Sea Island Wolves 3 SIREN LAIMING ISTER Genny

Sea Island Wolves 3

Claiming Kristen

Kristen Jakob knows better than to cross into Covenanter territory, but she isn't planning on being caught. Jakob and Kort Nickel instantly recognize Kristen as their mate, and they don't care if they have to trespass into Narin territory to catch her.

Big, dangerous and unrepentant about doing whatever is necessary to win, Jakob and Kort break every rule in their quest to claim Kristen. She plans on making them pay for that, but first Kristen has to figure out a way to resist them.

This extended version has been extensively rewritten and is at 90,000 words. (The short version of Claiming Kristen at 25,000 words is available in Tasty Treats, Volume 3 Anthology.)

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CLAIMING KRISTEN

MENAGE EVERLASTING

Sea Island Wolves 3

Jenny Penn Siren Publishing, Inc.

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In memory of Irene A., my grandmother, a woman who knew how to live life to its fullest. DEDICATION

CLAIMING KRISTEN

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JENNY PENN

Chapter 1

"You're out of beer." Tex McBane shook his empty can in front of Kort's face, blocking out his view of the table for as long as it took Kort to smack the can out of Tex's hand. He still had three jacks and that's all Kort cared about right then.

"Yeah? So?"

* * * *

"So?" Tex repeated with obvious annoyance as he flopped back into his seat. "You invite us over to play poker. That makes you honor bound to provide refreshments."

"We only invited you over here to keep you out of JD and Caleb's hair for the night," Jakob, Kort's twin, shot back from his side of the table. "I fold."

"I raise. Twenty." Cal tossed a chip into the middle before shooting Jakob a smirk. "And I'm insulted. Tex and I have been behaving ourselves for months now."

"You been obsessing over Lilly Masterson for months now," Kort corrected before chunking two chips into the pile. "I see your twenty and raise you another."

"Look who is the rich man," Tex shot at Kort. "Got more than enough cash but can't buy any stinking beers."

"Shut up, Tex," Kort snapped. "And save your complaining for the end of the hand."

"And we haven't been obsessing," Cal corrected, completely ignoring his brother. "JD and Caleb asked us to keep an eye on her, and that's what we've been doing. I call."

"Well, take a look at this." Kort laid out his three jacks with steady precision and a straight face waiting to break into a grin.

"That's pretty nice." Cal managed to hold a blank expression as he nodded over Kort's cards. "But not as nice as this."

Kort's mood soured with each queen Cal revealed, and he couldn't stop the grow that came out when all four had been laid bare. The sound triggered Cal's stiff features to relax into a smile as he pulled the large pile of chips in his direction.

"About those beers?" Tex leaned in to obscure Kort's view of his lost money.

"Yeah, I heard you the first time," Kort grumbled as he shoved back from the table. Rising to his feet, he leaned forward to snatch a bright red chip off of Cal's pile. "And since your twin here is so rich, he's buying."

"Fine." Cal sighed. "But make sure you buy it cold, and don't take too long. You still got a lot of money left to lose."

"And pick me up a Mr. Goodbar," Tex tacked on.

"Yeah, whatever," Kort muttered, about ready to snatch up his keys when Jakob plucked them off the table.

"I'll drive." Jakob blocked Kort's path, holding his hand out for the keys. "You've had a little too much to drink."

"Don't worry. I'm close personal friends with the sheriff," Kort assured him, smoothly sidestepping around Jakob. "Hell, I could say that about the whole police department."

So could Jakob, given he worked as a deputy sheriff. A job he took seriously, which probably explained why he slammed the front door shut when Kort tried to open it. Casting his brother a dirty look, Kort found Jakob still holding out his other hand in a silent, autocratic demand.

What the hell did it matter who drove? Kort just wanted to get there and back so he could wipe that smile off Cal's face. If he couldn't, then Kort would drink all Cal's beers. Tossing the keys toward Jakob, Kort caved.

"Fine. Why don't you drive?"

"You're a reasonable young man," Jakob patronized him in his best cop tone, lifting off the door so Kort could finally get through.

"Go screw yourself," Kort shot back before storming out into the fresh, night air.

Jakob snorted and followed, obviously taking a certain amount of joy in antagonizing Kort as they headed out to the grocery store. Kort could give as good as he got, and thankfully, the store wasn't ten minutes away. Still, that was long enough for Kort's mood to have worsened by the time Jakob had eased the truck to a stop in the deserted parking lot.

Stepping through the automatic doors to find Anne Callie flipping through some magazine didn't help Kort's annoyance. He was so not in the mood to listen to her

inane prattle. Not that there was any escape in sight with the store looking completely empty. Nobody to hide behind but Jakob.

"Hey, Kort. Hey, Jakob," Anne called out with a wave of the magazine she'd been reading. "What you guys doing coming in here so late?"

"Hey, Anne," Kort shot back with a false cheeriness that he didn't inject to the murmur he passed his twin. "I'll get the beer. You get the candy bar."

Just like that and feeling no ounce of guilt, Kort abandoned Jakob to listening to whatever mindless thing Anne felt like talking about tonight. Intent on getting his beer and getting out of the store in as short an order as possible, Kort cut down an empty checkout lane and headed straight for the bank of refrigerators showcasing a near endless variety of beers.

Even before he approached the mouth of the aisle, a sweet, feminine scent wafted over him. The smell of roses tinted with desire lured him forward, making all of his senses electrify and bristle with excitement as the beast inside stirred to life. With a growl, the wolf roused, sniffing the air and breathing more of that intoxicating scent deep into his lungs.

The mouthwatering aroma burned through his veins, making his blood boil with a need so deep and primitive Kort couldn't control the beast as it reared up. It demanded to know what prey smelled so delicious, but it already knew. His mate.

Kort froze as that realization hit him. He didn't need to see her, to know her name or even the sound of her voice, to know the truth. The lonely, echoing how filling his head was proof enough. The wolf cried out, desperate for the prize it had searched so many years for.

All that time Kort had known what would happen if he found her. The tales of Covenanter mating were legendary and spoken with discomfort by most mated men. Control was a valued thing to the males in their pack, but it all slipped away, torn to shreds at the first sight of their women.

Even knowing that and braced for the impact, Kort was not prepared for the nearly catastrophic effect of seeing his woman for the first time. At first sight of those luscious breasts and that come-fuckme ass, the wolf almost ripped right out of him. It wanted to morph, to be released to hunt and feast on its mate.

Instinctively, without any proof, Kort knew the small brunette lingering in front of the wine bottles was a wolf like him, but not Covenanter. Not yet. Soon, though, it would have to be soon because Kort could not bear this agony for long. He ached like never before, wanting things he'd never desired as the beast flooded his mind with visions too erotic to be ignored.

All around him the air thickened with wolf's musk as it fed off the growing scent of feminine arousal. She was wet, and he was hard, but most importantly they were made for each other. The beast inside him snarled, forcing his fangs to extend as it tested the very limits of Kort's self-control.

It wanted possession, wanted to take command of Kort's body and make its mate submit. The beast wouldn't be denied. It wouldn't be settled until he'd tasted her, feasted on her, gorged himself until he was limp and sore from riding her all night long. She'd be sweaty, sticky, crying his name and begging for more, for less, for anything he wanted to give her because she was his.

"Hey, Kort, you got that damn beer yet?"

The loud shout jarred Kristen from the momentary stupor she'd fallen into. Shaking off the erotic visions that suddenly fogged her head, she snapped back to the rows of wine before her. She'd been looking for one to complement the frozen dinner she'd picked out and gotten lost somewhere in the process.

That was dangerous, given that she'd dared to stop at the grocery store in Covenanter territory, but her meeting had held her up too late to make it to the one in her home pack's county. Why she'd gotten dazed while staring at the bottles and forgotten that she trespassed into a dangerous area could only be answered by the horrifying realization that she was not alone.

A second shadow grew from hers as something large shifted behind her. Whirling around, Kristen instantly took a step back at the sight of the man who watched her with the intensity of a seasoned hunter. He took one step forward, and she could only take one back before she bumped the shelf and sent the wine bottles tinkling with shudders.

The sound matched the electricity racing up her spine as the man cornered her, coming to tower over her with a silent stare. He was so tall and thick, she had to tilt her chin way up to keep eye contact with him, but she did it. She had to. Something inside her demanded it.

He had the most amazing eyes. They were whirling vortexes of green shards and blue lightning bolts. They trapped her gaze with their brilliant lighting show. As she watched, they turned greener and greener, going pale and beginning to glow with internal heat that she could almost feel like a sensual breeze across her flesh.

The slight shift of air carried with it an odor that had her tensing as her blood heated, gaining speed as it rushed through her veins in a torrent that drove her heart rate from a simple pound to a tormented pace. She couldn't catch her breath or even a thought as her body began to melt under the heat of his gaze.

She could feel her breasts tighten. Her nipples puckered painfully with the ache to be exposed, touched, mauled by those too-perfect lips. God, the man was gorgeous. Bright eyes, dark hair, and hard features, but nothing compared to those

lips. There was so much she wanted to do with those lips.

Those naughty, wonderful images began to pop through her mind again. Images of her naked with her hands buried in those soft, silkylooking locks, directing his head and those lips over her body until her arms locked and she buried his head between her legs. Her pussy quivered with the first shock waves of a mini-release.

She could almost feel his heated breath fanning across her cunt, that soft, devilish tongue stroking into her sheath, going faster, deeper, fucking into her, and twirling to hit that magical spot. Then those soft-looking lips would close over her clit and suck, just a little kiss...

Kristen gasped, her body going slack. The wine bottle slipped free and crashed onto the floor. Red liquid splattered across her ankles, her legs, and over the linoleum as a visible sign of her loss of control.

What the hell? She'd actually climaxed, even if it was a very small one, right here in the middle of a public grocery store. Her eyes darted back up to the man who hadn't flinched under the sudden chaos of the bottle shattering. No, the man smirked, a smug, knowing twist of the lips.

Covenanter.

Kristen had known that minutes before. Some primal, primitive part of her had felt the shift around her, sensed the male werewolf pacing in dangerously close and knew what it wanted. Her, naked and at his mercy, because everybody knew that's how Covenanters kept their mates.

For all the rumors Kristen had heard about the musk Covenanter males used to subdue and seduce their women, nobody had ever described it accurately. The thick, earthy scent filled her body, warming her with an intoxicating need to give this man anything he wanted. Given how kinky the Covenanters tended to be, that could be a very daunting list to have to perform.

Even as the wolf inside her whimpered, willing to lie down there and then and show him her submission, the human half of Kristen rebelled. The only reason her wolf thought in terms of mating was because of that damn musk. Everybody knew they could produce that scent at will, which meant she needed to escape now before the male figured out she had some sanity left.

"What happened?"

The grocery store manager appeared, rushing down the aisle and looking around at the mess before pinning them with a disapproving look.

"Look at this. I don't need this. It's almost closing time."

"I'm sorry." Kristen pulled herself together, forcing her focus to remain safely on the

manager and not on the second Covenanter following the human down the aisle.

Identical to the one still towering over her, there could be no doubt about the twin's breed or heritage. No eye contact with either of the Covenanters and get the hell out of the store as fast as possible, Kristen told herself.

"That's fine. I guess I'll clean it up."

The man had no grace, but right then Kristen didn't have the energy to spare arguing with him. Instead, she took the high road and hoped it would get her out of this situation faster. "I'll be happy to pay for the bottle."

"Of course," the little man snapped. "You broke it."

That got a reaction from the man mostly responsible for her dropping the bottle. He turned his head, narrowing his eyes on the smaller man. Kristen could hear the growl building in his chest.

"The lady apologized. You should be a gentleman and accept it gracefully."

It was almost comical that the man responsible for the most humiliating event of her life actually had the audacity to lecture anybody on manners. Kristen couldn't relax to enjoy the bit of irony, but took advantage of the spontaneously growing argument to start backing down the aisle and away from all three men.

"I did," the manager defended himself, puckering up with a pathetic show of indignation. That wouldn't be enough, not when it came to being sandwiched between two snarling Covenanters.

While they turned on him, Kristen turned and fled, but not before snatching up another bottle. Hauling ass toward the back of the store, she curved around the endcap and went flying back down the next aisle over. Not five seconds later Kristen skidded to a stop at the register, staring from the food in the basket toward the cashier.

Unsure if she had the time but hungry enough to risk it, Kristen plopped the basket down on the counter. It would have helped her frazzled nerves if the attendant paid any attention to her, but the young lady appeared engrossed by her own hand.

"Can I ask you a question?" Before Kristen could respond to that, the girl held out her hand for Kristen's inspection. "What do you think that is?"

Kristen blinked, her eyes widening over the red pimples covering the girl's palm. "A rash?"

"Yeah." The girl began to poke at the little bumps. "It feels lumpy. I wonder if it will

spread."

Glancing down into her basket at the toothbrush and frozen dinner she'd crammed into it, Kristen had to wonder the same thing. "Never mind about the groceries."

"What?" The girl blinked then glanced over her shoulder. "Oh, hey, Kort. Did you find the beer you wanted? Jakob was telling me you were going to steam some oysters in the beer. I got to tell you, I love oysters. Have you ever..."

Kort and Jakob, those were their names, and it didn't matter for a damn. Kristen could feel the heat, smell the scent of male, and knew that if she didn't get the hell away now it would be too late.

"Hey, where you going?"

Kristen ignored the cashier's call as she fled for the door. She didn't even care if she was making an ass of herself or amusing the Covenanters. It didn't matter what it cost, she had to escape.

"What about your groceries?"

Chapter 2

The moment the woman bolted, the beast growled and whipped free of Jakob's control. It gave him the speed and agility to shove around Kort and hop over the adjacent cashier's station, but still he couldn't catch his mate in time. The same heat that drove his determination fed her fear.

Jakob could taste it in the air, along with the intoxicating scent of a creaming pussy. The combined mixture had him nearly morphing in the parking lot when her car darted forward and snapped the driver's door closed. In a screeching whine of tires and high-pitched shrill of a racing engine, the little compact flew around the empty lot and crashed over the curb to take off down the road.

The wolf would have been right on her heels if Jakob hadn't latched down on his control and reined the beast back. It took all his strength and concentration to keep the wild animal leashed. He needed to be calm and rational, traits the wolf wasn't known for. Instead, it tended to think in more simplistic terms like

mine and have now. Two messages it growled through him with rage sharpening each syllable.

"Way to go, Jakob. You scared the little lady off." Kort's amused comment drew Jakob's narrowed gaze to where his twin dumped the twelve-pack into the bed of the truck.

"I don't think it was me," Jakob finally retorted when he managed to force his fangs back far enough to allow him to form words.

* * * *

"Are you suggesting it was me?" Kort paused by the truck to give Jakob a curious look. "You're not going to go all furry now, are you?"

"Yeah and no." Jakob nodded before wrenching the driver's side door with enough force to nearly bend the hinges. "I'm saying it was you."

"And I'm saying, maybe you ought to let me drive," Kort retorted, snatching the keys out of Jakob's hand the instant he pulled them from his pocket.

"I'm fine." No, he wasn't, but he could do with a fight right then to relieve some energy. "Give me the damn keys."

"I don't think so," Kort shot back. "If anybody is going to wreck my truck, it's going to be me. Now get out my way."

Growling over his brother's attitude, Jakob nevertheless stepped back and headed around the bed of the truck to the passenger's side. Beating the crap out of Kort might have helped him vent some of the tension binding his muscles, but it could get bloody, and he'd rather get sweaty and dirty and wet while bathing every inch of his erection in his mate's heated pussy.

"And for the record," Kort corrected, "I didn't chase after her like a dog in heat."

"No," Jakob agreed. "You just stared down at her like a rabid one drooling over its next meal."

Wrenching open his door, Jakob slid into his seat before Kort could respond. Not that his brother let him get in the last word.

"Hey, I'm the one that made her come," Kort defended himself as he piled in behind the wheel.

"Exactly my point."

He didn't bother to elaborate, but let Kort mull his response over as they both settled onto the bench seat. It took his twin all the way to the exit of the parking lot to cave and admit his obvious guilt.

"You'd think the woman would be thankful for the pleasure."

"You'd think," Jakob agreed, but Kort ignored the way he stressed that first word.

"Hell, it was a selfless act given I didn't get anything out of it."

"Women," Jakob commiserated in all obnoxiousness.

"Oh, shut up," Kort shot back. "It's not like you would have done anything differently, or do you think the way she took off without even shutting her door was a sign that she liked being chased out of the building?"

Jakob couldn't deny it or the fact that Kort had a point. Neither of them could be blamed for what had happened. It was just part of living with a wolf that sometimes got a little rowdy. And there was nothing that provoked the beast like running into its mate.

Mates were rare and hard to find for most Covenanters. That might make them a precious commodity, more so to the wolf. Denied the pleasure of sex no matter how much the human side might get off on the enjoyment of any random and willing woman, the beast only joined in the fun with its mate.

That meant that despite Jakob's fifteen years of gluttonous sexual excesses, the wolf was basically a virgin and pretty damn tired of that condition. *Mine. Have now.* That's all it cared about. The beast wouldn't be settling down or shutting up until Jakob appeared those two demands.

"So," Kort glanced pointedly in the direction their mate's compact had taken off in, "time to chase?"

That sounded like the best idea the wolf had ever heard, but Jakob managed to suppress its urges for the more reasonable course of action. "Time to plan."

"Plan?" Kort repeated, making the word sound almost like an obscenity. "What's to plan? Trust me, I know what to do once we get her naked, or are you already fretting over how to tell the little one she's going to be howling at the next full moon?"

"Actually, I'm fretting over how to tell her brother that she's going to be howling with us," Jakob corrected. "Or didn't you recognize the woman you were trying to enslave with musk?"

"No," Kort shot back defensively. "But the fact that you do is confusing the hell out of me. Don't tell me you've met our mate before and failed to tell me about it."

"That would be impossible." And Kort knew it.

Once the beast found its mate, it became insatiable in its need for its woman. Not only would it refuse to allow the human body to respond to any other, but it could easily become violent when denied, just like Jakob's was itching to do. Unfortunately, the condition would only be getting worse.

"I recognized her from pictures I've seen. She's Derek Jacob's sister."

"Derek Jacob?" Kort's jaw almost hit the floor. It still didn't take him but a second to stutter out his incredulous question. "As in Alpha of the Narin pack?"

"Actually, if my memory serves me right, she would be his twin sister."

"You're sure? Derek's twin? Do you know what that means?"

Depressingly, Jakob did, and there wasn't much to be said about that. "We wasted twelve years in the marines traveling all over the world to find what was right next door the whole time?"

"It means that our mate is in Narin territory, blood to their damn Alpha," Kort corrected, apparently needing to have all the complications laid bare so they could really see how screwed they were. "If Derek doesn't have our asses for trespassing, he'll certainly try to chew them off for touching his sister."

"She's our mate," Jakob countered, reminding both Kort and the wolf of some positive facts. "He can't keep her from us forever."

"One night is too damn long," Kort muttered back as he brought the truck to a stop in their driveway. His brother's head dipped slightly, scanning the end of the road and the house buried in the shadow. "Damn, JD and Caleb must be asleep."

"Somehow I doubt that." Jakob snorted as he kicked open his door. Their Alphas did tend to go to bed early these days, but Jakob suspected that had more to do with their very pregnant mate being confined to bed rest. The whole damn pack would be happy once Samantha gave birth and their Alphas went back to being rational. "Then maybe we should—"

"JD and Caleb won't back us until she bears the mating mark." Jakob slammed the door on Kort's overly optimistic suggestion. Now he knew why his brother had caved and headed home. He'd been going for reinforcements. "Until then she's a Narin and under Derek's protection."

"So you're suggesting we...what?" Kort gestured to the night sky. "Pray that he lets us near his sister? Because you know how The Narin feels about our kind messing with his women."

"No." Jakob shot Kort a dirty look for that obnoxious tone and yanked the beer out of the truck bed before heading up the path toward the front steps. "We need a plan."

"Yeah?" Kort pounded up the wooden planks right on Jakob's heels. "I got a plan. Let's go find her, mark her, and then she'll belong to us. Problem solved."

"Then what?" Jakob paused with his hand on the doorknob. "You think she's going to wake up tomorrow and be happy that you all but molested her in a grocery store, then hunted her down and mated her without so much as asking her for permission?"

"If she was human—"

Jakob groaned and shoved the door in. "She's not human. She's Derek Jacob's sister."

"Kristen?"

"What?" Jakob blinked at Tex's sudden intrusion in his and Kort's argument. He'd appeared damn near out of nowhere. Making a beeline straight for the beer, he barely even spared Jakob a glance before snatching up the twelve-pack.

"You get my Mr. Goodbar?"

Jakob pulled the candy bar from his pocket but held it away from Tex while he waited for an answer. "Who the hell is Kristen?"

"Kristen Jacob," Tex elaborated, snatching up the chocolate bar out of Jakob's fingers. "Derek Jacob's sister."

"You know her?" Kort crowded in beside Tex with enough predatory intent to have the other werewolf backing up cautiously as he answered.

"No, but Samantha's close with Claire, Derek's mate," Tex explained slowly, as if testing which part would get him hit. "Sam has talked about her before. Why?"

"You haven't slept with her?" Kort stalked Tex back through the entrance to the dining room, drawing Cal's notice up from where he'd been straightening his chips. He sent Jakob a questioning glance, but he ignored the other McBane twin, just as intent on Tex's answer as his brother.

"No. I swear, man. I haven't even been in the same room with the woman. Now, you want to tell me why you're growling at me?"

"And he's musking," Cal commented before his gaze went wide. "Oh, my God."

"What?" Tex shot his brother a confused look as Kort turned his feral gaze onto Cal.

"You have a problem?" Kort demanded.

"No, but apparently you do." Cal smirked.

"What?"

"Think about it, Tex," Cal purred. "Kort's about to rip your head off simply because he thinks you might have touched Kristen Jacob. Now take a good smell and tell me what those boys stink of?"

"Oh." Tex turned to study first Kort and then Jakob before a grin started to tug on his lips. "You two are so screwed."

"It's not that bad," Jakob began, trying to reassure the wolf panicking as it fed off the emotions swirling around him.

"Your mate is Kristen Jacob, and you," Tex nodded at Jakob, "are screwed."

"He's right," Kort snarled. "If she's a Narin then she understands what just happened and is probably on the way to find her brother right now, and we'll never get a chance to get near her again."

"Did you already mate her?" Tex sniffed the air loudly. "I don't smell sex, just heat."

"No," Jakob snapped. "Kort just...embarrassed her a little in the grocery store."

"Hmm," Cal murmured. "Kind of makes you wonder what The Narin's sister was doing in our territory this late at night."

That question hadn't occurred to Jakob until just then. The implications of the answers that raced to his mind had his own fangs aching to grow. "You think she was with somebody else?"

"Not like you have any right to say 'boo' about it." Cal shrugged. "After all, she might be your mate, but she isn't mated to you."

"That kind of makes her available, doesn't it?" Tex chirped in. He'd dug a beer out of the pack and popped the can as he settled back into his seat. "Hey, wait a minute, Kristen's a Narin."

"So?" Kort snarled.

"So she don't have to mate your ass," Tex shot back. "They can breed with anybody, mate anybody."

"Don't worry them," Cal chided with too much amusement in his tone to be sincere. "I'm sure all the other males will fully respect Kort and Jakob's claim even if they aren't men enough to enforce it themselves."

"I can kill you both where you're sitting," Jakob warned them, barely controlling the wolf as it went ballistic over their comments.

They weren't wrong. Once word spread that The Narin was protecting their mate from them, that they'd allowed her to escape, all the other Covenanter males would see it as a challenge. While none would dare to touch a mated female, an unclaimed mate would be a great prize for many of the young bucks who wanted to prove their prowess.

"I'll kill them all." That didn't sound very rational, but it felt right. It felt good. It felt like he was finally free.

"Yeah," Cal ragged the word out with a nod. "Or maybe you should just go claim the girl before you have to kill anybody." That sounded like a plan.

Kristen settled down into the bubbles and tried to let the sweet scent carry her tension away. Normally, a hot soak worked wonders, but not tonight. Tonight, not even the wine helped ease the painful cramps making

her muscles ache. Her whole body remained tight, still caught in the endorphin rush that had added speed to her great escape earlier.

It had been a close thing, but somehow Kristen had managed to evade the Covenanters. Unfortunately, she couldn't outrun the arousal still flooding her mind with one erotic fantasy after another. Taking deep breaths and letting them out slow and easy, Kristen tried to block the images the wolf kept dreaming up, but it wouldn't release her from the agony.

Tormented by the denial of its own needs, the beast inside appeared intent on tearing through her defenses until Kristen caved and fulfilled its demands. The same demands that had echoed out of her mate's intent stare earlier. It felt like he was still there, waiting for the perfect second to take her down. God, but did she ache for him to force her to her knees, to pin her there and cover her with his heat and hardness. He would be hard, thick, and forceful as he rode her, screaming, into oblivion.

No, Kristen shook those images from her head. That would not be happening because she would not allow it. The last thing she wanted in her bed was a Covenanter, and she certainly wouldn't tolerate taking two of them as mates. Not that they'd probably allow themselves to be caught.

Kristen didn't delude herself into thinking that what she felt was real. The mind-numbing sensation was merely a leftover aftereffect of their intoxicating musk. Derek had explained all about the dangers of the Covenanter musk, having seen the males use it on willing females. And only on willing females.

By their own Alphas' decree, the males were forbidden to use the arousing scent on any woman who wasn't already interested. Well that bastard in the grocery store had gotten around that technicality by not saying a damn word and giving her any kind of opening to deny him. That still didn't give him the right to gas her with an aphrodisiac that made her fucking come without even being touched.

God, what would happen if he did touch her? The very idea sent an electric wave of aroused fear coursing through her veins and made her twitch as she tried to throw off the sensation. This was too much. Kristen knew about pleasure, but this heightened sensation was so intense it bordered on pain.

It felt like everything she'd ever heard whispered about Covenanter mating. An orgy of sexual delights and excess, that about summed up all the tales Kristen had ever heard. The males went wild because Covenanters could only impregnate their true mate. That made them

somewhat desperate when it came to the issue and determined when they found their woman.

That was all the proof Kristen needed to know the two males she'd run into tonight had only been messing with her. If she'd been their true mate, then she'd never have escaped. Even if she had made it to her car, they'd have hunted her down and would have already had her spread out for their feast. The very fact that she didn't have a thick cock pounding out the ache in her pussy assured Kristen that she'd been nothing more than a passing amusement.

They were probably having a good laugh at her expense right now. Kristen just wished she was actually their mate. Then she could deny them, because Narins didn't need their soul mates to breed. True, some of their pack found that one special person, like her brother Derek had with his mate.

Given it could take a lifetime of searching and a wolf could still come up empty, most of their pack just settled down and married somebody more convenient. They raised their families and lived long, happy lives. That's the path Kristen always planned on taking, and lying there enduring the throbbing coming from her cunt as it clenched and spasmed in violent demand, she didn't change her mind.

With that stupid musk still confusing her body with so much lust, Kristen didn't hold any hope that her hand or a toy would satisfy her pussy's hunger. Of course she could call Peter, but even the thought of him failed to appease her wanton cunt. It wanted to feel the real thing, to be filled by the thick hardness of a Covenanter.

Only the real thing was probably already buried in some other cunt. While the Covenanters might have trouble finding their special woman, they never lacked for women. The musk helped, but being lick-worthy delicious probably accounted for a lot of their success.

Now Kristen could see why Derek refused to allow the packs to intermingle. In fact, he had very strict rules forbidding any interaction between unmated Narin females and Covenanter males. If he found out about what had happened tonight, Derek would go on the war path. Fortunately, though, Kristen didn't see any reason for him to learn about her unauthorized stop in Covenanter territory.

Thanks to his own rules, there was very little gossip spread between the two packs because the members simply didn't know each other. Kristen knew that none of the Covenanters knew her, so even if the male bragged, he wouldn't have a name. Hell, he probably hadn't even realized that she was a werewolf at all.

That also meant she'd probably never run into him again. Once she had a good night's sleep and all the musk wore off, Kristen knew she'd see that as a positive fact. Right then, it kind of depressed her because he sure had been kind of hot. He certainly had made her burn. Then he'd made her come, and her only regret was that it hadn't been as sweaty and dirty as it could have been.

Kristen smiled, realizing the wine was actually starting to have an effect after all. Letting her eyes drift closed, she gave up the battle and allowed her hormones to unleash all the fantasies she'd been suppressing for the past half hour.

The man might be a jackass, but he'd looked good in those jeans. It was just too damn bad he'd been wearing a shirt. In her mind, she ripped it off and started changing the scenario to where he was the one entranced by her, willing to go to his knees and please Kristen at her command. Now there was a fantasy that lured her in.

Drifting off into that wonderland of erotic dreams, Kristen would have passed out in her tub if a tiny squeak hadn't pricked her sense. The small, there-and-then-gone sound had her head snapping up as tension rushed back into her muscles. She sat there, ears straining to catch a whisper of the noise again.

Nothing. It had been nothing. She lived in an old house. It tended to groan and bemoan its age. But Kristen couldn't help to think that it had never squeaked. It would have helped if she could have smelled anything beyond the powerful floral scent of her bubble bath. Then she could have scented any interlopers, but the overly sweet odor clung to her, making it impossible for her to relax with the certainty that she was alone.

The only way to know was to go see. There wouldn't be any hope of relaxing for Kristen until she did. Plucking her robe off its hook as she rose out of the tub, Kristen didn't bother to dry off before she shrugged into the short, silken garment. All she bothered to do was pull out the clump of wet hair raining water down her back and belt the thing.

Cautiously, pretty sure she was making a fool of herself, Kristen opened the bathroom door to peer into her bedroom. Everything appeared just as she'd left it. For some strange reason that didn't make her feel any better, only more nervous as she moved out into the hall. Even the silence, which should have proven that her overactive imagination had gotten the better of her, felt too still.

This was all those damn Covenanters fault. They'd freaked her out, the

one watching her with that steady, hungry gaze and the other chasing her through the parking lot. The wolf inside her was too nervous over her brush with such predatory males. All she was doing by tiptoeing around her own house was feeding the wolf's paranoia.

Or, of course, she could have a complete breakdown. Kristen froze in the doorway of her kitchen. She didn't remember leaving the sink light on, but Kristen knew for a fact that she hadn't bought any groceries. So why was there a big, brown paper bag cluttering her counter?

Only one answer she could think of, not that she could figure out how to react to it. Paralyzed by conflicting urges to run for the door to escape, to her room to hide or to the phone to call for help, Kristen did nothing. She simply stood there staring at the bag as the chaos in her mind slowly condensed into a single certainty.

He was behind her.

Spinning around, her eyes widened at the sight of the Covenanter who had dared not only to enter her pack's territory, but break into her house. Words should have come easily to her, accusations, threats, demands. They all faded into silence as that alluring scent began to wind around her. She could feel her mind begin to slip away from her as lust once again began to drive wanton images into her thoughts.

She barely had the breath, much less the reason, left to speak. Still, she managed to get the question out that burned through her brain.

"Why?"

Chapter 3

Kort almost smiled at her whispered plea. She knew the answer, had to feel the truth. It was only the fear shining in her gaze that made her question the most obvious of realities. She was their mate. Their short, delicious mate flushing all pink with desire for them, and Kort couldn't wait to taste the proof of his victory.

Even his mate couldn't deny the scent of her arousal spicing the overwhelming, sweet floral odor radiating off her wet body. He watched with baited breath and hungry eyes as sexy rivulets of water trickled down her neck, slipping over the soft curve of her shoulder before disappearing into the heavenly shadow of her cleavage. Kort's mouth watered to follow the erotic trail with hungry licks of his tongue even as his fingers clenched with the need to rip her silken robe from her body and reveal all of her

smooth, luscious skin for him to feast on.

The sleek fabric drove him crazy, teasing him with the way it clung indecently to her body. Molded to her delicious curves, the robe couldn't hide the fullness of her succulent breasts, the sweet roundness of her stomach, or the heavenly

V waiting for him between her legs.

She was perfect, and she was his. The beast inside him clawed to the surface, howling in hungry demand. It thirsted to discover the color of her puckered nipples, to feel the creamy smoothness of her stomach against his, but mostly the beast wanted to bury its muzzle between those soft thighs and devour every inch of the delicious little pussy already creaming for his possession.

It need not weep, because his cock stood thick and hard, pulsing with need to lay claim to her cunt and ride her until she screamed in submission and begged him for her pleasure. She would submit. The beast would not rest until it had its mate protected under his dominance. Only then, when the wolf knew its mate would heed and obey, would it allow the man to worry over the apprehension still lingering in his mate's gaze.

The musk had thickened in the air around them, fogging the sharp edges of her fear. As hard as the wolf worked to drug its mate into accepting him, the glimmer of denial still shimmered in his mate's gaze. The sight of which only made the beast panic.

It would not lose this battle. The wolf could not live without its mate. The very thought sent the beast into a rage Kort couldn't contain. He caved to the savage demands to close in on his mate as the wolf inside him thrashed and clawed, fighting to take full control of Kort's body. "Why?"

The simple question whimpered out of her on a broken breath, but still it surprised him that she could speak at all. His own answer was rough and hard, growling out from the beast because the man didn't have the mind left to explain.

"Because you are mine."

"No."

She shook her head in denial, but made no move to stop the hands reaching for the belt of her robe. The word alone would have halted Kort. The soft plea in it triggered a tender urge to soothe and seduce that

was foreign to his nature. The wolf's response felt more right, more natural.

Impatient and angered by its mate's rejection, the beast broke free. For a blinding second, Kort felt the wolf swamp his senses, turning his fingers to claws as he shredded the robe from her body. Then man and beast were both left speechless, momentarily stunned by the beautiful feast waiting to be indulged in.

She was perfection. So very beautiful she made his cock swell to painful proportions with a need too great to be denied. He would have her. He would know the feel of her beneath him, of every soft, rounded curve squirming against him as he mounted her and plundered that swollen pussy peeking out at him.

The need to see those sweet cunt lips parted, to have her open for his every desire, drove Kort one step closer to the edge of sanity. But when he stepped into her, she stepped back. The bold move surprised him. With as thick as the musk had gotten, his mate shouldn't have the willpower left to offer even the weakest of defenses.

"No."

"Are you denying me?" The beast howled in anguish at the very thought, making it all the harder to form words.

* * * *

"I...I..." Her eyes closed as if she needed darkness to help find the words.

Kort didn't plan on letting her find them. She'd already tested the limits of his control over the wolf. It railed in violent protest, demanding to be freed to force its mate into submission. Unleashed, the beast would have tumbled her to the floor, pinned her on her knees, and fucked her until she sobbed for mercy.

As appealing as the images the wolf burned into his mind were, Kort wanted more. He wanted to mold his hands around the soft, plump swells of her breasts and make her moan. A sound of passion, no longer one of refusal, the soft betrayal of her desire appeased the wolf.

The beast growled through him with pleasure, tightening his fingers as it reveled in making her gasp and arch with teasing swipes of his thumbs over her nipples. Not nearly appeased, but drunk on making her whimper, the beast showed no mercy as Kort curled his fingers over her tender tips.

The hard, puckered points burrowed deeper into his twisting, pinching grip as his mate swayed and panted against him. It wasn't enough, not with

that sweet, little pussy beckoning him with wet kisses every time her hips rolled and bumped into his. Releasing one of her breasts, he slid a hand down over the curve of her waist, tracing the flare of her hips before discovering the softly padded flesh of her ass.

His fingers dug in, dragging her up the thick thigh he used to part her softer ones with. The motion split her pussy open, exposing his denim-covered leg to the molten heat of her cunt dripping with her need. His mate growled, echoing the same want as her cunt as she ground her pussy against the hard muscle of his thigh. With slow, little rolls of her hips, she teased herself with but a bare taste of what he had to offer her.

It was enough to make her gasp and buck. Her motions grew frenzied as her head tipped back, her parted lips releasing mews of both need and pleasure that matched the escalating speed of her body against his. Kort could feel the tension in her body building toward release and snarled with the pain of having to hold himself back.

Sweet mercy above, he wanted to rip his jeans open and plunge his enflamed cock into the sultry balm of the pussy begging to be ravaged, but he couldn't. He couldn't let that happen. Not yet. Not until Jakob joined them.

Of course, Kort could only endure so much. The wolf certainly had no patience left. The beast's hunger fed off its mate's frantic motions as she approached the pinnacle of her arousal. Grasping her neck in a firm hold, he forced her head back until he could stare down into her heavy-lidded gaze and watch those beautiful features as she came undone in his arms.

It was a sight he'd never tire of seeing, one the wolf planned on enjoying many, many times tonight, starting right then. Kort gave himself over to the searing demands of the beast and fanned his hand across the swell of her ass and tilted her hips until he could feel the tight bud of her clit being caught and dragged over his thigh.

The motion had her keening and tensing as he forced her to ride him right through one climax and into the blooming clouds of another. Incoherent pleas fell all around him, driving Kort's hunger to taste the sounds slipping from her lips.

Sealing the lush curves of her mouth with his own, he tried to go slowly, to commit the feel and flavor of her kiss to his memory. Kristen wouldn't allow him that little treasure. Too wild to be denied, she locked her lips around

his tongue and sucked the control right out of him.

With nothing left but the fiery burn of naked need ruling his actions, he repeatedly plundered the sweet, moist depths of her mouth until she jerked and bucked in his arms. The motions mimicked the clamp of her thighs over his as she pumped herself in forceful demand for more.

Kort wanted to give it to her, to push her over that edge and watch her completely lose control, to hear her climax, feel it as it soaked through his jeans. His hand spanned over her ass, bouncing her up over his hard thigh faster and faster until she tore her mouth away to pant out moans of her escalating pleasure.

Her arms twined around his shoulder, her nails digging into his muscles. She clung to him even as her hips lifted under his prodding, leaving his hand just enough room to slide along the seam of her ass and discover the hot, molten well of her desire.

"Your pussy is so soft, so hot, so wet. It begs for my touch."

Kort slid his finger upward, through the thick river of her cream to the opening from which it wept. At just the brush of his fingertip, he felt the tiny opening contract and gasp in a silent plea to be filled. He answered the plea with a deep thrust of three fingers deep into her clenching sheath.

Kristen screamed and arched, bouncing her ass as she fucked along his fingers. Kort kept her pinned to his thigh, forcing her pussy lips to stay open and leave her clit vulnerable to the rough rub of his jeans. She went wild, shrieking and thrashing as her climax broke over her.

Kort shifted fast to his knees. That was his release, and he planned to taste it.

For a second, Kristen thought she might actually crumble to the floor. The hard male body she'd been leaning against shifted, leaving her adrift as she swayed on legs too wobbly to support her weight. Gravity probably would have won the battle if a second set of thick, secure arms hadn't anchored her back into the warm, strong chest of another man.

Kristen didn't need to see to know that the second twin had arrived. His scent, so similar to his brother's, had the same intoxicating effect on her senses. With her body still reeling explosion that had rocked through her, Kristen didn't have any defenses left against that musk. It swirled through her, stiffening her tired muscles with renewed tension.

Clenched on the verge of a second overwhelming wave of pleasure, Kristen's world split wide as a scream shot from the depths of her very soul at the feel of a soft tongue licking straight up her slit.

"Mine."

The word growled out against her tender folds, tickling her swollen flesh with its barely human sound. And that tongue was way too long. Covenanters, Kristen remembered for an instant, could halfmorph. The whispered rumors held that the beast in Covenanters could take control of the man's body, morphing fingers into claws, tongues into wickedly delicious lengths all the while keeping the rest of the body human.

Not that she had the mind left to care who feasted on her pussy. Man or wolf, he devoured her cunt with such ravenous hunger Kristen could do nothing more than gasp and moan, arching her hips to offer more of her intimate flesh up for his tasting. He left no part of her unexplored, mesmerizing her with his erotic explorations.

Lured by the slow, sensual discovery of her nether lips, her head rolled across the hard bone of a man's shoulder. When her forehead bumped into a rigid jawline, her eyes fluttered open. From the shadowed depths of the Covenanter's features a cool set of jade eyes glowed as they studied her with predatory intent.

She was trapped, pinned between two wolves and completely at their mercy. Kristen knew they'd have none. Silently, she rejoiced in that fact, her own inner beast eagerly rousing to the primitive need for her mates' domination.

Her submission whimpered out of her as the man behind lifted his hands to capture her breasts in his rough grip. The slow, sultry dance her mate had tuned her body to with his intimate kiss changed in that second, becoming ragged and desperate with a mere pinching tug on her tits at the same moment the hard edge of her other mate's teeth scraped over her clit.

The tiny assaults electrified her, making her jerk out of rhythm. The two large, callus-tipped hands on her breasts jerked her back into the solid warmth of her mate's strength while his brother's kiss disintegrated from a sweet exploration to a ravenous devouring.

Relentlessly he toyed with her clit, licking, nibbling, sucking on the little bundle of nerves until she cried out, blindly fighting the hold of the man behind her as her body erupted into wracking shudders. She could hear the incoherent words tumbling out of her lips as she tried to beg, plead, say anything that would bring the moment to a head and release her from the bone-crushing tension spiraling out of her womb.

A finger dipped into the opening of her cunt and widened her just enough to snap the ties of reality. She became a thing of wanton needs, desperately flexing her hips as she fucked herself along the solid length of first one, then two, and then four fingers. They pushed back, pressing into the sensitive walls of her sheath spasming around them.

She could feel the utopia cresting over the horizon of her soul when his fingers slid from her body, leaving her on the precipice of the greatest orgasm she'd ever experienced. He didn't give her time to cry out any denials, before his mouth slid down and a warm, soft, playful tongue in to fill her aching pussy.

Gasping, she twisted in the arms trying to hold her still. As nice as the fingers teasing her nipples were, as sweetly playful as the tongue tormenting her sheath was, none of it filled the hard demand in her body for the rough pounding that would send her over the edge.

His fingers, wet and sticky with her own cream, followed the crease from her clenching cunt to the tight pucker of her anus. Kristen's eyes widened. Her entire body stilled as he pressed one finger into her hidden back entrance. The unusual pressure sent thousands of little tiny pain chills scampering over the edges of her pleasure, sinking into it and mutating the nearly orgasmic weight of ecstasy's wavering wing.

As the two waves of contrasting sensations crashed into each other, they collided, spiraling tightly together until she couldn't tell one sensation from another. Torment became rapture, and the intensity became almost too much for her body to bear as it twisted and writhed beneath the heated whips of ecstasy beginning to sear across her body.

The tongue dancing deep inside her began to roll and plunge, fucking into her with greater and greater speed. It mutated the pressure coming from her ass into a beautiful tension that had her twisting to attain a little more. He gave it to her, widening her back sheath with another and then another finger until she felt impaled on rapture's peak.

Everything blurred as those amazing fingers began to move. Kristen screamed as her mate began to fuck her twice over in a ceaseless rhythm of push and pull, rotating front to back with no relief in either direction. She just grew tenser, more desperate. Then, in one blinding moment, his fingers pressed down as his tongue pushed up. Both hit a sweet spot that had her body shattering.

The reality of the world around her ripped apart as the pleasure holding her captive vaulted her up into the heavens. The sensation flashed through rapture to project her beyond the captivating brilliance of the

heavens.

Threatened by the fear that all her control had been shredded, her mind began to revolt with apprehension at the warm, liquid utopia drowning her body in its sweet embrace. Her anxiety didn't have a chance to shred the beauty of the moment. A protective, cosseting, masculine presence wrapped around her to fill her with a strangely comforting sense of security and strength.

The warm scent of her mate soothed over the ragged threads of her sanity while his smooth, deep voice worked over the frayed edges of her control. He whispered dirty, dark, forbidden desires that twined around her, filling her mind with erotic images that heightened the ecstatic pleasures thrumming through her body.

"I can smell your pussy, the sweet odor of your release. You think that felt good, wait until I bury my head between your soft thighs and devour that sweet flesh. I'm going to stretch you out across my bed, tie you down, and then feast on you for hours."

Hours? Endure this kind of insanity for hours? Kristen swallowed, having no doubt the man meant what he said.

* * * *

That was the man talking. The wolf let Jakob speak only because it thrived on his pledge. For hours, the beast growled back, wanting that moment to be now. There wasn't time, not with the musk driving all the blood into Jakob's balls. His cock had swollen so painfully thick he almost feared he would burst if he didn't claim his mate soon.

Later, though, when he wouldn't be rushed or hurried, Jakob would show Kristen no mercy as he unleashed the wolf to devour his mate's delicious cunt. She would scream with pleasure and beg him for mercy, but Jakob would show her none. He wouldn't stop until she was a limp rag doll, completely obedient to his every command. When her only desire was to see to every perverted need he'd ever had, then Jakob would show her true ecstasy.

"I'm going to own your body, your soul, and this pussy will call me master forever after." He growled out that pledge, taking possession of her weeping folds with his hand. He split them wide and held her open for his brother's pleasure.

Kort's mouth had not relinquished the sweet treat of her cunt, but still lapped at it, tasting every last bit of the release he'd gifted her with. Still their mate creamed, whimpering and twisting in Jakob's arms as her body

shuddered, unable to recover from her climax with her body still so tense in anticipation of another.

They'd give her many more before they finished the night and take many for themselves, as well. Jakob couldn't wait until it was his turn to join their mate in the gasping, writhing storm of release. As oldest, he'd gotten the right of first claim to any part of their mate he wanted. Enduring the sensual bump and grind of the lush globes of her ass, teasing the erection he still kept restrained behind his zipper, Jakob knew just what he wanted.

The beast that had been relentlessly driving his every action howled in pain of having to wait to claim its prize. Pain lanced up his fingers as, for a second, his nails stretched into claws. Jakob struggled to keep the beast from ripping his jeans out of the way. Once he lost that last barrier, there would be no constraining the wolf's most primitive urges.

He couldn't let it free, not until Jakob knew Kristen would scream in ecstasy at his invasion. Needing that assurance, Jakob forced his fingers back into blunt, smooth tips that could tickle down Kristen's sides without scratching her. Still appearing lost in his brother's kiss, his little mate never knew how close she'd driven him to the edge.

Sliding his palm around the voluptuous curve of her ass, he sent his fingers down to discover the already lubricated entrance to her ass. Then Jakob showed Kristen just how savage she made him feel. Thrusting three fingers right up into her, he fucked a gasp right out of his little mate. Kristen squealed and squirmed around his fingers, her muscles tightening as she moaned out a simple plea.

"More."

Kurt's growl at that demand echoed through the thin wall separating her pussy from her back sheath. Jakob pressed back into the sound, massaging her channel with the same relentless motion used to lick up into their mate's cunt. Squeals erupted from Kristen as she jerked and writhed, her motions becoming as aggressive as her demands.

"Please! More."

Jakob couldn't control her and had to abandon his grip on her pussy to flatten his palm over her stomach. He felt the soft brush of his brother's hair against his arm as Kort shot to his feet. Then he could feel his twin's fingers grinding back against his as he screwed Kristen back into Jakob's touch.

She couldn't take any more. Kristen sobbed that fact over and over again as her legs kicked out in a frantic attempt to climb Kort and the

clearest sign yet that their mate was ready to be claimed. Taking too much delight in making her beg, Jakob didn't answer her call.

Neither did Kort. Jakob could hear the slurp and rasp of Kort feasting on her breasts and envied his brother such a delicious treat. Not that it mattered much. Kristen tasted delightful no matter where he licked. Nuzzling his face into the curve of her neck, Jakob let his mate's scent feed the wolf's ferocity, fueling the strength it lent his hand as he fucked his mate harder, faster, widening her in preparation for the thickest treat he had to give her.

With the steady pulse of her vein thumping beneath his tongue and the image of filling her with every burning inch of his cock flooded his head, Jakob felt his fangs lengthen long enough to scrape over her skin. But she hadn't agreed yet.

That was the one vow he'd taken before giving in to the beast's demand for its mate. Kristen had to accept his claiming. The willingness was there in her words. They just weren't the right ones. She'd have to be led to them. Jakob didn't see anything wrong with that.

"Please." Kristen shuddered, convulsing with her need. Jakob could feel every one of her tight muscles trembling under the strain as she clawed at Kort, constantly begging for more.

"More what?" Jakob growled against her ear, making her cry out in denial as his hand abandoned her ass.

"No. No, don't stop!"

Heedless of her plea, Jakob split her cheeks wide enough to grind his erection along the sweet trail that divided them. "You sure this isn't want you want?"

"Oh, God, yes," Kristen panted. Her muscles tensed, clamping down until her ass clung to his hard length in a tempting offer that had the beast inside him flexing forward into the tight heaven awaiting him.

"Then that's what you'll have," Jakob vowed. "I'll feed you every inch of me until you're so packed full of cock you don't know where we end and you begin. Heaven have mercy on you, girl, then, because I'm going to ride you hard and fast, deep and rough until you come apart at the seams. But that kind of pleasure only belongs to one woman. Are you sure that's you?"

"Please let it be," Kristen whispered back with such strained hope that

Jakob actually found a smile.

"Then you're willing to be claimed as our mate?"

"I...l...oh, more," Kristen growled back with the ferocity of a true she-wolf. Jakob felt the strength surge into her body as she bucked harder in arrogant demand. Over the rim of her shoulder, Jakob saw Kort nip her tit for issuing such a challenge. His teeth gleamed white in the faint light as they held her nipple captive while he growled in loud enough warning to have their mate settling back down.

"Please," Kristen whimpered, twining her fingers in Kort's hair to tug on his head. "Kiss me again."

Kort responded by jerking free and rising to his full height to glower down at their mate. Jakob could see the hollow glow of the beast shining in his twin's gaze. It snarled out of him, making his tone rough and raw. "Are you willing to be claimed?"

"Will you give me more?" Kristen trembled in Jakob's grasp, whispering back her reply in a broken breath. It sent a whiplash of warmth racing through him. The tender emotions blunted the harder edges of the beast's lust, making Jakob's own voice soft and soothing as he answered.

"We will give you all that you want. Will you accept our claim?"

She held him breathless for a long pause before her answer slipped out, a barely there sound. "Yes."

Chapter 4

The second the word fell from her lips, the air around her shattered with the loud roar of male wolves going into battle before being pierced with a scream. The high-pitched shriek shot straight out of her stomach as her whole body detonated with the sudden invasion of two, long supple tongues.

Ripped from the heat and hardness that kept her caged, Kristen swayed between the two sets of hands that had settled on her hips when both men had sunk to their knees. Their fingers bit painfully into her flesh, holding her up as she swayed and cried out at the indecent decadence they forced on her.

So soft and quick, the twin tongues filling her ass and pussy danced over the sensitized wall separating her passage, sending flares of glorious,

sparkling showers shooting up her spine and making her breath catch as her screams choked off into harsh gasps. Kristen could feel the rapture searing through every cell in her body, clenching her muscles with anticipation for the coming final explosion.

Then the slick invader savaging her pussy tickled over the sweetest spot, her body unleashing a squeal from Kristen at the sudden whiplash of ecstasy cracked over her. He did it again and again, pressing the length of his tongue back against his brother's as they milked every last soulpopping zing out of her climax and sent her screaming over the edge of sanity.

The smacking laps of beasts devouring their meal grumbled into snarls that echoed against her sensitive flesh in warning that they'd not even begun to satiate their hunger. Kristen didn't care. She didn't give a shit about anything in that moment but letting the euphoria shining through her body try to lift her right off her feet.

Her mates, though, weighted her down, anchoring her to reality, where she drifted downward instead of up. Pulled by gravity and directed by strong, callused hands, Kristen felt herself sinking not onto the floor but over a pair of hard, rough, denim-covered knees and directly onto the harder, thick shaft of a cock.

Her thighs shifted, instinctively making room for the bulbous head that brushed over her pussy. It pressed against her clit, sending a shower of almost painful sparkles of pleasure through her pussy. Kristen didn't know if she could endure any more, but she knew she couldn't deny her body's thirst for this final act of consummation.

With a little push and a sigh, she caved, melting down over him until she'd collapsed against his chest. The slow motion settled the hard cock stretching her wide that tiny bit further into her pussy, making her moan at the warmth spreading out of her womb. Thicker, longer than any cock she'd ever known, the satin-covered dick stretched her wider, igniting nerve endings that had never been charged before.

The sizzling tingles buzzing out of her cunt were too addictive not to indulge, and her hips rolled, flexed, chasing after each mindblowing rivulet as she rolled the heated dick filling her over the ultrasensitive walls of her pussy. Faster and faster she swung her hips until her ass lifted, and she'd have started to hump and grind as the primitive instinct in her body demanded.

Kristen wanted to fuck, needed to, would do whatever it took, even doing the deed herself. Big hands clamped around her waist, holding her

motions still. Kristen growled over the contrary grip and bit down on the side of her mate's neck.

"Frustrating, isn't it, baby?" The man chuckled. "To want something so bad and be denied."

* * * *

She bit him harder and jerked against his hold. All Kristen succeeded in doing was amusing him even more as he pulled farther backward. The hands on her waist kept her following him until she was seated on him with her knees bent while he stretched out over the floor.

"Go on and bite me if it helps, but things are about to feel a whole lot better."

A second set of hands palming her ass cheeks left no doubt about just what he meant. Kristen's eyes fluttered open as her mouth went slack. For a moment every single one of her inhibitions raced through her, tensing her body with fear for the first time instead of pleasure. Almost as quickly as the emotions swamped through her, they evaporated under the sudden growls of her mates.

Whatever womanly indignations or objections that might have popped into her head, they were instantly overruled by her wolf's response to males snarling out warnings at her. It had her head bowing as it sought to soothe her mates. Burrowing her face into the side of the male pinning her along his hardened shaft, she whimpered out her submission, letting her body go lax as she gave herself over to their command for their pleasure and hers.

Through the mist of primitive lusts fogging her vision, Kristen's gaze locked on a pair of boots resting in the kitchen doorway while she felt the cool, sticky feel of a finger slipping between her ass to press into her channel. Slowly her muscles relaxed around the finger preparing her with long swipes that left her ass tingling with a spicy kind of pleasure.

Kristen couldn't help the heavy pants that started to roll through her body as she rocked her hips, loving the wicked feeling of a cock grinding against her pussy with a finger rubbing back. All that friction sent delightful swells of bliss rolling up her spine, arching her head back enough to catch the legs sticking out of the boots.

There were going to be three of them? Even as she felt the hard slide of a cock down her split cheeks, her eyes rose over the long, thick, denim-clad legs. Her eyes traced over the taut, smooth planes of a wide, T-shirt-

covered chest as she felt the thick, rounded head lodge against her back opening. Deep, dark chocolate eyes captured hers just as she felt the painful pressure of being overstuffed by cock.

The thick, bulbous head pressing against the tight ring of muscles finally pushed through, and just like that the thickest inch of dick Kristen had ever ridden forged into her ass. In that blinding second, she forgot all about anything but trying to breathe as the pressure of taking in two cocks at once almost overwhelmed her.

Then they shifted, rubbing against each other and trapping the thin wall that separated them in a grinding motion that sent a fireball of pleasure ricocheting through Kristen. Gasping out a deep-throated pant, she jerked under the exhilarating blast. Her whole body pulsed with it, tensing then relaxing and letting that one delicious inch of dick slip back until her ass felt on fire with the pressure of his cock head stretching her open again.

Before Kristen could squeal out over that fact, he forged in, treating her to an extra inch as he began to twist his hips again, raining down another wave of molten ecstasy over her. It was too much, but not nearly enough, and no amount of wiggling made any kind of difference.

Her mates were going to do this their way, at their speed, and in that moment it felt like an injustice to Kristen. She'd given them her pledge, given them her body, and all they did was toy with her.

The woman wanted to rile at them, demand that they stop tormenting her with this slow, teasing penetration, but the wolf would not allow it. It feared displeasing its mates in any way and accepted their slow claiming as her due.

Panting out little mews, Kristen gave in to the urge to burrow her lips deeper into the curve of her mate's neck. Offering him her submission with soothing licks, she got drunk on the sweaty taste of his flesh and forgot herself for a moment. Of their own volition, her fangs lengthened, scraping over his neck with enough nip at the end to make the male curse.

"Shit!"

Her mate jerked, bouncing his cock out of rhythm and making her pussy explode with the most delightful sensations as the thick head rubbed heavily against her sweet spot for barely a second. It was enough to leave her snarling and taking another nibble in the hope of jarring him again.

"Damnit, woman! Stop biting me." There was enough strain in his tone to warn her that his patience had come to an end. Only Kristen suspected that his anger would lead to her delight, which was just how she wanted to finish this argument.

"Then fuck me already," Kristen dared to instruct him, enforcing her command with another sucking kiss that ended in the hard pinch of her teeth.

"Fine. Give it to her, Jakob."

Before Kristen could wonder at what that barked order meant, her world exploded. With one single thrust, the cock behind her impaled her ass with its full length and sent a lance of pained ecstasy searing up her spine. Kristen arched under the impact, releasing a howl at bearing the pressure of two fully engorged dicks filling her body.

"Oh, God, baby. So damn tight."

Too damn tight, because Kristen was sure she'd burst with even the slightest amount of motion. That didn't stop her body from shifting with a feral need to test the limits of this newfound pleasure. The small motion unleashed a rolling cluster of sparkling bubbles that boiled up her spine, popping all the way and releasing waves of rapture that rushed back down toward her pelvis and had her jerking anew.

"Hold still, baby."

Kristen found her motions stopped short by a rough set of hands clamping down on her hips to enforce her mate's demand. Letting her hips go lax, she fooled him into loosening his hold. With a quick twist and pull, she found the freedom to chase after those euphoric little detonations. The man behind her growled. This time his arm fastened around her waist.

"Damnit, woman, be still. I'm trying to be considerate here." "That must be quite difficult for you."

She hadn't responded. The words floated past her in the opposite direction, but she didn't bother to focus on who had said them. Her concentration remained fully on trying to break free of the arm holding her back from the pleasure she desperately needed.

"You don't know the half of it. If she doesn't stop wiggling," the arm tightened around her stomach, "she isn't going to be able to sit for a week.

"I say fuck her. I can't hold on much longer."

"No, damnit. This is her first fucking time, and I'm not going to let urgency ruin it."

She had no idea what they were talking about. Her whole focus remained fixated on breaking free of her bind. She twisted, bucked, arched her head back on his shoulder and just pushed in an attempt to be let free.

For a moment, she thought she had gained an advantage when his arm slipped. A second later a warm palm was fitting between the top of her mound and the pelvis pressing into it. One lone, callused fingertip wormed its way down to cover her clit.

Oh, God.

Kristen collapsed against the man's chest in total submission as he began to rub her sensitive little bud around. The drumbeat of rapture's march began to beacon out of her womb. Quivers turned to ripples and wound into sharp lashes of pleasure as her body began to tremble and writhe beneath the onslaught.

Her hips shifted, lifting fractions off the cock filling her from behind only to grind the cock in her pussy that little distance deeper. Small as the motion was, it set off a magnificent shower of pleasure that spider-webbed across her body with a greedy demand for more.

An inch this time, but not nearly enough. She chased the need filling her every motion, driving her to thrust and buck between the two men. They grunted under her motions, finally releasing her to chase the frantic rhythm set by one lone finger circling her clit. Then it snapped out of existence and sent her spiraling further in an uncharted rampage.

"Oh, man, that's fucking tight. So damn good, baby."

The words were grunted into her ear from behind. Dark and dirty, they matched the rough hands that came to grip her hips, setting a fast-paced bounce that had her fucking herself not just along his dick, but his brother's as well.

"Take it just like that. Oh, fuck, yes. You love it like that, don't you, baby? Nice and hard."

He slammed his hips upward on the last word, meeting her downward glide with a savage thrust that embedded him hard and deep into her. The motion snapped the leash holding in her first climactic detonation. They boomed one right after another, gaining in speed and intensity as the men began to actively fuck her back as she bucked between them.

Between the grunts, the slap of sweaty bodies against each other, and the dirty little words whispering through her ears, she felt the men surrounding her growing tense. As they pressed her body more firmly between them, she could feel their muscles shaking. A moment later the last explosion went off as she felt the sharp twin points of fangs begin to pierce her skin on either shoulder.

With a sonic boom, Kristen shot right out of her own body. She could hear the shattered fragments of reality tinkling down around her as she burned past. Past the bright, colorful world into the soothing abyss of space, she sank into the blackness with a sigh.

"Damn. That was hot."

Kort snarled at the sound of Tex's amused comment. Hot didn't even begin to describe what that was. Never ones to lack for female companionship, Jakob and he had indulged in every wicked urge they'd ever dreamt up. Now none of that compared to the simplest joy of being trapped in his mate's pussy.

That's just where he'd have liked to stay, but Tex had ruined the moment and reminded him that there was an interloper in their midst. The wolf didn't respond well to the revelation, which was why Tex had been instructed to keep his mouth closed.

He was only here to bear witness to the mating so that Kristen couldn't make any objections to it later. That might make perfect sense to Kort, but the wolf didn't care. All it knew was that there was an unattached male coveting its woman. That kind of threat was only ever met with violence.

Except, Kort realized, sniffing the air, Tex wasn't coveting. Despite what Jakob and he had just done to Kristen the feral wolf, the other man wasn't aroused. That would have been something worth notice beyond the fact that it calmed the beast, except that Kort could have cared less what Tex was feeling.

Right then all he cared about was what his mate was feeling. From the gentle breaths floating over her shoulder to the totally lifeless body slumped against him, Kort bet Kristen wasn't feeling anything but happy

and satisfied. Of course she probably wouldn't feel that way if she woke up naked on her kitchen floor.

That assurance gave him the strength he needed to push upward, unsettling Jakob and rousing him to gain his own feet. Kristen whimpered as his twin pulled free of her ass, snuggling deeper into Kort's chest before settling down. That gave Kort all the excuse he needed to rise without letting go of his mate.

Ignoring the arms Jakob stretched out, he tightened his grip on Kristen, slipping an arm under her ass to keep her pinned to his pelvis and his dick nestled in the warmest heaven he'd ever discovered. So tight and wet, her pussy molded to his cock like a custom-made glove. Even in her sleep, her cunt pulsed, tempting him to do more than simply rest inside her. Kort intended to take her up on that invitation, but figured finishing the night in bed would be more comfortable.

"Take care of that," Kort ordered Jakob with a nod to Tex. "I'll take care of the little darling."

Normally Jakob wouldn't have hesitated to go along with Kort's plan, but tonight their testosterone was running equally strong and Kort could see his brother's hesitation to obey. It showed in the beastly glow lighting Jakob's gaze. After a tense moment, he growled and brushed past Kort.

With no finesse or any sense of tact, Jakob stormed at Tex. "Get out."

"Hey," Tex held up his hands and backed up. "I know how to find the door, no problem."

"Now!"

Kort left Jakob to chase Tex away and stumbled down the hall toward Kristen's bedroom. It wasn't hard to figure out which door to head for since he'd seen her coming out of it earlier, but making it there without taking her back down to the ground was pure hell. Each step had his cock shifting and grinding against the soft walls of her pussy. Her sheath contracted around him, squeezing him tight enough to make the sweat start to gather over his balls.

It had not been ten minutes ago when he'd shot off so hard into her that Kort should have been sore and done for the night. It had been like three climaxes rolled into one, but that hadn't softened his dick or stopped it from starting to itch with the need to thrust again. Mated males rarely ever talked about what it was like the first time with their mates other than to make general comments about the sex being more intense. They'd certainly never said that the wolf would start to come out during the sex, taking control of the human body and morphing parts of it to attain its own ends.

Kort guessed he should have figured. Everybody always said it was the beast that demanded its mate. Obviously if the wolf wanted the woman, that meant in every way possible. Being caught in the throes of that seemingly insatiable hunger certainly changed Kort's view of why newly mated couples spent days in bed.

He'd always figured it was because they could, but as he finally, reluctantly released Kristen to drop her on the bed, Kort understood it was because they had to. God, but she looked delicious. His mouth watered at the very sight of all those soft curves waiting to be explored.

Ignoring Jakob as he entered, Kort put a knee up on the mattress and reached over to arrange Kristen so she wasn't crumpled up into a ball anymore, but spread out like the feast he intended to make of her. He took his time to make sure he'd stretched her legs wide enough that her swollen pussy lips no longer guarded any secrets, but parted to reveal all the creamy sweetness waiting to be picked up.

It physically hurt to constrain the need to dive right back into the luscious cunt, but Kort figured it was a pain he'd have to start living. The likelihood was he'd never get enough Kristen. Hell, it would probably take weeks of nothing but fucking his balls off in her to lower the ache in his balls to a manageable level. The problem was, Kort knew they didn't have weeks.

"Should have brought a camera." Jakob's forlorn comment drew Kort's gaze from their mate as he caught his brother studying her with such wistfulness it was kind of pathetic. Jakob glanced up and caught Kort's disgusted look and shot him one back. "What? It's not like she's going to be any less pissed at us for what we *didn't* do, so we might as well do them all."

Jakob was absolutely right that their mate was likely to wake up pissed at them. Whatever the fallout from doing things this way, both brothers anticipated that it would be some time before they'd have free range to indulge in any kind of carnal delights with their mate.

They'd accepted those consequences because no matter how bad things

got in the coming days, ultimately nobody would be able to deny them their mate. That grim thought settled in Kort's mind as the beast twitched inside him, becoming annoyed at the slight whiff of another male.

The scent lingered, not fresh and not heavy, but definitely human and male and, worse, in their mate's bedroom. Kristen had a lover, or had one in the past few weeks, not that she'd remember his name come morning. Once they got through with her, their mate would be ruined, unable to even tolerate the thought of another man touching her.

"So," Kort nodded to the backpack Jakob had set down on the dresser, "what you got in the bag?"

Chapter 5

Kristen muttered and swatted at whatever was tickling her stomach. The soft sensation that had invaded her sleep like an annoying gnat skittered away from her fingers, tracing delicate shivers up her side and making her smack even harder at the intrusion.

"Go the fuck away," she barked when she couldn't seem to deter whatever was irritating her.

* * * *

Still caught in the half-unconscious zone of near sleep, she popped to full, alert consciousness at the angered growl that answered her back. Her head snapped in the direction of the noise, her breath catching as her eyes looked on a set of glowing eyes.

The wolf glared down at her, remaining tense until Kristen dropped her gaze in submission. This wasn't supposed to happen. Kristen may never have been mated before, but she knew the rituals. The wolf wasn't supposed to come out until the moonlight ceremony itself. Until then they were all supposed to be people.

That didn't change the fact that as she rolled her gaze to her other side Kristen encountered another set of glowing eyes. This one studied her, finally dropping its head to rest on her hip while its tail began to wag. Kristen couldn't help but smile at the charming playfulness in the wolf's features, even if his brother was continuing to sniff her up and down, checking for she didn't know what.

Matching his growl with one of her own, Kristen shoved the annoying beast back so she could push up to a sit and curl around his brother. As a

were, she'd been around wolves all her life and knew how to handle them in human form as long as they didn't get feisty. If these two did, she could easily morph, which would assure they did her no real damage.

The wolf behind her barked, loud and hyper with annoyance, but Kristen didn't pay that or the cold nose butting into her back any attention as she sank her fingers in the thick, soft fur of the other wolf's neck. She knew just where and how to scratch to have his tongue lolling out of his mouth as he kicked his back leg to roll himself sideways and expose his chest in a silent plea for more.

Kristen grinned at the trusting display and obliged the big guy, delighting in making his hind leg whirl into an endless thumping motion when she found the sweet spot buried in all that plush fur. Unable to stop the laughter betraying her delight at having him at her mercy, she leaned forward, moving her hands harder and faster to see how quickly he could kick that leg.

The spontaneously joyful moment came to an abrupt end when the wet nose nudging against her spine slid straight down and lodge in the cleft of her ass. Startled, she shrieked, jerking away from the large wolf even as she turned to glare at him.

"Enough," Kristen snapped at both of them, shoving them both back as she tried to scoot further up the bed and away from danger. "We're done playing this game."

Both males cocked their heads at her as if confused by her declaration, but Kristen knew damn good and well they understood her. Not fooled or amused by their act, she pinned them both a hard stare. "Change. Change back now."

The only thing that changed was their bodies. Even as both wolves morphed back into human form, Kristen could still see the beast glowing at her through their focused gazes. She wasn't any safer now. Actually, given what they could do with those two, hard male bodies, she was probably in a whole lot worse trouble now.

They knew it, too. Breaking into wide grins that still looked menacing enough with all those little teeth, both brothers left no doubt about what thoughts occupied their attention. Even in wolf form, Kristen wouldn't have been any match for them, but as a human, she had no defense to offer.

It seemed prudent to call the wolf and let it offer what resistance it could

muster. With the first hazy burst of transformation, twin roars ripped through the bedroom, sending her wolf retreating with a whimper and leaving Kristen with two obviously pissed off beasts glaring down at her.

The one who dared to stick his nose in her rear took a clearly challenging crawl forward, his arm coming down to cage her hip in. Left with only two choices and a split second to make a decision, Kristen responded on instinct.

Not willing to go down without a fight, she gripped the edge of the cover and ripped it up at the last moment, knocking the man to his side and tangling him in the bedding long enough for her escape. All she had to do was make it to the door, and then she could lock them in.

At least that's how the plan went in her mind. In reality, she didn't even make it off the edge of the bed before getting slammed by a weight heavy enough to pin down her knees. Trapped sideways and lopsided, she didn't have any choice when the second man sauntered around the bed but to obey the hands he used to drag her into a more accessible position.

If she wasn't going anywhere, she might as well get comfortable, not that having the second man pin her down helped. After nudging her on her back in nearly the center of the bed, the beast showed its true nature when it behaved like a wolf instead of the human it now inhabited.

Draping his arms over her chest much the same way his brother did his over her legs, they held her down like they had paws instead of arms. Kristen might have spared a moment to consider that oddity, but rational thought was slowly becoming impossible. With every breath she took, her nipples brushed against the soft, heated skin that stretched like a heavenly band across her chest.

The constant, gentle stroke sent sparkly showers flooding out of her chest. It rained out a warmth that had her shifting away from the sensation. It felt too good and was making Kristen start to want things she shouldn't. Before she gave in to temptation and rubbed herself against him, she tried one last time to escape the unintentional caress.

"Come on," she muttered. "That tickles."

Typical male, he didn't pay that complaint any attention. At least the wolf had that much in common with human behavior. Instead of shifting to a better position, he just looked up at her as his lips broke apart into another grinning pant. That long tongue fell out as if too big for his mouth and

proving the rumors were true. He wasn't fully human.

"Don't drool on me," Kristen warned him as she eyed that tongue distrustfully.

That earned her a lick straight up her neck, over her cheek, and even dragging up some of her hair. Instantly, she shoved him back, about to snap at him for being so obnoxious when she felt another soft, limber tongue curl around her foot. It tightened for a second before slowly slipping back, tracing over her arch in an almost ticklish caress.

"Oh, my God," Kristen whispered when it dawned on her what the two depraved beasts pinning her down planned to do. "You're going to eat me alive, aren't you?"

A rumble went through both men that should have been a laugh, but the deep, savage sound came out sounding too menacing for that cheery a description. It fit what they planned to do because it was wicked and sick and the very reason she'd never wanted to be mated to a Covenanter.

They were all perverts unlike Narins. Narins never lost control over the beast, never allowed it to command their human bodies. Then again, Narins weren't known to be the lovers that Covenanters were, so maybe perversion had its rewards.

As much as Kristen wanted to remain tense and angry at their strange needs, she couldn't resist the warm, massaging pleasure of being so thoroughly licked by such gentle and talented tongues. The wolf inside her recognized the ritual for what it was and accepted the rights of the dominant males to bathe her. The woman only recognized the pleasure.

They worked over every muscle from toe to thigh and finger to shoulder, assuring each one had melted into useless rubber before moving on. Without the strength to recall a single objection, Kristen barely had the vigor to whimper or twist whenever they paused or shifted.

By the time they lifted their heads to turn and nuzzle her stomach, Kristen's whole body was undulating with the molten spasms rolling through her body. With velvety swipes that left liquid flames smoldering in their trails, the males teased her tummy, letting their heads roll back so that only the plush brush of their hair teased the tender mounds that ached most to be licked.

They'd drained all the tension from her body with their playful teasing, but

it had only slipped down to pool in her breasts and lower down in the hidden folds of her pussy where her sex nearly vibrated with anticipation. Still, Kristen smothered the need to force their attention to where she wanted it most by clenching her fingers deeper into the mattress. This moment was too good to rush.

By the time one long, supple tongue curled along the crease of her lower breast, Kristen had no more objections to anything they planned to do and let her legs fall open in invitation to the other tongue that had rolled down along the seam of her thigh to warm the outer seam of her pussy. He nuzzled open her swollen lips wider until his tongue could taste her with one long, endless lap.

Kristen moaned, arching her hips and offering herself up to his tasting even as she gave over the battle and buried her hands in the thick tresses of the male licking his way up one breast. Curling her fingers around the solid muscles of his neck, she forced his head to roll, arching herself up into the fur to tease the nipple buried in his hair.

It felt so good she couldn't be bothered to stop and worry why the other one had ceased his playing. Letting the need run wild through her, Kristen gave herself over to the savage urges filling her with every toying circle of that wicked tongue around her nipple. He was driving her insane, making her lust for the matching pleasure that should have been echoing out of her cunt.

In a silent appeal to show her complete acceptance, Kristen abandoned the head staring to rub and grind against her tit on its own. Reaching down, she spread her pussy lips with her own finger in a bold offer to the beast that had already settled down between her splayed legs. The sign of her total submission ripped a roar out of the man that ended in a scream as Kristen bucked up against the tongue that lashed its way right down her clit to fuck its full length up into her clenching cunt.

No longer a gentle cleaning or delicate tasting, that wicked tongue devoured her flesh, making her cunt spasm and weep as it raced up and down her walls, thrilling her but not filling her near enough to find the release. The pressure building inside her only intensified with every stroke that almost brushed over that magical spot that would give her ease.

The male denied her. Toying with her as his tongue danced all around where she needed his touch most, he drove the passion in her until it consumed her. Screaming for more as she writhed in agony from too much

pleasure, Kristen lost control of her body.

Her legs flailed, kicking at him in desperation as she clawed at his head. She tried to throw him off, hoping for a moment of peace if she couldn't have release, but the beast growled back, rearing up as he lunged over her.

Rough, heated skin enveloped her as the thick, bulging muscles of his thighs pressed hers wide apart. Without hesitation he plunged deep and fucked the full length of his engorged cock into her pussy.

Kristen jerked, arching up into his savage penetration as her whole body spasmed with the glory of finally being filled. Hot, hard, and so thick she could feel every crease and vein along the powerful length of cock rubbing into the tender walls of her sheath as he pounded himself relentlessly deeper.

She met him thrust for thrust, keeping her back arched so her hips could match his in the wild dance that had her straining to feel every inch of him because he felt too good. Her pussy was aflame with a pleasure so intense it felt like she'd explode at any second.

Then he twisted his hips and slammed into her from an entirely new angle, and she came apart. Kristen screamed, clawing at him as her body bucked in wild abandon, still trying to wrest every drop of ecstasy that had started to flow out of her pussy with each stroke that ground every endless inch of his dick over that magic spot. As the rapture began to storm through her body, it carried with it the thunder of one word growled right in her ear.

"Mine."

The sting of two fangs sinking into her shoulder sent a sliver of pain lancing through her pleasure, burrowing a fissure that only expanded into a whole new level of pleasure. Kristen screamed out as it catapulted through her, feeling her whole body convulse with wave after wave of blissful delight until finally she drowned under the magnitude of her own climax and sank into the relaxing depths of unconsciousness.

Jakob gave Kort a moment or two after he collapsed on top of their mate in a shuddering pool of sweaty limbs before prodding him. Normally he wouldn't have to, but normally Kort wouldn't still be nearly panting as he tried to catch his breath.

"You done?" Jakob asked in a pointed hint for Kort to get off their mate.

He didn't take it. From somewhere buried in Kristen's neck, Kort

groaned back. "Yes."

"Feeling like moving?"

"No."

"Well, do it any damn way," Jakob snapped, tired of trying to be patient. "You're going to smother our woman."

With a grunt at that bit of concern, Kort heaved himself up on an arm that Jakob could still see trembling, and managed to flop over onto his back with none of his usual grace. Actually, Kort looked ready to follow their mate into slumberland, which would normally be worth ribbing him about.

One round of fucking only tired the weak men out. Or men who had attained a level of pleasure that went beyond description, Jakob bet, because Kort wasn't weak. That was the last word to describe the way he'd just torn into Kristen, not that the darling had appeared to mind at all.

Even in her sleep, she was smiling. Jakob studied her features, gone soft now with satisfaction, and couldn't help but get lost for a moment. God, but she was a pretty thing, and his, his to protect, his to cherish, and his to fuck any way he liked.

"You gonna need a moment?" Jakob glanced over at Kort, who looked like he might very well have passed out.

He sounded half asleep when he grumbled back an answer. "Maybe two. At least."

"I'll get the darling cleaned up then," Jakob assured him, not at all certain Kort heard. He didn't wait to see whether his brother had something to check out the bathroom. The tub looked like it would be fun to play in, but the water had all gone cold.

Pulling the plug, he eyed the showerhead. It was small, which matched the space they'd have to fit into given the tub was the basin. It would be a tight fit, and Jakob knew how to maximize that effect.

Getting what he needed from the bag Kort had brought, Jakob set everything up before going to rouse his passed out mate. Glistening with sweat and still flushed from being so well loved, Kristen was still sprawled out on the bed, looking too limp to be alive.

His poor, little mate, she was obviously used to the stamina of those limp-dicked Narins. Maybe, Jakob thought hopefully, tomorrow she'd wake up happy, even thankful to finally learn how much better the Covenanters did everything.

Chapter 6

Tex sauntered out of the bathroom to find Cal waiting for him on the edge of his bed alone. He lifted a brow over that fact as he fished out a pair of sweats from his drawer, not that Cal seemed too inclined to comment on his solo status.

"Strike out?" Tex prodded his twin, knowing damn well and good that Cal never struck out.

"Eh, nothing good to eat," Cal muttered, shrugging off Tex's snicker. "How did your end work out?"

Tex took the time to throw off the towel he had wrapped around his waist and step into the sweats before even considering how to answer that question. As a matter of habit he enjoyed lying about anything to anybody but his brother. Tex figured that was his feral nature showing itself, except that feral wolves didn't even have loyalty to a twin. Still, he was half Covenanter, and that made him unable to envision a life where he didn't have Cal sharing in all his secrets.

Except this one, and mostly because it was humiliating. Of course Cal read that thought in Tex's silence and smirked. "I'm going to guess not good. Couldn't get the rabbit to come out the hat, huh?"

"It's just sickening." Tex sighed and flopped down on his bed. "I'll tell you this, though, it was hot. I mean the kind of fun that might make me reevaluate the benefits of finding ourselves cursed like a Covenanter."

Cal snorted at that and turned his chin to cast Tex an amused look. "We're not cursed like our cousins. If we were, we would have felt the pull to mate and spent the last ten years searching for that special one."

"Yeah?" Tex lifted his head to glare back at his twin. "Then you want to tell me why my dick doesn't stand up and salute while I'm watching a nice set of tits bounce around as their owner gets doublestuffed by her mates?"

"I don't know. Maybe it's just broke." Tex shot his brother a onefinger response for that obnoxious retort. "Or maybe they weren't such a nice set of tits in the first place."

"Right, and there really wasn't anything good to snack on at the bar tonight despite the fact that all the Covenanter musk floating around this dink

town attracts a constant flow of some mighty finelooking women."

"It was late," Cal shot back. "All the good pickings had already been snatched up."

This time Tex got to snort at that piece of stupidity. "Yeah, it is late, a whole fucking month late. I can't live much longer without sex, Cal."

"So what the hell do you want me to do about it? Buy you a pump?"

He should have whacked Cal over the head for that crack, but Tex got caught in thinking about his answer to his brother's first questions. He knew exactly what he wanted to do, hunt down the woman responsible for his condition and make her pay in ways she'd never dreamed up, ways that would make what Kort and Jakob did to Kristen look like they were practicing from an old manual.

Tex would have followed that urge, too, if he weren't a little suspicious that the woman hadn't done this to him on purpose. If anybody around this area knew how to pull off some voodoo love spell, she knew. Worse, she had just the kind of sense of humor to be amused by Tex and Cal's suffering.

Most of all, though, Tex feared she could do a lot worse things to them if they pissed her off. He didn't like being afraid of a woman. It chafed his ego, but even that burn didn't make Tex stupid enough to take on his enemy before he'd figured out what the hell she'd done to him. Then he'd make sure she suffered the consequences.

"I don't care what she's done to us." Tex sat up so he could lean in and give his vow to Cal man-to-man. "But one day Lilly Masterson is going to pay—She's back."

Tex forgot his pledge to vengeance as his eyes caught on the twinkling glimmer starting to glow in the middle of the room. It had him going still as he tensed in anticipation, waiting to see what appeared from the mist. Sure enough, a familiar face effervesced to life before their very eyes.

"Maybe she's the one who did it to us," Cal whispered not too quietly.

They'd gotten to know this ghost, given she'd been trailing them around for about a month. Tex cocked his head and studied her, trying to see if he felt any attraction for the woman. It was hard, given he could kind of see right through her, but he couldn't hear anything she was yelling at them. The woman didn't even have a scent to pick up, but then he didn't figure

ghosts would.

"How?" Tex finally asked, not seeing any rhyme or reason to Cal's comment.

"Well maybe she's our...no." Cal shook his head, appearing to see how stupid that comment was about to sound. It didn't take him but a moment to perk back up. "Maybe she works with Lilly, for her. Or maybe Lilly controls her or something."

Tex didn't think that sounded all too believable, but if somebody had asked him if he believed in ghosts two months ago he would have laughed. Given that he couldn't be certain of anything, Tex was willing to give Cal's theory a try. He hefted his tired ass out of bed and stalked up to the nearly visible woman.

As usual she was waving her hands, making gestures while she tried to mouth words that Tex couldn't hear. That obvious desire to communicate had turned the strange situation of being haunted into an entirely bizarre one as they'd developed a kind of dialog, not that it created any real bond.

Just the opposite of appearing happy at Tex's approach, the ghost gave the distinct impression of being annoyed with him. Heaving a visible sigh that made no sound, her hands settled down into the crooks of her arms as she crossed them over her chest. She didn't need to have form for that chin to look arrogant as it tilted up.

"Hey, darling." Tex ignored her obvious irritation and offered the same grin he would have a real woman. "How you doing tonight?"

Her chin dipped, and her brow arched as, without a single word, she let him know how pathetic she thought his attempt at charm was.

"That's good to hear," Tex stated as if she'd actually answered. "Now tell me something, darling, do you know a woman named Lilly Masterson?"

Her hands shifted as with a shrug, she clearly responded, "Who?"

Tex shot Cal a look, waiting to see how he took that bullet hole to his theory. Apparently not well, from the dirty look he shot back. "Like she'd tell us the truth if she did. Everybody lies, even dead people."

That got a one-finger retort from the ghost and a snicker from Tex.

"Yeah, baby, go find yourself a body and I'll scratch that itch for you," Cal snapped back barely taking a breath.

"Dude," Tex interrupted before the woman could make another lewd gesture. "You're arguing with a mute ghost, *again*. Think about how stupid that is and you—Hey, you, look at me." Tex snapped his fingers in front of the woman's glimmering face to draw her stuck-up look back in his direction. He leaned in close, hoping he was just as intimidating to a spirit as he was to normal people. "Stop spying on me in the shower."

The girl snickered, pumping a loosely curled fist in the obviously rude attempt to remind him how many times she'd caught him jacking off, or at least trying to. The damn woman knew that part, too. Her other hand joined her first as she lifted them both to mime tears rolling out her eyes. A moment later, they cut away to measure out barely an inch of space as she broke into a smug grin. That had Cal shooting straight off the bed.

"Damnit! I told you so."

Chapter 7

Jakob woke up with the kind of disorientation he hadn't felt since childhood. It was gray outside, so it could be dawn or dusk, but this certainly wasn't his bed or bedding. Holding up the white and pink floral comforter, he stared at it, knowing it meant he was in a woman's bed. Then a sweet scent hit him as he breathed deep, trying to rally his sleep-fogged brain cells to think, and had him going blind stupid again.

Inhaling the fragrant mixture of sex, musk, and the perfect woman, Jakob felt his cock start to stir as memories of the night returned to him. It was about morning and time to pay the piper, but technically the sun hadn't risen yet, which made it still the night and Kristen fair game. Happy to accept any rationalization that allowed him to indulge one more time in the pleasures of having found his mate, Jakob rolled to the side in search of her.

Curled up into a tight ball in the middle of the bed, Kristen had tucked her legs all the way up into her chest and slept like she was on permanent guard. Jakob smiled at the cute picture she made, a tempting one, too. Sliding closer, he found himself rebuked with a slap the very second he touched her. Too quick to catch, her hand lashed out and smacked his away as she grumbled at him.

"Go away."

"She's been like this for the past half hour." Kort's comment drew Jakob's gaze up to where his twin studied their mate from the front side of her. Smirking, he nodded to Kristen. "Watch this."

With one finger, he slowly reached out until its tip brushed against rounded curve of her knee. Instantly she smacked his hand, grumbling even harder.

"Go away!"

Kort snickered and drew his hand back as he cast an amused glance over her head. "She does that every time, but I don't think she's awake."

Jakob didn't think so either. She wasn't tense, and her breaths came in deep and even. Cocking a brow at her position, he shot Kort a speculative glance. "You been bugging her for a while, haven't you?"

"About an hour," Kort admitted, his gaze narrowing as he eyed some spot on Kristen. "Been trying to wake her so we could have some more fun, but the poor Narin doesn't seem to have any more stamina left."

That comment was obviously designed to bait her out of a fake sleep, but it didn't elicit even a hesitation of the soft sigh she made every time she breathed out. Kort shrugged and extended that finger back out. This time toward the spot he'd been studying.

"So, I'm getting what amusement I can out of her."

"Go away!" This time instead of hitting Kort, Kristen jerked and rolled all the way to her other side, Jakob's side.

"Eventually she's got to wake up," Kort reasoned, obviously searching for the next spot to poke.

"And be pissed as all hell," Jakob tacked on. "Which she's going to be anyway, so why do you have to make it worse by irritating her?"

"Because I'm thinking she isn't going to be so mad," Kort stated in the hopeful kind of tone that begged to be agreed with.

Jakob snorted at his twin's forced optimism and had a rebuke coming when the distant chime of his cell phone cut him off. The sound drew an annoyed glance from Kort, the kind of look that said he'd been listening to the sound for too long. Given it had just started, Jakob figured that meant

it wasn't the first call he'd gotten that morning.

"So how long you been ignoring that?"

"About eight calls in the past half hour." Kort shrugged, like he wasn't at all concerned about who would be so desperate to get in touch with them. Jakob could take a fair guess and half felt like ignoring it himself.

"Can't run from them forever."

That bit of wisdom didn't get anything more than another shrug from Kort. Instead, he appeared completely consumed with trying to manipulate Kristen into some predetermined pose. As Jakob watched, Kort very carefully poked Kristen in the foot, making her leg instantly kick straight down the bed to throw off his touch. From Kort's grin, Jakob assumed that's what he wanted to happen, but he didn't bother to ask why given his phone started to ring again.

"The time between calls is shortening," Kort commented with an absentmindedness Jakob couldn't believe he felt.

"Which means JD's getting more pissed by the moment."

Jakob could only imagine the words coming out of their Alpha's mouth right then. Of the two brothers that ruled over the pack, JD was the one who could, and would, express his displeasure vocally, physically, endlessly. It was the endless part that worried Jakob. However fast JD got over his upset was however long it took to get their Alpha working to get their mate brought home to her new pack.

"Time to answer," Jakob stated the next time his phone started ringing. Shoving out of the bed, he abandoned Kristen to Kort's torment. As he fumbled around the chaotic spread of clothes splattered across the floor, his phone went dead. By the time he'd found his jeans in the mess, it had started to ring anew.

"Stop whatever you are doing to Kristen, Jakob," JD barked before Jakob could even offer a greeting. "Get your asses out of The Narin's territory and in my office. *Now!*"

The line went dead before Jakob could say a word, not that he'd really expected any different.

"Looks like fun time is over," he sighed, dropping the phone back into his

pocket. Jakob leaned over to start pulling on his jeans as he prodded his brother in the same direction. "Come on, man. JD's pissed enough."

"Look at that." Kort didn't budge from the bed, but called Jakob's eyes up to get lost in the beauty of Kort's handiwork.

Somehow his brother had prodded Kristen in keeping her bottom leg straight down while her other stayed tucked up in her chest, leaving the pink, creamy flesh of her pussy on display and wide open for invasion. He'd tweaked his masterpiece by getting her to lower her arm. Still encircling her knee, the slender limb had dropped lower, plumping up her breasts and putting her lush curves on display.

"Now tell me that's not worth being a little late."

Kristen looked like a woman waiting to be fucked. Given that Kort lay stretched out beside her, his cock straining to try and bump into her lush ass, Jakob had little doubt what Kort intended to do next. He'd have a perfect view to watch his brother screw that delectable cunt in intimate detail. Just the idea had him hard, and he knew there would be no controlling himself once Kort got through with her.

Of course by then, JD would probably have flipped his entire lid, or worse, The Narin could show up. Word traveled fast, and they hadn't been worried last night about keeping things quiet. Kristen's neighbors had probably already figured out she'd gotten royally fucked all night long.

There was no telling how long it would take that news to hit big brother's ears, but Jakob sure knew what his response would be and how much worse it would get if he actually caught Kort and Jakob in the act. Somebody would end up dead, and Jakob really didn't think killing her brother to save their sorry asses would go over well with their mate. They were going to have enough difficulties with Kristen. No point in adding on.

"No, man." Jakob jerked up his jeans, thinking it was best to put the boner away before he gave in to temptation and put it to work. "We really got to go."

Kort growled at that, glancing between Kristen and Jakob before he gave in with a snarl. Rolling out of bed, he snatched his own jeans off the floor and began arming himself. Neither of them dared to look over at the display Kort had made Kristen out of as they quickly dressed. It wasn't until he had everything packed back into his bag and was just about ready to leave that Jakob dared one quick look back at her.

She really was perfect, and last night had been something beyond any pleasure he'd drowned himself in. They'd get to do it again. Once they got over this rocky start, they'd have it for the rest of their lives, every night. After the decadence of last night, how could Kristen not want to get to that future, too?

"Hell." Jakob shrugged and shot his brother a wishful grin. "Maybe she will wake up and actually be grateful she got matched so well."

"If she has any sense," Kort agreed as they finally started down the hall. "And as many orgasms as we gave her last night, how could she not wake up happy?"

Kristen bolted awake with the kind of awareness that something was horribly wrong but not a clue as to what. Sitting there taking stock of her wrecked bed, she could feel her brain screaming with alarm, but couldn't catch the message. Then it hit her.

In one bold, perverted image after another, the whole night played out in an ever-increasingly mortifying memory. The sheer magnitude of just how many times and how many ways they'd screwed her left her sitting there in a stunned state of shock. They were

animals.

Fucking, sick, twisted, depraved animals! They'd proved every rumor she'd ever heard about the Covenanter true. They were uncivilized savages, more beast than man, and she could still feel every rough caress burning across her skin, every sultry lick tingling over her breast, and God help her, her pussy still ached with the feel of their possession. Not to mention her ass was on fire and her neck throbbed.

Kristen paused, stopping on that item as she inventoried all her aches and pains. This one shouldn't be on the list. Unless, of course, they'd done the unthinkable. Whipping out of her bed, Kristen rushed for the bathroom only to come to a stumbling stop as she crossed the threshold and got a glimpse of herself in the mirror.

There they were, two identical bites on either side of her neck, a brand of ownership she'd wear for the rest of her life. They'd mated her, claimed all rights to her body. As her eyes scanned down the rest of the image reflected in the mirror, Kristen swallowed at the glimpse of what her future would hold.

They'd left their marks all over her. Hickeys were strewn in every which direction from her stomach all the way down to her ankles. Deeper maroon

patches showed tiny little scrapes and had already started to darken with tiny bluish marks feathering down the center in a whisper of the path their teeth had taken. The marks matched the deeper bruises that had started to form rings around her wrists.

The sight warmed through her as memories of the ropes they'd used to tie her up with surfaced through the chaos of her mind. Unwillingly, her eyes lifted toward the tub, taking in the shower rod that curved around half the tub. Mounted to the ceiling, Kristen now knew it could hold her weight while she thrashed about, seeking freedom from the men who showed absolutely no mercy, but a definite penchant for keeping her vulnerable.

They would be back. That thought echoed through Kristen along with the realization that there would be nobody to stop them. Not even her brother could save her from the reality of those bite marks. Kristen certainly couldn't rely on herself, not when the Covenanters got too close with that musk of theirs.

They'd mated her, and in most packs that made her theirs to use as they wished. Unless, of course, she found a way to undo the mating. Kristen had never heard of such a thing being done. In point of fact, the mating bond was considered impossible to break, but if there was a way, she knew exactly who would know it.

* * * *

"You did what? Why I ought to clock you two boneheads together and make some firewood. How completely dumb can two men be?"

Jakob caught Kort's look and shared a smirk. Stupid it might have been, but he couldn't bring himself to honestly regret anything about the evening. Nothing but maybe Tex having to be there. He shot that cocky son of a bitch a glare for looking like he was enjoying this a little too much.

"I'm talking to you three jerks, and you'll do me the honor of looking at me when I'm speaking!" Samantha McBane yelled, her rounded stomach heaving with the kind of outrage only pregnant women could project.

"Samantha," JD growled, thrusting to his feet and sending his chair whipping back. "What are you doing out of bed?"

"Don't try to change the conversation on me, JD," Samantha warned him, waggling a finger at her mate as JD stalked up on the little woman filling the study's doorway. "I want to know how you are going to punish these three jackasses, and don't be smiling like that, Tex." She shouted right

over JD's shoulder. "I know all about you and Cal's little obsession. Best you wipe that smug smile off your face and get out of my sight before I say something I might regret."

"I don't know what she's talking about," Tex denied even as he stood up. "Still, I think I'll take my ass out of here while it's got enough padding to keep the seats from hurting. Good luck, guys."

"Sit down, Tex," JD snapped before turning on his mate. "And you don't order my men around."

Jakob tried to ignore the argument that broke out between JD and Samantha, embarrassed for his Alpha because it didn't appear like he was winning. Not that he looked at JD with less respect, because that was just the way it was. Male Covenanters tended to be a bit strong in personality, which explained why their wolves always chose women of equal strength.

Of course, Kristen hadn't exactly seemed like the type to rip through her men with a sharp tongue the way Samantha was doing right then. Jakob closed his eyes, remembering just how soft and sweet his mate's tongue really was. There had been nothing hard or prickly about Kristen.

Then again, she'd been pretty well fucked. Climaxed women tended to be more agreeable in Jakob's opinion. Since they hadn't given her one of those in the past few hours, he felt pretty sure Samantha's ire failed in comparison to whatever Kristen was thinking about them right then.

"And don't even growl at me like that, JD, or I'll show you a growl." Samantha now had her mate backing up slightly as she poked him the chest. Poor JD couldn't do a damn thing because she was carrying his kids.

"I got that right. I know exactly what all you brilliant male minds are going to come up with." Samantha cast a disgusted glance over the entire group of them. "I know. You're going to snatch that poor girl up. It's not bad enough what those two did last night, you're going to help them commit an even greater crime and steal her away from her life."

Samantha's gaze snapped back to her mates, that chin going up in clear challenge. "You think you control everything. Well, I got news for you, JD. If you don't do what's right here and now, I'm going to put you on suspension."

"On what?" JD roared, clearly shocked beyond comprehension.

"Suspension," Samantha repeated, appearing completely intimidated by the large Covenanter growing only bigger with his obvious rage. "Until this wrong has been righted, you can sleep in your own bed."

With that dangerous proclamation, Samantha turned and stormed off, leaving JD growling in her dust. Jakob half expected for his Alpha to go crashing after her, putting this whole meeting off for another couple of hours. It suited him just fine when instead JD muttered a bunch of obscenities and vented his rage by slamming the door hard enough to make the wall shake.

Samantha might have riled up their Alpha, leaving Jakob and Kort at his mercy, but that was still better than waiting to see when they could go pick up their mate. No matter how guilty they might be of every crime laid at their feet, Kristen was still theirs. Nobody could break that bond or deny it.

"What's that?" Kort leaned in to Tex to ask, drawing Jakob's gaze up to them before checking out what they were both staring at.

"That's her punishment list," Tex answered, explaining the notebook JD was scribbling in. "JD's been keeping a detailed list of every single punishment she's earned through her pregnancy."

"And she's going to suffer with each one," JD snarled as he snapped the notebook closed. "All eighty-three of them."

"Now see," Tex grinned, "that's the kind of diligence a mated man has to have. It's going to be months before Sam will be able to put up with that kind of sexual activity, but JD's not going to forget. Are you?"

"No." JD leaned across his desk. "Let me tell you this, for as annoyed as I am with my mate, she has a point. You two really screwed this up. Why didn't you come to me first?"

"Because we knew you wouldn't get involved until she was mated," Kort answered promptly with their predetermined response. It was a lie, but it sounded reasonable.

"And so the best you could come up with on your own is breaking into the girl's house and drugging her into submission?" JD shot back as if they all didn't know that he'd had Samantha bent over the hood of his patrol car within five minutes of meeting her.

"It's not like we can control the musk," Jakob retorted. Not about to bring up any rumors that might have JD removing his head from his shoulders, he tried to nudge his Alpha with a more general prod. "Come on, JD, it's not like you've never been through that first heat. It's kind of overpowering."

To say the least, not that JD looked like he was remembering what it was like to be consumed by lust. In fact his Alpha's scowl only furrowed deeper at Jakob's comment. "Yeah, but I knew she wasn't the sister to The Narin, who happens to be the chief of police."

"And she didn't even know your name," Tex shot back gaily. "Samantha told me about—"

"Shut up, Tex."

Jakob caught Kort's gaze as JD lit into his cousin. It seemed to him that they must have told Kristen theirs, but as he slowly played the night over in his mind, Jakob couldn't remember when. Apparently, neither could Kort, who stared back at him with a blank look.

Well, damn. That wouldn't improve Kristen's mood, but it wasn't all bad news. JD's screwup hadn't stopped Samantha from settling down with her mates. It might require some groveling, but they could fix that mistake.

"—and I didn't break into Samantha's house and molest her." JD didn't even breathe as he swung that same barking snap at Jakob and Kort. "And what do you two brilliant, fucking minds think Kristen's chief-of-police brother is going to do when he learns what you did to his sister?"

JD paused, and Jakob knew not to fill it. Kort, though, always had to have an answer. "Congratulate us?"

"Try charge you with rape," JD shot back.

"We didn't rape her," Kort argued instantly. "We mated her, and Derek Jacob might hate like hell that we did, but it can't be undone, and that Narin bastard knows it."

"Well, I guess that depends on how she tells the story," JD growled back.

"No, it doesn't." Kort jerked his head toward the only man grinning in the room. "Why do you think we brought along Tex as a witness?"

At JD's annoyed glare, Tex's hand shot up. "I swear to tell the truth and nothing but the—"

"Shut up, Tex!" JD snapped.

"We asked her," Kort stressed, bringing their Alpha's enraged glare back in their direction. "And she said yes. Go on and tell him, Tex."

"It's true." Tex's head bobbed with his agreement. "They asked her if she accepted them as their mate. The lady said yes, and then Jakob dropped her down on Kort's cock and—"

"Shut up, Tex." That one came from Kort, who was growling now about as bad as their Alpha.

"Hey, it's what you brought me there for." Tex's hands went up in an open sign of surrender. "I'm just doing my duty."

"You might as well have fucking videotaped the damn thing," JD muttered in all too obvious disgust.

"They thought about it, but the camera—"

"Shut up, Tex." This time Kort hit him hard on the arm, making Tex grip the blow but not stopping that all too knowing smirk.

JD's sigh sounded heavy as everybody did just that. His gaze lifted slowly to settle on Jakob, who knew his silence hadn't gone unnoticed. They studied each other for a moment before JD finally nodded.

"Okay, big brain, let's hear why it is I chose you and your dipshit of a twin as my first commanders?"

"You didn't choose," Jakob corrected. "We won the battle. It's our right."

JD didn't argue that, though his scowl returned along with the tension that had him leaning into his desk. "You don't have a plan."

"I know Derek will be pissed and want to do all sorts of things, but anything he does will be construed as war. Nobody blocks a Covenanter from his mate." Jakob felt the need to repeat that fact even though he knew it could be construed as a challenge by his Alpha.

"Yeah, and Derek is The Narin. That gives him the right to declare war if he wants," JD repeated as if Jakob had failed to recall that most basic fact. "We have treaties on mating with his pack, and you violated every one. That gives him the moral right, and Kristen being his sister gives him every

reason to feel just fine with going to war."

"Maybe he will, but I'm betting Kristen won't."

That simple statement threw JD for a moment. Cocking his head, he appeared to consider what Jakob really intended to do before he settled back in his seat, looking a good deal more relaxed. "You're going to blackmail her."

"I figure on offering Derek a fight to the death to settle the matter. I'll tell Kristen the only way to stop it is if she agrees to come with us." Jakob didn't like the term blackmail, but couldn't deny that it might work.

"You're relying on the fact that she'll think her brother's life is at stake, but what if she has more confidence in her Alpha?" JD argued. "What if she doesn't mind the idea of the two of you lying a few feet in the ground?"

"She's our mate, JD. No matter how much she might want to deny that, Kristen won't be able to resist the bonds that unite us."

"I need your help." Chapter 8

Kristen had never thought to utter those words to Lilly Masterson, but talking to her sister-in-law had been a total bust. If Claire knew of anything helpful, she'd kept it to herself. Kristen wouldn't be surprised if she had. It had made her about sick the way Claire had gone on about the joys of being mated.

Like Kristen hadn't heard them all before. She certainly didn't need to hear them now. What Kristen needed was help, and she'd lowered herself all the way down to coming to Lilly Masterson to ask for some. At least she got to enjoy shocking the normally unflappable private detective.

From the surprised look on the other woman's face, Lilly clearly hadn't expected that greeting. Her amazement didn't last long, nor did she respond to Kristen's desperate request. Leaving Kristen standing there on the porch, Lilly shuffled off without so much as a second look in Kristen's direction.

Taking the open door as an invitation, Kristen stepped into the cabin buried out in the marsh. Lilly's house sat on a scrap of land that barely managed to rise over the water that flooded in every six hours. The dark wood structure blended in with the wild, tropical feel of the tiny tidal island. Accessed by a dirt path that had been built up wide enough to fit a car, there were signs all the way down the wandering drive to beware of alligators.

None of it fit what Kristen had expected of Lilly's home, not that she'd ever given it much thought. Still, some part of her had been expecting something more lavish and modern to go along with Lilly's smart, wealthy image. This aged shack with all its outdated and worn furniture seemed much more an abandoned rental than a home.

Kristen could really care less. Turning to find Lilly moving around behind the island that separated the galley kitchen from the rest of the main room, she confronted her a second time. "I need your help."

"Does your brother know you're here?" Lilly shot back, clearly annoyed and obviously not totally awake yet. Kristen eyed Lilly's pink nightshirt and matching plaid bottoms. Even with the overtly girly getup, Lilly still moved with a kind of lethal grace and spoke with the authority of a person used to wielding power.

"This doesn't concern him."

Lilly snorted. Shoveling more coffee grinds into the maker, she didn't even bother to look at Kristen as she dismissed that statement. "He's your brother and your Alpha, every aspect of your life is his concern."

"This isn't something he is capable of handling," Kristen amended, unable to argue with Lilly's reasoning.

* * * *

"Now that, I believe." Turning around to study Kristen as the coffee machine started to sputter and pop, Lilly slowly started to grin. "So you're here, which we both know means you're desperate. You don't want your brother involved, which means your problem is either embarrassing or you're afraid he'll get hurt. Add that with the two fresh bite marks you got on either shoulder and I bet I can guess what has you all weirded out this morning."

"How did you know?" Kristen asked, tensing as Lilly worked it out too perfectly too quickly.

The bite marks weren't visible, and Lilly didn't have a werewolf's sense of smell, so how the hell had she known? A creepy kind of cold slithered down her spine, but Kristen consoled herself with the reality that all the wolves she'd ever known to deal with Lilly had the same reaction to the woman. Point-blank, nobody liked her.

"Given there are two," Lilly completely ignored Kristen's question to continue working out the problem, "I'll go out on a limb and say you got

tagged by a set of Covenanters."

"How did you know?" Lilly just grinned, antagonizing Kristen all the more. "How?"

"Oh, relax." Lilly waved off Kristen's growl. "I'm just good at guessing. What I'm still confused on is why you are here."

However Lilly had figured it out, Kristen didn't have the luxury of worrying over that now. What she needed was help, and she didn't have anybody else to turn to. "I need you to undo it."

Lilly snorted. "Please tell me you're not talking about the mating, because you should know better than me that's not possible."

"Then make it possible," Kristen snapped, tired of being toyed with by the smart-mouthed detective.

"Okay, I'll just go get my jar of magic fairy dust and—"

"Don't fuck with me, Lilly." Normally Kristen didn't give in to the temper of the wolf. Then again, normally she was dealing with people she cared about, or at least didn't want to see get hurt. With Lilly, though, it felt good to give in to the need to roar at her enemy. "I want this mating undone."

"Not. Possible."

"Then make it," Kristen snarled back.

"And waste my time?" Lilly shook her head. "Even if I found a way, by that time you'll be all settled in with your mates and probably chunk my bill out the window, just like your kind always does."

"No. I won't be," Kristen vowed. "I don't know even know who the two idiots are that bit me, but I know that there is no way in hell that I would ever end up matched to two arrogant sons of bitches that think they can turn me into some kind of sex slave they don't even have to bother to say hello to before they stuff me full of dick. I won't stand for it!"

"Well then go tell them that," Lilly shouted back, making direct eye contact with Kristen and tempting her into a full transformation. "You are going to help me."

Expecting Lilly to snap back another denial, she surprised Kristen when she suddenly relaxed into a smile. "Not unless you help me."

Every one of Kristen's hairs prickled. She should have known. The devil had measured how desperate she was, and now Lilly would ask for a payment that would match. "You're not talking about cash, are you?"

"No."

"What do you want?" Kristen braced herself for an answer she knew she wouldn't like, but she didn't have any other option than to ask.

"Richard Payne." Lilly repeated a name that Kristen didn't recognize.

"Who?"

"He was arrested last night for robbing a few banks. He needs to stay in jail."

"I'm a defense lawyer," Kristen informed Lilly, just in case the detective didn't know. Somehow, though, she kind of suspected Lilly already knew, given that her grin only widened.

"Who better to make sure somebody stays in jail?"

It had been nothing short of stupidity to go to Lilly's. Kristen's fingers tightened on the wheel as she imagined wringing that bitch's neck. To even have the balls to ask Kristen to take on a client for the sole purpose of throwing the guy's case went to show that every bad word her brother had ever said about Lilly Masterson was true.

None of that changed the fact that Kristen didn't have but two choices. She could break every ethical code and violate several laws to screw over Richard Payne, or she could spend the rest of her life on all fours servicing the two horny dicks that had broken into her house last night. A lifetime of guilt versus a lifetime of submission, Kristen didn't know which one would be worse.

It really came down to which one she could live with. Right then nothing sounded shoddier than living with two Covenanters. Their women didn't tend to work, mostly because they were turned into baby making factories. While the idea of kids didn't bother her outright, the vision of her having to throw away her successful career to spend the next ten years wading through poopy diapers did.

She really didn't have a choice. As Lilly herself had pointed out, even if she could find a cure it would take time. Meanwhile, there would be no keeping this news from her brother. Claire would have told him already and

hopefully tried to blunt Derek's temper because Kristen bet he didn't take the news well.

Soon enough, Derek would be on a collision course with her mates. Kristen really had no idea of how to prevent that from ending badly, partly because she had no clue who her mates were. Not that she needed their names to know Derek could kick their asses.

Then again there were two of them and only one of her brother. Two very large, very savage Covenanters, meaning Derek might win, but he'd definitely get hurt. Kristen couldn't allow that. He had a family to look after and the pack to tend to. The repercussions of last night could throw her entire community into turmoil.

Lost in her morbid thoughts, she didn't know what her speed was, but guessed it had been excessive when a set of blue and red lights went off behind her. The cop gave her the normal single wail of his siren and then tracked her car into the grassy shoulder bank. Kristen knew the drill and began digging through her purse for her license. She'd just leaned over to find her registration in her glove box when a knock on the window alerted her to her company.

With a sigh of recognition that life just intended to crap all over her, she rolled down the window. "Good afternoon, officer. I got my license and—" *McBane*.

The words froze in her throat as her eyes widened over the unsmiling face of the Covenanter Alpha. It couldn't be a coincidence after what happened last night that her mates' Alpha now stood glaring down at her.

Acutely aware that this situation could turn sour, Kristen plastered on her best smile and hoped he'd only pulled her over to give her a ticket. "Sheriff—"

"Please step out of the vehicle." He cut her off, opening her door for her.

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* * * *
"I don't think—"
"Now."
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Kristen obeyed the harsh command, instinctively submitting to the authority of an Alpha. Almost immediately she wished she hadn't. She hadn't taken any vows to obey the Covenanter Alpha's authority and owed him no loyalty, but with her compliance she created the appearance that

she had.

"Listen, Sheriff McBane," Kristen began, trying to keep her tone reasonable and not panicked. "I don't—"

"This way." He took her elbow in one large hand and tried to direct her toward the back of the car.

"I'm not going anywhere with you." Kristen jerked free of his hold, allowing her own anger to guide her for a moment. It was a mistake to challenge an Alpha, especially when she didn't have the strength to shake his hold a second time. His fingers curled around her arm, tightening almost to the point of pain as he yanked her toward the trunk of her car.

"Don't make this more difficult than it need be." That was a warning, not an attempt to soothe, but Kristen dug her heels in and refused to be intimidated by this man.

He couldn't do anything to her without her brother's consent. Kristen knew Derek wouldn't give it. An Alpha in his own right, Derek had the strength to handle McBane, but she didn't know if he could take on two.

Fortunately, JD's twin didn't look to be around anywhere. Kristen knew that might not make a difference as disputes tended to be settled in a more ritual manner. A ritual that could gather the two packs together as witnesses. There was no way that could end well.

Kristen went cold at how badly it could all go. The Covenanter Alpha must have smelled her sudden fear and guessed at its cause. Releasing her by the bumper, he offered her no reassurance as he turned to pin her with his hard gaze.

"Your brother will be here shortly."

"My brother?" Kristen could feel the blood rush out of her head at that statement.

"We'll have this all sorted out when they get here."

"They? Who are they?" Kristen could feel the panic start to tingle through her body. "Sort what out? Damnit! I demand to know what is going on here."

As if in answer to that, the passenger side of the patrol car opened up. It

could only have been worse if one of her mates had stepped out. Instead it was *him*. The one who had watched, the witness.

That thought had a growl rolling out of her. Kristen should have figured out what they'd been up to before now, because now was too late. In that grim moment, Kristen realized how badly she'd underestimated her mates. She'd thought them nothing but sex-crazed frat boys and forgotten completely that every werewolf knew how to hunt, the Covenanters better than most.

She should have run far, far away because now she had no choice but to stand there and await her fate. Something she didn't think would take too long in coming given the pickup truck blasting down the highway.

"Keep an eye on her." McBane shoved her at the last man she wanted to be with. "I'm going to go keep the Nickel brothers entertained."

"The Nickel brothers?"

McBane shot her a pitying look, making Kristen bristle. Not that he took notice as he turned his scowl on the man who'd come up to leer at her. "Behave yourself, Tex."

With that, the sheriff strutted off, leaving her alone with the sole witness of last night's debauchery. The pervert giving her lewd looks wasn't her only problem. He wasn't even her biggest.

Watching the black bumper of the pickup slide almost right up to the patrol car's thinner one, Kristen forgot all about Tex in the mad rush of nerves that nearly overwhelmed her as she caught sight of the two Covenanters filling in the cab. Her mates. Awareness spread through her like a warm, soothing sensation that had the wolf inside her almost purring as it settled down.

That only enraged Kristen more because her mind knew it wasn't fair. She didn't know these men other than they were willing to do anything to get what they wanted. What they wanted was her, naked in their bed, but Kristen was more than simply a pussy to be fucked. She wouldn't let them or the wolf inside her reduce her to such a thing.

"Don't even think about it." JD blocked Kort's path with a shift of his body. "The party is only going to get bigger, and we don't need to start it with trouble. So try to keep your head and remember fighting isn't going to get that woman in your bed tonight. You hear me, Kort?"

Kort's eyes shifted from where his mate and Tex stood to JD. He didn't like seeing his mate standing so near another male. Knowing that Tex had already seen Kristen naked and climaxing only made it harder not to want to tear out the man's throat. As satisfying as it might be to hear Tex scream in pain, it obviously wouldn't go over well with JD.

They needed JD's help. They didn't need to make this situation any messier. JD had it right about that, but all the logic and reason didn't change the fact that Kort wanted to rip Tex's arms off and beat him bloody with them for standing so close to his woman.

She was his. Mine, the wolf growled with a hunger that Kort knew wouldn't be appeased any sooner by picking a fight with anybody or everybody that bugged him today. Not that he could relax no matter how hard he tried to force the tension from his muscles, but Kort did take a step back, a silent signal he'd heard his Alpha's advice.

Right now, he had to remain focused on a single goal, keeping his temper from screwing him out of having a pleasant night. Jakob and he had been plotting all sorts of ways to ease their mate's anger over the previous evening. They freshened all the linens in their house and even went out and got some flowers and baked apples to make their home smell inviting.

If only Kristen would glance back, Kort could smile at her. Then she'd know everything would be all right. She'd be able to see that they were just relaxed, normal guys who did what they had to last night. Kort knew it would be important for her to realize that they would have done things differently if they'd had a choice.

After spending most of the day on the phone talking with almost every woman he knew, Kort had gotten some perspective on how their mate might be feeling. Sensitive of how Kristen might feel about having her personal information spread around and aware that JD hadn't wanted it spread around, Kort had wisely phrased everything in hypothetical terms.

Unfortunately, more than half the women he knew had liked the sound of what he'd described and thought he was propositioning them, which didn't help Kort at all. It had dawned on him after receiving so many invitations to come over that he might not be asking the right type of woman.

So he'd turned his attention to calling all the older, mated women he knew. That had put the uncertainty back in his ego as one and all of the mated women became angry, indignant, and a few had even issued threats. Painful threats, ones that he certainly hoped hadn't occurred to Kristen because Kort knew she liked certain parts of his anatomy right where they

were.

As mad as she might be now, she had to realize she'd want to use those parts again in the future. Kort would feel better about his conclusion if Kristen would just glance back for a moment. The stubborn woman didn't, leaving him with not much of a view.

With her hair in a tight bun and her suit hiding every damn curve, Kort wouldn't have recognized her at all as the sensual woman who had so mesmerized him last night if it wasn't for the restless need his beast aimed at her. The wolf wanted her, wanted to shred all that ugly fabric away from the soft, sweet skin he knew it hid and devour her.

Kort swallowed, trying not to drool as the beast started filling his head with one bad idea after another. They might have been stupid, but they all looked like so much fun Kort's balls started to ache with the need to try at least one.

He couldn't because he'd never get past JD. His Alpha would probably whip his ass, which would not only fail to impress his mate but probably piss her off even more. The madder she got, the longer he'd have to wait to get a chance at any of those ideas. Given how stiff Kristen looked right then, Kort figured he'd be in pain for a while.

He might as well not make it worse by thinking about all the things Kristen wouldn't be letting him do. Taking a deep breath with the hope of clearing his head, Kort tried to focus on anything beyond bending Kristen over the trunk of her car and giving in to all his lustful urges.

That outfit really didn't do justice to the luscious ass he knew it hid. That thought gave him some pause as he wondered why she'd wear such an uptight getup in the first place. She'd been wearing something similar last night in the grocery store, so he had to figure Kristen dressed like that for her job. What job, though, Kort didn't have a clue.

Maybe he should have spent some time learning about his mate today instead of trying to figure how to deal with her. That thought came a little too late given the three pickups that were bearing down on them. The Narin had arrived, and he'd brought backup.

"Remember," JD turned a hard glare on Jakob and Kort, "let me handle this."

As strong as their Alpha might be, Kort didn't think he'd be up to fighting The Narin and the four commanders he had clipping at his heels. The only thing those men looked like they'd come for was a fight. Falling into line behind JD, Kort cast a quick nod at Tex, but the other man had already latched on to Kristen's arm and started to pull her back from the two walls of men charging at each other.

The Narin's head snapped in the direction Kort's had taken. His feet followed a second later as he curved around Kristen's bumper. The sudden turn left Tex completely unprepared for the fist that had him whipping backward as he stumbled, almost going all the way to the ground.

"Get your hands off my sister!"

Chapter 9

Kristen gasped as Tex suddenly disappeared under the meaty thud of Derek's punch. Almost as soon as Tex released her arm, Derek latched on to her. His grip was stronger, enough that Kristen couldn't control the wince when he jerked her after him, clearly intent on dragging her off.

One look in her brother's eyes silenced the complaint dangling on the edge of her tongue. Kristen had expected Derek to be angry, but not homicidally enraged. For the first time ever, she feared her twin and what he might do, not to her but the three Covenanters blocking the path back between the cars. What the hell had Claire told him?

"You're not taking her, Derek."

JD McBane spoke calmly, reasonably, but with enough hardness to his tone to make his statement sound like a threat. Derek's gaze cut to his lieutenants, and Kristen watched his jaw start to fall open. She knew what command would come next. There would be no way somebody didn't end up dead on this road today.

"No!" Fear, not aggression, powered her shout and the struggles that managed to pull her arm free. "Let me go! You're hurting me, Derek."

That statement received instant twin growls that rumbled over the sheriff's shoulders. Suddenly JD was surging forward under the press of her mates as they struggled to get past their Alpha. Just as quickly, Derek's commanders started to crowd in on the Covenanters, responding instantly to the threat to their Alpha.

"I said stop!" Kristen shouted at nobody in particular, encompassing all the men in her glare. "There isn't going to be any fighting today."

"You don't want to get involved in this, little sister. I'll handle it." Derek growled, his gaze focused with lethal intent on her two mates. Kristen didn't doubt that her brother could smell the men on her. He'd never really

handled the idea of her having sex well. Mating a set of Covenanters had clearly pushed him over the edge.

"You're right," Kristen spat. "I don't want to be involved in this macho pissing contest, but unfortunately, I'm stuck in the middle. So as long as I'm here, there isn't going to be any fighting."

"Then leave," Derek retorted instantly, snatching her up by the arm again and starting to shove her back behind him. "Now get in your car and go—Boy, did you just growl at me?"

Her brother shot that question back at the snarls rumbling from behind JD. This time, though, the sound formed itself into a roar. Kristen felt Derek tense with that final stillness he got before he sprung into action. Nobody challenged an Alpha, not unless they wanted to be bloodied.

"I'm still here." Kristen reversed the hold Derek had on her by wrapping her free hand around his arm and clinging to it. "And I said no fighting."

"And I told you to leave, and, son, if you growl at me one more time, I swear to God I'II—"

"She's my mate."

Kristen closed her eyes as that declaration rolled over her brother. Whichever one of her boneheaded mates thought that clarification would help the situation had vastly misunderstood the situation. Her brother hadn't grown stiffer at that revelation, but turned to hard stone. A state Kristen knew he'd rouse from only once his mind caught up with the bloodrushing rage his wolf was no doubt quaking with.

As protective as Derek was of Kristen, it didn't compare to the sacred place her wolf held in his beast's heart. It was a rare and special bond shared only by twins. Kristen doubted even the Covenanters would understand the depths that Derek would go to protect her despite the fact that they only ever had twins. They only had male sets.

Her mates might not have realized that Derek was only storing up energy to fuel the compete meltdown coming, but JD appeared to. The big sheriff stepped forward, clearly using his bulk to barricade the narrow gap between his car and Kristen's. Her brother would need to go through or over to get to her mates. Kristen didn't figure that would be an easy task.

"Try to take a deep breath, Derek." Still calm, still cool, The Covenanter's tone had lost its bite and taken on an almost apologetic sound.

"You promised me," Derek growled back, surprising Kristen with his comment. She might not have understood what promise her brother referred to, but JD did because he answered without hesitation.

"And I didn't break it. Those two numb-nuts didn't inform me until after the fact."

"That. Doesn't. Help." Derek's words grumbled out in short spats, making it quite clear that his fangs had started to lengthen. That was another thing a wolf didn't threaten an Alpha with unless he wanted to be bloodied. Derek being The Narin didn't stop JD from responding in kind.

"Doesn't change that she's Covenanter now, either."

"Nor does it change that I'm Kristen Jacob, his sister, and standing right here." It was probably suicidal to get between the two, but Kristen didn't see any other option to keeping the two men apart. If nothing else, they'd have to spare a moment to move her.

She could only hope that bought somebody else the time they needed to keep this bloodbath from happening. Of course that wish would have a better chance of happening if she wasn't surrounded by a bunch of male wolves.

Derek's commanders kept narrow-eyed watch over her mates, who had their gazes fixated on Derek. Not that he noticed given his whole focus remained on JD, who met him glare for glare. The only one not looking ready to take out the enemy was Tex. That idiot stood behind Derek, well out of striking range and grinning like a fool despite the swelling in his cheek.

"Get out of the way, Kristen."

She turned her chin up at Derek's command, used to challenging him as his sister despite his status as pack Alpha. "I will not. Not until you calm down and start to see reason."

"There is no reason in this," Derek snapped. "You hate Covenanters. You avoid them and their territory like the plague. How did you even—" Derek froze for a second, his eyes shifting up as he appeared to come to a conclusion that was too close to right. "Was this consensual?"

Kristen's lips went lax, too soft with shock to form the assurances they should have to keep the murder flashing through Derek's eyes. They went

cold and hard, just like his voice as he repeated his question.

"Was it consensual?"

"Are you implying my men would do anything dishonorable?"

"Don't play me, McBane," Derek roared, stepping up and almost onto Kristen. She could feel the heat of his anger coming off of him in waves that only made her sweat harder as he ripped into his friend. "I'm not some young pup who hasn't been around you guys. I know what kind of savage beasts you turn into when you go into heat. Your kind doesn't give a shit about rules or laws then.

"Now I'm asking if it was consensual?" Derek roared right over her head, sparing her the humiliation of having to blush through a lie as he accurately guessed what really had happened. "Or did those two dickless shits behind you musk my sister into becoming some kind of sex toy for the night?"

That should have led directly to violence, but instead everybody froze at the crisp alarm sounded by one of Derek's commanders. "Somebody's coming."

Maybe they didn't want word spreading the police chief and sheriff of two neighboring towns were having a thrown down on the side of the highway. Perhaps they didn't want to have to keep themselves in human form when ripping each other to shreds. It might be that they didn't want to give the other the luxury of dying a pleasant death by being run over.

Kristen didn't know what had all the men freezing but figured it would probably be a combination of all three explanations. Whatever the reasoning, the sudden halt to the boiling argument gave her an opening to at least try and keep things from returning to where they'd left off. What to do, though, she didn't have a clue.

Figuring nothing she thought of would succeed, Kristen decided to simply give in to her own anger. If anybody had a right to start a fight, it was her, after all. She'd been wronged by just about everybody present.

Her two mates had taken liberties beyond the pale. Their dipshit friend had only made that crime worse with watching. The sheriff had pulled her over, and she knew damn well she hadn't been speeding. Then her brother had shown up and acted like he owned her, like she couldn't take care of herself.

That burned worse because Derek should know better. Focusing in on that thought, Kristen let it build until enough anger fueled the kick she leveled at his shin to make it hurt.

"Ow!" Derek danced backward, his glare turning indignant. "What the hell did you do that for?"

"That's for telling me to go away like some infant who can't handle her own life." Kristen leveled another kick at him. This time she slammed her heel into his other shin, prompting Derek to growl as he shifted forward.

"Stop that."

"Or what?" Kristen shot back. "You gonna beat me up, too?"

"Or I'll tie your ass up and stuff you in the trunk."

He wouldn't, but Derek did love to threaten her. Whenever she did something he didn't approve of, he'd always felt the need to try to bully her into doing things his way. His concern could be considered sweet. It could also be very annoying.

"Derek," Kristen sighed his name the way she always did to let him know he'd worn her patience through. "I'm not a little girl anymore, and I don't need you to make all my decisions for me."

"Yes, you do," Derek contradicted her with full sincerity and no hesitation. "Especially when it comes to mating. I'm your Alpha. You have to petition me for approval before you mate. I'm also your brother. You're supposed to at least introduce me to the men you're dating."

Kristen couldn't argue against any of those points, and Derek knew it. He didn't even pause before leading her back to the very conversation she didn't want to have with him right then and there.

"We both know you would, too," Derek stated. "Which is why I know this isn't consensual, because you wouldn't break all those rules. Not for a couple of Covenanters. You don't like Covenanters, and they don't date. When they find a mate, they mate, no waiting, no asking. Tell me I'm wrong."

Kristen couldn't. Derek wouldn't believe the lie anyway. Instead, she focused on the one point her brother couldn't argue. "It doesn't matter how it happened. It happened. Even you can't undo a mating."

"I could kill them." Derek glanced over at her two men and smiled slightly. "That would solve my problem."

"And make me the reason for war between our packs," Kristen concluded grimly. "I don't want that, Derek. Please don't make me live with that kind of quilt."

That got a scowl and probably would have earned a rude retort but the squeal of brakes sliced through their conversation. The sound had both of them snapping around to watch the car that everybody else had been staring at for the past minute. Instead of speeding past, it went crashing through the sandy shoulder across the lanes.

Horn blaring in pulsing trumpet call, the Mustang slammed to a stop with enough force to send a dust cloud whooshing up over its roof. As the spray cleared away, Kristen began to make out the shape of a woman waving out the window and yelling.

"Hey, honey!"

"Oh, crap."

Kristen didn't know who the woman was yelling at until JD growled and shoved through the men to start storming toward the car. As she trailed away, so did his muttered complaints about the inconveniences of females. By the way he grumbled, Kristen bet the woman was related. Given the huge, obviously pregnant stomach that blocked her view of the woman as she struggled to get out of the car, Kristen narrowed it down to mate.

A second, skinnier woman came around the bumper to help. Kristen's eyes widened over the sight of her sister-in-law giving the pregnant lady a helpful tug to get her out of the old Mustang. It figured Claire would be with her. Kristen knew they'd become friends over the past few months. Two converted werewolves mated to Alpha males, this was just the kind of reinforcements Kristen needed.

"Samantha." JD intercepted his mate with what could only be best described as restrained tolerance. "You should not be here."

"Don't you even start with me, JD." Samantha might have been a foot shorter than her mate, but she pushed past the oversized male as if he were barely a pebble in her path. "I'm going to have my words with you later. Right now I have duties to attend to."

"Your only duty right now is to stay off your feet and grow my babies," JD snapped back at her.

"I'll certainly attend to that once I'm done here. Now you can either threaten my fragile condition further by annoying me more and elongating this moment, or you can behave as a gentleman and help me expedite this matter."

Kristen had to admit that she was impressed. She hadn't even worked up the balls to look at her own mates yet. It would help if they didn't stare so intently. Kristen didn't need to turn her chin to feel the penetrating heat beaming down on her.

JD might have relaxed along with Derek, but her two men still hovered too close. Without the sheriff holding them back, they'd started to shift ever so slowly in her direction until a warm, musky scent started to invade her head and make it begin to spin.

"Kristen."

"Don't touch my sister."

She barely had a chance to recognize the brush of a hand along her arm before Derek smacked one of her mate's hands away. Suddenly she found herself the only barrier between two snarling, bristling males.

"She's my mate. I can touch her whenever I want."

"Over my dead body."

"That can be arranged."

"Hey! Hey, hey."

Claire pushed her way between Kristen and her brother, saving the moment when all Kristen could do was long to curl closer into the heat of her mate. With the fresh air came the revelation that the sons of bitches had been musking her. Again. Right in front of her brother.

"There is not going to be any death arranging today. Okay, guys?" Claire gave her the time she needed to get over the effects of the intoxicating odor along with her anger.

"Why don't we give Kristen some room? You," Claire pointed at one of

Kristen's mates, "whoever the hell you are, why don't you back up and stand right over there. Then we'll," she began to pull Derek backward, "go over here and leave Kristen right there in the middle. Nobody will touch her, and she wouldn't show any favoritism by moving. All right?"

Kristen didn't think the men were really all right with the situation. She certainly wasn't. Given the opportunity, Kristen would have loved to shove her mates on their asses and haul, but in the opposite direction. Barricaded in on either side by solid walls of male muscles, Kristen didn't have the opportunity and no choice but to obey. A circumstance that made her bristle, failing to return the suddenly strong hug she found herself trapped in.

"Welcome to our pack." Samantha jerked Kristen back to arm's length with impressive strength. "I'm Samantha Hark-McBane, and I'm here to help."

"Samantha, you have got to let me handle this situation."

Samantha turned and gave her mate a bright smile. "By all means continue to handle it, dear. I'll just take care of Kristen."

"You don't understand. |-- "

"I understand. Kristen is mated to Jakob and Kort, right?"

"Technically, yes," JD growled.

"Then technically that makes her a Covenanter bitch and under my authority. Now given the details as *I* know them, I would say that Kristen has a valid grievance against her mates for their treatment of her."

"What the hell does that mean?" Derek perked back up, his gaze going immediately to the men standing across from him. Thankfully Claire was there to make sure he only roared at them instead of starting to rip limbs off of them. "How the hell did you treat my sister?"

"I'm not sure that's proper for us to discuss outside the individuals involved." Samantha lopped her arm around Kristen's shoulders and pulled her close.

"I'm her brother!"

"Really?" Samantha had to be faking that surprise. She'd arrived with Claire after all. Still the woman pulled it off like a seasoned actress. She

turned to flash Kristen a big smile. "Let me congratulate you on your fine and proud heritage. Sister of the Narin Alpha is quite a position. I'm sure your family will be pleased to learn that you have mated the first lieutenants in the Covenanter pack. Such strong and capable men will give you many fine sons, however—"

"Samantha, please let me handle this." JD groaned, sounding downright desperate now.

"Oh, I am. I'm going to let you handle Derek and the details of how this marvelous event took place. I'll see to Kristen's comfort."

"That's her mates' job," JD growled.

"That's my job," Derek corrected him.

"Actually, it's my job." Samantha overruled both Alphas without blinking. "The Covenanter pack rules give me complete rights to govern over any complaints a female brings to me, and I am allowed to grant judgment on how to handle the matter without question."

"What the hell are you talking about, woman?" Derek snapped. "What complaints?"

"JD will answer all your questions." Samantha shot her mate a too-bright smile. "After all, that's his area of authority."

"You are pushing it, Samantha."

Kristen guessed Samantha liked to push it. "After due considerations of all the details, I think I have come up with a perfectly acceptable conclusion to the problem as it presents itself."

"You have?" JD obviously tried to glare his mate into submission as he stepped dangerously close to her. Not too close, her stomach wouldn't allow for that.

"Yes. I think Kristen should live with us until such time as she agrees voluntarily, as in without being musked, to move in to her mates' household."

"That's insane!" JD erupted.

"I like it," Claire declared loudly. "Don't you, Derek?"

Obviously Derek didn't like it, but JD's reaction continued to overshadow anybody else's. "No. I forbid this."

"You can't forbid it. This is my right. If you interfere in this ruling you will be breaking Covenanter law," Samantha shot back. "This woman is as of now under my protection, and she'll be staying with me."

"If you do this, Samantha, I'II—"

"What? What will you do?"

"You don't want to find out."

Samantha shrugged off her husband's ire with amazing ease, Kristen thought. She'd seen a lot of men make threats in her lifetime. That had been a vow. Instead of worrying over her husband as she probably should have, Samantha turned her attention to the other three Covenanters lurking about.

"As for you three, let me make this quite clear. There will be no scheming, no manipulating, and no mischief making. Even if you get around my ruling with such underhanded methods, you will be showing an even greater level of disrespect for your mate than you already have. Trust me, I won't need to punish you after the hell your life will become."

Kristen's eyes widened at that, and she stared in amazement down at the petite-sized woman. Out of everybody there worth following, Samantha had proven herself to be the most worthy one. She'd found a way around the mess that had become Kristen's lifeline. Without a single objection or even a word, Kristen allowed the other woman to drag her off to her car.

JD followed along, bitching to his wife while Claire appeared to dance excitedly about. Kristen barely noticed them. She was too busy enjoying the sudden escape she'd just been given.

Chapter 10

"What did you do to my sister?" Derek growled, stepping into Jakob's personal space the second the Mustang spun around in the middle of the road and shot back off in the direction it had come.

Kort stepped back, leaving his twin to deal with their outraged brotherin-law while he stared after the black muscle car disappearing into the horizon. Lost in thought of how this new twist would work out, it took him a moment to understand his brother's responses. When it hit, though, it caught him as a very stupid thing to say, especially for Jakob.

"Nothing she didn't beg me to do." His twin gloated in the face of
The Narin's snarl.

* * * *

"I can testify to that," Tex chipped in, sounding way too happy not to ignite the flare of Derek's temper.

Kort sighed as Kristen's twin and his went down in a ball of flailing fists and wheeling kicks. He didn't really care to join his brother in an ass whooping. Hopefully, Derek would vent all his rage on Jakob and forget about him. Considering that it would help if he moved out of the way, Kort sought safety on the other side of the road where JD lingered, glaring along with Derek's commanders at the fight taking place.

"You got to do something about this, JD," Kort finally commented after a moment.

"Ah, Derek won't kill him." JD dismissed Kort's concern, falsely guessing at its source. "Least, I don't think he will. He might unman him, though."

"I'm not talking about Jakob," Kort snapped. "I'm talking about your mate's plan to separate me from my mate. It isn't right." "You think I like this?" JD snorted, turning his full attention on

Kort. "Now I got to put up with your damn woman's attitude when my house is already being terrorized by my woman's damn attitude.

The way things are going, I'm going to have to build another fucking house just so I can get some peace."

"Well, then do something," Kort shot back, brazenly asking for his own ass whooping. "Go stand up to your woman."

That was a bold thing to say to his Alpha, and it rightly deserved a smack for the level of disrespect. Instead of taking offense, JD only snickered. "Yeah, right. Why don't you go stand up to my woman?" "Because he is afraid of her." Tex smirked, his eyes twinkling as he informed JD of the quiet whispers that had been circulating amongst the men in the pack. "Ever since the doctor told that woman to stay in bed, she's become scary. Now all your men quiver in their boots whenever Samantha comes near."

Both Kort and JD could have taken exception to that statement.

JD clearly waited for Kort to deny it or at least rebut Tex in some way, but Kort couldn't. Tex hadn't lied. Apparently, their Alpha knew it from the way he finally shrugged off Tex's insult.

"Wait until your mate's pregnant," JD muttered with a hard look at Kort. "I bet that's going to be some fun to watch."

It sounded more like sheer terror. He'd handle it, though. Like a solider headed to war, Kort would face pregnancy with the knowledge that all the pain and suffering served the greater good. After all, it wasn't like Kristen would stay pregnant forever.

"Look, JD, you made him turn green." Tex chuckled, nudging
Kort in the ribs with his elbow. "Look at it this way, with Samantha
making sure she stays out of your bed, it's not like you can
impregnate her."

"Thanks, Tex," Kort shot back with a look of complete disgust at his Alpha's cousin.

"But don't worry, man. With Cal and I sleeping right next door to the lovely, we'll make sure nobody else gets a chance, either." It was the wink that pushed Kort's temper too far. Without

hesitation, he struck out at Tex, catching him in the same spot that

Derek had landed his punch. It had about the same effect, sending the
large wolf wheeling back on his heels as he gripped his chin and
cussed around his grin.

"Don't waste your time," JD ordered, making sure Kort didn't follow up the sucker punch with anything more painful. "Tex likes to be hit."

"No, I don't," Tex shot back.

He staggered for a second more before starting to pull himself upright. Releasing his already swollen chin, he rolled in, obviously testing for a break. Too bad he didn't have one, because it might have actually wiped the smile off his face. Kort raised a brow at Tex's smirk, wondering if JD didn't have it right.

"What?" Tex asked, staring right down into Kort's look and seeming to read it for what it was. "No. I don't like being hit, but the threat of it doesn't dissuade me from being me."

"How about being killed?" Kort retorted calmly. "Because that's what you'll be if you go anywhere near my mate."

"Well, it's not like I can avoid her, given I live with him." Tex

nodded over Kort's shoulder toward JD. "I could move my bedroom across the hall—"

"I'm not undoing the nursery for either of your sorry asses." JD shot down that idea before Tex had a chance to finish suggesting it. "Or the one next door to it," Tex offered only to be immediately dismissed by JD again.

"That's set up as Samantha's office, and it's the only thing keeping her sane right now, so forget it."

Tex shrugged. "Nowhere else to go, 'cause Cal's in the last room, unless, of course, I slept with him. That'd only give us one room gap to where your delicious mate sleeps."

"I said don't," JD snapped when Kort surged forward, ready to break Tex's jaw this time. At Kort's growl, a clear sign of disagreeing with his Alpha's orders, JD shoved him back. "I said no. I know he deserves it, and hopefully one day he'll find a woman that gives us the chance to piss him all the way off. That day is not today." That promise didn't satisfy Kort in the least, but he heeded his

Alpha for now. Shooting Tex a hard look, he made that clear to everybody. "You stay away from my mate or you won't ever find that day."

"I ain't going to touch the little woman," Tex assured Kort. "Of course, I don't see you getting a chance to touch her, either, in the near future."

"Tex," JD growled. "Enough, or I really will let him kill you right

"And piss off your mama?" Tex snorted. "I don't think so." The two of them broke off into their own argument as they both

disagreed over how many of Tex's Covenanter relations would either be upset or relieved at his demise. Yesterday Kort would have been in the upset column, but now a part of him would have been relieved. He was just that desperate to assure that his mate didn't sleep within seducing distance of the Casanovas of Collin County. Kort knew for a fact Tex and his twin, Cal, had earned their reputation the hard way, doing it one woman at a time. Of course they had more opportunity than most of the Covenanters, given they weren't full blood. Despite JD's assurances that some woman might turn the two half-breeds on their heads one day, almost everybody else had concluded that the feral half of their blood had shown true, leaving Tex and Cal unburdened with any mating curse. Not that Kort truly envied them. No packs wanted them or would claim them, not even the Covenanters. They were tolerated only as relations to the Alpha family, but were not ever considered pack. That's just why Kort didn't trust them. When it came to protecting his

"I'm moving in."

mate, Kort didn't trust anybody but himself.

"What?" That jarred JD's attention away from insulting his cousin. Turning startled eyes on Kort, he shook his head. "No. Hell, no! My house is not a bed-and-breakfast, okay? You cannot just book

a reservation and show up."

"Ah, think about it," Kort coaxed, working on the fly since he really hadn't thought it through. "It is the perfect solution to the problem. It not only puts me and Jakob in perfect position to seduce our mate freely, it will also piss off Samantha with a taste of her own medicine."

"You are assuming I want to piss off my mate," JD growled. "Or that I even have to do something to piss her off."

"The quicker we seduce our mate the faster all three of us will be out of your hair."

JD appeared to consider that. "Fine, move in, but everybody is going to be double bunking. I'm not undoing the nursery to make room for all you people. You don't like that, go stay at the Holiday Inn. Now help me separate these two before Derek actually does kill Jakob and all the women end up pissed off."

Standing in a room large enough to be considered a master in most homes, Kristen tried to figure out what the hell she was doing there. Samantha had shown her to this so-called guest room with the declaration that it was now hers to call home. Except Kristen had a home, one that she liked and wished she could return to. This room might be nicely decorated with gorgeous views of the marsh outside the bay windows, but that didn't change the fact that it had become her prison.

"Kristen," Claire sighed, straightening up from the corner she'd dumped Kristen's luggage into. "You really need to relax."

"No, I don't," Kristen shot back, casting Claire a dirty look for even suggesting such a thing. "I need to figure a way out of this nightmare."

"Is that what you're going to do? Look for some miracle cure?" Claire came around the edge of the king-sized bed to lay a pitying hand on Kristen's shoulders. "Because you know there isn't one."

It was on the tip of her tongue to tell Claire she wouldn't believe it until Lilly had exhausted every option. That kind of information would only pass through the other woman and back to Derek. Riling her brother's temper wouldn't help her situation, but it could make it worse.

"I know," Kristen stated softly instead, trying to sound somewhat accepting. "It's just, I have a life, you know? A house, a job, and friends, what am I supposed to do with all of that? Just forget about it and accept this is my new home?"

"No, because it's not your home." Claire squeezed her shoulder before releasing it to give the room a good look. "It's kind of like a nice hotel. Look, Samantha's just trying to give you some time to figure everything out."

"You mean to accept that I'm screwed," Kristen corrected, not buying the hotel bit in the slightest.

She'd heard enough from Samantha to know the woman might be hell on wheels, but she was also completely in love with her men. The woman couldn't see beyond her own happiness to realize that Kristen's situation wouldn't end up the same.

"Well, that is the fun part of having a mate," Claire retorted dryly. "And from the way Samantha goes on, I think you will be well compensated for whatever trouble those men cause you."

"You think a good fuck is going to make up for having to give up my home, my pack, the only community I've ever known?" Kristen laughed, unable to stop the disbelief from popping out of her. "Trust me, I think I've seen the best those men can do, and it isn't worth it."

"Burn." Both Claire and Kristen jumped as Tex strolled into the room. "Now that's something I wish Jakob could hear. Maybe I'll have to tell him just what his mate thinks of his skills. I'll have to say it in a very crowded bar and speaking very loudly. That should be some fun."

"What the hell are you doing here?" Kristen demanded to know. Just the sight of Tex's cocky grin made her bristle.

"Live here, dollface," Tex informed her as his gaze swept over her room. "'Course, Cal and I don't have such nice cells, but then again we're free to leave whenever we want. So I guess we all have something positive in our lives."

From the way Claire growled, Kristen knew she wasn't the only one Tex rubbed the wrong way. The other woman had tensed, stepping forward as if to protect Kristen from him. "How long have you been standing there eavesdropping?"

"Long enough to know just how beautiful you are in profile," Tex replied, all smooth and charming despite the women glaring at him. "And let me give my compliments to The Narin for picking such a delicious looking mate."

"Watch yourself, Tex." Claire took another step forward, clearly challenging him. "I know all about you."

"Do you, now?"

"Lilly's clued me in on some details."

Hearing Lilly's name brought back Kristen's nervousness. If anybody found out she'd been to see the detective, they'd freak out. The only thing that could be worse was if anybody found out why she'd gone and what kind of payment Lilly had asked for.

Apparently, though, she wasn't the only one who worried over Claire's threat. For the first time since she'd met him earlier, Tex looked concerned. His smile might have remained in place, but it lost its relaxed curl. The way he tensed made a lie out of his too-sweet response.

"I'm honored to know that such a beauty as Miss Masterson would take note of my details."

"I wonder how she'll take note of your adventures last night."

That, for some unexplainable reason, finally wiped the smile off of Tex's face. The man actually appeared to grow nervous as he considered Claire's threat. It made Kristen wonder, because the only reason he'd be worried was if he had some designs on Lilly. That actually didn't sound so insane. They were both annoying as hell.

"There isn't any reason she needs to be informed."

"I guess that depends on whatever future details might occur, doesn't it?"

Almost right before her eyes the man seemed to lose the cocky, self-assured attitude. "Fine. I'll keep my mouth shut, but you tell Miss

Masterson if she keeps playing her stupid games, she's going to see the end of my temper."

With that he jerked to the right and stormed off through a side door Kristen had thought led to a closet or bathroom. She could see clearly as he threw open the door it simply led to another bedroom. Her eyes cut to Claire, who still glowered at where Tex had been standing.

"Is he sleeping there?"

"No. We are."

Kristen's spine straightened, her head snapping around to confront her two mates as they filtered through the door. They'd startled her into looking in their direction, and it was just as bad as Kristen anticipated. Last night's memories had blurred their features until all she'd been able to recall was the smell, the feel, the taste of them. They were large, rough, and intoxicating.

Worse, they were good looking. She'd forgotten that fact, along with how dangerous it could be to make direct eye contact with either one. Too late, she recalled that last one only after her gaze had swept over the battered male limping through the door.

Her eyes raced up his hard length, taking in his torn and filthy clothes. Spotted with blood and ripped to reveal gashes and bruises marring the tan skin beneath, they told the tale of the thrashing he'd taken. It was his ice-blue eyes waiting to capture hers in their stare that spoke of revenge.

Kristen didn't have any doubt who'd beaten the crap out of him. Nor did she wonder who he intended to pay for that fact. The blanket aggression glaring down on her had her stomach beginning to tighten with anticipation of just what he intended. Like a beast on a leash, he watched her with barely restrained hunger that had the wolf inside Kristen whimpering with want.

Fear blended into the lust just being near her mates had awakened in her, and she instantly went from being annoyed to feeling all itchy. Conflicting needs tore at her soul. Desire surged forth, undeterred by doubt and fears, but it only fed them with its intensity. She'd never felt a pull this strong, and it made age-old instincts fire off demands to flee and hide.

Kristen looked quickly away, avoiding her second mate altogether. Silently reminding herself that she had to resist them until Lilly found her a cure,

she focused on her hands and tried to take deep, calming breaths.

This could work. She had some protection in the McBane home. Now all she had to do was avoid looking directly at her mates for the next several weeks. No, that would never work. She had to come up with a better plan, some way of looking at them without ending up feeling all hot and lusty.

"Where the hell is my mate?" JD's bark shattered the sudden heavy silence in the room. He arrived in no better mood than when she'd last seen him. Wearing the exact same scowl, he stormed into the room to scan a look over everybody before landing on Claire with a growl.

"And what the hell are you doing here?"

That sharp tone had Claire's chin going up. "I brought over some of Kristen's things, and Samantha was a little upset, so she retired to her room."

"Great," JD grunted, as if burdened by Claire's answer. Kristen had a feeling his bad temper came from the argument they all knew he was sulking off to have. Hopefully, he wouldn't win, and she wouldn't end up being evicted anytime soon.

"Get out of my way. You two jackasses might be staying in my house, but don't ever, ever get in my way," JD roared, shoving her mates in opposite directions. For a man in a rush, he paused long enough to assure his sour mood was felt.

"And I don't want to hear shit out of you while you're here. You're ghosts, you got that?" JD pointed at both men before nodding at Claire. "And you. I believe your mate is looking for you, and he isn't in the best condition."

"Worse or better?" Claire asked, casting a critical eye over Kristen's mate.

"Better." JD paused to glare at his commander and snorted. "Much better. It's actually quite embarrassing."

With that insult delivered, JD stalked out of the room. Claire was almost right on his heels. She paused long enough to give Kristen's stiff frame a tight, quick hug, whispering as she did. "It'll work out. Just give them a chance to do right."

Then she was alone with them. Casting a quick glance at their boots to make sure they were still on the other side of the room, Kristen risked

pointedly turning her back on them. There could be no clearer sign of rejection for a male werewolf than that. It would be too much, though, to hope that would change their minds.

Chapter 11

"Kristen." She felt the rush of movement behind her as the warm, spicy scent of a man enveloped her. "I'm...will you please look at me?"

She didn't want to, didn't trust herself to behave in a rational, sane manner with those brilliant eyes mesmerizing her. Appearing weak didn't sit right with her, either. They certainly wouldn't take her denials seriously if she didn't have the balls to deliver them face-toface.

Squaring her chin, she turned and pointed her narrowed gaze right at his nose, the least attractive part on anybody's face. "What?"

"I'm..." He sighed, and suddenly a callused fingertip pushed up her chin until he'd forced her to meet his gaze. Instantly she got lost in the whirling kaleidoscope of vibrant blues and greens. "I'm Jakob Nickel, and I'm sorry for how I handled our previous introduction."

"Huh?" Kristen blinked after a moment, trying to throw off the light-headed sensation that had her starting to feel lost. "What?"

"I'm Jakob Nickel," he repeated slowly, pausing like he didn't want to go on. "And I'm very sorry for how we handled our previous introduction."

Kristen waited for a moment, expecting more and getting nothing else. "That's it? That's all? You're sorry? That's the best you can do?"

From the way he stared blankly back at her, Kristen knew the answer was yes. "We're very sorry?"

"But only for our previous introduction?" Kristen snorted and shook her head at that bit of insanity. Like she didn't understand what he wasn't saying. "And not for breaking into my house and molesting me on my kitchen floor while you let that," her hand waved off toward the open door, "pencil-dicked ogre watch—"

"I can hear you," Tex shouted out from the other bedroom.

"I don't care," Kristen roared back.

"I told you it wouldn't work," her as-yet-unnamed mate grunted, drawing

Kristen's enraged attention in his direction.

"What?" Kristen snapped. "What wouldn't work?"

"Apologizing," the man answered succinctly, if with a touch of smugness. Apparently he thought himself the smart one, but he'd forgotten one little thing.

"And you are?"

That question didn't embarrass him, but he puckered up a little with pride. "Kort."

"That's where I'd like to see you all," Kristen muttered.

"That's because you want revenge," Kort retorted without even trying to pretend like he hadn't heard her. "And why apologizing doesn't work, because you know we aren't that sorry."

"Kort," Jakob snapped, clearly peeved and ready to take it out on his brother. "Will you shut up and let me handle this?"

Kristen, though, appreciated Kort's honesty, even if she still didn't like the man. Actually, she hated him because even focusing on his mouth left her too flushed with memories of everything he'd done with those hard lips last night.

"Yes, Kort, shut up and let your brother handle lying to me," Kristen growled right at the wall over Jakob's shoulder. "After all, I'm supposed to be too dumb to recognize that apologizing for the introduction isn't the same as apologizing for molesting me all night long."

"I didn't—"

"Why would we owe you an apology for something you enjoyed so much?" Kort shot back, cutting off Jakob's denial and keeping the argument between just him and Kristen.

"I did not enjoy it!" It was stupid to lie, but the words popped right out of her, born out of a need to defend herself and protect her shattered dignity. Not that Kort would let her get away with it.

"Please," Kort snorted. "You were on all fours *begging* for cock any way you could get it."

Never in her life had any man spoken to her in such a way. It left Kristen momentarily stunned as she gaped over his audacity. "How dare you?"

"Hell, you going to act like that, we might as well settle the argument the old way." Kort sauntered forward, his hands dropping to his belt buckle. "I'll prove it to you, just give me five minutes and then I'll bring you a mirror."

That did it. Kristen snapped under the wash of rage at his very suggestion. A part of her had known they'd never adhere to Samantha's rules, but this time she wouldn't call defeat with nothing more than a whimper. This time she roared back at him and charged.

The second her body slammed into the hard wall of muscle known as Mt. Kort, Kristen realized her mistake. He felt warm and smelled even better. Her head spun with the rich, drugging scent of man and musk while the world whipped around her.

Even as Kort went crashing toward the ground, he snaked his arms around her waist, pinning her to his heated length and dragging her down with him. Her head cracked against his shoulder as they landed, leaving her stunned for the whole second it took him to roll. Before Kristen could react, she found herself pinned to the floor with her wrist trapped in his hands.

It was a position she remembered too clearly from the night before. Kort like to play captor, liked to systematically break down every one of her defenses until her own wanton lusts overpowered her good sense and she became a desperate thing of need that gloried in his ruthless drive to make her beg.

A whimper lingered at the edge of her lips as her body melted in anticipation of repeating that performance, but fear held it back. Kristen clung to that thin sliver of panic, feeding it with her desperation to escape as the air thickened with that intoxicating musk.

"Damnit!" Kristen hollered, throwing all her strength into trying to buck Kort off. "You son of a bitch, let me go!"

"If that's what you really want, then stop fucking tempting me." He grunted out the words as his hips flexed, grinding down with each roll of her own.

"It's called struggling," Kristen snarled, throwing all her weight into twisting loose.

"It's called tempting."

"Let her go, Kort." Jakob matched that order with a boot planted into his twin's side. Suddenly, Kristen was free. She didn't hesitate to see if Jakob had saved her or was intent on capturing her for himself. Scrambling in the opposite direction of both Covenanters, she crawled to her knees and onto her feet, all the while moving as far away from them as possible.

Only once she had the full length of the room between them did Kristen bother to look back to find them engrossed with each other. Struggling to his feet, Kort gripped his side as he shot Jakob a murderous look.

"Damn, Jakob. Did you have to kick me?" Kort straightened slowly, wincing with every inch. "If I'd wanted to be kicked, I would have gotten in on your fight with that idiot earlier."

"Great, I'm mated to a wuss," Kristen spat, bringing Kort's frozen gaze back to her like a laser. "And it's not 'that idiot,' his name is Derek, *my brother*."

"You happy he beat the crap out of Jakob?" Kort asked, like he really needed clarification.

"Yes." Kristen smiled. "He deserved it, and so do you."

"Yeah? Well if you're so pleased, why you still all pissed off?" That wiped away Kristen's grin and brought Kort's own tugging at his lips. "You don't want apologies, and you're not satisfied with your brother beating Jakob near death. That's because you want your own revenge."

He wasn't wrong. Seeing the damage Derek had done to Jakob didn't give her any kind of joy. Actually, it kind of irritated her. Yet again her brother felt the need to handle Kristen's life, trying to solve her problems and doing everything his way. Kristen didn't hold hope that he'd ever realize she could fight her own battles.

"You have a right to it." Kort's voice softened, becoming persuasive.

"After what you did?" Kristen didn't need his affirmations. "You're damn right about that."

"And we're going to give it to you."

That took her a minute to process, and even then it left her suddenly quite confused. Eyeing the big brutes towering over the edge of her bed, Kristen

didn't trust either one of them in the slightest. "You are?"

"It's got to be good, though," Kort warned her. "I don't want to spend the rest of my life with you lording how we met over us. So you got to have enough revenge now to get it out of your system completely."

"Kort," Jakob groaned, looking more pained than his brother. "Don't tempt the woman."

"I'm not," Kort snapped, turning to shoot Jakob a dirty look. "We tried it your way, but it's like I told you on the way over here. This ain't going to be fixed with a few flowers and some humble words. She's our mate. She's like us. We'd want revenge, and that's what she wants. Right, Kristen?"

As much as she wanted to, Kristen hesitated to agree, unsure of what was being negotiated. "I guess it depends on what kind of revenge."

"Well," Kort shrugged, "I guess that's up to you. It's your revenge."

"I don't like the way she is smiling, Kort."

Apparently, Kort didn't either, because it felt it necessary to add on some qualifiers himself. "Just don't make it bloody or fatal."

"No blood or death." She could live with that as long as she didn't have to live with them.

"It's probably going to take you some time to come up with something." Jakob sounded almost desperate now.

"Hmm." Actually, Kristen already had a plan going.

Lilly needed time to find the cure. Given the powerful pull even now by her wolf to accept Jakob and Kort, Kristen knew the one thing she didn't have a lot of was time. It would be hard to resist the attraction, impossible if she let them get even one hand on her body. Now she had a means of assuring they kept their hands to themselves.

"At least you want some time before you spring it on us." The uncertainty in Jakob's tone turned his statement into a suggestion. The man was beyond nervous now. "After all, the surprise lends something to the act."

"Oh, you're going to be surprised." Once they realized that she'd broken the mating bond, Kristen imagined surprised wouldn't begin to describe their reaction. Jakob sighed in clear resignation and sent her one last hopeful look. "That's going to make you happy?"

"Very happy."

"Well, while you're planning all that out, could we maybe focus on something positive? You know, like try to work on settling into being mates?"

His negotiation technique needed work because Kristen could already guess where Jakob was heading. Years of experience in the courtroom kept her from giving him a flat-out "no." Best to let him say what he wanted outright and not let him play any games.

"Settle into being mates?" Kristen repeated, cocking a confused brow at that. "What's that supposed to mean? You want me to move into your house and play happy Mary housekeeper?"

Jakob flushed, revealing that some part of him had dared to hope he could get her to agree to that much. Kristen, though, had put enough of a sneer into her words to keep the big man from brazenly agreeing. Instead he went for an insulted scowl that probably had as much to do with the embarrassment of her calling him out as it did that he wouldn't be getting what he wanted.

"No, of course not," Jakob shot back, before pausing as if unsure of what to say next. The man needed to learn to have a contingency plan because the way he stumbled over the rest of his answer really was pathetic. "I know you're not ready to move in yet, but can we at least proceed on a course that would lend itself to one day moving into our own house?"

The man was still fishing. Kristen had to give him one for tenacity. "And what course is that?"

"Doing what mates do?"

"And what do mates do?" Kristen had really started to enjoy watching Jakob squirm, but apparently Kort had reached the end of his patience. He answered bold, blunt, and true to his nature.

"Fuck." Kort paused before feeling the need to expand his answer. "Mates fuck."

Kristen met his glare with a smirk before giving Kort back her own tart

answer. "I'm not having sex with you."

"I wasn't talking about sex," Jakob snapped.

"Excuse me." Kort held a hand up, blocking Jakob's complaint. "I want to talk about sex."

Too bad nobody wanted to talk to him. Kristen kept her focus on Jakob, who continued on with a certain amount of indignant air. "I'm talking about the normal things, like eating dinner together, talking about our day, vegging out in front of the TV together. You know, normal, everyday things."

"Like getting naked at the end of the night and having some fun," Kort retorted over Kristen.

"Shut up, Kort!" Jakob snapped.

"At least I agree to that." Kristen snorted.

"To what?" Jakob rolled his head slightly as he emphasized his point. "To Kort shutting up or to what I was saying?"

"To both, actually."

There wouldn't be any point in trying to keep them at arm's distance. In fact it could be very dangerous not to keep an eye on her two mates. On the other hand, it might be beneficial to have them thinking things were progressing.

"I mean what you're talking about is going to happen regardless," Kristen reasoned. "After all, we are living together."

"Yes, but it could happen without a constant, tense bickering." The way Jakob pointed that out made it quite clear he blamed her for all the tension. "We could actually try to be nice to each other."

"I'm sorry. I can't do nice with this boner bothering me." Kort interrupted again, this time drawing Kristen's complete attention as he continued to complain about his hard cock. "I mean I can try, but I'm not going to be able to truly relax and be a pleasant fellow until my dick gets a little loving."

"Then try making a fist," Kristen snapped, unable to ignore Kort any longer. "Because your hand is all the attention you're going to be getting."

"A little loving from my mate," Kort shot back. "Unless it's your hand, it isn't near the same thing."

"Then suffer."

"Misery loves company, honey."

"Kort," Jakob intervened again, solidifying Kristen's opinion that he probably spent a lot of time fixing his brother's mistakes. Kristen imagined last night fell into that category. "Will you just shut up about how hard your damn dick is?"

"It's kind of hard to when I'm in pain," Kort retorted angrily. "And it's her fault. Seriously, man, how can you look at her and not ache? Now you're asking me to be nice on top of it? I'm just saying it would be easier to get along if we were screwing."

"Gee, I'm not having any problems staring at you," Kristen sang out sweetly simply because she knew it would bug Kort. From the way he tensed and growled, she hadn't been wrong, but she had underestimated his intelligence.

"Yeah, that's because you ain't looking at us at all, honey," Kort ripped back. "You been staring over our shoulders, at our hands, noses, ears, everywhere but looking right at us. I wonder why that is?"

"Because you're butt-ass ugly," Kristen spat back, feeling the heat flood her face.

"Now that's just a lie." Kort paused before clarifying his position. "Well, I guess Jakob kind of is right now. No offense, man, but you may have to sit this round out. Your face is just a bloody, bruised mess. It almost kind of hurts to look at you."

"And yours can look the same," Jakob threatened him. "Now stop being an ass before Kristen gets really pissed at us."

"She already is," Kristen growled, irritated beyond belief by the Beavis and Butthead show her two mates were putting on.

"You sure about that, honey?" Kort retorted, continuing on to prove how little decency he had. "Because there is only one thing making this room smell sweet, a wet pussy."

Kristen reeled back like he'd hit her, so shocked that Kort had dared to give testament to the very thing she'd been desperately trying to ignore. Ever since she'd made eye contact with the bastard her body had started to liquefy under the constant whispers of want pulsing out of her cunt.

Apparently both of them knew it. That revelation horrified Kristen, but not as much as Kort did as he continued to humiliate her.

"Come on, honey, we all know it's true," Kort whispered, daring to take a smooth step forward. "There isn't any need to leave that poor, little pussy aching and unfilled when I got all the cock you'll ever need hard and ready, right here."

Kristen didn't know which was worse, the fact that Kort could be so crude or the way her body responded to his lewd suggestion. He'd been like that last night, whispering all kind of wicked promises in her ear, demanding all sorts of dirty things, and she'd melted at every single word.

The things he'd said had driven her crazy, and giving in to them had blown her mind. She could remember how hot, how sweaty it'd been. She'd screamed and begged, clawing at them as they fucked her hard and furious, filling her with their strength and power even as they'd weakened her to the point of obeying their every command.

"Come on, Kristen." The husky warmth of Kort's whisper brushed across her face a moment before a callused thumb traced their path. "You know you want it."

Kristen did, but there was something about that tight, tired line that broke the moment. Even as the musk thickened around her, trying to deprive her of her reason, Kristen clung to his last statement. He'd probably used it a million times on just about as many women.

Why that hurt, Kristen didn't care to understand. All that mattered was the pain worked like a charm against his musk, freeing her mind of the lusty fog consuming it and riling it into anger strong enough that she could touch Kort and not be tempted.

"No!" Planting her hands against his chest, Kristen shoved him back and then kept on going, walking him right across the carpet as she lit into him. "Believe it or not, bozo, I'm not a victim of my lust. It's not my problem if you're such a pathetic loser that you can't even function because of your raging hormones."

"I am not a pathetic loser," Kort snapped back, but it lacked the heat of true anger. As he stumbled backward under the herding stretch of her hands, he still appeared too shocked by her outburst to rally against it.

"No, you're a poor, sad, little baby boy," Kristen spat. "Can't even function without getting screwed every hour because all your brains are in your nuts. Well how about this for revenge? How about I screw your brother without you? What if I make you wait weeks, months, whole fucking years before I let you back in my bed? What do you think of that, Mr. Blue Balls?"

By the time she was done, she was screaming at him. All the anger she'd pent up that morning unleashed itself, and she shoved him hard right through the open door. This time when he landed on his ass, she knew she'd put him there. It felt good. Almost as good as slamming the door in his startled face.

Turning, she breathed out a deep sigh of release and faced Jakob. He looked pained but patient. Kristen was struck again by the thought that Jakob must be used to having his brother complicate his life. Maybe if Kort hadn't been in the picture...Kristen stopped that thought before it could finish.

It didn't matter how much shit Jakob ate because of Kort. She still didn't want a mate. They wouldn't accept that and simply go away. Kristen wouldn't be proving it, either, by beating up on Kort. She needed to remember her plan. With a deep breath, that's just what she did.

"I accept."

"What?" Jakob looked startled by that statement, as if confused by it.

"I accept the terms of your offer," Kristen explained, forcing her voice to relax enough to not sound like snarls as she continued. "We'll put the past behind us and start on a new foot in the morning. You can court me, and I'll be receptive, but we both know I'm going to get my revenge."

"Um, I kind of liked the revenge you just mentioned to Kort."

Chapter 12

Kristen chased Jakob out of her room, unable to tolerate any more of his and Kort's insanity. Crass, lewd, indecent, she really had every reason to dislike them. It only annoyed her even more that she didn't.

The words Kort used, the way they made her feel, Kristen growled,

beating back the unwanted surge of heat as she recalled their conversation. She would not give in to those base level urges, no matter the fact that they wouldn't leave her alone.

A run would help. It would give her wolf a chance to exhaust all the restless energy making her a pain in Kristen's ass right then. Even as she considered the woods across the way from the McBane den, Kristen dismissed the idea.

As much as she'd like to free the beast so it could wear itself out, in that form she'd have no control over her wolf's responses to her mates. She'd be completely vulnerable and didn't doubt that her two horny mates would take advantage of the situation. Just the idea of what they'd do had her jerking as she tried even harder to throw off those unwanted thoughts.

She needed a distraction, something that didn't have to do with wolves, mates, or sex. Always an escape from her personal problems, her work called to Kristen. Thankfully Claire had had the foresight to snatch her purse and computer case from her car before they'd taken off with Samantha. There was even a space to work in the massive bedroom.

Tucked under a bank of windows sat a very large desk Kristen easily managed to spread all her papers out on. Unfortunately it wasn't as easy to get her mind to focus on any of them. After wasting thirty minutes rereading the same paragraph and still having no idea what it said, Kristen gave in to the obsession tugging at her concentration.

Kort and Jakob had the advantage. She was on their territory, surrounded by their pack mates. Males always hung together. Even their own Alpha had obviously intended on handing her right over to Jakob and Kort, despite knowing what they'd done and how many laws they'd broken.

If it hadn't been for Samantha, Kristen probably would be tied to a bed right then. She had to remind herself of why that would be a horrible fate. Remembering that they intended to keep her that way breathed fresh fear into her concerns. Kort and Jakob had an entire support system of relatives and friends in their favor.

All Kristen had was one very pregnant woman, who was required to lie in bed for more than half the day. Hell, she couldn't even count on herself, not with the lure of her mates almost too strong for Kristen's wolf to resist. It wouldn't be long before she lost control of the beast.

That only left her with Lilly as an ally, which proved how screwed Kristen was. Scowling as she considered the bargain Lilly had offered her, Kristen reached for her phone. She didn't know whether she could actually sell out Richard Payne for her own benefit, but Kristen did know she'd take

the case. Maybe she'd get lucky and the man actually would be guilty. If not, then Kristen would get the pleasure of sticking it to Lilly by assuring Mr. Payne got off.

Finding out the details of Mr. Payne's arrest didn't take her long. Nor did it take her more than a half hour to run into a dead end. The state had already assigned Mr. Payne a public defender who happened to be in court all day. Kristen left him a message, but didn't expect he'd get back to her before the morning when Mr. Payne came up before the court for bail.

Kristen would be there. Until then she had to find something else to occupy her time. At least the boys had stopped making noise in the next room. The silence allowed her to pretend that she wasn't being held captive in The Covenanters' den.

Finally she could lose herself in her work. That's just what she did, blocking out the room around her and the rest of the world with it.

* * * *

Kort hesitated in the doorway separating his room from Kristen's. Hunched over her desk and fully absorbed in her work, she didn't notice him. It gave him the moment to study her, to remember how she'd looked all flushed and sweaty, her pink lips swollen and eyes glazed, little breathless begs falling from her mouth as her pussy creamed in sweet demand for more.

That thought got a growl of approval from the beast inside him. Behaving in its normal restless and impatient manner, the wolf narrowed in on the focus of its desire. Sure enough, not a second later, Kort could scent his own musk tinting the air as the beast tried to lure its prey toward its clutches.

Samantha might have mouthed off about not using it on their mate, but she knew as well as anybody that a man couldn't control the musk. Of course women tended to be pigheaded about the issue, and Kort suspected Kristen would be no different. He'd get blamed no matter what. As if on cue, Kristen's head snapped up as her chin turned in his direction.

"It's not my fault." Kort defended himself before she could accuse him of anything. Not that he thought she'd agree, but he had to try.

* * * *

"So I was warned." Kristen surprised him as she shoved back her seat. Her agreement gave him hope for a moment, but his mate didn't look very agreeable. Actually she looked pissed, all stiff and storming toward her dresser.

"Samantha explained it all to me, how the musk is almost like a reflex."

"Then you can't be mad at me for it." That statement came out sounding more like a question thanks to the uncertainty in his voice.

"No," Kristen agreed, sounding anything but agreeable. "I can't be."

"What's that?" Kort eyed the bottle Kristen snatched off the dresser. He'd heard a rumor that Samantha had managed to block her mates' musk by applying a nearly noxious amount of perfume to her body. "You're not going to drown yourself in that shit are you? Because I like the way you smell."

"Me, too." Kristen smiled, coming to a stop right in front of him. "But not the way you do."

Before Kort could respond to that or defend himself from the sticky, stinky spray she doused him with, Kristen turned the bottle and shot him right in the chest with a hard blast from its nozzle. The little witch didn't stop there, but held the red cap down as she coated him from head to toe.

Stumbling back and putting up his hands to stop from getting hit in the face, Kort tried to escape the foul odor clinging to every one of his pores. No matter how far he retreated into his room, he couldn't escape the stench of the cheap cologne Kristen terrorized him with. Kort didn't take well to being abused.

"What the hell, woman?"

Kristen's arrogant chin tilted in the direction of his roar, and the woman had the audacity to smile at him. "That's better."

"Oh, God," Jakob groaned. Kort had left him tying up his boots, but a glance now showed his twin wavering on his feet as he rubbed his eyes. "That shit stinks. I take it that's a no on dinner."

"Dinner?" Kristen's gaze cut to Jakob's in clear confusion.

"I didn't get a chance to ask her before she assaulted me," Kort snapped. "I think this should count as her revenge."

"You musked me," Kristen shot back. "It was an act of selfdefense, not vengeance."

"Then why don't you coat yourself in this shit and leave me out of it?"

"Because it stinks," Kristen retorted, suddenly very calm and cool.

She could claim self-defense all she wanted. That smirk clearly expressed how much Kristen enjoyed getting some vengeance. Kort didn't fool himself into thinking her appetite had been satiated either. No, the future looked worse, much worse to him because it had become quite clear she intended to nick and pick at them to death. That was true revenge.

"Yeah?" Kort reached for the hem of his T-shirt. About ready to rip it over his head, he paused long enough to point out the obvious. "Well, you still have to smell it through dinner, honey."

"Not as bad as you," Kristen responded, but without the amused smugness she'd had a moment ago. Now she sounded a little unnerved as Kort dropped his shirt and went to work on his belt. "What are you doing?"

"Going to take a shower," he explained the obvious. "Unless, of course, you really do want to smell me through dinner, and don't bother giving me that look. I'm not showing you anything you haven't seen, touched, and licked before!"

That put color back in his mate's cheeks and appeased a certain need in Kort to rattle the woman. It also put the stiffness back in her spine as she jerked around, clearly intending on storming out of the room. Jakob caught her, though, latching on to her arm and turning her to face him. Kort couldn't help but notice that was not in his direction.

"About dinner?" Ever earnest and determined, Jakob sounded hopeful. "You're going, right?"

"Going?" Kristen arched a brow at that. "Are you implying that I would leave this house to attend a meal with the two of you?"

Kort snickered at her choice of words and the way they seemed to fluster Jakob for a moment. His brother's answer came out short and unpoetic. "Yeah."

"Like a date?"

More at ease with that question, Jakob managed a smile. "Exactly."

"That's what you sent bonehead—"

"Hey!" Kort instantly objected to the nod she sent his way, but a glance

down did show he had a hell of a boner with quite an impressive head. "Okay."

He conceded the point, not that Kristen paid him any attention. She hadn't even paused when he'd interrupted.

"—into my room for? To ask me out on a date?" Offering up a fake laugh, Kristen shook her head at Jakob. "What, so you two could musk me on the ride and then molest me? Do I look stupid enough to be alone with either one of you?"

"We weren't planning on musking you," Jakob growled, showing a little spirit finally. Not that Kort expected that argument to win Kristen over. It certainly hadn't worked out well for him. Of course nothing appeared to be going his way tonight. Even his damn brother had it out for him. "Kort, put your pants back on."

"What?" He couldn't gasp out much more than that one indignant word as the lunacy of Jakob's order overwhelmed him. "Why?"

"As a show of good faith." Jakob turned that solemn, intent look on Kort and he knew there would be no arguing the matter. Kort still would have if the prize hadn't been Kristen, but she was too much to risk. Not that Kort was all into self-sacrificing.

"Fine, show good faith," he snapped back. "But why do I have to be the stink bomb at the table tonight? Why don't you be a noble asshole and volunteer for the role."

He never should tempt his twin with that kind of challenge, but Jakob wouldn't back down. Taking the bottle from Kristen, the fool doused himself in the wretched cologne. Even Kristen backed away, and it didn't seem to Kort wearing something that repelled their mate made any kind of sense.

"There. We'll both stink. Happy now?"

"You smell bad enough for the both of us. I think I'm going to take a shower." That's just where Kort was headed when Kristen finally had her say.

"You might as well join him, Jakob, because I think I'd rather take my chances with the McBanes."

That brought an instant laugh out of Kort as he paused to shoot a grin at Jakob's scowl. "So much for your martyring yourself. The woman's not impressed."

"Go take your fucking shower, Kort," Jakob snapped over Kristen's head. "And I'll handle our mate."

"Oh, you'll handle her?" Unconcerned with his nudity and kind of enjoying the way Kristen pointedly refused to look at him no matter what he said, Kort couldn't resist aggravating the situation. "You and what tools? We didn't bring over the whips and chains. You sure you can handle her without some assistance?"

"Damnit, Kort. Shut up."

"'Course we could use the pillowcases." Kort cast a speculative glance at the bedding. "They'd make decent binds, if limited in position. Then again, it's not like you need all the creativity to fuck a mate into submission. Let me get that shower, and then we'll get her in hand."

He'd been joking, sort of. Given her response earlier that day to his teasing, Kort expected her to go all ninja woman on him again and start shoving him around. To do that, she'd have to touch him.

The anticipation of feeling her bare hands against his chest had Kort tensing as he waited. Except Kristen didn't go boom. At least not in a way that he liked. Finally turning to face him, she impressed him with her ability to both blush and threaten at the same time.

"You listen to me, you crass bastard. You're going to wear that cologne, or I'm going to get my own chains." Leaning in close enough to tempt him into breaking house rules, Kristen didn't give any thought to her danger as she growled at him. "Then I'm going to leash you down tight and make you watch as I fuck your brother for *hours*. And I'm not going to dinner with you."

She tacked on that last statement loud, clear, and firm as she shifted back. Head held high, she gave him a passing glance before smirking. It took every bit of self-control Kort had to stand there and watch her carry that smug smile out of the room. The woman really knew how to push his buttons.

"Do you just love digging our grave deeper and deeper?" Jakob asked in the tense silence that followed her departure. Kort sighed, letting the exaggerated sound be his answer. Jakob matched it with his own, but he had more to say.

"Put your damn clothes back on and I'll go convince our mate we're the best company she's likely to have tonight."

Kristen could smell her mate coming the second he passed through the door. A glance confirmed Jakob came bearing a smile and, no doubt, an apology as well. Well, she didn't have any interest in hearing it. Turning back to her papers, she tried to ignore the shadow growing across her desk.

It would be hard to ignore a man his size looming over her shoulder, impossible given the rotten smell permeating the air. The toxic scent really did make her kind of sick, but Kristen preferred the nausea to the lust their natural odor inspired. Lust didn't begin to describe the wanton need that musk inspired.

But it wasn't all the musk. She could probably roll them in shit and it wouldn't disguise the lethal grace of their bodies or the intent hunger in their eyes. Nor would the worst stench in the world stop her from quivering with anticipation every time they came near. Even if she did manage to undo the mating, Kristen had no doubt that some part of her would always desire them. Knowing what they could do when unleashed, how could she not?

"Kristen—"

"I'm not going to dinner with you." Not bothering to look up from her notes, Kristen cut him off with a dismissal before he could ask his question.

"You have to be hungry," Jakob argued, not so easily dissuaded.

It was on the tip of her lips to tell him she was just fine when her stomach lodged its agreement with Jakob's assessment. The very loud grumble reminded Kristen she'd missed lunch. Something her tummy did not intend to allow her to do with dinner.

"I'm sure there is something to eat in this house," Kristen told her stomach, not about to sacrifice herself to her mates for a little bit of food.

"There is normally." Jakob paused to sigh heavily. "Will you please look at

Kristen didn't want to because it made everything that much harder. Conscious, though, of not looking weak, she braced herself and turned her head. No amount of preparation would probably ever help against the power of Jakob's hypnotic gaze.

Instantly she found herself captured by the swirling shards of blue and green. The constant whirl and clash of crystalline colors made his eyes appear brilliantly alive, almost seething with emotion. Kristen didn't need a translator to explain their message. He hungered and for only one thing, her.

It would be so easy to give in to that need, to submit to the promise of raw, hot sex his gaze made. His body could live up to the vow. Hard, large, and capable of an endurance that had left Kristen feeling stiff and sore that morning, every muscle that rippled over his broad frame teased her with the memory of how good it felt to give in to the wanton lust Jakob inspired in her.

Quickly, before the last of her willpower crumbled, Kristen cut her gaze to the wall over his shoulder and forced herself to remember that just because something felt good didn't make it good.

"It's my first night here, and it would be rude of me not to pay my respects to my hosts." That sounded good, logical, and rational. If only her voice hadn't strained over the words, making them come out weak and desperate sounding

"They probably would be more pissed if you did." Snorting off her comment, Jakob irritated her anew with the return of his arrogant tone. "I can assure you that they're not in the mood for company."

"And why would I believe you?" Kristen didn't trust him in the slightest.

"Because Samantha pissed both JD and Caleb off when she gave you sanctuary. Trust me, it's going to be days before they're done disc ...discussing the matter."

Jakob blurted out the first part instantly and with enough emotion to assure Kristen it was an honest response. The way he faltered, though, to round out his comment, sounding uncertain, gave away the fact that the end was a lie. Kristen considered what word he'd really meant to use while Jakob babbled on in an obvious rush to get past his slip.

"So they aren't going to be showing up for dinner. Actually, there is no dinner unless you want to eat the chili that Cal's making, which, trust me, you don't."

Kristen narrowed her eyes on him for telling her what she did and didn't want to do. Still, he might be right. It all depended on one thing. "Who's Cal?"

"Tex's twin." Jakob smiled, probably sensing her tension at the mention of that Covenanter. "Tex is in the kitchen helping him out, which gives you a choice. Tex and Cal or me and Kort?"

"I think I'll just choose myself." Kristen didn't like ultimatums, tended to respond rashly to them.

"Fine," Jakob agreed too quickly. "Then why don't we go down to the kitchen and you can grab yourself something to eat?"

Kristen sensed a trap and had a suspicion that she'd run into that ultimatum after all because she had absolutely no choice but to do as he suggested. Giving Jakob a hard look to let him know she didn't fear going into the kitchen, Kristen stood up and let him lead her out into the enormous house.

It had been built on a curve in the marsh, angled so that both the back and front of the house had impressive views of the long-fingered sea grass and the royal-blue waters beyond. As they descended the stairs from the loft all the bedrooms stemmed off of, Kristen couldn't help but be struck again by the opulence of the great room.

The Covenanters might be a smaller pack than the Narins, but apparently they lived better. It made her wonder where exactly her mates lived and if they lived so lavishly. She kind of hoped not. As nice as the McBanes' house was, it felt a little overwhelming to Kristen.

So did walking into the kitchen and finding just what Jakob had warned, Tex and somebody who looked a hell of a lot like him.

"Oh, hey!" Kristen had really begun to hate the sound of that voice. "Check it out, Cal. That's Kristen, the one I was just telling you about."

Cal must have been the big blond standing by a stew pot that bubbled and popped, releasing an aroma that already had her stomach cringing in fear.

Looking at the steam rising out of the massive caldron, Kristen only glanced up when Cal spoke, catching his gaze in time to see his eyes narrow with a sudden realization.

"Huh."

"What?" Kristen snapped at him, bristling for some reason she couldn't name. Not that she needed a reason beyond the fact that Cal was Tex's twin, identical or not.

"Nothing." Cal shrugged, turning his attention back to stirring his creation. "Just Tex's story left a different impression than you do."

"Tex is intentionally an ass. Cal comes by it naturally," Jakob explained, making it quite clear that Kristen should take insult at the man's somewhat cryptic comment.

"Hey, I come by it naturally," Tex shot back with a smile. "Cal doesn't mean to be one. He doesn't even realize he is one. So you guys joining us for dinner?"

"Not in this lifetime." Kristen let that honest answer roll out of her without any hesitation. If Tex and his brother didn't feel the need to be polite, there seemed no point in wasting her time with the effort. "Why aren't they identical? I thought all Covenanters twins came out looking the same?"

"They're only half Covenanter," Jakob replied, leaving it at that and giving Kristen a perfect opening.

"What's the other half? Dog?" Kristen snickered, enjoying being directly insulting for a change. It had a kind of liberating effect that Cal ruined with his serious-toned response.

"We prefer the term 'feral,' darling." He flashed her a toothy, white grin. "It sounds less civilized."

That wiped Kristen's grin away and brought the tension back to her shoulders. Ferals were dangerous, untrustworthy creatures that almost always had to be put down for the greater safety of society. They tended to be violent, packless monsters that were looked on as a disease rather than a breed.

"So?" Kort strutted into the kitchen, breaking the sudden silence with his booming voice. He didn't even spare a glance in Tex or Cal's direction

look in Jakob th	en her direction.	"You two ready to
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Chapter 13

Jakob's pleasure at having Kristen agree to go to dinner with them didn't last beyond the second the truck doors slammed closed and the stench of the cologne she forced them to wear started fogging up his lungs. The stink made the fifteen-minute drive to The Firehouse a nauseating trip.

Kort rolled his window all the way down and spent the whole ride overobviously trying to breathe out of it. Jakob did the same, leaving Kristen to sit, tense and silent with her knuckles going white as her hands clenched each other in a tight fist. He couldn't tell if she felt sick or was just flat-out pissed. With the cologne blocking any scent Kristen gave off, Jakob could only guess.

She wouldn't have to guess how he felt if she'd just glance in his direction. It didn't matter how sick the cologne made him feel, Jakob's dick still hadn't lain down. Neither had his beast. Just the opposite, the wolf had started to stir to life, annoyed at being so close to its mate and not being allowed to touch.

That she also denied him even the soothing scent of her body left the damn beast ready for a fight, one preferably where he shredded that godawful suit she wore. Once he had her naked, he would shove his face right between her soft thighs and drown in her scent. It took a lot of concentration to keep those urges from manifesting into action as he helped Kristen down to the ground.

Not daring to risk touching more of her than his willpower could stand, he offered her only his hand, which she rejected. Hopping out of the truck, she paused to straighten her jacket and look around before casting a doubtful look in Jakob's direction.

before he gave in to the desire to kiss the concern from her lips. "They always have room for one more."

"It looks packed. You sure we're going to get a table?" "Don't worry." Jakob turned his attention to closing the truck door

"Especially us," Kort added. He'd come to a stop at the end of the bed, waiting on the two of them. "The Firehouse is pack."

* * * *

"Is pack?" Kristen scowled, obviously perplexed because she let Jakob settle a hand on her back and didn't object when he guided her toward

Kort. "Is that just bad grammar or are you making a different point?"

"It's pack," Kort repeated as if he couldn't understand her confusion. "It's owned by the pack, operated by us, and one of our hangouts."

"Oh," Kristen nodded, "you mean it's owned by one of your packmates. I get it."

"No." Kort laughed. "I mean what I said, honey. It's owned by the pack."

"The Covenanter pack is incorporated," Jakob interceded, elaborating on Kort's short, cryptic comments before his brother ruined their dinner by annoying their mate more than necessary. "Everybody in the pack owns a certain amount of shares, which is somewhat based on their ranking."

"You're incorporated?" That bit of information had Kristen stalling out at the edge of the drive. "How the hell does that work?"

"Way any corporation works." Jakob shrugged and tried to get her moving again. "The corporation owns almost every business in this town."

"And quite a few outside of it," Kort tacked on helpfully.

Kristen glanced between the two of them, making a face that clearly expressed her amazement. At least her surprise didn't stop her from moving forward even if it did leave her muttering. "I still don't get how that works. Do you all work for the company? I mean the whole pack."

"Most of us." Jakob nodded, holding the door open for her. "In one way or another."

The loud rumble of conversations being conducted across the diner roared out the door, bringing their conversation to a temporary stop as Kristen took in The Firehouse. Jakob hoped she could look past its homey and worn appearance to see what he'd brought her here to see, the pack itself.

The Covenanter pack was small and tight-knit. They looked after each other and saw that none of their own lacked or suffered. Unfortunately, all Kristen appeared to know of their kind came from their rather rough reputation.

Jakob knew last night hadn't helped that impression, but he hoped tonight would show her something she didn't expect. Clearly he'd succeeded because Kristen stayed quiet as they moved through the diner, stopping at

nearly every table to introduce her to another couple sets of twins.

By the time they'd reached their customary table in back they'd introduced her to nearly fifty of their pack, and all had greeted her with the polite familiarity that spoke of acceptance. Kristen had responded with silence, a condition Jakob assumed to be a sign of thoughtful contemplation.

Not wanting to disturb her from coming to the obvious conclusion that she might be wrong about them, Jakob settled her into her seat and left her to study the crowd. Pretending to busy himself with the menu, he kicked Kort when he opened his mouth and threatened to disturb Kristen's thinking.

They needed to give her time. She'd come around. So would Kort, though right then he felt the need to kick Jakob back hard enough to make the table rattle. That had Kristen's attention snapping back to them and leaving Jakob with no reason not to smash his brother's foot.

"Ow! Damnit!" Kort's ass started to pull away from his seat in an obvious oncoming lunge when Kristen's comment stopped him cold.

"First you take me to a restaurant packed with women you have so clearly fucked. Then you parade me past them, forcing me to meet each one and giving them more than enough time to leer at you. Now, you're going to start a fight?" Kristen asked, glancing at them as if they were a science experiment gone wrong. "I would have been better off with those feral bastards."

"No. What?" Jakob's gaze swept over the other tables as he tried to make sense of her accusations. What he saw had him coming up short. "Well, damn."

"Was this your way of showing me how grateful I should be to have you two as mates?" Kristen packed enough disgust into her tone to make sure they understood how ungrateful she felt. "That you two could have any woman you wanted? And I should be overjoyed to be that woman?"

"Crap." Kort's ass hit the seat. "We might as well have gone to Wiley's because I could have used that beer right about now."

"So you're not going to deny it?"

"That we slept with all these women?" Kort snorted. "No, but you'd be accusing us of the same thing no matter where we took you."

"That's reassuring."

"You can't be mad at us about this," Kort shot back, clearly heating with the argument. "We never said we were monks before we met you, and you can't be complaining about the experience that had you climaxing all damn night long. Honey, you should be *thanking* those women."

Jakob caught Kristen by the arm before she could fully shoot out of her seat. Despite her resistance, it took him little effort to jerk her back down. "Now don't be running off in a huff. Kort might be an ass, but he's not completely wrong. We all have pasts."

"Yeah?" Kristen cocked a brow at that. "Well, mine wasn't as town whore."

Kort snorted at that insult, but Jakob chose to ignore it altogether and focus on the main point. "Are you saying we'd have no reason to be ...distressed over anything in your past?"

"No." Kristen jerked her arm free, clearly affronted by his question. "Certainly not. Unlike you two depraved perverts, I didn't feel a need to screw everything that moves."

"We scented a man in your bedroom last night," Kort retorted with ill patience. "You must have screwed something."

That accusation had Kristen puckering up with full indignation as she narrowed her sights on Kort. "Peter is not *something*. I think that title belongs to you."

Kort didn't take the least bit of offense, too concerned with the same part of her statement Jakob was. "Peter who?"

"Jakob!"

In a flash, his night went from nightmare status all the way to night terror as Jakob's vision blurred on the sight of a massive bosom rubbing right into his face. Slender arms wrapped around his head and snuggled him into a scent he was all too familiar with.

It didn't shock him at all when Gina leaned back to plant a kiss right on his lips. No, it horrified Jakob, as did her words when she lifted her mouth barely a breath above his.

"I was so disappointed when you didn't call me last night like you

promised. I stayed up all night aching, but then—"

Right when Jakob's rattled brain finally fired a command to chunk the woman off his lap, Gina bolted, launching herself into Kort's limp arms. In that second, Jakob realized dinner had gone deathly silent, making Gina's words ring out louder than they should have.

"This bad boy called me up today and promised me the most wicked delight." Gina nuzzled her head into Kort's neck and licked him from his shoulder to his ear, following him when Kort tried to twist away. "I'm going to lock all my windows and doors tonight and make it a challenge for you to break in and have your dirty way with me."

Jakob's jaw dropped. Kort froze. Something under the table shifted, whipping past his jeans fast enough to leave a breeze. Then suddenly, Gina was tumbling backward. Before the entire shocked audience crowding into the diner, Gina twirled, slipped, and smacked down hard on her ass, her head cracking into the floor a second later. Of the sixty or seventy people present, Kristen was the only one to react instantly. Shooting out of her chair with a gasp, she rushed around the table to see to the fallen woman.

"Oh, my God! Are you all right?"

In a move that might have looked like fussy concern to everybody else, Kristen assisted Gina to her feet. Jakob knew the truth. He sat close enough to see Gina wince at the grip Kristen had on her arm, and could hear the harsh whisper his mate hissed at the other woman.

"You touch anything of mine again and I'll put you down so you never get up." While Gina turned a terrified gaze on Kristen, she turned a concerned one back on her along with turning up her tone. "Oh, dear. I think you bit your lip when you fell. It's bleeding bad."

"What the heck is going on out here?"

Not that Jakob would have interfered in the glorious display of possessive jealousy his mate was making of herself, but as Hank came rushing out of the kitchen, he didn't have much choice but to stand up and handle the situation. It only took a few minutes, and Jakob doubted Hank or anybody else was fooled by all of Kristen's false concern, but nobody argued that Gina had slipped and should go to the hospital.

Nobody but Jakob, but he waited until they'd settled back into their seats

and Hank had disappeared to get their drinks. As the diner started to rouse again with a lively conversation surely fed by the recent event, Jakob pinned his mate with an expectant look and waited for her confession.

Kristen glared Kort down and waited for his confession. None came. Neither brother said a word as they both stared back at her, wearing identical expressions of patience. Unfortunately, Kristen didn't have much of that left in her and broke the silence first.

"So you want to tell me why you called that woman and why she thinks you're planning on breaking into her house tonight?"

"You want to tell me why you kicked her?" Kort shot back, not appearing the least bit contrite for the scene his little pet had just caused.

"Why did you call her?" Kristen growled, not about to take second seat in this argument. The man had clearly been up to no good and owed her an explanation.

"Why did you kick her?"

"For the same reasons I'm about to kick you," Kristen snarled. "Because she pissed me off."

That wasn't the full truth. The woman might have irritated Kristen, but her wolf had responded with instant rage at the sight of another bitch touching what it considered hers. A side effect of the mating, the instinctive response caused Kristen to be even more anxious to have the bond broken. She didn't approve of violence, didn't like it, and certainly didn't want to become violent herself.

"Answer her, Kort." Jakob surprised her by taking her side, not that she trusted his motives.

"She isn't going to like the answer."

Now that Kristen read as an honest response.

"We're mated now," Jakob stated simply, his gaze locked on her. "There are no more secrets. Tell her what you did."

Kort sighed, sinking deeper into his seat before turning his sullen scowl in her direction. "I just wanted to know what to expect, you know, from you. How you might be feeling after last night, so I made some calls and asked some women how they'd feel."

Kristen simply stared at him, trying to absorb how many ways she should be pissed off. The man thought her no better than Gina, had asked that bitch for advice on Kristen and given her intimate details about their mating. It was almost too much for her mind to handle at once, so she went with a simple response.

"You really are an ass, you know that?"

Kort sighed and nodded after a moment. "If it's any consolation, I don't mean to be. It's not like I ever banked on you finding out what I did."

Kristen blinked in that bit of bluntness and almost laughed. She should have hit him, or at least blasted him, but after everything that had happened, Kristen could see one positive trait in Kort.

"Well, at least you're an honest ass, and what about you?" She turned her attention to Jakob, who jerked his glare from his brother to cast his scowl in her direction. "What did you do?"

"Why do you think I did anything?" Jakob demanded to know, clearly defensive.

"Because you're acting guilty," Kristen answered with the same frankness Kort liked to use. "And you said there were no secrets."

"I talked to my mom, okay?" Jakob spat, like he fully expected her to laugh.

"You talked to Mom?" Kort snickered and shook his head. "I might be an ass, but you're the real loser."

That got him kicked. A gesture Kort returned. Before they could break into a full-on brawl, Kristen interceded. "Actually I think it's kind of sweet."

A double set of surprised eyes turned on her with obvious disbelief.

"You do?" Kort sounded not only amazed, but a little disgusted.

"Why?" Jakob didn't sound any more convinced of her comment than his brother.

"Well," Kristen shrugged, "given you broke into my house, molested me, not to mention you allowed a feral to watch, then humiliated me in front of my brother, only to top that all off by bringing me here not simply to meet all

your past conquests but to witness the depths of your blonde pet's devotion, I'd say you need advice from your mother."

Neither man squirmed under her lengthy accusation, but Kort did have the grace to sigh out a begrudging acceptance before casting Jakob a doubtful look. "So what did Mom say?"

"She said we were screwed and we should probably do a lot of groveling."

Kristen broke into instant laughter at the mumbled confession, unable to stop herself from giving in to the moment and enjoying her small bit of validation. If nothing else, she already knew she'd like Jakob and Kort's mother. Of course, right then Jakob and Kort didn't look like they cared too much for her.

"Would groveling help?" Kort finally asked, looking sick at even the idea.

"Something tells me you'd screw it up," Kristen assured him, not at all certain why she didn't say "yes." It would do her ego a little good to see the man humbled, but it would also mean he'd have to lie. Kristen knew damn good and well Kort didn't regret anything, except maybe getting caught.

"I can be pretty convincing," Jakob offered with such sincerity that Kristen believed him.

"Yeah, but then Kort would make fun of you and you'd have to beat the crap out of him." Kristen shook her head. "I'm not up to being the center of attention for a second time tonight."

That was another half truth. Kristen didn't want another fight because she didn't want to be reminded of the past incident. Nor did she care to become the thing that kept the two twins at each other's throats. They might be jerks, but she wouldn't allow that to become an excuse to lower herself to their level, notwithstanding the Gina event.

Thankfully Hank provided a distraction from that conversation when he returned with the drinks. He chatted with her mates for a few moments, taking the time to welcome her into the pack before he took their orders and disappeared.

A momentary silence settled over the table. It felt like a beginning that nobody knew how to start. Kristen busied herself with her tea while she tried to figure out what to say. Apparently Kort already knew of a topic they could revisit.

"Peter who?"

The gulp of tea Kristen had just taken went down wrong, sending a streak of burning pain radiating out from her chest. Tears clogged her vision while she coughed, trying to recover her breath. Jakob didn't help any when he pounded her back to add a new ache to her list.

"Thank you." Kristen jerked away from him. "I'm fine now."

"Then, Peter who?" Kort asked again, calmly waiting for an answer.

"Peter nobody," Kristen shot at him. "And I don't think I have to answer any of your questions unless, of course, you intend on answering all of mine."

Kristen had bet that her mates had more to hide than she did and wasn't prepared for Kort's casual response. "Ask away."

"How many women did you sleep within a week?" Kristen didn't really want to know the answer, but figured the question would scare them back from going any further with this conversation.

"Depended on the week." Kort shrugged, looking completely unrepentant. "Got to have at least one night's rest a week, you know?"

"No. I don't," Kristen retorted primly. That was not the answer she wanted to hear, but the one she'd feared. "Unlike you, I didn't jump from slut to slut, so I don't have to worry about missing my sleep."

"You had a relationship with this guy," Jakob chimed in, flanking her from the left.

"Yes." Kristen didn't see any point in denying it when they'd find out the rest of the horrid truth later. They'd be pissed enough then, so it seemed wise not to antagonize the situation by lying outright. "I had a relationship, a mature, responsible relationship with *one man*, while the two of you were out there dicking your way through the entire female population."

"That was all frivolous." Jakob dismissed her comment with a wave even as he agreed with her point. "It was just sex, and we never told any of those women that they meant anything or led them to believe we were available for more than a single night."

"You," Jakob pointed a finger at her stiffened with anger, "on the other hand, had a *relationship*. That means you had an emotional connection

with your lover, which is actually betrayal."

"It is not," Kristen shot back, instantly indignant at his accusation.

"And how would you feel if you found out we told some other woman we loved her?"

Kristen opened her mouth to tell him she didn't care and hoped he found that woman again after she had the mating bond broken, but the lies wouldn't come out. The very second the idea settled in her mind, the beast inside her riled near the surface with a sudden need to kill something. Snapping her jaw closed, she fought the urge.

"Exactly." Jakob nodded, taking her silence for what it was.

God help her if they ever realized who Peter was, then she wouldn't have any right to be so bitchy. They would find out eventually. Something told Kristen they'd remember every detail of this conversation then and throw it all back in her face.

"Let's agree that the past doesn't matter and forget about it," Kristen offered up charitably.

"Let's not," Kort dug in. "Let's talk about Peter who and why you're suddenly so forgiving?"

"Because I'm trying to be nice, you ass," Kristen shot back. "Can't you just be thankful?"

That came out louder than she intended. Her voice rang in the suddenly silent diner, making her blush and glance about to see if anybody had noticed her shrew routine. Lifting her eyes from Kort they immediately locked on to the reason the diner had suddenly filled with tension.

"Derek!"

Kristen had never before been so grateful to see her twin as she was then. Darting out of her seat before Jakob could stop her, she threw herself into her brother's arms and held on. He felt solid and comfortable, familiar in a way that went beyond a simple lifetime of shared experiences.

The protection she felt in the arms squeezing her back made Kristen wish she could play the weak female and beg her brother to take her away from all of this. She couldn't, couldn't even hold on to him. Sighing, she stepped

back and met Derek's frozen gaze.

"You want me to kill them for you?" The question sounded sincere enough that Kristen didn't know if he meant it. Her mates apparently did. Jerking out of their seats, they presented a wall of muscle that trapped Kristen on the other side.

"You sure you can, Narin?" Jakob growled.

"Maybe you should look around and consider your options," Kort warned him.

It was a not-so-subtle reminder that her brother stood surrounded by the enemy. He'd come wading into this mess just for her. That didn't surprise Kristen in the least, but it did harden her momentary desire to play the victim.

"Yes, you should," Kristen agreed with forced cheeriness. Latching on to Derek's arm, she took the biggest risk and started dragging him back to their table and right past her grumbling mates. "The menu is pretty long, and I've been promised the food is pretty good."

"Kristen," Kort growled, clearly fighting to control his temper. Probably because her brother was there. "I'm sure your brother has other dinner plans."

"Actually, I don't." Whether he meant to or not, the chair Derek chose to hunker down in was Kort's. "And you can relax, puppy. It was your own Alpha who suggested I come over here and see how well my sister had been matched."

That not only explained Derek's presence but it also cut off any other objections Jakob and Kort would have made. Instead they stayed silent, letting their displeasure be felt through the tense and hardened glares they shot at her brother as they both settled back down at the table. Kristen didn't bother to interfere, just happy to have her brother there.

"So, Kristen." Jakob forced a polite tone that came out strained and tight. "What do you do for a living?"

Kristen blinked, unprepared for that simple question. It quickly sparked a chain of thoughts that had her frowning. "About that, where's my car?"

"Your car?" Derek scowled at her question. "Somebody steal your car?"

- "No," Kort answered for her, snapping that harsh response at her brother with clear indignation. "It's in the garage at the McBanes' place."
- "But I don't have the keys," Kristen pointed out. From the twin glares that comment received, she knew her mates didn't want to talk about that now or here. Kristen could guess why. It was the very reason she did, because Derek wouldn't let them get away with anything.
- "I'm sure they're around," Jakob finally conceded.
- "Don't worry," Derek cut in smoothly. Stretching out a leg, he dug for something in his pocket. "I got my spare right here, you can use that."
- "She doesn't need that," Kort snapped, his anger apparently making him forget that he was dealing with not only her brother, but an Alpha.
- "My sister needs whatever she wants," Derek snarled.
- Straightening up and tensing with the kind of speed that assured the table separating him from Kort would offer no protection, his sudden aggression sent out ripples across the room as everybody tensed again. Unaware or unconcerned with the attention they were drawing, Derek leaned forward in obvious challenge to instruct Kort.
- "And as her mate, it will be your joy and duty to assure Kristen has everything she wants."
- "I always wanted a motorcycle." Kristen did, but she only brought it up because Derek had always forbidden it. Apparently her mating didn't change Derek's opinion or authoritative attitude.
- "But not that."
- "Trust me, on that we agree," Kort muttered, shooting Kristen a dark look for her suggestion. She smirked back at him.
- "Okay, how about 'I hate the fuzz' tattooed on my ass." Since she was sitting at a table with two police officers, that earned her a double set of glares. Kort, though, snickered before offering her a too-sweet smile.
- "Don't worry about the fuzz on your ass, honey. We can always shave it for you."
- "That's so sweet," Kristen purred back before narrowing her gaze on him.

"Where are my car keys?"

"I don't think—"

"You want me to trust you." Kristen cut off Jakob before he could try to make a reasonable excuse for keeping her under their control. "You have to trust me. Where is my car?"

The brothers shared a look that ended with Kort sighing. Stretching out a leg, he shoved a hand into his pocket and fished out a set of keys that he chunked at her. "It's parked in the garage. Now what is it you do for a living?"

"Well that couldn't have gone any worse," Jakob muttered. Chapter 14

He stood beside Kort, watching as Kristen trudged up the steps toward her bedroom. She looked tired and tense. Two things Kort didn't like seeing on his woman. Not that he could blame her. Dinner had been a disaster. That was before her brother had shown up.

"Gina could have cracked her skull open and died." Kort caught the shift in his brother's chin and met his gaze. "What? Just putting things in perspective."

"I need a drink." Jakob shoved off the wall he'd been using to support himself and headed for the study at the back of the house.

* * * *

"Don't you want to wash the stink off first?" Kort called after him.

"Eh." Jakob didn't even pause. "Once I'm drunk it won't bother me."

Kort snorted at that bit of wisdom and started off for their room and the shower he needed. A half hour later Kort emerged clean, smelling like soap and looking for that drink. Pausing only long enough to pull on a pair of sweats, he headed off to join Jakob.

He found his twin draining a bottle of scotch. Slouched down on the couch with his boots on their Alpha's coffee table, Jakob looked half asleep. Cocking an eye at his twin's audacity, Kort paused to nod at Jakob's feet.

"You don't think you're going to be in enough trouble when JD and Caleb get a whiff of this room? You want to tempt them into hobbling you, too?"

"I don't care," Jakob muttered. "I'm too tired to care."

"Yeah? Well Kristen might. Having a mate with two feet is probably high on her list." Kort moved off to find his own bottle, figuring that their Alphas would be pissed no matter what come morning. He might as well be guilty of something if he was going to get the blame.

"Who the hell knows what that woman wants," Jakob muttered, his gaze rolling toward the study door and the stairwell beyond it. "I thought we'd have it easier when I figured out who she is. I mean, a werewolf, what could be better?"

"A mate who wants us?"

"And how can she not?" Jakob voiced the very question that had been plaguing Kort all day. "We're her fucking mates. She knows what that means. We might not have done completely right by her last night, but she's acting worse than most humans do, and they got to get over the whole myman-lifts-a-leg-to-pee-sometimes thing."

Kort sighed as he settled down in the chair across from Jakob to share in his misery. "Just wait until everybody learns that she's sleeping in her own bed."

"I'm sure Tex and Cal have already informed them," Jakob retorted sourly. "That probably explains Gina's thing tonight. That woman..."

"I told you we shouldn't get messed up with her," Kort growled, feeling every right to blame Jakob for that disaster.

"Yeah, you said she was crazy and then you went and called her to ask for advice on Kristen." Jakob saluted him with his bottle. "That takes balls, brother."

"I was desperate," Kort mumbled, drowning his guilt with a hard shot of whiskey. "Besides, I didn't really think Gina would consider it a come-on. Spare me the look," Kort snapped at Jakob when he made his traditional dumbass expression. "I said I was desperate. You don't think right when you're desperate."

"You don't think right any time of the day," Jakob shot back.

"Well, it's kind of hard with my balls on fucking fire. Ah, hell, never mind."

Slamming his bottle down on the table, Kort jerked out of his seat and left Jakob to stew alone. Abandoning the study and the stink he'd long grown

tired of smelling, he trudged up the steps, having to pitch forward slightly to alleviate the pain of walking with a fully loaded erection. Damn thing had never been this big and hard before, and if he didn't get some ease, Kort feared he'd end up strutting around bowlegged.

He blamed Kristen for his problem. Damn stubborn-ass woman. Climbing into his own bed, he wondered how long he'd have to wait before she gave in to the inevitable. Probably a long time given how dinner went. So much for Jakob's idea of taking her out on a date. Or maybe it had been their mom's suggestion. Either way, it had failed.

The problem, as Kort saw it, was that dating required too much conversation. Talking to women had never been his strong point. Jakob had always been the charmer, the one to lure the women in. Kort's role had been to seduce them into letting the brothers play, which had always been easy once he got his hands on them. He was good with his hands.

Lifting his arms to splay his fingers out in front of his face, Kort listened to the rustle whispering under the door that divided his room from Kristen's. She hadn't fallen asleep yet. The woman stayed too tense, probably had habitual problems getting to sleep. She needed to learn how to relax.

Kristen rolled over, rearranging the pillows before settling down again to see if this position felt any better than the last fifty. It didn't. Nothing felt right because this wasn't her bed. The mattress was too firm and the pillows too mushy. They kept collapsing under the weight of her head until her neck started to ache from the odd angle.

It just figured. Nothing about this night had gone right. Nothing about her day had, either. In fact, the last twenty-four hours felt like some surreal, drug-induced hallucination. If she could get to sleep, maybe when she woke up everything would be back the way it should be.

More likely she'd wake up with a kink in her neck. Sighing, Kristen sat up and tried to fluff the pillow into a solid enough ball to support her head. Tomorrow, she'd go home and get her own damn pillows. If her mates had anything to say about that, she might very well sic Derek on them.

"Kristen?"

That question hit her like a bolt of lightning, making her jerk and snap around in startled fright to find just what she feared. The sight of the huge man filling out the doorway made her heart skip a beat before it outraced her lungs, leaving her breathless and nervous as Kort trudged forward.

"You're never going to get any sleep if you don't relax." "Don't talk to me

like a child," Kristen retorted, inching further back on the bed. The closer he drew the itchier she became, having to struggle to fight the urge to flee. Not that she could escape, and being cornered only worsened her mood.

"I can sleep any damn way I want. What the hell do you think you're doing?"

Her voice dropped dangerously as he came to a halt at the foot of the bed. The lethal warning in her tone didn't even make Kort pause before he ripped the covers away, leaving her completely exposed and wearing nothing but a T-shirt that barely covered her ass.

"You need to relax."

"And I can just imagine how you think you're going to help me with that."

"I highly doubt that."

"Try anything and get hurt." Kristen's gaze narrowed when Kort ignored that threat and lifted a bold knee onto her mattress. "I mean it."

"So do I. You need to relax."

Before she could react, he reached out and latched on to her ankle. Kristen squealed and kicked at him with her other foot, not that it did her any good. He dragged her clawing and snarling back down the mattress as if she weren't protesting at all.

"Damnit, Kort! Stop! I said no."

"You don't even know what I'm offering."

"I think I have a pretty good idea," Kristen snapped back. Giving up on shaking loose of his hold, she snatched up a pillow and jerked to a sit so she could smash it down over his head. "Let go!"

"Make me."

"Samantha," Kristen hollered the name.

"Go on and yell." Kort snorted. "That woman's probably pinned between her mates right now and ain't going nowhere they don't let her."

"God, must you be so crass?"

"Maybe you'll get lucky and Tex will come running to the rescue."

"This is not helping me relax!" Kristen spat, bashing him with the pillow hard enough to elicit a grunt.

"Stop that!" Kort jerked her ankle straight up in retaliation, and suddenly Kristen found herself flat on her back with her leg floating over her head. The odd position opened her right up with her shirt offering her no protection for her modesty. If Kort looked straight down he'd get a full, unobstructed view of her pussy, and Kristen didn't doubt that's what he'd intended.

She'd learned enough about Kort's appetites in one night not to figure he had something horribly obscene and way too thrilling planned for her to resist, but that didn't mean she'd given in simply because...That thought froze in her mind as something else dawned on her.

"You're not musking."

Kort shot her an annoyed look for pointing out that obvious fact. Instead of answering or even ogling her as Kristen expected, he turned his attention to her foot, leaving her to wonder what he was actually up to.

"What are you doing?"

"How many times do I have to say it?" Kort retorted in exasperation. "You need to relax."

Apparently his answer to her problem was a massage. Not trusting him or his intent, Kristen tried to remain as stiff and defiant for as long as she could. Her resistance didn't last longer than it took those magical hands to work their way down to the arch of her foot. Those fingers knew just how to rub every muscle so that it melted into a soft puddle of sweet tingles.

Sighing, Kristen gave over to the blissful thrills dancing up her leg as his rough, callused touch slid higher. The warmth of his palms soothing over her ankle had her eyes drifting closed as the heat spread out and up, covering her in a cocoon of delight. She deserved this, Kristen decided, becoming intoxicated by the pleasure, unable and unwilling to mount any defense against it.

The only whimper of complaint that slipped over her slack lips came when his fingers brushed over the sensitive flesh of her inner thigh. The soft caress ignited the tendrils of desire pooling in her pussy to a flash fire that flooded her channel with molten need to feel more than just his touch

scraping along the insides of her legs.

Kristen wanted to feel the rough press of his thighs against hers, to be stretched back over his thick cock while he rode every bit of tension and reservation from her mind and body. Unable to form the words to give voice to her need, Kristen let her leg go lax in his grip, allowing her thighs to spread as she issued the most primitive of invitations to Kort.

The contrary man ignored her silent request, abandoning her leg altogether to start anew on her other foot. Disappointed, but not entirely convinced he'd truly denied her, Kristen lifted her lids enough to let her gaze through her lashes and study Kort. His whole focus centered on his hands gliding over the curve of her instep and paying no attention to the parts of her body aching for his touch.

Her drowsy mind fumbled over that fact, trying to make sense of Kort's actions. The man had been looking like he wanted to devour her since they'd first met. He'd certainly made no secret of what drove his interest in her. Then why wasn't he taking advantage?

She waited, the anticipation stirring the need into a painful ache as his touch slowly crept higher. Each firm stroke of his hands released more tension from her tired muscles, the heavy sensation rolled up her leg, swelling over her cunt lips and making her cream all the more.

There was no way Kort could miss that signal, not with the need slickening a path straight toward her pussy. Kristen knew he'd gotten the message. That much was clear in the way he avoided touching any part of her desire.

Cracking her eyes open again, she glared up at him when he released her leg to flop back to the bed. Kristen intentionally let it fall wide, giving him a full-access pass, but Kort's gaze remained fixated on hers and didn't wander the way it should have.

"Roll over."

"Don't wanna." Kristen smiled and stretched, assured she could break his control by letting her shirt slide up over her ass. When she looked again, his eyes had dropped to just where she wanted. "Come here."

That husky command had Kort growling, his knees bending onto the bed in a move that left Kristen expecting to feel the heavy weight of his muscles as he mounted her. Instead Kort's hard fingers dug into her hip and flipped her onto her stomach in such a rush that Kristen's gasp got the wind knocked out of it as she found herself facedown in the mattress.

"I'm not going to mess with you tonight because we both know come morning you'll hold it against me. So don't even try to tempt me, woman, or I'll beat this ass so red it burns."

It could only be the incredible narcotic effect of his damn musk that made Kort's threat sound like a come-on. Her ass heated under the weight of his palm, tingling with the sudden need to feel the punishing sting of his anger because Kristen remembered exactly where that led.

It was a ride so wild and wicked she couldn't help but arch her hips in a small press back against his hand. The invitation earned her a delightful smack as Kort responded instantly with a snap of his wrist matched with his barked command.

"Stop it."

"Mmm," Kristen sighed, shifting against him again. "Make me."

"Damnit, Kristen! I'm trying to do right here. Now behave."

Kristen snorted at the indignation making his words sound desperate. He couldn't last much longer. He couldn't honestly want to. "Don't blame me. It's your fault for smelling so good."

"I'm not musking."

That snarled retort popped Kristen's happy bubble. Shifting her head to the side to sniff pointedly at the air, she couldn't deny his statement. Cold reality seeped into her, ruining the moment and giving her the strength to try and shove herself up. Kort pushed her back down, leaving her no more room than to glare at him out of the corner of her eye.

"Well, why aren't you?" The man wanted her. He had to. They were fucking mates, and he couldn't change his mind about that now. "Aren't I supposed to be irresistible to you?"

"You are," Kort snapped back. "But every time the beast puts some dirty image in my mind, I think about it being another woman and it shrinks the dick, sends the wolf whimpering back to its corner."

It took a moment to process that, but when it hit, Kristen found more than enough strength to throw him back. "You're thinking about other women!"

She'd jackknifed, twisting at the waist so she could throw that accusation right in his face. Instead of looking cowed or defensive, Kort bumped his into hers as he roared right back. "How the hell else am I supposed to stop from musking you?"

"I don't know, but you better find another fucking way." Kristen's gaze narrowed as another thought hit her. "And it better not be Gina."

The reddened blush that stained his cheeks had her howling. All the sexual frustration winding her muscles tight erupted in a fiery rush that fueled her anger. Before she could plant either one of her fists in his handsome face, Kort caught her by the wrists. With a jerk and a shove, she found herself facedown in the mattress again. Not about to accept his commands this time, she planted her palms in the bedding and pushed up only to lose all the strength in her arms at the first piercing crack of Kort's palm over her ass.

"That's for blaming me when I don't musk you. And that's for blaming me when I do!"

The sheet smothered Kristen's scream as her other ass cheek lit on fire as his rough palm collided with it. All her rage morphed under the tidal wave of musk that consumed her. It liquefied her resistance into a seething ache that only burned hotter as Kort's palm delivered another stinging slap.

"That's for tempting me when I'm trying to do good. And that's for when you blame this all on me in the morning!"

Kristen lost track of his reasoning after that. None of it mattered, not then with her body singing with a symphony of delight that only vibrated stronger with each crisp lash of pain that shot through her with every slap of his hand. Her ass felt on fire, but her pussy burned hotter, desperate to feel the rough touch of his fingers invading her soft flesh.

With the words lost in the bliss fogging her mind, Kristen couldn't beg or plead for more, but her hips arched, lifting her ass and spreading her cunt open in a primitive invitation for Kort to finish it. He had to because if she didn't get some respite, the ache consuming her might very well be the end of her.

"Damnit, woman," Kort snarled, the pain and torture clear in his tone.

His anger came through in the coarse dip of his fingers right into the core

of her cunt. There was no patience left for sweet explorations or gentle seductive caresses. Forcing her pussy lips wide and pinning them down with the tips of two fingers, he fucked the other three straight into her, hard and deep, making her gasp and buck at the sudden penetration.

Not nearly as thick or thrilling as the treat she'd hoped for, the sensitive walls of her cunt still clung to his fingers as they rasped over her flesh, igniting spirals of ecstasy that popped and danced up her spine. It might not have been enough to send her screaming into an orgasm, but the pressure was still more than Kristen thought she could stand.

Unable to resist the ceaseless pump and pull of those broad digits, Kristen's hips began swaying as she tried to fuck herself hard enough against his fingers to find the release just out of reach. The whirling pool of molten desire keeping her spiraling within its grip warmed, taking out the hard edges of Kort's body as it covered hers.

Her skin prickled with the sensation as her cunt clenched in weeping anticipation for the moment his touch would abandon her channel, giving room for the smooth, heated flesh of his cock to stretch her as wide as she needed to go. Then his fingers slipped from her, and her breath caught as the mattress dipped beside her cheek, compressed by the weight of Kort's arm braced to hold himself above her.

"I just want you to remember in the morning, you started this."

His growl breathed across her neck, cooling her sweating skin and tickling it as his words stirred her hairs to dance across her flesh. Kristen shivered under the caress and the hard warning behind it. A part of her knew that he had a right to his anger, but mostly she didn't care. Whatever the consequences, this moment was worth it.

"Please, Kort."

She could get no more out. Those words alone tumbled over her tongue, thick and muffled. Unable to assure him, Kristen lured him with the soft grind of her ass against the erection pressing hard and hot against her soft globe. It jerked, slickening with proof of his own desire, and Kristen couldn't help but to tease him with another, more forceful, rub.

Kort snarled and cursed, shifting behind her in a move that planted the enormous bulb of his cock head right into her crease and then followed it all the way down until he'd lodged himself right against the slick opening of her pussy. It was more than Kristen could bear.

Pressing herself deeper into the bed, she arched her back and began to force the tender opening over the bulbous slide of Kort's dick. His cock jerked again, meeting her efforts with a forward surge that popped his thick head through her clenched entrance. Kristen barely had time to savor the sudden delight of being impaled on such a deliciousness before Kort snarled and thrust hard, fucking a scream out of her as he gave her everything she wanted and more all at once.

The man was pissed, and he was taking every bit of his rage out on her poor little pussy. Showing no mercy, Kort intentionally drove her insane with the pleasure, riding her with a hard, furious pace that matched the punishing tempo of the fingers that slid down to trap and torment her clit. Kristen's sanity couldn't last under the relentless lash of rapture being driven straight up her spine by every ferocious thrust of Kort's hips.

The pleasure was too much and not enough. Addicted and unable to control herself anymore, Kristen planted her hands in the mattress and reared up, throwing all the strength she had left into fucking herself back on every ruthless pound of Kort's cock and riding his flesh into the nirvana she knew awaited her.

Then it was there, breaking over her as her whole body tensed and shuddered under the devastating impact. Kristen clung to that second, trying to savor the ecstasy blooming inside of her, but she lost her tentative hold on reality at the feel of Kort's sharp fangs biting down on the sensitive arch where her shoulder met her neck. The slight slice of pain pierced the euphoria bubbling through her, making it explode and multiply in an endless wave of pleasure that had Kristen crying out as her muscles liquefied and she collapsed onto the mattress.

Hours could have passed, though Kristen suspected only minutes had, before the world started to order itself around her. The musky scent of sex, the sweaty stick of the sheets beneath her, her jellified muscles, Kort had fulfilled his promise to help her relax. Kristen could have faded away on the blissful oblivion tugging at her spirit if it hadn't been for the rude, hard shift of Kort's body as he jerked free of hers.

The sudden sparkles his thick cock ignited as it whipped out left Kristen murmuring an objection, wondering if she could go another round given how very satiated she felt right then. Not that it would be up to her. The decision lay with the strong fingers forcing her to roll over on her back.

Kristen didn't offer any resistance, didn't even bother to try and keep her thighs from falling open in submission to whatever wicked thing Kort intended. Whatever he did, she knew it would feel good, possibly even better than. Even with features hardened into a scowl and his cock flushed such a deep red it looked almost purple in its demand. Actually, it looked kind of painful, and it began to dawn on Kristen that Kort hadn't found the same release she had.

"Will you look at my dick?" Kristen couldn't take her eyes off it or the burgeoning worry that it might take all night to work the starch out of Kort's cock. "Now the damn thing ain't never going to go down!"

Kort snapped that at her before turning on his heel and storming out of her bedroom, in the exact opposite direction Kristen had expected him to head. She stared blankly at the door that had slammed shut behind him, wondering if he would be coming back through and what kind of toys he'd be carrying. As the seconds ticked into minutes, Kristen began to realize he'd left for good.

For some strange reason that made her smile. Snatching up the edge of the covers to pull them over herself as she stretched back out on the mattress, Kristen shared her gloat with the ceiling. After everything Kort had done to her, she couldn't muster the most miniscule grain of guilt at his condition.

Maybe tomorrow she'd feel bad or angry, given he'd once again invaded her bedroom uninvited. Right then, though, Kristen let the joy filling her wash away all concerns and carry her off into a well-earned night of peaceful slumber.

Chapter 15

Kristen watched Richard Payne disappear through the door until the heavy metal snapped closed and a big, barrel-chested deputy stepped in front to block the path. They would be transporting him back to the county jail, along with the rest of the men who hadn't made bail that morning. The thought of the kindly, old grandfather like Mr. Payne in prison weighed heavily on Kristen's shoulders.

It didn't help that she'd honestly fought to keep him from spending another night in prison, which is what made watching him leave all the harder. Of course, it could have helped if she'd more than five seconds to look over the case before having to argue bail.

Not that her gut needed all those details to know one thing for certain. Richard Payne was not guilty. The man couldn't move without something

creaking and cracking. She highly doubted he'd managed to wield an assault rifle and then make a speedy getaway lugging a duffel bag full of money.

Even if he wasn't directly guilty, that didn't mean he hadn't conspired or assisted in the crime. Mr. Payne insisted he had no memory of the past two weeks, which either made him a liar or crazy. Kristen leaned toward insanity. That thought had hit her when she'd first introduced herself and Mr. Payne retorted that he'd been expecting her. Apparently, God had told him He would send an angel to save him from this devil's game.

The longer conversation they'd had in the back hall while the rest of the accused had their moment before the judge hadn't gone any better. According to Mr. Payne, God had led him to Charleston to find his son, Steven, whose soul had been taken from him by the devil. That's why all this was happening. Satan didn't want Mr. Payne to save his boy.

That had perked up Kristen as she considered whether Steven could be involved in his father's legal troubles. It had also had her wondering if maybe Richard Payne wasn't a complete fruitcake. Either way, Kristen wouldn't be railroading the kind old man, though she felt the urge to drive something heavy over Lilly for screwing with him.

Not that God had warned Richard about that sinner. Mr. Payne didn't recognize Lilly's name, which left Kristen wondering if his son would. Figuring all that out technically wasn't Kristen's job. Her only goal was to get Richard Payne off on all charges. The quickest route Kristen could see to that outcome would be simply proving the man didn't have the strength to commit the crime.

If the prosecutor wanted to try and claim Mr. Payne was an accomplice, then Kristen would get into Mr. Payne's mental status. It wouldn't be too hard to convince a jury the man didn't know what he'd gotten himself into. Either way, Kristen felt confident she'd win.

That didn't mean she didn't have a lot of work left to do. Packing up her notes, Kristen headed toward the lobby, her mind spinning as she considered her next move. She'd almost made it all the way to the main exit before Kristen realized she'd picked up a shadow.

Turning to look over her shoulder, Kristen's gaze connected with the dark glowers of Kort's. He looked as miserable and pissed as he had that morning over the breakfast table. Actually, that was the same expression he'd worn last night when he'd stormed from her bedroom. Kristen could guess what kept Kort's scowl in place. While she'd woken up feeling as good as she had when she'd passed out, he'd obviously woken up harder

than he'd been last night when he'd failed to take his pleasure.

No, not failed, Kristen corrected herself. Kort had held back on purpose and not because he feared she'd be mad at him in the morning if he didn't. He'd been making a point, proving that she could trust him to control himself no matter what. The message had been received, but it didn't earn him any sympathy.

Just the opposite, knowing he suffered kind of improved her day. Strangely, it also made her want to push, to see just how much control Kort actually had. Turning, she marched right up to Kort, not stopping until the rounded front of her heels almost kissed the lip of his scuffed work boots. Kristen lifted her chin to meet his gaze and match his scowl before laying down her accusation.

"You're following me."

She paused, giving him a chance to say some smart-ass thing back, but Kort didn't twitch an inch. In fact he only seemed to grow stiffer before her eyes, not that Kristen would be dissuaded from making her point.

"So much for that trust thing we were supposed to be working on."
Nothing greeted her declaration. Kort didn't even appear to be breathing, which had Kristen sighing. The man was ruining her moment, and she let him know just how exasperated she was with his antics. "So, what? You're not talking to me now?"

"I'm in *pain*."

Kristen couldn't help but glance down at his snarl and become impressed by the size of the bulge making his jeans look uncomfortably tight. That put the smile back on Kristen's face as she dragged her gaze away from that temptation. "Gee, and I'm feeling really good this morning."

"I bet."

"So good, in fact," Kristen continued on, ignoring the snap he took at her as she forced her arm through his and dragged him off the wall. "I'm feeling generous enough to buy you breakfast."

"If you were feeling really thankful, you'd offer to be my breakfast," Kort muttered in complaint, but let her pull him from the courthouse.

"You did a nice thing last night, Kort, don't ruin it now." Kristen chastised him only as a joke, but the man appeared to take it seriously, perking up with a sudden alert that almost made her snicker.

"I did?" He considered that for a moment before breaking into his own grin. "I guess I did, which means you owe me."

"A breakfast," Kristen clarified before he got ahead of himself.

"But I get to order anything I want."

"Off the menu." Kristen felt the need to reiterate her position, not trusting the sparkle lightening his eyes. She might be willing to play nice for the moment, but that didn't mean she'd forgotten what, or who, she was up against.

Kort didn't argue with her, but Kristen didn't exactly feel he'd agreed either from the arrogant saunter that returned to his step. Instead of having to drag him toward the café around the corner, she had to pull him to a stop to let Kort know it was time to stop strutting down the street. And there wasn't any hiding that swagger or its effect on the women they passed.

Kristen gave the evil eye to a set of big boobs pausing to smile at Kort before she turned her glare onto the skinny little hostess who wiggled her ass all the way over to the booth she led them to. All the attention appeared to go unnoticed by Kort. Maybe she should have taken comfort that he wasn't musking, but Kristen didn't.

"What?" Kort straightened up as he lowered his menu. Appearing to pick up on her dark tension, he glanced around the café with a sharp, predatory sweep of his gaze. "Something's wrong?"

"Yeah," Kristen agreed, keeping her gaze locked on her problem. "Why aren't I spread naked across this table, begging you to fuck me?"

That widened Kort's eyes as they snapped back to stare in stunned surprise at her. A second later his hard expression relaxed back into a wide grin. "I don't know, honey. Why aren't you?"

"Because you're not musking me." Kristen growled, annoyed by his good mood. "Which can only mean you're thinking about another woman."

"Or that I wasn't thinking about sex at all," Kort corrected, pausing long enough to drop his gaze down to her breasts. "But now I am."

Kristen cursed as her nose quivered over the suddenly rich scent tinting the air. It didn't go unnoticed by the brunette, even if the stupid human didn't understand why she was suddenly starting to stink herself. The very fact that the other woman got even a slightest bit of pleasure from Kort, no matter his intention, snapped the reins on Kristen's jealousy hard enough to have her kicking him under the table.

"Ow!" Kort winced, hunching forward slightly as he shot her an offended look.

"Stop that," Kristen hissed at him.

Making a show of rubbing his leg vigorously, Kort glared at her over the table. "Fine. All you had to do was ask."

"And don't think about other women."

Straightening up to meet that challenge, Kort's scowl slowly turned thoughtful as his gaze lifted and took on a lost gleam. Slowly the musk receded, supposedly giving Kristen the fresh air she needed to think straight. Her mind, though, couldn't stop obsessing over what might be filling his. It didn't take long for the stress to get to her.

"What are you thinking about?"

"In Iraq, we found this mass grave, had about thirty bodies in it." Kort appeared to weigh that statement before shrugging. "Maybe forty, it's hard to count when they're in pieces."

"Never mind," Kristen cut in before he could elaborate on that story.

As long as he wasn't thinking about screwing the brunette or any other color pussy, she didn't need the rest. Thankfully he didn't have a chance to horrify her with any more when the waitress appeared. She even managed to get through ordering her whole meal without growling over the way the young girl's eyes couldn't seem to stay off Kort.

The tanned teenager didn't even appear to notice Kristen's tension, but Kort did. His grin only grew wider with every word that Kristen managed to ground out. His eyes stayed fixed on her, steady to the point where the message behind it couldn't be missed when he didn't even glance at the waitress as he gave his order and handed off his menu.

Even after the girl disappeared, they remained silent, staring each other down. Kristen waited for Kort to give her any reason to kick him again. She was pretty damn sure he waited for her to give him a reason to let the laughter dancing in his gaze loose. Somebody had to give, and it wouldn't

be her.

"You know," Kort sighed, "it strikes me that you're awfully jealous."

Her big toe collided with the booth wall as she felt the breeze of Kort's legs shifting out of range a second too late. Pain shot up her leg, making her bend over slightly with a wince this time and giving Kort's grin a reason to grow.

"Oh, no, honey." Kort shook his head at her. "There ain't going to be any more kicking me today. Jakob did enough bruising last night to make my shins sore. Now let's get back to this you being jealous thing."

"I am not jealous," Kristen snarled. "I'm annoyed, note the difference."

"You know you don't have any reason to be," Kort retorted as if she hadn't disagreed. "There is only one woman in this whole world who I'd like to be buried balls deep in for the rest of my life."

"That's disgusting."

"Then why you getting wet?" Kort leaned in to take a sniff of her side of the table. "Sweet, creamy pussy just aching to be fucked. That's you, right? Or is it some other cunt teasing my dick with—" "Ow." Kristen grunted, missing Kort a second time.

"You sure you're not jealous?"

"No. I'm pissed because it is rude to flirt," Kristen snapped. "And it's even ruder to gloat over it."

"I'm not flirting." There went Kort's smug look, replaced by pure masculine outrage. "I'm not encouraging anybody to make any move but you, honey."

"It doesn't stop them from trying to encourage you."

"That's not my fault." Enough indignation colored Kort's deep tone to make the gravely words pierce Kristen's own righteous anger, but she'd come too far to simply fold. It wasn't like she could make a bigger ass out of herself, so she might as well own her position.

"I. Don't. Care."

Those three crisp words appeared to throw Kort, leaving him stuttering for a second before he settled into a scowl. "You're a crazy lady, you know

that?"

Maybe, but the one good thing about their waitress was that she had the kind of timing Kristen could appreciate. Both of them forced on polite smiles and nods as the scrawny little thing settled their drinks down onto the table. Kristen relaxed as she took note of the teen's undeveloped body. Kort would not only have to be scum, he'd have to be sick-in-the-head scum to be interested in that immature figure.

The brunette, though, was all curves. From her perfectly groomed hair down to her expensively stylish shoes, she had both sex appeal and class. What she lacked, though, was balls. Capturing the woman's gaze for barely a second, Kristen managed to give her a toothy enough grin to help the brunette keep her eyes from wondering anymore.

It was a gesture not lost on Kort or unappreciated by the big jerk. Back to grinning, he cocked a brow at Kristen when she finally turned her attention back to him. "You done now?"

"Yes, and I'm not jealous."

"No. Of course not."

"I'm not."

"And that woman didn't just piss in her panties a little." Kort stiffened up the second the words hit the air. "Don't kick me."

"Don't mess with me."

"You know, honey, you're looking a little tense."

"Kort—"

Kristen sighed and closed her eyes on his smile. If she was crazy, then it was his fault because he was steadily driving her insane with that grin. He conveyed so much with that simple smile. It could go from amused to smug to seductively wicked in seconds. Each one pulled her emotions in totally opposite directions until he had her spinning, unsure of what she felt.

"I think you need to relax."

"And perhaps you should remember the last time you tried to help me relax you ended up in pain."

"It was worth it."

Kristen's eyes popped open at that soft whisper, unsure she'd heard him right, but there could be no denying the soft tenderness calming Kort's gaze as he reached across to brush his thumb over her cheek.

"Don't you know, honey, there isn't any pain I wouldn't endure or any challenge I won't meet to have you any way I can."

Kristen blinked, trying to smother the warmth spreading out from where his palm cupped her cheek. So light and gentle, his touch, his words melted through her defenses, leaving her desperate to find something to stop herself from going all soft beneath his persuasion.

"What about Jakob?"

Kort's snort broke the moment, and he released her to stretch back into his booth. "That boy's going to have to figure his own way into your pants. I classify that as not my problem."

Kristen almost laughed, but caught herself in time. "You're twins. That's supposed to be 'united we stand, divided we fall."

"Sure, if your twin is a girl," Kort agreed easily. "But if you have a brother, then it depends on whether falling means landing between your sweet thighs. That alters the entire equation."

"You're hopeless."

Kristen didn't bother to take him to task for his coarse summation, figuring it would only be a waste of time. The man was old enough to know better, and the fact that he didn't meant he didn't want to. There would be no hope in changing him now, not that Kristen wanted to. Everybody had a right to be who they were, even Kort.

"No. I am determined," Kort corrected her, bringing his heat and hardness stretching back across the table. "Just to be clear on this, honey, whenever you feel a little tense, you come to me. I'll ease every damn worry out of your body, and Jakob never has to know."

"And what about you?"

She shouldn't have asked that. Kristen should have taken a deep breath, reached for reason, and dismissed his offer without a second of

consideration. To do anything else had only resulted in that sexy curl returning to his lips, matched by the deepening timbre of his husky whisper.

"You show you trust me by giving yourself over completely to my command and I'll prove you can trust me by keeping the dog on the leash." His smile gentled as his gaze softened. "It's like I said, honey, any pain, any challenge. I'd do anything for you."

"That's an omelet with cheddar, ham, bacon, onions, peppers, and mushrooms with a double side order of sausage, along with your pancakes and grits."

They broke apart as plate after plate started dropping down onto the table, most of them piling up around Kort. Despite the rudeness that clearly indicated that Miss Jail-Bait was disappointed to find out that Kort was Mr. Not-Interested, Kristen welcomed her sudden appearance. Things had gotten a little too deep for her taste, and as the waitress disappeared to bring more food, Kristen intentionally focused on what Kort had ordered.

"Jesus, Kort. You eating for two?"

He smirked at that. "Don't worry, I work it off."

Her eyes rolled, reading into that comment a lewdness she'd grown to expect from him. Kort took exception to the gesture.

"No, really. My job is very physical."

"I didn't disagree." Kristen defended herself before giving his words any real consideration. He did look fit, and she knew from intimate experience that went beyond most male wolves' normal strength. She'd assumed that was a Covenanter trait, given they all seemed heavily bulked up on muscle, but even by that comparison Kort was harder.

"So what is your job? Construction?" She could see him with a jackhammer, all sweaty and rippling.

"I teach night maneuvers."

"Night maneuvers?" Kristen repeated. That sounded very military and dangerous. Not that she got a chance to ask. Looking up to nod her thanks at the waitress as she placed her one and only plate down, Kristen waited for her to finish serving the food before pestering Kort for an explanation.

"We train private soldiers, and my specialty is in teaching them how to sneak up on a target in full darkness." Kort added nearly a pound of salt to his food while he explained, amazing Kristen at how rotten his diet actually was.

"So I can eat almost anything," he went on as if reading Kristen's mind. "As a matter of course we run ten miles a day, and that's before going out on maneuvers. Now you jealous?"

"No," Kristen answered succinctly, not about to get dragged back into that conversation. "And just because you exercise doesn't mean you can eat whatever you want. Fit people die of heart attacks all the time."

"Oh, how sweet." Kort offered her a fake smile. "You're starting your wifely nagging duties before tending to any others. I tell you what, honey, when you're living in my house, sleeping in my bed, and servicing all my other needs, then I'll eat whatever no-fun, no-taste diet you want to put me on."

"Just because food is good for you doesn't mean it isn't any fun or has no taste," Kristen shot back, but felt her cheeks color as Kort's gaze pointedly dropped to her plate. "Wheat toast tastes good."

"If you say so." But Kort didn't look like he honestly agreed. He did look a little concerned, though, as he glanced from her food to her breasts. "You, uh, aren't on a diet, are you, honey?"

"No."

"Then how you keep all those curves so luscious without any fat?"

Kristen rolled her eyes at the concern coloring his voice. "I come by them naturally. A little fat goes a long way." He still didn't look convinced, making Kristen sigh. "And I already ate breakfast, or don't you remember?"

"Oh." That brightened Kort's eyes back up as he turned his attention toward his own meal. "Forgot."

For the next several minutes, he appeared to forget about her altogether, digging into his food with the kind of appreciation Kristen hesitated to interrupt. Only once he'd devoured nearly half of everything and came up for a breath did he even glance at her. He paused over the lip of his glass to scowl at something over Kristen's shoulder.

"Oh, crap."

Turning and fully expecting to find herself confronted by another Gina-like bimbo, Kristen was pleasantly surprised when she saw her brother bearing down on them. Already anticipating Derek would be joining them, she slid over to make room for him.

"Hey, what are you doing here?" Kristen's greeting held nothing but delight as Derek paused for a second and then dropped onto the seat beside her.

"I thought I'd join you for breakfast."

"You're a little late." Kort grunted before rudely pointing out, "We're just about done here."

"That's okay, I already ate," Derek shot back, showing too much teeth with his smile.

Kristen glanced from the two men trying to stare each other down. The threat of violence thickened with every breath they took, assuring one false move would end in disaster. Just like last night, Kristen felt nervous, uncertain of how to diffuse the situation. It had to get better because she would neither be giving up her brother nor, apparently, her mates.

"So," Kristen sighed, feeling awkward and uncertain of what to say. "How did you find us?"

That drew Derek's scowl her way. His features softened with his shrug even though he remained tense. "I tried calling you, but when I didn't get through. So, I called Peter."

"Peter?" That brought Kort's scowl her way, but unlike her brother, his expression hardened. "Peter who?"

Thankfully, Derek completely ignored Kort's interruption and gave Kristen the cover she needed to do the same. "He said you'd picked up a new case and had to be in court, so I figured when I couldn't find you there, you'd be here."

"Peter who?"

Derek tensed, growling at the demand clear in Kort's raised tone. Before he could say anything that Kristen might regret, Kristen kicked him, making Derek grunt as he shot her an annoyed glance. She gave him back the look, not caring what Kort read into it. Anything would be better than the truth.

"Peter nobody." Derek shrugged, caving to Kristen's silent warning.

"Why don't I believe that?"

"I guess because you're not as dumb as you look." Derek smirked. "So you want to tell me about this new client?"

Kristen rolled her eyes, well accustomed to Derek's nosy and bossy nature when it came to any and every detail of her life. Normally she'd have told him "no," but right then Kristen needed to keep the conversation going before Kort got a chance to dominate its direction.

The summary of Mr. Payne's current dilemma did appear to mellow Kort's temper a little. He even managed to participate a little, though Derek continued to try and antagonize him. Kristen couldn't do anything about Derek's big-brother attitude. It was just something Jakob and Kort would have to grow accustomed to handling.

She had more hope today than she had last night that they could manage. Kort appeared to, even if he didn't relax. At least he ignored Derek's taunts and appeared genuinely interested in her case. Kort even offered to help find Steven Payne, which Kristen thought was sweet, if a little patronizing. That was still a hell of a lot better than her twin's "I control the universe" attitude.

"Don't waste your time." Derek grunted. "I'll find Steven for her."

"That's very sweet," Kristen cut in before Kort could take offense. "Of both of you, but I don't need to find him. What I need to do is get back to the office."

"Yeah," Derek sighed and stretched before sliding out of the booth. "I got to get moving, too."

"You mean you have real criminals to harass?" Kort asked with not enough innocence to fool anybody.

"I think the word you're looking for is arrest," Derek corrected him with a toothy smile. "And trust me, I'm just waiting to convince the victim to swear out a statement."

"Well then." Kristen shoved out of the booth, planting herself right between the two men who had reverted back toward growling at each other. Intentionally, she gave her back to Kort, facing her brother in a silent challenge. "Good luck with that."

"l'II—"

"Call me later to catch up," Kristen finished for Derek, knowing he'd intended to insist on walking her to her car. She was back in the middle of the tug-of-war, only she couldn't really walk away from Kort. He was her mate. Derek knew it.

Sighing, he shot Kort another menacing look before giving in with ill grace to Kristen's pointed refusal. "Sure. I'll call, or maybe I'll just show up. I hear JD's still got a few empty bedrooms."

He left that threat hanging over the both of them, strutting off with the kind of authority that drew the other patron's glances. Fortunately for the rest of them, they weren't related to her brother. They didn't have to deal with his macho attitude on a day-to-day basis.

Of course, Kristen had three manly-men all trying to boss her around. While she'd managed to ditch one, she still had another breathing down her back. He wasn't any happier with Kristen than Derek had been, but Kort had his own obsession to harp on. Before Kristen could escape by rushing off, Kort latched on to her arm and forced her around to confront the issue she most wanted to avoid.

"Peter who?"

Kristen sighed, her head banging into the nearest hard wall— Kort's chest. It was so easy to simply wrap her arms around him and soak in his warm strength. Even the vibration of his growl comforted her.

"Peter who, Kristen?"

The man would never let it go, but Kristen still didn't want to deal with that issue right then. She had a good idea of what could distract Kort and give him a chance to vent some of the aggravation she could sense in him.

"You know what, Kort?" Kristen patted his chest and lifted her chin to meet his narrowed gaze.

"I want to know who Peter is," he retorted, unflinching in his position.

"That was a very stressful breakfast."

"And it's about to get more stressful if you don't answer my question. Peter

who?"

"Maybe we could go for a drive," Kristen whispered, offering his scowl a smile.

"And you can tell me who Peter is on the way?"

"And here I was thinking we could just *relax* for a little while. After all, I feel very stiff. How about you?"

Kort blinked, appearing to digest that before his gaze hardened even further. "Stiff, but not dumb enough to think you mean to help me ease that situation."

"But I'd be willing to let you work out some of that anger," Kristen promised. Soft and husky, her voice echoed with the slow burn making her rub against him. He felt good, hard and solid, but Kristen wanted more than a little teasing. She wanted Kort unleashed.

"Any way you'd like."

"Oh, honey," Kort sighed. "You're in for it now. Best you get your ass in my truck before I decide to bend you over one of these tables and tan it in front of all these nice, decent people."

Chapter 16

Lilly sighed as she watched Kristen skipping behind Kort Nickel, trying to keep up with the man's longer, fast-paced rush. She looked happy, and from Kort's expression, Lilly could guess what the two of them were off to do. So much for her plans.

They'd crashed and burned a lot quicker than Lilly had anticipated. Not that she'd honestly expected the uptight Narin to betray her client or go against all the laws of nature and resist her mates. Still, Lilly had hoped Kristen's anger would keep her from caving in to temptation so quickly. Lilly hadn't even gained an extra day to find Payne's wayward son.

Still, Richard Payne hadn't made bail, and it would take Kristen some time to get his case acquitted or thrown out. Hopefully she could find Steven Payne before that happened. Even if she did, though, that wouldn't eliminate the threat Richard posed. While his son might be a complete psycho, Richard still carried the bigger threat.

Not corrupted, Richard Payne was misguided and the perfect tool for her father to use against Lilly. The bastard knew she could honestly touch

Richard. Agakiar had many minions like Steven. He could replace the younger Payne easily and still keep his plans rolling. It would help Lilly if she could figure out exactly what her father was up to.

She'd managed to put some pieces together, but all she could see of the final picture was that it would be bloody. Whatever Agakiar planned to do, he clearly needed a human werewolf mate. That had become clear when she'd tried to destroy the necklace she'd stolen from Samantha McBane. Made of jewel infused with the blood of the Lycan King himself and cursed by elves, it could not be unmade. At least not in this world.

Worse, Lilly could not see into the gem. No matter how many spells she tried, the names of the mates it knew. She would have taken it to Mae, but knew the witch would never agree to touch something so filled with dark magic. Mae had trembled at the sight of it when she'd first seen Samantha wearing it.

Given it had clearly been created to locate and eliminate werewolf mates, Lilly couldn't trust that it wouldn't be ill used by any other she passed it on to. The Lycan Nation would probably keep it safe, but the same could not be said of her. Lilly could not risk them discovering her location.

So it fell to her and her alone to figure out what names Agakiar had and what he intended to do with them. All good questions to ask Steven Payne. If only she could find him before his daddy got released. Lilly didn't need to ask anybody what Agakiar intended to use Richard for.

Sighing over her shitty luck, Lilly popped the clutch into gear and glanced up to check the traffic before easing out on the road. All her motions paused, though, when her gaze collided with one glaring at her over the cascade of glinting car tops filling out the court parking lot. Parked illegally in the shadowy corner of the asphalt lot, Tex McBane sat on his motorcycle, legs braced and holding the bike upright, and staring right at her.

His jeans bulged with interesting shadows as the denim tried to stretch wide over his engorged erection. It was an impressive size, proportional to the rest of his massive frame. The arms crossed over his chest only heightened his size and lent strength to the glare he beamed her way. There was no softness or forgiveness in this man.

Even from a distance, she could feel the heat of his building rage and scent the wildness driving it higher. A feral, some part of Lilly had known that the first time she'd ever seen Tex. Laid out, unconscious on the porch steps, she should have left him there to die because now he was going to cause her all kind of problems.

Lilly had enough to deal with right then. Holding back the urge to provoke him, she kept her middle finger bent over the steering wheel and pulled out onto the road. Tex and his brother could follow her all they wanted. Lilly knew how to keep her secrets secret.

Chapter 17

Jakob escaped into the fresh night air, abandoning the dinner still half eaten on his plate back in the dining room. He couldn't go back in there. It didn't matter that he'd spent the better part of the day waiting anxiously to see Kristen again. Or that he'd wasted hours practicing conversations they could have. It was all just too damn hard.

From the moment he'd walked in the front door and breathed in her sweet scent, Jakob had been nothing but hard. Painfully so. Kort's indelicate advice before heading off to work had been to think about sex with other women. Jakob had to admit that it did wonders for shrinking his dick back to a normal size. It also managed to make his guilt inflate to nearly intolerable proportions.

He just felt like such an ass sitting by Kristen at the table while thinking about screwing another woman. But then Jakob didn't know what else to do. Thanks to the stink he'd left in their study, JD and Caleb had forbidden him to use the cologne Kristen had given him. Without something to mask the musk, Jakob didn't have a choice but to do whatever it took to keep from drugging Kristen.

Actually, that wasn't completely true. Jakob had one other option, fleeing. That's what he did. Not that he could hide from Kristen for the rest of their lives. At some point, he'd have to deal with her and her irrational demands.

If only he knew what the hell she really wanted from him. Jakob would give her anything. He'd even be willing to try all his mother's sissy suggestions, but first he'd have to learn to be around her without giving himself a migraine thinking about other women. That would be easily accomplished if the wolf thought it truly possessed its mate.

That wouldn't happen without sex. A lot of sex. If they screwed long enough, eventually the beast would mellow and Jakob would be able to hold a normal conversation with his woman. Of course, Kristen wanted to do everything backward and try to get to know each other first. It made him wish he could take another shot at her brother. Derek should have known better, prepared her for mating. Despite being a werewolf, Kristen obviously had some screwed up ideas.

Those kinds of thoughts didn't help his headache. Trying to push his concerns aside, Jakob breathed deep and let the soft sounds of night lull him into relaxing. He'd no sooner settled into a rocking chair, intent on letting the peace wash through him, when the back door creaked open and his sense rocketed to attention at the sweet lure of his mate.

"Jakob?"

Closing his eyes, he listened to the low shuffle of feet in his direction. With each step Kristen took, more and more blood flooded his balls, making his cock swell and harden as his mind began to spin with images of just the fun they could have out here on the porch. Between the railing and the rocking chairs, Jakob could get creative.

"I saved you a piece of cake." She'd come to a stop beside him, close enough to grab. "I left it in the kitchen, if you want."

* * * *

Jakob's fingers tightened over the chair's arms until the rough wood cut into his skin. "I'm not hungry."

"Oh."

He felt her shift beside him, a soft, teasing breeze of her warmth over his skin that was lost too quickly. Jakob flinched under the torment of staying perfectly still while his mate slipped away. A part of him wanted to chase after her while another prayed for her to leave quickly before his control snapped and he had her pinned on all fours, sobbing for more as he fucked like the savage beast he was.

"Are you mad at me?"

Jakob jerked his head in Kristen's direction, startled by the sound of her voice. Instead of retreating back into the house as he'd anticipated, the damn woman had settled down into the chair not two feet from his, still well within grabbing distance. Almost as quickly as he'd looked, Jakob snapped his gaze back out to the marsh, trying his damnedest to keep from musking the whole front yard.

"Jakob?"

"Look," he growled, unable to last much longer with her so temptingly close, "if you're going to stay there, then I'm going to musk you because it is just too damn hard to control the beast."

There, he'd said it, been as blunt as he could about the problem. Now Kristen could go off on him before leaving him alone to find some kind of peace. She should have gone off on him, should have been as frustrated and high-strung as Jakob, but for some reason her laugh sounded genuine and relaxed.

"It's okay. Samantha told me about how JD got upset over the cologne."

Kristen dug around in her pocket, pulling a small tin from it. "She also gave me this."

"What's that?" Jakob eyed the metal canister, his nose wrinkling when she popped it open, releasing a strong medicinal scent into the air.

"It's something you put under your nose, like this." Kristen smeared a small amount of the waxy substance over her upper lip. "And it helps open your nasal passages or something like that. It doesn't really matter. Now all I can smell is this, so musk away, big boy."

Risking a look at her, Jakob couldn't make sense of the easy smile gracing her lips. She relaxed back into her seat with a sigh, her legs stretching out until her ankles rested on the railing, letting her tip her chair back so she gazed up at the night sky.

"Why are you in such an agreeable mood tonight?" Jakob didn't know what he was suspicious of, but felt certain he should be.

"I don't know." Kristen shrugged and shot him a curious look. "You'd rather I be a bitch?"

"No," Jakob grunted.

Even though it was easier to look at her when he didn't have to fight the attraction, there were still limits on Jakob's willpower. Staring at Kristen too long tested them. Forcing his attention back to the marsh, he took a deep breath, inhaling the sharp scent of her medicinal rub. That jarred him enough to start thinking again.

"I'm just curious," Jakob grouched, settling deeper into his seat. "You were all 'get the hell away from me,' and now you're suddenly asking me about my day. That kind of shift tends to make a man paranoid."

"Well, I had a really bad day yesterday and today, a pretty good one." Kristen paused before tacking on, "Thank you very much for asking."

"Yeah?" Jakob smirked at the reprimand, thankful she didn't seem to have a clue as to the kind of thoughts keeping him preoccupied and forgetting his manners. "What? You win a big case or something?"

"Or something," Kristen agreed. "Then again just working makes me happy."

It wasn't hard to read too far into that quiet qualifier. Then again, Jakob didn't really understand how Kristen's mind worked at all. So he could be completely wrong. The only way to know was to ask. "Is that a subtle hint that you think I'm going to try and stop you from working?"

"Husbands, babies, they tend to disrupt a woman's life." Kristen shrugged, as if stating a fact that couldn't be argued with.

"Or you could say they enhance it."

"They need to be taken care of."

"I don't need you take care of me," Jakob warned, feeling highly insulted to be compared to a helpless infant. "I've managed fine on my own and can continue to do so."

"If you don't need me then why am I here?" Kristen asked, neatly backing Jakob into a corner that had him bristling.

"Would it be that easy for you to pack up and go away?" Jakob decided to change his angle of attack and neatly avoid her question. "You really think you could go on to have a perfectly happy life?"

"Nobody's life is perfectly happy, Jakob," Kristen shot back in exasperation. "I won't be that with or without you, but without you I have my career, my house, my family, and the only pack I've ever known. With you, I got Kort shadowing my every move and have to sit through dinners listening to two ferals make lewd jokes at everybody else's expense."

"That's all your fault." Jakob wouldn't take the blame for their current predicament, at least not full blame. "We could be at home, sweaty and exhausted in bed, but you're the one who insists that we go through this farce—"

"Farce?" Kristen interrupted, straightening up in her seat with full indignation. "You think giving me time to adjust to this situation is pointless?"

"Oh, for Christ's sake, Kristen. This isn't a situation," Jakob snapped. "It's a mating, and you had to have known at some point you'd have one. Why you want to act like it's all new to you is beyond me."

"Because it is," Kristen snarled. "Because as a Narin, I was always supposed to be able to pick out my mate, not get stuck with one like you Covenanters do."

"Stuck?" Jakob repeated, repulsed and amazed at the same time. "You consider yourself stuck with us?"

"Well, aren't I?"

"Okay, let's try it this way," Jakob suggested before she pushed his temper too far with that attitude. "Tell me one thing you think is bad about taking a Covenanter as a mate."

"Babies," Kristen answered instantly and without hesitation.

"Babies?" Now she had him, because Jakob wanted kids. "You don't like babies?"

"No, I like babies," Kristen retorted with clear frustration. "But this isn't like we're talking two kids over the next ten years. I know how much you Covenanter bastards like to breed."

"Well it is a lot of fun to try." Jakob couldn't help but to smile at the very idea, earning him a dour look from Kristen.

"Of course, you guys always go for the twofer event. Twins and twins only, right?"

"And male." Jakob nodded.

"Yeah, great," Kristen sighed, leaning back into her seat. "A house full of males, I'll add that to my list."

"I bet you will." Jakob snorted. "And you should also make a note of the fact that Covenanters don't tend to have many offspring. As much as I might wish to pack our house with twelve sets of little hellions, the most any mate in recent history has given birth to is three sets."

"So that's what? Six kids?"

"You make that sound like a lot."

"Says the man who doesn't have to give birth or give up his job."

Jakob might be annoyed, but he wasn't dense. He'd noticed the theme running through all her answers. "And for the second time, nobody said anything about you having to give up your job."

"What the hell you think is going to happen?" Kristen shot back. "Kort and you are going to stay home to raise the young? Because as their mother, that's not reassuring."

"Have you ever heard of daycare, lady?" Silently, Jakob prayed for patience, because that snotty tone of hers had roused the beast.

The wolf might not understand words, but it got tone and didn't like its mate talking down to him. Females were to be submissive, and if this one didn't understand, the wolf would be glad to show her. Jakob just might let it if Kristen didn't stop smarting off to him. "You can't put pups in daycare," Kristen retorted in that know-itall manner that had Jakob sizing her up. Just one more smart-ass comment and he'd have her bent over that railing before she could gasp for breath.

"We have a den mother that runs the local daycare. Trust me, most mates dump their pups there even if they stay at home. Young Covenanters can have endless energy. It's best to let them work it out on each other. It also begins the pack bonding."

Jakob paused, waiting for Kristen to belittle his explanation and give him every reason to stop being nice. Damn woman didn't, though. Instead of mouthing off, she hesitated, studying him in return before she settled on a response.

"She runs the local daycare?"

"Along with two other female mates." Jakob shrugged, disappointed that she'd failed to tempt him. "So you can see you don't have anything to worry about."

So said the man who wanted her to have six kids. It was too much. Kristen had only started to adjust to the idea that she might be stuck with Kort and Jakob, now he informed her that he planned on filling their house with constant noise and commotion?

That right there had her reconsidering whether she could screw over

Richard Payne. No, she really couldn't, which left her stuck with nothing to do but sigh over her fate. Kristen consoled herself with the grim reminder that just because she knew she'd lose the war didn't mean she couldn't win some battles.

"Okay," she spoke aloud as she came to her decision. "But I'm not having babies one year after the next. We're waiting at least three years between each set."

Kristen sensed Jakob's head snapping in her direction, but kept her focus fixed on the sky, silently battling the wave of musk that rolled over her. Talking about children really seemed to arouse him. The second the subject came up he started smelling so good not even the bracing odor of eucalyptus could stop her from starting to melt in all the wrong ways.

"All right." Jakob's agreement had her blinking, trying to think back to what the hell she'd said. "We'll wait three years, but we're starting right off the bat on the first one."

"Not until I get my schedule cleared," Kristen corrected him instantly, picking the first battle she intended to win. "If we're going to do this, we're going to do it an organized manner."

"It's sex, Kristen." Jakob snorted, reminding her so much of Kort in that moment. "We're not planning the invasion of Normandy."

"I'm not getting off my birth control until I have my schedule cleared," Kristen repeated, choosing not to respond to his obnoxious retort.

"You're on birth control?" Jakob sounded pissed again, which only served to aggravate Kristen's mood.

"Of course."

"Then Kort was right, you were sleeping with somebody. Who?" Jakob didn't sound pissed, he sounded deadly. His soft snarl held a dark menace that assured Kristen he intended to do violence against whoever she named.

"Nobody." That might have been a direct lie, but it was also prudent. She was protecting a life. Given that she didn't intend on carrying on with Peter, it didn't seem fair to let Jakob kill him.

"Then why the hell are you on any kind of control?"

"To help regulate my period, if you must know, Mr. Pushy." Kristen shot that

answer at him with enough indignation to assure that he'd believe it.

"Oh." Like almost every man would, Jakob folded on that answer, obviously not interested in discussing menstruation with her. "Well, all right then."

Kristen almost laughed at the stiff, uncomfortable way he retreated, but didn't want to prod his temper again. Instead she turned her attention back to a conversation where she had more moral right to be outraged than him.

"And I'm not quitting my job. Six months and I'm back at work."

"We're talking about babies again?" Now that sounded hopeful and brought that heady, intoxicating scent wrapping around her.

"We're talking about me continuing to work," Kristen corrected without any bite in her tone.

She didn't feel like getting worked up again, not with that alluring odor easing the tension from her muscles. Even as the stiffness drained from her limbs, it pooled into a frustrating ache in her pussy. Overindulged by the past two days, her greedy cunt started whispering all sorts of wicked ideas through her head.

"And how many times do I have to say that nobody intends to make you quit your job?" Jakob asked, clearly exasperated with her.

The man might be annoyed, but he was still musking. A glance down at his groin confirmed that his interest was a good foot long now and probably causing him all sorts of pain. It could hurt more, though. Kort knew how bad, and Kristen had to wonder if he'd done the nice thing and warned his brother. Given his nature, probably not.

"I guess you're just going to have to keep repeating yourself until I believe you," Kristen answered after a moment, more focused on how to get him into the position she wanted.

"And how long do you think that's going to take?"

"I guess until I trust you," Kristen retorted, enjoying provoking him.

"Seeing as stubborn as you are, that could take forever," Jakob muttered. Shooting her a cross look, he asked a question he clearly expected to get him nowhere. "Isn't there something we could do to speed things up?"

Kristen could have smiled over the gift he handed her, but that would have

raised his suspicions. Instead she scowled and answered with a predictable rejection. "What? You want me to tell you how to make me trust you?"

"You want me to prove it any damn way," Jakob snapped. "Might be quicker if you just told me how."

"Well, I can tell you how not," Kristen shot back with just as much heat. "Don't musk me after you said you promised not to!"

"I told you when you came out here that I couldn't control it," Jakob roared, jerking upright in his seat. "And you said it was all right."

Kristen glared him down, pretending to be cornered before giving in ungraciously. "Fine, you can't control it, but at least prove you can control yourself."

"I am," Jakob growled, jerking his chin toward the railing. "You ain't bent over naked and being tortured into begging for my cock."

"And what if I was?" Kristen whispered, boldly daring him with her words. "What if I begged you to fuck me? Would you be able to stop, to hold back, knowing it wasn't what I really wanted?"

Jakob was quicker than Kort. He didn't even need to be led all the way to the water's edge before he perked up. Unlike his twin, Jakob didn't fall over himself volunteering to give her everything she wanted and take nothing for himself. Instead the dark flush crossing his hardening features assured Kristen that Jakob was building up to blow his top good and hard at any second.

"And will that prove it to you? That you can trust me?"

Even knowing she was fueling the fire that chipped those words out, Kristen didn't try to control her smile. "Actually you'll have to prove it quite a bit. Wouldn't want you to get by on just a few lucky strokes, would we?"

"You made this offer to Kort?"

"Please." Kristen snorted, rolling her eyes. "Like I'd tempt that Neanderthal. He has the patience of a gnat. And you're going to prove that you're trustworthy by making sure he doesn't find out because I don't want to be pestered by him. He's already lewd enough."

She could tell by the way Jakob's eyes narrowed that he didn't like that condition. What Kristen couldn't figure out was whether he objected over some sense of brotherly loyalty or because he sensed the lie in her words. Marshaling her defenses, she stared down his dark look.

"You got a problem with that?"

"I got a problem with the whole damn thing," Jakob snarled. "My hand is itching to tan your hide right about now, and since your ass isn't on fire, I think you should consider that proof."

"I'll consider it a threat," Kristen shot back, thinking it wise to take her leave before Jakob really did go off. "And that only means you'll have to work extra hard to prove that you won't ever hurt me."

That got Jakob to his feet, but Kristen had already made it to the back door. She'd considered it prudent to talk and walk at the same time. Before he could try anything, she slipped back into the kitchen and fled for her bedroom, half wondering if he'd follow and for just what reasons. Of course when she made it to her own room safely, Kristen couldn't help but be disappointed that Jakob hadn't come up with any reasons.

Chapter 18

Kristen trotted off toward her bathroom, telling herself she only cared because Jakob had denied her revenge. If he didn't play, she couldn't make him suffer. Kristen wanted him to suffer, to be brought to his knees by the same lust that shattered her very willpower to resist it. It only seemed fair that Jakob be at the mercy of the same relentless need she was.

He'd forced her into this mating with the claim that he couldn't help himself. Where was that motivation now? Maybe he didn't want to want her. That startling revelation instantly angered Kristen. They sure as hell better like her because she wouldn't turn her life upside down for two men who didn't.

Actually, given she'd been the one to sacrifice her home and her pack, they owed her nothing short of a declaration of love delivered on bent knees. That probably would never happen, Kristen conceded as she slipped into her nightshirt. Still, some kind of show of affection would be nice.

Be a hell of a lot better than being ignored, Kristen grumbled to herself. Now she had nobody and nothing to do, but maybe work. As much as Kristen loved her job, she didn't exactly feel in the mood to focus on

anything too complicated right then. Pulling on her robe, Kristen shuffled out of the bathroom intent on plopping her ass down in front of the boob tube and vegetating.

"Let's get one thing straight, cupcake," Jakob growled, appearing from behind the door she'd just shoved open. "I don't like being toyed with."

Before Kristen could comprehend his sudden appearance or the anger sharpening his words, Jakob latched on to the collar of her robe and jerked it free, sending her crashing onto the bed.

"Now you tell me I get to play," he snarled, rubbing a possessive hand over her ass. "But with no fucking. Now do you really think that's going to go well for you?"

It seemed to be going pretty damn good already by Kristen's estimation. Deciding not to give Jakob the fight he appeared to want, she tried to unman him instead by tempting him with more than she knew he could take. Planting her elbows in the comforter, Kristen arched her spine, raising her ass and sending her nightshirt rolling down her back. She could feel the cool night air caressing the heated folds of her pussy and slid her legs wider to make sure he could see every intimate detail of her offered flesh.

"I never meant to imply you couldn't fuck me." Kristen cast a smile over her shoulder to go along with that purr. "You just can't come."

Their gazes locked, clashing in a silent battle that tipped in Kristen's favor as the heady scent of Jakob's musk began to overwhelm her inhibitions. His hesitation would normally have left Kristen feeling like a fool, but with that intoxicating aroma drugging every one of her concerns, Kristen found the boldness to reach down and give ease to her own aching flesh.

"Or maybe I'll just take care of it myself," Kristen whispered.

Slipping her fingers between her slick folds, she found her clit. Knowing just how to rub the tender bud so that the ache in her pussy only sweetened, Kristen rolled the sensitive flesh under her finger in slow, hypnotic circles. Combined with the thickening scent of Jakob's arousal, the pleasure flowing through her went deeper than a simple physical sensation.

Strangely comforted and satisfied despite the ache slowly tightening the walls of her cunt, Kristen sighed, melting down into the bed. A glance back over her shoulder found Jakob glaring down at her cunt while his fist pumped his own slickening cock. The sight of his engorged dick pointing right at her caused an echoing ripple of need to course through her pussy, sending a thick wave of cream running down her thigh.

Jakob's nostrils flared, his gaze narrowing, and Kristen could see his fingers flex, strangling his cock for a second. Whatever control held him back, she dared to snap it. Leaving her clit alone, Kristen used her fingers to spread her pussy lips wide, arching her back even more until her hips tilted in the perfect angle for him to step up to the edge of the bed and mount her. Then she challenged him with a smug smile Kristen knew would break his hold.

"Aren't you going to prove to me I can trust you?"

Jakob snarled and surged forward, releasing his cock to grip her hips. Kristen's fingers fell away from her folds as all thoughts of the game or any kind of revenge disappeared under the exquisite pressure of his inflamed cock head pressing on the core of her cunt. Then the heat seared over the walls of her pussy as they stretched wide over the satiny grind of Jakob's hard dick impaling itself full-length into her cunt with one brutal thrust.

A scream tore out of her throat at his sudden penetration. The high-pitched sound clenching as her fingers tightened on the sheets before a rapturous spasm washed away the sudden tension. It came back with the long, sensual slide of Jakob's cock retreating, leaving her pussy spasming frantically over nothing but air. Her moan of denial twisted back into a shriek as he hammered himself deep into her.

"You can trust me, Kristen." Jakob's snarl breathed hot and husky over her shoulder as his chin dipped down to leave his lips whispering against her ear. "You can trust that you're going to regret playing with me."

Kristen didn't think so, but didn't argue the point when his arms lifted and he straightened up. With his feet planted on the floor, he had all the leverage he needed to drive Kristen's breathless groans into squeals time and time again. If she could have caught her breath, she would have laughed with the joy of riding out the glorious storm of hip-pounding thrusts Jakob threw at her as he fucked her good, hard, and deep into the mattress.

He took her with a savagery that only fueled Kristen's own primal urge to be possessed, owned, and mastered. Lost in the euphoric rush of being free of all control, Kristen felt herself get swept away by the orgasm that crashed through her, the force and pleasure magnified by her own submission. Kristen screamed out Jakob's name as the impact of her release held her tense for barely a second before her body succumbed to the writhing spasms that tore through her.

Collapsing against the mattress, Kristen sighed. Savoring every wicked thrill blissfully curling over her, she lost sense of time or reality until the sensations slowly ebbed, leaving her wiped out on the bed like a boneless doll. In comparison Jakob felt hard, stiff, and still thick as he filled out her pussy.

The fullness that had recently brought her such delight now mildly irritated her as it forced the still-shuddering walls of her cunt to continue to dance with a pressure Kristen didn't have the energy to enjoy right then. Burrowing deeper into the comforter in a subtle withdrawal, Kristen gave Jakob a more pointed hint when she yawned.

"Thank you. That was very niceeeeee..."

Kristen's whispered gratitude ended with a shriek as she found herself suddenly jerked straight. Slamming into the hard chest that curved down to meet her, the wind slipped from her throat in a gasp as the world rotated around her. Before she could recover her breath, her heart stopped, seizing her lungs as Kristen found herself suddenly sitting straight up.

He'd rolled her with such speed, she didn't have time to brace herself for the sudden impact of being impaled on Jakob's lap. With her ass nestled into his groin and her legs trapped between his steelhardened thighs, there was no room for the swollen cock now stretching her pussy to full capacity.

Kristen worked to get air into her lungs, trying desperately to adjust spirally spikes of pleasure so sharp it almost hurt to endure. It was too much for her satiated body to accommodate. The dark curl of Jakob's snarl told her he knew and didn't care, intent on forcing her to enjoy every wicked torment he could think up.

"This is the problem with your plan," Jakob growled, one hand shifting from her hip to her back. The gentleness of his palm pressing against her didn't disguise the strength and determination as he bent her forward. "I don't get to come. I don't exactly have any reason to stop, do I?"

"Oh," Kristen moaned, more than hearing the threat in his words. With every whispered one, she dipped another inch, the motion tightening her cunt around his cock and making it bend with her. The steel-hardened dick didn't budge without protest, shifting and rubbing against her tender walls until nearly his full weight ground down on the sweetest spot of all.

"Jakob, please," Kristen gasped, trying to gulp in air as her tired body roused, tense and frustrated by the pleasure swamping back through her.

"Yeah, that's what I'm here to do." Jakob growled, a dark and dangerous

sound that matched the ruthless intent of his fingers forcing themselves between her thighs. "I'm here to please you. All night long."

Kristen's eyes nearly bugged out of her head as those three little last words sank in. Then she forgot to fear the torment coming as it arrived in the form of a callused fingertip pressing down into her slit to trap her clit beneath its hard press. With one roll, he made her hips jerk and the cock buried inside her thump against the wall of her pussy, unleashing a spasm of delight that raced from her cunt right up her spine to leave her head whirling with sparkly bubbles of joy.

"Oh, yeah," Kristen sighed, finding a smile. "This is worth staying up for."

* * * *

Apparently, Jakob didn't appreciate her good mood because it made him snarl. Suddenly, she was whipped back up against his chest, his knees hooking under hers to spread her cunt wide. The motion felt delicious, but it left her aching for the overwhelming fullness the other position teased her with. The only thing that could have been better would be for Kort to be there, fucking her ass and making her howl from the decadence of riding two cocks at once.

There was one way to get more out of the moment, egg Jakob's temper on. A feat that wouldn't be hard for Kristen to pull off. All it took was a giggle and little teasing. "Wouldn't this position be better in front of a mirror?"

"Still full of sass. How about now?"

Jakob snapped a second before his palm slapped down right over the sensitive folds of her pussy. Stretched wide by his cock, there wasn't a single inch of her tender flesh that wasn't exposed to the sudden explosion of heat that rocked her cunt with a shudder of painful delight.

"What you got to say about that?"

Kristen licked her lips and arched her hips in a plea that matched the moan falling from her lips. "More."

Jakob grunted, a sound that got lost in the high note Kristen hit as the heel of his hand cracked over her clit, making it burn and tingle all at once. The sensation bloomed through her body, leaving her twisting and panting between blows as Jakob took her right to the edge of a second climax.

"Please, Jakob, just one more."

Kristen begged him now, unconcerned with anything but the mindless need to reach the release so near she could feel its sharp edges clawing at her body. The flash of rapture didn't come, leaving her groaning in denial. The sound twisted into an endless moan as Jakob's knees released her, only to smash them back together, and suddenly she was being bent back over.

"Hands on the floor, cupcake," Jakob growled, his own fingers forcing her so low that Kristen had little choice but to catch herself before she toppled over and right off the cock keeping her dream of an orgasmalive. "That's it, darling. You're going to work for your treat."

Before those words could even make sense, Jakob's hand thrust between the tight V of her legs and captured her clit, still throbbing from his paddling. Jakob didn't treat her tender bud any gentler this time, but began massaging it with rough, relentless rolls of his finger. Kristen jerked under the brutal lash of pleasure, making the dick inside her jerk and pound against the stretched wall of her cunt.

The motion unleashed whorls of euphoric delight, giving her enough determination to lift up on her tired arms, enough so Kristen could lift her hips and pump the silk-covered cock filling her right over the magical spot that made her eyes roll back and drool gather around the edges of her lips.

"Oh, baby," Jakob groaned, driving her motions wilder with the merciless grind of his finger. "Go on and fuck me. I think I might get this little clit pierced and make you ride me like this all over again. Next time in front of a mirror."

Kristen had no idea what Jakob said, but the husky pant of his voice curled around her like a caress, freeing her of all worries as his cock hit her special spot one last time and ecstasy blasted through her. With no breath left to scream, Kristen gasped out her pleasure, feeling her whole body tense and tremble under the awesome weight of a soul-deep release.

The sensation was almost immediately followed by bone-deep tiredness. She probably would have collapsed right there and toppled to the floor if Jakob's hands hadn't caught her. Shifting his grip to her hips, he snarled.

"I don't think so, cupcake. We ain't done yet."

Kristen found she did have the ability to still scream when Jakob lifted her

until the bulbous head of his cock stretched the clenched muscles of her opening. Then, barely giving her the time to draw a breath in, he slammed her back down his length, dousing the dying embers of her last release with a bolt of pure fuel.

Her eyes watered, running over with tears that spilled down her cheeks as her mate forced her to ride him fast and furiously, driving her exhausted body back into a writhing fit of endless need. With her fingers digging into his legs, she tried to find the strength in her arms to brace herself for the constant flow of pounding thrusts, but it was hopeless. Kristen had nothing left to fight off the lust consuming her, not even the strength to cry out as another orgasm crested over her.

Out of breath, out of strength, and out of any ability to defend herself for whatever Jakob planned next, Kristen could only pray that he intended to settle her into the bed for a nice long nap as he lifted her clear of his still-hard shaft. Being turned in midair didn't alarm her sleepy senses.

They preferred to rejoice at being lowered back onto the mattress until she landed only half stretched out on the soft bedding. Her lower half draped over the sharp ridges and hard planes of Jakob's chest, her knees butting up against his arms and his hot breath teasing the moist lips of her pussy.

"Jakob?" Kristen whispered through the alarms ringing in her head. "W ...wha...what—"

"Suck it up, cupcake." Jakob's sharp-edged voice cut through her stutters like a blade through butter.

The strength and conviction in his tone stood in stark contrast to the weak wobble of her own, a reflection of the differences in their bodies. While Jakob remained tense, his motions full of constrained aggression, Kristen couldn't muster the smallest amount of energy to try and squirm away or even resist the hands holding her hips over his head.

Even her mind had turned to jellified mush, unable to catch a thought much less rally any kind of response to see herself freed. All she could muster was a whimpered plea at the first brushing kiss of his lips over the folds of her pussy.

"Please," the word whispered out of her as Kristen's tired body began to tense anew.

"Yep," Jakob whispered. "That's what this is all about. Pleasing you. Now

spread them legs wider, baby, and let's see how many orgasms it takes to make you pass out."

It took eight. Eight straight climaxes, not counting the ones Jakob had gifted her before his control had almost snapped and he had to shift from wearing out her pussy with his dick to tormenting her with his tongue. By far, pulling his throbbing cock out of her tight cunt had been the most difficult challenge Jakob had ever faced.

Actually, the second most difficult because Kristen made a tempting picture spread out over her sheets, naked and vulnerable. All he had to do was take the plunge. Even if she woke up, Jakob knew she wouldn't be complaining. It had been nearly a half hour since Kristen had been capable of forming coherent words.

Of course, that wouldn't last. Come tomorrow she'd find some nasty ones for him if Jakob gave in to the urge and broke their agreement. It would be what she deserved for putting him through this hell. That's exactly where Jakob had ended the night, with his balls rock hard and feeling like they were filled with tiny shards of glass that made every movement a painfully horrifying experience.

Not that he hadn't known it was coming. From the moment she'd made her offer on the porch, Jakob could see what Kristen intended. It wouldn't be enough to simply prove to her that he could control himself. The woman wanted him to suffer.

Well, she'd gotten her wish. If he hadn't been in so much pain, Jakob might have admired how Kristen had managed to come up with a revenge that was neither bloody nor deadly but immeasurably more painful. A very feral part of him did take pleasure in how clever his mate was.

It wasn't in the wolf's nature to forgive. When it hurt, it lashed out. Too easily that impulse could turn destructive, but Kristen had instead chosen to be productive. As much as it might test every bit of his strength to deny himself, Jakob could see the positive in the fact that she let him touch her.

Kristen wouldn't, if she didn't already trust him, already desire him. Whether she knew it or not, any intimacy they shared would only tighten the bond between them. It shouldn't take too long for her to grow tired of this game, to ache with the kind of completion that would only come when she held both Kort and him deep within her body, all three of them finding release at the same moment.

Of course, Jakob smirked, that desire would overwhelm her a lot more quickly if he stopped by his house tomorrow for some toys that really taught her how unsatisfying a regular old climax could be. Whatever it

took, no matter how badly he suffered in the meantime, Jakob swore he'd win this game in the end.

"Hey, sleepyhead. Don't you have a bed for that?" Chapter 19

Not anymore. Not for the past two weeks. Then again who needed to sleep in a bed when they could nap bent over their desk at the office. Kristen was sure the back pain and neck cramp were purely superficial. At any moment now, she'd get the feeling back in her feet.

Kristen kept that grumpy rejoinder to herself as she lifted her head from the book it found comfortable enough a moment before. There would be no point in bitching at Peter or anybody else for her current predicament. She'd been the one to cause it. Now she was the one suffering, which seemed right in a cosmic kind of way.

It also seemed kind of ironic that after two straight weeks of having every wanton appetite filled Kristen found herself restless and hungry for more. She'd spent every lunch break stretched out naked in the bed of Kort's truck for his feasting. Then every evening after dinner, Kristen found herself similarly served up naked in a softer bed for Jakob's voracious appetite.

Between the two of them, Kristen was worn out, but not half as satisfied as she'd figured on being. The whole point to her revenge had been to make Jakob and Kort suffer. She was supposed to be gliding about all happy and satisfied. Instead of leaving her glowing, though, her orgasms had only grown shallower and increasingly unfulfilling. Sure, they felt far beyond any other pleasure she'd ever known, but they just didn't satisfy.

Not that Kristen held any hope that meant she might be growing tired of her mates. Just the opposite, Kristen's need for them only grew stronger. And it wasn't just sex. That part frightened her the most. She'd tried to hide from the truth, but couldn't deny that she woke up depressingly alone and anxious just to see them, to be near them.

"You fading out?" Peter's voice pulled her back from the whirlpool of thoughts that constantly tried to drag her under. "Am I that boring or you that tired?"

"Sorry." Kristen offered her business partner a half smile. Peter looked as chipper as he sounded and as handsome as always. "I've been having trouble sleeping."

"Well, I got the cure right here."

Peter slipped all the way into the room, revealing the two cups of coffee he'd obviously picked up at the little café in the lobby of their building.

That was the thing that she always liked about Peter. He was thoughtful. It had helped their relationship, too, that he'd known about things like werewolves long before he'd met her.

"Straight up, no fuss." Peter deposited one of the large coffees right in front of her. Kristen savored the heady steam seeping from the cup, the scent alone invigorating her.

"You," Kristen saluted Peter with her cup, "are a god." "Not hardly." Peter smirked, settling into a seat on the other side of her desk. He sipped his own coffee as he glanced over the papers spread out all over. "The Richard Payne case? I thought this was going to be an easy one for you."

"It could be," she admitted, shrugging off Peter's curious look. "The prosecutor has a weak case. He knows it."

"Already offered a plea, huh?"

"I told him I'd pass the deal along to Richard." Which Kristen had, along with advising him not to take it. "I'm not going to tell my innocent client to plead guilty to make all our lives easier."

Friends since law school and lovers since they opened up the office together, Kristen knew Peter better than almost anybody and knew he'd understand her position. It would be his if Richard Payne was his client.

"So, off to trial you go." Peter offered her a half smile.

"Yeah," Kristen sighed, taking another wide view of the papers cluttering the table. "The thing is that I could easily get him off with diminished capacity. I got the report right here that says he suffers from delusions and could even push that into not being competent to stand trial."

"You do that, he ends up institutionalized." Peter's calm, deep baritone hid the distaste Kristen knew he'd feel at that conclusion. She felt it, too.

"He'd be easy to dress up as sympathetic to a jury, and the prosecutor's case is all circumstantial." Kristen met Peter's dark, soulful gaze. They both knew there were no guarantees in a courtroom. Taking any case to trial always held some risk because every now and again juries did the strangest things.

"Be good if you had an alternate theory," Peter finally suggested. "If you can explain why your client was anywhere near that money or in that hotel

room at all, but—"

"—that gets me back to him being crazy," Kristen concluded. Shaking her head, she shoved back in her seat. "I'm going to have to tear each bit of the prosecutor's case apart and see if that's enough to let the defense rest. If not..."

Kristen didn't really know which was worse, playing the insanity defense or trying to prove some convoluted conspiracy theory without a single bit of proof. If only she could somehow prove Lilly's involvement. Kristen would risk it, even knowing that Lilly would probably take Kristen's career out on her way down. The problem was that Lilly was that good, and Kristen hadn't been able to find a single link between her and Richard Payne.

"Or maybe he was duped," Peter offered. "Not crazy, but senile and taken advantage of by somebody younger. A relative?"

"I've looked that angle over." Kristen shook her head. "Wife's dead, no brothers or sister, one son, Steven, who disappeared about five years ago. I can't find any trace of him, and all Richard will say is that the devil took him."

"Old man all alone in the world?" Peter considered that. "Perfect pickings for a con artist."

That would be Lilly. Kristen really should go have a frank talk with that little bitch. First, though, Kristen needed to have one with Peter. She'd put it off for the past two weeks but instinctively knew the longer she waited the angrier Jakob and Kort would be when they discovered the truth.

"I'll figure it out." Kristen offered Peter a forced smile. "One thing for sure, I won't let an innocent man go to jail."

"Of that I have no doubt," Peter retorted, falling silent as he studied her. "I know that look, Kristen. You got something to tell me, but you're not sure how to say it, so why don't I? You found somebody."

She'd always sworn that Peter had a bit of mystic in him. His ability to read and understand her moods had almost made her think that he was her mate when they'd first met. It hadn't taken her long to realize that despite being a perfect match for her, the fickle beast inside wanted something else.

"Your mate?" Peter asked, not bothering to give her time to answer.

"Perhaps the large brooding shadow you've been traveling around with these past couple weeks?"

"Yeah," Kristen sighed. "That would be him."

"Kind of figured." Peter cast Kristen a curious look. "I take it he doesn't know about me, yet."

"No," Kristen almost laughed at the idea. "I don't think our relationship is ready for that conversation."

"And I guess this is the point in the conversation where I say something like, 'It's been fun." Peter smirked, wagging his eyebrows at her. "Hell, I'd say I love you like a sister, but..." His gaze dropped pointedly to her breasts. "That would be a lie. Still, as much as I love you, Kristen, I love certain parts of my anatomy more."

That got a real laugh from Kristen as she shook her head at Peter. They'd never really been a couple, just best friends and busy professionals who'd had problems finding others to fit into their lives. That's the real reason they'd started having sex. There had been very little romance to it, but enough satisfaction to keep both from worrying about the lack of a significant other.

"I promise you, I won't let them take anything from you," Kristen vowed.

"Them?" Peter cocked his head at that slip.

"Him," Kristen corrected instantly. Not that her speed washed away Peter's amused look. Frowning back as he began to grin, Kristen took her stand. "I said *him.*"

"Uh-huh." Peter smirked. "You know, back where I come from in Texas, your kind likes to do the multiple thing, so it's not like you got anything to hide."

Kristen strongly suspected that where Peter came from there were Lycans. Definitely not her kind, but apparently the same couldn't be said of her mates. Not that Kristen bothered to explain things to Peter. Just because he knew of the existence of shifters didn't mean he had to be educated on all the varieties.

"Yes, well, you're in South Carolina now." Kristen offered him a prim smile to go with her deepening accent. "We do things differently down here."

"Haven't I learned that over the past few years?" Peter snorted before softening his look and offering her a more sincere response. "Well, him or them, either way, I know the score. The only thing that breaks up mates is death."

"Well, there are no deaths planned, so I guess I'm stuck."

Peter's gaze sharpened as he pinned her in her seat. "Stuck?"

"Don't give me that look." Kristen groaned. "You know what I mean."

"And I quote," Peter straightened up as his tone took on a higher pitch, "mating is nothing more than an archaic tradition perpetrated by dictatorial males in their relentless drive to dominate and oppress females who would accomplish more with their lives without the hindrances of male intervention. End quote."

"I haven't said that in years," Kristen defended herself, insulted and annoyed at the way Peter managed to remember every damn thing she ever said.

"It was like your mantra through law school," Peter shot back. "You almost had me thinking you were gay."

"Just because I believe in female independence does not indicate any kind of sexual preference," Kristen hissed at him. "I happen to believe that—"

"Oh, no." Peter waved her comments away with a shake of his head. "We're not sidetracking onto one of your woman's lib rants. We're talking about you being stuck."

"Don't say it like that. I didn't, and I only meant that nothing breaks up a mated pair." Least, nothing she knew of, and Kristen really wasn't interested in learning any. The very idea of being separated from Kort and Jakob had already started to grow terrifying.

"True, but I know you, Kristen." Peter gave her his best pointed stare. "You don't give in easy, which probably explains why you look like hell—"

"Hey!"

"—and been grumpy as all get out while your shadow fairly oozes a dark, menacing quality that obviously terrifies everybody in his vicinity."

"Oozes a dark, menacing quality?" Kristen couldn't help but snicker at the

idea of Kort oozing anything. Not that Peter joined in the joke. He stayed focused, his tone calmand accusing.

"You're obviously making their lives hell."

"So?" Kristen bristled. "They deserve it. You don't know what they did to me, so don't you be passing judgment."

"They?" Peter cocked a brow. "So it is more than one."

Kristen growled as Peter's grin widened. He'd trapped her, distracted her, and ran her right into a slip that already had chuckles slipping out his lips. It didn't take a genius to figure out what came next, but Kristen cut off whatever gloating comment he'd thought up with her own snap.

"Get out of my office."

Lifting his hands in surrender and staying pointedly silent, Peter shoved out of his seat. Kristen knew by the sparkle in his eyes that she'd only delayed the inevitable. Peter would have his fun with this piece of information, and it started when he paused by the door.

"I can't wait to meet these men."

"Yeah?" Kristen glanced down at his trousers before meeting his gaze. "I thought you loved certain parts of your anatomy?"

"You won't let them hurt me," Peter stated with complete confidence. The statement softened his smile until it faded. "You know they'll want you to leave the firm when they find out."

"I'm not going anywhere," Kristen muttered, but she feared that it was a lie.

"Yeah," Peter agreed obnoxiously. "Well, I'm still going to miss you."

Then he was gone, leaving Kristen to stare down at the table and face the mess that she'd made of her life. Peter had one thing right. She was making everybody's life hell, including her own. He just didn't understand, though, how dangerous things were.

If Kristen allowed her hormones or emotions to rush her into a rash decision or action, she might very well have to live with the consequences for the rest of her life. The difference could be her working here, and holding on to the last piece of her former self, to being forced to give up every single thing she'd ever known.

Kristen didn't like change. Never had. Given everything she'd had to change and would have to, Kristen figured she deserved some time to adjust, even if that did leave Kort oozing things in the lobby. At least he stayed down there.

Thankfully, Kort hadn't invaded the sanctuary of her office. Kristen recognized it for what it was, an attempted symbol of their respect for her job. It would probably be too much to hope that he'd hold that attitude after he met Peter. That would have to happen sooner or later. It would probably end as badly as she feared, so putting it off made sense.

What couldn't be put off was her work. Renewed by the caffeine, Kristen shoved aside her concerns over Kort and Jakob and threw herself back into work. The rest of the afternoon slipped by. Before she knew it, her Thursday had come to a close and it was time to head home and cope with serving as Jakob's dessert course for another night.

"You know the thing about a bathtub full of dirty water?"

Kristen closed her eyes at the sound of Peter's amused question. The elevator doors whooshed shut behind her, leaving Kristen no avenue for escape as he shoved off the wall he'd been leaning against to saunter over to her.

"What?"

"You got to pull the plug to clean the tub."

Kristen blinked then scowled. "What?"

"Think about it." Peter winked.

Kristen did, and it still didn't make any sense. Shaking her head, she started for the lobby's exit. "I'll keep that in mind. Now you have a nice night."

"You seem to be in a rush," Peter commented, easily falling into step with her quick stride.

"I am." Kristen shot him a patronizing look for insisting on opening the door for her. "I was rushing to try to get away from you."

"Ah." Peter nodded, following her right out the building and settling a hand onto her back to guide her down the sidewalk. "But, you see, that

won't get the plug pulled."

"Plug?" Kristen repeated in confusion, increasing her step to try and pull away from his touch. It was hopeless. With his longer legs, she could be running and he'd keep up easily at a jog. "What is this with the bathtub analogy? Because I'm not getting it."

"You'll figure it out." Peter steered her around the corner into the parking garage's stairwell. "I have every confidence."

Kristen rolled her eyes at that and shot Peter a dirty look for making her pause so he could open the door at the end of the staircase. "You're assuming I'd waste any time thinking about your—"

"Who the hell are you?"

Kristen came to a sharp stop, right along with Peter as they rounded the corner and almost slammed right into Kort. Her mate's sudden appearance might have held Kristen stock-still with alarm, but Peter didn't have enough sense to recognize the danger. Of course, if the man had any intelligence at all, he wouldn't have set this all into motion. Then again, a sane man wouldn't have responded with such blatantly inappropriate cheer.

"I'm Peter Hann. Kristen's partner in the law firm."

"Peter who?" Kort growled, the words sounding garbled as they grumbled around fangs Kristen could sense lengthening.

"Peter Hann, and you must be one of Kristen's new friends. It's a pleasure to meet you."

Kristen snapped forward in a sudden rush as she broke out of her panicstricken paralysis and flung herself between them, blocking Kort from lunging at the other man.

And Peter was a man, a human being. He didn't have the strength to make it a fair fight, but he was frail enough to make it a lethal one. Kort, on the other hand, could snap Peter's neck without breaking into a sweat. He looked about ready to do just that.

"Please, Kort, let me explain," Kristen pleaded desperately with him, but to no apparent avail.

"So this is Peter." His scowl didn't soften as a hard smile tugged at Kort's lips. "Or should I say was."

"Now, Kort—"

"Get out of my way, Kristen."

"I will not," she snapped back, managing to sound determined despite the fear pounding through her. Kristen could tremble later. Right now she had to make sure Kort didn't separate Peter's head from his shoulders.

"Honey, don't make me--"

"Don't you make me," Kristen cut him off, matching his harsh snarl and then some. "Now take a deep breath and calm down. It's not what you think."

"Don't lie to me." Kort's glowing gaze cut to her, and Kristen could tell how close he was to losing all control. "I know who this is. I recognize his scent."

"Well," Peter smiled in the face of death, "I hope it's not too offensive."

"No!"

When Kort lunged for Peter, Kristen threw herself at him. Wrapping her arms around Kort's waist, she clung to him.

"He's just joking, Kort."

"I'm not." Kort grunted, trying to pry her arms free. Every time he managed to loosen one, she snaked it back around him, managing to tie him up enough that he couldn't get at Peter, who, wisely, finally decided to flee.

"Actually, I'm leaving before anything I love gets damaged." Peter paused long enough to wink at Kristen, a gesture that forced her to tighten her hold on Kort. "After all, I think the plug has been pulled."

Kristen shot him a dark look, half tempted to unleash Kort for that smartass comment. Not that she had time to bother with Peter when Kort took up all her attention. Shoving her back, he managed to tear himself free without getting rough with her, though the look in his eyes told her that wouldn't last.

More than just her ass started to burn as that thought had Kristen

wondering just how long she had before Kort felt the need to get physical. In his current condition, he probably wouldn't care that they were in a public parking lot. Kristen did. As much as she didn't want to have this argument in the first place, she sure as shit didn't want to have it there.

"You slept with him."

Kort didn't beat around the bush. Kristen couldn't claim that his accusation shocked her. Nor could she deny it. None of that stopped her from stiffening up with full indignation and snapping back at him with clear insult.

"Yes, slept with. As in past tense."

"Don't." Kort surged forth, his temper slipping as he locked her arms in his tight hold. "Don't push me, Kristen."

"He's not my lover, Kort. He's my friend." Kristen spoke slowly and clearly, wanting to impress the difference on him. "We're not having sex. That's in the past. As you and Jakob both made clear, your past is not relevant. Neither is mine."

"It is when you're still working with him." His body tightened with his snarl, his hands jerking her right off her feet to leave her dangling in the air.

"Damnit! Put me down." Kristen glanced around the parking lot.

"Somebody's going to come along and call the cops."

Surprisingly, her feet hit the ground. Not shockingly, Kort issued a warning before turning to storm off. "Fine. We'll talk about how you're quitting this job at home."

"Great," Kristen whispered to herself. Peter and his stupid analogy, maybe she wanted to bail that tub one bucket load at a time. Now it looked like she'd be sucked down the drain, or maybe shoved down it, given Kort's mood.

Chapter 20

"I'm telling you, I've had

* * * * enough! I'm not going to take any more harassment or abuse from you. You got that?"

No. Jakob didn't get it. Peering around Cal's half open bedroom door, he

surveyed the empty room before shoving the door wider, trying to see who Cal yelled at.

"Don't even give me that shit." Cal's hands waved through the air with sharp, jerky motions. "I don't know sign language, but I'm pretty certain *this* ain't it...Oh, yeah?"

Cal shot a bird at the room and snapped. "Back at you, tiny-tits."

"I don't think I've ever been called that."

Jakob enjoyed watching Cal start. Jerking around, his eyes went wide as red streaks started to stain his cheeks. Jakob didn't think he'd ever seen Cal embarrassed, despite the fact that Cal did all sorts of humiliating things. Of course, he'd never done crazy.

"I didn't see you standing there," Cal grumbled. Apparently, he still had trouble focusing on that fact. Jakob glanced in the direction Cal's gaze kept cutting, but couldn't figure out what the man looked at.

"Something there, dude?"

"It's a woman."

Jakob pointedly took another look before shaking his head at Cal and whispering back. "No. It's not."

"She's there." Cal's growl heated, growing louder. Trust me."

"Uh-huh."

"Oh, don't look at me like that," Cal complained, his temper getting the better of him as his hand shot out to indignantly point at absolutely nothing. "She's there. Right there."

"Sure, man." Jakob agreed in the way that one was supposed to when dealing with the mentally insane. "Whatever you say."

"I'm not fucking around here, Jakob," Cal insisted, showing more emotion than he almost ever did. "She's here."

"Look, ⊢"

"I think she's a ghost." Cal's spontaneous confession brought a halt to Jakob's slow backward procession. "But whatever she is, she's not a

delusion or hallucination. Tex can see her, too."

"A ghost?" The hands Jakob had been holding up in surrender as he'd backed out of Cal's room dropped down to his side as he paced curiously forward. "Can she move things or affect anything?"

"No. Thank God," Cal muttered. "She just floats around all annoyingly shaking her hands and yelling at us."

"What's she say?"

"I don't know." Cal's attention got caught for a second, like he was watching his apparition before he snapped back to the moment. "I can't hear her, thank God. I'm betting, though, she sounds like a shrew...like a bitchy, naggy, ugly-ass shrew!"

Seeming to completely forget about Jakob, Cal turned away to snarl at the empty room. He froze, growing stiffer as he appeared to listen to a ghost Cal had just said he couldn't hear. Jakob watched him straighten up with the kind of building fury that made it a good thing the woman didn't have a body. Obviously, whatever the ghost did it triggered some very primitive urges in Cal. The kind that a flesh-andblood woman would probably hesitate to antagonize.

"Go on and have yourself a laugh," Cal barked. "And I'll go find myself an exorcist."

"She sounds pleasant," Jakob commented into the pointed silence that followed that threat.

Cal snorted. "She's not, but if you think so, why don't you take over haunting duty."

"Because I can't see her?" Jakob guessed the obvious answer, definitely not wanting to swap places with Cal. He already had one woman driving him nuts, Jakob didn't need two.

"Lucky you," Cal muttered, unsympathetic to the fact that Jakob felt like he had it worse. "Is there something you wanted?"

"Actually, yes." Jakob straightened up, remembering what had brought him to Cal's room in the first place. "JD, Caleb, and Samantha are doing the dinner-in-bed thing tonight, and I was hoping you and Tex would do the dinner out thing."

"Is that right?" Cal smirked. "You hoping for a little alone time with the missus?"

"Something like that."

Actually, Jakob had plans that, if everything went well, would earn him all the alone time he ever wanted with Kristen. Tonight, he planned to convince his stubborn mate to finally call an end to her revenge and agree to settle down, move into his house, and start acting like a good mate should.

"Something like that?" Cal snorted. "Tell me, when you going to get tired of being led around by your balls?"

"I'm not—"

"You're letting your woman set the rules, and you're playing her game."

"At least I'm not arguing with a ghost," Jakob shot back, unable to argue Cal's point. "Now you going to do me a favor and get lost for the night?"

"Yeah, sure," Cal agreed with ill-grace. "I'll assist the cause even if it is doomed to failure."

"Thanks." Jakob shot Cal a fake smile. "And about your ghost?"

"Yeah?"

"You need to talk to JD." Jakob pinned Cal with a hard look. "He's going to want to know if something is haunting his house."

"More like he'll laugh at me and then kick me the hell out," Cal retorted. "JD isn't going to believe me."

"Actually, he might, and he sure as shit won't laugh about it." Jakob knew like the rest of the pack how JD felt about ghosts. Their Alpha had made his feelings known a while back, though Cal probably didn't know about the incident.

"He had a run-in with a ghost," Jakob informed JD's cousin. "He was helping out The Narin with something, and I guess his mate had a ghost that hung out with her."

"Hung out with her? You make that sound like they were friends." Cal clearly couldn't phantom that idea as being logical if his sour expression

was anything to go by.

"From what I gather, they were." Jakob shrugged. "She even had a name. Kate, I think."

"Yeah?" Cal snorted. "I got a few names I like to call my own, but none of them are as bland or boring as Kate."

"Call her whatever you want," Jakob shot back, over arguing with Cal. "Just make sure you tell JD."

"What?"

Cal's sudden roar had Jakob startling as he turned his back on him. Just as quick, he snapped back around to confront the other man before he realized Cal wasn't yelling at him. In fact, he didn't even look in Jakob's direction, but stood there flailing his arms at nothing that Jakob could see.

"Will you stop waving your fucking hands in my face?" Cal snapped. "I don't give a shit if you have something to say. I can't hear you!"

The tension eased from Jakob's muscles, leaving behind a snicker as he watched Cal argue with the ghost. He'd never actually known anybody who could get the better of Cal's temper. Both Tex and he tended to be laid-back, too laid-back and unconcerned, which made them good at goading other people's tempers. Whoever the ghost was, she'd evened those scales, and for that, Jakob already liked her.

Leaving Cal to his argument, Jakob followed the luring scent of his mate as the sweet fragrance thickened with the sound of the front door being slammed open. Instantly, the living room below filled with the heated sounds of another argument as Kort roared in after her.

"Don't you walk away from me!"

"Don't you yell at me." Kristen stormed into sight below the loft, not even bothering to look back at the man nearly stepping on her heels when she snapped at him. "I'm not talking to you when you're like this."

"This?" Kort snarled, trailing her around the bend in the staircase as they started to stomp up in Jakob's direction. "If you think this is bad, you just keep mouthing off, honey, and see how much that improves my mood."

The smile Jakob had grown at the first thought that Kristen was home

faded with the reality of her entrance. This was not how he wanted to start the night. For two long weeks Jakob had, as Cal had so tactfully put it, been playing Kristen's game. Night after night he indulged every one of Kristen's wanton urges only to deny himself and then suffer the most excruciating pain he'd ever known.

Tonight he'd planned to bring an end to all that. With the help of a romantic dinner, some mood music, and a little wine, Jakob had practiced all the lines he'd used to convince Kristen to bring this insanity to an end and let him have at least one release. He felt sure with Kort's presence, she'd cave.

Despite being caught up in the struggle to control his own desires, Jakob hadn't missed how insatiable Kristen had grown. It didn't matter how many climaxes he fed her, she always wanted something more. Jakob knew exactly what she needed, Kort and him riding hard and rough from either end until all three of them exploded with the mind-numbing rush of release.

Kristen needed it, but Jakob couldn't survive another night without it. The beast had had enough. Whether or not Kristen agreed, Jakob was going to end the night buried balls deep inside her tight cunt and pumping out every bit of frustration she'd made him endure for the past two weeks. The dinner and all the romance was just a polite way of asking for what he intended to be taking.

"Don't touch me," Kristen snarled, jerking free of Kort's hand as she stormed past Jakob without so much as a glance. His brother's palm slid from her waist to their mate's lush behind, swatting it and making her jump through the door she'd just shoved open.

"Damnit, Kort." Kristen whirled on him, flushed with outrage and more than a little excited, if the wisps of feminine arousal thickening around her were any indication. "Don't do that!"

"That's two," Kort stated, darkly. "Now get your ass bent over your bed for the rest or I'll bend you over the banister and handle the matter right here."

"If you so much as lay a hand on me, I'll give Derek permission to rip it off the next time you see him." Flushed and panting, Kristen looked more scared than menacing as she threatened Kort. "Now you stay the hell away from me until you learn to behave yourself."

As if she thought that would be the final word on the subject, Kristen provoked Kort by showing him her back again. Jakob felt the same growl grumbling out of his twin starting to vibrate in his own chest. He didn't

have a clue what had gone wrong between his mate and his brother, but instinctively, Jakob's hardening determination mirrored Kort's response to Kristen's attitude.

He caught the door she tried to slam in Kort's face, drawing Kristen's startled notice for the first time. Before she could turn her indignant wrath loose on him, Kort ducked under Jakob's arm and sent Kristen stumbling backward in an attempt to avoid being run over.

"Damnit! This is my room, and you, neither of you," Kristen's glare swept over to include Jakob in her reprimand, "have any right to barge in whenever you feel like it."

Jakob responded to that by slamming the door closed and leaning against it, a silent statement that he didn't intend to go anywhere. Not until he knew what the hell had Kort going after Kristen. Even then, Jakob didn't think it mattered too much anymore.

All that really mattered was that Kristen was alarmed, aroused, and cornered. Three things that made the beast inside him howl the call to battle. It was time, past time, to put their mate in her place.

"Don't even bother trying to play like you have any right to be indignant, honey." Kort crossed his arms over his chest and glared down at their woman. "You're going to answer my questions, and then you're going to strip down and crawl up on that bed to await your punishment."

"I will do no such kind of thing," Kristen spat, dancing further and further away from Kort. "You will be the one to—"

"—tie you to that bed and pack both your ass and your cunt with some fake cock." Kort paced forward, crowding Kristen back against the edge of the desk. "Then I'm going to get out the butterfly and clip your clit and run a chain up from that little bud to a couple of clamps I plan on using on them tits. Then, honey, I'm going to turn the butterfly on, pop me a can of beer, and sit back while you writhe for however long it takes you to start answering my questions."

"Fine," Kristen caved, smelling wet and nervous, a delicious combination. "I'll answer your damn questions, but don't you be threatening me."

"I wasn't threatening. I was promising," Kort vowed. Kristen must have believed him because he'd no sooner growled than she darted around him, escaping back into the middle of the room.

"I grant you have some reason to be upset that I didn't explain about Peter, but there will be no punishing of any kind," Kristen instructed. "You do not have a right to control every aspect of my life."

"Actually, I do," Kort disagreed. "I'm your mate, something you seem to like to forget."

"Peter?" Jakob tasted that name, remembering why he hated it. In that moment he wondered if he wouldn't have to kill the man. It all depended on Kristen's answer. "Peter who?"

Kristen had whirled around at the sound of his question, irritating Jakob again as she appeared shock to find him there. He really didn't appreciate being ignored and forgotten. Nor did he like the way she simply gazed at him in uncertain dismay, instead of actually answering his question.

Before he could repeat it, though, and add on a threat to make her take him as seriously as she did Kort, his brother answered. "Peter Hann, her partner in the law firm and lover."

"My business partner and *former* lover," Kristen corrected instantly, her face flushing with the return of her agitation. "Not even lovers, more like friends with benefits. I'm not sure a slut-ball like you can understand the concept since we all know you only care about the benefits part."

"Don't," Jakob warned her, his patience shredded by her confession. "Don't even think you're talking your way out of this one, darling."

Kristen crossed her arms and glared back at her two mates, mocking their attempt to intimidate her. She might be a little nervous and very excited, but Kristen was not weak. It didn't matter that she knew she couldn't win this battle. That didn't mean she would roll over and concede defeat at the first scowl they sent her way. If Kort and Jakob wanted to claim any victories tonight, they'd have to earn them.

"You are not working with this Peter."

The words barely sounded human. Kristen could see the canines giving Jakob so much trouble. They'd lengthened in clear warning that to defy his order would risk losing Jakob's control over his beast.

"You said I wouldn't have to quit my job," Kristen boldly reminded him.

She wished she was half as indifferent to the threat he presented as she

sounded. No matter how cool and calm she might appear, inside her heart raced so fast she felt flushed with heat, almost overwhelmed by it. Each of her breaths grew shorter, tightening into pants, as her blood rolled thick and heavy in her veins.

The heady sensation pooled in her womb, swelling her pussy lips and making them drip cream. Worse, Kristen knew Jakob and Kort could smell her body's instinctive reaction to their domination. A fact she couldn't hope they'd ignore and could only pray that they acted on.

"I meant your career," Jakob snarled, still arguing and forcing her mind to try and think about the lust fogging it.

"I didn't."

Short, simple, Kristen couldn't have expanded on that answer if she tried. Not that she needed to. Being curt with Jakob had a devastating effect on his temper. His gaze narrowed, his eyes darkening as every muscle in his body flexed. The thick scent of unrestrained aggression began twining through the musk rolling off of him in waves, a silent warning that she had only seconds left.

"You didn't explain a lot of things, Kristen."

Kort's heated growl breathed over her neck, making her jerk around to find he'd taken advantage of her argument with Jakob to sulk closer. Instinctively, she edged away from him, but could only widen the gap a foot for fear of getting in grabbing range of Jakob, who looked ready to lunge at her. Kort paced forward, sizing her up as he gave her one last opportunity to tell the truth.

"You got any other sins you want to confess to before we get to your punishment?"

Two answers popped instantly into her mind. Both would probably carry a heavy sentence individually. Though the sum total would probably be lesser if they had to discipline for all three transgressions at once. It was a hard call to make, but Kristen came down on the side of moderation.

Meeting Kort's waiting gaze, she offered him a sweet smile. "I've been screwing your brother every single night."

Kristen didn't add that she hadn't let Jakob come either, but let Kort stew over the implication that she had. Leaving him shocked and mute, she

turned her saccharine grin on Jakob and offered him the same misleading confession.

"And I've been fucking your brother through every single lunch break."

"You son of a bitch." Jakob jumped immediately on the bait, turning all his building rage on his twin. "I knew there was a reason you weren't walking around with a twelve-inch boner anymore."

"Me?" Kort gasped, stepping around Kristen to confront his brother's accusation face-to-face. "What about you? *Fucking all night long?* All I got was an hour!"

Kristen quickly scurried out of the way, aiming for the bedroom door. Intent on escaping before either one of them figured out the truth, she almost made it. Kort caught her at the top step of the stairs. Snatching her up by the arm, he whirled her back into the hall and away from any possible getaway.

"And where the hell do you think you're going?"

Someplace safe, like her brother's, but Kristen kept that bit of honesty to herself. Not that she got to answer. Jakob saved her from having to come up with a lie when he stormed up behind Kort and latched on to his brother's shoulder. He had the advantage of surprise on his side and managed to whip Kort back so fast he stumbled and went crashing down onto his ass.

Before Kristen's startled eyes, Jakob trembled and grew an honest inch taller, wider, thicker in every direction. She could scent the wolf trying to force his way into the world and could see the effort it cost Jakob to hold the beast back. Heaving with panted breath, his fingers clenched into tight, white-knuckled fists, he towered over Kort.

"She's going to bed with me, you asshole. Kristen's got some things to make up for, and you," Jakob paused to slam a punch into Kort's raising jaw, sending his brother sprawling back onto the floor, "you can stay the hell out of my way."

From one blink to the next, Kort's head went from tilted to the side to roaring out a challenge as he lunged to his feet. Planting an arm around Jakob's waist, he rushed them both past Kristen so fast a breeze brushed over her cheeks. With a grunt, they crashed into the railing, which responded instantly with a rippling wave of cracks that popped loud in the

suddenly silent air.

Jakob's arms windmilled for a split second before he disappeared over the edge with a whoosh. A second later a loud, heavy thump echoed through the house so strong it vibrated the floor beneath her feet. Kristen blinked and stared at the gaping hole in the railing, unable to believe Jakob had actually gone through the thing. They were fifteen feet up in the air. He could have broken his back.

That thought jolted her out of her shock and sent Kristen rushing to the edge. Almost fearful of what she'd find, she peered over and spied Jakob lying sprawled out, eyes closed and looking like the dead.

"Jakob!" That shriek had his eyes cracking open. At the small sign of life, Kristen's heart started beating again. "Are you all right?"

"No, woman, and all your screaming ain't helping," Jakob snapped back, proving that his mood hadn't been improved by doing a backflip off the balcony.

He rolled over to his side, shoving up to a sit. He grimaced over the motion, making Kristen wince and feel the need to start taking control of the situation.

"Don't move." Her order came out sounding more like a plea as she rushed toward the stairs. "You could have broken bones or internal damage. We need to get you to a—"

"What the hell is going on out here?"

Chapter 21

JD charged past Kristen, barely sparing her a glance as he confronted Kort, who did not appear the least bit concerned. Too busy glaring at her, Kort didn't even seem to realize that his Alpha had stormed up to him and waited, not at all patiently, for an answer.

Kristen bit her lip and went tense when JD felt the need to take a step to his left and block Kort's view of her. He sounded about ready to rip her mate limb from limb when he repeated himself.

"Well? What happened?"

"Jakob broke the railing."

Kristen almost gasped at the sound of Kort's nonchalant answer,

but the air froze in her throat when JD's fist whipped out to clamp around Kort's neck. For the second time that night, her heart stopped beating as fear for her mate held her paralyzed. All Kristen could do was watch as the Covenanter Alpha wrenched Kort clear off his feet by the throat.

Kort's eyes bulged, his face going beet red as his hands came to clutch at JD's arms. Dangling from his Alpha's hand, he didn't challenge JD by trying to rip free of his Alpha's hold, but clung to him as he garbled and tried to speak.

"Listen, you smug little bastard," JD snarled with enough menace to have Kristen praying he didn't intend to snap Kort's neck. "I've had enough of the drama and the chaos. This is my house, and for one goddamn night it's going to be quiet."

Matching each word with a step, JD didn't even flex as he carried Kort over to the broken railing. Straightening out his arm with a smile, JD held Kort over the edge.

"If I hear any more yelling, screaming, cussing, breaking of anything..."
* * * *

JD didn't finish his threat, but delivered on it by simply releasing Kort. Kristen cringed, not even daring to make a squeak as the house rumbled with another heavy impact. Silently, she prayed that Kort survived his fall as well as his brother had. If not, then she'd shove JD over the edge and see how he liked it.

"And you will be fixing my railing."

JD laid down that decree, without a single hint of concern for the two men he lorded over. He turned, obviously dismissing her mates. Kristen could only hope that meant they were fine. As rough and tough as JD acted, surely he wouldn't callously abandon his injured men, no matter how much they'd pissed him off.

Not that JD would ever be elected Mr. Congeniality. Passing her this time, the Alpha finally took notice of Kristen and drew to a stop. He didn't leave her wondering what he thought. As if his disgusted look didn't say enough, JD felt compelled to be brutally blunt.

"This is all your fault. I wish you'd get the hell out of my house, and you can take those two idiots with you."

That bracing bit of rudeness had Kristen's spine stiffening with indignation as she tilted her nose up at him. "Just for that, I might stay here indefinitely."

Kristen could be that brash because she knew JD wouldn't pitch her over the banister. He might like to, but the big brute couldn't lay a finger on her. Forget what Derek would do to him if he did, Kristen knew that Kort and Jakob would be the first to try and whip JD's ass.

They might not protect themselves from their Alpha, but they'd protect her. Males would die for their females, their loyalty that absolute. JD knew it, too, but then again he didn't have to touch her.

"Jakob?" JD hollered down toward her mate, beginning to smile in a way that only made Kristen more nervous.

"Yeah?" Jakob sounded grouchy, but not in any kind of real pain.

"Give her one for me."

Kristen's jaw fell open in shock. She had no doubt what the pig meant by that. He'd just ordered her mate to discipline her, and that wasn't his right. Before she could light into him for that base command, Jakob drew her ire with his snorted response.

"It'll make her scream, and I thought you wanted things quiet."

"Then gag the damn woman." There went JD's smug smirk as his features

hardened into his typically pissed off expression. "Really, do I have to explain everything to you?"

"Don't worry, JD," Kort shouted up, making sure everybody present could hear him clearly. "She'll pay for the banister and for disturbing you."

All the sympathy and concern that had flooded Kristen moments ago whiplashed into fiery outrage at that outlandish vow. She managed to get a squeak out that time before JD cut her off with another stinging insult.

"She's been disturbing me since she brought this circus into my home. It's about damn time one of you manned up and took control of the damn situation."

Kristen growled, a reflex of the anger boiling inside her. JD could have taken his own offense at the disrespectful sound, but the man just grunted. Without another word to anybody, he sulked off, muttering to himself about the inconveniences of women.

That was fine by her. Kristen didn't want to waste her temper on him anyway. She had two better targets in mind, the two idiots that set this entire humiliating episode into motion. Of course, in the great pride of idiocy, neither of her mates looked the least bit ashamed or concerned when Kristen turned to find them glaring up at her.

Both had gained their feet, and neither looked more reasonable for the wear. In fact the brilliant shine of unbridled aggression continued to glint in Jakob's gaze, matching the dark intent in Kort's scowl. Well, Kristen wouldn't be so easily intimidated. She had her own angry reserves left to fuel her temper.

Cocking her hip out and planting her fist on her waist, she met their fierce expressions with her own intolerant one. "Listen up, you two egotistical juveniles. You can both stop trying to tear the house down because I didn't let either of your asses come!"

She probably should have panicked at the way Jakob stilled at her newest confession, but Kristen didn't have that much sense left. Kort, Jakob, Peter, JD, they'd all goaded the calm reason out of her. If nobody else felt compelled to act like a sane person, there was no reason for her to bother with the effort.

"You're yelling, Kristen." Low and deep, Kort's voice held more than a warning, but also a hint of anticipation. "I do think JD just made his

opinion on that subject known, which makes you, by my count, up to six. So why don't you go on and get in bed before you end up earning an even dozen."

A shudder coursed through her body at his words, an internal ripple of heat that flooded her cunt with enough blood to make her pussy start to tingle. Swallowing down the excitement trying to take control, Kristen accepted that it wouldn't be beat. The arousal budding inside her could only be delayed and not for long.

She wouldn't be escaping her fate. Not tonight, not ever. The only thing Kristen could hope to do was control it. Jakob and Kort would fight her, but Kristen knew how to hold her own.

"I went to see Lilly Masterson." That statement wiped away Kort's smug look and tensed Jakob's stiff one. "To see if she knew a way to undo a mating."

"So help me God, Kristen." Jakob breathed out, his fingers flexing again with obvious violent impulses. She didn't let that test her own determination, but met Jakob's murderous gaze and cut him off.

"She didn't." Kristen made that assurance sound like anything but. "So, does that make it an even dozen?"

Offering them a smug smile to go with that smart-ass comment, Kristen dared to turn her back on them and walked away. Pointedly ignoring Tex and Cal, who'd appeared around the time JD had, Kristen flounced back into her bedroom and slammed the door shut hard enough to make the wall shake.

That should goad their tempers, like they needed any more fuel. Kristen's grin warmed into giggles. They'd be coming after her. Any second now, Jakob and Kort would be banging into her room. Kristen didn't think they'd have enough patience or interest left in getting to even six of her punishments. She was thinking the first one would wipe them all out.

Kristen's door hadn't even slammed shut before Jakob took off to chase after their mate. Kort held back, having a score to settle first. Besides, if he didn't get to it now, he might actually hurt Kristen later. For as hard as his cock was, an overriding need to smash something infused his arousal. He needed a release and figured Jakob owed him.

His brother glanced in Kort's direction at his call and cocked his head right into the fist Kort cracked across his jaw. The blow sent Jakob fumbling sideways before he went crashing toward the floor.

"That's for sucker punching me earlier," Kort stated. "Because that was low."

* * * *

"Yeah?" Jakob tested his jaw, looking for a break. "We even then?"

"For now," Kort agreed sullenly.

"You know we used to be on the shit end of that stick," Tex commented, drawing Kort's sour gaze toward him. The grinning fool came sauntering down the steps with his more dour-faced twin on his heels. "Our lives have gotten much easier since you two moved in and started pissing JD off."

"I'm so glad we could be of service," Jakob snarled, scrambling off the floor so he could confront Tex face-to-face.

"Watch yourself now." Tex smirked, pointedly glancing back up the stairs. "Don't want to make Daddy come back out here, do you?"

"Come on, Tex." Cal clapped a hand on his brother's shoulder. "I'm hungry."

"Oh, yeah, dinner." Tex nodded at Jakob and Kort before turning to follow his brother toward the front door. "Can't wait to meet up with the gang, got so much to tell them."

With that, the cocky son of a bitch sauntered out of the front door. Kort growled, jerking forward. He'd known Tex had run his mouth all over town, making Jakob and Kort the laughingstock of the pack. The patience he'd shown in tolerating Tex didn't exist tonight. Kort was fresh out of restraint.

The anguish he'd felt at finding out Kristen had feelings, true feelings, a friendship, a business, a *fucking life* with another man howled through him again. Every time he thought about Peter, Kort felt the need to kill something. Pushing him to the edge of his limits hadn't been enough for his mate. No, Kristen had to goad him even further.

The pain of being strangled and dumped on the floor didn't even compare to the devastating blow Kristen had delivered when she'd revealed that

she'd gone to Lilly. Kristen wanted to break the mating, and Kort could guess why. She'd explained it more than once. Narins chose their mates. They didn't get stuck with them like Covenanters.

Well, Kristen was more than stuck with Kort. She was going to be stuck on him by the end of the night because Kort intended to bury his cock deep inside her and never, ever let her go. Or at least not until he'd broken that rebellious spirit of hers and had her dutifully minding her role as his mate.

It might take a very long time and every position he knew, but eventually Kristen would come to accept him. First, though, Kort intended to pound all his aggression out on Tex's smug face. Once he'd exhausted the hard surge of violence boiling in his blood, then he'd get to Kristen.

Not waiting to see if Jakob followed, Kort stormed out the door and into the night, where he didn't have to worry about being loud or breaking anything.

Kristen sighed as she stared out of her window, watching the four wolves below tear into each other. Just as in their human form, Covenanters tended to be bigger than Narins in their beast form. Bigger and more vicious. Not that Kristen worried over her mates. The frown furrowing her brow had everything to do with annoyance and nothing to do with concern.

"Stupid bastards," she muttered to herself.

They were supposed to have come chasing after her in a frenzy to mate and dominate. Then they all could have had a mind-blowing round of sex before passing peacefully out and forgetting all about punishments. Of course, in the morning, if they brought the subject up, she'd remind them she had to get to work. Then she'd flee to her brother's.

Kristen was not above hiding until Jakob and Kort remembered they'd promised her revenge without consequences. Well, that promise had gone to hell along with Kristen's attempt to rile them up enough to lose control. Technically, her theory had worked given the ferocious battle going on in the yard, but she still looked at it as a backfire.

Instead of wearing out all that urgency on her, they were wasting it on Tex and Cal. Not that she was fooled into thinking they'd work through all their energy. The fight would only fuel their carnal needs. With their more violent urges curbed, the rest of their aggression would only infuse their arousal, focusing their desires instead of unleashing them as Kristen had wanted.

And she'd taunted them into taking a dozen punishments out on her ass? Kristen's hand slid down and under her nightshirt, touching the proof of her own desire. They should have been here, tending to the need heating her pussy with so much cream it slickened the inside of her thighs.

Knowing that she hadn't managed to avoid her punishments didn't diminish her want, but only made her wish harder that they'd stop playing down below and come up here and show her how much better it would feel to have their thick fingers playing with her swollen flesh. They were both so good with their hands and mouths and tongues...Kristen gasped as a small, sparkly climax fizzled through her.

It wasn't enough, but Kristen feared it was far more than her mates planned to give her. She'd denied them both release for two weeks and felt certain she'd be denied tonight if they had any sense about them when they showed up.

Jakob, with his bossy nature and need to control, would no doubt see holding back her climaxes as a lesson and punishment well deserved. Kort wouldn't dress his reasoning up so much. He'd do it just because he had an eye-for-an-eye view of the world. Between the two of them, she had reason to worry that twelve might actually be the number of hours or even days they tended to deny her.

What Kristen needed was a new plan. One that assured her pleasure and robbed Kort and Jakob of the ability to think. Most importantly, one that wouldn't backfire on her.

* * * *

Kort morphed back into his human form as the other three wolves around him did the same. He went from towering over Tex on four feet to standing on two as the wolf beneath shifted into a naked, bloodied man still grinning up at him. Tex would be truly cowed maybe a second after he died and had to meet his maker.

Until then, his spirit remained undented, and Kort didn't have the interest in trying to beat the smile off his face anymore. Damn fool actually appeared to enjoy getting beaten. Grunting at his own observation, Kort stepped back, allowing Tex to roll to his feet.

"That make you feel better?" Tex asked, sauntering over to where they'd left their clothes. He probably had some other smart-ass thing to say, but the words died on his lips just like his smile. His famous grin slipped into a rare scowl as he shot a hard look at Kort.

"Man," Tex snapped finally, clearly pissed, "did you piss on my pants?"

Kort smirked, wishing he'd thought of it and not the least bit concerned with having to take the blame. The culprit, though, couldn't keep his mouth closed. Stepping into his own jeans, Cal looked completely unrepentant as he confessed.

"That would be me. Next time maybe you'll think about picking a fight when I'm hungry."

"Yeah?" Tex tossed the jeans at Cal, who swatted them aside. "Well, now your stomach is going to have to wait even longer, 'cause I'm going to get a shower, along with a fresh pair of pants."

With that Tex stormed off toward the house, as naked as the day he was born. Kort watched him go as he tugged on his own jeans, not liking the idea of Kristen bumping into a naked Tex. Not that he expected that would actually happen. Glancing up at her window, Kort could see the light seeping around the curtain.

"You think she's barricaded the door yet?" Kort asked Jakob, sensing his brother stepping up to his side.

"No." Jakob's voice sounded rough, but firm in his conviction.

"Pity."

The fight had blunted the hard edges of his anger, but the hurt still simmered deep inside. Merging with the arousal pumping through his veins, the mixture made an intoxicating combination that fed a very primitive urge to claim his mate. Not in the "honey, please, may l" kind of way, but more in a "rip the door off its hinges and with a howl of victory pounce on his mate" kind of way. Kort really could have gone for a little resistance on her part.

"I doubt she even locked it." Jakob sighed, sounding almost sorry about ruining Kort's wicked musings. "I think our cunning little mate is probably stretched out naked in her bed, waiting with a surprise for us."

That, along with Jakob's depressed tone, drew Kort's glance.

"Huh? You think she's waiting naked with a gun?" Because nothing else made sense out of Jakob's comment or his demeanor. Obviously, though, Kort had it wrong, given the disgusted look Jakob shot him.

"No," Jakob retorted, pinning Kort with his stare. "Don't you see what's going on here, Kort?"

No, and he wasn't capable of seeing much right then. Kort was strung too damn high. All the energy he'd thrown into the fight hadn't been expended, but recycled and concentrated into a seething pool of lust that left him incapable of complicated thoughts.

"I'm hanging hard and tight here, bro," Kort warned Jakob. "So you got a point, make it. Otherwise, there is a pussy waiting to wear out the ache in my balls."

"That's just what she wants." Jakob stepped forward, blocking Kort's path as his words picked up speed with his increasing urgency. "Kristen wants you desperate. This whole time, she's been playing us, playing on our desire for her."

That sounded like a punishable offense, but Kort didn't know if he followed his brother's logic. "The whole time?"

"Think about it," Jakob urged. "From that first night when she ran. What do you think she thought would happen?"

"Well, she said—"

"No," Jakob snapped. "Not what she said, what any female werewolf would know would happen if she ran from her mates."

"We'd chase." Kort gave him the answer Jakob obviously fished for.

"Yes," Jakob eagerly agreed. "She set the whole situation up."

"Then she got mad about it." Kort began to catch on, seeing the reason in Jakob's logic and seeing the hole in it. "But then she went to Lilly. Why'd she do that if she had forced our hand in mating her that way?"

"Because she's not upset about the mating. It's about control and Kristen's need to always have it."

"And we made her lose it that first night," Kort whispered, remembering with a sense of awe how she'd given herself completely over to them.

"She lost control of herself." Jakob shifted, turning to look up at Kristen's window. "And all this, going to Lilly, forcing us to have sex without

releases, Peter, taunting us tonight, it's all about her attempt to push us so beyond our control we don't stand a chance of stealing hers again."

"I don't know." Kort still thought it all sounded a little overwrought. "Kristen never talks about control."

"Most people don't know why they do what they do." Jakob grunted and cast Kort a look that assured him Jakob included Kort in that group. "If people understood themselves, the world wouldn't need shrinks."

Kort snorted at the very idea of Jakob as a shrink. Most times his brother tended to be as lost as Kort when it came to the female mind. That certainly had seemed to be true when it came to Kristen. Still, as Kort considered it, he had to admit that Jakob might have a point.

Kristen's motives probably were more convoluted than a normal woman's. It probably had something to do with that big brain of hers. In a lot of ways her intelligence fascinated Kort, making him consider things he wouldn't normally. Sure as hell, he'd never have thought that she'd set this all into motion.

Then again, Jakob could still be wrong. Studying the grimly determined set of Jakob's jaw, Kort didn't doubt his brother believed what he said. That didn't make Kort any more certain.

"How you know you're right?"

"Simple." Jakob shrugged, turning back to gaze up at Kristen's room. "If I am then Kristen's up there, naked and doing something to herself that's designed to make both of us lose it the minute we step into her room."

By "something," Jakob meant pleasuring herself. Just the thought of watching Kristen touch herself about made Kort lose it right there and then. The wolf inside him howled, making his cock leap and weep with the need to rush forward and see the show. Forget watching, the hungry beast inside him growled, he wanted to be a part of the production.

"So," Kort tried to force a calming breath down his throat, attempting to think around the lust fogging his mind, "what are we supposed to do? Resist?"

Because if that's what Jakob intended, that they walk away, Kort would have to disagree. Kristen needed to be fucked, fucked into submission, into accepting her place in their lives. More importantly, Kort needed to be

buried inside her tight, wet cunt listening to her plead with him for more. That would be about the only thing that would soothe the ache deep inside.

"No." Jakob snorted. "Don't be stupid. We don't walk away. We take control. That's the way we win."

"You sure about that?" Kort asked, eyeing Jakob suspiciously.

He didn't like being called stupid, but the hard cut of words bothered him more. The slip in Jakob's patience had revealed the anger still boiling hot under his calm tone. Kort understood about the rage, but he also knew his brother well enough to know Kristen wasn't the only member of their family who valued control.

"Or is this just an excuse to get all your toys out to play with? Because I'm not waiting for you to go home and get them." Hell, Kort wouldn't even be waiting another minute. He could only endure the pain in his balls for so long. His fortitude had about run out.

"No, it's not," Jakob shot back, a smug grin pulling on his lips. "Because they're all here, been using a few on our mate these past couple weeks, which proves I don't need an excuse."

"Bet she hasn't let you use the binds or whips," Kort spat, honestly jealous that his brother had gotten to have more fun than him.

"Bet she can't stop me tonight, no matter what."

"And who is the control freak again?"

Jakob shot him a dirty look for that dig, but didn't provoke the fight further. "We walk in and find her the way I said, then I'm right and we do things my way. Agreed?"

"Agreed," Kort answered instantly, tired of wasting his time arguing with Jakob. "But if you're wrong. I get to mount her first."

Chapter 22

Braced, prepared for just about anything, Kort nodded at Jakob and watched with baited breath as he turned the knob. The moment of truth had come. Time to find out what waited for them on the other side of Kristen's door.

Pushing the heavy wood in, Jakob's feet didn't budge as it gave away to reveal one of Kort's favorite fantasies—Kristen on all fours, face pressed to the mattress, lips slack and wide as she moaned out her pleasure and that sweet ass tilted high in the air, legs spread and all her secrets revealed. The only difference between reality and his wet dreams was that Kort had always been the one feeding cock to that pink pussy. His dick, not some piece of worthless plastic.

But Kristen knew her part, playing it better in real life than she had in any of his carnal musings. Her blue eyes, darkened by desire, gazed back at Kort through a thick forest of eyelashes, making him clench as he felt drawn into the moment. The vixen knew it, too, and lured him in deeper with her slumberous smile, with her soft, sensuous voice.

"I didn't think you two were ever going to join me." Her hand never slowed as it pumped the dildo deep into her pussy. "Sorry, I couldn't wait."

Kort growled, out of patience himself. Surging forward, he found Jakob immovable as he blocked the doorway. Holding on to the frame, Jakob resisted Kort's attempt to shove him free and shot his brother an annoyed look.

"I was right. We do things my way."

Kort snarled, not interested in playing any of Jakob's stupid games. "There is only one way I intend to do things."

* * * *

"Not yet."

"Now."

That was the beast growling out its demand. It had waited two damn weeks to come off the chain. The temptation of Kristen not ten feet from him, fucking her delectable little cunt, had caused the damn wolf to chew through its leash. It wanted to bathe itself in her heavenly tightness, to devour the sweet cream flowing out of her pussy and then fuck it raw.

"It'll be more fun my way."

That vow had Kort's gaze cutting to his brother. It didn't linger on Jakob's smile, too desperate for the sight of the erotic show Kristen was putting on. Jakob's words, though, resonated with the beast.

"Trust me, Kort, I don't have a lot of patience either, and I think Kristen should be punished for that. Don't you?"

Yes, Kort surely did. The maddening woman had him walking around bowlegged for the past two weeks. He'd suffered through the most excruciating pain every second of every day, enduring for her. Kristen, on the other hand, couldn't wait long enough to scratch her own itches. That didn't seem right or fair to Kort.

"Then let's do this right."

"Glad you're on board. We're going to need a few things." Jakob nodded toward the desk, where Kristen had spread out the supplies Jakob must have brought with him. Either that or his princess had some interesting tastes.

Not that Kristen paid them any mind. Her eyes had drifted closed.

The panting moans falling from her lips started to pitch higher as she worked the dildo into a frenzy that had her hips jerking back, fucking herself onto the toy. That was his woman, she liked to be ridden hard and fast. It made her come just the same way, and Kort could see her straining toward a release.

His little darling probably knew what they planned and wanted to get one last climax in before they got their hands on her. Unfortunately for Kristen, she wasn't fast enough.

"Here, let me."

Jakob's smooth voice had Kort tensing as his brother reached out to cover Kristen's. Forcing all motion to a stop for a second, he took control of the dildo, dragging it slowly out of her clenched sheath while Kristen whimpered. The sound turned to a whine when the toy slipped free.

The objection whipped into a cascade of small, panting gasps as the thick head of the fake dick slid up the shadowed path that divided her ass cheeks. A large, tanned hand appeared to palm her soft flesh, the fingers pressing into the pale skin before Jakob gripped her sweet cheek and parted it to reveal the clenched entrance it hid.

Eyes fixated on the slow track the toy took, Kort swallowed, feeling the pound of his pulse in his throbbing cock as the rounded head dipped slightly against the puckered indention of her asshole. He could see Kristen tense with the same excitement that tightened in his balls. Unlike Kort, whose breath caught in anticipation of the moment, Jakob would

push in and stretch that puckered entrance wide. Kristen's breath trembled and tumbled with a single anxious question.

"Jakob?"

"You were doing it wrong, cupcake." With a savage twist of his wrist, Jakob fed her ass a whole inch of hard, plastic cock. "It goes here."

Kristen squealed at the sudden penetration, her hands gripping fistfuls of the bedding as she tried to squirm higher and away from the toy slowly forging deeper and deeper into her ass. But even as she sought escape, her hips tilted, offering more of herself up for the invasion.

The peals of high-pitched excitement falling from her lips came faster and harder, condensing into shrieks as Jakob seated the dildo fully inside her. If it had been Kort's eager erection held snug in that tight ass, the little darling would surely be screaming right now instead of crying that it was not enough.

"JD was kind of clear on the noise thing." Jakob nodded toward Kort's hand, prompting him back to the moment.

It soon would be his swollen flesh tunneling through the strong grip of Kristen's lush ass, and then he'd ride her until every last drop had been wrung from his balls. Only once his dick had withered and failed would he let Kristen go. First, though, they had to prepare her.

Nodding up at Jakob, Kort crawled onto the bed and that much closer to temptation. It only got that much harder to resist when Jakob started twisting and bouncing the toy, making Kristen's mouth fall open on a scream. Flushed and shuddering, she looked so damn good Kort could just

"Anytime now, man."

Prodded back to the task yet again, Kort lifted the ties in his hand and gave Jakob another nod. Already playing with their mate, Jakob's motions became more savage, rendering Kristen completely defenseless as Kort slipped the ball on the gag between her lips. They closed instantly, smothering out her cries as she tried to spit the gag back out.

Jakob gave Kort the moment he needed when he shafted the full length of the fake cock in and out of her hard. Tying off the ends of the gag, Kort locked Kristen's shrill screams deep inside her throat. Only squeaks and muffled shouts whispered around the edge of the ball, but Kort got the message.

Kristen started grunting, fucking herself back against the dildo and arching her back to get the best angle possible. With her eyes closed, she looked lost in her pleasure, so out of touch with reality she didn't even notice when Kort slid the blindfold over her face. Tears trickled from under her lashes, wetting her cheeks and making the black fabric stick.

Kort smoothed away the stray strands of hair clinging to the edges of her face and gave her a gentle kiss on temple. "It's a shame we have to gag you, honey, because there are so many things I'd planned on you doing with those luscious lips. You're going to be punished for that, count it as number thirteen."

Kristen mewed, but Kort didn't know if that was his warning or Jakob's fingers slipping through her slick folds that elicited the sexy sound. So sensitive, she jerked so hard her arms wobbled and her face hit the mattress. Even around the gag Kort could make out her whimpered pleas as Jakob's fingers dipped and disappeared in the honeyed opening of her cunt.

Kort didn't doubt his brother gave her a nice massage along the thin stretch of skin dividing his touch from the unforgiving plastic buried in her ass. He couldn't wait until it was his dick and his hand driving her crazy.

Taking a man there made a woman know her place. It made her weak, vulnerable, totally dominated, and at the control of the man who claimed her. Kort wanted to be that man again. When he'd sunk himself into that ass the first night, he'd felt completely empowered, emboldened by the very knowledge that he possessed her totally and completely.

Kristen had submitted to him then as she would now. The beast demanded it as payment for the pain it suffered in knowing she cared for another. There would be no other, and he'd fuck her until she knew no other. Kort needed the assurance she was his, and he needed it now.

Unconcerned with Jakob's plans and knowing his brother could work around him, Kort shed his pants and reached for the lube. His dick didn't need his fist to get it primed and ready. With his cock head leaking with excitement, Kort didn't need the lube either, but he used it. Not willing to risk hurting Kristen, he even let Jakob play with her until both were certain she was ready.

The scent of feminine arousal thickened in the air, combining with the musk and overwhelming it as Kristen started to come undone. Shuddering violently, she struggled to rise back up on her hands, moaning and thrusting as she tried to rush toward release. Neither brother intended to let her find it.

Jakob didn't show any mercy when he whipped the toy free, his other hand lifting from her pussy to crack a sticky slap over her ass. Kristen wobbled and collapsed under the impact, clearly struggling to scream around the gag. Her resistance didn't end there. Before her hand could dip all the way down to her pussy, Jakob had it trapped in his own.

Kort didn't intend to give her struggles a chance to escalate. Stepping up behind her as Jakob moved back, he finally gave free reign to the wolf. Clenching back only its howl as it surged forward, sinking his fingers into the luxurious plushness of her ass.

"You don't take, cupcake." Jakob's voice snapped over Kristen like a whip, making the woman beneath Kort go stiff in his hands. "You beg and hope we feel like giving."

Kort had something to give her, but didn't bother to explain. Instead, he showed. Splitting her cheeks wide, he brought his drooling cock head up to kiss the puckered entrance of her ass. Not even bothering to put a knee on the mattress and meet her halfway, Kort whipped her back, slamming her down his entire length in one swift move that buried his balls against the satiny smoothness of the ass he'd just taken.

A ripple of pleasure rushed through him so violent and hard it weakened his muscles with the same tremors that rippled through his mate. Clenched tight in her ass, Kort could feel every spasm that rolled over her walls. Each one felt delectable as they tickled over the tight skin of his cock, luring his swollen member into shifting, pumping, fucking those ripples into full waves that would easily milk the seed from his balls. Kort would have given in to those urges if Jakob hadn't intervened.

"Roll her over, Kort."

He didn't normally take orders from his brother, but he'd promised Jakob the night. Obeying, though, was still one of the hardest things he'd ever tried to do.

Kristen waited with her breath held and her heart still to see if Kort followed that command. She could feel him tense and uncertain behind

her, hesitating to bring a halt to what felt so good. Even if Kort could, she couldn't hold back the rapture flooding her body with the need for more.

Already burning from having her barely tried muscles stretched so wide by his heated length, her ass clenched and milked Kort's cock in a desperate frenzy for a little more, more friction, more movement, more of the delicious dick making tendrils of flames lick up her spine. The sliver of pain infused the bliss radiating through her, causing delightful ripples to echo all the way down to her very fingertips.

Kristen tingled and ached, unable and unwilling to control the slow sway of her hips keeping the mouthwatering thrills alive. Not an inch, not even a half, but the gentle rub of his hard cock pressing into her tender walls as she shifted had Kristen grunting, wanting to lift up and really exploit the sensation. Only her arms couldn't hold her weight, too weak to even stiffen up for a try.

Her legs trembled with the same joyful ripples, but there was still strength there, enough to hold her weight when Kristen dropped her feet over the edge of the bed. She didn't try to force herself to stand, but let her legs straighten out, lifting her ass up and gripping the cock inside her so tight she could feel every pulse rippling down his vein. The vibration rolled across her tender walls, igniting brush fires of rapture that needed to be stoked.

Before she could shift and soothe the wanton lust boiling in her veins, Kort snarled, jerking and treating her to one orgasmic thrust before his arm clamped around her waist. Kristen's momentary hope that he'd continue and drive the ecstasy already cresting around her to completion faded as the world whirled around her. The motion jarred the hardness teasing her ass, making his cock bump and grind in all sorts of fantastic ways.

Gasping for breath, Kristen struggled to breathe around the gag even as Kort stole her breath again. The strong thighs trapped between hers started to separate, forcing hers wider and wider. Each inch sank her ass lower and lower until she could feel the soft sacks of Kort's balls brushing against the insides of her spread ass cheeks.

She'd taken every bit of thickness as deep as she could, awakening nerves that had never tingled so badly. With her ass aflame, impaled on Kort's thick dick, Kristen's pussy shivered at the cool air caressing every exposed inch of her intimate flesh. Spread out on the edge of the bed, caged against Kort's chest, her cunt lay open and completely exposed and totally vulnerable to whatever Jakob planned to do to her pussy.

Panting in anticipation, her cunt spasmed and wept with the ache of

waiting. She wanted to be touched, licked, fucked, filled with a hard cock that made her pussy burn with the same delight her ass did. Then they'd finally move and give her what she'd been missing for the past two weeks, true completion.

Kristen moaned, her own thoughts making her body clench in violent demand for that precious release. Lost in a tide of erotic musings, she arched blindly into the warm, strong hands that came to cup and massage the aching globes of her breasts. Every little caress of those calluses, every teasing swipe across her nipples, sent a swell of pleasure rolling through her that had Kristen twisting, lifting herself in a silent offering for more.

Kort's rough grip excited her, adding sparkling showers to the whirl of sensations keeping her on the edge, but even the crisp shots of pleasure that bolted from her tits couldn't smother the drumbeat of need pulsing out of her pussy. It still waited, still wanted so badly that she ached.

Lost in the lusty need spasming through her cunt, Kristen was caught completely off guard by the sudden, striking pain that lanced through her. Nearly jerking completely free of Kort's hold, Kristen bucked and screamed into the gag as the tight pinch of the clamp over her nipple continued to shoot vibrant shards of painful pleasure right down her spine.

Clenching under the impact, Kristen's neck lost its stiffness as the sensation rolled though her ass. The steely length of Kort's cock made the spasms blossom into the most exquisite pleasure as her muscles pulsed in wanton greed for more. That pleasure hadn't even begun to subside when a second bolt of pure ecstasy lashed over her.

Even knowing she should have expected it, Kristen got washed under the beautiful tide of pained pleasure streaking out from under the clamp pinching her second nipple. She'd forgotten or repressed the memories of what had happened in the bathroom that first night, leaving her unprepared for Jakob's deliciously wicked intentions.

Now, with her chest burning, it reminded her of the dark decadence he'd forced her to endure. He'd stolen her will that night, driving her so wild with need and pleasure she'd given over to even his most depraved wishes. Kristen feared that would pale in comparison to what Jakob intended tonight.

That first night Jakob hadn't had Kort helping, and Kristen knew that thick cock stretching her ass to the point of pain was only about to turn the most extreme pleasures into total, gluttonous rapture. Kristen couldn't let that happen. Once done, they would own her.

But there was nothing she could do to stop them. Even as her head

started to roll in denial, her pussy swelled and flooded with a fresh wave of heated desire, desperate for what it knew came next. Jakob's rough touch didn't disappoint as two blunt fingers worked something soft and ticklish over her clit.

There would be no resistance now. Her traitorous body wouldn't allow it, not when Kristen knew the tantalizing tugs on her sensitive bud would soon be followed by a soul-consuming climax. All Kristen had to do was be still and enjoy her punishment.

Tense and primed, she waited for Jakob to set her world ablaze. With a distant click, her pussy whipped into a frenzy of spasm, driven by the relentless vibrations humming through her clit. Each miniature throb echoed out of her swollen bud, becoming magnified as they rolled through her pulsing cunt.

Writhing with the ecstasy starting to boil in her blood, Kristen's ass clenched tight, the muscled walls rippling down Kort's cock in a desperate attempt to milk his hard length. He grunted, a moist blast of air that seared her neck as his hands dropped to her hips and held her still, denying her the pleasure of grinding herself against his thick dick.

But he couldn't deny her the joy of twisting in his grasp. Every movement she made, every merciless caress of the butterfly, tugged and pulled on the chains linking her tits to her clit. The building pressure in her breasts expanded, colliding with the rapture rolling out of her pelvis. Mushrooming together, the billowing waves of ecstasy started to race Kristen toward a release that was guaranteed to keep her satisfied for years to come.

Kristen screamed and bucked, throwing herself headfirst into the rising storm only to crash down hard when the vibrations keeping her clit dancing came to a sudden, abrupt halt. Instead of going crazy with the pleasure, she went wild with rage, screaming into the gag as she tried to claw her way free of Kort's hold.

Left on the edge of experiencing something too beautiful, her wolf joined the rebellion, lending its strength to her outrage. Enough that Kristen almost broke free, but even as her hand reached for the gag, she almost ended up swallowing the thing as her pussy lit up with a sharp lance of heated pain.

Flames of pure, molten rapture raced over her pussy as another lash danced over her sensitive folds. In the dim recesses of her mind, Kristen registered that Jakob had whipped her with something both soft and stiff. Not that it mattered. All she cared about was the pleasure ballooning out of

her pussy as he danced the crisp end of his new toy right over her clit.

The poor bud throbbed, sending out alarm waves that had her whole body tensing, waiting, desiring for more. Always more. With each lick of the lash the lust inside her twisted, ratcheting higher and higher, but taking her even further away from the release Kristen so desperately ached for.

There was no resisting the pleasure, though. As the licks started to dance all over her body, Kristen gave herself over to the mighty rush unleashing all her inhibitions. Enflamed with desire and mindless with the need for completion, her hand reached for her pussy. Her fingers parted her slick folds even further as her hips arched, offering her cunt up for more.

The gesture elicited an instant growl from above her. The low, predatory sound sent a thrill rushing through her as she felt the air shift around her, heating and compressing until Jakob's hard length scraped over her naked skin. He still wore his shirt, the soft fabric catching on the clamps and tugging on her throbbing nipples even as the hard wall of his chest pinned them beneath his weight.

The rough rasp of denim against her thighs told Kristen he hadn't shed his jeans, either. She wasn't disappointed, though, because the smooth, rounded slide of his cock head through her molten fold assured her he didn't intend to deny her. Smiling behind her gag, Kristen arched her hips higher, dragging Kort's cock with her as she slipped her gasping cunt hole right up to meet the blunt head of Jakob's cock.

So much for her punishment. Kristen might not be able to resist her mates, but they couldn't resist her, either.

Chapter 23

Jakob could feel the beads of sweat gathering between his shoulder blades. They trickled down his spine, rolling over skin that coursed with tremors from the strain of holding back. For one blinding second, the beast had ripped through his control, provoked beyond reason at Kristen's primitive offer.

With the heated cream of her arousal bathing the swollen head of his cock, Jakob battled the ferocious urge to slam himself, full tilt, into her tight cunt. The wolf howled back, demanding its mate with a ceaseless litany that pounded through Jakob's head.

Mine. Want. Mine.

It was an echo that matched his own seething desires. Weakened by the need for a release too long denied, Jakob didn't have the will to resist Kristen's subtle shift. As his cock slipped down her slit and caught on the

sweet indention of her pussy's entrance, he had no control over his own hips as they pressed back, the sensitive head of his dick forging past the delicious squeeze of her tight entrance only to be welcomed into her molten, pulsing sheath.

The velvety walls of her pussy rippled around him, sucking him deeper and deeper into her honeyed depths. Every inch of the way he could feel Kort's cock, hard and unforgiving, pressing back against the thin wall of her sheath. His thick presence made Kristen's tight pussy grip Jakob's dick all the harder.

The sensation was exquisite, drawing fissures of pure rapture from his balls as he forced her cunt to swallow every inch of him. Trapped beneath him, Kristen moaned around her gag as she tried to writhe and twist between Kort and him. Her legs curled over his, giving her enough leverage to hump her hips slightly.

The motion had her crying out, sending spasms down her cunt that had the sweat pouring out of Jakob as he fought to stay still. It was a battle he couldn't win, not with every aching inch of his cock trapped in the delectable clench of her rippling pussy. Jakob might not have the will left to deny himself, but the same couldn't be said of denying Kristen.

For two straight weeks she'd tormented him, letting him ride the wild rush toward ecstasy only to make him walk away hard and unfulfilled. Two weeks of pent-up frustrations boiled in his balls, assuring that the ride would be short and fast because Jakob didn't have the stamina to take as long as Kristen would need. He certainly didn't have the mercy left to care.

Snarling over that vow, Jakob arched his hips, pulling free of the fingers Kristen had dug into his waist and almost free of the cunt clamping down around his dick in a desperate attempt to keep him buried in her heat. Jakob didn't intend on abandoning her pussy. He wanted to master it.

Lifting off Kristen so he could reach the clamps, Jakob snapped one free at the same second he slammed the full, hardened length of his cock deep into her pussy. Kristen screamed, going wild under the assault. Thrashing violently, she slipped up and down his length, milking his cock so hard he could feel the seed slipping from his balls.

"No!"

Jakob growled but could barely manage to release the second clamp before the wolf hammered his "yes" right back into the heaven of Kristen's pussy. There was no stopping the beast as it roared out its victory, fucking itself with ravenous delight into the heated clench of his mate's cunt. Kristen sobbed beneath him, her body flushed and shaking as he rode her harder and faster, driven to the furious pace by a mindless need. Still, Jakob needed to know the sounds muffled beneath the gag were ones of pleasure and not pain. In defiance of his own rules, he ripped the gag from Kristen's mouth, setting free her incoherent gasps and groans.

The stuttered and butchered pleas falling from her lips emboldened the beast, strengthening his muscles as he fucked himself into his mate even faster. Relentlessly, he chased the ecstasy boiling in his blood. Jakob's balls swelled painfully, preparing to unload two weeks' worth of unexpressed seed on Kristen's suckling cunt.

Suspended in the moment right before his world detonated, Jakob almost missed the sign he should have been waiting for. Kristen tensed, her whole body arching as her teeth sank into her lower lip. The damn woman was about to come. But not before him.

Giving himself over to the moment, Jakob shafted his cock as hard as he could, fucking himself as deep as he could into her pussy, and held still as the release washed out of his balls and flooded through his body. A near apocalyptic wave of rapture tried to crush him, but even as his muscles spasmed with uncontrollable shudders at least one part of Jakob stayed hard.

"No!" Kristen wailed, whipping her head from side to side as her hands clawed at him and her hips flexed in obvious demand. "Please don't leave me like this."

"Why not?" Kort's voice sounded strained. It only then dimly dawned on Jakob that his brother hadn't joined in. "That's what you did to us."

"I know. I'm very sorry. I won't do it again," Kristen babbled with the excited desperation of a person driven too far. "Please. I need you."

That softly whimpered plea about broke Jakob. If only she'd remember that later then he could give her all that she wanted, but he didn't hold any hope that she would. That sober thought hardened Jakob's resistance. They weren't just punishing their mate, they were showing her that sex wasn't a weapon to be used against each other. The battle for control should not stem into the bedroom.

He had to be strong. With Kristen's tight cunt pulsing in carnal invitation around his still-hard cock, Jakob knew he had to move or accept defeat now. Taking a deep breath and tensing every muscle, Jakob threw himself back from her as fast as he could, making sure the last rippling suck of her sheath didn't have a chance to seduce him back into her heat.

It was cold outside her pussy. The thick cream that had only moments ago felt like heated oil being massaged all along his length dried cool on his dick. Not that his cock withered under the chill. If anything the breeze had his member swelling in angry demand to return to the heaven of Kristen's molten cunt.

Jakob fought that urge, stumbling back far away from temptation. Not that he could ever get that far. Jakob would have to leave the house to escape Kristen's cries as she called out for him. Even then, he'd never be free of the glorious sight of Kristen naked, impaled on Kort's cock, vulnerable and begging for him.

His little cupcake, all sweet and delicious. Jakob could eat her right up. The wolf inside him snarled, in full agreement with that idea. Not the least bit content with his recent release, both man and beast wanted more.

The ache was back in his balls, starting to burn just as hotly as it had moments before as Jakob watched Kort roll Kristen under him. The motion brought his brother's feet to the floor and smothered Kristen's shrieks into the mattress.

The high-pitched squeals quickly turned to sensuous moans as Kort unceremoniously started fucking her ass. Jakob could see every muscle in Kort's body clench as he threw all his strength into pounding his cock hard enough to make Kristen's ass bounce with each thrust. Their mate loved his unrestrained aggression, huskily begging for Kort to go faster as her hips flexed in constant rhythm with Kort's.

The sight, the sound, the very scent of Kort reaming his thick dick between Kristen's pale, lush globes made Jakob's cock jerk hungrily. He'd take her there next and show her even less mercy. Kristen would love every moment of it, right up until he left her stranded on the peak of another climax.

Gripping his cock in his fist, Jakob watched, mesmerized, as Kort rode their mate, fantasizing about the moment when he'd finish and Jakob took his place. It wouldn't be long in coming from the way Kort tensed. Not nearly long enough for Kristen to bounce back from her near miss and join his brother in finding release.

With a roar, Kort pounded himself into Kristen's delectable ass one more time before convulsing with a tidal wave of shudders. They washed away all the tension from Kort's muscles. With a mighty sigh, his brother collapsed on top of their mate, smothering her beneath his weight.

If Kristen had wanted to cry out or fight, her resistance got smothered into the bedding. All that came through were soft whimpers along with the

occasional sniffle. Jakob waited, giving them both time to regain a little sense.

He didn't want Kristen too close to release when he mounted her. Kort, on the other hand, looked like he needed a moment to find his strength. Jakob could sympathize with his brother's condition, but knew where it could lead if Kort didn't get off Kristen soon.

When one too many seconds passed and Kort didn't rouse, he smacked him on the back of the head. "You done?"

* * * *

"Oh," Kort groaned, obviously reluctant to move. He didn't put any real effort into it, barely lifting his head to glare at Jakob. "Give a man a moment."

"You had one," Jakob shot back. "Now get off."

"That's what I did." Kort snickered, shifting slowly toward his feet. "That's what I plan to be doing again."

"Later," Jakob corrected him. "Now it's my turn."

"Don't you," Kort nodded to the toys laid out on the desk, "wanna play?"

"Not tonight. Not anymore." Jakob didn't have the patience left. "Now get off."

Kristen could barely understand their words, but didn't need to. Her worst fears had already been confirmed. They meant to deny her any release. Maybe it was what she deserved. Definitely she'd be mad at them in the morning. Right then, though, Kristen didn't have the strength to do a damn thing.

Every muscle in her body ached from the strain of being driven toward three consecutive climaxes and being denied all three. Without getting the bone-melting satisfaction of coming, the tension in her body had turned from an exquisite pleasure to a constant, throbbing pain. The source of which echoed out of her cunt.

Uncontrollable spasms left her pussy clenching, weeping when it tightened over nothing but air. She wanted Jakob back, wanted to feel the extreme rapture of taking both her mates at once. All the climaxes she'd enjoyed these past two weeks didn't compare to the thrill of being trapped between their two hard cocks tonight.

Kristen would have given them anything if they'd indulged her with another taste of that divine pleasure. Even knowing they wouldn't didn't lend Kristen the strength to do anything other than groan as Kort dragged his still-thickened dick across the sensitive walls of her ass.

Ablaze with a frenzy of tingles, her ass clenched around his dick, making his slow withdraw an exquisite torment. Clinging to him and praying Kort would resume the hard fucking that had put her in this shameful condition, Kristen whimpered when his bulbous head stretched her tender entrance wide.

Quivering over the loss of his hardness, she held herself still, wondering what came next. Jakob came next. Kristen didn't need her eyes when the pressure against her ass repeated itself as another rounded cock popped through her tight entrance to know it was Jakob who mounted her. She could tell simply by his feel.

Kort was delicious, an overindulgence like chocolate. Jakob, on the other hand, felt like a straight-up shot of whiskey, both smooth and hot. Taking him on also came with consequences, like being reduced to a boneless, whimpering sex toy. Now if only Jakob would use her for sex, but Kristen wasn't that naïve.

Gulping in as much air as her burning lungs could tolerate, Kristen held still, not daring to provoke Jakob into making this torment worse. It was already bad enough having to endure his slow penetration when Kristen really wanted to feel all that hard heat slamming in and out of her ass fast enough that she might just get a glimpse of ecstasy again. Maybe even a full taste.

"How you doing, cupcake?"

With the full length of his cock filling out her rear, Kristen was doing too damn good for words. A problem she suspected Jakob suffered given the husky strain in his voice. Mr. Control was having issues. A little help with that and he might forget all about whatever stupid game he had in mind.

"Ducky."

Jakob grunted at that. "And now?"

Kristen didn't answer, couldn't answer. She was too busy

shrieking over the vibrating pulses that suddenly consumed her clit. The bastard had clicked the butterfly on, sending her world instantly into the chaos of rapture's ever-building storm.

Her cunt shuddered with wondrous waves of need that couldn't be contained, crashing out of her pussy in thick rolls of cream. Giving in to the primitive motion, Kristen flexed her hips, and miraculously, Jakob gave her room to make the motion feel good. Not pausing to consider his motives, she threw all the strength she had into lifting far enough up to get leverage to chase after her orgasm.

Jakob let her go wild, holding steady and still as she fucked her ass back against his cock in an ever-escalating rhythm as she raced to catch the ceaseless cascade of tremors pulsating through her clit. Faster and harder, Kristen worked herself into a lather that started to crest with glorious rays of bliss.

Just when she was about to throw herself into the horizon of the best damn climax she'd had in the past few weeks, Jakob brought it all crashing down around her. The butterfly clicked off the same second a hand on her back flattened Kristen into the mattress. Then it was Jakob doing the fucking, pistoning into her ass so fast he blew apart the climax rising inside her and rode the pleasure to even brighter heights.

Kristen clawed at the mattress, a desperate reflex that rose to escape the rapture crushing her under its weight. It was too much, and with each merciless thrust deeper, Jakob made her endure even more. Reason got lost in the rush of ecstasy, and her body responded without thought, meeting each pound of Jakob's hips against her own in a mindless attempt to sail with him over the edge of sanity and into the peace of release.

As fast and furious as Jakob rode her, he didn't last long. Not nearly long enough for Kristen to join in his shout of victory, no matter how hard she strained. With a howl, he buried his cock as deep as he could as the thick stalk started to shudder with hard waves that flowed out to consume Jakob's body.

He collapsed, his head falling into the curve of her neck while his chest flattened against hers until Kristen could feel the outrageous pound of his heart beating against her. He'd worn all but one part of himself out. Still embedded deep in her ass, his massive cock had not softened in the slightest despite having already unloaded twice tonight.

It was time for round three, and Kristen was ready for round three to be the last round. The tremors coursing through his muscles matched the ceaseless spasm of her own, except hers hurt. In agony, her body cried out for release, leaving Kristen distraught enough to consider any option.

Kristen couldn't win a fight with them, not in this condition. They'd

never let her please herself. That only left one thing to do. It was the lowest of the low, but Kristen didn't hesitate to turn her chin toward the ragged pants heating her shoulder.

"Please, Jakob," she whispered, not bothering to try and strengthen her broken voice. "I can't take any more. Please, it hurts."

Jakob went stiff, and for a moment, Kristen didn't think the guilt had worked. Then he cursed like a man damned and she knew he'd caved. Not that she had the energy to gloat or would have risked it when he rolled them both over. Kristen didn't even have the breath to whimper as his dick settled more firmly inside her tight channel.

Anticipating Jakob letting her come by the butterfly, Kristen's heart lurched as for the second time that night she found herself draped over one mate with her legs spread wide in welcome for her other mate. They were going to take her to paradise again, and Kristen couldn't wait, wouldn't survive it if this turned out to be another ruse.

Wanting to assure that she would not be denied, she pressed her luck and lowered her hands to tug at Jakob's wrists. Dragging them from her waist to her breasts, she sighed as he snickered and covered her swollen globes with his rough touch.

"Please," Kristen whispered, arching her throbbing tits deeper into his palm. "Love me."

"Damnit, cupcake, you're going to pay for this later."

Jakob growled, a harsh sound promising retribution despite the tenderness he showed as he began to massage her aching breasts. Ignoring his ill temper, Kristen sighed, the gentle, soothing caress of his hands softening some of the harder edges of her lusts. Not enough, though, to dull the impact of the ripples of delight flowing out of her nipples, trapped between his rotating fingers. The tingly sparkles only added to the frustration threatening to consume her.

"Kort?" Kristen panted, fear and panic starting to set in when she didn't sense him near. "I need you. Please."

"Damnit, Kort," Jakob hollered, making her realize that the faucet had been running in the bathroom. "Aren't you clean yet?"

"I need a moment," came back the muffled reply, making Kristen whimper

over the weight.

"I don't think Kristen is going to last that long."

A door opened in response to that, and Kristen turned her head blindly in its direction. Before she could beg Kort to join them, Jakob ordered him to.

"What? You just going to stand there?" Jakob snapped. "Or don't you know what to do when you got a pussy opened for your pleasure?"

"But I thought—"

"Later," Jakob cut off Kort's confused retort.

"Please, Kort." Kristen added her own breathless whispers to their argument. "I ache. Won't you help me?"

Tense silence greeted her question, finally being broken by the stomp of feet. "Yeah, sure, but we're doing things my way."

Kort's warning ended directly overhead. Feeling the itchy rub of heavy thighs against her, Kristen tensed, anticipating the first pounding thrust that should have matched Kort's statement. With her cunt clenched for invasion, Kristen was caught off guard by the teeth that raked over her clit, popping the butterfly free and leaving her tender bud exposed for Kort's mauling.

Gasping, her hands abandoned Jakob's to bury themselves in Kort's silken tresses and press his kiss even harder against her pussy. He retaliated by nipping her swollen bud, sending sharp streaks of rapture shooting all the way through her to erupt from between her lips as shrieks as the spicy, throbbing pain started to melt into the molten pool of ecstasy beginning to boil in her blood.

An inferno Kort stoked with the soothing lap of his tongue right up and over her pulsating bud, giving it a little twirl that had Kristen twisting with the same motion. Over and over again, he toyed with her clit, interspersing the climactic pleasure of having his velvety tongue roll and tease her over sensitized bud with hard lashes of rapturous pain as he took the occasional nibble.

It was too much, and Kristen had already endured more than her limit. She couldn't control the ecstasy starting to rampage through her and didn't even bother to try. Giving herself over to her climax, Kristen screamed in

anger as Kort's kiss dried on her cunt, abandoning her swollen folds just when she needed him the most.

Before she could hurl curses at him or drop her hand to cover her pussy and give her ease, Kort gave her something better to scream over. With a sharp, deep thrust, he fucked his engorged cock to the very back of her pussy, making the climax rolling through her collapse. The pleasure imploded, condensing as it spiraled higher and higher, but not releasing her.

Not until Kort moved and slid his long length back out of her cunt, causing fissures of pure heat to ignite as the clenching wall of her pussy got trapped between his cock and his brother's. Then Jakob shifted, matching Kort's motion with his own withdrawal as Kort forged back deep into her pussy.

Kristen lost sense of reason and time, consumed by the endless rhythm of thrust and withdraw. Her hard, labored breath matched theirs as they passed her hips back and forth, working both her cunt and ass to fuck their cocks in a ceaseless flow kept her filled, flushed, and aching for more. Arching her neck, Kristen blindly lifted her head until it banged into Kort's chest.

With no warning she bit him, a primitive provocation that assured his aggressive response. Above her Kort snarled, his hips jerking out of their beat and slamming into a new one that had his length racing against his brother's as both cocks pounded into her at the exact moment. Kristen gasped at the sweet bliss exploding out of her pelvis as her powerful mates treated her to a seemingly endless series of divine thrusts.

Giving herself over to her climax, Kristen let the ecstasy roll through her, washing away the whole world as sweet oblivion called out to her. In the distance, she could hear Kort and Jakob grunting as they exerted themselves and the sharp pinch of their matching bites as they came in a possessive rush. The feel of their release flooded through her body, making her own that much more gratifying. Kristen passed out with a smile on her face.

Chapter 24

Kort collapsed, losing sense of the world and reality as he luxuriated in one of the most splendid releases of his lifetime. It was better when all three of them were together, best when they all came as one. He'd never give this up. Sure as shit, he wasn't going back to the hell of the past two weeks. That sobering thought ruined Kort's moment, aided by Jakob's grumpy voice.

"Hey, man, do you mind? You're crushing me here."

Kort grunted, not really concerned over Jakob's well-being, but he was over Kristen's. They'd been hard on her, not bothering to try and rein in the beasts' more savage urges. Still, Kort found their mate smiling when he lifted his head. Kristen had passed out happy. Hopefully, she'd wake up that way.

Forcing tired muscles to work one last time that night, Kort heaved himself up onto his feet but didn't release Kristen. Instead, he dragged her with him, unwilling to pull his contented cock free from the warm glove of her pussy. He felt her shiver, a mutter tumbling from her lips at the same moment Jakob's dick popped free of her ass.

"This position is killing my ass." Jakob matched their mate's grumpy protest as he lifted off the edge of the bed. "Next time either you're on bottom or we're moving higher up on the mattress."

"You're the one that had her waiting like that," Kort reminded him, inadvertently reminding himself of how quickly Jakob had caved.

The memory and its implication disturbed Kort enough that the chill cutting through him couldn't be warmed by the tight clench of Kristen's cunt. He feared he'd feel this kind of alone for a while. Sighing over the loss of a satisfaction too good not to be bitterly missed, Kort lowered Kristen down into the middle of the bed all alone.

Pulling free of her heat, Kort echoed Kristen's groaned complaint. Hers ended when she rolled over, smothering the sound into her pillow. Kort's only got worse as he stared at the tempting picture she made. He'd never get enough of her, but right then he had to walk away.

Leaving Kristen to her sweet dreams, Kort followed Jakob into the bathroom to clean up. Despite the recent fun, Jakob didn't appear in any better of a mood than Kort. He suspected Jakob's loss of control plagued him as much as it did Kort, though probably for totally different reasons.

Whatever held Jakob tense and silent, the worry followed them back into the bedroom. Even after they'd tended to their mate and settled into bed with her, Kort could feel the tension echoing his on the other side of the bed. It only thickened as the minutes dragged past, proving that no amount of avoiding the subject would make it go away.

"You can't control yourself." Kort caved, knowing he wouldn't relax until it was said. "And now you're thinking we need to leave."

"You must be thinking it, too," Jakob retorted, ducking out of actually answering. "Or you wouldn't be saying it."

"I'm saying I don't want to go," Kort corrected him, annoyed to be right. "I'm tired of all these games, Jakob. I just want to be with Kristen."

"And you will," Jakob assured him before conceding, "eventually. And I'm not the one playing all the games. If you want them to stop, we have to leave."

"I don't get that." Kort shook his head, thinking how both Kristen and Jakob liked to complicate things unnecessarily. "Why can't we just tell her we need her, that we're tired of everything. You know, honesty. Isn't that supposed to be the best policy?"

"Not when you're dealing with a woman."

Kort grunted at that, not exactly in the mood to argue Jakob's grim statement. "And what will leaving accomplish? Besides petrifying my dick and enraging my wolf?"

"It will prove to Kristen that she needs us just as badly as we need her." Jakob sighed, shifting restlessly and provoking a mutter from their mate. He waited a second, only speaking once Kristen had settled down.

"She never wanted a mate, Kort. As a Narin, she would have had the right to pick who she wanted, but we took that choice from her. That's why she's mad, and only giving the choice back to her will make it right."

"We can't undo the mating." Kort reminded his brother of the obvious. "Nobody can, and I'll kill whoever comes up with a way for Kristen to try. She's ours."

"And we're hers," Jakob retorted instantly. "That's why we have to leave, because she needs to figure that out. The quickest way for that to happen is to show her what life without us would be like."

"Maybe that's not what she needs convincing of," Kort retorted. "It's like you said, she had the right to pick, and she knows we never did. You ever think that might be what's bothering her?"

"No," Jakob answered bluntly. "And I doubt Kristen cares about how we feel."

- "Sure she does." Kort rolled his head to catch his brother's grim stare. "She's been using sex against us because that's the only thing she thinks we care about."
- "That's not exactly a compliment," Jakob pointed out dourly.
- "No, but it also proves that she wants us to want her," Kort pointed out. "For most women that goes deeper than sex. In mates it always does."
- "So you think she's been using sex against us because she thinks that will make us want her on a deeper level?" Jakob smirked. "Actually that does sound like a woman, but Kristen should know better."
- "Should doesn't mean she does." Jakob couldn't argue that point either, emboldening Kort to press further. "We need to prove to her that this is more than just about sex, and I don't think abandoning her to here is going to accomplish that."
- Jakob didn't say anything for a moment, but finally relented with a begrudging acceptance that Kort might have a point. "I guess."
- "There is no guess to it. You don't prove to a woman that you love her by walking away from her unless you're in some stupid, hoity-toity movie." Kort glanced down at Kristen's soft smile and found his mood lightening as his own lips lifted.
- "Don't be so quick to dismiss the idea," Jakob warned him. "I got a feeling Kristen likes hoity-toity movies."
- "Probably." Kort would live through watching them if it made her happy. "That doesn't change the fact that we have to show her that this isn't about her giving up Peter or her job or her old life, but about building a new one with us, a better one with us. And I still don't think leaving accomplishes that."
- "No," Jakob whispered, his tone sounding like the afterthought of whatever idea rolled through his head. It held him silent for a moment and had Kort's gaze lifting from Kristen's in worry of what would come out of Jakob's mouth.
- "I think leaving might accomplish it." Jakob smiled. "In fact, I think it's just in how we tell her."
- "Tell her?" Kort snorted. "I haven't agreed to anything to tell her about."

"But you will," Jakob assured him. "Because we're going to leave, and Kristen is going to come with us. I have a plan I think you're going to like."

Kort sighed, knowing he wouldn't win this argument. "How long you think that will take?"

"Hopefully just a few days."

Kort snorted, thinking their stubborn mate would need more than that. Well, he told her he'd endure any pain. Apparently, Kristen meant to test that theory.

"Fine," Kort admitted defeat with ill grace. "Now tell me about this plan."

"Would you at least tell me where we are going?" Chapter 25

Kristen told herself she was a fool to let Jakob guide her out of the McBanes' house. He was up to something, something no good given the gleam in his eyes. The wicked gleam assured her that the hammer she'd been waiting to fall these past few days had finally started to swing. She had every right to fear the oncoming impact.

After everything that had happened Thursday night, she'd had every reason to expect that their argument and punishments would continue Friday morning. Actually, Kristen had woken up determined to tell them she didn't have time for battle that morning. She had work to get to, or escape to.

Not that she'd gotten around to enforcing her rehearsed argument. Instead of going on about Peter or trying to even the score from the previous evening, Kort and Jakob had ravished her outright. Taking her separately, together, until her legs had trembled and she didn't even have the strength to get up and take a shower.

Kristen should have known they weren't that forgiving. While she'd lain there buzzing with pure joy, Jakob and Kort had ambushed her, explaining with all seriousness that they wouldn't be touching her again until she was under their roof, in their bed, in their house. Arrogant bastards thought she wanted sex more than them.

The very idea had been so laughable that morning, Kristen had all but dismissed their ultimatum as a pathetic attempt to save their wounded male pride. It wouldn't last because she could hold out. When it came to sex, Kristen might have been right, but that wasn't all they'd started denying her.

They'd been so busy with their plan Kristen hadn't actually seen either of her mates for more than maybe five minutes in the past two days. Two days that had started to feel like years, they'd ticked by so slowly. Every second of every minute of every hour dragged by, leaving her caught between anticipating the possibility of seeing them in the next one and the depression that they hadn't shown for the current one.

Jakob and Kort might be annoying as hell, but they also made her world light up. Like they did now. Even knowing she was being led to the slaughter, Kristen couldn't resist the temptation to follow Jakob out the door. Not that she went without complaint.

"I already told you it's a surprise." Jakob's oversized hand kept her much smaller one protected in his grasp. The warm, callused palm rubbed against hers, causing little rivulets of pleasure to roll down her spine.

"We're walking there?" It was the obvious conclusion when Jakob began escorting her down the long drive. Still, her surprise had the statement coming out like a question.

"We're just going a few houses down."

confident in her decision to go with him. "Haven't you ever enjoyed waiting for the surprise?"

"Friends of yours?" Kristen eyed him doubtfully, sensing a trap. "You are impatient." Jakob smirked, not making her any more

"Not when you and Kort have been acting all secretive these past few days." She added just enough annoyance to her tone to make sure he didn't get any ideas.

Kristen suspected he just might be. His thumb had shifted to rest over her wrist, right against her beating pulse. He'd already started a small, mesmerizing rub over that sweet spot. The tiny little ripples of pleasure cascaded up her arm and through her body.

"You'll enjoy it." Jakob winked. "Trust me."

"I'll trust you when you swear that you will not be calling me cupcake at any point tonight."

"That's insulting," Jakob huffed. "I shouldn't have to promise. I'm your mate, and you should trust me."

* * * *

Kristen couldn't help but smile at the tinge of indignation that colored his stiff response. Jakob could be so cute when he got huffy. Nor did she miss

that he hadn't promised, which probably did mean his plan ended with her tied up, chained up and begging while he cupcaked her ass.

Or maybe it would be her pussy. Her cunt volunteered that optimistic hope as it creamed in anticipation of whatever Jakob had planned. Certainly her pride wouldn't object given she'd be clearly tricked into submission. Whatever Jakob's surprise, Kristen really didn't have anything to fear.

"I do trust you, Jakob," Kristen assured him sweetly. "It's that oversized bulge in your pants that I don't trust."

"That oversized bulge just wants to be your friend."

"Does it?"

"It likes you," Jakob promised her. "It means you no harm."

"Just remember to keep it on its leash." Kristen wouldn't be charmed by his grin. "A leash you put on it."

"Ah," Jakob sighed. "But you're the one keeping it on the leash."

Kristen clenched her jaw, fighting the seductive charm of his voice going lower, deeper as he turned to whisper in her ear. "At some point, sweetheart, you're going to have to come over and let it off to play."

Kristen dug her heels in and came to a stop. She knew how to handle this, knew she had to handle it right up front. The problem was that was getting harder and harder. Jakob wasn't the only one who wanted to play. For now, though, she still had enough resistance left to sound authentic when she snapped back at him.

"That is not being on your best behavior."

"Give a man a break, Kristen. You're not naked and moaning in the middle of the street. I consider that a hell of an accomplishment."

"Accomplishment? You think I'd really let you strip me here in the middle of the—" Kristen stopped short. Jakob's eyebrow had risen slightly, his lips kicking up into a smirk. Best not to turn this into a challenge. She didn't have the defenses left to hold him off.

"We're here."

"What?" Kristen looked around the street before focusing in on the large,

darkened house in front of her. "Here?"

"Come on." Jakob began pulling her up the driveway.

"It doesn't look like anybody is home."

"That's because we're not inside."

"What? Wait a minute. Is this your house?" Kristen gasped. "That's not even creative, and I'm not going in there so you claim victory and ravish me.

She said it. She meant it, but she didn't put up any resistance as he prodded her up the front steps. "Just relax, Kristen. It's not what you think."

"It's exactly what I think," she argued. "You said you wouldn't touch me unless I was under your roof, and now look, you've dragged me all the way here. It doesn't take a genius to figure out what for. Why don't you just admit...it's empty."

Her indignation ran flat when he finally managed to open the front door. She could see straight through the massive great room and right out the towering windows on the other side of the house. It was a breathtaking view. The floor-to-ceiling windows framed the pink and purple hues of the sunset over the marsh with such warmth and vibrancy that it almost drew her straight to them.

"You like?" Jakob asked from behind her as her hands smoothed over the glass.

Kristen looked back at him. Her eyes traveling across the distance, realizing just how easily he'd lured her into his den. Now he filled in the doorway, blocking her only exit. She could almost sense his anticipation.

"It's an amazing view."

She turned back to admire the rest of the room, all but dismissing him. Completely vacant, it appeared oversized with a kitchen made for feeding a small army off to the right. Granite countertops, stainless steel appliances, it looked as empty and void of all personality as the great room did.

"Is this really your house, or did you just buy it?"

"It's where we live, but technically the pack owns the house."

Kristen nodded her understanding. It was all part of their strange Lycanlike pack culture. At this point, she didn't object because this place was gorgeous, like a dream home she hadn't dared to fantasize about. Jakob's deep voice encouraged her to dream.

"It has five bedrooms, four baths, and an extra two rooms that can be used as offices or game rooms or whatever you want to make them into."

"Me?"

Jakob ignored her question and gestured down the hall. "You want me to give you the grand tour?"

"I don't know." Kristen glanced down the darkened hall. "Are there any more surprises waiting for me?"

"I just want to show you the house."

Reluctantly, she gave him her hand and let him lead her into the shadow mysteries of the house. It didn't remain a mystery any more than it did a dark suggestion. Flipping on the lights as he went, Jakob showed her one oversized bedroom after another, one opulent bathroom after another, until they finally came to the end of the hall and the stairs that led up to the two extra rooms.

Only one door remained unopened on this floor, and as Jakob turned the knob, Kristen held her breath. Just as she suspected, the last bedroom in the series was an even grander version of the rest. Here the ceiling soared up to a point.

"Wow." Kristen couldn't help but be impressed. This room had it all, elegant architecture, amazing views, a platform for the massive bed seated just opposite the windows.

"This is what you will wake up to every morning as our mate." There could be no hiding the pride in Jakob. Whatever uncertainties that had kept him a little nervous had faded. He knew he'd scored with this room.

"Wait until you see the bathroom."

She could imagine, but first she had to take her eyes off the bed. The only piece of furniture in the whole house, and it was already made.

"I don't get it."

"What?" Jakob hesitated on the other side of the room.

"Why the bed?"

"What do you mean? Why the bed?"

"There is no other furniture in this house, but I can smell Kort and your scents everywhere. This is your house, but where is everything?"

Jakob smiled gently as he closed in on her. "This was Kort's and my house, but now it's ours."

Kristen shook her head, confused and softening beneath the look in his eyes. "I still don't get it."

"We're going to make a new life together, Kristen. Not yours or mine, but ours." His words warmed some part of her that had been stiff and cold for the past two weeks. She could offer no resistance, but melted into his touch as he cupped her cheeks.

"But the furniture?" Kristen whispered, not wanting to break the spell she could feel weaving its way around this moment.

"I had it packed up and sent to a storage unit. We can go through it together and figure out what we want to keep and what we want to change. There will be a lot of changes in the future, Kristen. For all of us."

"You're willing to change? For me?"

"For only you. Don't you understand, Kristen? It's important to me that you're happy. If you're not happy, then I'm not happy."

"How do I know that isn't just a line?"

"Well, you're going to have to trust me." He started this little hypnotic rubbing motion with his thumb over her lips. "Haven't we earned a little trust?"

They had. They had earned a little bit of trust. She'd earned a release from all the tension staying away from them had caused her. Kristen couldn't fight it anymore. Her defenses had been worn down not just by Jakob's sweet words or grand gesture. Her own desires had been pecking away at her willpower for days.

There was simply nothing left to hold on to but Jakob. She wanted to hold on to him. He was solid and strong and so damn appealing to all her senses. When his head dipped, she couldn't have been sure it hadn't been her who had moved first.

It didn't matter. When their lips met, Kristen knew she wanted this, needed it.

Jakob brushed his lips over Kristen's gently. Very gently, giving her time to withdraw. Instead of moving backward, she pressed herself inward. Curving her body in to his, her arms twined around his neck. All signals were a go, but still he held back.

He feared rushing her and scaring her off. His plan had come together so well, too easily. He just didn't trust it. Slow and easy, that was the way to capture a wild mate. Slow and easy, it was the hardest thing he'd ever tried to do.

His muscles trembled under the strain as he traced the delicate curve of her mouth, teasingly sucking her lower lip. He captured the plump sweetness in his teeth, biting down ever so gently even as his fangs ached to be released, to be allowed to pierce and mark her once again as his.

Kristen whimpered under the restrained assault and pressed herself even closer against him, molding her curves perfectly into his angles. His cock jolted inside his jeans, his hips reflexively grinding against the softness of her stomach.

Another whimper preceded the tentative flick of a warm, wet tongue along his lips. The playful caress was an invitation he could no longer resist. He reached up to cup her face and hold her steady as his lips broke open over hers. The sweet exploration quickly flamed out of control.

Kristen matched his passion as he stroked deeper into her mouth. Their tongues tangled and danced until he felt like he was drowning in her taste. Just as it had been that first time, he couldn't get enough. He couldn't control the rampaging need for more.

He'd fuck her right now, standing right there, if he didn't have his damn clothes on. The layers of fabric saved her from the savage screwing that his cock wanted to give her. The wolf howled, growling at the leash he held it back with. He couldn't let the wildness break through. Not this time. This time was for Kristen.

That vow got lost in the static of pure lust that swamped him when her lips closed down over the tip of his tongue and sucked him straight into her moist depths. The sharp edge of her teeth scraped over his sensitive

taste buds, firing each one with a tinge of pain and too much pleasure for him to remain focused on holding the wolf back.

Deep down in his balls he could feel the punch of desire flare almost painfully hot as if he'd been tapped with a red-hot poker. His muscles tightened, tingling with the need to transform as a primal growl fluttered out of his chest. He felt the snap as the wolf began to bust free of the silken strands his control had become.

God bless her, Kristen didn't understand the danger she was in. If she had, she'd never have reached down to mold a hand over the hard length of his erection. With her hand encasing him, squeezing him, he could barely catch breath, much less think clearly. Thinking was a waste. Right now, all he wanted to do was to feel, to taste. His lips returned to hers again. A savage taking, he'd lost control of the beast. It reared its head, demanding its turn at plundering the sweet, moist depths of her mouth.

Delicious.

Her flavor only fueled the beast into more reckless behavior. There were still too many clothes in the way of the fucking he needed. The beast knew how to solve that problem, rip the damn fabric out of the way. He heard the tear of her shirt even as he recognized it was his hands curling over the edges of her collar. What control Jakob had disappeared in those moments.

The beast wouldn't be denied any longer. It wanted, and it would have. The rest of Kristen's clothes disappeared beneath his hands, shredded and forgotten the second smooth, silky skin teased his fingers. With a hard grip, he curled his fingers into the firm, wellrounded globe of her ass. He'd take her there again, but not now.

Now he would drown himself in a more rapturous heat. With a rough grip, his hands dipped and bit into her thigh. Dragging her upward, he lifted her until her soft heat pressed into his throbbing erection. Kristen returned the demand with one of her own. Wrapping her legs around his waist, she ground herself against him, igniting the wolf's savage need to mate. Mate now.

Jakob had no mind left to worry about making it to the bed. Dragging her to the floor, he pinned her beneath him, reveling in the lush feel of her curves. She was such a beauty, his mate. The sweetest cupcake he'd ever eaten.

With long, sensual swipes of his elongating tongue, he discovered the addictive taste of his mate's neck all the way down to the flushed, heaving

globes of her breasts. A nip at the tip of one lush globe had her moaning, arching as her hips flexed upward over the band of his jeans to grind her pussy into his stomach. The damp heat of her desire burned through the thin fabric of his T-shirt to scald his flesh with the proof of just how wet she was for him.

With the scent of arousing cream flooding his head, the erotic motion of her hips had him growling, clamping his hands over her waist and lifting her ass straight up until he could taste the intoxicating proof of her arousal on his lips. The wolf had no tolerance for hesitation, no room for restraint. The beast plunged its oversized tongue deep into the delicious cunt that had offered itself up to his feasting.

His mate groaned, twisting as her back flexed and her neck strained under the extreme arch he'd dragged her into. He growled back a warning to the woman to be still, to not resist or fight the tongue fucking he gave her. He wouldn't tolerate such defiance. This pussy was his. His to plunder, to savor, to taste and take at his leisure.

Even if his mate doubted, her cunt knew it. The long, velvety walls of her cunt tightened down around his tongue, sucking him deeper and fighting to hold on to him when he withdrew. His cock swelled with angry demand at the seductive motions of her sheath. Swelling with blood, the angry tyrant demanded release, release from his jeans, release to plunder her sweet depths and find release buried deep inside her.

His own jeans suffered his annoyance when his fingers came to rip at the zipper blocking his path. The stiff denim was no match for his claws, and he shredded the material until the cool air breathed over his naked flesh. Cold wasn't what he wanted. He wanted to bathe himself in his mate's liquid heat.

With a jerk, he forced her hips back down and plunged himself deep into his mate, eliciting a scream from her even as her cunt pulsed and wept over his invasion. Too absorbed in finally being able to touch heaven, he didn't have the attention to notice her response.

In that moment, all he could feel was the strange mixture of emotions buffeting him. The beast had never felt these things before—a sense of closeness, of perfect completeness as though they had truly become one. She was his mate, as precious a gift as any beast could hope to have. In that moment the wolf felt a gentleness it had never known.

His eyes drank in everything, savoring the sight of his woman flushed and panting, twisting with the hard tips of her breasts pebbled and becoming, and the beautiful sight of the swollen pink folds of her pussy split wide around the darken length of his cock. He'd never seen such an amazing sight, never dreamed of feeling it.

In a move that he wasn't expecting, his mate pushed herself off the floor. Her hands latched on to his shoulders as she used his solid strength to straighten up so that he no longer impaled her. Now she controlled the moment, sitting straight up on his lap with his cock filling her completely.

She caught his mouth in a questing, hungry kiss. Catching his lip in her teeth, she sucked it into her mouth at the same moment she flexed and fucked herself along his length. With the force of a lightning bolt striking him, pure heat shot down his spine to engulf his balls in an inferno of flames that licked their way down his cock, forcing him to move.

Taking control once again he began a slow, steady pattern of withdraw and return. He relished in the small moans of enjoyment that broke from her lips over his. She twisted and writhed, trying to force him to increase his speed. He wanted that, but he enjoyed the soft demands that she panted out.

Sweat beaded between his shoulders and trickled down his forehead as he exerted more control than he had ever expected himself to be capable of. The pain of holding back was worth it as her sheath tightened even further around him, forcing him to forge through the tight fist of her muscles. Still he managed to hold back, to maintain his rigid control until she began to beg. Her lips fell from his to settle on his shoulder. In a perfect imitation of the mating bite, sharp, little fangs pierced his skin and broke the beast's willpower.

With that tiny little bite she shattered him, reducing him to a thing of wild need. He gave in to the unquenchable hunger plaguing him and began to pound into her helplessly. Faster, harder, deeper until the sweat rolled off him in waves and his ears rang with the cries of her passion and the erotic slap of flesh against flesh.

Drawn to the mating mark he'd left on her weeks before, his lips locked over the healed wound. His tongue lapped at the sweet skin seconds before he pierced her with his fangs, driving his cock deeper than ever before at the exact same moment. Beneath him, his mate screamed as her cunt pulsed and spasmed into complete chaos.

The feel of his mate coming apart beneath him had the beast roaring seconds before its own release crashed down over him. The tidal wave of pleasure seared through flesh and bone to fill his soul with a primal sense of victory, possessiveness. She was his.

The satisfaction, both physical and emotional, had his balls swelling anew, firing out another shot of seed deep into her very womb even as the beast trembled and collapsed on top of his mate. If he'd been in wolf form, he'd have rolled onto his back for a long nap, so content was he.

The man, though, resurfaced, taking enough control to recognize Kristen's small body, flattened beneath his own, still twitched and trembled with the aftershocks of her own climax. Jakob rolled, taking Kristen with him so that she draped over him like a sweaty, heated blanket. The soft feel of her secure in his arms had him chasing down that nap the wolf had suggested.

His fingers followed his eyes to the mark on her shoulder. Blood swelled up from the puncture wounds as the skin around darkened into the deep, somber shades of a bruise. Unable to help himself, he leaned down to lick the small hurt clean. He heard the wolf growl in contentment and only realized that it was Kristen a second later when she curved inward, arching her neck to give his lips better access.

He nuzzled her abused skin gently, feeling a tenderness he'd never experienced before flood through him. Kristen was his mate, but she was more than that. In the past two weeks she'd slowly started to fuse into him, making him feel incomplete and strangely empty when she wasn't near.

He needed her. He would always need her. As his lips parted, his throat stumbled for the words to tell her how he felt, he heard the bedroom door slam open.

"You son of a bitch!"

Chapter 26

Kristen almost jumped out of her skin as Kort roared into the room. Jerking straight up, her eyes widened on the sight of her enraged mate bearing down on them. Kort looked more than pissed, not that he directed any of his anger at her. He didn't even spare her a glance as he stormed across the room.

"You swore you'd wait until I got back with dinner." Kort threw that accusation at Jakob, who didn't appear the least bit concerned.

"I lied," Jakob admitted honestly with a great deal of relish.

There would be blood spilt in a moment if Kristen didn't do something. Not that she had a lot of choices in how to stop the fight about to start. Scrambling to her feet as Kort finally pulled up to a stop in front of them, Kristen launched herself at him, using her body as a human shield. Before Kort could react, she plastered herself against his chest and wound her arms around his neck.

"You brought dinner? How sweet." Kristen smiled up at Kort's scowl and stretched to give him a kiss on the cheek. The small motion rubbed her naked curves into Kort's clothed hardness, sending tendrils of wicked delight racing over her skin. Before she could distract herself further with the delightful sensation, Kort proved that he was not as enamored as her.

"It's not sweet," Kort stubbornly corrected. "It was supposed to be romantic. We were supposed to have a nice dinner, an honest talk, and sex, together."

Jakob snorted, still languishing on the floor. "Kristen and I decided to skip to the sex part. More fun that way."

"I bet," Kort snapped, and for the first time actually appeared to notice Kristen. His gaze narrowed on her with obvious suspicion. "Did that bastard tell you he loved you?"

Kristen blinked, trying to absorb that question. Growled with a glare, it didn't feel like a confession so much as an accusation, but still they'd obviously meant to include that in their honest talk. Now the question was, did they mean it?

"Kristen," Jakob was suddenly on his feet, turning to her to meet his serious expression, "I love you." He didn't even take a breath before flipping Kort a triumphant smile. "There, I said it first. Now what you going to do?"

"Kristen," Kort growled over her shoulder, his hands settling on her waist as if to move her out of the way. "Go wait in bed for the victor."

"Excuse me?" She might not have been able to keep up with their testosterone laden insanity, but that sharp order snapped Kristen out of her confusion. Jerking free of Kort's hold, she turned to confront him with her scowl, intending to show her mate that he wasn't the only one who

could throw a tantrum.

"Do you want me to put my clothes back on and leave?" she demanded to know. It was easy to imply that's what she'd do when Kristen knew neither man would let her make it to the door. They had her in their house now, and she didn't doubt they meant to keep her there.

At least the threat finally had Kort looking at her like the naked woman she was instead of some sack of feed in his way. Fist on hips, she thrust her pebble-tipped breasts out at him, trying to appear capable of carrying through with her threat no matter how sticky with arousal her inner thighs were.

"Because that's exactly what I'll do if the two of you don't stop ruining my moment."

"Yeah, Kort," Jakob tossed out with a smirk. "You're ruining our afterglow, so why don't you go make yourself useful and set the table?"

"Jakob—"

Her reprimand disappeared beneath her shriek as the room suddenly flew past her. One second she was turning on her antagonizing mate, and the next she was bouncing over the mattress. The impact cut off her scream in time to hear the meaty thuds of something getting hit more than once.

Kristen barely managed to roll to a sit before Kort was on her, leaving Jakob crumpled on the floor behind him. Her last rational thought was that Kort had hurt his brother. Then she forgot all about Jakob as Kort pressed her deeper into the bed.

His heated breath fanned over her nipples, making them pucker. Her mind emptied over everything but anticipating the moment when his kiss would consume her tender tits. Firm but gentle, his lips broke over her swollen peaks, making Kristen sigh and arch up into the sweet, teasing suction of his mouth.

Expecting to be as roughly ravished as she'd been moments ago, the tender explorations of Kort's kiss filled her with the warmth of being cherished. The soft, husky sensation bloomed through her lust, making her twist with needs long unfulfilled. They'd played, they'd fucked, but they'd never truly loved.

Tonight would be different. Kort promised her that and more, his soft,

husky whispers melting over her, into her and making her twist beneath the velvety tongue licking its way up her breast to Kristen's other torrid peak. Every kiss along the way, Kort told her how much he adored her, how beautiful he found her, and just how much he loved her.

From the way his hands trembled as they swept over her body, Kristen knew he meant it. She was chosen. All her worries and fears faded under one single concern. Kristen wanted Kort to know he was accepted, that she wouldn't deny him anymore.

Curling her fingers into his hair, she tugged his head up, leaving her tits furrowing against the rough scrape of his shirt. A question flashed in Kort's confused gaze, a worry darkening his eyes and making her ache to assure him she'd never reject him again.

"Let me." Kristen smiled, answering his unspoken question with the press of her body.

Without resistance, but still clearly uncertain, Kort allowed her to roll him over, reversing their positions. Settling over the hard planes of his chest, Kristen nuzzled her lips into his neck and breathed deep of the intoxicating musk making her light-headed with lust. He smelled too good not to take a taste.

With little licks, Kristen savored his earthy flavor, chasing after the shudders her kisses caused with little nibbles. Kristen peppered the tiny love bites across his neck, feeling the tension drain completely from the hard body pinned beneath her. It was a powerful aphrodisiac to have a man so strong and full of arrogance submit to the soft whisper of her lips over his skin.

"Let me show you how loved you are."

Emboldened when he answered with a groan, Kristen lifted her chin to brush a kiss over Kort's lips before dipping back to trace the line of his collar to the first button on his shirt. She could feel his skin flushing beneath her lips, feel how his heart jerked against her breast before taking off in a thunderous race when she popped the button free with her teeth.

One by one, the little plastic discs holding his shirt together disappeared into the bedding as Kristen traced the smooth line of skin that dipped all the way down to his belly button only to come out hairy on the other side. Rubbing her cheek into the soft fuzz that grew out of his waistband, Kristen teased him with a swipe of her tongue, eliciting a groan.

The harsh sound sucked in enough breath to pull his stomach taut and make a tiny gap beneath his belt buckle for her to explore. Pure heat greeted her tongue, radiating out of the massive erection straining for attention beneath his jeans.

Soon, real soon, she'd unwrap that treat and explore all his hardness, but first Kristen wanted to enjoy all the bronze skin stretched taut over the endless, rippling muscles covering his torso. Kort was magnificent, and he was hers.

After all the weeks of denying herself the joy of touching him, Kristen's hands couldn't stay still. They slid up his chest, brushing his shirt aside as she lifted onto her knees, making room for her touch to roam over his chest. He felt hot and smooth beneath her fingers, his nipples sensitive to their rolling flicks. He responded as she did all those times he'd tormented her tender tits, groaning and arching into her hands.

Kristen couldn't help but take a taste. Kort growled, jerking under the first teasing roll of her tongue. Pushed apparently too far to remain passive anymore, his hands shifted, coming up to cover her breasts in hard grips that had Kristen trying to tug free before he stole her sanity and took control of the moment.

"No." Kristen reached for his wrists, surprised when he let her pull his hands away from her swollen globes. "I want to love you."

"Then allow me."

Jakob's order growled over her shoulder as the bed suddenly dipped beneath his weight. Rough and hot, his palms slid around to cover her breasts, using his hold to force her back to her knees and against hard heat.

"No, Jakob."

Kristen whimpered her objection, fighting the pleasure streaking out from the nipples he caught in his teasing grip. He rolled the sensitive buds, making her mew. The fingers she'd wrapped around his wrists went slack, clinging to him as he pinched and pulled her throbbing tits.

"I want—"

"To show Kort you love him," Jakob huskily finished for her. "Then show

him."

Kristen couldn't, could barely breath as her heart stilled over the slow descent of Jakob's hand. Her pussy swelled and creamed, greeting the first, blunt pass of his fingers over her slit with a shudder of delight. The sensation raced out of her cunt, sending a hard spasm of need through her whole body until it fell from her lips in a stuttered gasp.

Then his finger split open her wet folds to trap her clit beneath its callused tip, and Kristen forgot all about anything but the ecstasy whirling to greater and greater heights, spurred on by the relentless roll and pinch of Jakob's rough touch.

"You promised Kort you'd love him, cupcake."

Jakob's dark voice had her eyes opening, blinking as the world wavered before her. Slowly it came into focus. Only because Jakob gentled his touch, giving her a chance to breathe and realize Kort had freed his erection. The long, hardened cock looked angry all flushed red and swollen with need. It stared at her, weeping from its unblinking gaze.

Tempted to taste, Kristen leaned down and licked the evidence of his arousal from the head of his cock. Kort growled, going tense as his gaze hardened with predatory intent. He wanted, and she would give. Keeping her eyes locked on his, Kristen obeyed the command in his silent stare, brushing another kiss over his sensitive head.

A wave of feminine satisfaction moved through her as his lips curled into another feral snarl. Strung taut with need, he was at her mercy now. Kristen didn't intend on showing any as she gave herself over to the pleasure of enjoying her mate's hardened flesh. Nuzzling her cheek against his thick cock, she let her eyes drift closed as Kort's growls started rolling out one right after another.

Curious and intent on enjoying her treat, Kristen ignored the threat in his tone and took her time, lifting her hands to explore his hot masculine flesh with soft, slow strokes. She followed her fingers with teasing, chaste kisses, tracing a line all the way down his pulsing dick to his silky balls.

With a tender touch, she cupped his velvety sacs, learning the way he liked to be touched and that he really preferred being sucked. Trapping one tender sac between her lips, Kristen made Kort howl and Jakob growl. The hand softly toying with her breast abandoned her aching flesh to bury itself in her hair.

With a hard jerk, Jakob pulled her lips from his brother's ball and back up to Kort's weeping cock head. "You want to suck something, cupcake. Suck this."

Kristen eagerly obeyed that order. Licking up the juice gathering along the slit in Kort's cock head, she savored the salty fluid before tasting her way down the rest of his cock. Her lips split wide around his bulbous head and followed until his hard head bumped into the back of her throat.

Kristen swallowed, sucking in a little bit more of Kort's thick shaft and delighting over the way he groaned and jerked beneath her. Clamping her lips tight around his wide dick, she pulled back slowly, dragging another moan from his lips.

"Again, cupcake. Make him sweat."

Those were the kind of orders Jakob should always give, Kristen thought as she took Kort deep into her mouth once again. She took her time, tormenting him as he had her so often. She explored every inch of his hardness, learning all the ways he liked to have his dick licked, sucked, and even nipped.

A bold scrape of her teeth over the blood-gorged head of his cock finally snapped Kort's control. He ripped her head free of Jakob's hand, taking control over her motions and forcing her to suck him as fast and deep as she could. Taking him as he commanded, Kristen still had the ability to keep him from what he desired most.

Leaving her lips relaxed around his pumping shaft, she teased him by outracing his hand and fucking him faster than he could keep up. Tickles and giggles bubbled in her belly as Kort went wild beneath her, jerking and bucking, trying to force a release in all the same ways she had so many times when he'd held her pinned down with his mouth devouring her cunt.

So lost in the joy of tormenting her mate, Kristen forgot about Jakob and how he didn't like her to have control of anything. Not even his brother. Jakob reminded her of that fact with a single swipe of his tongue through the molten folds of her pussy. Aching from neglect, her cunt blossomed under Jakob's mouth, eagerly accepting his kiss.

That quickly he wiped away all her focus and concentration, leaving her breathlessly awaiting the next bold, adventuresome lick of his tongue. That velvety intruder dance over her intimate flesh, twirling over her clit before

dipping in to tease the spasming walls of her cunt. Kristen moaned, flexing her hips and opening her pussy up wide for his feasting.

The small gesture had a growl vibrating over her sensitive folds a second before his mouth latched on to her clit, and he retaliated by giving her exactly what Kristen had wanted. Jakob was merciless, driving her insane as he twisted and rolled her clit, making the tender bud throb so hard the pulses echoed through her whole body.

She didn't fight the beast, giving herself over to the pleasure and letting it consume her even as her mates commanded her. With a hard tug, Kort reminded her that his dick still waited. Denying him no more, she sucked down hard on his cock. Matching the relentless tug of Jakob's lips on her clit, she shared the ecstasy rolling through her with Kort, letting him fuck her mouth hard and fast.

Together they raced toward the final detonation, when the pleasure would explode and consume them both. Then it pounded through her, hammered home by the sudden, deep penetration of a hard, hot cock forcing her cunt wide around its girth. She screamed as Jakob fucked his thick length deep into her spasming pussy, driving himself all the way into her clenching depths.

Then he fucked her, hard and fast, riding the waves of her release to the sweetest of peaks, but not the highest. Despite all the pleasure, Kristen needed more. She needed both her mates, needed to feel them buried deep inside her as they all came together.

Dimly aware of Kort's roar of satisfaction or the seed she swallowed as his cock jerked and pulsed between her lips, Kristen dragged her head up, pulling free of Kort's slackening grip. Jakob had eased his motions, letting her release relax back into a seething pool of wanton need.

His grip remained firm, the sawing motions of his cock inside her cunt hard. Only his tempo had slowed. It followed her when she crawled forward, making her knees tremble as every inch of hardness she pulled free of slammed back into her a second later. He fucked her hard enough to make her breath catch, but too slow to make her heart race.

"Please," Kristen panted, the rest of the words lost in a whimper as Kort's wide palms shaped themselves over her breasts.

"Please what, cupcake?" Jakob growled. "You want Kort to suck those tits while I fuck this pussy, or maybe, you'd like him to lick your clit while I ream

this cunt?"

Kristen shuddered at his wicked suggestions, wanting them but still wanting something more. Mindless with the need for the feel of both of them, Kristen tried again to crawl over Kort's still-hard cock. Unable to form full sentences, Kristen gave in to her primitive side and grasped Kort's sticky dick in a hard grip.

"This." Gasping, she flexed her hips and met Jakob's hard thrust. "That. Both."

Apparently, they didn't need any more explanations than that. As if they understood the primal need driving her, Kristen suddenly found herself being dragged up Kort's hard body and off Jakob's thick length. Before she could do more than whimper, Kort settled her down over his cock, standing tall and proud as it waited to slide deep into her pussy.

Assured they intended to fulfill her command, Kristen eagerly spread her knees wider around Kort's thighs, letting her weight sink her all the way down his dick until his balls kissed the edges of her pussy lips. The position opened her ass for Jakob's invasion, but not enough.

Wanting to break Jakob's control and knowing just how to do it, Kristen reached around and split them wider in blatant invitation. On cue, Jakob snarled and surged forward, the blunt head of his cock coming to press against her clenched entrance. He didn't hesitate, but forged inward, making her body buzz as he fed her one delicious inch of hard dick after another until Kristen was overfilled by her mates.

She couldn't breathe without causing some minor shift that got magnified into an avalanche of pleasure as her cunt and ass burned from the friction her motions caused. The sensation only heightened her need for more. It simply wasn't enough to take her mates so deep, now she needed them to move.

"Well, cupcake?" Jakob's balls slapped against her ass, his fingers curling into her hip as he held her still. "You gonna tell us or make us fuck it out of you?"

Kristen's lips lifted in a wicked smile as she glanced back at Jakob's grimly set features. Tensed and braced, he didn't have but one little thread of willpower holding him back. That was one more than Kristen wanted him to cling to.

"Fuck it out of me."

That taunt drew feral snarls from both her mates. With a flex of his hips, Jakob dragged his cock back over the sensitive walls of her ass only to set them ablaze when he slammed back into her tight channel. Kristen arched under the impact, squealing as fissures of delight erupted all along her spine.

"Again," Kristen panted out when he held frustratingly still.

"Is that what you want, cupcake?" Jakob growled. "Or maybe you like it this way."

Kort imitated his brother's motions, making her moan as her hips arched into the pounding thrust of his cock burying itself full-length into her spasming cunt. Another wave of pure bliss rocketed through her, a taste of what could be if only they'd start moving together.

"Both! Please," Kristen pleaded, uncaring that they made her beg. All she cared about was the pleasure. She chased after it, bouncing and pumping her hips as she tried to force them to repeat their motions. It didn't take more than that to earn her a twin set of groans and the sudden shift of her mates around her.

No longer capable of teasing, Kort and Jakob gave in to her wanton demands. Shifting to fuck her in alternating strokes, their tempo quickly escalated, leaving her no second to breathe around the endless shudders of ecstasy starting to ripple through Kristen. Trapped between them, she writhed and cried out as everything inside her built to bursting.

"Oh, God!" Kristen screamed as her body went tense under the most extraordinary bolt of rapture. It blossomed with such beauty through her that Kristen felt warmed all the way to her soul. More than anything she didn't want to be alone in that emotion.

"Kort, Jakob, oh, God, Hove you both so much."

With her words, she felt both of her men go tense, their muscles shuddering under the impact of the same storm leaving Kristen trembling in their grasp. The feel of her mates' release washing through her, roaring over her, sent a second orgasmic wave crashing through her, and Kristen cried out as her vision exploded into a sea of color flashes.

For what felt like an eternity Kristen floated in an endless sea of bliss.

Slowly the tides washed her back to reality's shore, leaving her trapped in a sweaty pile of her mates' limbs. Still buried deep inside her, two thick cocks stood at attention, waiting for the next round. That thought brought a smile to Kristen's lips, because she knew neither Jakob nor Kort would ever grow tired of this.

Neither would she.

"I love you, cupcake," Jakob murmured, planting a wet kiss on her shoulder.

"Goes double for me, honey." Kort yawned. "I love you like the dickens."

That gave Kristen a moment of pause, and she cracked an eye to study Kort. "And what exactly are the dickens?"

"I take it you're not going to let me kill these boys, are you?" Epilogue

Kristen smiled at Derek's disgruntled tone. He looked like a petulant child who'd been denied his favorite treat. Not that he fixed his dark expression on her. No, Derek's eyes remained locked on Kort and Jakob, who stood on the opposite side of the study glaring back at him.

"And I'm not going to let you hurt them anymore, either," Kristen informed her twin, drawing his dirty look her way.

"Spoilsport."

"Look at it this way, they enjoying hitting each other," Kristen assured Derek. "They really don't need your help in adding to their collection of endless bruises. They may actually manage to kill each other one day."

"It won't be the same if I don't get to be the one doing the killing," Derek grumbled. "And for the record, I wasn't thinking of bruises but more like broken and bloody."

Kristen shot her brother a dirty look for obviously relishing that idea. It had been nearly a week since she'd moved in with Kort and Jakob. While they still had their issues to work on, not even Kristen could deny the strange glow she'd taken on.

She'd also lost nearly four pounds thanks to their daily carnal exercise routine. That kind of pleasure more than made up for losing her comforting floral comforter. Kort refused to allow it in their bedroom, claiming the

bunnies embroidered along the hemline watched him wherever he went.

It unnerved him enough to not be able to perform his mately duties. Not that Kristen believed him, but she'd traded her bunnies for the ox head Kort had wanted to hang over the mantle and the football jerseys Jakob thought made fine wall art.

"I think everybody is here." Finally finished greeting the unwanted guests piling into JD's and Caleb's study, Claire came to a stop in front of them. Kristen could see the tired strain on her sisterin-law's face despite the smile she forced as she stepped forward to hug Kristen.

"Hey, you. I haven't seen you in a few weeks." Releasing Kristen, Claire stepped back to give her a knowing glance. "I'd ask how it was going, but that glow speaks for itself."

"Don't, Claire," Derek growled, his eyes narrowing back in on Kristen's mates. "Don't remind me."

"Hmmm," Claire murmured as she pretended to give Kristen a hard study. "I'm almost jealous. Apparently twice the men double the glow."

"Enough," Derek snapped, appearing to completely forget about Kristen as he stepped in to threaten his mate. "Unless, of course, you want to be dragged home to find out how good it feels to be fucked with your ass packed full of cock."

"Plastic or real?" Kort asked that unwise question as he sidled up to Kristen. His arm slipped around her waist as Jakob's settled over her shoulder, her other mate appearing on her other side.

"Because, you know, there is a difference." Jakob paused to consider his own suicidal words before shrugging. "Or at least with Covenanters there is."

"Just give me more of a reason, boy."

"I need silence."

That sharp command cut through whatever antagonizing thing her mates thought to say next. Delivered in a clear, perfect pitch, it drew everybody's gazes to the small woman whose regal bearing matched her tone. Derek had explained that she was some kind of witch or sorceress.

Her name was Sasha. She'd worked with Claire before she'd met Derek, back when Claire worked for The Masters of Cerberus. The company name sounded as ominous as their mission statement. Then again, Kristen considered any statement that used words like demons and devils to be pretty grim sounding.

Fortunately, Sasha and her boss, a Lycan named Big Mike, hadn't come to the lowcountry to chase down another demon-possessed psycho killer. Today they were playing more the role of ghost busters than exorcist.

"I feel like an idiot."

Cal issued that complaint from the depths of the oversized cushions of the couch. Above him Sasha waved her hands, stirring the air with her fingers as if searching for something. They stilled for a second at the sound of Cal's voice, starting up again only to stop a second later when Tex responded to his brother's grievance.

"Yeah?" Tex smirked. "You look like one, too. Ceremonial robes are not your color."

"Hush," Sash hissed. "This is a delicate procedure, and I need to focus."

Cal snorted at that, clearly unconcerned with the sorceress's reprimand. "I don't know why I got stuck doing this."

"Because Kate picked you." Tex clearly relished that fact. "And we don't argue with Kate, now do we?"

Kristen didn't have all the details, but knew that Claire's old companion, Kate the ghost, had taken up residence in the McBane house. Though Tex and Cal were the only ones who could see her, Claire had explained that didn't mean Kate couldn't see everybody else. Everybody and everything they did, which put some color in Kristen's cheeks.

"Does he have to be here?" Cal jerked a finger at Tex, spitting his question in Sasha's direction.

"I told you," the woman ground out between clearly clenched teeth. "We need him to verify that the spirit is in the room. Now please be quiet."

Not appeased and incapable of obeying that order, Cal waved at Claire and argued with Sasha. "I thought she was all buddy-buddy with the damn ghost. Why can't she look for the bitch?"

"I wouldn't talk that way about the woman who's going to be inhabiting your body in a moment." Tex advised his brother with no sincerity in his tone, making Kristen wonder if they would ever shut up.

"I can't see her." Claire cut into their sniping, clearly as irritated as Kristen with the ferals' disrespectful attitude. "Not anymore."

"Don't worry, sweets." Derek soothed Claire, tugging her close into his side so he could rub her back. "In a moment, you'll be able to talk to her."

"If everybody will shut the hell up," JD clarified with his normal graciousness. "Now maybe we can actually start, which means we can finish and all of you can get the hell out of my house."

Everybody turned pointed gazes on the ferals, waiting to see if either intended to actually obey that command. With a smile, Tex held his hands up in silent surrender while Cal glared at the entire room, clearly sulking. Probably because he really did look like an idiot. Tex had it right. Purple was not their color.

"Okay then." Sasha forced a tight smile, her hands lifting over Cal once more. "All is silent."

So it was until Tex thought he'd pass out from boredom. It kind of looked like Cal already had. Stretched out on the couch, his twin looked relaxed and peaceful as the sorceress continued to hum softly over him. This whole thing, the robes, the humming, the waving of the hands seemed a little hokey to Tex.

He held silent, though, hopeful that they could actually get Kate into Cal's body. He felt pretty certain that the ghost would do something either horribly humiliating to Cal or maybe extremely painful. Either way, Tex figured on it being quite a show, which it was not so far.

Disappointed, he'd begun to think the ghost had chickened out when he began to feel the ticklish sensation on his neck. Looking up, he didn't have to look around to find Kate standing right next to him.

"Well, hello there."

Typical, cranky apparition, she shot him a one-finger greeting that amused Tex. Kate had a bad mood brewing, and soon she'd have full use of Cal's body. That had to be an interesting combination.

"She's here?" Claire whispered that question, drawing Kate's glance in her direction.

"Yep." Tex nodded. "And she's looking at you. Oh, now she's not. Now she's looking at Cal like a ripe piece of beef. Oh, she flipped me the bird again."

"I need to know where she is," Sasha cut off Tex's commentary with a tight, annoyed tone. This was no time to piss off the woman that was going to help Tex enjoy watching Kate take her revenge on Cal.

"She's right her." Tex pointed, tracing a line out as Kate raised her arm toward Sasha. "Her hand here."

Giving Tex a suspicious glance, the sorceress took one of Cal's hands in her own before tentatively reaching out her other to where Tex had gestured. Nothing happened for a second, making it all that much more startling when both Sasha and Cal suddenly gasped. The sorceress flushed and shivered, a ripple moving through her into Cal.

Then it was over, and Sasha's arms fell to her side as she stumbled back. The tension in the room mounted as everybody stared at Cal, waiting to see if it had worked. Everybody but Tex. He didn't need time to tell him what his sense already had. Cal smelled wrong, felt wrong. It definitely wasn't his brother slowly rising to a sit.

"Kate?" Claire's tentative voice drew Cal's scowl in her direction. His mouth opened, forming words that had no sound. "I can't hear you? Why can't I hear him...her?"

Sasha shrugged, still recovering from the transfer. "I don't know. Whatever's blocking her spirit, it must not have been undone by the spell."

"If she can move the body, maybe she can write."

That somber suggestion came from a solemn tone of the large man hidden in the corner of the study. Tex had been introduced to the Lycan. They called him Big Mike, big not only meaning some hightitled position in whatever the hell company he worked for, but also a statement of his sheer size.

"It's possible," Sasha agreed. "Only one way to find out."

Eager as his twin to empty their house of guests, Caleb already had a pad and pen in Cal's hand before Sasha could finish speaking. Kate fumbled with both for a moment before figuring out how to get Cal's fingers to work

properly.

Then she couldn't be bothered to pause as the pen flew across the page, leaving behind a line of neat cursive instead of Cal's customary chicken scratch. Tex leaned in, easily able to read the well-formed letters.

"Those are names," he whispered. "Two men, one woman."

That had a creepy feel that Caleb's comment didn't soothe. "I know those names. They've trained with me." His chin lifted, his gaze going to Big Mike as his tone softened with dread. "They're all lycans."

"Not the women." Tex corrected the obvious mistake in Caleb's reasoning. "They have to be mates. Death."

"What?" Caleb's startled gaze blinked back to him.

"It's what she just wrote." Tex nodded to the legal pad in Cal's hands. "Death. It comes."

"Death is coming?" Claire rushed forward, dropping to her knees in front of Cal to stare beseechingly up into his eyes. "Please, Kate. What's coming?"

Misery.

"Well," Tex stared at the word scrawled at the bottom of the page, "that can't be good."

THE END

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I live near Charleston, SC with my two biggies, my dogs. I have had a slightly unconventional life. Moving almost every three years, I've had a range of day jobs that included everything from working for one of the world's largest banks as an auditor to turning wrenches as an outboard repair mechanic. I've always regretted that we only get one life and have tried to cram as much as I can into this one.

Throughout it all, I've always read books, feeding my need to dream and fantasize about what could be. An avid reader since childhood, and as a latchkey kid, I'd spend hours at the library earning those shiny stars the librarian would paste up on the board after my name.

I credit my grandmother's yearly visits as the beginning of my obsession with romances. When she'd come, she'd bring stacks of romance books, the old fashion kind that didn't have sex in them. Imagine my shock when I went to the used bookstore and found out what really could be in a romance novel.

I've worked on my own stories for years and have found a particular love of erotic romances. In this genre, women are no longer confined to a stereotype and plots are no longer constrained to the rational. I love the 'anything goes' mentality and letting my imagination run wild.

I hope you enjoyed running with me and will consider picking up another book and coming along for another adventure.

Also by Jenny Penn

Ménage Amour:

Available at Deception

Ménage Everlasting: Tanners' Angel

Ménage Everlasting: Jamie's Revenge Ménage Everlasting: Kansas Heat

Ménage Amour: Cattleman's Club 1: Patton's Way Ménage Everlasting: Cattleman's Club 2: Hailey's Game Ménage Everlasting: Cattleman's Club 3: Rachel's Seduction Ménage Amour: Tasty Treats, Volume 1: Rachel's Seduction Ménage Amour: The Cowboy's Curse 1: Sweet Dreams Siren Classic: Sea Island Wolves 1: Mating Claire Ménage Amour: Sea Island Wolves 2: Taming Samantha Ménage Amour: Tasty Treats, Volume 3: Claiming Kristen

