



Furry ENDEAVORS

Christina J.
Loren



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by Christina J. Loren

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Furry Endeavor
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*A dream you dream alone is only a dream.
A dream you dream together is reality.
~John Lennon*

*We do not have to make this journey alone.
Thank you to everyone who has supported me,
especially my editor, Sherri. Without you,
Christina would not exist today.*

CHAPTER ONE

"Look Adin, just because you're a hunk, doesn't mean you'll get into my pants..." Lance trailed off, thinking of what he really wanted to do with Adin. "Although, it does give you an advantage."

Adin chuckled, moved closer, and a low growl escaped his throat. "What *will* get me into your pants?"

Damn, this guy knew how to push all the right buttons.

"By telling me what the hell just happened outside."

Adin leaned back slightly, and Lance's cold stare met his lover's fiery gaze.

"It was freezing out there in the blizzard. I kept you warm until we got inside." Adin wrapped his arms firmly around Lance.

"I know you kept me warm, but what I want to know is why you didn't freeze without a coat. I had on a thick, heavy one and was still cold."

"My body adjusts easily to fluctuating temperatures."

Lance nuzzled closer into Adin. He was a furnace; he was *his* furnace.

"We should get ready. My parents are expecting us in a couple hours, and if we don't show up early, we'll never hear the end of it." Lance pulled away and started to undress, heading toward the bathroom. He needed a warm shower before going outdoors again.

"There's lots of time, but for now," Adin began, following on his heels, "all I want to do is kiss every inch of your body."

Lance turned on the water, but before he could straighten, Adin was behind him—naked—pressing his hardening member against Lance's aching hole. *Fuck*. His lover reached up, took a handful of Lance's deep brown hair, and pulled back. Lance wanted nothing more than to give into his urges and ride Adin's cock till he came over and over again.

"Not now. I promise when we get back, we'll fuck like rabbits."

"Swear?"

"I swear." Lance glanced back with a grin. "Now get in so we can go." He jumped in the shower with Adin close on his tail.

"You know..." Lance twisted toward Adin and lathered up the soap. "You never did tell me why we aren't seeing your parents for the holidays."

"My parents are the kind you want to avoid during the winter months. They can get kind of"—Adin turned away—"secluded."

"What does that mean?" Lance began to rub Adin's back, working his way downward. His smooth, lightly tanned skin sent little electric charges up his own back. *Tasty*, he thought. He loved how the water dripped down his lover's spine and flowed over his bubble butt. After cupping each ass cheek, Lance slipped his fingers in and out of the warm crack and continued, "Everyone wants to be alone and not leave home during the winter."

"Look, we don't need to go and see them. They don't expect me to come home for the holidays." Adin faced Lance, then both men looked down. Adin's cock was hard as a rock. "See what you made me do?" He grabbed hold of his thick, raging hard-on.

Lance kneeled, gripped his lover's shaft, tilted his head back, and engulfed the entire length. Adin's large crown bumped the back of his throat, triggering his gag reflex, but Lance was determined to take it all. The sweet scent of Adin's flesh drove him crazy. His chin met Adin's balls before he retreated and released his partner's cock. Lance looked up, biting his lower lip with a sly grin.

"I promise I'll finish when we return tonight."

"Why did you go and do that?" A low groan escaped Adin's throat.

“To show you what I want to do—later.”

Adin rinsed off and stepped out. “Well we better get going. We don’t want to miss the festivities.” He rolled his eyes and handed Lance a towel.

“Don’t be like that. You know my parents will be happy to see you—even if you’re fucking their son.” Lance had to laugh at his own statement. He knew his parents didn’t approve of his change in lifestyle, but they’d never been openly opposed it.

CHAPTER TWO

Lance pulled into the drive and turned the car off. The two men sat in silence. He could feel the uneasiness pouring off Adin. He knew his lover hated visiting his parents even though he'd never admit it. But Lance couldn't blame him, because they always brought up how much they thought he would do better with a woman.

"I guess dad salted the drive. It normally freezes over and turns into an ice rink," Lance said, trying his best to take their minds off what was to come. He turned to face Adin. "Ready for this? Don't forget to smile." He gave a great big fake grin.

"Don't be like that. It'll be fine." Adin's warm hand landed on Lance's leg.

"Last chance to leave." Lance started to put the keys back in the ignition.

"Stop. Let's go; I'm getting hungry."

They got out of the now cold car and walked up to the door. Lance extended his hand and pressed the doorbell. "Looks like they aren't home. We should go." He turned just as the door opened, and he was

greeted not by one family member but his parents and siblings. *Great. Force everyone into what you want them to be mom and dad.*

Each person wore Christmas colors and broad, fake smiles—at least his siblings were. He knew they hated Christmas as much as he did but were forced into it. Being made to partake in festivities wasn't their idea of fun. Years of wearing the same style of sweater, singing the same carols, sharing the same stories felt more like torment than Christmas.

"Lance! Glad you could make it. Come in, come in." His mother grabbed Lance and Adin and yanked them inside.

"Adin, would you like some nog?" Lance's father asked as he made his way toward the kitchen.

"Never liked the stuff, sorry Henry," Adin replied, trailing after his dad.

"So Lance, how's work?" Joyce asked.

"It's good, Mom. Off for a few weeks."

"That's good, dear." She paused, and leaned in close. Her salt and pepper hair fell forward over her shoulder. She smelled like how the holidays should be: sweet like sugarplums with a hint of nutmeg. "How's Adin doing? Your father seems to be warming up to him, but I just don't know." His mom pulled back, then sat in one of dining room chairs.

"He's fine too, Mom. What don't you know about? We've been seeing each other for close to a year now." Lance joined her at the table.

"He seems like a nice young man, but why can't you find a girl and settle down? Enough of this nonsense." She lifted her hand and gave a dismissive wave.

"I can't believe you just said that. I love *him*, Mom—not *her*. I want to spend the rest of my life with him. This isn't a phase." Lance stood. His face was hot, and he knew he must have been three different shades of red.

"Lance dear, come sit back down. You know I worry about... everything that could go wrong. At least with a woman things are less"—he looked around as if to see if anyone was listening—"risky."

"Mom, stop. I am not having this conversation with you again. Every time we see each other, it's the same argument, and it will always be the same answer—always." Lance stormed into the kitchen where Adin and his father seemed to be getting along a lot better than he and his mother had been.

"...would just need cleaning." Henry looked over to Lance. "Ah, look who's come to chat with his old man."

"Not now, Dad." Lance swung his head in Adin's direction and grabbed his hand. "We're leaving."

Joyce entered just as Lance had Adin in tow.

"Lance. Wait," she said, reaching out as if to hold onto him but not quite making the connection. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean for it to sound the way it did. Just stay for a bit."

Lance spun around to meet his mother face to face. "No, Mom. Every time we see each other, it's always about me finding a girl. Well, I have news for you—for both of you." He pulled Adin in close. "This man is not going anywhere. I plan to grow old with him and be happy—together." He placed his arm around Adin's shoulder, holding him tighter. "This is who I want to marry."

His mother's jaw dropped as her stare was met with an icy glare.

"Well that's great, son." Henry broke the silence, then pushed past Joyce and shook Adin's hand. "When did you propose?" He glanced back at Lance.

"I haven't yet. But thanks to you two"—he threw his hands up as if in surrender—"I had to ask him this way." They were always stepping into his life when he didn't want them to.

"We couldn't be happier for you." His father embraced Lance in a warm hug.

"Ya. One of you is happy. Mom still has her jaw on the ground." He pushed out of his father's arms. "It's best if we just leave. Mom has had enough stress to last her for another year."

Lance and Adin made their way to the front door. Luckily, they were able to get in and get out without much communication with his siblings. They were probably hiding someplace where there was a TV, so they didn't have to be social. Which was fine with him. He hated trying to carry on a conversation with them anyway. Like his mother, they were always hammering him with questions, making sure he knew what he was doing. His two older brothers were constantly nagging him about finding someone to settle down with. His younger sister incessantly wanted Lance's advice on clothes or men—but she was way too young to be dating in his eyes.

They closed the front door, shutting out Lance's mother begging them at least to stay for supper, then hopped in the car. Lance shoved the key in the ignition and started the engine. But instead of popping it in gear, they sat there, and Lance looked over to the man who now knew his intentions.

"So..."

"So." Adin smiled back. And his heart melted.

"Merry Christmas, I guess." He laughed and took Adin's hand into his. "I wanted to wait and ask you later tonight when we were alone. But I guess my parents beat me to it."

"How about if we go about it as though I'd never found out."

"How can you forget something like that? It's not that easy."

"Trust me. Just carry on this evening as if everything had been planned this way."

Lance put the car in reverse and backed out of the drive. He did trust Adin, but Lance wasn't sure what he had in mind. *Trust me* was a loaded expression. It had many outcomes, and with Adin, the possibilities were endless.

When they made it back to the house a long hour later, Lance took Adin into the bedroom. He started changing into something more comfortable while Adin watched. At the dresser, Lance grabbed the silver ring he'd hidden in the back of his sock drawer.

No point hiding it now.

He'd considered a white gold band, but this one spoke to him the moment he'd seen it in the jeweler's case. Besides, silver was his favorite metal. It shined when polished and looked so elegant. Lance smiled and tucked it into his jeans pocket, got up, and returned to Adin.

"Sorry you had to bear witness to my families love."

"Hey, that's nothing. My family fights more than you think."

"Can't be as worse as tonight."

"We get into fist fights, among other things."

"What does that mean, 'among other things'?"

"It's not important. Weren't you going to ask me something when we got home?"

"It is important. This is the second time today you've brought that up."

"Ask me what you were going to, and I'll tell you what I mean."

"You are difficult. But very cute and convincing." Lance leaned in closer to Adin who was now on the bed. "Adin, ever since I met you, I knew that you were the one that I wanted to spend the rest of my life with. I fell in love with every piece of you—every inch, every breath, every heart beat."

Lance reached into his pocket and brought out the silver ring. He'd waited for two months to find the right time to ask Adin, and

Christmas felt right. He reached for Adin's hand and then slid the band on.

Adin jumped, grabbed the ring, snatched it off, and threw it across the room. It landed next to the wastebasket with a *ping*, causing Lance to jolt his head around. He glanced back to his lover. *What the fuck?* Then it hit him that Adin wasn't being an ass or joking. He was clutching his hand as if in pain, and a band of charred skin circled his finger.

"What was that all about?" Lance glanced up to see Adin's brown eyes filled with irritation and confusion. "Are you okay?"

"I'm allergic to silver," he snapped. "I thought I'd mentioned that to you?"

"I would have remembered something like that." Lance looked down at Adin's hand. The burn was quickly mending in front of his eyes. How was that possible?

"I heal fast too," Adin replied hastily.

Confused, Lance narrowed his eyes. "I can see that. What the hell?"

"My answer to your question is, yes. I will marry you." Adin got off the bed and took a few steps forward.

"Now what is it you were going to say to me?" Lance began. Adin turned and faced his fiancé. "Does it have to do with your ability to recover at lightning speed and your apparent sudden allergy to silver?"

"It does. Lance, there isn't another person out there, besides my family, who knows what I am. I love you and have complete faith in you—in us. And if we're to spend the rest of our natural lives together, then we have to be completely honest with one another. If my family knew I was even considering telling you our little secret..." Adin shook his head. "They would rip me limb from limb."

"What do you mean 'what you are'? It's not like you're anything other than human." Lance gave a chuckle at the thought he'd just asked someone who wasn't human to marry him.

"I'm not exactly human—I mean—I am human most of the time." Adin's gaze penetrated deep into his soul. "I'm a werewolf."

Lance laughed. "Ya, right. And I'm a vampire." He stood and walked toward Adin.

"I'm being serious, Lance. My family isn't human either. We're werewolves."

Lance's face went cold as if all the blood had drained into his beating heart. He wasn't a vampire, and his fiancé wasn't a werewolf.

"That's impossible. Werewolves are fictitious—myths, nothing more." He shook his head.

"Well... Not exactly." Adin leaned against the wall. "I'm not expecting you to believe me right away. I know it'll take time. It took time for me to even believe my parents when they told me at sixteen that I, too, was a werewolf."

"You're right. I don't believe you. But I still love you, even if you're sounding crazy." His fiancé was coming out of left field to be tossing something so bizarre and so stupid that it bordered lunacy. He'd play along for now, but he wasn't buying it. Adin had to be making this up to avoid explaining what was really going on with him. Only moments ago, he'd asked the love of his life to marry him, and he wasn't going to call him on it. Not yet. Nothing else was going to spoil their night.

Lance walked up to Adin and put his arms around his large, six-foot-three frame. His body was burning up, warmer than usual. "Are you feeling all right? You're pretty warm."

"Side effect of being a werewolf. Trust me; it can be a blessing and a curse."

"Is that why you were warm during that blizzard?"

"Yes. My body constantly runs hotter—a steady 102F, but when I feel endangered or I'm turned on, my body reacts and grows even warmer."

"That's why we never need a blanket in bed over us in the middle of winter."

"No, that would be because you can't keep your hands off me." Adin leaned down and kissed Lance's forehead.

"You wish." Lance pushed away.

"Anyway, that doesn't change the fact that I am and always will be a werewolf. You'll just have to accept it since you want to marry me."

"True... So can you change at will?" He had to ask. If for no other reason than to see how far Adin was going to go with this concoction?

"Werewolves can. Yes. But I'm working on that aspect. Since I'm 27, I can only change when I get upset or am in danger."

What is up? Adin is acting as if this werewolf shit is for real. "Define in danger? What are your limits? I don't want to be fighting with you at some point in the future and then suddenly, poof, you're a werewolf."

"When I do change, my clothes come off."

Why is he avoiding my questions? "As in...you have to take them off? Or they get shredded like what's-his-name in that fanger movie."

"Not shredded, but they do fall off. A wolf doesn't have the same form as a human. You know, it's kind of hard to keep clothes on a wolf."

"So when you change back to a human, where do you find clothes?"

"Normally I wake up in bed human again. I don't remember changing back, but I do remember everything I do as a wolf. So far, I haven't had the bad luck of trying to find clothes."

"How much danger do you have to be in to change?" Lance tried again. He sat on the bed and motioned for Adin to sit beside him but was politely rejected when he kneeled in front of Lance.

I haven't figured that part out yet, and it scares me." There was sadness in his eyes. "As far as I can tell, it depends on the situation. I could be in a fistfight and not change. Whereas with other times, all it could take is a push. If I feel my life is threatened, then that's when the change occurs. But you shouldn't ever have to worry. I would never feel like my life is threatened when I'm with you, even in the hottest of arguments."

"Just because it hasn't happened in the past, doesn't mean it won't happen at all." Lance knew Adin couldn't control his temper as much as he said he could, and things could get out of hand. But that would only be a problem if all this shit were real. "Besides, I *still* don't believe you are a werewolf, so no need to worry..."

"Lance. Please—"

"You know, I said to myself I would let you run with this, because I love you. But come on Adin, enough playing about. Why are you working so hard to make me believe something like this? What is really going on?" He knew he sounded harsh, but enough was enough. Answers needed to come out—for both their sakes.

"I'm trying to tell you the truth, but I don't want to freak you out." Adin rubbed his hand over his face, then leveled his gaze on Lance.

The way his partner looked into his eyes, it was as if he were reaching for something—searching for the right words. He understood the truth could be hard for some people, but Lance had never expected Adin to try and pull the wool over his eyes.

"What's freaking me out is the way you're dragging this on. Either show me proof or drop it." Lance shouted. He hated the fact this had gone on to the point that he was now yelling. But dammit, he was beyond irritated that his lover was holding on to this delusion that he could shift into a wolf.

"There isn't much proof, other than this." Adin reached out and placed his hand on Lance's leg. His palm grew warm and then began to sprout new hair—the color of burned honey. "I can't shift my entire

body at will, but I can manage a localized change." His fingers curled and claws erupted near his knuckles.

Lance's pulse quickened, and his breathing reduced to short, rapid pants.

Holy fuck! He's telling the truth.

"Okay, you can stop now. *This*"—Lance pointed to Adin's morphed appendage—"is creeping me out." He nodded.

"See, this is exactly why I didn't want to show you at first." Adin frowned and pulled his arm back. "I knew it would make you uncomfortable." He shook his hand, and the fur started to disappear. His fingers uncurled, and the claws retracted.

"I'm not uncomfortable." Lance took Adin's hand and examined the now normal appearing flesh. He rubbed where the claws had been. It didn't feel any different from his own skin.

"Then why do you look like you're ready to be buried; your face is as white as snow."

"It's not every day that one sees fur and claws on another human. Let alone their lover. Besides, I'm more freaked out by the fact I didn't believe you. I shouldn't have doubted you, but it just sounded so..."

"Strange? Abnormal? Wrong? Like a lie?" His gaze warmed. "I understand. Really, I do."

"Ya, it sounded like something out of the latest teen movie. You know, the kind where the main character confesses their undying love for the other person; then it turns out that they're supernatural..." Lance shook his head, holding Adin's gaze. "It never ends well for them."

"Then let's not make the same mistake as they do." Adin smiled.

Lance knew they wouldn't if he'd stopped second guessing Adin. He had to trust him if they were going to grow old together—that is if Adin could grow old. He'd have to add that to his list of questions for later. But for now... Lance was more than ready to show his fiancé just how much he meant to him. He reached down between Adin's legs and gave a gentle squeeze.

"What's this all about?" Adin's eyebrows rose as he softly moaned.

"I did promise I would finish when we got home, and we are home." He gave another little squeeze.

"That you did. But why not test our boundaries a bit tonight. You know what I am, so why don't we try something different. Us wolves have a higher sex drive when we're outdoors." Adin trailed his hand down Lances shoulder then along his spine. Shivers went

up and down his entire body; yes, he wanted to explore everything with Adin.



CHAPTER THREE

Lance followed Adin into the freezing night. Washington State had thousands of forested acres, and Lance happened to own a small, small part: a mere ten acres. He hugged Adin closer and tighter; Lance was frozen solid. Adin had better get them to where they were going—and fast—if he wanted his cock to be somewhere other than receded into his own body.

Snow piled high on the trees and prevented Lance from seeing any further than five or six trees in front of his face. He sure hoped Adin knew where they were going, because he had no clue. For all he knew, Adin could be leading him deep into the woods, so he could have his way with him. He prayed to God that was the case. He would give himself over to him in any way, shape, or form. He just hoped he would not have the pleasure of seeing one of those forms be Adin as a wolf.

Lance had lost track of how many trees they'd passed and for how long they'd been walking. One, two, maybe three miles? Must be

past his property line by now, but he couldn't be sure. The forest surrounding his place wasn't a great place to take a midnight stroll, but he wasn't going to complain. Somehow, he knew if anything were to happen, Adin would be there to protect him. He squeezed the love of his life a bit harder.

"It's okay. We're almost there." Just as Adin had finished reassuring him, they reached a small clearing.

A log cabin sat off to one side surrounded by a thicket of pine trees and snow. A large chimney of giant grey stone slabs anchored one side of the dwelling. Along one of the outside walls, two rows of cut wood were neatly stacked. An overhanging section of the cedar shake roof covered the front porch, and two relatively thin poles supported the center with another two on each side. Thin wisps of smoke rose from the chimney and filled the air with a slight distinct smell of cedar.

"Oh my God, Adin. What is this place?"

"You like it? I come here sometimes when I need to be myself." He led Lance toward the front porch.

"Did you build this?" Lance looked around in astonishment. *How could someone build something like this—alone?*

"I did. Although it did take me the better part of two years." They stopped at the front door. "Come," Adin said and swung the door wide. "I have something I want to show you."

The cabin looked small on the outside, but when Lance stepped over the threshold, it was warm, cozy, and everything he could ever want, including Adin.

"Have a seat. Right now, there's only a bed... But I do hope to have more furniture soon. It's hard to make seats in the middle of winter. The trees are frozen and take too long to thaw, not to mention all the sap that leaks out."

"I bet." Lance looked around then plopped onto the edge of the mattress. "By the looks of things, you sure do know a lot about living in the woods."

"Well you get good at it when you never know where you'll end up. Ever since I've been out on my own, I had to learn to cope with whatever I had at my disposal. I moved from one place to the next, never setting down roots...until now," Adin came and sat beside him, his presence along with the fire heating him from the inside out.

"Wait." Lance's gaze darted between Adin and the roaring blaze in the hearth that had been waiting on them. "How did you know we would come here?"

"Lucky guess?" Adin shrugged.

"Doubtful." Lance glared at Adin. "Truth?"

"What do you mean?" Adin chuckled.

"You can be honest with me. Heaven only knows how many more secrets are locked away in that head of yours," Lance retorted. He loved teasing his love.

"Honestly?"

"Yes. I'm waiting."

"Well, I found the ring the other day and assumed you were going to ask me something over Christmas. Turns out, I was right." Adin looked at his feet. "I wanted to surprise you with something too, so right before I saved you from the freezing cold earlier today, I was here, getting things ready. I made a fire and hoped it wouldn't go out by the time we arrived. Speaking of..." Adin got up, put another log on the fire, then returned to his seat.

"How did you find the ring?"

"I went snooping. I've always snooped for my presents, ever since I was a kid."

"You know, if you weren't so cute, I would hit you. It was supposed to be a surprise!" Lance couldn't keep a straight face.

"So you keep telling me. Anyway, that's how we ended up here." Adin leaned over and kissed Lance.

Lance freely gave himself over as his tongue met with Adin's. He took his fiancé's lower lip gently into his mouth, sucked, then released. A knock sounded on the door.

"How the...?" Adin stood. "Who's there?"

"It's me, dumb ass—your brother. Dad wants to see you. Now."

"What for? I told him I wanted nothing more to do with him."

"Do you think he would have indulged me by letting me know why he wanted you? No. Now get your ass out here. Oh, and tell your human friend to wait inside. We don't want any witnesses."

"Witnesses?" Lance darted from the bed and grasped Adin's arm. "To what? What does he mean, Adin? And what do you think your father wants with you?"

"I don't know. But stay here." Adin turned, pulling free from Lance's grip and faced him. "There's a rifle under the bed. The shells are in the pantry beside the...well there isn't anything in the pantry but the shells." He started to leave then swung back around. "Be careful with the gun, and brace yourself if you have to use it. It can dislocate your shoulder if you're not wise with it."

"Wait. You're telling *me* to be careful when you're going out there with your brother who's spouting words like *witnesses* and sounds like he's pissed enough to rip your head off?" Lance stepped forward. "No. I'm coming with you. Whatever your father has to say, he can say it in front of me."

"No. Now stay here." Adin's voice was firm, unwavering. Lance hated when he spoke like that.

He reversed his step and sank back onto the bed. God only knew what was about to happen. The door to the cabin clicked shut, and the room went deathly silent except for the crackle of the fire.

Lance had lost track of how long it had been since Adin left, and the mind-numbing hours spent alone, staring into the fire, waiting for his fiancé to return was taking its toll. It had been a long, stressful day, and Lance was dying to lie down. But he couldn't allow himself sleep until he knew Adin was safe. In the end, though, his body's need to shut down overcame his mind's desire to wait for his lover. His eyelids drifted close.

The howl of a wolf startled Lance back into consciousness. His gaze jerked to the window. It was still dark out, so he couldn't have been asleep for more than thirty minutes. *Just a wolf*, he thought and turned over.

Then it hit him.

Adin is a werewolf, and said he could only shift when he was upset or in danger. He jumped out of bed and headed to the nearest window. He craned his neck, trying to catch any movement in the dark. Nothing. Lance ran to the pane by the door. Still nothing. He rushed back to the bed, reached for the rifle, just to be on the safe side, then to the pantry, and grabbed some shells. If there were things such as werewolves, he hoped like hell a gun could slow them down long enough for him to get away.

He edged up to the door. If it were only Adin out there, he would feel like an ass pulling a gun on his fiancé. But if there were others...

Lance took a deep breath and opened the door. The shells dropped from his hand as the one the thing he never wanted to see stared back at him.

A werewolf.

"Adin?" Lance croaked, but the wolf growled and advanced two steps.

Oh God...

Not Adin.

CHAPTER FOUR

Lance dropped to the floor and grabbed a few shells. *Damn*. Why the hell hadn't he loaded the gun? How stupid could he have been? His hands couldn't move fast enough to get them into the barrel. Fear and anticipation had the air seized in Lance's lungs. At any second, he knew the animal's fangs would be tearing at his flesh. But for some reason, the wolf stood there, watching him from the porch. *Thank God*. But why had he not attacked? What was he waiting for?

As swiftly as he'd dropped them, Lance stood and stumbled a few steps back, fumbling with the stock. Once loaded and ready, he held up the barrel and pointed it at the beast. Slowly, it advanced inside, confident, and snarling with each step. Toying with his prey.

He fired.

The gun bucked like a bronco and slammed into his shoulder. The wolf ducked as if instinct had kicked in. *Damn! Missed!* He should have taken those lessons his parents had tried to set up for him.

Lance loaded the rifle again, took a deep breath, aimed, and pulled the trigger. As if in slow motion, he watched as the bullet ex-

ited the end of the barrel and landed a few inches from the wolf. *Fuck sakes!* The idiot that he was had put it in backward.

The wolf encroached, and Lance was running out of space—as well as ammunition. His back was getting warmer. *Shit.* He was closing in on the fire. His left foot bumped the fireplace poker, and he glanced down. *Yes.* He might be able to fend off the wolf at a closer range, because he certainly wasn't worth a damn with a gun. He bent over and picked it up. Since he didn't have to aim much with a poker; it made a much better weapon.

Lance held the iron out in front of him. If the animal came at him, he'd have to move quickly. He could jump to the side, and the wolf would dive straight into the fire. But that wouldn't be great; he'd catch fire and only run back out. Lance would have to be faster. Strike the beast and kill it if he were to survive.

At that moment, the feral creature lunged.

Lance swung.

And his blow hit home.

The sharp tip pierced the animal's thick fur and lodged in its flesh. The smoky grey wolf yelped and crumpled to the floor at the exact second Adin appeared in the doorway—naked.

"Where the hell have you been? And why are you naked?"

"Sorry, I was held up with Father. On the way back, I felt something was...wrong, as if I were being watched and followed. Their eyes pierced into my soul like a bloodthirsty killer and allowed me to shift, because I felt as though my life was in danger. But on a positive note, it did help me to make it here faster." Adin crossed the threshold and closed the door. "Are you all right?" His gaze fell immediately to the shells scattered across the wood, then swung around and assessed the new hole through the doorframe.

"I see the gun came in handy," he said and turned toward Lance.

"You need to show me how to use that"—he motioned to the rifle lying on floor by the table—"before I hurt someone—or me."

"Looks like you didn't need it that badly. The poker did the trick."

Adin pointed down to the unconscious wolf on the floor with an iron rod sticking out of his side... He kneeled beside the animal as if inspecting the carcass. "This one looks familiar."

"How can you tell?"

"The marks on the fur." He waved his hand over a lighter patch of fur. "These show his age. This one is older than I am. And these"—Adin pointed to dark spots, which looked like Dalmatian dots in two circular patterns—"tells me this wolf is from my family." He stood.

"Your family? This wolf tried to kill me. Does that mean that your family hates me?" Christ, he sounded defensive and insecure. But damn, how else was he to feel when people he hadn't even met were apparently out to assassinate him.

"Not exactly. But when I arrived at my father's, he looked more puzzled than me on why I truly was there."

"So why were you there then?"

"My brother's up to something. For some reason, he wanted me to leave you alone so someone could attack you. Probably because he knows it would annoy the crap out of me and make me rebel. When I talked to father, he said that he hasn't seen my brother in over two years, which is much longer than normal."

"Normal? He disappears often?"

"He's fifteen years my senior, and for as long as I can remember, he would leave but always come back. I should have expected he was planning something after what father revealed about how long he'd been gone, and how everyone around the house while I was there had been acting as though he'd never even been born."

"All right. I give up. You told me you were a werewolf, and I accepted that. You told me you don't talk to your parents much, let alone see them on the holidays. I accepted that. I've also accepted the fact you have a secret cabin in the middle of nowhere that you visit on occasion without telling me." Lance's face was burning up with frustration. His patience was being pushed to the limit, and he wasn't sure what was going to happen next—walk out or hit something.

"Hell, I even let you leave me in the middle of this God forsaken place, so you could go running to your father, because he called you." He took a step forward and over the wolf's body toward Adin. "I have been pretty forgiving for a lot of shit. It's time that honesty shows its face around here, starting with what the hell is going on. The whole story this time."

"Sit. I'll explain as best as I can but can we get rid of a certain injured shifter on the floor?"

"He's been there fine for the last few minutes, another couple won't hurt. Now spill." Lance commanded, and this time, his own voice boomed. He slouched down onto the bed.

Nude, Adin sat next to Lance. "My family isn't close, as you know. My father is trying to become the alpha in the area, but my uncle, the current leader, is still alive. Father has tried to kill him through less recommended ways, but any signs of aggression toward him could lead to a less desired outcome.

To assume the title, he needs the blessing from the rest of the pack, when and only when, the current alpha dies. It has to be passed on through family, and since my uncle never had any sons, it falls to his sibling to carry on the leadership." Adin glanced over, and Lance stared back at him, doing his best to soak it all in like a child in school.

"What makes this even worse is my brother wants the position and the power. He thinks if that happens, father will respect him more. That's how I came to the conclusion he has his own agenda. Why would father send someone he was fighting with to give me a message? What he doesn't know is that if our uncle dies, even by my brother's hand, my father will still assume the rank. He's too stubborn to take advice from those who know more than him. The title won't skip our dad, simply because someone else in the family killed the current leader. We've told my brother all of this, and yet he still tries to start fights with everyone, hoping that it will escalate into something more."

Adin moved back and leaned against the wall.

"What if he does succeed in starting something and, a war of sorts breaks out between your families?" Lance looked up at Adin and then rested his head on his fiancé's lap.

"A war won't necessarily break out. But werewolves are temperamental—at least the majority of us are. If a war were to break out it would start among our families, then expand to include other shifters who would take sides. Initially, though, it would be between the pack: my uncle, father, and whoever else in the family that wants to take sides or start new ones, allowing my brother to get the chance he needs to kill my uncle. With uncle busy trying to keep the peace, he won't be expecting a blow from within."

"What do you mean within?"

"Well, I think that my brother has been living and going to my uncle for long periods of time. Why else would he be leaving his home before he's found a mate?"

"Makes sense. He would want to keep tabs on your uncle and his every move, so he can learn his habits and his mistakes."

"Right. Uncle must know this too, yet he refuses to act. Why would he be so stubborn? It's as though he wants him to be alpha, which doesn't make any sense. Father becomes alpha unless something happens to him." Adin paused then his eyes went wide. "Unless Uncle is filling my brother's head with lies by telling him that he would become alpha after him. My brother might be the pawn in this

game and not even know it. Maybe he thinks he's the one calling the shots, when in fact, it's the other way around?"

"A good question to which I have no answer. Not to change the subject or anything, but... You know, you never have said why you left home when you did."

"I didn't go, because I chose to. After I came out, father felt it best that I leave and 'find myself' then return home. My brother on the other hand... He doesn't have an excuse. What I also don't understand is why would he come here and antagonize me? He doesn't have anything to gain with me entering the fight."

"Maybe he believes that you'll side with your father; and since he'll side with your uncle, he would get the chance to wipe out any threat to him being alpha other than your dad." Lance glanced once more to the injured wolf and back to Adin. "So who the hell in your family do you think is working for your brother and is knocked out, bleeding on the hardwoods?"

"We'll find out soon. When werewolves are close to death or severely injured, they return to their human form. There's something else you should also know. There are a limited number of ways one can kill a werewolf. We're even immune to human diseases. The first is to stab us with something silver, causing a deep wound. If you want the shifter to die, you have to make sure the object doesn't get removed. If it is extracted, the wound will heal. But if it isn't, the silver will prevent the injury from completely repairing. Making for a slow and agonizing departure from this world." Adin looked down at the wolf twitching on the floor. "Go and grab the axe from outside. There's another way we can kill a werewolf."

Lance got up and retrieved the weapon from outside. When he returned, there were two naked men in the cabin: Adin and the mystery man.

"Stand at the door. Watch if you want." Adin took the axe and put it beside the bed. He grabbed the man on the floor, flipped him onto his right side, and revealed the poker. Adin grasped the end and pulled. The man groaned, and his eyes shot open. At least he was awake now.

"Who are you?" Adin commanded.

"Fuck you." The man spat blood, hitting his fiancé's directly in the face. Adin wiped his cheek, then reared back and kicked him near his wound. The man coughed up blood and grabbed for his side.

"No, but if you don't cooperate, I will make sure you can never reproduce again." He reached for the axe.

"You won't. You left your family because you chose your faggot life and couldn't face your father. You don't have it in you, coward."

"Adin, don't do anything rash." Lance stepped forward, trying to stop his lover from committing murder.

"Ya, listen to your fag of a boyfriend. He couldn't even hit a target that was three feet in front of him."

Lance came forward and grabbed the bloody poker from next to Adin. He held it high and then slammed it down, anchoring the man's hand to the floor. He let out a scream that turned into a laugh. God, Lance hated when people in movies did that. He never thought the day would come when he would hear it for himself.

"I'll just heal dumbass. You know, Adin, your boy sure is stupid. You even told him that werewolves heal except when confronted with silver."

"I wasn't trying to kill you, only to make sure you can't run very easily. Give me the axe." Lance turned away, then back again with his arms crossed.

"Lance, perhaps he's right. He can serve us in another fashion."

"Adin, I am *not* fucking him. Sex with one animal once a day is enough for me. Why would you think I would be interested in him?"

"I was thinking we let him go. After all, it is Christmas."

"Uh, what about the fact that he tried to kill me on Christmas—or better yet—tried to break us apart by knocking me off?"

"Perhaps we can use him to deliver a message to your brother?"

Adin and Lance glanced down at the naked man staring back.

"Fine. But make it quick. All this fighting has gotten me worked up, and I need a little relief." Lance looked at Adin and winked. Adin's cock twitched, so he knew his lover had gotten the hint.

Adin leaned down and whispered something in the other shifter's ear. The guy started to snicker then went straight-faced. Adin straightened then looked back at Lance.

"Ready when you are." Adin reached low and groped Lance's ass.

CHAPTER FIVE

Lance had finished cleaning up the blood off the floor when Adin came back inside. After the man had left, he'd gone outside and gathered some wood for the fire. Lance wasn't sure why, because they weren't going to need much heat with what they were going to do later. He'd been wanting to fulfill his lover's wish ever since they'd woke up.

Adin dropped the wood by the fire and turned. Lance met his gaze and put his hands over his heart.

"I love you."

"Love you too," Lance replied and kissed Adin.

At first, Lance was hesitant, then dove in. His tongue explored the familiar territory he'd conquered earlier that day. He moved his hands over Adin's taut muscles. Ever since his fiancé had come out as being a werewolf, Lance loved seeing him with his clothes off. It kind of turned him on having his lover nude, standing in front of him when he himself was still fully clothed.

As if reading his mind, Adin juttet in.

"I think it's time you stripped." He reached and grasped the bottom of Lance's shirt. In one quick movement, his T-shirt was on the floor ripped in two.

"You didn't need to do that," Lance groaned. "Now I will definitely freeze on the way home."

"Well we can stay here all winter. I can hunt our food, and we can fuck like rabbits all winter long."

"Promise?" Lance chuckled.

"Promise."

Lance unbuttoned his pants and let them fall beside his torn shirt. Next went his black briefs that were failing to hide his growing bulge. He wanted to free his own beast, and let Adin try and tame it like he had so many times before.

His cock sprang up, and Adin kneeled right before taking its entirety into his mouth. The warm, wet feeling met his cock, and Lance let out a moan. Adin knew how to hit every spot he liked. He released his cock, stood, and then led Lance backward until the bed met his calves.

"Sit." Adin rumbled, but this time it was even sexier than before. He pushed him onto the mattress.

"Yes, sir." Lance grabbed his cock and stroked it slowly.

"No touching until I get back."

"Don't be long. I need you here." Lance motioned with his hands moving them up and down his shaft, then let go.

Adin left the cabin but was back a few short minutes later, carrying some rope. He went to the fire and allowed it to thaw out.

"Stand." He barked again. Lance's cock responded, growing even harder.

Adin came around to Lances back, grabbed hold of his hands, and bound his wrists with the rope. Next, he brought the braided twine up between his legs and pushed his balls out of the way. He looped it around Lance's neck then tied it loosely, making sure it couldn't tighten and choke him.

"What are you doing?" Lance's erection bounced up and down with each of Adin's movements.

"You'll see." His voice was sly, causing Lance's cock to twitch. Because it meant he had a devilish plan that included him.

He walked over to the kitchen area and grabbed a stick about two inches thick and sanded smooth. It looked as if it could have been

coated in varnish by the way the fire light glinted off the surface. He brought it over to Lance and held it vertical on the mattress.

"Sit."

"But the rope is in the way, and we don't have any lube. You're not going to shove that up my ass with no lube are you?"

"Wimp. Fine." Adin stuck his tongue out before heading in the direction of the bathroom. When he returned, he held a jar of Vaseline up for Lance's inspection. "Will this work?"

"Better." Lance nodded.

Adin reached behind Lance and separated the fibers of the rope to create a small opening. He greased the wood and returned it to vertical on the mattress.

"Sit. Now."

Lance lowered himself onto the stick. It slid through the opening of the rope with ease, then reached his hole. The lube-slicked tip penetrated his tight ring, and Lance kept going, pressing lower. He moaned, having already taken half the length, then Adin placed his firm hands on his shoulders and pushed him the rest of the way. Lance gasped followed by a long moan. His cock was harder than the stone fireplace and burned with desire hotter than the blaze inside its hearth.

"How does it feel?"

"Amazing. Is this what you use the stick for?" Lance lifted his head and fell into Adin's dark gaze.

"Yes," he whispered.

Adin reached and took hold of Lance's cock with one hand and rubbed lubricant over it with the other. He steadied himself over Lance's cock, then plunged downward in one quick movement. His cock breached the threshold of Adin's waiting entrance, and Lance nearly exploded. He'd never had something penetrating him while he fucked another man.

Then Adin took charge.

Slowly, Adin moved back and forth, jacking off Lances cock with his tight ring. God, Lance wanted to shove his cock deep within Adin but didn't know if he could. Not without losing his grip on the wooden dildo in his ass and the sweet sensation rubbing his prostate with each of Adin's downward thrusts.

He felt helpless sitting there with his hands tied, and his lover bouncing up and down on his cock. But damn if the loss of control wasn't intoxicating. Never would he have thought of this and never would he have tried it.

"Fuck!" he burst out in between moans. "That feels amazing,"

"You like that?" Adin dipped his head, and his warm lips slid over Lance's, tasting—teasing. "You want to release your seed inside me? Give me all of you with nothing between us."

"Hell ya. I want to feel my bare cock pulsing in your ass."

With every flex of his hips, Adin's meat slapped against Lance's abs. The feel of flesh—Adin's flesh—against his skin almost had him coming. Adin leaned over and slammed his mouth onto Lances once more for a kiss he could only describe as feral.

Without warning, Adin yanked away from Lance on a loud moan. God, he was so close, yet Lance never wanted the feeling to end—the feeling of being inside his lover. But he didn't know how much more of this assault he could handle. Adin's pace suddenly intensified, and his ass clamped onto Lance's cock.

"I'm going to come," Adin exclaimed right before thick liquid splattered onto Lance's chest. Adin's cock pulsed against Lance's flat stomach, and his hole squeezed Lance's shaft.

"God, I'm going to shoot inside you."

"Do it. I want to feel it." Adin pushed down.

As if needing the approval, Lance released his creamy fluid deep inside Adin. The wooden stick pressed against his prostate, stimulating what felt like never-ending jets of hot cum from his cock.

Lance fell over onto the bed with Adin still on top of him. "Where did you learn that nifty stick trick?"

"After I moved here, I was collecting firewood one day and feeling a little horny when I found that stick. The shape reminded me of a nice, thick cock, so I smoothed it out, lacquered it, and tried it out. Tonight, I'd remembered I had some rope and my special wooden stick and thought it was time I shared it with you."

"In the future, don't go far without it. We need to do that again."

"Hold your horses." Adin laughed and moved off to the side. "Next time, I get to fuck you. Do you want to stay tied up all night?" He plucked at the ropes binding Lance. "Or should I release you?"

"I don't know? It depends on if there is an encore?"

"Normally I would say yes, but I'm beat. After confronting my father, then what we just did, I need sleep." Adin yawned, then pointed to the bed.

"Sounds good. Untie me first."

Adin reached around, worked on the knot, then slid the rope from between Lance's legs, leaving the section around his neck.

"And the rest of it?" Lance said, looking down at loop around his throat.

"It suits you. I think I'll leave it." Adin winked and lightly slapped Lance on the shoulder.

"Please?"

"Please what?"

"Please, sir?"

Adin chuckled. "I meant, what are you saying please for. Leave it on or take it off?"

"Oh. Please, take it off." Lance laughed with Adin as he removed the rest, including the stick.

"Thank you for tonight even though someone from your family did try to kill me."

"Anytime—minus the killing part. I enjoyed spending some quality time with you." Adin moved closer to Lance and gave him a kiss.

"Love you."

"Love you too." *Forever.* Lance thought and closed his eyes.

He put his arm around Adin and pulled him close. Lance really did love everything about him, and he knew Adin felt the same way about him in return.

"What are we going to do about wolfie with the message?" Lance asked, keeping his eyes closed.

"Well, tomorrow I'll go back and talk to my father. Maybe if I can describe the markings to him, he'll know who it was that came after you. He should, because he's more familiar with our relatives than I am."

"So if this is your brother's doing, which we can only assume since all the evidence points to that fact, and he wants me dead to get to you, this isn't over, is it?" Lance opened his eyes and met Adin's gaze.

"No." Adin shook his head. "It's not over. I wish I could lie and tell you that it is, but you deserve the truth."

"Your father, will he help us and defend us?"

"He won't have a choice. If he wants me to succeed him as the alpha rather than my crazy brother, he'll have to step in."

"I thought your brother would take it since he's the eldest?"

"Not if I can help it."

Biography

Christina Jade Loren current resides in California where she loves to write and hates to work. One of which is a must if both are to continue.

Visit her at www.ChristinaLoren.com.

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