

#### **Welcome to Sanctuary 2**

## Winter and His Twins

After his ex-boyfriend beats him up, erotic romance e-book author Winter Ryan is forced to contact his sister for help. Little did he realize that in doing so his life would change in ways he never would have imagined.

Garrett and Hawk Sullivan, the youngest set of Sullivan twins, are visiting Charlotte when Spring asks them to help her brother. Arriving at Winter's door in the middle of the night, they don't expect to meet their mate—Spring's baby brother. The shape-shifting Irish wolfhound electronics geeks have found their mate who also happens to be their favorite gay erotic romance author. Life couldn't get much better.

Life couldn't get much better—until Winter's violent ex shows up.

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shifters

Length: 21,938 words

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## **Cooper McKenzie**

**MENAGE AMOUR** 



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## **DEDICATION**

To Lee Brazil, the troublemaker who suggested and encouraged my foray into yet another new frontier of writing \*hugs and snuggles to you\*

## WINTER AND HIS TWINS

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### Chapter 1

Winter Ryan stared hard at the message he was about to send, debating only a moment before pushing the send button. Thankfully the virtual assistant company he used worked twenty-four hours, so his sister would know of his plight within the hour. He knew Spring would send help if she didn't try to come herself.

He only hoped she didn't try to call beforehand. If she did, she would reach his voice mail. Until he replaced his phone, he had no other way to communicate with the world outside his apartment except by e-mail.

Using his legs to roll away his chair from his desk, he stood carefully, wincing with a small gasp as pain shot through his body, reminding him why he'd given in and made contact with the outside world. He'd done enough for now. He'd broken down and asked his sister for help, the one thing a brother should never do.

Men were supposed to be strong and self-sufficient, able to deal with anything. But with both hands heavily bandaged he couldn't work on the computer, couldn't hold a pen to write the romantic e-books that were gaining popularity, hell, he could barely hold his own cock to pee.

Thanks to the pain medications they'd given him at the emergency

room he couldn't think enough to be creative anyway. Unfortunately, with Scott out somewhere still stewing in his anger he didn't dare leave his apartment without the possibility of another beating.

Walking slow and careful, Winter walked out of the room where he worked and into the room where he lived. Stopping in the kitchen nook, he looked through the cupboards and refrigerator before gathering what he needed.

Comfort foods were definitely the order of the evening. Two cans of his favorite soda, a bag of barbecue potato chips, and one of the bags of clearance Easter candy he'd bought before running into Scott would start him on the road to a junk food coma. If that wasn't enough, he would return for the leftover lasagna he'd made the night before.

When he woke up in the ambulance, he was surprised to find that he still held the shopping bag of chocolate eggs and marshmallow Peeps. Especially when he later learned that several fingers of that hand had been broken when his ex-lover stepped on them. His right wrist had snapped when Scott shoved him, and he'd landed on it. He didn't realize until he'd returned home and dumped the bag on the dining room table that someone had put his broken phone in the bag.

After setting his bounty of junk food on the small table next to the queen-size sofa bed that spent more time open than closed, he used a knife blade to open the can of soda. Thankfully the pharmacy had taken pity on him and packaged his pills in an easy open envelope instead of a bottle. He managed to pick two up between his first and second fingers and wash them down with several swallows of soda.

Hoping the medication worked fast, he slowly eased himself down onto the mattress. He gritted his teeth against the pain as his ribs, back and rest of his body protested any movement. He needed to clean up but, with both hands in casts that he was not supposed to get wet for the next four weeks, there wasn't much hope of that without someone to help him.

Picking the television remote up, he managed to click the

television on and then flip to his favorite movie channel. With a cautious sigh, he rearranged himself until he found an almost painless position. Then he settled in for what he expected to be a long, painfilled night.

\* \* \* \*

"Hello?" Hawk Sullivan sat up as he answered his cell phone. Though it was after midnight they were still awake, having just returned from the opening reception of the three-day electronics convention they'd come to Charlotte to attend.

"This is Spring. Are you Hawk or Garrett?" a woman's gentle voice asked. She sounded frantic.

"Hawk. What's up, Spring?"

He looked across the room at his brother, who'd just come out of the bathroom. His twin stopped in the doorway, lifting one brow in curiosity.

"It's my brother, Winter. I just got a call from his assistant. He needs help. I tried to call him, but his phone went straight to voice mail. I know you're busy, but..."

"What's his address, sweetie?" Hawk propped the phone between his ear and shoulder as he grabbed a pad and pen off the nightstand between the two beds.

After he reassured her that they would take care of things there, he hung up and looked again at his twin.

"Trouble?" Garrett asked as he tossed the towel back in the bathroom and went to his suitcase for clean clothes.

"Don't know. Spring says her brother had his assistant call her and ask for help, but she can't reach him on the phone."

As soon as they dressed, Garrett opened his computer and looked up directions to Winter's apartment. Once he printed them out, Hawk led the way out of their hotel room and downstairs to the parking garage. Winter and His Twins

Twenty minutes later they pulled into an upscale apartment complex. They found Winter's building in the back and parked in an empty slot not too far from his door. Stepping out of the SUV, he took a deep breath. He was surprised to hear his brother growl softly even as his own cock jumped to attention.

"Garrett, do you smell that?"

"Orange and spices, like Christmas," his brother responded as he moved forward. "Our mate."

Hawk caught up with him on the sidewalk. Together they tracked the delicious scent. He wasn't surprised when the trail led them to Winter's front door.

\* \* \* \*

A heavy pounding jarred Winter from sleep. Without thinking, he started to roll out of bed. He yelped when pain shot through him from head to toe. Moving slower and more cautiously, he rose and slowly made his way to the door. As he did, he looked at the small alarm clock sitting on top of the television set. Two forty-five. Since there was no sun streaming through the sheer drapes on the small windows, he deduced it was the middle of the night. At least he'd gotten a few hours of sleep.

"Who is it?" he asked, all at once fearful that his ex-boyfriend had tracked him down.

Scott had never been to his apartment before. He had always demanded Winter come to his house or meet him out at a club. He wasn't sure if Scott even knew where he lived.

"Spring sent us." The voice was muffled by the door but sounded deep and strong. Something about the voice reached into his belly to soothe the anxiety that had taken up residence there ever since he'd come to in the emergency room.

Flipping the dead bolt back, Winter took the door between his two casts and tried several times to twist it open. Finally he gave up and

twisted the lock in the doorknob instead.

"You'll have to let yourself in," he said.

He stepped back and shifted to lean against the wall, his knees suddenly feeling as limp as wet paper towels. His insides tensed as the knob turned and the door slowly swung open. Two men stepped through. He relaxed when he saw neither one was Scott. It took another moment to realize he wasn't seeing double, but the men were twins.

Hot, gorgeous, drool-worthy twins. Taller by his five feet nine inches by at least half a foot, they were powerfully built with broad shoulders, thick arms, and flat washboard abs. Skintight T-shirts hugged their muscles while loose-fitting cargo pants hid their assets. Their golden blond hair was tousled as if they'd just awoken from sleep and thrown on clothes to come to his rescue.

These were the kind of men Winter had been dreaming about since he'd realized girls held absolutely no attraction for him whatsoever. These were the kind of hot, sexy men he wrote about in his gay erotic romance e-books. He could only hope these two were gay as well and not married with kids.

He made a whimpering sound of hunger when the second man closed the door before twisting the dead bolt into place.

"Spring called us and said you needed help," the first man said as they turned to look at him. "Holy...what the hell happened to you?"

"Who are you?" Winter asked as the two men moved to either side of him. Each man wrapped a big hand around his upper arms.

When the two men leaned close he wondered what was going on. He watched one then the other as they each took a deep breath. They sighed at the same time as smiles grew on their faces. They shared a look and nodded as if in unspoken agreement.

"I'm Garrett Sullivan," the one with grass green eyes on his right said, while "Hawk Sullivan," came at the same moment from the one with bright blue eyes on his left.

"Spring sent us," they said together as if to assure him. "Now,

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what the hell happened to you?"

"Can one of you help me to the bathroom? I really need to pee," Ryan requested, his voice weak.

"Sure, baby," Hawk said. "Just relax and let us take care of you." "Okay."

Hawk stepped back as Garrett swung him up into his arms. When Winter stiffened, Garrett made soothing sounds that reverberated through Winter to warm what had until now been an empty spot in his heart.

Garrett easily carried him into the bathroom and helped him out of his shoes, socks, and sweatpants. When surprise and hunger flashed across Garrett's expression, Winter was glad he went commando. Once he was sitting on the toilet, the big man stepped away, but stood in the doorway with his back to the closet-size room.

Winter closed his eyes as he answered nature's call. He hadn't peed in front of another man since high school when the class bully teased him for having a hard-on. That had also been the first time he'd been hurt because he was gay. Since then, he'd been very careful to keep his sexual preference secret from the world.

Even his family didn't know he was gay, though Spring had made comments over the years that made him think she knew and accepted. She was always the one he went to with his problems and who listened when he needed someone to talk to. Eventually he admitted the truth of his sexual orientation, and she didn't react as expected. Instead she just nodded and changed the subject. He wondered if she'd told anyone else about her husbands-to-be's special abilities or if she'd trusted that information to him alone.

Once he finished, he tried but could not stand up. Even if he could get on his feet, he couldn't take a bath without help, and more than anything he wanted a bath.

"Um, Garrett?" he asked softly as he looked at the bathtub with longing. The big garden tub was one of the major draws when he'd been apartment hunting. It was more than big enough for two, though he'd never shared it with anyone.

"Yes?"

"I know I'm a major pain in the ass right now, but do you think you could help me take a bath?"

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## Chapter 2

When the big man stepped back into the room, Winter moved his hands to cover the erection that, despite the pain, had grown since Garrett and Hawk had arrived. Something about these men turned him on like no one else ever had. He knew nothing about them but the attraction seemed to go far deeper than merely physical, though these twins were certainly drool-worthy.

"Not a problem, sexy." Garrett turned to the tub fixtures and started the water flowing to fill the tub. "For you, no request is too big. And you don't need to hide your hard-on. We're both aroused by you, too."

"Really? Why is that?"

Instead of answering, Garrett went to the bathroom door. "Hawk, find a couple of plastic bags."

"They're under the sink," Winter supplied.

"Look under the sink," he repeated before turning back and starting to take off his clothes.

"What are you doing?" Winter asked.

As the big man's chest came into view, he licked his lips and tried not to drool. Muscles rippled with every move under the light dusting of golden hair. His cock twitched and grew even harder at the sight.

"You're going to need help in the bath, so I'm going to get in with you."

"Oh, okay. There are extra towels are on a shelf in there." Winter pointed to the door to the walk-in closet that had been another draw of the otherwise too-small apartment.

By the time Garrett returned with several towels, Hawk appeared

in the doorway with several plastic shopping bags. "What's up?"

"While I'm giving sexy here a bath, we need to tell him," Garrett said as he put the towels on the floor beside the tub. Then he toed off his shoes and stripped off the rest of his clothes.

Winter's eyes widened when Garrett's cock came into view. It was long and thick and as hard as his own. Then what the man said sunk in.

"Tell me what?" Winter asked as Hawk stripped off his own shirt and shoes. Then two men each took an arm and gently wrapped his casts in the plastic bags.

"In a minute," Hawk said.

Once his casts were protected from the water, Hawk and Garrett carefully peeled the oversized white T-shirt over his head. Someone at the hospital had found the shirt for him to wear home after they'd cut his own off of him. Winter stared at the floor as his hairless chest came into view. He was a computer geek and a writer, and he hated to exercise. His physique would never in a hundred years of working out compare to these men.

Garrett stepped into the tub and sat down. Then Hawk helped him stand and climb over the edge of the tub. Embarrassed to his toenails, Winter couldn't look at either man, his erection bobbing in front of him to lead the way into the water.

It took both men's assistance to get him settled in the water. He didn't fight when Garrett pulled him to lean back against his chest. Winter rested his arms on the edges of the tub and tried to relax as the water's warmth soaked in. He'd never taken a bath with anyone before and found himself tensing up. Especially when Hawk sighed after opening his pants. His erection peeped through the opening as if to say hello.

"Now just relax, sexy, and let us take care of you," Garrett said. He lifted his hands and gently massaged up Winter's upper arms and across his shoulders to the base of his neck.

"I don't know if I can," Winter admitted softly.

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"Don't worry, baby. By the time we're done, you'll be so relaxed you won't be able to move," Hawk promised as he picked up the apple green, nylon scrubby ball Winter used instead of a washcloth.

"Please tell me why it is we're all hot for one another," Winter requested as Hawk started at his feet and worked his way up.

\* \* \* \*

Hawk looked at his brother and nodded for him to explain. Then he returned his attention to gently cleaning their mate's beautiful pale skin.

Garrett was the talker. Hawk preferred action to words. His brother was the public face of the company while he stayed in the background. But when it came time to work, they both threw themselves into whatever job they took on, sometimes working around the clock to meet a deadline or fix a computer problem.

"Spring told you we were shape shifters, right?" Garrett started as he soaped up his hands and began to wash the man in his arms from the chin down.

"Uh-huh," Winter said, sounding less stressed and a little breathless.

"Shape shifters come in all breeds, wolf, dragon, tiger. We are Irish Wolfhounds. Our family has lived in a little valley tucked away in the Smoky Mountains almost forever."

"Okay, but what does that have to do with us walking around with hard-ons? I've never been turned on by anyone like I have since you walked through the door," Winter admitted as he dropped his head back on Garrett's shoulder.

"Shape shifters are fated to mate with one person for the rest of their lives. With us being twins, we'll share our mate," Garrett continued.

"Sit up, baby, so I can wash your back," Hawk said, wanting to get him cleaned up before he completely melted into a boneless mass of man.

Winter cooperated, and in just a few minutes Garrett had finished bathing their mate. Once he was clean, he settled back against Garrett again with a sigh.

"So what does that have to do with us?"

"You're our mate," Hawk said simply.

"Me? I'm your mate?"

Hawk met his gaze and nodded. "Yes, baby, you are our mate."

"Are you gay?" Winter twisted to look from Garrett back to him, his eyes wide and expression unreadable.

Hawk nodded as he glanced at his brother who also nodded.

"Yes, sexy, we're gay," Garrett said easily. "And you are our mate, which means we'll never be with anyone else except you for the rest of our lives."

Winter's eyes widened even further as a smile slowly bloomed, transforming his features into a thing of beauty.

\* \* \* \*

"Cool," Winter said he settled back against Garrett's chest again. "So what happens now?"

Hot shivers raced through him as he realized that he would no longer be alone. He'd dated in the past, but had never felt a connection to the men he'd slept with or dated. He'd never been able to relax completely with those men. Had never been able to let go and just be himself without feeling as if he had to remain in control at all times. But with these two, there was something that made him want to snuggle with them and let them do anything they wanted to him.

He jumped and then relaxed as Garrett's hand brushed down the center of his body from neckline all the way down to his groin. He gasped in a small breath when the hand wrapped around the base of his cock.

"First, we're going to do something about this." Garrett kissed his

cheek as his hand began to slowly stroke up and down his length. "Then we're going to get some sleep. When we wake up, you will tell us who beat you up."

"Umm, okay," Winter breathed, his arousal racing higher and higher.

With both forearms bandaged and propped on the tub he could do nothing but flex his hips into the gradually tightening grip that slid up and down his cock faster and faster. When a second hand cupped and gently rolled his balls, his head dropped back onto Garrett's shoulder and his eyes drifted shut.

"More. Please. More."

Bending his legs, Winter planted his feet on the tub's floor and began to thrust himself through Garrett's hot, wet fist. A half dozen strokes later, his body stiffened and rose out of the water, his head and feet the only points holding him grounded.

"I'm coming," he cried as he felt semen surge out of his balls and up his cock to explode out the head. His life juices splattered across his wet chest. The added heat sent his hips thrusting several more times as his orgasm rolled on and on.

"Mmmm, beautiful," he heard one of the twins murmur, but he couldn't tell which one as fingers traced through the pearly white seed.

"Delicious," was the last thing he heard before he relaxed back into the water, and darkness descended over him.

\* \* \* \*

"He's perfect," Hawk said, grabbing their mate's hands before they fell into the water when Winter went completely limp. Garrett wiped his chest clean before licking his way up the man's neck.

"Yes, he is," his brother agreed easily. "Now, help me get us out of here, so we can all get some sleep."

### Chapter 3

Winter woke up in pain from his shoulders down. It took a moment before he realized he wasn't alone. He felt bare skin snuggled next to him both front and back. It took another moment to remember who slept next to him in the bed and what had happened.

Taking a deep breath, he opened his eyes.

"Morning, sexy," the man in front of him said as he reached back to pat Winter's bare hip.

"Good morning," he whispered.

"Did you sleep well?" the man behind him asked softly.

Winter nodded then swallowed as an erect cock pressed between the cheeks of his ass. "Uh-huh."

Garrett, the man lying in front of him, rolled out of bed, making the movement look graceful. Winter watched as he padded into the kitchen and returned a moment later with a glass of water in one hand.

"Here, take these," he said, retrieving two pain pills from the envelope by the bed.

"How did you know I hurt?" Winter asked as he shifted to lie on his back.

"It's morning, and you haven't taken anything since we've been here."

Winter nodded. It was so obvious, but he wouldn't have thought of it. Hawk helped him lean up. Garrett popped the pills into his mouth then held the glass so he could take several swallows to wash them down.

"Now just lay here for a few minutes and let those go to work," Hawk said as he gently smoothed his hand up and down Winter's chest.

Winter sighed as dropped his head back onto the pillow. "I don't think that's going to be a problem. I hurt too much to move."

"Well, since you're stuck there for the time being, now is a good time for you to tell us what happened last night." Garrett returned to sit at Winter's hip. He looked serious but also concerned.

"My ex-boyfriend didn't like the way I broke things off with him. I went out for some candy to celebrate finishing my latest story, and Scott caught me on my way home. As you can see, he beat the shit out of me before walking away."

Winter looked at the ceiling as he told the story, not wanting to see judgment or disappointment in the other men's eyes.

"How did you break up with him?"

"I'd tried to call him, but he didn't answer, so I sent him a text message and an e-mail," Winter admitted with a small grin. "That's the last time I do that."

"Baby, you don't ever have to worry about breaking up with anyone ever again because you belong to us now." Hawk leaned in and brushed a kiss on his cheek.

"Really?"

"Really," Garrett assured him. Bracing his arms on either side of Winter's body, he leaned down until they were nose to nose. "You are our mate, and we're going to keep you forever."

Winter stared into eyes that were green as spring grass and swore he saw forever in their sincere depths. "Okay," he purred before lifting his head enough to brush his lips over Garrett's.

His lips were soft and gentle as they responded. Just the feel of them sent electrical impulses through Winter's body, firing the banked coals of arousal. Breathing through his nose, he shifted his head to the right and parted his lips to take the kiss deeper. Garrett matched him move for move but allowed Winter to maintain control of this mating of lips and tongues and teeth.

Winter lifted his arms and wrapped them around Garrett's neck,

taking care to not hurt him with his casts. The kiss continued for more than a minute until Winter finally eased back and dropped tiny kisses at the corners of Garrett's mouth before dropping his head back to the pillow.

"Wow," he gasped as he caught his breath.

"My sentiments exactly," Garrett said before leaning down and brushing his lips over Winter's one last time before easing Winter's arms from around his neck.

"Oh, man, that was so hot," Hawk said once Garrett sat up. "My turn."

Hawk cupped one hand under his mate's jaw then turned his head his way. Leaning in, Hawk licked across his lips before closing the final inch and getting his own good morning kiss.

This kiss was just as gentle, just as arousing as Garrett's, yet Hawk was more controlling, one hand holding Winter's head still as their tongues dueled back and forth. Winter marveled that for identical twins they tasted similar yet different. Just different enough that even if he were blindfolded, he would be able to tell them apart with a kiss.

He gasped and tore his lips from Hawk's when a hot, wet, silky mouth enveloped just the head of his hard cock. "Oh, God," he cried.

Garrett's tongue swirled around the entire head before brushing back and forth over just the slit. Winter sucked air when the man took him deeper into his mouth, sucking and licking at his cock like it was a popsicle. In the meantime Hawk shifted his attention to the side of Winter's neck where he began to lick and nuzzle the skin from his ear down to where it flowed into shoulder.

Winter could barely breathe, much less think, when Hawk lifted his head and looked into his eyes.

"Baby, we want to claim you as our mate, right here, right now. What do you say?"

Winter looked up into sky blue eyes that glowed with life and love and knew deep in his soul that he never wanted to be with anyone else. "Yes. Claim me. Make me your mate."

Hawk nodded and looked down his body at his brother. Something passed between the twins though neither said a word. Garrett bobbed up and down several more times, sucking, licking, sending bolts of lightning through Winter that came back to coil deep in his pelvis.

"Come for us, baby," Hawk murmured in his ear before taking the lobe between his teeth and biting gently.

That was all it took to shoot Winter to the moon. His head arched back as fire raced through him from groin to every cell in his body and back again. At the peak, he felt Hawk bite where shoulder and neck came together and knew Hawk had claimed him.

Needing to belong to both his mates, he cried, "Garrett, now. Claim me. Please make me yours."

In a heartbeat, Garrett slid up his body and bit the other side of his neck. But the extra pain only added to Winter's pleasure, and his orgasm swelled and overwhelmed him once again. A feeling of completeness filled him that he'd never ever felt before.

"My mates!"

It took a few minutes to recover, but when he did, he looked from one brother to the other. "That was incredible, but it seems I'm the only one getting happy."

"Don't worry, sexy," Garrett said, licking the spot he'd just bit. "We're happy just making you ours. And we have the rest of our lives to make each other happy."

Winter frowned as tears filled his eyes. "Don't you want to have sex with me?" he asked softly.

The brothers looked shocked for a minute. "Oh, baby, of course we want to have sex with you," Hawk assured him, running a hand up and down his chest. "But you're injured and need to rest and get better before we get too rambunctious."

"Mmmm," Winter purred. "I think I'd like rambunctious."

"And when you're healed, we'll get as wild as you want, but for

now you're going to let us take care of you," Garrett said, his tone just strong enough to melt any opposition Winter might have.

"Could I at least suck your cocks, please? I want to give you pleasure, too."

Before his mates could answer, three stomachs rumbled loudly.

The men all chuckled before Garrett said, "I think we'll wait until later for that treat. Right now we're getting out of this bed, getting dressed, and going out for breakfast."

Winter pouted for a moment. "Okay, but tonight I am going to give you pleasure," he stated.

"Yes, sir," Garrett said with a sexy smile.

"Can't wait, baby," Hawk agreed with a grin.

## **Chapter 4**

After the twins pulled on their clothes, they helped Winter dress in baggy sweatpants and a comfortable fitting T-shirt. On their way out the door, Winter struggled to pick up the soft-side black computer bag that was sitting on the floor by the front door.

"What's in that?" Hawk asked gently, taking the strap from Winter's fingers. He slung it over his own shoulder, surprised that it was heavier than it looked.

Winter shrugged and looked away. "Stuff I might need. I always carry it with me. If I get inspired, I can write or at least make note of my thoughts. Snacks in case I get hungry while I'm out. A book or two. I guess you could call it my man purse."

"Do you have your keys, sexy?" Garrett asked as he opened the door.

Winter pointed to a smaller hook by the door. "Right there."

Hawk took the key ring that held two keys and pocketed it then followed the other two out the door. He pulled the door closed and confirmed it had latched and locked before leaving. Though they hadn't talked about it, he wanted to meet Winter's ex-boyfriend. He wasn't sure if he would thank him for bringing them to Winter's rescue or beat the shit out of him like he'd done to his little mate.

Once on the sidewalk the brothers turned toward the Hummer then stopped when they realized their mate wasn't with them. Turning, they found Winter walking in the opposite direction. A moment later he stopped and looked back at them, his expression worried.

"We can walk to breakfast, if that's okay. It's not that far," he

said.

Hawk nodded and watched his brother do the same. They joined Winter and headed up the sidewalk. He looked around the parking lot, but didn't see any car that looked like it belonged to their man.

"Which car is yours?" Garrett asked once they'd caught up with him, once again proving their thoughts ran along similar paths nearly all the time.

Winter dropped his head again, but kept walking. His pace was fast, challenging Hawk to keep up even though he was a half a foot taller than his little mate.

"I don't have a car," he finally admitted as they approached a small coffee shop at the end of a strip mall. "That's why I like this apartment. Everything I need is within walking distance, which forces me to exercise. If I have to go across town I'll call a cab, but most of the time I just walk where I need to go. Besides, cars are expensive, and I'm a struggling artist living in a big city."

That brought to Hawk's mind another group of questions. "You said you write. What kind of writing?"

Again Winter didn't answer. Instead he opened the door and held it for the other two men to enter first.

Once they were all inside, he pointed to an empty booth along the back wall. "That's where I usually sit."

Hawk nodded and waited for Winter to lead the way. As they crossed the dining room, their mate stopped every few steps to say hello to the other diners and had to evade questions about his injuries.

When a busty older woman stepped in front of them and grabbed him, Hawk balled his fist to keep from pushing her away and declaring to the room full of strangers that Winter belonged to him. A glance at his brother proved Garrett to be just as affected.

"Sweetheart, what happened? It was Scott, wasn't it? I told you that man was no good for a sweet thing like you. And who are these hot honeys you brought with you today? Research? Or purely pleasure?"

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The woman's questions came at machine-gun speed as she led Winter to the booth he'd indicated earlier as being his. Once they reached it, Hawk understood. A bright yellow sign sat at the front edge of the booth stating "Reserved for Winter."

"Anna, these are me mates, Garrett and Hawk," Winter said in a perfect Irish accent as he slid into one side of the booth. Garrett sat next to him so Hawk settled across the table.

She laughed loudly at his accent. Apparently this wasn't the first time he'd done this. "Your mates, eh? Does that mean you kicked Scott to the curb?"

Winter nodded as he settled both casts on the table. He once again looked uncomfortable, so Hawk decided it was time to divert the woman's concerned nosiness.

"Do you have a breakfast special?" he asked without looking at a menu.

Anna stared at him as if searching for something. He met her gaze evenly, trying not to shift as she studied him intently for nearly a minute. Then she turned her attention to Garrett and did the same thing. Finally she nodded with a broad smile. "You'll do. But I'll warn you now, you hurt my boy and you'll answer to me."

"Yes, ma'am," Hawk and Garrett answered as one.

"Now, breakfast. I'll assume you two drink coffee?" She waited until they nodded. "Good, because anyone who doesn't drink it won't last long with this one. All right, then. I'll bring coffee, and your breakfast will be up in a few minutes." She nodded once again after looking at the three men. Then she walked off without another word.

Hawk looked at Winter. "She didn't ask what we wanted."

"She never does. But you'll love whatever she brings. She's magic that way," Winter said. "I just don't know how I'm going to eat with these things."

"Don't worry, sexy, we'll take care of you. That's our job now," Garrett explained softly. "We'll keep you safe and love you and make you so happy, you'll forget all about Scott and any other man who's

ever hurt you."

Winter's eyes grew wide as he digested the solemn vow. He looked at Hawk who nodded his agreement. "You'll never be sad or alone again, baby."

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Winter swallowed hard before he said softly, "I just hope I can make you happy, too."

Hawk reached across the table and held Winter's fingers as Garrett dropped a hand under the table and ran it up and down his thigh.

"You make us happy just sitting there," Hawk said softly. "Will you be okay moving to Sanctuary?"

"Do you have Internet?"

"Yes," Garrett answered.

"Will I be able to leave and go to book signings and conferences and stuff?"

"Of course," Hawk said.

"We'll want to go with you because we won't want to be far from you for too long." Garrett answered a moment later. "Mates prefer to spend all their time together, which is why our ancestors settled Sanctuary. That, plus the fact that many people frown on triad relationships."

"Will your family be okay with this? With your mate being a man, I mean."

"As long as we're happy, our family will be. Plus there's nothing they can do about it. Fate determined we were mates, and no shape shifter can go against their destiny. Of course it helps that we're all gay," Garrett ended with a chuckle.

Before Winter could ask another question, Anna returned with three mugs and an insulated pot of coffee. After serving the three men, she handed Winter a tablespoon that had an extra large handle. "You'll need this to eat with."

"Thanks, luv." Winter shifted back into his Irish brogue, earning a questioning glance from his mates.

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With a smile he explained. "It's a game we play. Anna has always been supportive, and when I got stuck writing my first book she suggested this so I can get in the heads of my main characters. It worked so well that every time I start a new book, I become the main character. I play with accents, and we talk about clothing choices and personality traits. She also shares stories about some of the other customers. I think she's one of the reasons I get so many compliments from my readers. They like the fact that my characters are sometimes less than perfect with a limp or a scar or a bad attitude."

The brothers nodded and seemed to understand before turning their attention back to the waitress.

"So, what's for breakfast?" Garrett asked when Anna didn't immediately move away.

"Don't worry, honey, you'll love it," Anna responded with a wink and a grin. When she walked away she left the coffee pot behind, as if knowing they would need it.

"You know, every time we try to find something out about you, something happens to derail the conversation," Garrett pointed out when a tense silence descended over the table.

Winter blinked, startled at his mate's observation. A moment later he shrugged. "Sorry."

"There's no reason for you to apologize, we just want to know all about you. Now, please tell us about your writing. Or is it a secret?" Hawk said gently.

"No, not a secret exactly." Winter dropped his gaze to the table, suddenly nervous about how they would take the news that he wrote in a genre most people snubbed their noses at.

"Look at me, Winter," Hawk demanded gently.

When Winter lifted his eyes and met the big man's gaze, Hawk said, "You have nothing to be embarrassed about. We are your mates.

There should be no secrets between us."

Winter nodded and took a deep breath. "I write romance novels. Gay erotic romance. I write under the pen name Ryan Winter."

He looked from one to the other as he waited for their reactions.

"You're Ryan Winter?" Garrett whispered, going pale as he digested Winter's announcement.

"Yes."

"Really?" Hawk asked, looking just as shocked as his brother.

Winter nodded. He watched as the brothers' eyes got wider as they looked across the table at one another. Again they seemed to be communicating silently before both turned back to look at him. Before they could share their thoughts, Anna returned with their breakfast.

First she set a glass of orange juice in front of each man. Then she placed a plate with three strips of bacon, a large bowl of oatmeal, and a small pitcher of milk in front of Winter. "It's got apples, raisins, and extra brown sugar, just the way you like it."

"Thanks, Anna," he said with a smile as she served his mates.

A large platter was placed in front of each man. On the platters were a half dozen strips of bacon, three fluffy, golden brown pancakes, and two fried eggs. He grinned as the brothers looked at their food, then at the waitress.

"How did you know?" they asked in unison.

"I told you," Winter said before Anna could speak, "she's magic."

"I just know when I see two men with big appetites," she said with a wink before sashaying away to tend to her other customers.

After they were alone again, Winter focused on his food. He was scared about what his mates would say about the secret he'd kept to himself for so long. Only two other people knew that Winter Ryan was Ryan Winter, gay erotic romance author, and he trusted them both implicitly to keep his secret.

They were half finished with breakfast before either man spoke. By then Winter's stomach had gone sour, and he'd stopped eating for Winter and His Twins 31

fear he'd throw it all up again when his mates told him that they refused to be mated to what some people called a "gay porn writer." Instead he drew designs in the oatmeal congealing in his bowl.

When Hawk reached across the table and took the spoon from his hand, he jumped in surprise. He shifted into the corner in fear that the big men would beat him up now for keeping such a secret even though they'd known each other for less than a day. He tensed as he waited for the brothers' reactions.

## **Chapter 5**

"Relax, sexy. We'd never hurt you. It was just a surprise to discover that our mate is also our favorite author." Garrett reached over and patted his leg.

"Really?"

"Uh-huh," Hawk said as his brother nodded. "You're a great writer. I think we have every book you've written."

Winter relaxed. His cheeks burned as the twins looked at him with what appeared to be awe. "I think that might be another reason Scott beat me up. I tried to tell him about my writing, but he showed no interest, so I stopped trying." When he saw the twins' faces grow serious, he stopped talking. "Sorry about that. I don't mean to keep talking about..."

"He who will no longer be named?" Garrett offered, using a tweaked line from the Harry Potter phenomenon.

"Yeah, him."

Winter relaxed as the two men nodded and went back to eating. He picked his spoon back up and began eating again as well.

"So what do you want to do after breakfast?" he asked after they'd all finished and were sipping at half-full coffee cups.

"I'd like to go back to your place and play some more," Hawk said with a lewd grin.

Winter could only sigh in response as the blood from his brain raced through his body to fill his cock. "Sounds like fun," he said softly, eager to taste the cocks he'd seen but had yet to sample.

"Not yet. I saw an interesting store a few doors down and think we should check it out first," Garrett said.

Winter smiled, knowing exactly which store Garrett was talking about. "Oh, yeah, let's go shopping first." He slid across the bench, but was stopped by Garrett who hadn't moved. "Get up, let's go."

"Sweetheart," Hawk said patiently, "we need to pay the bill."

"It's already taken care of," Winter said with a grin.

"How's that?"

"I come in whenever I get a royalty check and buy a giant gift card that usually lasts me until the next royalty check. Anna subtracts my meals each time I'm here and lets me know when it gets low." Winter explained easily. "Now, let's go shopping."

"Okay, baby. Let's go shopping," Hawk said as he slid from the booth. Garrett followed and then helped Winter stand.

"How's your pain, sexy?" Garrett asked softly as they followed Hawk toward the front door.

"I'm okay."

"Not hurting?"

"Nope," Winter said with a grin before stopping beside a woman who always reminded him of a librarian. "Morning, Nell."

"Morning, Winter. What happened?"

"Ran into an angry ex. Wondered if I could borrow the keys to the store? Me mates want to check out yer inventory." Again the Irish brogue came out in full force, making him consider it as the basis for one of the heroes of his next book. A sexy Irishman who turned on everyone in his path just by talking to them.

"No problem." Nell handed him a key ring. "I'll be along in a bit, and I don't want to see three naked men playing with my toys when I get there, understand?"

"I'll try to control meself," Winter snarked as he brushed a kiss over her cheek.

Anna and Nell laughed together as Winter turned to find his mates waiting at the front door. He joined them, then led the way down the sidewalk to the front door of Nell's store, Bliss.

He unlocked the door and locked it again once they were all

inside. Then he waved one arm around the room. "Have a blast."

Hawk looked from their little mate to the room which appeared to be a hedonist's fantasy. Then he looked at his brother.

"Toys," they said in unison before moving deeper into the store.

"Behind the scarlet curtain," Winter offered.

Hawk didn't glance at the wide selection of women's clothes and only paused a moment in front of a display of leather men's clothing. Though he would love to see Winter in leather, he would prefer skintight blue jeans, without anything else.

A look back at Winter showed the man had moved away from the door and taken a seat on a bench near the checkout counter. He looked tired and pained until he saw Hawk looking his way. He forced a wide smile and made a shooing motion with one cast-encased hand.

"Go on and look. I've already seen everything in the store."

Hawk nodded and continued on to where Garrett studied a wide display of toys, most of which Hawk had never seen before. Whips, paddles, and chrome and leather devices that he could not determine the purpose of. Maybe Winter should come and share his knowledge so they would know whether or not they wanted any of those.

For now he'd be happy with the basics. "Plug and lube," he murmured. "Then we need to get our little mate home, so he can rest. One of us will need to stay with him while the other goes for boxes, tape and packing materials."

He couldn't wait to take Winter home to Sanctuary. He wanted his mate safe and far away from the asshole who had hurt him.

Garrett nodded in agreement. "We also need to swing by the hotel, pack our stuff, and check out."

"I'll do all that if you'll stay with him," Hawk offered, not wanting to leave his sexy little baby alone.

Garrett nodded then pointed to the display in front of them. "So, which one do you want to get?"

Hawk studied the grouping of butt plugs, trying to imagine their

little mate wearing the different ones. At a loss he shrugged. "Maybe we should ask Winter?"

"I've already got the small red one and the medium-size purple one at home along with a small thing of lube. If we're going to be living in Sanctuary full-time, we'll need a lot more lube. Beyond that, I don't really care, except that I think you should each get plugs as well."

"Why is that?" Hawk couldn't help but ask.

"Maybe I'll want to fuck you some time, too," he said with a wink and a grin. "Besides, I think it would be sexy for all of us to have matching plugs. We could wear them together one day and then have one hell of a fuckfest that night."

Hawk found his jaw dropping open as he stared at his mate. His cock went even harder than it had been all morning. It began to throb in his jeans as he mentally pictured what Winter was suggesting.

"Damn, sexy, you're gonna make me come just by talking that way," Garrett said.

Winter shrugged with a grin that just sent more blood pumping to his cock. "I'm a writer. I write guided fantasies. I just hope you won't get upset if some of the stuff we do ends up in a book."

Hawk groaned at the suggestion before turning back to the toy display before he stripped them all and Nell walked in on them naked and fucking in the middle of the toy area.

Without another word Hawk and Garrett each pulled a red and purple plug from the rack then turned to the larger plugs. They debated only a moment on whether to get the large neon green or black plug then grabbed three of the green ones. Garrett picked up a box nearly full of bottles of lube, and Hawk grabbed several economy size boxes of antibacterial toy cleansing wipes.

As they approached the front of the store with their bounty, Nell knocked on the locked door. "Just in time, I see," she said after Garrett flipped the lock and held it open for her.

It took a few minutes for her to ring up their purchases then wrap

and bag the items in a large, plain brown gift bag. Hawk took the shopping bag while Garrett picked up and shouldered Winter's messenger bag. Then they each put a hand on Winter's back and guided him to the door.

As they left, Nell called, "Be good to him, or I'll be a part of the very large lynch mob that will hunt you down."

Hawk wasn't surprised when, as soon as they entered the apartment, Winter crawled onto the bed and immediately fell asleep.

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#### Chapter 6

Winter woke to the sound of tapping. Wiggling his fingers, he winced as he concluded that he was not typing in his sleep again. When he opened his eyes, he found his nose only inches from a faded denim-clad hip. He reached back, but found only one of his mates was in bed with him.

Feeling playful, Winter slid his hand over the top of the man's thigh then slowly eased it between his legs and stroked his fingers over the solid, muscular inner thigh. He slowly worked his way up to the juncture of his legs.

"Sexy, if you'll hold on two minutes I'll be finished here, and then we can play."

Winter sighed, but pulled his hand back before he could reach the man's denim covered cock and balls. "All right, but don't be too long. I might just go find someone else to play with."

"Hawk's out running errands," Garrett said as he reached over and ran his fingers through Winter's hair. "Now be a good mate and behave yourself."

Winter huffed a sigh and rolled onto his back. Horny and wanting some attention, he decided to take matters into his own hands. Or rather his own fingers, since both hands were in casts. Lifting his hips from the bed, he pushed the waistband of his sweats to his upper thighs, freeing his hard cock.

"Oh, damn," Garrett muttered as Winter pushed his shirt up his chest.

He ran the fingers of both hands up and down his belly, close to, but never touching his cock. The tapping of computer keys slowed then stopped all together when he ran two fingers down the length of his erection, moaning at the feel of skin on skin.

When Garrett moved from the bed, he turned his head and watched. Garrett set the computer on the table, then stripped off his clothes so fast Winter's mind could barely keep up.

"You're in for it now, sexy," Garrett said as he went to the foot of the bed.

A moment later he'd pulled off Winter's sneakers and sweatpants then climbed back onto the bed. Winter shifted himself higher on the bed, awkwardly stuffing pillows behind his shoulders and head.

"I want your mouth on my cock before I fuck your pretty little asshole," Garrett said as he crawled up to straddle Winter's body.

"Mmmm, sounds good," Winter replied, licking his lips as he looked at the long, hard erection bobbing from the golden-blond curls of Garrett's groin.

Without another word he parted his lips and engulfed the head of Garrett's cock. Closing his lips around the glans, he brushed his tongue over the tip. He smiled as tart, tangy, salty drops of man juice oozed from the slit.

Lifting his head further, he took more and more of Garrett's length in. As he did, he brushed his tongue back and forth across the undersurface and felt the thick vein that ran its length. Shivers ran through him when Garrett's hands came up and cupped the back of his head.

Long before he was ready to release him, Garrett jerked his hips back, pulling his cock out of the reach of Winter's mouth.

"Damn, sexy. You're too fucking good at that," Garrett muttered.

His hands rhythmically massaged Winter's scalp as he began to knee-walk back down the bed. He continued moving until he hovered over Winter, holding himself up on knees and elbows.

"Fuck me, Garrett. Please fuck me," Winter said softly, knowing he was begging, but needing to be one with this man, his mate.

When his man swore and started to leave him, he reached up and

wrapped his arms around Garrett's back. "Don't leave me!"

"Shhh, sexy. I'm not leaving. I've got to get some lube, so I don't hurt you when I mate with you." Garrett leaned so close his lips moved against Winter's as he spoke.

"Second drawer," Winter said and pointed to a small set of drawers between the couch and the corner of the room.

Garrett nodded and moved away. Thankfully he returned before Winter had a chance to miss him. Wanting to help, Winter pulled his legs to his chest and then spread them so his knees were practically in his armpits. He held them out of the way as Garrett slicked the lube over his pucker.

He sucked a breath and tried to relax everything from the waist down as his mate slid one finger deep into his back hole. Seconds later he pulled out and replaced the single digit with two. Winter couldn't fight down the groan that started at his toes when Garrett added a third finger.

"Please, Gar, please fuck me now." He panted as the fingers in his ass twisted back and forth then spread apart, gently stretching him further.

"I don't want to hurt you, sexy," Garrett said, moving to kneel on the bed, his thighs brushing against Winter's lower back.

"You won't. Please fuck me now."

He sighed as the fingers left him, then took a deep breath when he felt the larger, blunted tip of Garrett's cock press for entry. "Yesss," he hissed as the thick, full length pushed in him until he felt Garrett's balls brush his skin.

He couldn't keep from tightening his muscles around the intruder as he watched pleasure fill Garrett's face.

"Winter, stop, or I'm going to come too soon," Garrett said harshly through clenched teeth as he leaned over and planted a hand on either side of Winter's shoulders.

Winter froze, suddenly wondering if this was such a good idea. Sure, Spring had told him about the wonders of having two men at her beck and call, but what did he really know about these men who'd claimed him as their life mate?

"I'm sorry," he breathed, turning his face to the side. In this position he couldn't move anything else.

"Oh, sweetheart, don't. This is our mating, and I don't want to rush things but you have me so hot that I can barely keep from fucking you hard and fast."

"So do it," Winter urged, trying to shift his hips against Garrett, but unable to move.

Leaning down, Garrett kissed him then pulled back again. Taking Winter's hips in a gentle grasp, he began to slowly slide his cock in and out. Chills and shivers raced up and down Winter's spine with every movement, sending his own arousal higher.

He began to make small grunts each time Garrett thrust into him, inhaling as he moved out. In less than a minute he was panting hard and felt his arousal spiraling out of control. Though he thought he heard something in the background, he did not look away from the deep green eyes staring at him.

When Garrett closed his eyes, Winter dropped his gaze to the man's chest. Unlike his own twelve carefully numbered chest hairs, Garrett's chest held a dusting of hair that glinted in the available light. Needing to touch his mate, Winter shifted his right leg farther to the side and moved his right arm in to stroke over the well-defined muscles of his mate's chest. The strands were silky smooth against his fingertips, tightening the spiral of his arousal until it was overly tight and threatening to explode.

Garrett leaned forward, bringing his chest down to Winter's. The change in angle of his thrusts stroked over his prostate and sent him flying.

"Damn, that's one hell of a beautiful sight," a deep, growly voice said as Winter's sperm pulsed through his cock to fill the space between his belly's and Garrett's.

He cried out when Garrett growled deep in his chest and bit him

again. The feel of Garrett sucking hard at the side of his neck sent him immediately spiraling into another orgasm. Or maybe the erotic pain just intensified and prolonged the first one just as it should have slacked off. When his body finally wound down from what was the best sexual experience of his life, he felt like a boneless puddle of goo.

A moment later, Garrett licked at the bite on his neck then shifted to collapse beside him. Winter couldn't open his eyes to see who the voyeur was. He couldn't even find the energy to care who'd just walked in on them, though he hoped it was Hawk and not one of his neighbors.

Winter took a deep breath when a warm cloth wiped over his cock, balls, and belly. Forcing his eyelids up, he found Hawk finishing up cleaning him, his expression aroused and intent.

"Hi, Hawk," he whispered, too relaxed to even lift a hand to touch his mate.

"Hi, baby. How you feeling?"

"I'm good," Winter answered on a sigh. "Can you do something for me?"

"Anything."

"Would you show me your other form?"

Instead of answering, Hawk stepped back from the bed and quickly undressed. Winter swallowed then licked his lips when the man's long, hard erection bobbed into view. He was only mildly surprised when his own cock began to inflate with renewed interest. Before he could comment, the air around the man shimmered and instead of a man, a large blond Wolfhound stood in the middle of his living room.

"Oh, wow," Winter breathed. "That's so cool!"

He sat up as the dog slowly approached. As he did with every dog he'd ever befriended, Winter held his hand out, palm down. But Hawk didn't sniff at his fingers, instead walked past his hand to lay his head on Winter's lap. His nose bumped against Winter's cock, causing him to giggle.

"You're beautiful, but I will not fuck a dog," Winter said. Using only his fingertips, he pet Hawk's head and rubbed behind his ears in a motion he knew all dogs loved. And his mate was no different as he pressed even closer into his lap and made happy little doggie sounds, his tail waving back and forth like a flag.

Winter didn't know that Garrett had shifted as well until a furry head bumped his shoulder. A moment later a rough tongue licked his spine between his shoulders, which tickled, and he giggled and pulled away. Twisting to look over his shoulder, he found that he now had two large Wolfhounds in his apartment.

When someone pounded at the door, Winter jumped in surprise. Suddenly on the defense, Hawk and Garrett turned and growled.

"Winter? Are you all right? Anna said you're hurt," a female voice filtered through the door.

Winter looked at his mates and said, "Change back. That's Olivia, the building manager, and I'm not allowed to have pets."

The air shimmered and as quickly as the dogs appeared, they disappeared again. Hawk and Garrett gathered their clothes and stepped into the other room as Winter struggled into his sweatpants. Once his mates were out of sight he went to the door. Using both hands, he twisted the lock. The action hurt, but not as much as it had the day before.

It took ten minutes to convince Olivia that he was not dying. Then he asked her if she could arrange to have his furniture donated to the local charity that helped battered women because he was moving out and wouldn't be needing it.

"What are you leaving behind?" she asked.

Winter looked around the apartment. "Probably everything but my clothes and my office. Let's just say whatever's here day after tomorrow is all theirs."

"It's because of that man, isn't it? The one who hurt you?"

"No, I've just decided that it's time to move on. This was never

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supposed to last as long as it has," he said gently. "I just got comfortable and lost track of time."

"So where are you going?"

"I've found a place up near Boone. I'll stop by with my forwarding address before I leave," Winter said.

It took a few more minutes before she finally left, and Winter was able to close the door behind her. Then he turned to look objectively at his tiny apartment and went through a mental inventory. What he'd told Olivia was correct. Except for his clothes and the contents of his office, he really didn't care what happened to the rest of the apartment. He'd picked up the thrift shop furniture when he'd moved here five years before, planning to replace it piece by piece with better things, but had never gotten around to it.

"She's gone. You can come out now. We have a lot of work to do if we're going to leave today."

#### Chapter 7

Hawk entered the room alone. His blue eyes glowed, and he wore only his unfastened jeans. His cock pushed through the opening, still long, hard, and looking delicious. Winter lifted an eyebrow in question when Garrett didn't follow him through the doorway.

"Garrett's taking a shower. Said we should enjoy ourselves while we're waiting for our turns."

"Uh-huh," Winter said, licking his lips as he shoved sweats down until gravity took over and they fell to his ankles. "Wonder what we could do to keep from getting bored?"

He giggled as Hawk stripped off his jeans and then stalked across the room until the heads of their cocks brushed. "Oh, I think we can think of something, don't you?"

"Mmmm," Winter moaned.

Hawk moved even closer so the length of their cocks pressed against each other. He then reached in and wrapped one large hand around both shafts and gently stroked.

"Oh, God, that feels good," Winter whispered.

"Just wait till I get my cock in your ass. Then tell me how you feel." Hawk looked down at him, his eyelids dropping so that he looked even sexier than usual.

"Yes, please," Winter said.

He probably sounded like a child politely asking for another cookie, but he didn't want a cookie. He wanted Hawk's cock in him as much as he'd wanted Garrett's moments earlier. "Fuck me now, please. Make me your mate."

Looking in his big man's eyes, Winter saw the same urgent

hunger there that bubbled deep in him. All at once he needed to feel Hawk loving him as only a mate could. Slowly easing back, he turned and looked around the room. Though only a few yards away, the bed was too far away. But the table was right beside them.

With a swipe of one cast, letters, magazines and a couple of books flew across the room, leaving the table bare. One look at his mate proved the man needed no further enticement to prepare him for coupling. Instead Winter smiled at his mate then bent over the table, hissing as his overheated body came into contact with the cold wood.

Turning his head to one side, he smiled up at his mate as he pulled the cheeks of his ass apart to show the man his excited, waiting hole. "Fuck me, Hawk. Take me now."

Hawk's answer was to smack his left ass cheek.

"Oh, God, more." Winter arched his back and wiggled his ass to tease his sexy mate.

Another slap landed hard on the other side a heartbeat before Hawk's cock nudged its way into his hole then pushed his entire length in on the first stroke. He froze, leaned over to press his chest against Winter's front as he held himself deep and still.

Winter tried to shift under his big mate but couldn't. "Hawk? What's wrong?"

"Not a thing, baby. I'm just so wound up that if I don't take a second and settle a bit I might hurt you." Hawk's growly voice sent Winter's hunger ratcheting up several more notches until all he could think about was the orgasm they were about to share.

"Don't wait. Fuck me. Now," Winter whined as he clenched the muscles of his ass, massaging his mate's big cock.

"Oh, shit, baby. You're making me crazy," Hawk said as he pulled back until just the head remained inside.

He pushed deep again before setting up a fast rhythm. Winter's cock throbbed each time he went deep causing him to tighten his ass around the cock deep inside his ass. That action made Hawk growl deep in his chest and thrust faster and harder. When he reached

around Winter's hip and took hold of his cock, Winter's orgasm swelled deep in his balls.

"Hawk, I'm close. So close," Winter panted.

The thrusts became even stronger but more rhythmic. "Okay, baby, come with me," Hawk thrust once, twice, and then a third time before holding himself deep and just flexing his hips to get even closer.

Winter cried out, and his orgasm rolled over him as Hawk bit the other side of his neck from where Garrett had claimed him. Every muscle in his body clenched as he flew with his release and his orgasm rolled from cock and balls out to every cell in his body then back again, like ripples in a pan of water.

When their orgasms finally backed off, Hawk rested heavily on top of him. It took several minutes before Winter could feel his toes and had absolutely no desire to move from under his mate.

Finally Hawk took a deep breath and eased his softening cock out of his ass before kissing his way down Winter's back. "Come on, baby, let's go get a shower. Then we'll get you packed up and go home."

"I'm not sure I can move," Winter said before sighing and relaxing even further onto the table.

"Yes, but the sooner we get to Sanctuary, the sooner we can all sleep together in our very own great big bed," Garrett said from the doorway.

"Oh, all right. But I cannot wait until I get these damn casts off, so I can hold you and rub my hands all over *your* bodies," Winter grumped as he straightened and followed Hawk into the bathroom.

\* \* \* \*

It was after sundown when Hawk turned the Hummer onto the rough unpaved road that comprised the last ten miles into Sanctuary. Looking at the man sleeping in the passenger's seat, he hesitated a

moment. Winter had fallen asleep almost as soon as they'd gotten on I-85 and hadn't woken since. Of course he'd had a busy day both physically and emotionally.

After they'd cleaned up, he and Garrett made him sit by and watch as they packed the things he wanted to take with them. On their way out of town they got him a new cell phone, so he could keep up with work, or at least make contact with his customers and explain his situation.

As they crested the last mountaintop into Sanctuary, he patted Winter's thigh. "Winter, it's time to wake up, baby. We're almost there."

"Hmmm, what? We're there? How long was I asleep?"

Hawk watched as Winter straightened and scrubbed his fingers tips over his eyes. Gently dropping his hands back into his lap, he looked around. "It's dark," he said, sounded disappointed.

"Only in the trees. The moon is nearly full, so you'll be able to see just about everything," Hawk said.

"How long was I asleep?"

"A couple hours. You need the rest," Garrett said from the back seat. "Mom always said the best thing when you're hurt is plenty of rest and TLC."

"And we'll be happy to provide plenty of both until you're up and around."

"I'm hungry," Winter said just before they broke out of the trees and entered the large meadow that was Sanctuary.

Hawk stopped the truck, so their little mate could take a good look before he parked.

"Welcome to Sanctuary, Winter. Welcome home," he said.

\* \* \* \*

Winter looked around the meadow in disbelief. "It looks like the back lot of a movie set," he said. "Which house is yours?"

"Our house is that one." Garrett leaned between the seats and pointed far to their right.

"You live in a castle?" Winter asked.

He stared at the two-story stone building with a flat roof and squared turrets at each corner. It stood a little apart from the other buildings and looked like it should be on a hillside in England or Ireland or some other exotic, medieval setting. What made it even more amazing were the satellite dishes and antennas that topped one of the turrets.

After taking in his new home, he then turned his attention to the rest of this place his mates called home.

Closest to the parking lot to the left sat an ornate Victorian house painted peach with hunter green and navy blue trim. Fancy gingerbread trim covered the wraparound porch and a three-story circular tower. It reminded Winter of some of the historic homes he'd seen on visits to Savannah and Atlanta.

Next to the Grand Victorian stood the biggest, reddest barn he'd ever seen. Three stories tall, at least, it could house a dozen horses with quite a bit of room to spare. There was a wide, two-level deck in front and lots of windows on all three levels. If it was a barn, it had to be the fanciest one he'd ever seen.

To the right of the barn stood three log houses all with wide front porches. They looked like houses typical of the mountain region.

Then Hawk drove the Hummer slowly into the parking lot and pulled into a space next to what looked like an apple green UPS delivery truck. There was room for at least a half dozen more cars. On the uphill side of the parking lot was a garage big enough to hold an eighteen-wheeler or quite a few smaller cars.

"This place is incredible," Winter said as Hawk parked and turned off the engine.

He struggled with his seat belt and finally gave up. "Help, please," he said, leaning back and lifting his hands to shoulder height.

Garrett reached between the seats and pressed the button that

unlocked the straps holding him prisoner.

"Thank you," Winter said, turning to look between the seats. Feeling a little silly after his nap, he pursed his lips and sent Garrett an air kiss.

Garrett leaned in and gave him a quick peck. "Be careful, or you're going to find yourself dragged into the woods for more than just a kiss."

Winter grinned. "Can't wait."

"We'll hold off on any kinky, in-the-forest sex until after you've gotten those casts off. Besides, you're going to be busy directing the integration of your computers into our system and teaching us how we can help you do your job while you're laid up," Hawk said, sounding more like a parent than a lover.

"Yes, mate," Winter said with a sassy grin. "Now can we go show Spring that I survived Scott almost intact before you give me a tour of my new home?"

As they climbed from the Hummer and started up the path, the silence of the early evening was broken by the sound of a large animal barking fiercely. The animal sounded like it wasn't far away. It had barely finished when others responded as if passing along news like a telegraph system each one sounding a little further away than the last.

Winter moved to stand between the large forms of his men as he shivered in fear. "What the *hell* was that?"

# **Chapter 8**

Garrett wrapped his arms around his mate. "Sounds like our brothers overdid the caffeine again." His cock immediately hardened as Winter snuggled deeper into his embrace.

"Your brothers?" Winter rubbed his cheek back and forth against his chest. He seemed unaware of the affect he was having on Garrett.

"Yes, our brothers. Too much caffeine winds us up, and we go a little wild," Hawk explained as he stepped closer to press against Winter's back.

Before Winter could respond, a woman's voice interrupted, causing their little mate to jump and tense. "Are you three going to stand there making out all night, or do you plan on joining the rest of us for cake?"

Garrett brushed a kiss on the top of Winter's head. "What do you say? Join the parents for cake or ignore them and go check out our house?"

Winter dropped his head back and looked up at him, arousal evident in his eyes. "Though I'd like nothing more than to get alone and naked with you again, I am a little hungry."

Garrett nodded, knowing he also had to be tired. They'd loved him hard today with little thought that he was still recovering from his ex's attack just the night before.

"Okay, then, meet the parents it is."

Releasing Winter was one of the hardest things he'd done in awhile, but Garrett managed to pull his arms back and instead linked arms with him. They turned toward the path that circled in front of all the buildings before ending up back at the parking lot again. A glance told him that Hawk had done the same with Winter's other arm.

Two men and two women sat in rocking chairs on the porch of their parents' home. Several oil lanterns provided light and Garrett saw the women were knitting. Spring's needles moved fast and confident while their mother's hands moved slower, and she concentrated hard on what she was doing. The dads were talking quietly, their hands unusually still. Normally they'd be whittling one of the little wooden animals they then sold to a gift shop in Boone to keep the house from filling up with them.

Garrett and Hawk released their mate at the bottom of the stairs. When he didn't move, Garrett patted Winter's ass, earning himself a dark look. But Winter climbed the steps to the porch as Spring set her knitting aside.

"Oh, my God, are you all right?" Spring asked as she wrapped Winter in a hug before releasing him, looking him up and down and then hugging him again.

"No, but I'll heal," Winter answered gently though he sounded like he was gritting his teeth. "It's my own fault. I should never have gotten involved with Scott to begin with, but it's in the past now."

"But your hands? How can you work? And your writing?" Spring finally released him. Leading him to her chair, she pushed him, so he was forced to sit or fall on his ass.

Garrett had to grin at how his mate let his sister fuss over him when he'd had a hard time letting them fix him a sandwich earlier.

Winter saw his expression and shrugged. "I'm only five years younger than she is, but she has always treated me like I'm about six years old."

"Most of the time you act like it. Are you hungry?" Spring scolded gently.

"Yes, we are," Garrett answered before Winter could speak.

"I'll go up to the Wash House and fix us something," Hawk offered and practically ran from the porch.

Wimp, Garrett thought as he watched him move even faster once

he was back on the path. Hawk always did hate emotional confrontation.

"Stay away from the coffee bar. We've already got six dogs hyped up on caffeine, we don't need any more," their mother ordered gently, reminding Garrett that they weren't alone with Spring.

"Mom, Dads, this is Spring's brother and our mate, Winter Ryan. Winter, these are our parents, Bridget, Michael, and Thomas Sullivan." He made the introductions gently.

Their parents had always known they were gay, even before the twins themselves did, but to bring home their mate, a gorgeous little man who happened to be the sibling of their brothers' mate seemed more than a little strange. Now that they were faced with the reality of their sons' sexual preferences, how would they react?

Bridget laid aside her knitting with what sounded like a relieved sigh. She stood and approached Winter slowly. Spring stepped back as she walked up and took his hands in hers. "Welcome to Sanctuary and the Sullivan family, Winter. I'm so happy my babies found you and were able to take care of you when you needed it." She then leaned in and kissed his cheek.

"Thank you, ma'am," Winter said, sounding more than a little amazed at the warm greeting.

Once Bridget stepped aside, her husbands each stepped in and added their welcome with a warm embrace. Though relieved that his parents accepted Winter so easily, Garrett found himself fisting his hands. He didn't want anyone touching his mate, even his family.

"Relax son, he's all yours," Thomas, the more empathetic of the two dads, said with a chuckle.

"Yes, sir, he is."

\* \* \* \*

Meeting the parents did not go at all as Winter had expected. But then he wasn't sure how such a meeting was supposed to go. After all, none of his other boyfriends had ever offered to take him home to mama before. And now to know that they would all be living in the same valley was a bit overwhelming, especially given what he wrote. Should he share that little tidbit of information or keep it a secret? Not even Spring knew exactly what he was writing though he had shared that his electronic books were selling way better than expected.

By the time he'd eaten a sandwich and a piece of cake with a large glass of milk, his eyes began to droop, and he began to yawn. "I'm sorry," he apologized for the third time after not being able to keep his mind focused on what Bridget was saying. "I don't know why I'm so tired. I slept the whole way here."

"No, we're sorry. You should be in bed, resting," Bridget enunciated as she sent telling looks to her sons. "Resting, not messing around," she stated when both his mates set their dishes aside and stood up.

"Yes, Mom," they answered in unison.

"Thank you," Winter said as he brushed a kiss on Bridget's cheek.

"For what?"

"For accepting me so easily into your family," Winter said, still a little amazed at the ease with which they'd taken the news that their sons' mate was a man.

"Son, it's not for us to judge. For shape shifters, wolves, tigers, bunnies, dragons, or wolfhounds, Fate decides who we spend our lives with. It's not about looks or money or any of the things that young people these days think will make them happy in a partner," Michael said, his tone gentle. "And unlike those young people who change lovers like they do socks, shape shifters mate for life."

Winter nodded. "Still, thank you anyway."

The parents laughed. "You're very welcome," Bridget said. "Now go on up to the Wash House and get some rest. Tomorrow we'll unpack the truck and get you settled in the fortress."

"Yes, ma'am." Having dealt with Southern mamas and the way they ruled their families with iron fists covered in love, Winter recognized when he'd been given his marching orders. Looking at Garrett and Hawk, he raised one eyebrow. "Which one of you wants to show me to the Wash House?"

"I will," the brothers answered in unison.

"Very well. Good night to all of you," Bridget said. "We'll see you for breakfast then, and you can meet the rest of the boys."

Winter nodded and allowed his twins to lead him off the porch and up the path to the barn-like structure next door. Once inside he didn't have a chance to look around as they hurried him across the main floor and up two flights of stairs then to the first door down an open balcony that looked out over the main room.

Once they were closed in the twins' bedroom, he looked at the two full-size beds. They barely fit on his queen-size bed. There was no way the three of them could share a bed tonight. "I guess I'm sleeping on the floor."

He squeaked when Garrett grabbed him. "No way, sexy. Now that we've got you, we will always, *always*, sleep together from now on."

"Just give us a minute to figure this out," Hawk said. He brushed a kiss over Winter's lips before turning his attention to the bed situation.

Winter watched wide-eyed as the men went to work. Hawk moved the nightstand from between the beds and pulled the comforters from the mattresses. Then the brothers shoved the two beds together. Then Hawk laid one comforter over the two beds to hide the split in the middle while Garrett moved the pillows so they would lay across the two beds and no one would fall in the center if the beds shifted apart.

"Wow, you guys are good," he said once they stepped back, pleased with the result of their handiwork.

"Just a different kind of creative thinking," Garrett said with a shrug. "Not nearly as impressive as the books you write. Now, strip and get into bed, so we can snuggle since Mom outlawed sex."

## **Chapter 9**

Winter woke horny and wanting. He was snuggled between his twins. He carefully worked his way free and after using the bathroom, dug into his bag for the lube he'd stashed there while the twins were packing up his office. Bending over the counter in the bathroom, he tried to prepare himself, but found it difficult. Instead he pulled out the large plug and slid it in before returning to bed.

His mates were still sleeping, having rolled onto their backs, each sporting an erection, the sight of which made his mouth water in anticipation. Crawling back onto the bed, Winter maneuvered himself between their thighs. Taking Hawk's cock first, he licked up the underside before taking the hard length deep into his mouth.

He heard Hawk moan just before fingers combed through his head.

He bobbed up and down several times before licking across the head and releasing Hawk. That earned him a whining, wordless protest as he turned and gave Garrett's cock the same attention. He wasn't surprised to receive the identical response from the other man. They were, after all, identical twins.

He moved back and forth from cock to cock several times before sitting up and looking at the two men who were now very much awake.

"I'm horny," he announced with a giggle.

"Like we couldn't tell," Garrett returned with a laugh.

"Who wants to fuck, and who wants to get sucked?"

Both men groaned when he reached down with his fingertips and began to play with his own cock. Then in a move so fast he could barely take it in, Garrett pulled him up and turned him around, so he lay on top of him.

"Up on your knees, baby, but don't hurt yourself," Hawk instructed as he climbed from the bed.

Winter got into position, bending his knees and resting his bandaged forearms on either side of Garrett's hips. A moment later Hawk repositioned them so that Winter's knees were resting on the bed, but his lower legs were hanging off.

"Oh, fuck, he's got a plug in," Hawk muttered after brushing one finger down the cleft between Winter's ass cheeks.

Winter released Garrett's cock and looked over his shoulder. "I told you I was horny," he snarked.

"Yes, you did, didn't you, baby. Relax and we'll work all that horniness out of you," Hawk said as he gently pulled the plug out and brushed the head of his cock over Winter's hole.

"At least for a little while," Garrett added, his voice muffled by Winter's cock in his mouth.

Winter moaned and then turned back to Garrett's cock. Unable to hold the cock and himself up he licked his way around the head then lifted it by taking just the head between his lips. He sucked in a breath when Hawk gently pushed his way through the outer rings of muscle before sliding deep on the first stroke. Pulling out, his next thrust seated him fully inside. The sudden full feeling caused Winter to moan around Garrett's cock which then had Garrett moaning around his in response, sending even more waves of arousal shooting through Winter.

Then Garrett pulled Winter's cock from his mouth. "God, that's a beautiful sight, your cock sliding in and out of our sexy mate," he said before licking and nibbling his way up and down the length of Winter's cock.

Hawk held his hips and began a slow, easy stroking in and out. Garrett matched the rhythm and Winter did the same, gently sucking Garrett's cock, his tongue bathing as much of it as he could. With men attending to both cock and ass, his need for more quickly grew.

"Faster, Hawk. Fuck me harder," he said.

He wasn't sure the man heard him since he still had cock in his mouth until Hawk tightened his hold and began moving in and out of him at a steadily increasing rate. He sucked harder as well, taking Garrett as deep as he could and swallowing as well.

"Shit, gonna come, baby," Hawk ground out several minutes later, his hips driving even harder and deeper.

"Oh, God, me, too," Garrett added, reaching between him and Hawk and rolling his balls with gentle fingers.

Winter pulled his mouth of Garrett's cock long enough to cry out, "Yes, oh, shit, yes!" as his balls contracted and sent his seed pulsing through his shaft and into Garrett's hot, wet, waiting mouth.

He had just enough time to reclaim Garrett's cock before jets of semen filled his mouth as Hawk stiffened and thrust one last time before holding himself deep. Winter felt the added heat as he came as well. Winter sucked and swallowed as his hips continued thrusting into Garrett.

His mind went foggy, and he had no idea how much time passed before Hawk gently eased his cock from him and collapsed onto the bed beside them. "Now that's the way to wake up." He observed, his voice soft and relaxed.

"Uh-huh," Garrett agreed.

"Mmmm," was all Winter could manage as he rolled to lay on the other side of Garrett.

They were still recovering long minutes later when a loud pounding sounded at the door. Winter jumped in surprise, but his men just sighed.

"What?" they yelled in unison.

"Mom said to tell you breakfast is in five minutes, and if you're not down, she's going to come up and drag you down in whatever state you're in," a deep voice cheerfully blared through the door.

"Thanks for the warning," Garrett said as the brothers sat up and crawled off the bed. "Come on, sexy. Time to get dressed."

"But—" Winter wanted to argue, but had a feeling that Bridget was a woman of her word and would drag them downstairs naked if they tarried too long.

While Hawk disappeared into the bathroom to clean up, Garrett pulled him out of bed. "We have the rest of our lives to play, sexy. Right now we've been summoned to the table. And Mom won't hesitate to drag us down naked if we're not at the table."

Winter nodded and went to his messenger bag that one of his men had thoughtfully brought with them the night before. Opening it, he grabbed the pair of soft, black cotton shorts he kept tucked in a side pocket. After pulling them on he turned to find both men staring at him. "What?"

"That's like Mary Poppins's bag, isn't it? Bottomless and holds everything and then some?" Hawk asked as Winter pulled his jeans on. He wasn't teasing. He sounded like he was in awe of Winter's bag full of essentials.

Winter shrugged. "Not really. But you never know when you're going to need a pair of clean shorts."

"I think later on we should see what all that bag does hold," Garrett said. "Maybe we can put together a daypack for you to carry around here."

Winter nodded. "That would probably be more practical if we do much hiking and stuff." Pulling on his shirt he headed for the door barefoot having kicked his shoes off by the front door in what had obviously been an old, ingrained habit. "Come on, all of the sudden I'm hungry."

"Well then, let's go," his mates said as one.

Once they'd descended the stairs, Winter stopped to take a good look around this place where he now found himself. The stairs that led down from two floors of bedrooms were situated in the back corner of the huge room.

To his immediate left was a curtained off area about the side of a room. Walking past it, he found himself in a nice library area with lots of bookshelves lining the two walls and several comfortable chairs. He knew he would be spending time in this area, as he loved to read almost as much as he loved to write.

Walking past the front door he found himself standing at a coffee bar and knew this had to be where Spring spent her time. Everything was spic and span, and he wondered if she had the supplies to make him a chai latte, his favorite coffee bar drink.

Garrett and Hawk let him wander as they headed for the dining area and kitchen that took up another corner of the room. Beyond that was what looked like a traditional living room with couches and a variety of chairs facing a huge flat-screen television that hung over an even bigger fireplace. There was no fire, but the walls and back were blackened with soot, a telling sign that this was not just for show. He continued his wandering and found himself in an area that reminded him of the laundry room back at his apartment complex. Washers and dryers lined the back wall with several long tables for folding divided this area from the rest of the room.

He continued on and found a short hallway with a back door. Two rooms, one marked men, and the other women, created the hallway. Pushing open the door to the men's room, he found it was more than just a restroom, but a locker room with several shower stalls, a couple of toilets and three sinks.

Returning to the main room, he joined four men gathered around the coffee bar. Spring was in her element, mixing and heating and serving as she'd done for years at her job. He studied her and thought she looked a lot more relaxed than she ever had back home. He wondered if it was being away from the city or the two black-haired men in the kitchen watching her every move. He blinked when she set a mug in front of him though the others had been there before him.

"One chai latte for my baby brother," Spring said with a smile. The other men didn't seem to mind that she'd served him first, but he felt uncomfortable. Taking his mug he headed to the dining area where his mates sat talking to their parents.

"What's that, baby?" Hawk asked as he sat in the chair between them.

"Chai latte. Not quite the same jolt as coffee, but something a little different," Winter said, taking a sip.

He closed his eyes and moaned as the hot, sweet, foamy spiced tea caressed its way from lips to throat to belly. He took a second sip before setting the mug on the table. Opening his eyes he found his mates staring at him as if he'd just propositioned them.

"What?" he asked, raising one eyebrow.

Garrett and Hawk swallowed hard and tried to look innocent, but when they shifted in their chairs, Winter noticed the growing bulges pushing at the zippers of their jeans. "Nothing," they said softly.

"Forgive them, Winter. I tried my best, but sometimes I think they forgot every manner I ever drilled in them," Bridget said from across the table.

Trying to keep his movements covert, Winter reached out and laid a hand in the center of each man's lap, earning him twin glances that could cut steel. "But they're so cute," he said in their defense.

"Cute? You think we're cute?" The twins leaned in and growled in his ear.

Winter used his fingertips to pat their erections. "Yes, I think you're very cute. But I'll tell you why later."

All at once he felt happier and more lighthearted than he had in ages. He wasn't sure if it was being with his mates or being out of the city and away from Scott, but he couldn't repress a grin. He also had to fight the urge to jump up and dance a jig while singing a happy song.

A moment later the rest of the chairs at the very long table filled up with large pairs of men who looked alike.

"Winter, these are all our brothers. Adam and Brock, who are mated to your sister. Then there's Cole, Dawson, Evan, and Frank."

As Garrett made the introductions, each brother raised a hand as his name was called, making each pair easier to identify as they sat next to each other.

Amazed, he looked at Bridget. "You gave birth to four sets of twins?"

She nodded with a smile while her husbands seemed to puff up with pride. "Yes, Sullivan men always come in pairs. Which is why they must find a mate who can love them both equally."

"Oh, wow," was all Winter could say. "What about the women? Do they come in pairs, too?"

Michael and Thomas laughed. "Haven't had a girl born in this valley in twelve generations. Something about the genes only produce male babies," Michael said.

"That's why we ended up with eight boys. Bridget was determined to have a girl. After those two," Thomas nodded to the men sitting on either side of him, "she finally gave up."

"Twelve generations of males. That has to be some kind of record," Winter said. "And four sets of twins in one family. You are an amazing woman," he said to Bridget, in awe as a huge platter of pancakes was handed to him. Instantly his attention was diverted from procreation to breakfast.

#### Chapter 10

After breakfast the five sets of twins marched down and unloaded the Hummer. Winter tried to help, but nearly dropped a box containing his computer's hard drive. Instead he directed traffic, telling each man who came in with a box whether it went to the computer room, the bedroom or the kitchen. He'd been touched when his mates packed up most of his kitchen stuff as he had invested in some nice cooking utensils, and when he wanted to, he could cook a really good meal.

Which made the guilt that had been niggling at him poke a little harder. It had only been two days, but he was ready to lose his casts. He wanted to show his mates he wasn't nearly as needy and leech-like as he'd been since they'd shown up on his doorstep. Sure he found he needed hugs and snuggles from his mates, but it was embarrassing when Hawk had to cut his pancakes so he could eat them.

As his men went to the Wash House to pack up their things and bring them down, Winter prowled the fortress. It surprised him to find that while the exterior of the house may look medieval the interior was anything but.

The first floor was an open layout with twelve-foot ceilings. Several large stone pillars were strategically placed to hold the second floor in place. The kitchen was an open design taking up one back corner with white painted cabinets and granite countertops. Winter was drawn to that area and found himself standing in a chef's dream kitchen that even had a drawer-style dishwasher and a warming oven.

Walking the rest of the room, he admired the wide-board pine plank flooring finished to a golden glow. The walls had been plastered and painted a pale peach. What surprised Winter was that, except for a card table with two folding chairs flanking it and the boxes of his belongings, the room was entirely empty.

He stood in the kitchen and imagined how he'd decorate the room. A large, round wooden table and comfortable chairs in the area closest to the kitchen suitable for having poker nights or just dinner with a few of the family. He turned to the rest of the room, and in his mind's eye saw large, well-padded couches and chairs set in at least two conversation groups, but furniture that could be moved around if need be. There would be a bookcase on that wall and more pictures everywhere and area rugs that helped define spaces but without taking away from the beauty of the floor.

Climbing the wide circular staircase to the second floor, he entered the bedroom, which took up nearly half the second floor. It, too, was an open design with only the toilet and closet area screened off from the rest of the room. The walls were a color that reminded Winter of French vanilla ice cream, and the floor was carpeted with a thick, caramel-colored carpet that he couldn't wait to roll around on. Toeing off his shoes, he moaned as the soft carpet caressed his bare feet.

The bed was the biggest thing he'd ever seen, the mattress lying directly on the carpet. The headboard looked like a piece of wrought iron fencing. When he approached, he discovered that it was attached to the wall and not to the bed.

The only other furniture was a couch with a coffee table in front of it facing a set of windows. He could imagine snuggling on the couch as they watched the sun come up in the morning. Or watching the leaves change color. Or snowflakes fall and cover the ground. Or the stars come out at night.

Looking around the rest of the room he could see that there were additional decorative touches that needed to be added. A basket of soft towels to sit by the giant, modern claw foot tub. Some artificial plants and trees to turn the bathroom area into a jungle. Extra pillows and a thick comforter to cover the bed. A trunk at the foot of the bed to hold their small but growing toy collection along with extra blankets and pillows.

God, he really was a girl, he thought as he walked around the room and looked across it from a different angle. That was one of the things all his boyfriends had teased him about, being too feminine. Though his apartment didn't show it, he liked to cook, help his friends decorate their apartments, read foodie and women's magazines, clip coupons, and shop when his brain wasn't consumed with whatever project he was in the middle of.

His mood grew darker when he realized his mates knew nothing about that side of him. Would they still want him when they found out?

Before he could open the double doors that led to the rest of the second floor, a voice called from downstairs. "Winter? Where are you?"

"Up here," he said sadly, turning to head toward the stairs.

Before he reached them, his mates bounded into view, each carrying two large black plastic bags.

"So, what do you think?" Garrett asked.

Winter watched as he carried his bags across the room, setting them next to the four boxes containing Winter's entire wardrobe. He rarely traveled and didn't even own a suitcase, just a large sports-bag he used when he went to visit his parents.

"It's beautiful," he said simply as his inadequacies piled up to smother him. He dropped his face so his men wouldn't see his expression.

"But?"

Winter heard Hawk drop his bags and come to stand in front of him. He saw the man's boots just before large warm hands settled on his shoulders. A moment later he felt warmth at his back and knew that Garrett had joined them. A kiss brushed across the back of his neck sent shivers through him, making it hard to think of a polite way to break the news to his mates of his girly side.

"What's wrong, Winter? Don't you like it?"

"No, it's not that. I love it. I want to decorate it. I want to hang pictures and buy couches and chairs and rugs and make it even more beautiful. I want to cook gourmet meals in that beautiful kitchen and throw poker parties for your brothers," Winter said softly, unable to hide the misery in his voice.

He blinked several times, but the tears filling his eyes would not be caged. When a hand slid under his chin, he fought it, not wanting his mates to see him cry.

"Winter, look at me," Hawk ordered, his voice gentle but with a thread of strength that melted Winter's determination.

He slowly lifted his head until he was looking up into Hawk's strong features and bright blue eyes.

"Baby, we love you. We want you to be happy. If decorating and cooking will put a smile on your face, we're all for it," Hawk said as he brushed the tears from Winter's cheeks.

"We haven't decorated because we wanted to wait for our mate so it would be *our* house. Except for the office, we don't really spend much time here," Garrett said behind him before kissing the side of his neck. "We're mountain men, Winter. We don't know anything about decorating. The only reason the walls and carpet go together in the room was because Mom picked them out. We just did the manual labor."

"So you don't mind if I'm girly?" Winter asked hesitantly.

"What's girly about decorating and cooking? Some of the best chefs and interior designers in the world are men. And most of them are gay," Hawk said. "Feel free to go crazy. All I ask is that we have a big screen TV and at least one nice recliner chair, so I can sit back and watch movies with my baby in my lap."

"I'll see if I can find double recliners, so we can all snuggle together," Winter suggested, the sadness gone and excitement surging forward to take its place. His mates didn't see him as weak or less than a man because he liked things most men wouldn't be caught dead doing. All at once he couldn't wait to get started.

The two men pressed closer until they made a Sullivan sandwich with a Winter center. Winter felt long, thick, hard cocks press into his belly and between the cheeks of his ass and knew he was in trouble if he didn't break this up and soon.

"Show me your office," he requested, stepping sideways and out from between the brothers before they realized his intent.

His mates grumbled as he danced away from them, across the carpet toward the closed double doors. The boxes of his equipment sat lined up along the wall as if no one wanted to enter their office.

"Now, you can do anything you want with the rest of the house, but please don't do anything in here without discussing it with us first," Garrett said as each man reached for a doorknob.

"Okay, not a problem. I figure I'll be demanding your input on almost everything I do. I want this to be our house, so you're going to have to help choose some things."

His mates looked at him with identical deer-in-headlight expressions. "We have to go shopping?"

"It won't hurt a bit. And if you go shopping with me, you'll be able to test out the recliners and the couches and have a say on what kind of pictures I hang on the walls." Winter tried to make it sound appealing.

"We can talk about that later. Right now we want you to see this," Garrett said as they opened the double doors.

Winter walked in, his eyes growing wider with each step until he thought they might pop out of his skull. "Oh my God, it's...it's...it's...Oh, it's perfection."

This was the office of his dreams, though he hadn't realized it until that very second. One wall was lined with cork with papers, pictures, and small colorful notes hanging from tacks. Another wall held a bank of monitors with several keyboards on a long table just in front of them. Though currently dark, he could see them lit up, each

monitoring a different program or showing an aspect to a complicated layout. Another wall had nothing but maps; of the world, of the country, of the state and one of just the local area. The fourth wall had a series of storage cabinets though he saw that at least one contained the computer mainframe that provided the heartbeat for this room.

The center of the room was filled with a huge worktable, twothirds of which was covered with computers, papers, and other minutiae necessary for running a business. The last third was completely empty, as if waiting for him to set up his station and get to work.

Turning, he found Garrett and Hawk standing side by side, tense and nervous. He threw himself at them, knowing instinctively that they would not let him fall. He wrapped a hand around each man's neck and pulled them both down, so he could reach them.

"I love you." He kissed Hawk's lips.

"I love you." He turned his head and kissed Garrett.

"Thank you for coming to my rescue. Thank you for choosing me to be your mate. Thank you for bringing me here. Thank you for not hating me for being girly. I love you both so much."

He moved from one to the other, back and forth every few words. Lips, cheeks, and chins all received kisses as he grew more and more excited about this new life they would be building together.

"I love you, too, baby," Hawk said, his voice deeper and rougher than usual.

"Me, too, sexy," Garrett echoed in the same tone that sent need racing through Winter's entire body to gather deep in his pelvis.

Before they could strip themselves and him, Winter pulled away. "Will I be able to have my computer without hooking it into your system? I'm kind of paranoid about people hacking in and stealing my work."

"Not a problem. We can set it up for you any way you'd like," Hawk assured him. "But we're not doing it right now."

"Why not? It's been days since I've checked my e-mail. And I

need to let my publishers know that I'm incapacitated. And my assistant needs to know that I'm out of commission for jobs for the next few weeks. Oh, God, my fan club will be going nuts since I usually check in with them a couple times of day."

He began to pace around the room, mentally kicking himself for falling out of touch with the world. Just because he'd been hurt, met his mates, fallen in love and moved was no reason to go completely incommunicado for this long.

"We'll set it up for you later. And we'll help you with your e-mail and anything else you need to be taking care of," Garrett said, taking him by the arm and leading him out of the office and toward the stairs.

Hawk followed just behind after closing the doors to the office. "Right now you need to relax and heal. Nothing is so important that it can't wait another couple of hours while we take you on a tour of your new hometown."

Winter looked from one to the other. "Really? You'll help me? Wow, that would be great. Okay, then let's go sightseeing."

#### Chapter 11

Garrett watched Winter as he fell in love with Sanctuary. Their little mate was interested in everything, wanting to know what each of the outbuildings was for and how the co-op general store worked and how they'd brought electricity, water, Internet and cell service to their little corner of the mountains.

He didn't believe him when Hawk said, "A little piracy and a lot of magic."

So Garrett went into details about how over the past two hundred and fifty years the Sullivans had earned more than a few favors from the government and every once in a while called one in through back channels and goodwill.

After walking the perimeter of the meadow that encompassed Sanctuary proper and keeping Winter from exploring every nook and cranny in every outbuilding, they returned to the Wash House for lunch. After the meal was over they left Winter at table and cleared the table and did the dishes.

"So, what's for dinner?" Cole asked as he and Dawson pushed from the table.

"Hmmm, haven't given it any thought." Garrett looked at Hawk who shrugged. "Any suggestions?"

"There's no more frozen lasagna in the valley, so don't even think about it," Cole said. "Since we've had sandwiches for lunch you can't do that either."

Winter waited until the others left to move to the open kitchen door. "So what's the deal with dishes and cooking and stuff?"

"One set of twins cooks, and the next set in the alphabet cleans up

then cooks the next meal. Since we cleaned up for lunch we're responsible for cooking for dinner and Mom and the Dads will clean up. They'll make breakfast and Adam, Brock, and Spring will clean up and then cook lunch. And so on and so on."

"So where do I fit?" Winter leaned against one side of the doorway and crossed his arms over his chest. His pain was almost tolerable, but he would take a couple of generic over-the-counter painkillers in a few minutes just to keep everything under control.

"You're on our team. But until you can get your hands wet, you can just stand there and look cute," Hawk said as he began to wash pots and pans while Garrett stacked dishes into an industrial-sized dishwasher.

"Sounds like a tough job, but I think I can handle it," Winter snarked.

The two worked as a well-oiled machine putting the kitchen to rights. Once they finished, Hawk opened a subzero freezer and then stood and studied the contents. "Damn, there's nothing in here."

Winter crossed the kitchen to stand beside him and giggled. The freezer was nearly full of meats and vegetable packages.

"Pull out that big package of chicken breasts, and lay them out to defrost," he said, pointing to a large plastic bag. And those two bags of green beans. Do you have onions? Cornflakes? Mushroom soup?"

As the brothers rushed to pull out the items he called out, Winter mentally put together a menu that was easy enough for his mates to fix, yet delicious enough to impress his new extended family.

"We'll need to be back here an hour and a half before dinnertime," he said. "So what should we do now?"

Before either of his men offered a suggestion, the front door slammed open, causing Winter to jump. A disheveled man walked in, looking around the room wide-eyed and panicked.

"Winter? Where the hell are you?"

"Scott? What are you doing here?" Winter started across the room, baffled at the other man's sudden appearance in this place he

shouldn't even know about.

Winter was shocked immobile when Scott caught sight of him and raced across the room toward him. As the man raced toward him, his mates suddenly appeared beside him, making low, threatening growls deep in their chests. So completely focused on Winter, Scott did not appear to see or hear them.

"Ours," the twins stated with no uncertainty.

"Winter, why did you leave town without telling me? I was so worried. I had a hell of a time tracking you." Scott sounded frantic with worry, but Winter didn't care. "I had to sleep in my car last night and then hiked forever to get here. You really were a naughty boy to run away like that. Now come on, let's go home."

"No," Garrett and Hawk growled.

Scott hesitated long enough to glare at the twins. "Excuse me, I'm here for my boyfriend."

At his condescending tone toward his mates, Winter moved through his shock and into disbelief. "You tracked me to Sanctuary? How the hell did you do that?" Winter's normally nonexistent temper flared into flames. When Scott moved forward and didn't stop a proper distance away, Winter held out his hand to keep him from coming even closer. When Scott pressed against his cast Winter took a step back to keep him at arm's length. Out of the corner of his eyes he saw his mates move away and begin to strip off their clothes.

"Why would I go anywhere with you, now or ever? You beat me so bad the emergency room doctor wanted to put me in the hospital. You used me as your little fuck toy, not a boyfriend or lover. You called and expected me to race to you."

Winter felt hot tears fill his eyes, but somehow kept them from falling. "You never, ever came to my apartment. You never wanted to be seen in public with me. And now you've somehow tracked me across the state and are standing here acting like *your* heart is broken. What the fuck kind of crazy person are you?"

"Of course I tracked you, pet. You're my boy toy." Scott's

expression shifted, and suddenly instead of worried and sorry, he took on a smug and superior air. "I have to keep track of my property. The second time you came to my apartment I put a GPS device in that messenger bag you carry with you everywhere. How do you think I could show up out of the blue when you were out walking? You really are stupid enough to think it was just coincidence, aren't you?"

Realizing that Scott saw him as nothing but his own personal living sex toy, Winter's anger exploded. But before he could throw himself at the man and beat him to a bloody pulp as he wanted, Scott's attention was diverted.

"What the hell?" he screamed taking two steps back. "Those guys...They were there and then...they changed into dogs. What kind of shit is that?"

Two large blond wolfhounds stepped closer to Winter, angling themselves to protect their little mate. They growled as they kept Scott at bay.

"Shhh, loves. It's all right. He won't hurt me." Winter ran his fingers up and down the dog's necks as his anger eased. It helped to know that his mates would keep him safe from this man who was staring at him like he was crazy.

"These are my mates, and they want you here about as much as I do. Go away, Scott."

"Your mates! But they're dogs! You're into fucking animals? You really are a freak, aren't you!"

At Scott's derogatory comment, Winter's anger exploded. All he remembered later was throwing himself past the dogs and using one casted arm as a weapon to slam against Scott's temple. After that, a red curtain of anger dropped over his memory, protecting him. When the veil parted, Scott was on the floor, barely conscious and bleeding from several wounds on his face and upper body. Hawk held Winter several inches off the ground with both arms wrapped securely around his middle.

Winter blinked and looked at a naked Garrett who knelt next to

the injured man. "What happened?"

"Baby, remind me later never to piss you off," Hawk said. He sounded like a proud papa and was grinning when Winter stared up at him. "I think Scott now understands that he needs to leave you alone and never come near this place again."

"Did I do that?" He nodded toward his ex-lover.

"You just gave him a taste of what you went through," Garrett said as he stood as Hawk set him down. The brothers then quickly dressed. "He'll survive, but he won't enjoy living for awhile."

Just as they finished, the front and back doors opened at the same time, and several brothers rushed into the room. "What the hell's going on in here?"

"Just dealing with a piece of trash," Winter said. One last wave of anger pushed him to kick Scott in the side. The man on the floor mound and rolled onto his side. "Go back to Charlotte and stay there. Next time you show up here I won't take it so easy on you."

With that he took his mates by their hands and walked away from Scott. As they passed the brothers, he looked at them. "Please make sure he makes it out of the valley and back to his car before we get back here to fix dinner," he said.

Wide-eyed, the brothers nodded as they parted to make room for the trio. "No problem," one of them said.

"We'll take care of him, Winter," another said.

Once on the front deck, Winter looked at his mates. "So, what else should we do this afternoon?"

"We thought we'd show you one of the most special places in the valley," Hawk said as he wrapped an arm around Winter's shoulders and led him off the deck and around the Wash House

"Okay," Winter said easily.

"Are you okay for a little hike?" Garrett asked as he followed them.

"Sure," Winter said quickly, not wanting them to think him weak. They crossed the meadow and entered the tree line that surrounded Sanctuary behind the fortress. Garrett moved ahead to lead the way while Hawk fell back to bring up the rear.

After ten minutes Winter was breathing heavily, realizing that hiking in the mountains required a whole different set of muscles than strolling around town, but he refused to complain. He just gritted his teeth and continued putting one foot in front of the other. He was determined to follow Garrett up the narrow trail. He knew he was out of shape, but just a few minutes should not wear him out like this.

He had to stop several times, but his mates never complained. They waited patiently while he caught his breath. The trail had been leading steadily up the side of the mountain finally leveled out and entered a small clearing on the side of the mountain.

Trees had been cleared and a log gazebo sat in the center of the small clearing. It looked as if it had been there forever, the logs silvered with age and weather. The tin roof was painted bright green and blended in with its surroundings. Several painted rockers and Adirondack-style chairs populated the gazebo.

Winter didn't look at his mates but headed straight for the gazebo. The bright yellow rocking chair nearest the steps called to him. After brushing off a few stray leaves he sat down and began to rock. As he looked out, the view from this perch high on the mountainside captivated him.

He could just see the meadow and building that comprised Sanctuary, but in lifting his eyes he saw mountains as far as the horizon. A cloudy haze softened the sharp edges of exposed granite on some of the mountains as well as the trees that grew wherever they could find purchase.

"Wow," he breathed, amazed and impressed and overwhelmed by the natural beauty. "I wish I had my camera."

"We'll come back soon and you can take all the pictures you want," Garrett assured him as he settled in a red chair on side of him.

Hawk pulled an apple green chair up to sit on his other side. "Welcome to our home. Welcome to Sanctuary," he said.

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Winter nodded, but couldn't say anything in response. With blue skies overhead and the beauty laid out before them, words seemed inadequate. He watched as last fall's dried leaves blew across the path. He watched birds circle overhead, riding the air currents. Time seemed to stop as they sat there. All thoughts of work and worry and being inadequate drained away.

As tension drained away, a gentle sense of peace took its place. After a few more minutes he wasn't sure he could move, even if someone set his pants on fire. Closing his eyes he smiled as the adrenaline from his encounter with Scott drained away and left him with an intense need to express his joy at living.

Opening his eyes, he looked out at the beauty of the valley then from one man to the other. Standing up, he toed off his shoes. Then he began to dance around the gazebo as he awkwardly tried to strip his shirt over his head. "I'm horny and want to make love with my hot, sexy mates," he said as he struggled, "but I think you're going to have to help me."

#### Chapter 12

After seeing Winter beat the shit out the interloper, Garrett knew his mate really was perfect for them. And now, watching him dance around as he tried to strip off his shirt sent heat surging through Garrett until all he wanted was to love the man until none of them could move.

Looking at Hawk, he saw his brother felt the same way. The next time Winter danced by, Garrett stopped him long enough to pull off his shirt. The next time he came within reach, Hawk opened his jeans and pushed them down far enough to free his cock before releasing him again. Winter continued dancing to the music only he heard. His sexy body drove Garrett's arousal higher and higher until he had to have his man. Grabbing his arm he pulled Winter down to sit on his lap, then wrapped one arm around his back while his other hand reached down to begin playing with Winter's cock and balls.

"Mmmm," his mate moaned, leaning up and licking at his lips before kissing him.

Garrett's breath caught when Winter shifted on his lap until he straddled his legs. Then he reached between them, opened Garrett's jeans and gently eased his cock and balls out. Garrett heard Hawk moving around, but had no clue what his brother was doing. He growled, "Mine," when Hawk gently untangled them and then lifted Winter from his lap.

"No, brother, ours. Why don't we all get a little more comfortable?"

Shaking his head to clear the thick, lust-induced fog, Garrett saw that Hawk had pulled the futon mattress and blankets from the Winter and His Twins 77

waterproof trunk and laid them out at the back of the gazebo, making them a bed to play upon.

Garrett stood, and by the time he crossed the few feet between his chair and the bed where Winter now lay naked and slowly stroking his cock, he had stripped off his clothes. He knelt on the edge of the mattress and just watched. Several heartbeats later, Hawk knelt on the opposite side of the bed.

Like their little mate, he took his cock in his own hand and began to stroke at the same slow, easy pace that Winter did. Hawk mirrored his actions so that all three of them were moving at the same speed. Seeing Winter play with himself was such a turn-on, Garrett wasn't sure how long he'd be able to stay in control and not come.

"What do you want, sexy?" Garrett asked when he felt his orgasm ball up in his pelvis, just waiting to explode.

"I want to fuck one of you while the other fucks me. Can I do that?" Winter spoke in a breathlessly soft tone just louder than a whisper.

Thrills at Winter's soft suggestion caused Garrett to shiver in response. He closed his eyes and lifted his hand from his cock to keep from spilling his seed all over his little mate, just barely holding himself together.

"Oh, shit," Hawk ground out across from him, his voice deep and rough.

Garrett opened his eyes just in time to watch as every muscle in his brother's body stiffened. Hawk then shot several ropes of pearly white fluid across Winter's body.

Winter's hand dropped to the base of his own cock where he gripped the shaft tight, obviously trying to keep from coming himself. "That was beautiful, Hawk," he said, smiling softly, trying to comfort the man who looked upset that he'd peaked too soon. "Does that mean you like my idea?"

Hawk nodded, looking embarrassed. "I'd love to feel you in me at the same time Garrett's in you. I've only done this once before, and don't know what to do to prepare myself."

Winter giggled and sat up, leaning in and kissing the big man. He reached into the pocket of his jeans and pulled out a butt plug. "Turn around, and I'll prepare you while Garrett does me."

Hawk blinked and looked shocked. Then he looked at Garrett. "You okay with this?"

Garrett nodded. "God, yes," he groaned, his arousal building at just the thought of such a coupling.

\* \* \* \*

Embarrassed that he'd come so quickly, but finding himself getting turned on again by the thought of their little mate fucking him, Hawk turned and positioned himself on all fours.

He jolted when Winter ran his fingertips up and down his back before leaning in and kissing his left ass cheek as the plug coated with his own cum rubbed over his back hole.

"Relax, sexy," he heard Garrett murmur at the same time he felt the plug slip into him.

He moaned as Winter pushed deep. Though he tried to keep from tensing up, the muscles of his ass clenched around the intruder anyway. He made a grumbly purring sound as Winter rubbed his other hand up and down his spine. When Winter began to slide the plug back and forth while twisting it.

Hawk dropped his head and chest to the mattress and just relaxed into the full feeling.

"Hawk? You okay?" Winter asked as he began to push back on the plug fucking in and out of his ass.

"More. Need. More," he managed to groan.

\* \* \* \*

Winter looked at Garrett, who had worked three fingers into his

ass. "Need you."

Garrett nodded, looking as wound up as he felt. He only hoped they could all get into place before he exploded.

Winter pulled the plug from Hawk, then clamped them around the base of cock to hold back his own eruption. "Roll over, Hawk. I want to see you when I fuck you.

He was shocked at how quickly the man moved. In seconds he lay on his back and lifted his legs to his chest to expose his now stretched hole. "Fuck me, Winter. Fuck me now."

With Garrett's fingers still filling his ass, Winter moved over and positioned his cock at Hawk's hole. He slowly entered his mate, feeling his muscles clamp down around his shaft as soon as he'd passed through the rings of muscles. He held steady as Hawk took several panting breaths before nodding.

"Oh, God, that feels so good." Hawk moaned as the muscles clenched tight around his cock eased. Winter pushed deeper then pulled out partway before sliding even deeper, fucking in and out until he was balls deep in his man.

Looking over his shoulder he nodded to Garrett who replaced the fingers in his ass with cock. As soon as the head of his cock moved past Winter's sphincter, he thrust hard, sliding all the way home on the first thrust.

Winter made a keening sound as Garrett's arms came around and rubbed up and down his belly as if to soothe him.

He was so close to coming he barely heard Garrett say, "Okay, sexy, it's in your hands now. Fuck your mates."

"Yeah, just a minute," he growled as he panted and tried to hold onto his quickly shredding control.

But his body refused to wait for him to regain some sort of composure. His hips began to rock back and forth filling Hawk with his cock then pulling back and filling his own ass with Garrett's thick cock. His slow stroking caused both men to moan with each move he made.

When Garrett's fingers brushed over his nipples all restraint exploded. He began to thrust back and forth hard and harder until his orgasm rose up and took over. With a loud cry he thrust deep into Hawk three times, feeling the heat of his semen rise from his balls up through his cock and out the head of his cock. His entire body began to tingle as he felt Garrett's hot release fill his ass at the same time Hawk came again, coating both their bellies with his juice.

As his orgasm slowly abated, Winter found he couldn't breathe. Garrett lay heavily over him while Hawk held him tight to his chest. Just as he was about to fight his way out of the pile, Garrett and Hawk linked arms and rolled so they lay on their sides on the mattress, still connected.

"That was incredible," Hawk whispered once they'd all caught their breath and recovered.

"Uh-huh," Garrett added as his hand slowly began to rub up and down Winter's side. "Winter? You okay?"

"I'm great," Winter said with a contented sigh as a story idea exploded fully developed into his thoughts. "Can we go back now? We should be able to set up my computer before dinner. I've got this really great idea for my next book."

"Relax, baby. We'll get everything done, but right now we're busy loving on our mate." Hawk kissed him deep and long. When he pulled back Garrett turned his head to kiss him as well.

"Will you marry me?" Winter asked when he was able to breathe again.

"Who are you talking to?" Hawk asked as he and Garrett exchanged a glance.

"Both of you. I want the three of us to have a ceremony. We could do it at the same time Spring marries your brothers."

"We'd love to do that, but North Carolina doesn't recognize gay marriage or polyamorous marriage, sweet mate of ours," Garrett said hoping his mate wouldn't be too disappointed.

"Well how about some kind of commitment ceremony?

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Something that shows our family that we are married?"

Winter watched as his mates exchanged another look before they both turned back to him.

"We'd love to marry you, baby," they said in unison.

# THE END

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cooper McKenzie always thought she had been born a hundred years too late, but appreciates air conditioning, computers and other conveniences of modern day living. She enjoys the slower pace of New Bern, North Carolina, as well as the history and small town community found there. In addition to dreaming up her next story, Cooper enjoys reading everything except scary books, singing in her church choir and needle-weaving.

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