment. No matter how much he tried to tell himself he wouldn't fall for the next muscled body that came along, he always did. And he always ended up walking away with a broken heart when they left.

Love sighed deeply, wishing he had a lollipop to suck on, and walked over to the nightstand. He knew there was a pad of paper and a pen in the drawer with the phone book. He'd seen it earlier.

He opened the drawer and pulled it out, quickly writing down his phone number. He doubted Logan would call it, or even remember who he was the moment he was gone, but Love could hope.

"Here," Love said as he crossed the room again and held the paper out to Logan. "I should be here for the rest of the weekend. Why don't you call me when you do have time?"

"That's not how this is going to go, Love."

"It's not?" Love was a little surprised but not much. As much of a dominant as Logan was, he would change his mind on a dime to get his own way. Love *loved* dominant men, but they were so high maintenance.

"No, it's not!" Logan snapped as he leaned down to grab Love's backpack. He swung it up on his shoulder then reached for Love's arm.

Love wasn't stupid. He jumped back as fast as he could. When Logan growled again, Love quickly held up his hands in a submissive gesture. "Now look, Logan—"

The sudden darkening of Logan's eyes as he set the backpack down on the floor sent a thrill of excitement and fear up Love's spine. He started backing away, but Logan matched him step for step.

"Logan."

Love frowned when Logan's face seemed to shimmer like if he were looking through blurry glasses. There seemed to be more of a

point to his face, more...hair? When Logan grinned and his mouth suddenly seemed filled with longer, sharper teeth, Love bolted.

Fear raced through him at the loud roar that sounded behind him as he ran into the bathroom and slammed the door closed, turning the lock. Love's heart pounded frantically as he leaned back against the door. There has been something not quite right in Logan's face when he roared. Hell, the roar wasn't quite right. People shouted. They yelled. They might even scream.

Who roared?

Love jumped and ran to the other side of the bathroom when Logan pounded on the door. He looked around for a place to hide, but there was no counter under the freestanding sink, and the place didn't have a tub, just a shower.

The only thing Love could see was a small window. It would be a tight fit, but he might be able to squeeze through it. Love pushed the window open and looked out. The distance from the window to the ground made him groan. He just knew he was going to break something.

The sound of the wooden door cracking cemented Love's decision. He jumped up and started wiggling out the window feet first. Love shimmied back and forth until he could get his body through the small opening. He grabbed the edge with his hands and let himself hang down against the outside wall.

Just as he closed his eyes and let himself drop, Love heard the bathroom door crash open. The ground came up fast. Love cried out as he landed, his foot twisting under him. He rolled to a sitting position and checked over his ankle.

Damn, it hurt like hell, but it didn't seem broken. Love rubbed it, hoping it was just a small ache until he heard the loud roar above him. Love didn't care how badly he was hurt. He wasn't sticking around.

Love got to his feet and tested his ankle. It hurt, but he could use it. With the sounds of Logan's rage ringing in his ear, Love hobbled down the path behind the building. If he could get to one of his

friends, he could get home. He'd have someone else go back for his bag. His long weekend away from home was over.

Just as Love turned the corner of the building, he heard another loud roar, this one more agonized than the previous ones. He glanced back just as Logan leaned out the window. Fear had Love quickly dashing out of sight.

"Love!" Logan shouted.

Love had no intention of going back, no matter how much his heart ached to see Logan again, to feel the man's hands on his body. There were some things in this world that just weren't worth it. Being someone's slave was one of them.

He wanted to be loved and cared for. He didn't want to be under someone's thumb, having to ask for everything in his life. He liked dominant men, yes, but even he had limits, and Logan Stone just found them.

Chapter 4

Logan was going out of his mind. Love was out there somewhere, maybe hurt, maybe dead. He didn't know. He did know that his mate wasn't where he was supposed to be, which was by his side.

How was he supposed to care for Love and protect him if the man wouldn't stay put? This was exactly what he didn't want. He should be attending to clan business right now, but all he could think about was what could be happening to Love.

Logan had searched the entire area, each alleyway and back lot, every road in and out of the compound. He'd even searched several buildings and fenced off areas. There was still no sign of Love, and Logan didn't understand that.

There should have at least been a scent of the man that would lead Logan right to him. Logan had smelled him a few times, but the trail always went cold before he found him. It was like the man disappeared.

Logan didn't want to admit to anyone, especially those in his clan, that he had lost his mate. He would be a laughingstock, and he knew it. But he was getting desperate. Love had been missing for several hours now, and it was in the middle of the night. There was no telling what kind of trouble he could get into.

Leaning against the brick wall of the building Love had been staying, Logan finally admitted to himself that he needed help. He couldn't find Love on his own. If something happened to Love before Logan could locate him, he would never forgive himself.

Logan pulled his cell phone out of his pocket and dialed his brother's number. Not only was Reed his brother, he was also the clan

enforcer. If anything happened to Logan, Reed would take over until their alpha returned.

“What?” Reed mumbled into the phone, obviously having been woken up by the phone ringing.

Logan grimaced. “Reed, I need help.”

“Logan?”

Logan could hear the sleep and confusion in his brother’s voice. He supposed his call was unusual. He didn’t often call in the middle of the night, and he never called for help. His only justification was that he’d never had a mate before.

“Yeah, it’s me,” Logan replied regretfully. “I’m down at the guest compound. I need you to get the boys down here as soon as you can.”

“Trouble?” Reed’s voice was perfectly clear now. Logan could even hear the man in the background as he got dressed.

“Yeah, just a bit, but I want to keep it under wraps for now, okay? Just bring the boys down here and I’ll explain everything to you when you get here.”

“All the boys or just Cael and Garen?”

Logan rubbed his hand over the back of his neck to relieve the tension gathering there. “Yeah, just the three of you.”

“We’ll be there in ten minutes.”

Logan snapped his phone closed and leaned his head back against the hard brick, closing his eyes. Heartache and longing filled him. This wasn’t how a mating was supposed to go. Mates were supposed to be together.

The mating heat that a wolf went into after they mated was a dangerous time for everyone. Wolves were very territorial creatures. Logan would need physical contact with Love often during this time just to be able to keep his wolf under control.

Any perceived threat to his mate, no matter how trivial, could be met with a wolf in a mating rage—the most dangerous of wolves. The current situation had the potential to send Logan into a mating rage. It

was all he could do now to keep control of his wolf. Logan could feel him just beneath his skin, pacing, growling, wanting out.

Logan opened his eyes and pushed himself away from the wall. He started pacing up and down the sidewalk in front of the stairs that led to Love's room, unable to stay still. His skin itched. He was drawing ever closer to shifting. Another few hours of not knowing where his mate was and even he wouldn't be able to hold his wolf back.

"Logan."

Logan swung around, a growl emanating from low in his throat. He quickly retracted the claws that had slid out when he saw his brother and inner circle standing on the sidewalk several feet away. He let out a deep breath and walked toward them.

"What's going on?" Reed asked cautiously.

"My mate is missing."

"Your mate?" Reed asked. "What mate?"

"I met him tonight at the moon festival. We went back to his room to get some of his stuff and had a little argument. He took off."

"Well, congratulations. This calls for a celebration." Reed frowned. "I think."

"If we don't find him, there won't be anything to celebrate." Logan rubbed his hands up and down his arms. "I can already feel my skin starting to itch."

"We need to start back at the beginning," Reed said. "Which building was he staying in?"

"This one!" Logan snapped. He would have thought that was obvious with the way he stood in front of it. Logan rolled his eyes and pointed upstairs. "His room is up there."

Reed arched an eyebrow but didn't say anything as he started up the stairs. Logan rolled his eyes and hurried up the stairs after his brother. There was a reason that Reed was the clan enforcer. Reed had a cooler head than Logan. He needed it to be the clan enforcer.

Logan was stronger, faster, and more agile. He could think quickly on his feet and strategize with the best of them in a split second. He did have a bit of a temper though. Reed had talked him out of more than one tension-filled situation in the past. He'd probably do it in the future.

Which was why Logan had called his brother. He was starting to lose his objectivity, if he had any in the first place where Love was concerned. The mating heat natural to his kind was starting to set in, and Logan felt like he was crawling right out of his skin.

"Which room?" Reed asked when they reached the second floor.

Logan pointed to Love's room.

Reed walked over and opened the door, sniffed the air, then cautiously stepped inside. Logan walked in right after him. His heart sank as he remembered a quite different scenario the last time he walked through the very same door.

Reed slowly walked around the room. Logan knew the man was taking in every detail—the smell, the placement of each object, even the sounds in the room, which at this point were just breathing. It was the lack of detail that freaked Logan out.

When Reed walked into the bathroom and came out a moment later, a look of astonishment on his face, Logan flushed.

"Just what did you two argue about?" Reed asked.

Logan sighed. "I told him he was coming home with me."

"And?"

Logan rubbed the back of his neck and looked away from his brother's questioning look. He felt like a schoolboy caught skipping school. No way in hell did he want to explain himself. Hell, he shouldn't have to. He was the beta after all.

"We just argued, okay?"

"Did you attack him?"

"What?" Logan shouted, his eyes snapping over to glare at his brother. "Of course I didn't attack him. I would never hurt Love."

Reed looked back at the shattered wooden door leading into the bathroom before glancing back at Logan. “Does he know that?”

“Of course he—” Logan suddenly remembered the fear on Love’s face as the man ran for the bathroom and again when he was running away down the dirt path behind the building. “Well, sure, I mean, he has to know, right?”

Reed just looked at him.

Logan sat down on the end of the bed and dropped his head into his hands. Love really had been terrified of him. Logan always gloried in being a wolf. He enjoyed the strength and power that came with it, the senses he had that humans didn’t.

Until now.

Knowing he had terrified his mate to the point that the man had run from him made Logan ache. This was the first time in his life that hated what he was and wished that he was just a normal human that Love wasn’t afraid of.

Logan felt his wolf shift under his skin and knew his feelings of self-loathing were being communicated to the wolf. His wolf wasn’t happy. It wanted out. It wanted to find its mate. Logan clenched his hands into fists as he fought his wolf for control. He wasn’t going to shift. He wasn’t!

“Logan!” Reed shouted. “Snap out of it, damn it!”

Logan blinked. He realized that he was growling deeply, his teeth bared. His claws had extended and dug into the palms of his hands, drops of blood falling to the floor. His skin itched where sprouts of golden fur had started to grow.

He closed his eyes and drew in several slow, calming breaths as he felt his wolf slowly recede—first his claws, then his teeth, and finally, the fur on his arms. Once Logan felt that he had regained control of himself he looked up at his brother in desperation.

“What am I supposed to do, Reed?”

“How badly did you scare him?” Reed asked as he crossed his arms over his chest.

“He ran from me,” Logan whispered. He folded his hands together and let them hang between his knees. “Isn’t that enough?”

“Does he know what we are?”

“I thought he did, but now I’m not so sure. I mean, I found him at the moon festival, and things just kind of snowballed from there. Before I knew it, I had claimed him and we came back here.”

“Where you scared the shit out of him.”

“Yeah.”

Logan knew he was the biggest dope in the world. He had been granted his mate by the gods and fucked it up, all in one evening. He’d be lucky if Love even spoke to him again. Logan wouldn’t blame the man in the least if he ran for the hills.

He suddenly remembered Love’s green backpack and glanced around for it. It should have been right by the door where he dropped it before chasing after Love. It wasn’t. He jumped to his feet and ran to the bathroom to look around. When he didn’t find the backpack there, he walked back into the main room.

“Logan?”

“His backpack,” Logan said as he lifted the comforter on the mattress and looked under the bed. “Love had a green backpack that he put all of his stuff in. I dropped it on the floor right before he ran into the bathroom. It’s not here.”

“Love?”

Logan’s head snapped up. “Yes, that’s his name. Do you have a problem with that?”

“No, no, you don’t understand,” Reed said quickly. He shook his hands in front of Logan. “Are you talking about Love Star?”

Logan stood to his full height and growled. “Yes.”

“Well, fuck a duck!” Reed started to laugh. “Logan, Love is with Matt.”

“What?” Logan’s heart slowly began beating faster. Love was okay? He wasn’t hurt? He wasn’t lying in some ditch somewhere with his throat ripped out? He was alive and well and at Reed’s house?

Wait!

Logan frowned. His hands clenched as a wave of jealousy shot through him. "Why is Love with Matt?"

"Love and his friend, Drea, came up to spend spring break with Matt. They all know each other from college. They live in the same apartment. I guess Love called Matt right before I went to bed and asked if he could crash at our place." Reed patted Logan's shoulder. "Bro, your mate is in my spare bedroom."

"And you didn't think anything of Love asking to crash at your place instead of the guest compound?"

"Matt said Love was upset over something and didn't want to stay by himself. I didn't know he was running from you."

"He wasn't running from me!" Okay, he was, but Logan didn't like it when Reed said it. He liked it even less when Reed merely arched an eyebrow at him. Logan rolled his eyes and tried to remember how upset his parents would be if he ripped his brother's throat out. "Fine, he was running from me."

"Because?"

Logan heaved a sigh. "Love was running from me because I lost my temper and scared him."

"And?"

"And I gave into my impulses and chased after him, scaring him even more." Logan sighed. "Right about now Love is probably wishing he never even met me."

"Logan, I'm sure it's not as bad as that."

Logan's shoulders slumped as he sat back down on the end of the bed and cradled his head in his hands again. "You didn't see him, Reed. He locked himself in the bathroom. He ran from me. He was terrified, Reed, my mate was terrified of me."

Logan felt the bed dip as his brother sat down next to him. He didn't lift his head. He couldn't. The thought of Love being afraid of him was bouncing around in his head like a cannonball. Logan squeezed his eyes closed to keep his tears at bay.

“Logan, you need to remember that our emotions run close to the surface. I know for a fact that you had no intention of scaring Love, did you?”

“No, but—”

“But, your natural dominance came out, and you needed Love to submit, didn’t you?”

Logan shrugged. Reed was right. Love had defied him, and Logan gave into his natural instinct as a male wolf to make the man submit. He just forgot to tell Love that he was a wolf.

“If Love had been a wolf, he would have understood what was happening and submitted to you. But he’s not. He’s human, and that means you have to go slowly with him. You can’t treat Love like you would someone else in the clan, Logan. He needs careful handling.”

Logan lifted his head and looked at his brother. “How do you know all of this stuff?”

Reed grimaced. “Barbara.”

“But Barbara was pack, Reed. She knew all about mating and submitting.”

A bark of laughter fell from Reed’s lips. “Barbara knew about mating in the clan. She knew nothing about submitting.” Reed suddenly looked very sad. His forehead wrinkles and a distant look filled his eyes. “Besides, Barbara wasn’t my mate.”

Logan’s mouth dropped open, and he could only stare at Reed for several minutes. Granted, it was twenty years ago or so, but he remembered how crazy Reed had been for Barbara. Logan hadn’t understood the attraction himself. The woman was crazy.

“Wait, if you’ve known all this time that Barbara wasn’t your mate, then why are you still single?”

“I’m waiting for my mate, what else?” Reed smirked. “Why do you think I let her go and never tried to track her down?”

“I don’t know. I’ve kind of thought you were nuts all of these years or heartbroken.”

“No.” Reed chuckled. “Barbara and I were dating. At first, I thought we were mates. By the time I figured out that it was just first time pheromones overloading, it was too late. When I told her I wanted to call things off, she suddenly showed up pregnant. I may not have wanted her, but I would never give up my child.”

“So, you married her?” Logan was shocked. “What if she hadn’t run off and your mate suddenly showed up?”

Reed shrugged. “I don’t know, but that never happened.”

“Reed.”

“Logan, Barbara was a conniving, spoiled, rotten bitch. You know it, and I know it. I wasn’t sorry to see her go, but I never would have let her leave with Matt. Luckily for me, taking care of a newborn cub took too much work, so she split and left me with my son.”

“Yeah, but—”

“I’ve never regretted it, Logan. I know that my mate is out there somewhere. There are times when I swear I can even feel him moving closer.”

“Him?”

Reed’s face flushed as he chuckled and looked away. “Yeah, I know my mate is male. Ever since I figured things out after Barbara left, I’ve always known I would be mated to a man.”

“Then how come I’ve never seen you dating one?” Logan tossed his hands up in the air, frustrated with his brother. “Hell, I’ve never even seen you kiss a man, let alone have a relationship with one.”

“Logan, if I dated someone that wasn’t my mate, I would be doing a disservice to them, me, and my mate. I won’t do that. Yes, it’s tough and it’s lonely, but I would rather wait until I find my mate.”

“I...damn!”

Logan couldn’t stand the sincerity and longing he could read in his brother’s eyes when the man looked back at him. He suddenly remembered all of the nameless men and woman he’d slept with over the years and realized his brother was a far better man than him.

“Logan, I know I will find my mate. I feel him getting closer every day. I know I won’t have to wait much longer before he will be mine. And the moment I have him in my arms, the last twenty years will feel like a heartbeat. Nothing else will matter.”

“You’re that positive?”

“Weren’t you positive when you held Love in your arms for the first time?”

Logan remembered how right Love felt in his arms, how the mere touch of the man’s lips against his had sent him up in flames. He remembered Love’s sweet smell, the laughter that filled the air around him and made everything better. He even remembered how cute Love looked with black wolf ears on top of his head.

“Fuck, I’ve made such a mess of things.” Logan groaned as he dropped his head back into his hands again. “Love is never going to forgive me.”

“Well, don’t count yourself out yet, brother. The mating bond goes both ways, you know. I’d be willing to bet money that Love is going out of his mind right about now. The only problem is that he doesn’t know why.”

Logan jumped to his feet and started for the door, visions of Love suffering and not knowing why filling his head and making his heart ache for his mate. “I’ve got to get to Love.”

“Logan,” Reed called out, “stop.”

Logan started to yank the door open when he felt his brother’s hand on his arm. He almost growled until he saw the concern in his brother’s eyes. “What?” he bit out through clenched teeth.

“You might want to slow down and make sure you’re calm before you confront Love. He ran from you once. You don’t want him running from you again. You go rushing in there like this and you’re sure to scare him.”

Logan leaned his head against the edge of the door. Reed was right, and he knew it. Again, he was thankful that the man was not

only the clan enforcer, but also his brother. Reed knew him well and still cared about him.

Logan could only hope that Love would feel the same after awhile. He knew he needed to explain things to Love, to go slow and not frighten the man, no matter how much he wanted to bundle him up where he could never be hurt.

“Okay,” Logan said then drew in a deep breath as he looked over at Reed. “What do you want me to do?”

Chapter 5

Love came awake slowly, but as he did, he noticed a distinct difference in the cold temperature of his front versus the hot temperature at his back. He also became aware of the fact that whatever was warming him from behind was very solid.

Love reached down and felt warm flesh on his hip. He instantly jerked his hand back and cradled it against his chest. The tingle that shot up his arms when he touched the arm resting on his hip scared the crap out of Love.

Drawing upon courage he didn't know if he had, Love glanced over his shoulder. His eyes widened, and his heart started pounding frantically in his chest when he realized who the man was that warmed him.

Logan Stone was in his bed.

"Ssshhh," Logan murmured against the back of Love's neck. Love shuddered, fear racing through him when he felt Logan's cheek rub against the back of his neck. His hand patted Love's hip. "Go back to sleep, Love."

Logan's voice was lazy, muffled. Love didn't even know if the man was awake. He didn't want to know. He just wanted to get away. He had no idea how Logan had found him, but he needed to leave before the man woke up.

Love waited until Logan's body went slack and his breathing evened out and then slowly slid out from under his hand. He grabbed his pillow and bunched it up, pushing it into place where his body had been.

Logan grumbled a bit but then he settled down. Love held his breath the entire time as he got dressed and limped toward the bedroom door. His ankle still hurt a lot. It was even slightly swollen. Luckily, it wasn't a break, just a sprain.

Love grabbed his green backpack off the floor, thankful that Matt had gone back and gotten it for him, and then snuck out of the bedroom. He winced when the door clicked loudly as it closed behind him. When nothing happened, not even an enraged mountain of a man crashing through the door, Love turned and hurried down the hallway.

He started for the front door when sounds from the kitchen caught his attention. Love hoped it was Matt or Drea as he cautiously walked in that direction. He needed a ride.

Love paused in the doorway to the kitchen and looked into the room. No one was directly in the kitchen, but Love could see a couple of people sitting just beyond the kitchen in a small breakfast nook. One of them was Matt.

"Matt," Love whispered loudly.

Matt's head whipped around, his look of astonishment turning friendlier when he spotted Love in the doorway. "Love, what are you doing up? You should be resting that ankle. It needs time to heal."

"I got to go, man."

"Go?" Matt glanced over at the other man at the table before looking back at Love. "Go where?"

"Home."

Duh!

"Why don't you come sit down and have something to eat first," Matt said as he stood up and pushed his chair back. "I imagine you're pretty hungry right about now."

Love was. He was starving in fact. But he was also afraid Logan would wake up before he could escape. He didn't want to see the man again. The weird way Logan's teeth had grown sharper and more pointed had scared the crap out of him. Love didn't even want to

think about the way Logan's face had shimmered and seemed to change slightly.

It was just odd.

"Matt, I really need to go."

Love had explained to Matt the previous night that he had made yet another bad hookup. He hadn't gone into too many details. He thought at the time that Matt probably knew Logan. Well, now Love knew that Matt knew Logan. The man was upstairs sleeping in the guest bedroom. Someone had to let him in.

Love frowned and glanced over at the other man in the room. He seemed vaguely familiar. He winced when he remembered exactly where he had met the man. "How's the shin?"

"Fine." The man chuckled. "Thanks for asking."

"Oh, Love." Matt smiled and gestured to the stranger. "This is my father, Reed Stone."

"Hi, it's nice to—" Love swallowed hard as the hairs on his arms suddenly stood up. "Stone?"

Reed nodded, grinning right before he took a sip of his coffee.

"Any relation to Logan Stone?"

"My uncle," Matt said.

Reed smirked. "My brother."

Love swallowed again, wondering why he had never made the connection between his friend, Matt Stone, and Logan Stone. He should have seen it. He knew Matt's last name. He just didn't.

He rubbed his hands together, absently wondering why they had suddenly become so clammy. "Hey, you know, breakfast would be great, but I really need to get on the road. I'm sure Drea and I can just grab something along the way. Thanks anyway." Love started backing out of the room.

"Love, wha—"

"You need to listen to Logan before you decide to leave, Love," Reed said. "There's more going on here than you realize, and I

believe you'll regret it if you don't stay and listen to what Logan has to say."

Matt looked confused as he glanced back and forth between them, but Reed seemed to know exactly what was going on. Love had to wonder how much Logan had told Reed about what occurred between them.

"Why don't you sit down and let Matt make you something to eat," Reed said. "I imagine Logan will be down soon enough."

Love quickly glanced over his shoulder, imagining Logan standing right behind him. When he found the space empty, he heaved a sigh of relief and pressed his hand against his chest. He felt like his heart beat so fast it might jump right out of his ribcage.

"I need to go."

"Love, what's going on?" Matt asked.

Love shook his head. He wasn't sure how to answer Matt, mostly because he didn't know himself. The whole last twelve hours or so had been one big cluster fuck after another. Love was intrigued by Logan and had been from first sight.

Unfortunately, his history with gorgeous dominants seemed to once again play out. Logan looked like sex on a stick. He just didn't have the personality to go with it. Or maybe the problem was that he had too much personality.

The man seemed overbearing, dominant, and unable to listen to reason. Add in the fact that he scared the crap out of Love and there didn't seem to be much reason to stick around. Logan was turning out to be just like every other man Love was attracted to.

Just once, Love wished he could meet a nice guy that also revved up his engine. The more attractive they were to Love, the more of an asshole they seemed to be. Maybe Love should listen to his friends and start looking at guys that weren't quite so hot?

"Love and Logan hooked up at the moon festival last night," Reed said. "They mated."

“Holy shit,” Matt whispered as he stared at Love with wide eyes. “Is Logan the guy you told me about?”

Love nodded.

“Holy shit!” Matt plopped down in his chair. He looked stunned. “You mated with Logan?”

Love frowned. He didn’t exactly understand what Reed or Matt meant by *mated*, but the look of astonishment on Matt’s face made him feel very wary. “You know what, I really need to get going.”

“Oh, but, Love, you can’t leave,” Matt said. “Not now.”

“The hell I can’t,” Love snapped as he swung around and headed for the door.

“What about your ears?”

Love stumbled, reaching up for the ears he knew weren’t there. He hadn’t seen them since the previous night and assumed he either left them in the room or lost them in his mad dash to get away from Logan. He felt naked without them.

“I have a brand new set of ears I can give you,” Matt said. “I’ve been keeping them as a surprise for you. I even have a cherry lollipop.”

Love suddenly felt Matt behind him and then a lollipop was waved in front of his face. Love groaned and reached for the lollipop. Matt snatched it away before he could grab it. Love growled and turned on his friend.

Love thought there was something wonderful about having a friend that looked out for him so much that he carried pockets full of lollipops at all times. However, there was also something horrible about the fact that Matt knew how much Love loved his lollipops. The man could be cruel when he wanted to be.

“Come sit down at the table, and you can suck on this while I make you something to eat.” Matt waved the lollipop in the air.

Love stumbled forward. He set his bag on the floor then reached for the lollipop. Matt held the lollipop out of reach until Love rolled his eyes and sat down. Almost immediately, Love heard the

unmistakable sound of a wrapper being pulled off then a sweet cherry lollipop was popped into his mouth.

Love moaned and sucked hard. It seemed like forever since he'd savored the satisfying flavor. His eyes fell closed, and he concentrated on the lollipop until he felt something being placed on his head.

Love's eyes flew open, and he reached up, a small gasp falling from his lips when he felt ears on top of his head. Oh, they were soft and fuzzy. Love didn't even care what color they were. He quickly made sure that they were placed just right then looked up into Matt's smiling face.

"I don't suppose you have a tail, too?" He could wish, couldn't he?

"I do, a matching one from your favorite store," Matt said.

Love almost cried out when Matt turned and started walking away.

"And I'll give it to you as soon as you've had your breakfast."

Love could live with that. He leaned forward and rested his elbows on the table. He grabbed the end of the lollipop and moved it around in his mouth, savoring the taste and enjoying the fact that once again he had ears on his head.

His world was starting to feel right once again.

"You're really into that lollipop, aren't you?"

Love didn't even acknowledge that Reed had spoken. He was busy.

"Love is nuts about lollipops, Pop. Sometimes, it's the only way to calm him down."

"Isn't he worried about cavities or something?"

Matt chuckled. "I don't believe Love thinks that far ahead."

"And the ears?" Reed asked.

"Love doesn't go anywhere without them."

"He does know they're not real, right?"

"They're real for him."

Reed snorted. It was a very rude noise as far as Love was concerned. He stuck his leg out under the table and kicked Reed in the shin.

“Ow, fuck!” Reed shouted as he reached down to rub his leg. “What in the hell did you do that for?”

Love grinned around the lollipop then went back to sucking on it.

“What is with you, man?” Reed asked. “That’s the second time you’ve kicked me in the shin.”

Love heard Matt burst into laughter. “He’s kicked you before?”

Reed nodded and frowned at Love. “Back at the bar.”

“What did you do to him?”

“Nothing!”

Love rolled his eyes and snorted. Yes, the noise was rude but effective when needed. Besides, it came from him. Snorty noises were allowed when they came from him. Love did it with panache.

“You really need to stop doing that, Love.”

Love rolled his head and gave Reed a look that said what he thought about that suggestion. He tilted his head slightly, had one eyebrow raised, and a smirk on his lips.

Reed just rolled his eyes. “Oh, I can’t wait to see how Logan deals with you.”

“So not happening,” Love said as he pulled the lollipop from his mouth. “I’m eating my breakfast, getting my tail, then I’m out of here. Logan has nothing to say that I want to hear.”

“Love,” Matt said as he walked into the breakfast nook and set a plate of toast on the table, “you really should talk with Logan.”

“Nope.” Love shook his head

“Love, listen to me.” Matt squatted down next to Love’s chair and clasped his free hand. “You’ve mated with Logan. That’s something really important in my family. I know he was an asshole last night, but if you would just give him a chance to explain, I’m sure it would all make sense to you.”

"I know you and Drea have been telling me for ages that I needed to start watching who I became involved with, and I think maybe you're right."

"Love, you—"

"Matt, you didn't see him," Love whispered, darting a quick glance at Reed. "He was really weird last night."

"Weird?" Matt's eyes went to his father then back to Love. "Weird how?"

"His face, Matt." Love turned and looked at Reed to see if he was listening. He seemed to just be drinking his coffee, but Love thought the man might be eavesdropping.

"Love, what about Logan's face?"

Love turned back to Matt and shook his head as he leaned back in his chair. He didn't know how much of what was going on Matt knew about, but the knowing glint in Reed's eyes said he knew it all. Love might have been a little flighty, but he wasn't stupid. He was keeping his mouth shut.

"Nothing." He waved his hand a little to emphasize his words. "It was kind of late and the light wasn't real good. Besides, I haven't had a lollipop in ages. I must have been imagining it."

"Low sugar and all that?" Matt asked as he stood to his feet. "Or did you see my uncle's face go all—"

"Matt!" Reed slammed his cup down on the table so hard the coffee sloshed over the side. "You will let Logan handle this."

"It's going to be real hard for Logan to handle this if Love refuses to stick around, Pop."

Love stared back and forth between the two men. There was something going on here, and Love desperately wanted to ask what it was. He was just afraid of the answers.

"Did I hear my name?"

Love swung around back when he saw Logan framed in the doorway, dropping his lollipop on the floor. His heart pounded. He

jumped out of his chair and backed away so fast that his chair fell over and crashed to the floor.

His eyes widened, and panic started to kick in when Logan's eyes filled with heat as they landed on him. For a moment, Logan seemed to study Love with a curious intensity then his features softened.

When Logan spoke, his voice was tender, almost a murmur. "Hello, Love."

Love swallowed past the lump building in his throat and bent his head slightly forward to acknowledge Logan's greeting. He remained absolutely motionless after that, afraid to move in case Logan pounced again.

"I missed you when I woke up."

Love swallowed again, wishing he had his lollipop—anything to stick in his mouth so he wouldn't have to answer. When Logan took another step into the room, Love stumbled back until he hit the wall.

Logan reached out for him. Love inhaled sharply until Logan lowered his arm. "Love, I won't hurt you."

Love shook his head. He didn't believe a word coming out of Logan's mouth. Logan was just like every other man he had ever felt anything for. They would say what they thought he wanted to hear to get what they wanted. Once they did, they didn't care anymore.

Love was tired of putting his heart on the line only to have it stomped all over. His friends had been trying to warn him for ages to be more careful. He finally realized that they were right. He needed to be more careful, more wary, and he needed to start with the man standing in front of him.

"I need to go." Love looked longingly at the doorway Logan stood in. That wouldn't be a good exit. Logan had to dip his head just to get through the frame, which his shoulders seemed to touch on either side. He started looking around the room, quickly looking for another way out.

Breathing was starting to become a problem. He almost whimpered when his eyes fell on Logan again and found the man

watching him intently. He pressed his hands flat against the wall when they began to tremble.

Love felt panicked.

“Love, it’s okay,” Logan said, stepping closer.

Love’s eyes widened.

“Love, if you would just calm down,” Reed began as he stood up.

Love started edging along the wall toward the window. He didn’t care if it was closed. He’d jump through it anyway.

“All right, that’s enough!”

Love’s eyes snapped over to Matt when the man shouted. They widened even more as his friend walked into the breakfast nook with a large skillet in his hand, waving it around threateningly.

“Everyone, get back and give Love some room,” Matt shouted. “I don’t know what in the hell is going on, but even I can see that Love is terrified out of his mind. If you think crowding him into a corner is going to get him to listen to you, you’re sadly mistaken. Now get back!”

“Mine!” Logan growled, his facial features darkening as he scowled. Large canine teeth started slipping out over his lower lip.

That was it. Love went for the window. He scrambled across the floor and dug at the window, trying to raise it. He didn’t realize that desperate cries were falling from his lips until he felt hands grab him, and he screamed.

“Love, shhh, it’s okay.”

Love didn’t stop freaking out until he realized that it was Matt that held him. He spun around to see the rest of the room was empty, both Reed and Logan gone.

“Where is he?” Love cried out. “Where’d he go?”

“I made him leave, Love.”

Love turned and clutched at Matt’s shirt. “We need to get out of here, Matt. You don’t know what he became last night. Logan’s dangerous. He’s going to kill us all.”

“Love, I swear, it’s okay.”

“It’s not okay.” Love gave Matt a good shake. “You don’t understand. He—”

Suddenly, Matt’s calm made sense to Love. He dropped his hands from Matt’s shirt and started backing away. His finger shook as he pointed it at Matt, a man he had known for more than four years.

“You...you...already know,” he whispered. “You’re just like him.”

“I am, Love, but it’s not what you think.”

“It’s not what I think?” Love snapped. Matt had been his best friend for ages and he had never known? “Then what in the hell is it?”

“I’m a wolf shifter.”

Love stilled then cocked his head to one side. “Did you say wolf?”

Chapter 6

“Logan, sit your ass down. You’re going to wear a hole in my carpet if you don’t slow down.”

Logan turned and growled at his brother then continued pacing. There was something wrong about being ordered out of the kitchen by his nephew when his mate was so distressed. He should be calming his mate, comforting him. Not in another room where he couldn’t ensure Love was okay.

“If anyone can calm Love down enough to listen to you, it’s Matt. They’ve been friends for years.”

Logan stopped to glare at his brother. “Why have I never known about this? Why didn’t Matt bring him home before now? I could have found Love years ago. “

“For the last few years, you’ve been too busy sowing your wild oats to be looking for your mate, Logan. Love has been here a couple of times already.” Reed tilted his head. “Course, I’ve never met him before now either, but I wasn’t looking for him either.”

“Well, it’s wrong, Reed.” Logan started pacing again. “It’s just wrong. Love is—”

The rest of Logan’s words were stolen from him when Love and Matt suddenly appeared in the archway to the kitchen. Love looked pensive, his eyes darting frantically around the room to finally land on Logan.

Logan tried to look as nonthreatening as a man of six foot three could look. When Love’s eyes widened, Logan slowly crossed the room and sat down next to Reed. He folded his hands together in his lap and waited, hoping.

“As long as everyone keeps their distance, Love is willing to listen to what we have to say,” Matt said as he led Love to a chair. The moment Love sat down, Matt pulled a lollipop out of his pocket, unwrapped it, and held it out to Love.

Love snatched it out of the air like it was a bonbon and popped it into his mouth. Logan’s mouth fell open when Love leaned back in his seat and started sucking on the lollipop, his eyes falling closed as he groaned.

Logan reached down and readjusted himself, his cock growing hard at the sound that fell from Love’s lush lips, then turned to look at Matt. He gestured toward Love. “Do you want to explain that?”

“Not really.” Matt chuckled as he reached into his pocket. He pulled out a handful of different colored lollipops and dropped them on the coffee table. “But we might need these.”

Logan opened his mouth to say something about the lollipops, but Reed elbowed him in the side. He turned and glared at his brother but pressed his lips together and kept quiet. He’d find out about the lollipops later.

“Love, do you remember what I said in the kitchen about being a wolf shifter?” Matt asked.

Love opened his eyes and nodded. His pleasure in the lollipop in his mouth seemed to dim a little as he looked over at Logan, but it stayed in his mouth.

“The first thing you need to know is that none of us in this room will hurt you, not even Logan.” Matt gestured to Logan. “He might look dangerous. He might even sound like it. But I can honestly say he will not hurt you.”

Love nodded back at Matt without speaking.

“What you saw last night was Logan’s wolf trying to get out.”

Love swung his head around and looked at Logan, pulling the lollipop out of his mouth. “Why?” Love asked then immediately shoved the lollipop back into his mouth.

Logan tensed when Matt opened his mouth. He knew his nephew was only trying to help, but there were just some things that needed to come from him. Logan held up his hand to stop Matt.

“Please, let me.”

Logan glanced back at Love after Matt nodded and sat back in his chair. He took a deep breath and began the explanation that would either bring him his mate or chase him away.

“Do you remember when we met last night at the moon festival?”

Love’s face flushed, but he nodded.

“Do you remember what happened after that?”

Matt rolled his eyes. “I’m not an idiot. Just say what you have to say.”

Logan blinked. “Uh, well, do you remember me biting you?”

Love flushed again, a small grin coming over his lips before he quickly masked his features. “Yes, I remember that.”

Logan took another deep breath. Apparently Love remembered it and liked it. It took Logan a moment to regain his train of thought after realizing that his mate liked being bitten during sex. He’d have to remember that.

“When a wolf shifter meets hi—”

“Wait.” Love suddenly sat forward. “You’re a wolf shifter?”

“Yeeaahh,” Logan said slowly, glancing over at Matt. What had his nephew told Love?

“Can I see?”

Love looked so eager that Logan was loath to deny him. He stood up and started pulling his shirt over his head.

“Wha—what are you doing?” Love squeaked.

Logan dropped his shirt on the couch and started pushing his boots off. “You said you wanted to see my wolf form.”

“Yeah, but why are you getting undressed?”

“Our clothes don’t magically disappear, Love. That only happens in the movies. If we’re wearing clothes when we shift, they shred, and I kind of like these ones.”

“Fine, but do you have to get undressed in front of everyone?”

Logan paused and blinked at Love in surprise.

Love slapped his hand over his mouth as if he just suddenly realized what he said. Love was jealous. Logan was intrigued by the possessiveness his mate showed. It boded well for the rest of their conversation.

Now, if Love accepted Logan’s wolf, things would be perfect.

Matt chuckled and held out a new lollipop to Love. Logan frowned when his mate frantically took it, unwrapped it, and popped it into his mouth. His eyes didn’t close this time, but a small groan did come from his lips. That was good enough.

“We’ll wait in the kitchen if that’s okay with you, Love?” Matt asked.

Love nodded. Matt and Reed stood up and walked into the kitchen. Logan waited until they left the room before reaching for the buttons on his jeans. It took him just a moment to slip out of his pants and drop them on the table.

He turned toward Love and nearly swallowed his tongue at the heated desire he could see burning in Love’s eyes. He didn’t know if the man knew it was there, but he would find out soon enough that Logan felt the same. His cock was getting harder by the breath.

Logan swallowed then walked out to the middle of the room. He could feel Love’s eyes follow his every movement. “Okay, whatever you do, don’t run from me. If you get scared, call Matt and Reed back in here. Just don’t run. My wolf will chase you.”

“Is that what happened back at my room?”

Logan nodded, grimacing. “It’s a natural instinct, Love. Wolves are predators by nature. If prey runs, we give chase.”

“I am not prey!” Love snapped. His eyes sparkled with anger. It was adorable.

“No, you’re not, and you never will be. But you did run from me during a time when I didn’t have very good control of my wolf.” Logan shrugged. “He thought you were playing and gave chase.”

Love rolled his eyes. "Fine, I won't run."

Logan pressed his lips together to keep from smiling. He was beginning to understand his mate's moods. Love rolled his eyes when he didn't want someone to know he was uncomfortable. He got sassy when he wanted someone to know he thought they were being an idiot. And he sucked on a lollipop whenever he was uneasy.

"Okay, watch carefully, Love."

"Wait, it doesn't hurt, does it?"

"No, not at all." Logan was a little surprised by Love's concern but also warmed by it. "It's a little strange feeling, but it doesn't hurt at all."

Love nodded. "Okay, go on."

Logan got down on his hands and knees and willed the change. He felt his skin heat up, hair starting to sprout everywhere. His bones cracked as they shifted, elongating and reshaping him into that of a two hundred pound golden wolf.

Logan heard Love gasp, but he couldn't turn and reassure his mate that he was safe. His head had reshaped, a muzzle replacing his normal mouth and nose. Once he felt that his shift was complete, Logan pushed the wolf back for a moment as he looked over at Love.

He wanted just a moment to see if Love was afraid of him before giving his wolf control. What Logan found surprised him. Love looked totally intrigued. His eyes were wide, and his mouth hung open, but there wasn't a single sign of fear on his face.

"Oh, you are so beautiful," Love whispered as he came down on the floor on his knees. He reached his hand out hesitantly. "Can I...can I touch you?"

Logan leaned into the hand Love held out, rolling onto his side. Love's hands were suddenly all over Logan, moving through his fur and feeling every inch of him. Logan had just a moment to blink back the tears in his eyes before his wolf pushed him aside and took over.

"You're so soft." Love sounded awed.

Logan's mind was hazy, filled with Love's overwhelming scent. The lure of a mate's pheromones was hard wired into Logan. Once he had smelled Love, he would never forget the man's scent, be able to find him in a crowd, and track him for miles.

No scent would ever smell as sweet to Logan. And the stronger it became, the more power it would have over Logan. As it was, he wanted to roll in the sweet fragrance, to have it cover every inch of his body.

And then he wanted to cover his mate in his scent. Marking Love so that everyone that came near him would know he had been claimed was uppermost on Logan's mind. Love should always smell like him.

Logan's chest rumbled louder and rubbed his large head back and forth against Love's legs then started moving up his chest. He was elated when Love laughed and fell back on his butt. There didn't seem to be any fear in Love at all that he was sitting next to a two hundred pound wolf.

Logan butted at Love with his head until the man laid back on the floor then crawled over him, ensuring that his large size was supported by his legs. He didn't want to crush his smaller mate.

Logan rubbed his face against the side of Love's then down to his neck. He huffed loudly when Love laughed and tilted his head back. Logan knew that Love had no idea about the significance of his gesture, but Logan did. He licked at Love's arched throat then gently bit down on it. Not hard enough to hurt but just enough to appease his wolf.

Once Logan's wolf was satisfied and laid back, Logan jumped to have control again. He watched Love's eyes widen as he shifted back to his human form. Fear filled their gray depths as Love scrambled back until he hit the edge of the couch.

Logan climbed up onto his knees and held a hand out to his mate. "Love, it's okay. It's still me. I didn't mean to startle you."

Love's hand pressed against his chest as he inhaled a deep breath and let it out slowly. His eyes were still wide, but he didn't look quite so frightened. "Let me see it again."

"It?"

"I want to see you shift again."

Logan debated the merits of shifting again for about two seconds then lowered himself to the floor again and shifted. When he looked up at Love's mouth was hanging open once again, a look of awe in his soft features.

"That is amazing," Love whispered as he crawled closer. Logan couldn't help but whimper again when Love stroked his fur. He loved the feeling of his mate's hands on him. "Okay, shift back."

Logan blinked in surprise then shifted. Love's hands remained on his skin even after he shifted. Logan raised his head, expecting to see fear in Love's eyes, but instead he found Love frowning, his eyebrows drawn together in a deep grimace.

"Love?"

"Are you sure it doesn't hurt?" Love asked. "I felt your bones move. I felt you shift."

"No, Love, it doesn't hurt at all, I promise you. I've been shifting for years."

Love's forehead wrinkled as his hands moved down Logan's arm. "Did it hurt the first time you shifted?"

"The first time?"

Love nodded.

"Yeah, a little." Logan slowly settled his body down on the floor. He felt a little strange sitting in front of Love stark ass naked, but he wasn't going to do anything that might frighten the man again. "We're born human, but we can shift right away. I think it's more scary than painful."

"I'll bet," Love snorted.

"We know our time is coming before we shift. Our muscles start to cramp, and our bones pop."

“And that doesn’t hurt?” Love gasped.

Logan shrugged. “It’s not exactly comfortable, but it doesn’t hurt. It feels kind of like a growth spurt.”

“And when you shift?” Love asked. “What’s that like? Are you aware when you shift?”

“Aware?”

“Did you know who I was?”

Logan could see that the question was important to Love, but he wasn’t sure how to answer. Things seemed to be going pretty well between him and Love at the moment, and he didn’t want to do or say something that would send his mate back into a panic.

“Yes, I am fully aware of you, but it’s also like things are muted.”

“Muted?”

Logan chuckled. “We believe that our wolf is a separate entity from our human side. When the wolf takes over, our human side is pushed to the back. We’re still aware, but the wolf is in control. It’s the same when our human side is at the forefront. I can feel my wolf side, but right now I am in control.”

“Does your wolf know who I am?”

Logan patted Love’s hand where it rested on his thigh. “Oh, yeah, my wolf is very aware of you.”

Logan couldn’t even begin to explain how aware his wolf was of Love. They were mates, and his wolf was fully aware of that fact. To mark Love as his mate, Logan had to claim him in werewolf form. It was the only way the mating mark would remain.

He hadn’t taken Love in that form yet because Love had to give his consent. At some point, if Logan could get Love to agree to their mating, he would take Love in his werewolf form. It was the only way that their telepathic link could be created between them.

Logan’s third form was that of wolf and man, a werewolf. He’d have the body of a man, only bigger and more muscular, covered in fur. He’d also have ears, claws, and long canines to bite Love with and claim him again. It was his most powerful form.

“If that’s true then why did you attack me?”

“I can’t attack you, Love.”

Love leaned back, his eyebrow arching. “Really, ’cause it sure as hell didn’t look that way when you had me trapped in the bathroom. It pretty much seemed like you were going to try and kill me.”

“I told you, Love, you ran and I chased you because that is what I do. It was as simple as that. I wasn’t trying to hurt you or scare you. I never would have hurt you.” Logan shrugged, not really knowing how to explain it to Love. “I was just doing what was natural.”

“Natural?” Love snorted. “You call scaring me out of my mind natural?”

Logan could feel Love pulling away from him in his mind. The man was throwing up wall after wall to separate himself from Logan. It hurt, like a knife in his heart. Logan had no idea of how to get through to Love.

He leaned back against the edge of the recliner behind him and drew his knees up to his chest. Being naked in front of Love suddenly felt uncomfortable. “Do you remember when we met at the moon festival?”

“What?” Love looked confused by the sudden turn in the conversation.

“Do you remember when we met at the moon festival?” Logan asked again. “Dick head was trying to drag you through the crowd.”

Love frowned. “Yeah, why?”

“Him, I could have easily killed and never gave it another thought. He was trying to harm you.” Logan clenched his jaw as he remembered Mick Red’s hands on his mate. “He was touching you.”

Love’s head cocked to one side, and a strange look Logan couldn’t identify came over his face. “That bothered you, didn’t it?”

“Yes,” Logan growled. His hands clenched as a streak of rage flew through him. “He had no right to put his hands on you.”

“And you did?” Love snapped, though there wasn’t any fire in his words, just accusation. “I don’t exactly remember you asking either.”

“And I don’t remember you complaining,” Logan said. “In fact, if I remember correctly, you were begging me to fuck you.”

Love’s brow flickered a little as he flushed. He bent his head and studied his hands. “I didn’t know what you were then.”

“But...” Logan frowned, “you were at the moon festival.”

“Yeah, and?”

“Surely you knew what kind of festival it was.”

“Yeah, a party.” Love chuckled. “Matt said there would be food and dancing and stuff like that. He never said anything about it being some sort of shifter gathering.”

Damn Matt! Logan thought as he rolled his eyes. His nephew was getting him into more trouble with his mate than he ever expected. Of course, Matt had brought him his mate, too, so he couldn’t be too upset.

“Okay, so you didn’t know what you were getting yourself into when you went to the moon festival. I’m sure you understand the need to keep certain things, like our ability to shift, secret from the world in general.”

“Yeah, I can see that.”

“So, knowing what you know now, how do you feel about things?” When Love’s eyebrows shot up, Logan realized his question sounded odd. He just didn’t quite know how to ask Love if he would stay. “Does my ability to shift change how you feel?”

“I don’t know how I feel.”

“Are you still afraid of me?”

Logan held his breath as he waited for Love’s answer. It could make or break him. He could force Love to stay. It had happened in the past with his ancestors when they found human mates. It wasn’t unheard of. But Logan didn’t want a mate by force. He wanted one that stayed because he wanted to stay.

Love tilted his head to one side and stole a slanted look at Logan. “I’m not afraid of you exactly but...”

“But?”

Love shrugged and looked back down at his hands again. “I wasn’t afraid of you before at the...well, when we met, but then you did that growly shit and...” Love glanced up, biting his lip.

“And?”

“I just get the feeling that if I say anything, you’re going to take over my life. Nothing I said back at the guest house seemed to make a difference to you, like my wishes weren’t important. You just assumed that I would do everything you wanted without talking to me about it first.”

Logan leaned back and closed his eyes. He knew his behavior with Love was going to come back and bite him in the ass. He also knew he couldn’t stop his behavior. He was possessive. He wanted Love with him.

He was beginning to realize that Love was high maintenance just like he originally thought, but he was starting to like it. The man was spunky, intriguing, and downright drool worthy. He’d be stupid to lose Love now because he couldn’t learn to compromise.

Logan opened his eyes and looked back at Love. He was surprised by the anxiousness on Love’s face. He couldn’t have that. Logan reached over and patted Love’s hand to reassure the man he wasn’t angry.

“You’re right, Love. I made a lot of decisions for you without talking to you first. That was wrong of me.”

Love’s mouth dropped open. “You’re agreeing with me?”

“I am.” Logan breathed in deeply then let the air in his lungs out slowly. “But I’m also not sure I can change that part of my personality. In my world, I’m in charge. I’m used to making decisions for myself and everyone else. It’s second nature to me.”

Love frowned. “There’s that nature thing again.”

Logan chuckled. “I am a wolf at heart, Love, with an animal’s instincts.”

Logan was tickled pink when Love rolled his eyes. He adored the exasperation on Love’s face when the man was fed up with him. It

was sexy as hell. He hunched over, his arms resting on his thighs, and cupped his face on his hands.

“You’re cute as hell when you do that.”

“Do what?”

“Roll your eyes when you’re fed up with me.”

Love’s lips started to twitch then he sighed before giving into the laughter that Logan could see building in his face. “You’re a pain in the ass.”

Logan’s inner self crowed with joy as he pushed himself forward and crowded Love back against the couch. Their mouths were only inches apart. Logan could feel Love’s breath blow out against him.

“You didn’t seem to have any problems with me in your ass last night,” he murmured.

Love’s eyes widened, and a small pant came out of his mouth. The smoky gray in Love’s eyes started to darken as desire filled them. Logan knew Love wasn’t as unaffected by him as the man wished.

“Lo–Logan.”

“Yes, Love?”

Love’s hand fluttered at his throat for a moment before moving to press against Logan’s collarbone. “You...” Love swallowed hard. “You are—”

“Hot? Sexy? Irresistible?”

Love’s head fell back against the couch as he laughed. “That wasn’t exactly what I was going to say, but I’ll go with it until I can find a better word.”

“Yeah?” Logan raised his eyebrows. “Just what exactly were you going to say?”

“Uh-uh.” Love shook his head. “My lips are sealed.”

Logan’s eyes dropped down to look at Love’s plush lips. “Pity, there’s so much I could do with them.”

“Logan!”

Logan could tell that Love wasn’t really upset with him. There was a delightful little twinkle in his eyes as he laughed.

“You’re too much.”

“Too much for you?”

Love blinked, and the smile slowly fell from his lips. His expression grew serious. “I don’t know. I’m still trying to wrap my mind around the fact that you’re a wolf shifter. The rest of this...” Love shook his head. “I haven’t even begun to process the rest of this.”

“Is there anything I can do to help you process it?”

Love’s nearness was overwhelming. Logan suddenly had the urge to rub himself against Love and mark the man with his scent again. But he also didn’t want to frighten Love. His chest rumbled in a soft purr, and he rubbed his cheek over Love’s.

“God, I love it when you do that,” Love whispered as his head dropped back.

“Do what, Love?” If he knew, he could do it again.

“When you purr,” Love moaned. “It’s fucking hot. I didn’t know wolves could purr.”

“There are a lot of things we can do, Love.”

Logan increased the volume of his purr as he continued to rub his face over Love’s face. When he turned into the crook of Love’s neck and the man arched back even more, Logan groaned. Love’s sweet scent was stronger at his neck.

“Love,” Logan said quietly, “baby, you really need to not do that.”

Even as he said it and advised Love not to arch his neck, Logan was pushing his face closer, pressing his nose against Love’s soft skin and inhaling deeply. A delicious shudder rippled through his body as the sweet musky fragrance filled his senses.

“Do what?”

“Love, I told you, I’m an animal driven by instinct,” Logan said as he forced himself away from Love’s neck and the most alluring scent he had ever smelled. “And you smell really, really good.”

“Yeah?”

“I want to bite you, Love.” Logan licked a line up the side of Love’s throat. His hands started moving over Love’s body. “I want to sink my teeth into your neck and claim you as my mate again.”

Love stiffened. His eyebrows were drawn down in a confused frown when he pulled back to look at Logan. “Again?”

Chapter 7

Love knew something more serious than just a quick fling beside the side of a building was going on. Logan looked like a deer caught in headlights. Love wasn't even sure if the man was breathing. He didn't move. He didn't even blink.

"Logan?" Love was surprised when Logan suddenly pushed away and sat back, avoiding his gaze. Love moved his head around until Logan met his eyes. "I asked you a question."

"And I'm trying really hard to come up with an answer for you."

"You don't have one?"

Logan inhaled slowly and shook his head. "Not one you're going to like, no."

Love arched an eyebrow. "Tell me anyway."

Logan's face paled like a kid caught with his hand in a cookie jar. His eyes kept darting around. Every few seconds they would meet Love's then dash away again. Love almost felt sorry for the man, almost.

"You were at the moon festival, Love."

"And?" Love didn't quite understand what his attendance at the moon festival had to do with anything, but apparently it was important to Logan.

"I thought since you were at the festival that you knew..." Logan gestured to himself. "You know, about us."

"Shifters?"

"Yeah, right, shifters. The moon festival is a monthly get-together for my clan. Sometimes humans that are not mated attend, but they usually know what we are, Love. It kind of has to be that way because

if one of us shifted and a human was there who didn't know, well, I'm sure that you can imagine what would happen."

"Okay, so you assumed I knew you were a shifter."

Logan nodded.

"Go on."

Logan dropped his head back against the chair he leaned on and drew his knees up to his chest. It was a position that looked a little strange for a man of Logan's size. Love rolled his eyes and reached behind him on the couch for Logan's clothes then handed them over.

"Why don't you get dressed?" Love suggested. "I think you'll be more comfortable."

Logan flushed and took the clothes. He stood up and quickly pulled them on. Love was almost sad to see all of Logan's beautiful skin getting covered, but he knew talking with Logan was more important. There was something going on, and he wanted to know what it was.

Once Logan was dressed, he sat down in the chair and gestured for Love to get up off the floor and sit on the couch. Love did, resting his elbows on his thighs and folding his hands together.

"Okay," Love said, "tell me what you don't want to tell me."

"I thought you knew what we were, Love. I thought you knew what was happening when we went off alone together."

"Yeah," Love snickered, "we were going off to have sex."

Logan's eyebrows suddenly drew together in a deep frown. "And you just go off with anyone to have sex?" he growled.

Love's eyes widened when he saw Logan's hands clench into fists. He tried not to panic, but the dark glower filling Logan's face made it hard not to. He'd already run once from Logan. He hoped he didn't need to do it again.

"No," Love said carefully, "I'm usually pretty selective about who I have sex with. How was I supposed to know you were a shifter?"

"That's not what I meant, Love," Logan shouted as he jumped to his feet. "You shouldn't go off with people you don't know. You

certainly shouldn't go off and have sex with strangers. Don't you know how dangerous that is?"

"Fine, I won't go off to have sex with you anymore."

"Love!"

"What?"

Love would have given anything to have one of his lollipops right at the moment, but that would mean taking his eyes off of Logan. He didn't want one because he was flustered, but because he wanted to suck on it while he watched Logan be flustered.

It was obvious that Logan had no idea how to deal with him. Most people didn't. Love had been told that he was an acquired taste, and most people didn't want to acquire him. He was very high maintenance. He knew that.

Love liked strong, possessive men. He liked knowing he belonged to someone, and he liked that someone to always let him know he was wanted. It didn't matter if that came in the form of gifts, being affectionate, or just always wanting him close at hand. He liked knowing he was wanted.

And while Love liked his creature comforts, he preferred having someone to put his attention on and spoil. That, in a lot of ways, was why he couldn't seem to find a steady lover. He wanted to spend a lot of his time, if not all of his time, with his lover. He likened it to the term "glued together at the hip." He just felt that was the way it was supposed to be.

Unfortunately, most of the men he was attracted to preferred to fuck and run. If they did stick around, it was never for long. Love had been called everything from too clingy to a stalker. One ex had even threatened to get a restraining order because he said Love called him too often.

Love wasn't sure what type of man Logan was, but he was beginning to think that the man didn't like clingy lovers. It made sense, though, as much as Love hated to admit it. Everything he had

ever seen said wolves were territorial. Love might be moving into areas he had no business in.

“Love, you need to understand—”

Logan growled and turned to glare at the door when someone knocked. Love chuckled at the disgruntled look on the man’s face and got to his feet to answer the door. He just reached it and started to turn the handle when a strong arm wrapped around him from behind. Hot breath blew over the back of his neck.

“You never ever answer the door, Love.”

“Wha—”

“You don’t know who it could be.”

Love frowned and glanced over his shoulder, then up. Geez, Logan was tall. “And I never will if I don’t open the door.”

It made sense to him.

“Love, listen to me, please,” Logan pleaded. “You cannot answer the door. You have no idea who could be there. They might be dangerous.”

“Logan, I’ve been living on my own for a lot of years. I’m sure I can answer the door without—”

“You can’t!” Logan suddenly snapped, his face darkening.

Love arched an eyebrow at the anger he could see growing on Logan’s face. Then he suddenly realized that he was more intrigued by it than scared. That was a totally odd reaction in his mind considering how afraid he was of Logan earlier. And it confused the crap out of him.

“Please, baby?”

Well, put like that...Love sighed and stepped back from the door. He waved his hand at it. “Fine, you answer the door then, but I still think you’re being paranoid as hell.”

Logan grinned from ear to ear then leaned down and placed a small kiss on the tip of Love’s nose. “I know you don’t understand, Love, and we’ll get to that, but you really have to take more precautions with your safety.”

“Somehow, I think you’re going to be doing enough of that for both of us,” Love said as he crossed his arms over his chest.

The knock came again, this time followed by the ringing of the doorbell.

Love rolled his eyes. “Answer the damn door, Logan.”

“Either stand behind me or go back and sit down on the couch.”

“Seriously?”

“Love.”

Love rolled his eyes and his head. This really was too much. He thought Logan was just odd. Turned out he was paranoid as hell, too. Love walked across the room then turned back to Logan, spreading his arms wide.

“Will this do?”

“Perfectly.” Logan grinned before he turned back to the door and pulled it open.

Love arched on his toes and leaned a little trying to see who stood on the other side of the mountain of muscles blocking his view. When he spotted a shock of dyed blue hair, Love squealed and raced across the room.

“Drea!” He pushed past a very stunned looking Logan and enveloped the only other person he considered his best friend besides Matt and gave him a big hug. “Oh my god, I missed you so much. Last time I saw you, some hot guy at the festival had all your attention.”

“Love, sweetie, I can’t breathe.”

Love laughed and loosened his arms. Drea didn’t look any worse for wear. He actually looked quite rested. Love smirked. “So, how was he?”

“He?” Drea asked innocently. “He who?”

“You know exactly who *he* is, dork.” Love smacked Drea’s shoulder. “The guy that—”

The hairs on the back of Love’s neck suddenly stood on end as a low growl filled the space behind him. Love could feel the force of

Logan's anger pushing against his back like a wall of flame. The man was livid.

"Love," Logan said. His voice sounded like it came out through clenched teeth. "If you value your friend's life, I suggest you step away from him very carefully."

Love slowly stepped back from Drea and turned to look at Logan. What he saw made the rest of the hairs on his body stand on end. Logan's teeth were clenched except for the long sharp canines that hung down over his lower lip. His eyes had gone dark golden brown, but they looked like they were tinted by flames. Logan's hands were clenched, but Love could still see the claws trying to get out.

"Logan, what..." Love licked his lips. He glanced over his shoulder for a moment, checking on Drea. He looked as confused as Love felt. Logan's hand suddenly clenched in Love's hair, pulling his head around.

"Me!" Logan growled. "You look at me!"

Love didn't understand why, but he could see Logan's wolf lurking in the background of Logan's eyes. The wolf was practically pacing with agitation and anger. Love somehow knew that Drea's very life depended on how he acted.

Love stepped closer to Logan and pressed himself against the man's body. He started rubbing his hands up and down Logan's chest, murmuring to the man and beast, trying to soothe them both. Logan's arms wrapped around him in a crushing hug. The man's head started rubbing against the top of Love's.

"I'm here, Logan," Love whispered, "right here with you."

Love didn't give a sigh of relief until Logan started to purr.

"Love, what the fuck?" Drea exclaimed.

Love groaned when the purring abruptly stopped and a low growl rumbled through Logan's chest. He reached back with his hand and waved Drea past him. "Matt is in the kitchen, Drea. Go on in there. He can explain everything to you."

Love knew when Drea moved past him, but only because of the way Logan's body tensed. Love quickly went back to murmuring softly and rubbing Logan's chest. Logan and his wolf seemed to like it when he did that.

He also didn't want Logan attacking Drea, and that seemed like what the man was on the verge of doing. Logan's body was stiff. His chest continued to rumble, very slowly turning to a purr. Love could feel Logan's clawed fingers stroke down his back, even though they didn't press hard enough to hurt. It was still strange.

"You can't..." Logan's voice was rough but almost a whisper. "You can't stand close to other men, Love."

Love tilted his head back to look up into Logan's face. "Why not?"

"It's too dangerous."

Love frowned. That didn't sound exactly right to him. "Drea is one of my best friends, Logan. He would never hurt me."

"No, but I might hurt him."

"You?" Love's eyebrows shot up. "Why would you hurt Drea?"

"Because you belong to me, damn it!" Logan snapped. "And no one has the right to touch you without my permission."

Love blinked. "Excuse me?"

Logan shook his head in resignation. "I've been trying to figure out a way to tell you, Love."

"So, just tell me."

"I thought you knew who we were when I saw you at the festival. I thought you understood how things were and..." Logan's face seemed to take on an adoring look that Love had never seen aimed in his direction before. It mystified him and scared him at the very same time.

Love leaned lightly into Logan, tilting his face toward him. "And?"

"And I claimed you as mine."

Love's eyebrows rose in amazement. He knew there was a stronger meaning to Logan's statement. He felt it deep in his bones, and saw it in the agonized expression on Logan's tense face.

"Your what?"

"My mate."

Love nervously moistened his dry lips as he tried to remember everything he had ever read or seen about wolves and their mating habits. He just kept seeing a single alpha wolf with several other wolves in his clan. Did wolves really mate for life like the nature channel said?

"Do you have a harem?"

"A what?"

Love set his chin in a firm line and repeated his question. "You know, a harem. Do you have one?"

"What in the hell would I need a harem for?"

Love pressed his lips together in frustration and pushed out of Logan's arms. He took several steps away then swung back around to face the man again. "Look, I don't know what you call it, harem, wolf groupies, hell, maybe you call it orgies parties. Maybe that's what your moon festival is, but—"

"Love, what are you going on about?"

"How many people do you fuck?" Love snapped. His hands landed on his hips as he glared at Logan. "Am I going to be one of several? Isn't that what wolves do, one alpha to a multitude of other lesser wolves?"

"That's called a clan, Love."

Love's eyes widened as his worst nightmare came to life in Logan's words. "Then it's true?"

"I am the beta of my clan, not the alpha, but yes, we have a clan."

Love's brow creased with worry. "Do I have to be with all of them?"

"Them?" Logan's jaw suddenly clenched, his eyes narrowed lightly. "Them who?"

“Your clan.” Love thought he was being pretty straightforward with his words. What part of it wasn’t Logan getting? “Do I have to fuck them all?”

“What in the hell are you talking about, Love?”

Love couldn’t stand it anymore. He felt like he was talking in circles. He was confused and felt out of sorts. He just wanted to make it all go away for a few minutes so he could catch his breath and think with a clear head.

Love spotted the pile of lollipops on the coffee table and raced over to them. His hands shook so bad when he grabbed one that he couldn’t get the wrapper off. Love started whimpering, desperate for the simple solace the lollipop brought him.

He suddenly felt Logan’s larger body press up behind him. Logan grabbed the lollipop and carefully unwrapped it then held it out to Love. A soft cry fell from Love’s lips as he snatched at the lollipop and popped it into his mouth.

He groaned and leaned back against Logan as the sweet taste of watermelon filled his mouth. He preferred cherry but watermelon would do considering how desperate he felt. Love closed his eyes and just concentrated on sucking on the lollipop.

He didn’t exactly understand why sucking on a lollipop made him feel better, but it always did. He discovered this little wonder quite by accident about five years ago during finals at college. One lollipop and he aced his biology final. Without it, he was doomed.

Love opened his eyes when Logan’s hands began to rub up and down his arms. “I know this is all confusing to you, Love, but I swear it’s going to be okay. I won’t let anything happen to you.”

Love pressed his head sideways into Logan’s chest and closed his eyes again. His life seemed to be spiraling out of control, and he didn’t know how to stop it. Most shocking of all for him was the calm he found just from inhaling Logan’s strong masculine scent. The more he breathed in, the better he felt.

The strength and power he could feel coming from the muscular body behind him just added to the effect. Logan's body virtually surrounded him, protecting him from the outside world. Love felt like Logan was a barrier between him and anything else. It was an odd feeling but comforting.

Love soaked up as much of Logan's presence as he could before the questions floating around in his head started to make sense to him again. He drew in a deep breath and let it out slowly then opened his eyes and looked over his shoulder.

"I don't want to do this, Logan."

Logan's eyes darkened dangerously. "You don't want to be my mate?"

Love couldn't honestly answer that. "I don't know what being your mate means."

"It means you're mine, my lover, my mate, my..." Logan's lips pressed together for a moment. "It means you're my everything, Love."

"Yeah, but who else's?" Love didn't know what Logan's stiffening body meant, but he did know he didn't like the deep frown that came over the man's face. It made Logan look menacing, and Love didn't think that was a good thing when dealing with someone that could shift into a two hundred pound wolf.

Love turned in Logan's arms and started slowly backing away from him. Logan suddenly reached over and grabbed Love by his arms and pulled him closer, giving his body a little shake.

"You belong to me," Logan snarled through clenched teeth, very long and sharp looking clenched teeth. "No one, and I mean no one, gets to touch you without my permission. And I will kill anyone that tries to take you away from me."

Love's eyes hurt from widening so much as he stared at Logan's thunderous face. He once again felt like prey to a predator. The only thing he could think to do was soothe the beast. Love started patting Logan's chest, hoping what worked before would work again.

“Yeah, this whole ownership thing isn’t working for me.” Love clamped his mouth shut the instant he realized what he said. Those hadn’t been the words he planned on saying. He really needed to check with his brain before opening his mouth.

“Ownership thing?” Logan snapped. “Is that what you think this is?”

“How in the hell am I supposed to know?” Love snapped right back as he jerked out of Logan’s grasp. He shook his finger at Logan. “You keep saying that I belong to you and no one is allowed to touch me unless they have your permission. That sounds a lot like you believe you have the right to give other people permission to touch me, and I can’t allow that.”

“I should hope not!” Logan’s arms crossed over his chest. “I would be very unhappy if you started allowing people to touch you.”

Love blinked. This conversation wasn’t going quite like he thought it would. Well, it actually was, sort of. It was all going wrong, and that was Love’s usual experience when he liked a guy a lot.

Hell, he could even see himself falling in love with Logan, if he wasn’t falling already. And that scared Love right down to his toes. He didn’t believe for a moment that Logan would ever come to care for him the way Love always dreamed. He wasn’t stupid.

Growing up with a name like Love gave him a very unique perspective on life. He believed in true love, soul mates, and the ability to connect with that special someone on a spiritual level.

And he knew, somehow deep down inside, that Logan didn’t believe the same way. There was something about the rough, dominant male that screamed at Love to run and run fast. He just couldn’t seem to make his feet move.

Love was almost saddened by how much he wanted Logan. Their relationship was doomed from the moment they set eyes on each other. Loving Logan would eventually destroy Love, and he could only walk to his doom with his eyes open.

Love crossed his arms over his chest to match Logan and set his chin. Despite his need to have Logan, he wasn't going to just blindly give in. He knew if he didn't give Logan boundaries now, he would never get a word in with the man.

"I refuse to be your little play toy, Logan. If you want me, fine, but I will not allow you to dictate my every move. That includes telling me who I can and cannot touch."

The wave of heat that came from Logan when he cocked an eyebrow nearly knocked Love off his feet. Logan might not show it, but he was pissed. Well, the small tick in his jaw showed it enough. Most people probably wouldn't have noticed, but Love's full attention was on the man.

"If you think for one damn minute that I'm going to allow you to—"

"Allow?" Love gasped. "What makes you think you get to *allow* me to do anything?"

"You expect me to just sit here while you go fuck anything and everything?"

"You—" Love rubbed his hand over his face when words escaped him and turned away, walking back and forth several times as he tried to get his sudden anger under control. Logan seemed to think he was a slut that would sleep with anything that walked. "Is that what kind of person you think I am?"

"Isn't that what we've been talking about here?"

"No!" Love snapped. "We've been talking about you thinking you own me."

Logan suddenly moved over and sat down on the couch. He dropped his head into his hands, rubbing his face then pushing his long golden hair back before lifting his head and looking over at Love.

"I do not, nor have I ever believed that I own you, Love."

Love blinked. "You haven't?"

"No, people don't own other people, Love. It's wrong."

“Then what is this all about?” He asked as he spread his arms out. “You keep going on and on about me belonging to you and no one having the right to touch me without your permission. If you don’t think you own me, then what is that all about?”

“It’s about us mating.”

Love rolled his eyes. “You’ve used that word before, and I asked you what it meant. Obviously your explanation wasn’t enough.”

Logan flopped back on the couch and let his head fall back. He stared up at the ceiling, frowning. “That’s because you’re not a shifter, Love. Shifters understand what mating means. Humans don’t.”

Love wanted to growl in frustration, and then he wanted to wail at Logan for pointing out the one thing he could never change. He could never be a wolf no matter how much he wished differently. Not even his fuzzy ears and tail would change that. He would always be on the outside looking in at what he wanted.

“So, tell me what it means for a shifter then.”

“I suppose it’s different for other wolf shifters than it is for me. I’m the beta of my clan.”

“The beta?”

“The beta is the second in command of the clan. I take over when my alpha is away like he is now. Asher and his mate are away on business. When that happens, I temporarily become alpha. Other times, I’m like the vice president. I still take orders from the alpha, but everyone else is beneath me in rank, well except for the —”

“Logan!”

Logan chuckled. “Sorry, I guess I got carried away.”

“You think?”

“Let’s just say I’m second in charge. My clan answers to our alpha and then to me. In return, I am responsible for them. I keep them safe, fight for them.”

Love inhaled suddenly. “Those blood drops on your arm.”

Logan nodded. "They stand for the shifters I've killed while protecting my clan. You have to understand, Love, I don't like killing people, but I will do whatever I need to do to ensure my clan's safety, even kill."

Love walked over and sat down next to Logan, pushing his hand through his hair. "Fuck, Logan, this shifter stuff is pretty scary shit. How do you live with it day in and day out?"

"It has its upsides."

"Like what?" Love snickered. "An addiction to puppy chow? Doggy bones?"

"No, but peanut butter is an aphrodisiac for wolf shifters, strangely enough."

"Great, I'll remember to put some in your stocking at Christmas."

Logan chuckled. "Just remember, Love, small quantities or you won't be sitting down comfortably for a week."

"Yeah, yeah, get back to the upside to being in a clan."

Love's face flushed when Logan arched an eyebrow at him. "You don't think a frisky wolf shifter with an attraction only for you is an upside?"

Love swallowed. "Only for me?"

"That's part of the whole mating thing, Love. We've bonded, and I've claimed you as my mate. That means I won't ever look at another person, human or shifter, for my sexual needs. You'll have my full attention until the day we die."

"That doesn't sound so bad." It actually sounded pretty fabulous to Love. He couldn't think of anything he would like more than to have Logan's full attention. The dire look on Logan's face said he thought otherwise.

"It also means that me and my wolf feel threatened by anyone that touches you, stands too close to you, and in some cases, looks at you cross-eyed. And we will protect what is ours because you are our mate, Love, the mate of a beta wolf."

Chapter 8

Logan left Love sleeping on the couch. He knew his mate needed some rest after the eventful time he had during the last twenty-four hours, hell, the last twelve hours. His life had been turned upside down. Love had to be confused and exhausted. He'd certainly fallen to sleep fast enough once Logan got him settled on the couch.

Logan walked into the kitchen and skidded to a stop, his eyes widening in surprise to find his brother lip locked with Love's friend, Drea. He waited for a moment for the two men to acknowledge his presence, but when they didn't, he cleared his throat.

Reed and Drea jumped apart, their faces filling with color. Reed chuckled nervously. Drea wiped his lips and glanced over at Reed then quickly away. He looked anywhere but at Logan or Reed.

"Hey, Logan," Reed finally said when the silence in the room became overwhelming.

"Reed."

Logan pressed his lips together to keep from laughing outright when Reed casually stepped between him and Drea. His brother was protecting the man. An odd thought suddenly entered Logan's head and made him smile. He needed to test out a theory.

"I didn't have much time to meet you properly, Drea," Logan said as he held out his hand. "My name is Logan Stone."

Drea started to step around Reed. Logan smirked when Reed's eyes darkened and a low growl emanated from him. Logan wasn't stupid, though. He quickly stepped back and dropped his hand back down to his side.

Logan tilted his head slightly and regarded his brother until Reed dropped his eyes. No matter what was going on, he was still the beta, and Reed owed him his deference. His wolf demanded it as a beta of the clan.

“Asher and I will expect a proper introduction at the next moon festival, Reed.”

“Yes, Logan.”

“Make sure he is prepared.”

Reed’s head tilted up, a small smile coming across his lips. “I’ll make sure of it, Logan.”

Logan knew he had guessed correctly. Drea was the man his brother had been waiting for all of these years. Reed must be ecstatic. Logan was happy for him. He reached over and patted his brother’s shoulder.

“I’m happy for you, brother.”

Reed cast a quick glance over his shoulder. Logan looked over just in time to see Drea’s face flush before Reed turned back to him. Reed was grinning. “Thank you, Logan.”

Logan grinned back then remembered what he had come into the kitchen for. “I’m going to take Love back to my place. We still have some talking to do, and I want to introduce him around. Why don’t you and Matt come to dinner tonight and bring Drea. I’m sure Love will feel more comfortable if he sees some friendly faces.”

“We’ll be sure to be there.”

Logan nodded and grabbed Love’s backpack. He heard Drea start questioning Reed before he even reached the doorway that led to the living room and knew his brother wouldn’t have an easy time of things. Drea didn’t seem like the easygoing type despite the blue hair.

It made sense considering Drea was friends with Love. Somehow, Logan knew his mate would never be friends with someone that wasn’t just as crazy as he was. Love needed people around him that swam in the same psychotic circles.

Logan was chuckling to himself by the time he walked into the living room. Love was still curled up asleep on the couch, just where Love left him. He looked adorable with his hand curled under his cheek and the couch throw pulled up to his chin.

Logan slid his hands under Love and lifted him up into his arms. Love whimpered for a moment then turned toward Logan, burrowing into his chest. He let out a soft sigh of contentment when he buried his face in Logan's neck.

Logan shook his head and carried Love toward the front door. He needed to get Love back to his place where he could start showing him what was required of the mate of a beta wolf. Once the clan learned of his mating, and that wouldn't take long, Love would be thrust into the role whether he wanted it or not.

He just hoped Love was ready for it. He knew he wasn't. He really had no idea what to do with Love other than keep him. Giving him up wasn't a possibility, not after they had bonded. Logan just had to decide what to do with him once he got him home.

Logan carried Love out of his brother's apartment and down the walkway toward his apartments. They were housed in the same building but on different sides of an E-shaped courtyard. The middle of the *E* was the cafeteria. The sides were living quarters.

Love whimpered a bit. Logan smiled and stroked his hand along Love's side until the man calmed. Maybe having Love around wouldn't be that bad. He was drop-dead gorgeous, yes, but he also made Logan smile. He couldn't remember the last time he had smiled so much, or argued so much.

Logan was the clan beta. Everyone deferred to him except Asher. Sometimes, it got a little aggravating. Love seemed to have no problem standing up to him. His being a wolf shifter seemed to have no impact on Love in the intimidation department. Love put his foot down and stood his ground.

It was as sexy as hell.

Logan dug his apartment keys out of his pocket. He started to open the door when a sudden blinding pain exploded in the back of his head. Logan cried out as his knees gave out, and he collapsed to the ground, Love rolling from his arms.

The pain in his head was so intense, Logan could barely see through the spots dancing before his eyes. He could feel wetness beneath his hands and knew his head was bleeding. The only thing Logan couldn't figure out was what happened.

Logan started to roll to his knees when something kicked his gut. Logan gasped as the air in his lungs blew out. He groaned and wrapped his arm around his stomach. Another blow landed on his back and side, then another and another.

Logan tried to calm himself and concentrate enough to call his wolf forth, but the continued abuse being handed out to him kept him from being able to string two thoughts together. Intense pain made it almost impossible to do anything.

Logan's vision began to dim, and he knew he was close to passing out. He tried to rouse himself when he heard someone cry out followed by laughter so wicked sounding that it made his blood run cold.

Logan felt the hard cobblestone of the courtyard dig into his cheek as he turned his head. His heart pounded with a fright he couldn't ever remember feeling as he watched two men drag Love away.

Love was screaming and crying out, reaching for him. Tears streamed down his pale white face. Logan grabbed what was left of his energy and rolled to his stomach. He started to push himself to his feet when he heard the laughter again.

"Not this time, alpha!" someone snickered.

Logan refused to say anything about being called an alpha when he was a beta. If whoever was attacking him thought he was the alpha of his clan, so be it. It might come in use at some point. It also might get him killed.

Logan heard a click then something struck him in the back. A split second later Logan's entire body stiffened and pain infused every cell, every nerve as 50,000 volts of electricity shot through him.

Logan panicked. He couldn't breathe, couldn't smell. He couldn't see anything but a red haze. He couldn't do anything but lay there as agony pulsed through his body. It seemed to go on forever.

Then, as suddenly as it had started, it stopped. Logan's body still throbbed with pain. His head felt like it was going to explode. He opened his eyes to look for Love. Instead of Love's frightened face, all Logan saw was a boot coming at him at an alarming rate. Logan tried to dodge the kick, twisting away, but he felt it land on the side of his head in a flood of pain.

Then Logan didn't feel anything.

* * * *

It was quiet, too quiet. Logan could hear water dripping somewhere. There was also a cold echo of wind blowing somewhere. Other than that, he couldn't hear anything. He opened his eyes a fraction and realized he was inside somewhere, not in the courtyard outside his apartment.

He could see a dark gray ceiling over his head, gray metal pipes running from one end to the other. The floor beneath him felt cold and damp. It was also hard like stone. It was a little rigid and rocky, not smooth like tile.

The smells emanating from the room told Logan something nearby had recently died. He could smell old dried blood and the scent of death, rotting flesh and decay. It almost made him gag. Only by swallowing several times was Logan able to settle his rolling stomach.

Logan tried to push the rancid scent away and concentrate on the other scents in the room. He could still smell blood, but it was fresher,

more recent. With the ache on the back and side of his head, Logan was pretty sure he knew where that came from.

Logan's heart pounded a little faster when he caught a whiff of Love's sweet scent, only, it was filled with fear. Logan couldn't stand to know Love was so afraid that his fear became an actual scent.

Logan opened his eyes. He groaned in pain as he pushed himself into a sitting position and glanced around the room. He was correct in his earlier assessment of the room. It was cold and damp and dank. It was a stone cell.

It was also dark. The only light in the room came through a small window on the door. It had steel bars on it. He wouldn't be escaping that way, and there didn't seem to be any other way out of the room except through the door.

Knowing he would need all of his strength to escape and find Love, Logan started taking stock of his current physical condition. He had a nasty bump on the back of his head, a large laceration on the side of his head, and several very bruised ribs. One might even be cracked.

Shifting would heal most of the wounds. Some would take a little longer and a few more shifts. Logan's only problem was that he didn't know who held him. Shifting in front of humans was strictly forbidden except in dire emergencies.

This situation fit that description perfectly, but Logan wanted to know where Love was before he shifted. If he shifted and was killed, he would never be able to help his mate. If he shifted too early, whoever had him could kill Love before Logan could save the man.

Either way, Logan was screwed.

And Love would be screwed, too, if Logan didn't figure out a way out of this mess. Logan climbed to his feet and stumbled over to the door. If he pressed his face flat against the door, he could see just a bit down the hallway on either side of him.

The walls were dark stone, but every few feet were more doors like the one keeping Logan prisoner in his cell. Logan grabbed the

bars in the small window and gave them a small pull. Damn, they were locked solid in place. So was the door.

Logan pressed his face to the bars as close as he could get it and sniffed the air. His nose wrinkled when a dank rancid smell filled his nostrils. He jumped back and covered his mouth as his stomach threatened to rebel.

Coyotes.

There wasn't another smell on earth like the scent of a coyote. It was like burnt soap, a putrid odor that could even be smelled by humans. To Logan, it was one of the worst smells he had ever encountered. It also sent panic racing through him.

Logan knew if he could smell them, then he and Love were in a shitload of trouble. Finding a way to escape just became even more important than it had been just moments ago. There were a lot worse things the coyotes could do to Love than kill him.

Coyotes were cowardly scavengers that preyed on those weaker than them rather than working for what they needed. They were treacherous and without mercy, stealing and killing anything and everything. They also liked to torture their victims before killing them.

Their behavior was one of the reasons coyotes were not allowed in the territories of most shifters. They couldn't be trusted. They backstabbed and betrayed everyone for their own good.

Logan loathed them. Being a beta meant he often had to keep things secret, but he always tried to be honorable in his dealings with others. He didn't kill unless he had to, and he never tortured people beforehand.

Of course, if one hair on Love's head was out of place, Logan might have to rethink that policy. It was his job to protect his clan and his mate. It didn't seem like he was doing a very good job up until this point.

First he mated Love without his permission. Then he'd scared his mate so much that the man ran from him. And now Love had been

kidnapped by coyotes. With his track record to date, Love was going to hate him for sure.

Logan suddenly heard someone walking. He hurried to the corner and crouched down, trying to make himself as small as possible. As tense as he was, he couldn't stop his claws from extending and his teeth dropping down.

Whoever was coming stopped several feet from Logan's door. He heard another door open then Love's cries filled the air. Logan growled and raced to the small window. He pressed his face against the hard surface and tried to look down the hallway for his mate.

"Love!" he shouted.

"Logan!" Love shouted back.

Logan heard a sharp bark of laughter then the sounds of flesh hitting flesh filled the air. Logan growled when Love cried out. He was just barely able to hold onto his control. His wolf wanted out. It wanted revenge for the hurt Love was experiencing. It wanted their mate.

"Love!" Logan shouted again.

A gleeful looking face suddenly appeared in front of the small window. The man smiled, his sharp canines showing through his lips. "Hello, alpha."

"Mick Red," Logan sneered. "I should have known you were a coyote by the rotten, putrid smell alone. I'm surprised no one at the festival smelled it."

Mick tossed back his head and laughed. It was a cold, menacing sound that sent a chill down Logan's spine. "It's one of the benefits of having a wolf shifter for a mother. I can mask my scent."

"Your father raped her, did he?" Logan knew it had to be true. It was the only way a coyote could ever mate with a wolf. It would be the only way a coyote could mate with anyone as far as Logan was concerned. They were cowardly, filthy creatures.

Mick's face reddened and he growled. "My father is a great man, a king."

“And yet he had to rape your mother to get a child off her,” Logan said. “What a great king. I’m sure you’re proud.”

Mick snarled and slammed his fist into the door.

“Hit a sore spot, did I?”

Logan knew he was playing with fire, but he would do anything he had to do to keep Mick’s attention off of Love. Making Mick angry at him would ensure that whatever torture was coming came in his direction.

Logan’s worse fears came to life before his eyes when Mick suddenly smiled and reached his hand out of Logan’s line of sight. A moment later, Love’s face appeared. Mick held him by a leash attached to a collar around Love’s neck.

“Logan,” Love whimpered. His eyes looked wild. Logan could see pure terror growing in their blue depths with each rapid breath Love breathed. “What’s going on? Who are these men?”

“Coyote shifters, Love.”

Logan could see Love’s surprise even through the fear in his eyes. “There are coyote shifters?”

“There are all sorts of shifters, Love.” Logan smiled to reassure his mate, and maybe himself. “I’ll tell you all about them when we get home.”

“Okay.”

“Love!” Logan roared when Mick pulled on the leash around Love’s neck and his mate was jerked away from the small window.

Mick laughed harshly and stepped closer. “Why lie to the little human, alpha? Do you really think you are ever going to see your home again? Do you honestly think either of you will see the sun rise in the morning? You’ll never see anything except these stone walls.”

Logan heard Love whimper, but he needed to concentrate on the threat in front of him more than he needed to comfort his mate. Logan grinned, trying to seem casual and unworried about the dangerous situation he and Love were in.

“Oh, we’ll see the sun rise in the morning, Mick.” Logan smirked. “We’ll see it rise over your cold, dead body.”

Logan realized instantly he probably shouldn’t have provoked Mick quite so much when the man’s face flushed red and he growled. Love cried out as Mick yanked him forward. His cry turned to a deep gagging noise when Mick licked the side of his face.

Logan snarled and gripped the bars tighter. He knew Mick was baiting him. The man enjoyed torture whether mental or physical. He’d torture Love and make Logan watch just for the fun of it. As it was, Logan could just stand there as Mick started touching his mate. He felt totally helpless.

“Oh.” Mick chuckled as he pulled on Love’s leash. “But there’s so much time for me to play with your little pretty before the sun rises. Whatever shall we do?”

“You’d better not touch him, Mick!”

“Oh, but I plan to do so much more than touch him, alpha. Love and I are going to get better acquainted while you sit in your cell and rot, wondering what I’m doing to him.” Mick sneered. “I am the heir to my father’s throne. Love is going to pay for denying me.”

“Mick!” Logan growled and slammed his hands against the door. “I will kill you for this.”

Mick roared with laughter. “My father said wolves were weak when you took their mates away from them. I didn’t believe him until now. Human mates are even worse. They can’t even protect themselves, much less their mates.” Mick laughed harshly. “My father has an obsession for humans. He likes to torture them for weeks before killing them, the longer the better. I wonder what he will say when I bring this little toy home to him?”

“Love!” Logan roared as Mick yanked Love away from the window. He banged his hands against the door. “Mick, if you hurt him, I swear you will never see another sunrise.”

“I’ll come back for you when I’m done with your little human.”

Laughter filled the hallway then slowly faded away. A moment later, a door slammed shut. Logan's heart pounded frantically when he could no longer see his mate. He pounded on the door over and over again until his hands throbbed. He screamed for Love until his throat grew sore and his voice started to fade.

Tears sprang to Logan's eyes when he heard nothing but the sound of his own breathing and water dripping somewhere. It was eerily silent. Logan's dread began to grow as he started to imagine what Mick was doing to his sweet mate.

Love might be a bit flirtatious, but Logan knew he wasn't fast and easy with his affections. Whatever evil and twisted thing Mick came up with to torture Love with would be horrific and possibly damage the man for life.

And Logan was helpless to stop it.

Logan gave in to the rage flowing through his body and shifted. The moment all four paws hit the ground, he started throwing himself against the door with his body, trying to break through with his weight.

He could hear it creak, but it didn't give way. Logan lunged over and over again. His body began to ache with each impact. He ignored the pain and continued to throw himself against the door, the thoughts of the horrors Love might be experiencing spurring him on.

As Logan moved back to the far side of the room and readied himself to run at the door again, it suddenly swung open. The threatening growl that started to build in Logan's throat slowly faded away when he saw Love standing in the doorway.

It renewed itself in a deep cry of anguish as he took in Love's naked body covered in blood, a sharp knife held securely in his hand. Love's eyes seemed vacant, haunted, until they landed on Logan.

"Can we go home now?" Love whispered. "I want to go home, Logan."

Logan lunged, shifting to human form in mid jump. He wrapped his arms around Love the moment he reached him, pulling the man's

smaller body as close as he could get it. Love shuddered and burrowed closer.

Logan could feel him shaking, feel the fear pouring out of Love. He desperately wanted to comfort his mate, but the stench of blood was so strong it almost overrode Love's fear. Logan pulled back from Love enough to look down at his naked body.

"Are you hurt, baby?"

Love's hand trembled as he reached for the top of his head. "I lost my ears."

Logan frowned. Love seemed totally disconnected with what was going on. He could only imagine what his mate might have suffered at Mick's hands, and it was the worst case scenario. He wanted to howl with grief, but Love's welfare took precedence.

"It's okay, baby, we'll get you some more ears."

"And some lollipops?"

"And some lollipops."

Logan still didn't understand Love's fascination with having a fake, furry set of ears, but just knowing one was coming seemed to make the man happier. Love sighed deeply and burrowed back into Logan's arms.

"Come on, baby, we need to get out of here." Logan led Love toward the door. He had no idea which way was out, but he'd search every direction until he found it. He just needed to know which areas to avoid.

"Love, where's Mick?"

Love pointed down the hallway without lifting his face away from Logan's chest. Logan could only guess which door it was by the smell. As he walked past it, Logan glanced inside. He felt the blood drain from his face as he took in the blood splattered room. Mick's dead body lay on the floor in the middle of it.

A cold black silence surrounded them. Logan felt like his breath had been cut off. He glanced back down at Love and the blood covering his naked body. He didn't want to ask, but he had to know.

“Love, did Mick touch you?”

Love shook his head rapidly, almost too much so.

“Love, baby, look at me,” Logan said as softly as he could. He gently lifted Love’s chin so he could look into his mate’s eyes. “No matter what you tell me, I will still want you, Love. You’re my mate. That means forever.”

“He...he said...he wanted...” Love shook his head. “But you said no one could touch me without your permission and...and...”

“Ssshh, baby,” Logan said as he pressed Love’s face back into his chest. “I did say that, Love.”

“I...I...I killed him.”

Logan’s mouth dropped open in shock. He knew Mick was dead. Both he and Love were covered in blood, and Love had a knife in his hand that he still refused to let go of, but somehow he’d never connected the dots. Love had killed a shifter to protect himself.

“You had no choice, Love. He was going to hurt you.”

Logan was confused when Love shook his head.

“No.” Love pushed away from Logan. He looked defeated, broken. Tears started falling down his face. “I mean, yes, he was going to hurt me, but that’s not why I killed him.”

“It’s not?” Logan asked, half in anticipation, half in dread.

“He kept telling me what he was going to do to you after he was done with me.” Love twisted his hands together. His eyes started to dart around the hallway then landed on Logan. “I couldn’t let him do that. You know that. I couldn’t let him hurt you.”

In his heart, Logan had always been afraid that Love would never accept their mating. Yet, Love had just killed someone to protect him. If that didn’t prove the man was accepting, Logan didn’t know what did.

“Okay, Love, you did real good.” Logan took Love back into his arms and started ushering him down the hall. He wished he had something to cover them both up with, but stopping to look for

clothes wasn't an option. They needed to escape. They could cover up later.

“Are we going home now?”

“Yep, just as soon as we find a way out of this place.”

Chapter 9

Love couldn't stop shivering. He felt cold all the way down to his bones, and he didn't think it had anything to do with running naked through the woods with Logan. He couldn't seem to get the picture out of his eyes of the light dying in Mick's eyes as Love stabbed him.

He'd never killed anyone before. He prayed he would never have to again. It was horrifying. Mick had seemed so surprised, like he never expected Love to fight back. Love didn't understand how he couldn't know. He wasn't about to let anyone hurt Logan.

He didn't exactly want Mick to hurt him either, but he had been prepared to fight the man off as hard as he could. It wasn't until Mick started going on about what he was going to do to Logan that Love had lost it.

Love was pretty sure it was Mick's statement about skinning Logan alive that threw him over the edge. Before that, Love had simply been fighting back by hitting and kicking Mick whenever he could. Then Mick threatened Logan.

Love didn't exactly remember grabbing the knife and stabbing Mick. He wasn't even sure where he found it. He just remembered the surprise on the man's face as he slowly fell to the floor. His mind felt hazy as he walked away from Mick and went back to find Logan.

He still felt kind of hazy like everything that had happened was a dream, or a nightmare. The only thing that seemed to be real and solid to him was Logan. Love tightened his grip on Logan's hand. He just knew if he held onto Logan that everything would be okay. That was the only thing he did know.

Everything else was chaotic.

Logan stopped suddenly. Love almost ran into him before he could stop. He glanced up at Logan in confusion until the man pointed several yards away. "I'm going to go right over there and grab us something to wear. You wait here."

Love nodded and watched Logan sneak across the way and into someone's backyard. He chuckled then quickly slapped his hand over his mouth when Logan held a small mini skirt up to his naked hips and shook his head. Logan tossed them back over the laundry line and grabbed for something else.

A few minutes later, Logan came back across the yard and handed Love a pair of pajama bottoms. They were hot pink with little black cartoon puppies all over them. Love adored them even if they did fall past his feet.

"These match my ears," Love said as he reached up to check the placement of the fuzzy black ears on his head. His face fell when he suddenly remembered that he had lost his ears somewhere during the night. "Oh, well, I guess they would, but..."

"Love, I told you I would get you some new ears and lollipops as soon as we got home, remember?" Logan asked. "They will look great with your pajama bottoms."

"Yeah." Love glanced up at Logan, hoping he didn't look as desperate as he felt. "You did say that."

"I will, baby." Logan leaned down and placed a gentle kiss on Love's lips. "I promise, just the minute we get home."

Love bit the edge of his lip. "It doesn't bother you? I mean, I know it's kind of weird and a lot of people think—"

"Love," Logan said as he pressed his finger over Love's lips, "I adore everything about you, even the ears. If you're more comfortable wearing them, then wear them. It doesn't bother me in the least."

"Yeah?"

Love was a little hesitant about believing Logan. With the exception of his friends, who understood he was nuttier than a bed

bug, no one truly understood how much more comfortable Love was facing the world when wearing his ears.

Logan's hand curved around the side of Love's face. "I swear to you, Love. It doesn't bother me at all. And if anyone gives you any trouble about it, you send them to me. I'll set them straight."

Love buried his face against Logan's shoulder. He felt so much safer being near the larger man. After everything he learned over the last two days, Love knew the world wasn't as black and white as he originally thought.

Logan was like a rock amidst the storm brewing around him, destroying the rose-colored glasses he'd been looking through all of his life. He didn't want to live in this harsh reality, but he didn't want to live in a world without Logan either.

"Love, can I have the knife?"

Love jerked back, suddenly remembering that he still held the knife in his hand. He held his hand out, but his fingers wouldn't uncurl around the handle. They wouldn't move. Love whimpered.

"Sshhh, it's okay, Love," Logan said, "you don't have to give up the knife if you don't want to."

"I can't...I can't let go," Love whispered as he stared down at his hand. His throat ached with despair. "My fingers won't move."

"Do you want me to help, or do you want to keep the knife?"

Love bit his lip until it throbbed like his pulse. The knife in his hand was still covered in blood, much like his body. Every time he looked at it, he remembered Mick's threats against Logan and relived the shocked look in the man's eyes as he died.

Love quickly shook his head. "I don't want it."

"Okay." Logan slowly reached for the handle of the knife with one hand, Love's fingers with the other. "Then I'll take it and hold onto it for you. How does that sound?"

Love understood that Logan was talking to him like he was deranged, and he wondered if he was just a bit. "I didn't mean to kill him, Logan."

"I know, baby. You were just protecting us. No one will blame you."

"I just—"

Love heard a sudden noise behind him. He tensed, his heart pounding wildly in his chest, then he swung around with a deep growl. His grip tightened on the handle of the knife. He didn't care how much blood was on the knife. He'd use it again and again if it meant protecting Logan from harm.

Two men he'd never met stood there, their eyes on the bloody knife in Love's hand. They looked like they wanted to pounce on Love but were afraid of what he might do. Love backed up, putting himself between the two strangers and Logan.

"Mine!" Love waved the knife back and forth in front of him, giving the men a silent warning that he wasn't afraid to use the weapon. "Go away."

"Love." Logan's voice was very calm and soothing. "It's okay, baby, I know these men. They are not here to harm us. They are here to help us."

Love slowly lowered the knife enough that he hoped he didn't look too threatening, just a little. He didn't want them to think he didn't mean business. The first wrong move they made and Love would rip them apart.

"This is Cael and Garen, Love. They are guardians of my clan."

Love nodded like he understood. He didn't. He didn't have a clue what a guardian did. But he trusted Logan. If the man said Cael and Garen worked for him, he'd accept that. He still tensed when Logan reached past him.

"Give me your shirt, Cael."

Without a word or protest, one of the men pulled his black shirt off and handed it over. Logan started to place it around Love's shoulders then frowned. Love pressed his lips together to keep from smirking as Logan rubbed the shirt all over his chest then wrapped it around him.

“Scent?” Love asked.

Logan’s face flushed as he nodded. “You don’t need to smell like anyone but me.”

Love looked down at his body. It had been long enough that the blood covering him had dried and started to itch. “Then I definitely think a bath is in order.” Love looked up at Logan. “I stink of death.”

Surprisingly, Logan chuckled and drew Love closer. “You smell of victory and life. You smell perfect.”

“Fine, I smell perfect.” Love rolled his eyes. “I’d still prefer a bath.”

“Ask and you shall receive, my sexy little pup.”

Love clutched the knife to his chest as Logan wrapped an arm around his shoulders then turned them both to face the two guardians. He was a little unnerved by the curiosity he could see in their faces as they looked at him. He wished he could growl and hiss like Logan.

“This is Love,” Logan began. “He is mine, and he wants a bath.”

“I’ll see to it personally, beta,” one of the men said. The man bowed slightly in Love’s direction.

“Beta?” Love whispered, leaning close to Logan.

“It’s a title, Love, like alpha of my clan. Remember? I told you about it earlier. Beta means I am the leader of my clan under our alpha. I am his right-hand man, like the vice president.”

“Alpha?”

“A man named Asher Stone.”

“Are you related to him, too?”

“I am of his clan. That makes us related.” Logan smiled. “Asher and his mate are away at the moment, but you’ll meet them when they get back. You’ll like the alpha-mate, Darren. He’s human like you. Asher is a little scarier.”

Love blinked. “Seriously?” He couldn’t think of anyone Logan would be afraid of. The man was so damn intimidating that Love couldn’t figure out why everyone didn’t quake in their boots when he walked by.

Logan grinned. "Yep."

"Okay, so now I understand clan politics." Love gestured to the two guardians. "What do they do?"

"Keep you safe."

"Me?"

Logan nodded. "Cáel and Garen's sole responsibility in the clan is to keep you and me safe. They are guardians. They protect the inner circle, which includes you, me, the alpha, and the alpha-mate. As such, you are never to go anywhere without them or me."

"A babysitter?" Love scoffed.

"A protector, Love, nothing more."

"Well..." Love crossed his arms over his chest and turned to look at the two men. "If they are supposed to protect us, then how in the hell did Mick get his hands on us?"

Cáel and Garen fidgeted under Love's fierce glare. Their eyes were downcast, their shoulders slumped as if they were getting a talking down. Love wanted to growl at them. If they were supposed to be protecting Logan, then they failed miserably.

"Uh, Love?"

"What?" Love snapped as he swung around to look at Logan.

"They were out looking for you."

"Oh." Love felt his face flush. He supposed that Cáel and Garen had a good excuse if they were out looking for him. Still...Love turned to look at the two men before turning toward Logan again. "Do I have any say in things since we're mated?"

"Of course, Love. You are my mate. That gives you almost as much power as me, almost. I still overrule you. Asher, as the alpha, and his mate overrule both of us, though."

"Fine." Love turned back to the two guardians and held out his knife. "In the future, if you fail to protect Logan, I will kill you just like I killed Mick Red, and don't think I can't." Love waved the bloody knife at them. "This isn't my blood on this knife, but it will be yours if Logan comes to danger again."

“Love!”

Love refused to take his eyes off of C  el or Garen as his words sank in, not even when Logan grabbed him by his shoulder. He waved his free hand at them. “They need to understand the danger you were in. If they are supposed to protect you, then they damn well better do it.”

“Love, look at me.”

Love huffed heavily. He lowered the knife as he turned to look at Logan. “What?”

“Their first priority will always be you.”

“Logan, that’s—”

“Love, I mean it. You mean more to me than anything, even my own life. Without you, I am nothing. If something were to happen to you, I think I’d throw myself off the nearest cliff. Keeping you safe is my number one priority.” Logan pointed past Love to C  el and Garen. “It’s their number one priority.”

“Logan.”

Logan’s eyebrow arched. “No arguments, Love. On this, I will not bend.”

Love rolled his eyes. He knew he wasn’t going to change Logan’s mind anytime soon. He’d just have to make sure that he kept Logan safe from now on. “Fine, but after me is you, deal?”

“Deal.” Logan grinned then looked beyond Love once again. “Is that clear enough for you two? My mate has spoken.”

“Yes, beta,” both men replied. “Yes, beta-mate.”

Love frowned. “What is a beta-mate?”

“It’s a formal thing, Love. It’s only acceptable for someone in the clan to address us by our birth names. Anyone else calling us by our names would be an insult and should be immediately dealt with. So, if anyone outside of the clan calls you anything but beta-mate, you let me know.”

Love nodded. He was still confused. “There’s a lot of rules with being mated to you, isn’t there?”

“There are, but I have no doubt you’ll learn them in time.”

Love leaned closer to Logan so he could whisper in his ear. “Will they take my ears from me?”

“No, Love, they won’t.”

Love smiled despite the worry growing in him. He didn’t know a thing about being the mate to a man of importance. He could barely take care of himself. Love wished he had a lollipop.

“Cáel, give me your phone.” The man instantly handed over his cell phone. Love watched with curiosity when a grin began to spread over Logan’s lips as he dialed a number then put the phone up to his ear.

“Who are you calling?” Love whispered.

Logan held up his hand. “Reed, it’s me. Yes, Love and I are safe. Cáel and Garen are here with us now. We’ll be home soon, but I need you to do something for me.”

Love started to feel anxious but not in a bad way. He held his breath.

“I need you to find me a set of fuzzy wolf ears and a handful of lollipops for Love.” Logan paused for a moment and glanced over at Love. “What flavor, Love?”

Love licked his lips, already anticipating the lollipops. “Cherry?”

Logan smiled. “Cherry, as many as you can find. No, Matt will know what to look for.” Logan nodded a couple of times. “Okay, then we’ll see you back at the house.” He snapped the phone closed and handed it back to Cáel.

“Your ears and lollipops are on the way, Love.”

“Thank you, thank you, thank you,” Love cried out in relief and jumped into Logan’s arms. He was thrilled down to his toes. It almost made the day he was having worth it.

Love felt the tension between his shoulder blades start to ease when Logan started purring. A feeling of calm came over him like the sound of Logan’s chest rumbling made everything better. It meant he was safe.

“You can keep the ears and lollipops,” Love whispered against Logan’s chest. “Just keep purring”

Logan chuckled. Love felt the man’s large hand brush the back of his head in a gentle caress. “You don’t have to choose, baby. You can have both.”

“Beta,” one of the men behind Love said, “I hesitate to interrupt, but we are too exposed out here. We must get you and your mate to safety.”

Love felt Logan tense, and he knew the man was worried for him. He would have preferred to stay exactly where he was, but he wasn’t dumb. After what happened today, Love knew they needed to get to safety.

Love leaned his head back and looked up into Logan’s worried face. “He’s right. I only killed Mick. He had others working with him. We need to get to safety before they find us.”

Logan’s thumb stroked down the side of Love’s face. “Are you sure, baby?”

“Are you serious?” Love laughed harshly. “I’m pretty damn sure I’ve lost what little of my mind that I had. I’m not sure about anything else except that we’re still in danger. If going back to your place means we stay safe, so be it.”

“Our place, Love.”

Love rolled his eyes. “We’ll discuss it.”

Chapter 10

Logan worried when Love's head rolled against his arm. The man was out cold, which was weird considering how worked up he had been an hour ago. They had climbed into the car Cael and Garen brought, and Love crawled right into his arms, curling close and closing his eyes.

Logan didn't want him anywhere else. He didn't even complain about Love not wearing a seatbelt. Holding Love in his arms seemed more important at the moment. Logan just needed to have his mate close, to breathe in his sweet scent and know Love was alive. He needed to feel Love's heart beat next to his.

"We're almost there," Cael said from the driver's seat.

"Good," Logan replied, forcing himself to look away from Love's bruised face. "I want the compound locked down and double the guards. I also want the entire place searched, every building, every home. If anyone protests, they can talk to me."

"Yes, beta."

"We were taken from inside the compound, Cael, right outside my front door. And Mick Red was here before at the moon festival. He knew the layout, and he knew where I lived. He knew about Love."

"Is his name really Love?" Garen asked.

"Yes, it is." Logan arched an eyebrow. "Do you have a problem with that?"

"No, no, just asking. I wasn't sure if it was proper to call him that without losing my head."

Logan chuckled, suddenly seeing the amusement in the situation. "Yes, his name is Love Star, so named by his mother, Moon Star."

Logan clutched Love tightly when the car suddenly swerved. “Watch what you’re doing!”

“Did you say Moon Star?”

Logan met Cáel’s wide eyes in the rearview mirror. “Yes, why?”

Cáel shook his head, his eyes going back to the road.

“Cáel, if you know something that concerns Love, I need to hear it.”

“I’m probably wrong, Logan.”

Love whimpered and pressed his face closer to Logan’s chest when his heart began to beat faster. Logan stroked the silky black hair back from Love’s face and tried to calm himself enough to purr for his mate. Once he did, Love calmed down and went back to sleep.

Logan looked up and caught Cáel’s eyes in the rearview mirror again. “Tell me,” he said softly. He breathed in and out slowly, keeping control of his temper.

“Several years ago, before I joined this clan, I met a woman at another gathering. Her name was Moon Star. We spent the weekend together and then I got called home. I never saw her again.”

Logan mulled Cáel’s words around in his head, trying to see a possible connection to his mate. Granted, Moon Star was an odd name and probably not very common. That didn’t mean they were the same person. She could have been anyone.

“It was a clan gathering?” Logan asked.

Cáel nodded.

“Did she know about us?”

“She knew,” Cáel replied.

Logan drew in a relieved sigh. “Then it couldn’t be the same woman. Love knew nothing about us before I told him. If this woman was his mother, then it would stand to reason she would have said something to him.”

“Unless she decided to keep it a secret,” Garen said from the passenger seat. “It’s possible.”

Logan looked at C  el again. "How long ago did you meet this woman?"

"How old is Love?"

Logan glanced down at Love and wondered the same thing. C  el was several years older than Logan, but that didn't matter much in the clan. Wolf shifters tended to live longer than humans.

The mere thought made Logan's heart ache. Now that he had found Love, he didn't want to spend a moment without him. He knew being mated would extend Love's life span, but there was no guarantee it would be as long as Logan's.

"He goes to school with Matt. I suspect that they are about the same age."

"I met Moon a little over twenty-five years ago."

Logan swallowed hard. As Logan's eyes met C  el's in the mirror, he felt a shock run through him. "Do you think...?"

"Anything is possible, Logan."

Logan took a deep breath punctuated with several even gasps as the implications of C  el's words filled him. If what C  el said was true and he had met Moon several years ago, the possibility of his being Love's father was pretty high. Love could be a half breed.

Part of Logan was elated at the possibility. Love would be part wolf. He might have some of the abilities of a wolf-like scent and hearing, maybe even the ability to grow claws. Love might be able to have ears and a tail.

Another part of Logan grieved at the possibility. Half breeds were not widely accepted in the clan, hell, in any clan. The animosity and hatred that would be sent in Love's direction would destroy the sweet nature of the man's personality.

The anguish and confusion Love would go through made Logan's heart ache. He wasn't even sure if it was allowed for Love to be his beta-mate if he was a half breed. Most were ostracized, banished from their clans.

“No one is to know of this, do you understand? If word were to get out, they could take Love from us.”

“Someone is bound to find out at some point, Logan,” Garen said as he turned in his seat to look back at him. “Wouldn’t it be better to be truthful right from the start, show a united front of support?”

Logan opened his mouth to argue, but C  l interrupted him.

“I agree with Garen. If we show a united front, if we support Love and show everyone that we refuse to give him up, what can they do to us? You’ve already mated him, Logan. You’re already bonded. That can’t be undone.”

Logan felt proud of the way his men stood by his side. He took a moment to gain control when he felt tears prickle the corner of his eyes. “I thank you for your support, and Love would, too, if he wasn’t passed out.”

“Is he doing okay?”

Logan nodded. He could see C  l looking through the rearview mirror trying to get a good look at Love. He frowned. “Keep your eyes on the road or he’s not going to be okay.”

“I’m just worried about him. He seems pretty out of it.”

“Of course you’re worried, C  l.” Garen chuckled. “You’re his guardian, just like I am. It’s ingrained in us to care for the beta-mate.”

Logan smiled at the glare C  l sent Garen. He knew it was more than the instincts of a guardian that made C  l feel concerned about Love. If there were the least little bit of a possibility that Love could be his son, C  l would be ecstatic.

C  l, being several years older than Logan, had been dreaming of finding his mate and having a family since Logan first met the man. If Love were his son, then half of his dream would be realized. The other half, well...

“C  l, Moon wasn’t your mate, was she?”

“She was a wonderful woman, and I would have been very happy if she had been but, no, Moon was not my mate.” C  l shook his head. “That might be why I never felt the strong need to track her

down after we lost contact. It would have been unfair of me to keep her to myself when her mate could be waiting out there for her.”

“Not to mention your mate.” Garen chuckled.

“There is that.”

“Did you know Reed’s mate is a man?” Logan grinned when Garen’s mouth dropped open. There was some amusement in the shocked look on the man’s face.

“Reed’s mate is a man?” Garen asked. “I thought Barbara was Reed’s mate.”

“Nope, seems Reed has always known it, too. He just married Barbara because she showed up pregnant and he wasn’t going to give up his child, even if it meant taking her, too. He wasn’t in the least bit upset when she took off.”

“So, if Barbara wasn’t Reed’s mate,” Cáel asked, “who is?”

“Believe it or not, a friend of Love’s named Drea.”

“Drea Rutledge?” Carl asked. “Skinny little guy with blue hair?”

Logan nodded.

Cáel started laughing.

“What?” Logan asked.

“Reed is going to have a hell of a time keeping Drea under control. The kid is a regular firecracker. I spent most of last night keeping his ass out of trouble. It was like every unmated wolf in the clan was trying to hump him.”

Logan blinked. “Are you serious?”

“As a heart attack, man.” Cáel laughed again. “I even thought about giving the guy a go myself. I may be a bit older, but he’s damn hot.”

“He has blue hair, Cáel.”

“And?”

Logan burst out laughing as he shook his head. He hadn’t gotten that good of a look at Drea when the man arrived. He had been too focused on keeping him away from Love. Still, what he had seen didn’t do a damn thing for him. Love was much sexier.

And he didn't have blue hair.

"To each his own I suppose, but Reed will have your head if you make a move toward Drea now. He could barely stand for me to be in the same room with Drea, and I'm his brother. No telling what he would do if you looked at Drea cross-eyed."

"Oh, hell, I'm gonna need popcorn for this show." Garen started laughing.

Logan enjoyed the man's amusement. He imagined it would be just the sort of show Garen envisioned. Reed had been waiting a lot of years for his mate, and if the blue hair and arguing was anything to go by, he might be waiting a little longer. Logan didn't think Drea was going to let Reed be the top dog all the time.

"Just remember that he's Reed's mate, okay? He deserves the same protection that Love does." Logan pointed at both of his guardians. "And that includes protecting him from the two of you."

"Ah, we know that, Logan," Cáel said. "We would never poach another shifter's mate. You just have to remember I've met Drea. Like I said, Reed is going to have one hell of a time keeping him under control. The man has no filter on his mouth."

"Must be why he's such good friends with Love," Logan said as he looked down at his sleeping mate. "They both seem to have trouble written all over them."

Love's facial bones were delicately curved, his mouth full and pouty. His features were so perfect, so symmetrical, that any more delicacy would have made Love too beautiful to be a man. In a word, Love's beauty was exquisite and fragile all at the same time.

It was just a plus that Love's mind worked in wonderfully wicked ways and he had an inner strength that rivaled Logan's. Logan had no doubt whatsoever that Love was going to give him a run for his money. It was something Logan eagerly looked forward to.

After almost losing him twice, once when Love ran in fear from him and again when Mick kidnapped them both, Logan didn't care if

Love argued with him, stood up to him, or generally drove him crazy. Each moment would be a blessing.

“We’re here, Logan.”

Logan looked up just as they passed through the front gates of the clan compound. He was glad to see guards manning the towers on either side of the large gate. Even more guards were patrolling the fences that encircled the entire two hundred thousand acre compound. What couldn’t be patrolled frequently was monitored by cameras and an infrared tracking system.

Asher Stone had invested a lot of money in providing a safe place for his clan when he bought the place several years ago. No expense had been spared. He wanted to insure that his clan had a safe place to raise their families.

A guest compound sat near the front gates, encircled by fencing that kept it separate from the rest of the main compound. Guests were not allowed past the gates into the area where the clan lived. It was strictly forbidden.

The main compound itself consisted of several residential apartment buildings and separate houses, a main hall with an infirmary, cafeteria, and schoolhouse. There was also a training facility, a motor pool, and guard barracks.

Behind the main compound was a river, mountain range, and large forest for the clan to run through that went for miles. Logan even had a hidden cave in the mountains that towered over the small clan compound. He hoped to be able to show it to Love one day.

“Don’t forget to double the guard and have a search done of the entire compound,” Logan reminded Cael and Garen. “I don’t know how Mick made it into the festival, but he had to know someone. He’s a coyote shifter, but he can mask his sent because his mother was a wolf.”

“A coyote?” Garen growled. “Nasty creatures.”

“Well, thanks to Love, Mick is dead, but his goons aren’t. Neither is his father from what I understand. Coyote or not, the man might

take exception to a human killing his son. He might try and take revenge on Love.”

“We’ll protect him with our lives, beta,” Cáel said.

“I have no doubt of that. You’ve never let me down before. I see no reason for that to change now.” Logan grimaced as he looked into Love’s slumbering features. “Just try and make it look like you’re not guarding him. Love seems to have an issue with it.”

“Logan,” Cáel said slowly, “I have to tell you, I don’t think Love has an issue with us guarding him. It seems to me that he’s more concerned with us protecting you.”

Logan smiled and reached up to stroke his hand down the side of Love’s face. Cáel was right. Love hadn’t balked about Cáel and Garen guarding him. His issue had been with them not protecting Logan as he felt they should.

“He’s amazing, huh?”

Cáel chuckled. “He is something all right.”

“He’s going to keep you on your toes,” Logan said.

“Yeah.” Cáel smirked. “I kind of got that when he threatened to gut us with a knife.”

Logan grinned. He couldn’t help it. Love was a fierce little thing that was just as likely to be blown over by a stiff wind as he was to be shorter than most everyone he knew. No one looking at the five-foot-six man would ever think he could fight anything.

And yet he did, saving Logan’s life and his own. Love was a mix of bravery and fear, wit and uncertainty. He was perfect. He would make a perfect beta-mate. Logan couldn’t have been more blessed with a mate if he had handpicked Love himself.

Now he just had to keep Love safe.

As soon as the car came to a stop, Logan opened the door. Cáel and Garen were both waiting beside the car when he scooted out, holding Love in his arms. Logan was in no way surprised when the two men flanked him as he carried Love toward his apartment.

Logan didn't even need to say anything. He stopped by the door and waited as Garen went inside and checked the place over. It took about ten minutes, as Garen was also checking for bugs, cameras, and any type of explosive device besides intruders.

"Cáel, I think we need to consider moving my apartment to the second floor next to my office. The gathering room can be converted into an apartment without too much hassle, and it's right next door. We can put a door in between the two rooms."

"The gathering room?"

Logan nodded. "It's obvious that a ground floor apartment is no longer safe, and I want Love as close as I can get him. If we convert the gathering room into something like a loft apartment, it should work."

"It will need some work, but I think it can be done."

"Good, please look into what it would take. I'll talk to Asher about it and then Love and I will go over some design plans. I want him to have what he needs here to make him happy." Logan smiled as he envisioned a huge bathtub for Love.

"What about the gathering room?" Cáel asked. "If you convert it into an apartment for you and Love, where is everyone going to meet? The place is kind of popular."

"We'll figure out something, maybe convert my old apartment into something for everyone. We could add some pool tables, a big television, a few couches. I'm sure we can come up with something to make everyone happy."

"Under the circumstances, you might want to think about having everyone on the ground floor move upstairs. It seems to me that the added security might be needed if coyotes are coming onto the property."

Logan blinked in surprise. He hadn't actually been thinking about anyone else's safety beyond Love's, but Cáel had a point. If someone could be a threat to Love, they could be a threat to everyone in the clan.

“That’s actually not a bad idea. I know we have several empty apartments both on the first and second floor. If we moved some nonresidential stuff downstairs and had the upstairs renovated, we could provide more safety for those that live in this building.”

“I’ll survey what we have and let you know what it would take to convert everything. I’m sure we can work something out.”

“Make sure there’s an indoor playroom on the second floor, though. Most parents bring their cubs out to the courtyard during the day. While they can still do that, they will need someplace on the residential floor for the cubs to play.”

“Good idea.” Cael laughed. “If you don’t provide something, you’re going to have cubs coming out of your ears.”

“I like ears,” Love murmured, rubbing the side of his face against Logan’s chest, “big black fuzzy ones. They match my hair.”

Logan pressed his lips together to keep from laughing as he stared down at Love, waiting for the man to go back to sleep. He could see Cael out of the corner of his eye, fighting his own laughter. Logan grinned over at the guardian. “He really does like ears.”

“So, it seems.”

“Reed should be showing up pretty soon with a new set of ears for Love.”

“And lollipops.” Cael grinned. “Cherry, if I remember correctly.”

Logan shrugged. “Whatever makes Love happy.”

Chapter 11

Love came awake slowly, but as he did, he noticed a distinct difference in the cold temperature of his front versus the hot temperature at his back. He also became aware of the fact that whatever was warming him from behind was very solid.

Love reached down and felt warm flesh on his hip. The tingle that shot up his arms when he touched the arm resting on his hip didn't scare him like it did last time. Instead, it made Love feel safe and contented.

He smiled as he reached back and pressed his hand against the muscled body behind him. "Logan," he murmured.

"Morning, Love." A shiver of delight inched down Love's spine when Logan nuzzled the back of his neck. "Did you sleep well, baby?"

It was hard for Love to answer when Logan's hands started running up and down his body. He arched his head back and groaned instead. Love was pretty sure Logan got the idea when he felt the man's hand wrap around his cock.

"Oh, yeah." This was definitely the way to wake up in the morning. Love stretched, pushing his hips forward. There was just something exciting about having big strong man behind him that aroused Love to a fever pitch.

Knowing that Logan was a wolf shifter and could kill him in the blink of an eye with the teeth he was slowly scraping across the back of Love's neck made it even more exciting. It was dangerous and made Love's toes curl.

So did the hands Logan stroked over his body. Logan's touch was exquisite. He seemed to know just where to touch Love to drive him to distraction. Love arched and pressed his body into Logan's hands then back again to feel the man's body behind him. He couldn't decide which felt better.

Love didn't want to choose. Instead, he curled his arm back around Logan's neck and pulled him closer. He moved his leg up and settled it over the top of Logan's thigh. Logan's chest rumbled. His hands tightened on Love for just a second.

A moment later, Love felt something long and hard move between his thighs. Love started to lower his leg and trap the silky shaft between his legs, but Logan grabbed his thigh and kept it where it was.

Love opened his mouth to protest until he heard a cap snap. A moment later, he felt Logan's slicked up fingers move down past his ball sac. Love's entire body stiffened as one of Logan's fingers pushed into his ass. The pleasure was electric and instantaneous and shot through Love's entire body like a rocket.

"Logan!"

The rumble coming from Logan's chest grew louder, and Love felt Logan's chest vibrate against his back. He loved it when Logan purred, but the sound of the man's desire was by far sexier.

Love started moaning.

"Now, who's purring?" Logan whispered into his ear.

"That's...that's a moan, not a purr."

Logan chuckled. "Sounds like a purr to me."

Love didn't care what Logan wanted to call it as long as he continued to do what he was doing. The single finger in his ass had become three and they were all moving in and out, driving Love crazy.

Logan's lips moved along the soft curve of Love's throat, sometimes licking, sometimes gently biting. Love ached to feel them

sink into his skin again. He remembered the last time, the pleasure that shot through his body. He wanted to experience that again.

“Bite me, Logan.” Love thought he might have crossed a line Logan didn’t want to cross when the man froze behind in. He tried to turn his head and look back but Logan wouldn’t let him.

“Do you trust me, Love?”

“Yes.” Love was a little surprised at his instantaneous response, but he realized he did trust Logan. He didn’t know how it had happened or even when it had happened, but he did trust Logan.

“I want you to close your eyes,” Logan said. “Don’t open them until I tell you to.”

“Logan, wha—”

“Please, Love.”

Love frowned at the gruffness he could hear in Logan’s voice but did as he asked, closing his eyes. His heart pounded a little faster at the silence that filled the room. The only thing he could hear was his and Logan’s heavy breathing, but at least he knew he wasn’t alone. Logan was just as aroused as he was.

“Keep your eyes closed, Love.”

Love nodded. He didn’t understand why Logan wanted him to keep his eyes closed, but if that’s what the man wanted, he’d do it. Especially if it meant Logan would continue loving on him the way he was.

Logan started to move, not just the fingers he had in Love’s ass, but his entire body. Love almost opened his eyes to see what the man was doing but thought better of it when Logan rolled him onto his stomach.

“Logan.”

Logan’s voice was thick and unsteady when he replied. “On your hands and knees, baby.”

Love climbed to his hands and knees. His arms and legs started shaking when he felt Logan crawl between his thighs. It had only

been hours, but it felt like years since he had been loved by Logan, claimed by him. He craved it more than his next breath.

“Logan,” Love groaned. He pushed his hips back against Logan, wiggling in invitation. He wanted to be claimed, taken, and fucked. Whatever it was called, he wanted it, and he wanted it now.

Love shuddered when Logan’s hand stroked down the middle of his back. He could feel the tips of Logan’s claws trail lightly along his skin with the barest of touches. He should have been screaming in fear, maybe even running for his life. He knew what those claws could do.

And yet, he ached to feel them move across the rest of his body. Love knew it was crazy, but he couldn’t prevent himself from arching up into the soft caress, silently begging for more.

“Oh, you like that, don’t you, baby?”

Love nodded rapidly, speaking beyond his current ability to do. Everything was beyond his current ability to do except kneel there on the bed and enjoy the intense pleasure Logan was giving him.

When Logan pulled his fingers away then started pushing into Love’s ass with his cock, Love’s arms gave up. He collapsed down on the bed and buried his face in the blanket. Maybe it had been too long. Love could swear Logan’s cock was bigger.

Once Logan was fully inside of him, he hunched down over Love’s smaller body. Love turned his head and opened his eyes. His swift inhale of breath coincided with Logan pulling most of the way out then pushing back into him. His sudden inhale didn’t come from what Logan was doing to him but rather the thick hair Love could see growing on Logan’s arms.

“Lo-Logan?”

Love lifted his head and started to look over his shoulder but Logan grabbed a handful of his hair and forced his head back around into the blankets. Love’s heart started pounding faster as uncertainty filled him.

“Don’t look at me!” Logan snapped.

“Logan!”

“Please, Love, don’t—”

Love pushed himself forward until he could pull away from Logan. He quickly flipped over onto his back then froze when he got a good look at the man hovering over the top of him. At least, he thought it was a man.

He looked to be both man and wolf. Logan’s body was still human but covered in a thick coating of blond fur. His eyes more prominent, and he had ears, furry, fuzzy, blond ears, growing out the top of his blond hair.

“Logan,” Love whispered. He was mesmerized by what he was seeing. Logan wasn’t a wolf, but he wasn’t a man either. He was both. When Logan dipped his head and looked away, Love leaned up and cupped his hands around his face. “Hey, what’s wrong?”

“I didn’t want you to see me like this.”

“Why not? It’s fucking hot!”

Logan’s mouth dropped open as he turned back.

Love blinked when he got a good look at the sharp teeth in Logan’s mouth. He pointed to them. “Those, not so much.”

Logan snapped his mouth closed.

“Did you bite me with those?”

“Yes?”

Love tilted his head to one side as he regarded Logan with amusement. Logan’s response sounded more like a question than a statement of fact. “Either you did or you didn’t.”

“If I say yes, are you going to leave?”

“No, but I would question why I don’t look like a chew toy.”

Love could swear Logan’s face flushed, but it was hard to tell through all the hair on his face, or was it fur? He reached up and rubbed his hand over it then gasped at the softness. “It’s really fur.”

“Did you expect something else?”

Love laughed. “No, not really but, having never seen a wolf before, I was a little surprised.”

“It’s our werewolf form, half man, half wolf.”

“And you don’t want me to see it because?”

“I’m a wolf, Love.”

“I’ve kind of figured that part out, Logan.”

“I didn’t want you to be disgusted.”

“You’re not serious.” But Love could see that Logan was by the anxiety growing on his face. “You are serious. Logan, I don’t know if you noticed, but I have a thing for wolves.”

“It...it doesn’t bother you?” Logan asked as he touched his fingers to his face.

“Well, I don’t see myself ever having sex with one of the four-legged variety, but this is about as close as I can get without being kinky.”

Logan grinned. “I like kinky.”

“Logan, I won’t have sex with your wolf.”

“He’s your wolf now, and we don’t have sex in wolf form unless it’s with other wolf shifters.”

Love smacked Logan’s arm and glared. “No sex with anyone else, wolf form or not.”

“No, Love, don’t you remember? Now that we’ve bonded, I can only have sex with you.”

“And don’t you forget it either!”

“So,” Logan said as he leaned down over the top of Love, “no wolf sex, but what about my werewolf form?”

“Oh yeah.” Love wrapped his legs around Logan’s thick furry waist. It was trim, but still thick. The man was huge and not just around the waist. The cock slowly sinking back into his ass was quite substantial as well.

“You like that, Love?”

Logan started thrusting into Love. He rubbed his face against the side of Love’s cheek. Logan’s face was lightly furred but so silky that Love felt like satin was being rubbed across his skin.

And then the purring started and Love lost the fragile hold he had on his mind. He was being claimed by a wolf, his greatest fantasy, and strangest one, all come to life in one gorgeous man. Love was in heaven.

He reached up and stroked his fingers over the soft fur on Logan's face, moving them up past the prominent curve of Logan's cheekbones and then his eyes. Love's breath caught in his throat when he moved them up past Logan's forehead.

"Ears," Love whispered as he stroked the small curved ears, "you have ears."

Logan chuckled as he nuzzled Love's throat. "Did you expect something else, baby?"

"That's so fucking hot!"

"Glad I could oblige you."

Love groaned deeply as Logan's hands explored the soft lines of his chest, his waist, and his hips. They lightly traced a sensuous path over his skin. His lips traced a path over Love's throat, occasionally nipping with his teeth.

Each touch of Logan's hands on his body sent desire racing through him. He started rubbing his hands over Logan's furry back and shoulders. He could feel Logan's muscles quiver under his hands. They were thick, strong. The knowledge that such a powerful man was claiming him sent Love's senses spiraling. Love started panting, his chest heaving.

"Logan," Love cried out. He started to squirm beneath Logan. He wanted closer. He wanted to climb under Logan's hot skin. He wanted to wrap Logan around his body and never be cold again. "Logan, please."

"What do you want, baby?"

"I need...I need..."

"You need me," Logan murmured against Love's throat. "You need me to claim you. You need me to mark you as mine for all to see."

“Yes!” Love cried out as Logan’s canines sank into the soft skin between his neck and shoulder. Logan knew exactly what Love needed. The bite mark on his neck would be visible to everyone, even after it healed. Everyone would know that Logan had claimed him.

Love could feel how much delight Logan took in claiming him by the increase in the power of his thrusts. His body melted against Logan’s, accepting him with a pleasure that was pure and explosive. Hunger spiraled through him.

A moan of ecstasy slipped through his lips as Logan’s cock rubbed across his prostate. His pleasure mounted with each thrust of Logan’s body. It was a raw act of possession, and Love craved it more than his next breath.

“Logan!” Love cried out as his body began to vibrate with liquid fire then exploded into a million glowing stars. Heat rippled under his skin as Logan cried out above him, filling him with the signs of his release.

As Logan’s hot seed filled him, Love felt a sense of peace that he hadn’t felt in years. Everything seemed right in his world, a world that encompassed the man above him, in whatever form he was in.

Logan continued to nuzzle the side of Love’s neck, licking over the bite mark on his shoulder every few seconds. Love reached up and sank his fingers into Logan’s soft hair. Logan’s tongue felt like soft sandpaper across his skin. It made Love shiver in delight.

“You have to stay with me now, Love,” Logan whispered. “I’ve marked you, bonded with you. You can’t leave me.”

Love smiled even though he knew Logan couldn’t see it. He didn’t have any intention of leaving Logan, not now. But that didn’t mean he had any intention of letting the powerful beta walk all over him either. Logan might be the beta of his clan but to Love, he was simply a mate.

“I’m not going to leave you, Logan, but—”

Logan suddenly leaned back until they were face to face. “No buts.”

“But...” Love grinned. “I won’t be your doormat either.”

“Love, I never wanted you to be my doormat.”

Love pressed two of his fingers against Logan’s lips. “Then ask me to live with you. Don’t demand it.”

Logan frowned. “You know I’m not very good at this stuff.”

“I know, which is why I’m here. I’m going to keep you in line.”

A slow easy grin started to move across Logan’s lips. “You plan on keeping me in line?”

“I can do it.”

“You just might be right, babe.”

Love smirked and arched an eyebrow. “I know I’m right. Get used to it. It’s something you’ll be experiencing a lot.”

“You do remember that I’m the beta of my clan, right?”

“I do, but I’m not sure what that has to do with you and me.”

“Love, you can’t...” Logan licked his lips. His eyes darted away.

Love frowned. Logan seemed nervous. “Just say it. We shouldn’t have secrets between us, not if we want this to work.”

“You can’t challenge me in front of the clan, Love. It would make me look weak, and a weak beta is a dead beta.”

Love stared, speechless. This new world he now lived in scared the hell out of him. It was vastly different than anything he had ever experienced in the past. The rules were different, the etiquette unusual. Love wondered if he would survive it.

“So, maybe that’s something you can help me with. I can’t promise to keep my mouth shut because I’m not just built that way. But I don’t want to do anything that would put your life in danger.”

“As long as you’re willing to try, that’s all I want.”

“The same goes for you, beta. Remember that we’re partners, equals. I am not your slave, your boy toy, or your doormat. If you want something from me, ask. Don’t demand. I may be smaller than you, but I get just as irritated.”

Logan grinned. “You’re awfully sexy when you’re all worked up.”

“Does that mean you’re going to ask and not demand?”

“I’ll try, but you need to understand that there are some things I will not bend on.”

“Like?” Love asked. He was thrilled that Logan at least seemed to be willing to talk about things. If there was no compromise in their relationship, then they didn’t have much of a chance.

“Your safety, for one. I will never bend on that. You need to understand, Love. You’re entering a world you have no concept of. I wish that I could introduce you slowly, but I can’t. I need you with me now.”

“Is that your way of asking me to move in with you?” Love knew he had a heavy dose of sarcasm in his voice, but he couldn’t help it. He wanted to live with Logan, but he wanted to be asked. He wanted to know that Logan really wanted him there.

Logan’s sudden smile seemed to be amused and a tad self-deprecating. “Love, would you please move in with me?”

Parting his lips, Love leaned up to kiss Logan. He brushed his tongue against Logan’s, groaning at the sweet sensation. Logan knew just how to send his senses swirling. Finally, out of breath, Love laid back. He stroked his hand down the side of Logan’s face and smiled.

“I’ll think about it.”

Chapter 12

Logan chuckled from his position on the bed as he watched Love staring at himself in the mirror. His little mate was positioning the new black fuzzy ears on his head that Logan had given him. Love kept turning this way and that, looking at his ears.

“You look sexy as hell, and you know it,” Logan said. “Stop fussing.”

Love swung around, a glare on his face and his hands planted firmly on his hips. “Do you think this look is easy?”

Logan blinked. “Uh, no?”

He wasn’t sure what the correct answer was. He thought Love was sexy whether he spent an hour in front of the mirror or just woke up in the morning. No man could be as attractive as Love without it being natural. The eyeliner, ears, and the clothes were just window dressing.

“I’ve spent hours in front of the mirror trying to get this look perfect. I think I know when it’s right.”

Ah, so the high maintenance begins, Logan thought to himself as he rolled to the side of the bed and sat up. He needed to nip that in the bud right now. Logan gestured with his hand for Love to come stand between his thighs.

“Come here, baby.”

Love rolled his eyes and strode across the room with a haughty swing in his hips. “What?” Love’s silky voice held a challenge that Logan couldn’t ignore.

Logan grabbed Love’s arms and swung him around. He heard Love yelp as he landed on the bed. Logan followed him down,

covering Love's body with his own, stretching Love's arms up over his head.

"Who are you getting all dolled up for, Love?"

"You." Love frowned.

"Then you need to listen to me when I say you look fine. The eyeliner, the ears, even the clothes, they all look nice, and they make you look great. But, baby, to be honest, you look just as sexy when you wake up first thing in the morning with nothing on."

Logan barely restrained himself from growling when Love's lower lip slipped out and he started to pout. It was probably the sexiest damn thing he had ever seen. Logan grabbed both of Love's hands with one of his then reached down with the other hand and rubbed his finger across Love's lips.

"This, however, this I'm in full support of."

Love started laughing. "You like my lip?"

"I like your pouty lip."

Logan chuckled when Love stuck it out further. Maybe high maintenance wasn't so bad after all. He leaned in and nipped at Love's lips with his teeth then soothed it with his tongue. Love's long, drawn-out groan surprised him, and he leaned back to look into his eyes.

"Love?"

"You've got this whole dominance thing down to an art form, don't you?" Love asked as he pulled on his hands just a little. Not enough to really get himself free, though, just enough to wiggle around a little and feel the pressure of Logan's hand wrapped around his wrists.

"You like me that way." Logan grinned at the exasperation on Love's face. Somehow, Logan knew it was true. Love wanted him to be dominant. He just didn't want Logan to be an ass about it. Logan could live with that.

"Do I really have to meet your entire clan?"

"You do."

“Couldn’t we have like a small get-together or something? I could meet a few at a time.”

“Love—”

“What if they don’t like me?” Love whispered.

Logan smiled down at Love as he stroked the side of his face. “I like you, and that’s all they need to know. They will accept you because you’re my mate.”

“Well, it would be nice if they accepted me because they liked me, too. I don’t want them to like me just because I’m your mate.” Love started to pout again. “I’ll never make any friends that way.”

“You, my sweet little pup...” Logan tapped the end of Love’s nose, “don’t need to do anything except be yourself, and they won’t be able to stop from liking you.”

Love snorted and rolled his eyes. “Boy, have I got you snowballed.”

“Love, you—”

Logan’s words were interrupted by a loud pounding on the bedroom door. “Logan, I need you out here. The clan is starting to get restless, and Asher is arriving.”

Logan recognized the voice as his brother’s and groaned. He rolled to the side of the bed and stood up, then reached back for Love. “Come on, babe, as much as I would prefer staying in bed with you, duty calls.”

Love took Logan’s hand and scooted off the bed. Logan smirked when Love straightened his shirt then checked his ears. Love brushed his dark hair back from his face then drew in a deep breath.

“Okay, I’m ready.”

Logan didn’t think Love looked like he was ready. His face was tense and just a bit on the pale side. He was also chewing on this thumb. Logan suddenly remembered Matt’s words about what to do when Love was nervous, and he remembered the small bag of lollipops that had come with the ears.

“Hold on, baby.”

Logan hurried to the dresser and opened the top drawer. He pulled the bag out and carried it to Love. "I think you might need these. I forgot to give them to you earlier."

Love frowned in confusion until he looked inside the bag. Logan wasn't prepared for the squeal of delight that fell from Love's mouth or the bouncing mate that he suddenly had in his arms.

"Thank you!" Love said as he peppered Logan's face with kisses.

"I told you I wouldn't forget." Logan chuckled as he hugged his mate before slapping him on the ass. "Now, pop one of those in your mouth and let's go downstairs and see what has my brother's pantyhose in a bunch."

Love laughed and quickly dug into the bag. He pulled a lollipop out and unwrapped it, then popped it into his mouth. Logan's groan was almost as loud as Love's. There was nothing quite like listening to his mate moan in pleasure.

"Come on, babe, if I don't get you out of this room, we're never leaving."

Logan held out his hand to Love then led his mate from the room once he took it. Love bounced along side of Logan, looking happy as all get-out with his lollipop in his mouth and black, fuzzy ears on his head.

He was adorable.

Logan had no idea how his clan would accept Love, but he knew he was perfectly happy with the one fate had given him. Love might be high maintenance, but Logan liked him that way.

Logan could feel the eyes of his clan on him and Love as they descended the stairs. He stopped half way down and pulled Love to his side, wrapping an arm around his shoulders. He smiled when Love edged a little closer then faced his clan.

"This is my mate, Love." His stern voice brooked no protests. He could feel Love tremble beside him and knew the tone affected him just as much as it did the people below them. It was the voice of the beta. "I'd like you to welcome him into our clan."

Logan let his words sink into the clan for several moments then smiled as if amused. "And yes, his name truly is Love." He heard several people chuckle and the tension in the room eased. "He is the beta-mate."

Logan felt Love jerk when the clan started clapping. He flexed his finger's letting Love know he was there for him. "Don't let his gorgeous good looks or sweet personality fool you. Love can be just as fierce as any of us if he needs to be. He's already saved my life once."

"A human, beta?" one man asked.

"My human."

The man nodded quickly. Even he could hear the underlying threat in Logan's voice. Logan wouldn't allow any disrespect towards Love. His mate deserved all of the respect due someone of his status.

Logan opened his mouth to make his opinion perfectly clear when the front door suddenly flew open and two of his clan enforcers rushed in carrying a third man between them. The man was unconscious and bleeding.

"What happened?" Logan shouted as he ran over.

"We were attacked, beta," Iain said. "They were waiting for us right outside the grounds, a whole group of them. We were outnumbered."

"They who?" Logan asked.

"Coyotes, beta."

Logan growled. His muscles tensed.

"Beta, one of them told us to give you a message," Iain said. "It was the only reason he let us go."

Cold dread filled Logan. "What was the message?"

Iain's eyes strayed to where Love stood on the stairs. "They want the human."

"They can rot in hell!" Logan snapped. "They are not getting my mate."

“Logan,” Iain said warily, “I don’t know if we have enough soldiers to fight them off.”

“Then we’ll make them fight for every inch of ground they cross. Get everyone inside the main compound. I want the cubs moved to the bunker. Then go to the armory and get enough weapons to outfit everyone.” Logan glanced down at the wounded man on the floor when he began to moan. “And get the doc in here.”

People started moving immediately. Logan had ordered emergency drills in the past so that everyone would know what to do if they were attacked. He was satisfied that his clan would react accordingly.

“Love, what are you doing?” Logan growled when Love rushed forward and fell to his knees beside the man on the floor. He forgot that Love had never participated in any of the emergency drills. “You need to get down to the bunker with everyone else. It’s the safest place in the compound.”

“And you need to hold these while I work,” Love said as he pulled his ears off and handed them over to Logan.

“Wha—”

“I told you that I worked in a hospital and attended school.” Love said as he pushed up his sleeves then leaned over the injured man and started checking him over. “Well, I do. I just wasn’t completely honest about what exactly I do at that hospital or what I’m going to school for.”

“Then tell me now.”

Logan was mystified as he watched Love work. Love was usually a little off, flighty. As Logan watched him, his mate became confident and self-assured, working briskly but carefully as he tried to stop the bleeding and assess the man’s condition.

“Love?”

“I’m a registered nurse, Logan. I work in the trauma unit at the hospital,” Love said without looking up. “I’m also attending medical school to be a doctor.”

Logan stared, stunned by Love's words. Not in a million years would he have guessed that Love was a registered nurse or attending medical school. It just didn't seem to be something the man would be into. Love didn't seem that focused.

"You're going to medical school?" Logan asked.

"I've been going to medical school for several years, Logan. I'm about to start my residency."

"You're a doctor?" a sandy browned haired man asked as he ran in and knelt down on the floor across from Love. Logan recognized Darren Stone, the alpha-mate, immediately and heaved a sigh of relief. Darren could help the injured man. It also meant Asher was home.

"Not yet."

"Then stop touching my patient."

Logan growled when Darren started pushing Love away. He reached down and wrapped his hand around the Darren's wrist and pulled him away from Love. "Don't touch!"

He knew he could lose his life if Asher ever saw him handle Darren the way he was, but Love belonged to him. No one had the right to touch him without Logan's permission. Asher would just have to understand.

Logan wasn't expecting Love to turn and glare at him.

"Logan, we don't have time for this." Love gestured to the man on the floor. "This man is going to die if he doesn't get treated, and if I heard right, you have more pressing matters to deal with than someone touching me."

"Love—"

"Go!"

"Love!"

Love smirked. He reached and grabbed the edge of Logan's shirt and pulled him down for a quick kiss. When Love pulled away, they were mere inches from each other. Logan could suddenly see the worry in his mate's eyes.

“You damn well better come back to me without a scratch on you, or I’m going to be very pissed.” One of Love’s dark eyebrows arched up as if he dared Logan to argue with him. “And Logan, I’m not nearly as sexy when I’m pissed.”

Logan grinned. He couldn’t think of anything else to do in the face of his mate’s demand. He stroked the back of his hand down the side of Love’s pale face. “As you wish, Love, so shall it be.”

Logan was ready this time when Love leaned in and kissed him. He kissed Love back, putting all of his pent-up emotions into the press of his lips against his mates. He needed Love to know how important he was to him.

When Logan pulled away from Love, he held his hand out. “Knife and sheath, Iain.” A moment later, a knife inside of a leather sheath was pressed into his hand. Logan held it out to Love. “If anyone touches you or threatens you in a manner you do not like, I expect you to do to them what you did to Mick.”

Love blanched but nodded as he took the knife. Logan helped Love attach the sheath to his belt then stood up. “Remember what I said, Love. You’re first duty before any other is to keep yourself safe. I cannot live without you.”

Logan didn’t wait for a reply from his mate. He didn’t need one. He’d seen Love’s reaction in the glistening of tears in his eyes. He just turned and headed for the door. Just as he reached it he heard Love start talking and couldn’t help but grin. His clan had no idea what they were getting into when they tried to deal with his little human mate.

“Now, doc, this is how things are going to go...”

Logan shook his head and headed out. He took the gun that Iain handed to him and strapped it on. The earpiece communicator came next. Each of his solders had one. Logan hooked it in his ear and turned it on.

“Cáel, can you hear me?” as he hurried toward the front gate.

“Yes, beta.”

“I want you to go to Love. He’s with the Darren inside the main residence. I don’t care how much they argue with you, don’t let either of them out of your sight until I come back. Is that understood?”

Cáel was the best man for the job. He had a vested interest in protecting Love, one that wouldn’t send Logan’s possessive instincts through the roof. If Cáel was indeed Love’s father, Logan knew he had no reason to be jealous of the man.

“Yes, beta.”

“I mean it, Cáel, don’t take your eyes off of them.”

“I understand, beta,” Cáel said. “I will guard them with my life.”

“You can let Love know that Garen is with me, protecting me. And tell Darren that Asher is going to be with me, too.” Logan knew Love would feel better if one of the guardians was with him, guarding his back. It might make Cáel’s job a little easier. Love wouldn’t protest so much.

Cáel chuckled. “Yes, beta.”

Logan rolled his eyes at Cáel’s impertinence and turned to Iain. “Okay, where is Asher?”

“He’s already checking the perimeter, beta.”

Logan nodded. “Good, now what can you tell me about what happened and who is attacking us?”

“Coyotes.”

Chapter 13

“You did pretty good in there.”

Love looked up from where he was washing his hands in the sink to see the doctor standing a few feet away leaning against the counter. One corner of his mouth lifted up in a slight smirk as he went back to washing his hands.

“For a human, you mean?”

“Actually, no.” The doctor sounded surprised. “You did pretty well for anyone in the medical field. It takes a special kind of person to work on a patient in a trauma situation. Add in the fact that wolf physiology is a bit different from humans and ninety-nine percent of the population would have run screaming from the room. You didn’t.”

Love shrugged. “I saw no reason to panic. A patient is a patient, no matter what their physiology. The man needed our help.”

Love wiped his hands dry on a towel then turned to face the doctor. He knew the man was suspicious of him because he was a human. He expected that and didn’t fault the doctor for it. He just hoped that time would prove he wasn’t someone the clan needed to be worried about.

“I’m not going to be going anywhere anytime soon, doctor,” Love said as he crossed his arms over his chest. “I would appreciate anything you can teach me about shifter physiology. I want to learn whatever I can so I can be beneficial to this clan. I see no reason to let my skills go to waste just because I’ve joined the clan.”

“What does Logan think of this?”

“I don’t know,” Love answered truthfully. “I didn’t ask him.”

“Don’t you think you’d better?”

“No.”

“But—” The doctor looked perplexed, and just a bit worried.

“Logan is my mate. He is not my master.”

“He is the beta of our clan.”

“So I’ve heard.”

“But...it’s unheard of for the beta-mate not to consult the beta in all things.”

“Oh, I have every intention of consulting Logan. He knows more about these things than I do, and I imagine that he will be a great source of knowledge.”

“Oh, thank god,” the doctor whispered as he pressed his hand against his chest and blew out a relieved breath.

“But I will still be making my own decisions.”

“Beta-mate,” the doctor gasped, “you can’t—”

“Would you stop calling me that?”

“It is what you are.”

“I’m also a person.” Love frowned when he saw a small smirk beginning to cross the doctor’s lips. “My name is Love.”

The doctor’s eyebrows shot up. “Seriously?”

“Yes.” Love rolled his eyes. “Seriously.”

The doctor suddenly smiled and held out his hand. “I’m Darren Stone, the alpha-mate.”

Love felt the blood drain from his face as he remembered the impertinent way he had talked to the alpha-mate. He didn’t know much about clan stuff, but he was pretty sure he had just been very rude to the Alpha’s mate.

“Uh, nice to meet you.” Love tried to smile as he shook the doctor’s hand.

“It will be nice to have another doctor around here,” Darren said as he turned away and started gathering up surgical instruments. “Maybe together we can figure out the best ways to help this clan.”

“Is there something wrong with them?”

“Technically, no, but I’m their only doctor, except I’m a veterinarian.”

Love blinked. “You’re a veterinarian?”

“Yep.”

“Seriously?” Love asked, repeating Darren’s word from a moment ago.

Love heard a deep chuckle and turned to see Logan standing in the doorway, leaning against one side. His arms were crossed over his chest and an amused grin graced his lips.

“Hey, sexy,” Love said as he looked Logan up and down, looking for any signs of an injury. He looked wonderful to Love, not a scratch on him. “You look to be in one piece.”

“I had orders from my beta-mate to come back unharmed.”

“Is it over then?” Love still wasn’t sure what was going on beyond the fact that they were being attacked.

“It seems to be for now,” Logan said as he pushed himself away from the door and walked across the room to Love. “Asher has soldiers patrolling the perimeters now. They’ll let us know if anything is amiss.”

Love leaned into Logan. He spread his hand over Logan’s chest, just above his beating heart, and drew in a deep breath of his heady masculine scent. Even though he’d been occupied with saving a man’s life, Love hadn’t been able to stop thinking about the danger Logan was in. He’d worried about his mate the entire time.

“I’m glad you’re safe, Logan,” Love whispered against Logan’s throat. He swallowed hard as images of what could have happened to Logan filled his head. “I would have been very upset if anything happened to you.”

Logan’s arms wrapping around him was a balm to Love’s soul. He felt surrounded by the man, by his power and strength, and even his dominance.

“I’m safe, baby. I promise.”

Love glanced up when he heard Darren clear his throat. He looked just a bit anxious as he stood there twisting his hands together. Love suddenly knew what Darren's problem was.

"Where's the alpha?" Love asked. "Is he okay?"

"Darren?" Logan asked.

"He's down by the main gate, but he's headed back this way. He's fine."

Love frowned, confused by Darren's response. The man had been inside the infirmary with him the entire time. "How did you know that?"

"He told me."

"When?"

Darren glanced at Logan. "He doesn't know?"

"We haven't gotten that far," Logan said. "We just bonded right before this all happened. I haven't had the time to tell him."

"Tell me what?" Love was starting to feel like everyone knew something he didn't. He was beginning to suspect that it would happen often to him.

"Bonded mates can speak telepathically to each other."

Love's mouth dropped open as he turned to stare up at Logan. Shock rolled through him. He had heard Logan speak to him, but his lips hadn't moved. Love had heard it all in his head.

"Lo-Logan," Love whispered.

"It's okay, Love," Logan said mentally again. He smiled just a little. *"No one can hear you but me, and no one can hear me except you. And I cannot read your mind. I can only hear the thoughts you send to me."*

"I can send you my thoughts?"

"You can."

"Then why didn't you hear me before when I was screaming for you?"

"Before when?" Logan's face darkened, and his hands tightened around Love's arms. "Has someone touched you?"

“Yes!” Love shouted. “Mick!”

Logan’s face softened almost instantly as he wrapped his arms back around Love and pulled him closer. “Oh, Love, I hadn’t fully claimed you yet when Mick kidnapped us.”

“But you bit me.”

Logan chuckled. “I did, but I bit you as a man. It started the bond between us, but the bond is only fully formed when I take you in my werewolf form and bite you while claiming you during sex.”

Love slumped against Logan. “You really need to let a guy know about these things, Logan.”

Logan stiffened. “Does that mean you wouldn’t have bonded with me if you had known?”

Love didn’t even think about it. He went with his first reaction. He leaned back and smacked Logan on the side of the head. “Stop being an idiot.”

“I like this guy already.”

Love growled and swung around when he heard a voice behind him. He quickly placed himself between Logan and the tall blue-black haired stranger. His heart pounded a hundred miles a second when he realized he was looking at a man even bigger and more intimidating than Logan.

Love grabbed the knife out of the sheath on his hip and held it in front of him. He didn’t care that the man’s face instantly darkened, a deep frown covering his lips. Love just cared about protecting his mate.

“Stay away,” Love snapped.

“Love!” Logan shouted from behind him.

“What’s the meaning of this, Logan?” the man shouted.

“Oh, would you all just chill the fuck out?”

Love’s mouth dropped open when he heard Darren shout. He turned to look at him. Darren was rolling his eyes as he leaned back against the counter. His arms were crossed over his chest as if he

didn't have a care in the world. For some reason, that actually made Love feel better.

"Ash, introduce yourself before Love freaks out even more," Darren snapped. "Love, put that knife away and stop threatening my mate before I show you what I've learned being the alpha-mate. And Logan, close your mouth. A condor could fly into that hole."

Love's eyebrows shot up when he heard Logan's mouth snap shut. A moment later a deep chuckle filled the room. Love glanced over at the dark haired man, not sure yet what the hell was going on.

A deep sense of his own doom filled him as he watched Darren walk across the room and right into the man's arms. The look of adoration the man gave Darren was unexpected but made the man look less fierce, easing Love's tension.

He slowly put the knife back the sheath then leaned back against Logan. "Your alpha?"

"Our alpha, Love, and you just threatened him with a knife."

Love snorted. "Stands to reason. I insulted the alpha-mate a few minutes ago. If I'm going to fuck up, I'm going to do a good job at it."

Love felt Logan stiffen behind him. Before he could address the sudden tension in his mate's body, Darren's laughter filled the room. Love glanced over at the man in surprise. Darren just waved a hand at him.

"Oh, please, if I was insulted by what you said, I'd never survive in the clan. You should have seen it when I first got here. People were actually trying to kill me. After that, I learned to have thicker skin."

"Pe-people tried to kill you?"

"Not to worry, Love, Asher took care of them, and they are all gone. I haven't really had much problem with the ones still here. I think they accept me now, even if I am human."

"You're human?"

"Yes." Darren wiggled his eyebrows. "Surprised?"

Love sputtered as laughter burst from his mouth. “Yes, actually. I was positive you were a wolf shifter.”

“Nope.” Darren chuckled. “I’m human down to the bone.”

“Then I’m not the only one?” That was one of Love’s biggest fears about joining a wolf clan. He didn’t want to be the only human. Only another human would understand some of the things he felt.

“We actually have a few humans that have joined our clan since Dary arrived,” Asher said. “I think he’s been a big influence in our clan members accepting each and every one of them.”

Love swallowed hard as he looked at the alpha. He had fucked up, and he knew it. He hadn’t just insulted the alpha-mate. He had threatened the alpha with a knife. Not only could it cost him his life, it could cost him Logan.

“I apologize for threatening you, alpha. I realize it is no excuse, but I didn’t know who you were and I thought Logan’s life was in danger.”

The alpha seemed to have an inquisitive look in his blue eyes as he gazed at Love. It made Love fidget a little. He tried his best to be still, but he felt like the man was assessing him for his fitfulness at being Logan’s mate. Everything hinged on this.

Love suddenly felt like he couldn’t breathe. He pressed his hand against his chest when he couldn’t seem to get enough air into his lungs. Love swallowed again and sent out a silent cry for his mate.

“Logan!”

Love’s eyes widened in shock when he saw Asher and Darren suddenly grab their heads with their hands, both men wincing. Fear filled him, and he reached back for Logan only to find empty space.

Love swung around, a small cry falling from his lips when he found Logan on his knees on the floor, holding his head just like Asher and Darren. Love dropped to his knees and reached for his mate.

“Logan, what’s wrong?”

“My head,” Logan groaned.

Love scanned Logan's head for any sign of injury. He couldn't find anything. "Logan, what's wrong with your head?"

Love screamed when he was suddenly grabbed from behind and pulled away from Logan. Before he could breathe in, he was slammed up against the wall. Asher's angry red face leaned in close to him.

"Who the hell are you?" Asher growled.

Love heard a terrified squeak fall from his lips when he saw the anger in Asher's eyes and felt the man's fingertips grow into claws. "I...I...I'm Love Star."

"Why are you here?"

Love darted a quick glance at Logan, but the man was still on his knees on the floor, cradling his head. Love looked back at the alpha. "I'm Logan's mate."

"What did you do?"

"I...I..." Love shook his head rapidly. "I didn't do anything."

"I heard you yell," Asher snarled. "I felt it. My mate felt it. Logan felt it."

Love's eyebrows furrowed in confusion. "I don't understand. Logan said only he could hear me."

Asher's tight grip lightened. "You were calling for Logan?"

Love nodded.

"Then how did I hear you?" Asher glanced over at Darren for a moment, then back. "How did my mate hear you? Only mates are supposed to hear each other. No one else is supposed to hear you when you talk through your bond."

"I don't know," Love whispered, his heart still pounding. "I was just calling for Logan like he said."

"Like he said?" Asher asked. "What exactly did he say?"

"Logan said only mates could hear each other, but he could only hear the thoughts I sent him." Love felt his face warm with his flush. "I was scared, so I called for him."

With each word Love spoke, he could see Asher slowly leaning away from him. The glower of anger on his face slowly slipped away, and his hands loosened their grip on Love's arms.

"Why were you scared, Love?"

"I threatened you with a knife," Love said. "I'm not stupid. I might not know much about the wolf world, but Logan told me who you were. I know you can take him away from me."

Asher's face suddenly softened. "Oh, Love, no one is going to take Logan away from you. You're mated. No one can separate a mated pair."

"But you can still make our lives miserable."

"True." Asher suddenly chuckled. "But I won't. I understand the need to protect your mate. I waited ten years to claim Dary because it wasn't safe for him. I would die for him if need be. That's what being mates means."

Love was nearly shocked right out of his shoes when Asher let him go and walked back over to Darren. He pulled Darren to his feet and wrapped his arms around him, nuzzling his neck. Much to Love's astonishment, Darren smiled and leaned right into the big man, nuzzling him back.

Love suddenly felt an all consuming need to have Logan's arms wrapped around him. He looked over at his mate, his heart squeezing in his chest when he found him still kneeling on the floor.

Love raced across the room and fell to his knees next to Logan. He wrapped his arms around him and buried his face in Logan's neck. "I'm so sorry, Logan. I don't know what happened. I don't know what I did."

Love could feel tears spring to his eyes when Logan's arms wrapped around him. Knowing he brought his mate pain was almost more than he could handle. He was supposed to protect Logan, not bring him pain.

"*Sshhh, baby, it's okay,*" Logan whispered through their bond, which surprised Love. He would have thought that would be the last

thing Logan would have done considering what happened when Love used their bond.

"I don't know what happened, Logan." Love leaned back so he could look into Logan's deep amber eyes. "You said I could send you my thoughts. That's all I was doing."

"I know." Logan's hand stroked down the side of Love's face. "I don't know exactly what happened, but for some reason you were able to send your thoughts out to everyone in the room."

"I'm sorry." Love swallowed past the lump in his throat that formed when he saw the look of adoration that came into Logan's eyes. Maybe he hadn't screwed up that badly. "I won't do it again."

"Love, baby," Logan said softly as he brushed the hair back from Love's face. "I know you didn't mean to do anything. Even Asher and Darren know that. This wasn't your fault."

"But—"

"No buts, Love. Something significant happened here, and we'll figure it out together, okay?"

Love nodded and buried his face in Logan's neck. He didn't know what happened. He knew his mother could sometimes foresee things. She called it her "gut feeling." Love didn't inherit that particular trait from his mother. He couldn't foretell crap.

And, apparently, he couldn't talk telepathically with his mate, either. Love felt like crying. It was all he could do to keep his tears locked up inside his eyes. Hearing Logan speak to him in his mind had seemed so intimate. While it kind of scared him, he had also been excited by the prospect. He wanted to be able to have that something special with Logan.

But now he was afraid to use it. What if he hurt Logan again? What if he hurt Asher or Darren again? The big alpha would only take so many of Love's screw ups before he kicked Love to the curb. Asher had other people to protect.

"*Say something to me, baby, but say it softly,*" Logan whispered in his mind.

Love frowned and leaned back so he could see Logan's face. "What do you want me to say?" he asked out loud.

"No, Love, say something through our bond."

"No." Love shook his head. He refused to use something that could potentially hurt someone.

"Love, please."

"No!"

"Love, listen to your mate."

Love turned to glare at the alpha. He figured he was in deep enough trouble. A glare would be overlooked. When Asher arched an eyebrow at him, Love knew he had guessed wrong. He quickly turned back to Logan and prayed the alpha would let it go.

"I don't want to hurt you again."

"Then speak softly, Love. Don't yell."

Love frowned. "Is that what you think happened? I was yelling?"

"Were you?"

Love nodded.

"So." Logan grinned. "Speak softly to me this time."

Love drew in a deep breath then let it out slowly. He looked up into Logan's amber colored eyes and prayed his mate was right. If Logan was wrong and Love hurt him again, he swore he would ever use it again.

"*I love you,*" Love whispered through their bond as softly as he could.

Love's mouth dropped open when his big, strong, dominant mate's eyes filled with tears. He instantly thought he had hurt his mate again until a brilliant smile began to cross Logan's lips.

"*I love you, too, Love.*"

Chapter 14

Logan rolled over and immediately knew his mate wasn't in bed with him. The mattress beside him was cold. He sat up and looked around the room. Nothing seemed out of place, and he couldn't hear anything. Panic started to fill him.

"Love," he asked through their bond, "*where are you?*"

"*I'm in the kitchen with Matt, Drea, and Darren,*" Love replied softly. "*Why don't you come join us? I'll make you breakfast.*"

Logan couldn't pass up a deal like that. He was a horrible cook. He swung his legs over the side of the bed and stood up. He quickly grabbed for his clothes and started getting dressed. As soon as he pulled his boots on he headed for the kitchen.

Logan had practiced talking telepathically through the mating bond with Love several times over the last couple of days. Love was getting better at it every day. He just spoke really softly. So far, only Logan could hear Love talking telepathically.

Logan still hadn't figured out what exactly happened when Love yelled. Logan had felt like his head was going to explode as Love's scream bounced around inside his head. He just hoped Love didn't do it again.

Asher was still anxious about what happened and ordered Logan to practice often with Love so it didn't happen again. Logan knew it was more because of the pain Darren endured and less because of what happened. Asher wouldn't allow anything to hurt his mate.

Logan could hear laughter from the kitchen as he rounded the corner of the hallway. Love's voice was high and animated. Logan

was incredibly curious as to what the four men were doing that could amuse them so much.

He paused in the doorway, his eyes instantly seeking out his mate. Love was sitting on the kitchen counter, swinging his legs. He was waving his hand in the air for emphasis as he talked.

“No, really, you should have seen this guy.” Love laughed. “He screamed bad wannabe leather daddy, right down to the leather pants and bad pickup lines. He wanted me to exchange the lollipop I was sucking on for his dick.”

Logan frowned. He didn’t like the sound of that. “He who?”

“Mick Red.” Love started laughing harder. “You should have seen him. I mean, I don’t usually mind dancing with anyone. I love to dance. But this guy, he just wouldn’t take no for an answer. If Logan hadn’t shown up, I don’t know what I would have done.”

“And you’re laughing about it?” Logan asked. He didn’t see the humor in the situation. Mick Red had accosted Love. He had tried to drag him away. And that was before he even kidnapped them both.

“Oh, honey, you don’t understand,” Love said as he gestured for Logan to come closer.

Logan crossed the room and grabbed the chair right next to Love. He swung it around and straddled it. “So, explain it to me then.”

“I was just telling the guys here how I met Mick,” Love said. “He was at Reed’s bar. I was sucking on a lollipop when Mick walked up and propositioned me.”

“And that’s when the fight started,” Matt said.

“Fight?” Logan stared over at Matt. “What fight?”

Love started laughing again. “The one where I kicked Reed for the first time.”

Logan’s mouth dropped open. “You kicked my brother?”

“Yeah.” Love held up two fingers. “Twice, got him right in the shin, too.”

“Why would you kick my brother?”

“He made my ears slip.” Love crossed arms over his stomach as his laughter overcame him.

Logan started to chuckle. Love’s laughter filled him with joy. For a man that had been so sad a few days ago, watching Love laugh now made Logan’s heart feel lighter. He promised himself to try and do everything he could to bring this kind of joy to Love as often as he could.

“You’ve had a busy week then, Love.”

“Right?” Love chuckled. “I just wanted to get away for a few days during spring break. Instead, I meet my mate, get kidnapped by some coyote leather daddy shifter, and killed him. I learned I can talk telepathically and pissed off the alpha of a wolf clan. I’m just waiting to see what next week brings.”

“You’re never boring, Love,” Drea said. “I’ve got to give you that.”

“Boring is overrated,” Love said.

“Well, do me a favor, Love,” Logan said, “and try and be a little boring for a few more days. Until we know this threat from the coyotes is over, I need to have all of my attention on that. No getting into any trouble until things calm down.”

Logan knew he was in trouble the moment Love’s lower lip slipped out. Love slid off the counter and stepped over to Logan. He swung his leg over Logan’s and sat down on his lap, his arms wrapping around Logan’s neck.

“It’s not like I plan these things, Logan.”

“No, trouble is just attracted to you, Love,” Matt said.

Love rolled his eyes.

“Baby, please, just do your best, huh?”

“I’ll try.” Love grinned. “That’s all I can promise.”

Logan’s sigh was interrupted by a loud crash and the sound of voices from the other room. Logan instantly stood up and stepped in front of Love then motioned for the other men to get behind him as well.

He heard another noise and turned to see Love leaning over the kitchen counter to grab one of the cutting knives. He instantly bounded back to stand next to Logan, knife clutched tightly in his hand. When he arched an eyebrow at Love, the man snorted.

“Don’t even think about it,” Love said. “We’re in this together, remember?”

Logan grinned and turned back to face whatever was coming through the door. He wasn’t expecting an older woman with long black hair and skirts that reached the floor and swirled around her legs as she stormed into the room.

He certainly didn’t expect Love to squeal loudly, drop the knife, and run across the room before he could stop him.

“Mom!”

“Mom?” Logan whispered.

Love was bouncing and hugging and talking a million miles a minute. Logan was having trouble keeping up as Love told his mother everything that had happened to him in the last week. Logan winced a couple of times when Moon Star glared over at him.

“Come meet Logan,” Love said as he grabbed his mother’s hand and dragged her across the room.

Logan nodded, trying not to show how nervous he was. Love cared about his mother a great deal. If she disapproved of him, Logan didn’t know what Love’s reaction would be.

Moon star looked him up and down. Logan couldn’t tell from her expression how she felt. “You’re the man that allowed my son to be kidnapped?”

“Mom!”

“Uh, not exactly,” Logan said, ignoring Love’s outburst, “but it was my fault. I didn’t protect Love adequately. It won’t happen again.”

“Hmm.”

That didn’t sound good. Logan took a quick look at Love to see how he was taking his mother’s attitude. Love looked like a ping pong

ball, glancing back and forth between them, his lower lip caught between his teeth.

Logan reached into his pocket and pulled out a lollipop, something he carried around with him all the time now. He held it out to Love. "Here, baby."

Love snatched it up. His eyes were huge as he unwrapped the lollipop and put it in his mouth. Logan waited for his usual groan, frowning when it didn't come. Logan knew it was because Love's mother was in the room and turned back to glare at her only to find her eyes on Love.

"You give him candy?"

"Love likes lollipops."

"He's a grown man, not a child." She waved her hand at Love's head. "And take those ridiculous ears off your head. It's not Halloween."

Logan growled when Love's face paled and he started to reach for the ears on his head. He quickly reached over and grabbed Love's arm and pulled the smaller man up against his body, wrapping a protective arm around him.

"You're absolutely right," Logan said. "Love is a grown man, and as such, he can wear fuzzy ears and suck on lollipops if he wants to. It's not ridiculous if Love likes it."

Moon Star arched an eyebrow. Logan glared back. He understood that she was Love's mother and he loved her very much, but no one got to talk about Love that way or make him feel bad, not even Moon.

"Do you think it's appropriate for the mate of a beta to be wearing fake ears and sucking on lollipops?" Moon asked. "What will your clan say? Or your alpha?"

"I don't care. It's not up to them. It's up to Love."

"Or you," Moon snickered. It was not a good look on the woman.

"Actually, no, it's not up to me. It's only up to Love, but if it's something he wants, I will ensure that he gets it."

"Anything?"

Logan frowned. "Of course."

"What if Love wants to leave here?" Moon asked.

"Then we'll leave."

Logan tensed under Moon's intense stare. He knew he wasn't going to like what she said next.

"And if he wants to leave you?"

Logan stiffened when he heard Love whimper. He tightened his arms around his mate. The thought of Love leaving him nearly brought Logan to tears, but if Love ever wanted to leave, he knew he wouldn't stand in the way.

"I love Love. I would do everything in my power to keep him with me, but if he truly wanted to leave me, I wouldn't stand in his way. I just want Love to be happy."

"And you believe you're the best person to make Love happy?"

"I'm the only person that can make Love happy."

Moon tilted her head slightly as she studied Logan. "And why should I believe you?"

"It's doesn't matter if you believe me," Logan said. "It's only important that Love believes me."

Logan's mouth dropped open and shock ripped through his body as Moon suddenly began clapping her hands together. A wide, welcoming grin crossed her lips.

"Very well said, Mr. Stone." Love raised her hand to her mouth and blew a kiss to Love. "You've chosen well, my son."

"Thank you, Mom."

Logan blinked. "What just happened here?"

Love chuckled and turned his face up. "Mom was just making sure you were the right man for me."

"I'm the only man for you," Logan growled.

Love laughed and turned in his arms. His hand smoothed down the side of Logan's face. "Not to worry, big guy," Love crooned. "You *are* the only man for me. Mom was just checking that I was happy."

“Are you?”

Love’s smile lit up his face and made Logan swallow hard at the tenderness he could see in his eyes. Logan vowed to himself to try and put that look on Love’s face every day of their lives. He wanted that tenderness aimed at him.

“I am.”

Logan drew in a shaky breath and smiled. “Then why don’t you introduce me to your mother so she doesn’t think I’m a complete beast.”

Love tossed his head back and laughed as he turned to face his mother. “If my mother was truly upset, she would have come here with an army.”

Logan growled when Love suddenly tensed.

“Wait, how did you come to be here?” Love asked. “I haven’t even had time to call you and tell you where I was. How did you know?”

A shadow of some emotion crossed Moon’s face as she waved her hand behind her. Logan looked up to see Cáel standing in the doorway. A peculiar grin covered his lips as he leaned against the doorframe.

“Your father called me.”

Logan tightened his arms around Love when the man’s legs suddenly gave out beneath him. He could feel Love shaking and knew he was experiencing something profound.

“My father?” Love whispered.

Cáel waved from the doorway.

“You’re my father?” Love’s head snapped over to his mother. “He’s my father?”

Moon reached for Love’s hands, but he yanked them away, pressing back against Logan. “Love, honey, I know this is a surprise but—”

“A surprise?” Love snapped. “You call this a surprise? My father’s a wolf shifter, and you never told me.”

"I couldn't, Love." Mon wrung her hands together and glanced over her shoulder at C  l. When she looked back, her face was pale. "Love, I couldn't tell you. It wasn't safe, not for us or for C  l."

"Why not?"

Logan couldn't even answer that question. He knew they needed to keep their shifter abilities a secret from most people, but he would have figured Moon would have told her son he was a half breed.

Even as he thought it the words made a shock of fear spike through Logan. He was just as scared as he was the first time he thought of the possibility, only this time, it was real. His mate was a half breed. Logan didn't care much beyond what it might mean to Love.

"Love," Logan whispered, hugging Love to his body, "you're a half breed, half human, half wolf."

"Don't call me that!" Love snapped as he swung around in Logan's arms.

"Oh, baby, I could care less if you were a penguin with purple polka dots," Logan said as he grabbed Love's face in his hands. "I'm just worried. Half breeds aren't widely accepted in wolf clans, even less so than humans. I don't want anyone to hurt you."

"What do you mean half breeds aren't accepted?"

"Some wolves believe we should stick to our own species. They disdain anything different. It wasn't until Asher worked to change the laws that we were even allowed to mate with humans. Before then, a wolf that mated a human was hunted down and killed, the human mate, too."

"What?" Love squeaked.

"When Asher discovered that Darren was his mate, he worked to change the laws. But even then, he wasn't able to change the minds of all the clans. There are those that still refuse to accept Asher's bond with Darren. They won't even allow Darren into their territory."

"But why?" Love whispered. "Darren's a great guy. He has so much to give to the clans."

"I agree, as does everyone in this clan and a few others. But closed minds cannot be changed overnight, Love. Luckily, the laws have been changed so that Darren is safe."

"Does..." Love licked his lips. "Does that mean I won't be safe?"

"The laws say that no one can prevent mates from being together. That doesn't mean that people will accept you." Logan stroked his hand over Love's head then pulled him close. "And I won't let anyone hurt you, Love, I promise."

"There's something more you need to know before you make that promise," Moon said.

Logan felt Love tense in his arms but refused to let the man go. He held him tighter, bracing for whatever Moon had to tell them. "What?"

"Love is a speaker."

"A what?"

"Love has the ability to speak to people in their minds, only he can talk to more than one person at the same time."

"Are you out of your mind?" Love snapped as he swung around.

Logan started laughing. He couldn't help it, not even when Love turned to glare up at him. "I'm sorry, baby, but it makes perfect sense. Don't you remember what happened when you screamed at me mentally?"

Love's eyebrows were pulled together in a deep frown. "How could I forget? I thought Asher was going to kill me."

"Love, you were able to speak to all of us at the same time, and we didn't know how you did it. If what your mother says is true, it's a natural ability for you." Logan chuckled. "We'll just have to teach you how to control it. There are some thoughts that shouldn't be shared with anyone except me."

Love's face flushed bright red. He groaned and quickly buried his face in Logan's chest. "Just kill me now."

Logan chuckled. "Nope, I kind of like you with all these quirks."

"*Promise?*" Love whispered into Logan's mind.

"I promise, Love," Logan whispered right back. *"We'll figure out how to teach you to control this ability."*

"I hope so," Love whispered mentally again, then turned to face his mother.

"I know so," Logan replied.

"It still doesn't explain why I never knew about my father," Love said out loud. "Or why my mother never told me about him."

"I think that might be my fault, Love," Cáel said as he stepped forward. "Your mother and I only had that one weekend together. Once I left, we never saw each other again."

"Love, I'm not Cáel's mate," Moon said. "We both knew that back then. I don't fault him for leaving. I never did."

"Fine, you're not mates," Love snapped. "I get that. What I don't get is why you never told me who he was. You wouldn't even tell me his name. Every time I asked, you became upset, so I finally stopped asking."

"Oh, Love, I couldn't," Moon said.

"You keep saying that!" Love stamped his foot. "But you won't tell me why."

"Because I know you, Love. You would have started looking for your father the first chance you got, and as Logan has explained to you, until recently, not even humans were accepted in the shifter world. I wasn't going to let you put your life in danger."

Logan slowly started to understand what Moon was trying to tell her son. She hadn't kept Cáel's identity from Love because she was angry or because she didn't want Love to know who his father was. She was doing it to keep Love safe.

Logan smiled at Moon and took her hand, giving it a squeeze. "Thank you."

Moon's face flushed, and she dipped her head. "I love him, too, Logan."

"I know, and once Love understands what you did, he will thank you, too."

“How can you say that?” Love shouted as he spun around to glare at Logan. He waved his hand back toward C  el. “She kept my father from me.”

“She kept your ass alive,” Logan said. “Remember what I said, Love. Humans and half breeds were not accepted until Asher changed the laws. Until then, not even same sex matings were accepted. What do you think would have happened if you had tracked C  el down?”

Love frowned then shrugged his shoulders. “I don’t know.”

“They would have hunted us down and killed us, Love.” Logan pointed his finger at Love. “Not just you, but me, too, because I was your mate. Your mother was doing what she had to do to keep you alive, to keep us both alive.”

“Love, if you had come to find me even a few years ago,” C  el said, “not only would Logan have been prevented from mating with you, but both of you would have been put to death. And most likely, so would I for fathering a half breed. I wouldn’t put it past some clans to track your mother down and kill her as well because of what she knows.”

“It wasn’t an easy decision,” Moon said, “but I did it to save you.”

Logan watched Love’s chest heave as he breathed in then out. He looked like he was trying to take everything in and process it. Logan just hoped that Love understood and forgave his mother. He also had a relationship to build with his father.

Finally, Love looked up. “Are you really my father?”

C  el smiled and nodded. “So your mother says.”

Moon blushed and elbowed C  el. “Butthead.”

C  el laughed and wrapped an arm around her shoulders. Logan was shocked when Moon leaned into C  el’s body and C  el kissed the top of her head. They looked like old friends. He couldn’t help but wonder why fate had decreed they were not mates. It didn’t seem fair.

“Are you sure you two aren’t mates?” Logan asked.

“While I enjoyed the time we had together,” Moon said, looking less joyous than she had a moment ago, “our destinies do not lie in the same direction. Cáel’s mates will find him when the time is right.”

“Mates?” Cáel sputtered. “Have you lost your mind, woman?”

Moon laughed, and Logan suddenly saw what caught Cáel’s interest all those years ago. She may have been a few years older than Logan, but she was still a beautiful woman that glowed with life.

“Honey,” Moon said as she cupped her hand around the side of Cáel’s face, “you don’t get a choice. Fate decides what is best for us, and they have decided you get two mates.”

Logan pressed his lips together to keep from laughing at the astonishment on Cáel’s face. He reached over and grabbed Love, pulling the man into his arms. He didn’t like being away from his mate any further than he had to.

“*Are you doing okay, baby?*” Logan asked through their bond as he nuzzled the side of Love’s neck.

“*I guess,*” Love replied. “*This is all just a little weird, you know?*”

“*Somehow, Love, I think weird is going to be the norm in our life.*”

“*Right?*” Love laughed. “*It’s ridiculous. Whatever happened to mundane and boring?*”

Before Logan could reply, a loud blaring noise filled the room. Logan tensed for just a moment before turning to look at Cáel. “Call Asher and find out what’s going on. I’ll call the front gate.”

Cáel nodded and pulled out his phone. Logan did the same. He quickly dialed the front gate. The phone rang and rang and rang. Logan started to get worried when no one picked up. He glanced up to see Cáel talking, so he hoped the man got through to Asher.

Logan snapped his phone closed and waited for Cáel. “Well?” he asked when Cáel hung up. “What did Asher say?”

“We’re under attack.”

Chapter 15

Love paced back and forth in front of the huge steel door of the bunker and wrung his hands together. He hated being down inside the dark windowless bunker but knew it was for his safety.

No matter how much he had protested, Logan refused to let him be anywhere else. When orders hadn't worked, Logan had played on Love's instinct to protect his mother and friends. It had worked. Love agreed to go to the bunker and keep them safe.

He just couldn't stand the idea that he wouldn't be there to protect Logan. His mate was outside somewhere keeping the band of coyotes that attacked the compound from getting to the bunker full of elderly, women, and children.

"Have you heard anything?"

Love turned to see Matt standing behind him. His friend's face was pale white. His hands looked like he had been twisting them together for hours. Love shook his head but tried to look positive with a small smile.

"Logan is pretty busy right now. He needs to keep his mind on what he's doing, not alleviating my fears." Love shrugged. "Besides, I think I would know if something happened to him."

Matt nodded. "You would have. Mates always know when the bond is broken."

Love figured the same thing, but he hated Matt putting his fears into words. It didn't make him feel any better about Logan fighting for their lives. The possibility of his mate being killed was very real. Love wasn't sure if he liked this new world he lived in. It was a scary place.

“So, I guess you won’t be coming back to school, hmm?”

Love chuckled at the disgruntled look on Matt’s face. “No, I don’t think so. I might finish my degree someday, but I think I can learn more from Darren than I can in a medical school.”

“Probably.” Matt nodded. “He knows a lot about treating our kind.”

“Our kind?” Love laughed as he shook his head. “Boy, has that statement taken on a whole new meaning in the last few days.”

“There’s something that has puzzled me about all of this. If you’re a half breed, then why haven’t you shifted?”

Love blinked. “I can shift?”

“Duh, you have wolf blood in you. Anyone that has wolf blood can shift.”

Love stared at Matt for a few minutes then looked past him, scanning the room for one person that might be able to answer his question. “Darren, can we talk to you for a moment?”

Darren looked up then nodded. He set the small child in his lap down beside him and hurried over. “Yeah, what’s up?”

“Can I shift?”

“Hell if I know.”

Love rolled his eyes. “You are so not helping here, doc.”

Darren shrugged. “How would I know? You’re the first half breed I’ve ever met. I’m used to dealing with dogs and wolves shifters.”

“So, who would know?”

“Asher.”

Love felt like banging his head against the wall. “Asher seems to be a tad busy right now. Anyone else you can think of?”

“Sorry, dude, Asher would be the first person I would talk to.”

“Love.”

Love swung around to see his mother standing behind him. “Hey, Mom.”

“You shifted as a baby, Love.”

Love’s mouth dropped open. “I shifted as a baby?”

“Yes, you were about a year old. I left you playing in your crib.” She smiled. “Imagine my surprise when I came back to check on you and found a puppy instead.”

“Have I shifted since then?”

“No, only that one time.”

“Can I shift now?”

“I don’t know,” Moon said. “Can you?”

Love stared at his mother then stared at Darren and Matt, tilting his head slightly as curiosity overcame him. “How do you shift?”

Matt started laughing hilariously. Darren chuckled then quickly covered his mouth. Even Moon started laughing. Love could see the humor in the situation, but he also wanted to know how to shift.

“Guys.”

“Sorry, Love,” Matt said. “I didn’t mean to laugh, but that just caught me funny.”

“Cool, glad I could amuse you. Now how do I shift?”

“Love, you really need to wait until Logan is here to help you,” Darren said. “Shifting for the first time can be dangerous if you don’t know how to do it.”

“I’ve already done it once.”

“True, but do you remember how you did it?”

“Well, no, but if I did it once, it can’t be that hard to do it again, can it?”

Darren shrugged again. “I can’t say, Love. I’m human. My first inclination would be to wait for Asher and Logan. They know a lot more about this than I do. I’d wait.”

“Fine.” Love rolled his eyes as he heaved a heavy sigh. “I’ll wait, but I want to know if I can shift as soon as things get back to normal.” Love realized his mistake the second Matt and Darren started laughing. “You know what I mean, when things are normal for us.”

Darren reached over and patted Love on the shoulder. “We know what you meant, Love. But you have to admit, normal is not in the wolf vocabulary.”

Love chuckled. “Yeah, okay, I guess I can see that. I certainly haven’t run across anything normal since the moment I met Logan.”

“It hasn’t all been bad, has it?” Matt asked.

Love smiled. “No, but—”

Love jumped and spun around when he heard a loud crash outside the large steel door. He saw Matt run to the door and start sniffing, which was really weird. Darren shooed Moon back toward the others in the back of the bunker.

“What is it?” Love asked when Matt turned back to him, his face whiter than Love had ever seen it.

“Coyotes,” Matt whispered.

“Shit!” Darren started pacing. “How’d they get this far into the compound?”

Love squeezed his eyes closed. “*Logan, are you there? Logan?*”

The seconds seemed to tick by at a snail’s pace as Love waited for Logan to reply. As more time went by and Logan didn’t answer, Love began to grow concerned, then worried. Outright panic was starting to set in when Logan finally replied.

“*I’m a little busy, baby,*” Logan said. “*Can I get back to you?*”

“*There are coyotes outside the bunker door.*”

“*Outside the bunker door?*”

“*Yes.*”

“*How in the hell did they get there? Asher and I have them all rounded up.*”

“*Matt sniffed at the door.*” Love opened his eyes and glanced over to where Matt was still sniffing around the door. “*He says they’re coyotes.*”

“*Okay, keep away from the door. Asher and I are on our way. And no matter what you do, don’t open that damn door.*”

Love gestured at Matt with his hand. “Matt, Logan says to get away from the door.”

Matt’s nose was wrinkled up when he turned back to Love as if he had smelled something rancid. His fingertips had turned into claws

and long canine teeth slipped over his lip. He turned back and growled at the door as he slowly backed away from it.

A loud pounding started on the door. Love knew whoever was on the other side of the door was trying to get in. He glanced behind him at the people huddling together at the back of the room. The fear was evident on their faces.

"Are there any weapons in here?" Love asked when he turned back.

"No," Darren replied. "No one is supposed to be able to breach the bunker once the doors are closed from the inside."

Love gestured to the door. "Tell them that."

"There's a hidden escape route, though."

Love perked up. "A hidden escape route?"

Darren nodded. "Asher showed it to me. It's in one of the back rooms."

"Show me."

Love followed Darren across the room and through the small crowd of people. They both gave reassuring pats to many of the people they passed, whispering words of encouragement.

Love suddenly realized that it was part of his duty as the beta-mate, to care for the clan in Logan's stead. It was odd, but not something Love hesitated to do. These were his people as much as they were Logan's.

They walked past the people and through a doorway into a large dorm looking room. It had a rack stacked with blankets on one side of the room. Cots were neatly stacked next to the rack.

On the other side of the room, Love could see an industrial sized kitchen area complete with cafeteria style counters and serving section. There was a stack of folded tables and chairs near the wall at the end of the kitchen area.

"This is the main room," Darren explained as he waved his hand around at everyone. "It doubles as the cafeteria and sleeping dorm. It can house two hundred people."

“Asher had this built?”

Darren nodded. “He had this entire facility built. Well, sort of. It was an old military base from World War II. He bought it in an auction and retrofitted most of the buildings to fit our needs. This bunker was already here, but it was set up for army personnel. Ash needed to make it work for us.”

“I think he accomplished that.”

“There’s also shower rooms, an infirmary, and a command center.”

“There’s a command center?” Love stopped walking suddenly. “If there’s a command center, why in the hell aren’t we in there? We could see what was going on.”

Darren’s face flushed. “Asher forgot to give me the keys.”

Love rolled his eyes. “The command center has keys?”

“Well, it wouldn’t do for just anyone to be let in there.”

“No, I suppose not.” Love glanced around the room. “So, where is this escape route?”

“Oh.” Darren turned around and headed into the kitchen. “It’s back here behind the fridge.”

“The escape route is behind the fridge?” Love took in the large industrial sized silver fridge and winced. “How are we supposed to move it?”

Darren grinned. “Ash put it on wheels.”

“Nice.”

Love stepped forward and grabbed the side of the fridge. Along with Darren, they slowly pulled the heavy fridge out of the way, revealing a hidden doorway. Love was panting by the time they stopped.

“There’s not keys for this thing, is there?”

“God, I hope not.”

Love chuckled. “Where does this lead?”

Darren tilted his head slightly. "You know, I don't have a clue. Ash just told me to use it if we got into trouble while in the bunker. I never asked where it came out."

Love pushed his hand through his hair, stopping when he started to push his ears off his head. He quickly righted them and then glanced around the room. He was hesitant to use the escape route if they didn't know where it came out, but he also didn't want to have everyone in the bunker in danger if someone broke through the door.

"Ideas?"

Darren pressed his lips together and shook his head. "We can't leave these people in here unprotected. If someone breaks through that door, everyone's life is in danger. Ash and Logan left us here to care for them."

"Don't fool yourself." Love snickered. "They left us here to keep us out of trouble."

"True." Darren chuckled. "But that doesn't mean we don't have a responsibility to care for the clan."

"No, I get that." Love rested his hands on his hips and glanced around the room as he tried to figure out what the best thing to do was. If they left the bunker, they could run into trouble. If they stayed, they could run into trouble. Either way, they could be screwed.

"You've been here longer than me," Love finally said to Darren. "What do you think we should do?"

"Fight."

Love blinked. That was the last response he expected from a human in the middle of a shifter fight. "You want us to fight? We don't have any weapons."

A chill spiraled down Love's spine when Darren grinned and waved his hand around the room. "We have an entire kitchen full of weapons."

Love glanced around the industrial kitchen and slowly began to see what Darren saw. While it was a kitchen, it was full of sharp

knives, pots and pans, utensils, and other items that could be used to protect one's self.

"Okay, I see what you're getting at."

Darren laughed. "Remind me to tell you what I did with a set shish kabob sticks when this is all over. I actually made a wolf shifter pee his pants, and I barely touched him."

Love arched an eyebrow. "That had to be interesting."

"You have no idea. I think that shifters tend to forget that we have a brain because we're human. They look at us and just see someone that is physically weaker than them. They forget we can be just as devious."

Love crossed his arms over his chest. "I like the way you think, doc."

Darren chuckled. "Yeah, well, it tends to get me into trouble on occasion, but Ash seems to like it. Well, after he gets over his initial shock, that is."

"Right." Love moved toward the knife rack. "So, how do you want to do this?"

"We need to get everyone unable to wield a weapon into a safe zone and then set up a series of obstacles and armed people between them and whatever is outside the door."

"What if we put the children and elderly in the escape tunnel and close it up, put the fridge back into place?" Love asked. "We could arm everyone else. In the worst case scenario, if the bad guys get through, hopefully they won't find those we need to protect."

Darren clapped his hands together. "That's a fabulous idea. Let's go get everyone and bring them in here. We can have Matt stay and watch the door, let us know if the coyotes are starting to break through."

Love nodded. Together, they ran back through the dorm and into the other room. Love stopped at the entrance to the room and wondered if people would listen to him and Darren. It wasn't like they were full-blooded wolf shifters, after all.

"Listen up, everyone," Love called out. "Darren and I have come up with a plan. We need you all to move into the main dorm room."

Love grimaced when people just sat there, looking from him to each other. He clapped his hands together. "Move, people!"

No one moved. Love rolled his eyes.

"*Move!*" he shouted mentally.

Several people grabbed their heads and groaned. Babies and small children cried out. A few others looked at Love in fear. He suspected no one had experienced someone like him before.

"I am the beta-mate, and I have told you to move," Love said, trying to look as fierce as he could. "Do as you were told or I will inform the alpha and beta. We're trying to save your lives here, folks."

One by one, people began to stand and shuffle past Love into the dorm room. Many looked at Love as if he had two heads. Still others scooted by him, making sure they didn't touch.

When the last person moved into the dorm, Love glanced over at Darren. "Well, that went well."

"While they may recognize you and know you are the beta-mate," Matt said, "Logan hasn't formally presented you to the alpha and the clan. Until that happens, they will be hesitant to follow your orders."

"That's stupid. They know who I am."

"It doesn't matter," Darren said. "Until Logan presents you before Ash and the clan, they won't accept your mating. Believe me, I know. I went through the same thing myself."

"Yeah, this looks like another one of those laws Asher needs to change because this is ridiculous. It's not always possible to be presented before the clan right away. That doesn't mean I'm not mated." Love rubbed the back of his neck. "I have the damn teeth marks to prove it."

"Yeah, they do like that biting thing, don't they?" Darren laughed.

Love wiggled his eyebrows. "I might, too."

Matt inhaled sharply. "Love, we don't mark the alpha or beta."

“Why not?”

“It’s just not done. The alpha and beta are the ones that do the marking.”

Love sorted. “Yeah, Logan and I already discussed the whole ownership thing. It doesn’t work for me. If he gets to bite me, I get to bite him.”

Darren laughed.

Matt gasped.

Love rolled his eyes.

“Come on, let’s go arm these people before they rebel.” Love waved his hand at the door. “Matt, stay here and watch the door. The moment you think they might be getting through, come let us know. We need as much time as we can to hide everyone.”

Matt nodded and walked over to stand by the doorway to the dorm, leaning back against the wall. Love pointed at him as he and Darren walked through the doorway.

“Do not engage the enemy. I just want you to watch the door, not fight whoever comes through it. Darren and I are going to need you in the other room to help us protect the clan.”

Matt nodded. Without another word, Love walked through the doorway and into the large dorm room. He found those of the clan that were in the room standing around looking confused.

“I know you’re all afraid,” Love said when they looked at him. “But we have a plan. Darren and I need those of you that cannot fight to move into the kitchen. We’re going to hide all of you in a secret passage.”

“And the rest of us, beta-mate?” one woman asked.

“Go into the kitchen and find something to fight with,” Darren said as he stepped up beside Love. “A frying pan, a knife, hell, use a cookie sheet if you have to, whatever you can find to defend yourself.”

The next few moments were filled with chaos as people ran around and prepared for the fight. Love and Darren helped get people

into the secret passage then closed the door and pushed the fridge back in front of it. After that, they made sure everyone had a good weapon to use.

“Anyone that feels the need to shift, you can do so. Otherwise, use whatever weapons you can get your hands on.” Love waved his hands around the large room. “And spread out. We need to protect those in the passageway until others can get here.”

Love turned when he heard Darren suddenly inhale. “What?”

Darren stepped closer and leaned forward, whispering. “Did you let Logan know we’re hiding most everyone in the secret passage? If something happens, they’ll need to know where to look for people.”

“No, I told Logan about someone banging on the bunker door but nothing else. I thought you contacted Asher.”

Darren face paled as he shook his head.

Love rolled his eyes. “Well, hell!”

Chapter 16

Logan grunted as he took another coyote to the ground, landing on top of him. He dug his claws into the shifter's side as deep as he could go then pulled them out, ripping away a good chunk of the man's side. The man gasped then his eyes drifted closed.

Logan jumped to his feet and started toward the next coyote shifter. He'd lost track of how many he'd fought or killed. He just knew there were more coyotes racing toward him.

"Logan."

Logan paused for just a moment when he heard Love's voice in his head then jumped on the next coyote. *"Busy, baby,"* he growled mentally as he gutted the man.

"We're in trouble here."

"What?"

Logan cried out when his momentary pause allowed the shifter underneath him to get in a good shot. He felt blood start to trickle down from the new open wound in his shoulder. Pain racked his body.

Logan pushed the pain and fear aside and tore his claws down the front of the man's chest. He knew it was a fatal wound even as he jumped to his feet and looked around, trying to find Asher.

"Someone is still trying to break through the door to the bunker," Love said through their bond. *"Darren and I put all the young and old into the secret passage in the kitchen and we've armed ourselves, but I'd feel a lot better if you got your ass down here."*

"I'm on my way, baby."

Logan started running toward the bunker, striking out at any coyote he passed. He knew he took a few down but he missed even more. Whoever was attacking the compound had brought an entire army with them. Logan knew if they didn't get the upper hand pretty soon, they would lose the battle.

"Ash," Logan yelled out when he saw the alpha off to one side fighting another shifter, "Darren and Love need us. They're being attacked."

Logan kept running toward the bunker, not in the least bit surprised when Asher took down the coyote he was fighting almost instantly. Asher caught up with him within seconds.

"You and I need to have a little discussion with our mates about appropriate behavior when this is all over," Asher said as ran up beside Logan. "I have serious issue with Dary and Love putting their lives in danger."

"Yeah, you do that." Logan laughed as he ran. "I'll get the popcorn and watch the show. It's sure to be a doozy."

"I'm the alpha."

"And?"

Asher sputtered for a moment then burst out laughing. "Yeah, I don't seem to have much luck being the top wolf around my mate either. That doesn't mean I'm not going to tan Darren's hide for putting himself in danger."

Logan thought that was a grand idea.

They ran into the main compound building and made their way down the stairs to the basement. The closer they got, the slower they went. As they neared the bottom floor that led to the bunker, they could hear a loud pounding noise.

They stopped at the bottom of the steps, and Asher peered around the corner. After a moment, he leaned back and motioned for Logan to take a look. Logan's eyes widened when he did.

A group of at least five coyotes stood in front of the large bunker door. They took turns pounding on the door, trying to break it down.

Logan could already see several large dents in the steel door. If the coyotes kept it up, Logan had no doubt they would break through.

Logan leaned back and looked at Asher. He could see the fear on his alpha's face and drew in a deep breath. If it was okay for the alpha to admit he was scared, then Logan could to.

"What are we going to do?" Logan whispered so only Asher could hear him. Coyotes might be nasty creatures, but they still had excellent hearing.

"There are five of them," Asher said, "and only two of us—"

"Four."

Logan jerked and swung around, his claws drawn. He breathed deeply and pressed his hand against his chest, his heart thundering in his chest, when he saw Cael and Garen standing behind them. He hadn't even heard them come down the stairs.

"What are you doing down here?" Logan snapped. "Shouldn't you two be upstairs taking care of the coyotes up there?"

Cael arched an eyebrow. "Our first duty is to protect Darren and Love, and you know it. We're right where we're supposed to be."

Logan couldn't fault Cael's logic. It was Cael and Garen's duty as guardians to protect the alpha-mate and the beta-mate. Besides, it gave them four men against five, much better odds.

Logan nodded at the two men then turned back to Asher. "It would seem we are now four against five. How do you want to do this?"

"There's no way we can get in there without them seeing us coming. The bunker door is at the end of the hallway. There are no other entrances once we get around this corner. I suggest we rush them and take out as many as we can."

"Agreed." Logan flexed his fingers then tightened them into fists. "Let's take out as many of those bastards as we can."

Logan started to step past Asher when the man stopped him with a hand to his chest. "Try and leave one of them alive, would you? I'd like to know why they are attacking my clan."

“You know why,” Logan said, “because Love killed Mick.”

Asher shook his head. “Not good enough. Love was protecting himself and his mate. It’s perfectly acceptable in our world, and you know it.”

“That doesn’t mean that his father will accept that. As far as he knows, a human killed his son. No matter how many laws you change, Asher, not many fathers will accept a human killing their children.”

“Then he can die right along with the others. He’s breaking the law by attacking my clan. He should have brought his issue before the council.” Asher grinned. “But now I have the right to eliminate the threat to my clan in whatever manner I see fit.”

Logan shivered. Asher’s grin was evil and merciless. He never wanted to be on the receiving end of whatever created that look. Asher Stone could be a cold bastard when he wanted to be.

“Okay, let’s do this then. On three?” Logan glanced at each of his friends. They all nodded. Logan took several deep breaths. “One, two, three.”

They all raced around the corner and down the hallway, shifting into wolf form as they ran. Logan saw Asher, Cael, and Garen each attack one of the coyotes even as he chose one to hit himself.

Two of the coyote shifters saw them coming and braced themselves, claws drawn and teeth bared. The other three had no idea what hit them and were taken out fairly quickly.

Once they were down, Logan and Asher turned their attention to the remaining two. One was fighting Garen, the other was slowly backing down the hallway. Logan growled and started stalking him, Asher right beside him.

“You attacked my clan,” Asher growled. “By shifter law, I have the right to kill you.”

“I have no issue with your clan, alpha,” the man said quickly. “I just want the human that killed my son.”

“So not going to happen,” Logan said. At the same moment, he heard a voice speak from behind him and cringed.

“He’s a human!” the man growled, the corner of his lip curling up in disgust. It was clear to Logan that the man had issues with humans.

“That human would be me.”

“*Get the fuck out of here, Love,*” Logan growled through their bond without looking back at Love. He wasn’t about to take his eyes off the man before him, not even the glare at his mate.

“But...” The man frowned. “You’re not human.”

Surprised by the man’s words, Logan glanced over his shoulder to see a tall, black, furry werewolf slowly walking toward him. He had never seen Love in his shifted form and probably wouldn’t have known him if it wasn’t for the deep steel blue eyes looking back at him.

“Love?” he whispered.

Love winked as he walked by. Logan smirked as he watched Love swagger across the room. His baby finally got his wish. He now had ears and a tail, and they were completely natural.

“I don’t know anything about this hatred between wolves and coyotes,” Love said. “It all seems ridiculous to me. We’re all dogs of one type or another. But whatever, hate whoever you want.”

Logan smiled when Love crossed his arms behind his back and started pacing back and forth in front of the coyote. He was pretty sure he was the only one that knew how scared Love actually was.

“Mick Red kidnapped me and my mate, the beta of Stone Clan. From what I understand, that alone is a death sentence. But, I didn’t know about that law at the time. When I killed Mick, I did so because he threatened my mate.”

“I don’t believe you,” the man said. “Mick knows the laws. He never would have broken one of them.”

“Believe what you want. That still doesn’t change the fact that it happened. Mick came onto this compound and knocked me and Logan out. He kidnapped us and took us to some sort of dungeon

where he tortured us. He was positive that you would approve as you hate humans so much.”

Logan could see the change in the man’s face and demeanor as the man realized Love spoke the truth. He was pretty sure the man already knew his son was warped. Love just put it into words for him.

“That wasn’t the only time Mick accosted me either. He attacked me once in a bar when I refused to have sex with him. Reed, the Stone Clan enforcer, his son, and mate were all witnesses to that attack. Later that night, Mick came to the moon festival here at the compound and again attacked me, only this time, he tried to drag me out of here, too. My mate, the beta of Stone Clan, as well as many of the clan members can attest to that.”

“There’s a lot of evidence against your son,” Logan said as he stepped forward and stood next to Love. “I’m sure, given the need, Love and I can both find the dungeon your son held us in. I’m sure with that plus testimony from everyone involved, the death of your son will be considered justified.”

“The killing of my son will never be justified!” the man growled and lunged at Love, his claws drawn.

Before Logan could react and push his mate to safety behind him, Love stepped forward and stuck something shiny straight into the man’s gut. Logan’s mouth dropped open as shock filled him at how quickly Love moved.

The man grabbed onto Love’s shoulders for a moment, the life slowly fading from his eyes, and then he slumped to the floor. Love followed him down, squatting next to him. He carefully covered the dead man’s eyes with his hand and closed them.

“I never wanted things to be this way,” Love said softly. His voice was laced heavily with sadness. “I was just protecting the man I love.”

Chapter 17

Love stared at the two small red tears tattooed by the corner of his eye. He hadn't understood why Logan had the tattoo he did until he killed two men himself. And then it became blaringly clear.

It was important to remember the people he killed, even if he had done it in self-defense of himself and others. Remembering wouldn't stop Love from killing again to keep people safe, but it would give him incentive to try and resolve things before it got to that point.

"Are you going to stare at those things all day long?" Logan asked from where he sat naked on the end of the bed. "They look fine."

Love rolled his eyes and turned away from the mirror. "You're just saying that because you like the tramp stamp on my ass better."

Logan grinned. "Technically, the tattoo is at the bottom of your lower back, not on your ass."

Love sauntered over to Logan and sat down on his lap, straddling his legs. "Face it, sexy, you like having your name tattooed on my *ass*."

Love groaned as Logan's hands stroked down his back to caress the tattoo on his lower back just above his ass. It had been expertly done, Logan's name spelled out in cursive, surrounded by Celtic knots. Love had it done two weeks ago as a surprise to Logan when he got the tears tattooed on his face.

Logan chuckled. "I won't lie to you, Love. I do like having my name on your body. It lets everyone know you're mine."

"I thought the mating mark did that." Love groaned again and dropped his head back when Logan started nuzzling his throat.

“The mating mark only works for those of us that are shifters. It doesn’t work for humans, and I want everyone to know you are taken.”

“Possessive much?”

Laughter burst from Love’s lips when Logan growled and sank his teeth into the soft skin between Love’s shoulder and neck. His laughter quickly turned to an all out groan of pleasure as Logan’s fingers pushed into his ass.

“Fuck, the things you do to me,” Love groaned as he started pushing up and down with his hips, riding Logan’s fingers. There was only one thing that felt better than having Logan’s fingers in his ass, and he was pretty sure from the feral look on Logan’s face, he was going to get that soon, too.

“The things you do for me,” Logan replied. “I love watching you dance on my fingers.”

“I...I dance be-better on your cock,” Love panted. His eyes almost rolled back into his head as wave of pleasure rolled through him when Logan inserted a third finger into his tight ass.

“So, dance for me, baby.”

“Oh god” Love groaned when Logan lifted him then brought him back down on his cock, impaling him in one fluid thrust. Sitting on Logan’s lap, Love’s own gravity pushed Logan’s cock deep inside his ass.

“I’m going to fuck you like this until you come for me, Love,” Logan said as he started moving, thrusting, pounding up into Love. “And then I’m going to fuck you from behind so I can see my name on your ass.”

Logan’s hands gripped Love’s butt cheeks, tightening with each word he spoke. Love grabbed Logan’s shoulders and held on. He used his leg muscles to lift himself up and slam back down onto Logan’s hard cock.

When Logan suddenly pulled him closer, what was left of Love’s mind melted into a pile of lust filled goo. His body was pressed up

tightly against Logan's. His aching cock was trapped between his own body and Logan's light furred abdomen. Each thrust of Logan's body against his drove his cock between them. It was like being massaged by furry silk.

"Oh, harder, Logan," Love demanded. "Please!"

"Is that what you want, baby?" Logan asked. His voice was husky, his muscles taut. "Do you want me to fuck you into the wall?"

"Oh, god, yes!" Love screamed.

Love didn't know how Logan did it, but the man continued to thrust in and out of his ass as he stood up and walked across the room, pushing Love's body into the wall. Love vaguely remembered being in a position similar when he met Logan, and then all thoughts flowed away as Logan hooked Love's legs over his arms and started pounding into him.

Love's hard length was still sandwiched between them, being stroked and massaged with each thrust of Logan's body. Love gripped large handfuls of Logan's hair as his body started to shake, his orgasm just seconds away.

"Logan," he whispered.

Logan's deep amber eyes met Love's then the man tilted his head to one side, giving Love his submission. Love cried out and leaned forward, sinking his teeth into the soft flesh of Logan's throat. Hot, sweet blood filled his mouth, cementing his claim on Logan.

Despite being able to shift numerous times over the last couple of weeks and fucking like bunnies, Love had yet to give Logan the mating bite. He knew he needed to shift into his third form in order for the mating bond to be complete and let it sweep over him.

Love heard Logan cry out, but it was overshadowed by his own cry as the fire burning inside of him turned into an inferno. Love gratefully jumped into the fire and burned up as spunk erupted between them.

Logan continued to thrust into Love as his orgasm swept through him so forcefully that it made spots appear before his eyes. As he

started to slowly come down, he shifted back to human form. His chest heaved with each drag of air into his lungs.

Logan suddenly stopped thrusting. Love groaned in protest until Logan lowered him to his shaky legs and spun him around. One forceful lunge and Logan was once again balls deep inside of Love's tight grip.

Love pressed his hands against the wall to brace himself and pushed his ass out, giving Logan better access. He heard Logan's low growl as the man started to shift. His heart beat faster as the man loving on him grew larger, hairier.

Large thick, clawed, hands gripped Love's hips as a massive cock impaled Love over and over again at a speed that almost made Love lose his balance. Logan was ferocious, intense. Love knew that the wolf had taken over and wanted his mate, the wolf wanted Love.

Love pushed back far enough that he could bend his head forward, baring the nape of his neck to his mate. Logan roared then sank his canines deep into Love's neck. The pain was instantaneous but followed swiftly by pleasure so intense that Love felt his cock harden right back up.

Each pull of Logan's mouth felt like a pull on his cock. The connection was there and so strong that Love felt pre-cum leak from the tip of his cock. He was so close to coming again that his knees started to give out.

Logan grabbed him around the hips and swung him around. His teeth only pulled away from Love's neck when he was lowered to the floor, landing on his hands and knees. Logan never even stopped pounding into him.

Love knew he'd be sore tomorrow. He didn't care. Logan was finally fucking him like a man possessed, or wolf possessed, instead of treating him like spun glass. Logan was fucking him like he would die if he didn't. And Love craved every moment of it.

When Logan suddenly grabbed him by the shoulders and yanked him back, Love willingly went. He tilted his head to one side. Logan's teeth immediately sank into his neck again.

"Mine!" Logan growled through their bond.

"Yes!"

"My Love."

"Always."

Love wrapped his arm back and around Logan's head, holding his mate in place as the man stiffened and filled his ass with his hot release. Logan's body shuddered, his hips thrusting forward several times as the man rode out his orgasm.

When he finally stopped moving and extracted his teeth, his body slowly shifted back to human. Love bemoaned the loss of Logan's silky furred body, but he also liked the way Logan's human hands caressed his body as their breathing returned to normal.

Love turned and kissed Logan, claiming his lips just as assuredly as he had claimed the man himself. He put everything he felt, all the love and tenderness he felt in his heart into the kiss.

Love leaned away from Logan and smiled up at the big man. "Love you, sexy."

Logan grinned. "I love you, too, Love."

Love frowned when Logan started to chuckle. "What?"

Logan glanced up to the top of Love's head. Confused, Love turned to look in the mirror. His mouth dropped open when he saw two black fuzzy ears growing out of the top of his very human head.

"I still have ears."

"It seems that you do."

Love turned back to Logan. "Can I keep them?"

"Do you want to keep them?"

Love glanced at Logan, noting the amused look on his mate's face. Love reached up and stroked his fingers over the small furry ears. He shuddered when a sudden spike of desire shot through his body.

“Oh, this might not be a good idea,” Love whispered.

“Oh?” Logan’s eyebrow arched.

Love’s eyes widened when Logan glanced at his ears and a wicked grin crossed his lips. He suddenly realized that his very real ears were an erogenous zone and his mate had just figured it out.

The man’s pleasure in what he had just discovered was obvious. Love felt Logan’s cock hardening inside of him. Logan enjoyed the power he had over Love’s body.

Love groaned. His entire body trembled. He was so doomed. “Logan,” Love warned.

“Yes, Love?” Logan’s eyes held a twinkle of lust burning his amusement.

“You wouldn’t.”

“I’d do anything to keep you happy, Love.”

“Oh.” Love’s eyes fluttered closed as Logan reached up and stroked his fingers over Love’s ears. “I am so utterly fucked.”

“No,” Logan whispered, “you are so utterly loved.”

THE END

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stormy believes the only thing sexier than a man in cowboy boots is two or three men in cowboy boots. She also believes in love at first sight, soul Mates, true love, and happy endings.

Stormy lives in the great Northwest region of the USA, with her gorgeous husband and soul Mate, six very active teenagers, two boxer/collie puppies, one old biddy cat, and one fish.

You can usually find her cuddled in bed with a book in her hand and a puppy in her lap, or on her laptop, creating the next sexy man for one of her stories. Stormy welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website at www.stormyglenn.com

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