



TRINITY BLACIO

RUNNING IN FEAR

CUPID'S VENOM

ra<sup>v</sup>enous  
*romance*

***Running in Fear: Cupid's Venom***

by Trinity Blacio

A Ravenous Romance® Original Publication

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Ravenous Romance®

100 Cummings Center

Suite 123A

Beverly, MA 01915

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Six years of living in a cell sure can be hell on a girl. Not to mention the fact that Cecil Windstream was only sixteen years old when her family was taken away to be experimented on. After escaping, all Cecil wanted to do was die, but unfortunately the snake DNA that had been injected into her wouldn't let her die, and either will her mates.

Tug Brimstone was an alpha wolf by nature, but even he wasn't as powerful as his Remi LeBlathe, their true alpha. Happy to be the new head master in their jointly owned BDSM nightclub, Tug wasn't looking for anyone, but fate had another plan for him. In less than two days, he finds he has three mates, two who are part snake and wolf, and now he's tempting fate by injecting snake DNA into his own body so he can mate with them.

Rory Sherwood is mate to Tug Brimstone, Clayton Glands, and Cecil Windstream. How can one tiny female who has been beaten, experimented on, and is a virgin overwhelm him to the point where he forgets his own name, let alone seriously changing his DNA, just so he can mate with her?

Clayton Glands, the muscle behind the National Council of Wolf shifters, has hidden a family secret all his life, but in less than twenty-four hours he has found his mates, exposed his secret, and gained a son.

In a one-week time span, three alpha males Tug, Rory, and Clayton must protect their female from the scientists Cecil had escaped. Not only is her life in danger, but also her son's, and the future of every shifter around. The war against good and evil is coming to a head and their journey is just part of the story to come.

## Chapter One

Tug leaned against the wall, scanning the club for any trouble. Once again it was packed with members from all three clans in the area. He was surprised the cats mixed so well with the wolves. He glanced over to Remi's table and met his gaze, nodding. Remi and his mates sat at the table watching the show.

Jaycee, the alpha female of their pack, had insisted the club be decorated for Valentine's Day next week. He smiled as he remembered Remi and Dane trying to convince her to leave their club alone, but she'd refused.

Dane and Remi did everything Jaycee asked, pampering her. Even now, she sat with her feet in Remi's lap as he rubbed her feet, as Dane's hand rested on the swell of her belly while Mark leaned over her chair and played with her breasts.

"I never thought I would see the day that Remi would be rubbing some woman's feet," Jason growled.

"He's making us look like wimps," The young wolf next to him said.

Tug reached over and clipped him in the head. "Watch your mouth," he snapped. "That man could rip your throat out before you even moved and he's our alpha, so show some respect. His wife is pregnant, so he has an excuse to pamper her. She's giving him the best gift any man could have: a child."

A shadow fell over his shoulder and he moaned, knowing it was Remi. He turned, lowering his gaze. "I'm sorry, Remi. He didn't mean it."

Remi grabbed the young wolf by the throat and lifted him up. "Never, and I mean never, doubt my ability as pack leader. One can display love for a woman and still be the most powerful man around." He threw him to the ground. "Go home, Jason. You're not old enough to be here anyway, and make sure your father knows what was said here."

Jason crawled towards the door as Tug opened it for him. As soon as he was outside, he ran.

Laughing, Tug closed the door and leaned against the wall. "So, how are the babies? Has the morning sickness stopped?" He glanced at his friend.

Leaning back against the wall, Remi sighed. "No, she's still sick every morning, but Marsha and the doctors have assured us the babies are fine." He laughed. "They sure do kick up a storm, though. I thought for sure this morning one of them was going to kick right out of her belly."

Tug laughed and glanced at the door as a group of wolves entered the building. They lowered their heads in respect to Remi and moved into the club. "So, are we still having the Valentine's Dance here next week?" He smirked.

"Knock it off, Tug. It's the least we can do for Jaycee. Plus, it's the only place big enough to hold everyone. We can't give her the wedding yet, with the threat still hanging over our heads. She's right, though. We need a small event to ease the tensions in the packs. Bo's been talking about going back to Montana and it's scaring the crap out of Jaycee."

He frowned and turned to Remi. "You think that's wise? He's all alone out there and everyone knows he's important to you guys."

"There's not much we can do to stop him. He's the alpha of their clan. Dane's been trying to talk some sense into him, but I don't know. He has promised to stay here for the dance." Remi straightened and glanced at the door. "Someone's hurt." He growled and pulled open the door, sniffing the air around them.

Following Remi outside, they both scanned the cars not seeing anything. The door opened behind them and Tug knew Dane had stepped out, his scent washing over him. "What's going on? Jaycee's throwing a fit trying to come out here. She said a female was in trouble."

Stepping forward, Tug placed his body in front of the alphas, cussing up a storm. Just what he needed: two pissed off alphas who didn't know how to stay out of harm's way. He looked at the vacant field behind the parked cars when he saw her. Her blond hair reflected the lights from the club. She held up an arm—missing a hand. "Crap! Remi, we're going to need the doctor." Tug yelled and ran to her as she fell forward onto her knees.

He yanked his belt off and kneeled down before her. "Easy, I got you." He wrapped the belt around her arm, tying off the circulation. She had to have lost too much blood. Her heart skipped a beat and she passed out in his arms. A vicious snarl rose up out of him and shocked him. Tug glanced down at the beauty in his arms, not understanding the emotions swirling around in his head and heart.

Remi and Dane both glanced down as they walked towards the club's doors. "I didn't sense anyone out there, but you might want to double the patrols." The door opened to the club and Jaycee stood there, glaring at her mates.

"I've got the room behind the bar all ready, and the doctor happened to be here, so he's in the room waiting for you," she snapped. "Do you know who she is?" She glanced at Remi and Dane.

"No, she's not from our packs, and what the hell are you doing

opening the damn door?" Remi shouted, picking her up and pushing open the door to the private bedroom.

The doctor nodded to the bed where Tug placed his light bundle. "Remi, she's part wolf, but something else. I can smell it." The doctor pulled out his instruments. "I don't know how she made it this far. The end of her arm is frozen where it was cut off. She's lucky it was cold enough to do this, otherwise she would have bled out."

Remi lowered Jaycee down. "Will it start bleeding now that it's warm in here?" Jaycee sat down on the bed and pushed the woman's hair away from her face.

"No, the ice cauterized her wounds just like fire would, but we have to worry about infection now." The doctor injected a syringe into her arm right above where the belt had been removed. "I'm giving her a strong antibiotic and I'll give her another one in a couple of hours. That should stop any infection from spreading."

There were two large scars on her right cheek, her nose was crooked as if it had been broken, and there were dark circles under her eyes. Tug couldn't drag himself away from the woman's side. He wanted to be the one stroking her hair and sitting near her.

"Tug! Yoo hoo, Tug!" Remi snapped his fingers in front of his face and he jumped.

"What?" he snapped, glaring at Remi.

Jaycee coughed and Dane laughed as Remi crossed his arms over his chest. "I was going to say you can leave, but I can see that's not going to happen now."

"Why?" He glanced back at the woman, then at Remi. "Well, shit, it can't be." He pushed his hand through his hair, all the signs were there, the protective streak, his cock hard as a rock, and his wolf wanting to claim her, *mate*. His mate lay on the bed, hurt. Someone had hurt what was his. Fur pushed out of his skin, claws replaced his nails and he took a deep breath imprinting his mate's scent so he could find her anywhere.

"Easy, Tug. Pull it back in. She's going to need you here, not going crazy." Remi patted his back, calming him instantly with his powers.

"Excuse me, Remi, but we have a bigger problem here." The doctor nodded to her hand and they watched as something pushed out of the nub.

New skin and bone formed as a new hand formed. "What the hell is going on?" Tug glanced at the doctor, but the doctor shook his head.

"The only animal I know that can regenerate is..." He didn't get the words out as Remi pushed Jaycee out of the room into Mark's arms.

"Keep her out of here till we find out what's going on, and Mark,

not a word to anyone.” Remi and Dane locked the door and turned to the woman.

“How can she be part wolf and snake? It’s impossible.” Remi demanded.

Tug sat down on the bed taking Jaycee’s place by his mate and stared down at the woman as she moved her legs. Her eyes flashed open and she screamed. Her hands attacked some unseen person hitting at the air. “No more! Please! I’ll be good,” she screamed.

“Easy, little one, you’re safe.” Tug gently grabbed her arms and held her down as she glanced around the room, then looked down at her arm.

“Fuck, I can’t even kill myself right! What did they do to me?” she cried and turned her head away from everyone.

Remi moved to the side of the bed and reached over, turning her chin towards him. Every instinct in Tug urged him to push Remi away, but he held back.

“Why would you want to kill yourself? Life is precious.” Remi soothed the woman with just his words alone.

She calmed a bit. “I’m a freak, can’t you see?” She lifted up her hand. “They did this to me. No one will accept me into their packs now.”

\* \* \* \*

Cecil stared at the man next to her. He was huge, bigger than the one who sat on the bed with her. How the hell did she end up here? The last thing she remembered was putting her hand in the wolf trap, hoping to end her life before they found her again and dragged her back for their experiments.

The man on the bed stared down at her and growled. “Who did this to you? And what did they do?” He was handsome, with long red hair pulled back and a small white faded scar on his left cheek. He wore a black wife-beater T-shirt that showed tense muscles.

“I can’t tell you. They would come here and destroy everyone. I won’t watch another person killed because of me.” She turned her head back towards the wall. “Just let me go. It’s safer if I’m by myself.” Her lip trembled at the thought of once more being out there alone, but she had no one. They had killed everyone in her family with their experiments.

“My name is Remi LeBlathe. I’m one of the alphas here in this region and no one is going to hurt us or touch you here. This man sitting next to you is one of my best friends, Tug Brimstone. We can protect you. Please let us help you.”

Cecil turned and glanced up at Remi. She had heard of him. His pack was one of the most powerful in the United States, but he was also



connected to the National pack. “What I know, you wouldn’t believe. My family and I were taken from the California pack closest to your brother’s pack. No one knew about our abduction. Every member of my family is dead, and it wasn’t just our family they experimented on. They have labs all around the world, doing different things to make superior shifters. I was just lucky to get away before they did their final testing—if you can call it lucky. I was held prisoner for more than six years, being poked, prodded, and injected with snake DNA. I have nothing left to live for. Just let me die.”

Remi glared back at a shadow of a man. “The National pack must be made aware of this.”

“*No!* Please don’t call them.” She grabbed his hand. “They *are* aware of this. Remi, please, don’t call them.” She shook as he frowned down at her.

“The National pack knows of these experiments?” The man named Tug pulled her up and sat her in his lap. Cecil couldn’t understand why, but she felt safe in his arms. She rubbed her chin against his chest, and then stopped herself, glancing up at him. His gaze was hard, but there was something else in it as he stared down at her.

She sighed. “I’m so sorry, but they’ll come after you now. I didn’t want this, believe me.” Cecil curled up on Tug’s lap and shook. “They’ll kill me soon enough. You still have time to just let me go. Forget about all of this and me.”

Tug hugged her and rubbed her back. “We’re not going to forget about you and you’re not going anywhere without me. If we have to, we’ll go somewhere away from the pack and hide out till it’s safe.” He growled and glanced up at Remi. “With the council coming here so often, it would be safer if we left.”

“No one is going anywhere,” Remi said. “If one of the council members is doing this, then no one is safe. We need everyone here to protect those who are weaker.”

Dane asked Mark to bring Jaycee inside. “Maybe she’s heard or seen something that would give us a clue as to who is doing this. For right now, we can’t let anyone know about her being here,” Remi ordered, and glanced back down at her. “Did you hear anything about who could be behind this on the National pack? If we had a name, we could start there.”

Cecil shook her head. “They kept it quiet. All I know is they called him Mr. B. He only visited the lab I was in once, and all of us were locked in our cages.”

## Chapter Two

All Tug wanted to do was take Cecil away from everyone and keep her safe, but he knew Remi was right. They would be safer in numbers. The door opened and Jaycee once more moved into the room and smiled at Cecil.

"Hello. I'm Jaycee and these three bumbleheads are my mates. Don't let them scare you. Their barks are worse than their bites." She laughed when all three snarled.

"Enough, Jaycee. We need your help here and what we say can't be repeated to anyone, including the National Pack." Remi wrapped his arm around her and pulled her into his body.

"Cecil was telling us someone from the National pack has been conducting experiments on live people." He nodded to her.

"Oh my God! I'm so sorry." Jaycee shivered and placed her hands on her belly. "Remi, what if they tried to get our children?"

All three of her mates growled. "No one is going to touch our children. We need to figure out who this is and put a stop to it. Cecil says the person in charge was called Mr. B. Does this ring any bells?"

Jaycee frowned and looked at Remi. "You've been in more contact with them than I have. The only one who comes to mind is Blackwell and I know he wouldn't be involved in any of this. I've been in his mind Remi, there is not a chance I would have missed something like this. Maybe it's someone from overseas. We didn't meet any of them."

Remi frowned. "That's what I was thinking. Mark, we're going to need a list of all the members. Use the excuse that we're thinking of holding a party for the Fourth of July." He glanced down at Tug.

"Tug, take her to your place and grab Rory on the way. I want both of you with her at all times." He studied her for a minute.

"Did their experiments affect the wolf? Can you shift?" Remi asked Cecil.

Cecil curled up closer to Tug. "I refused to shift. I'm afraid to. I feel the wolf, but it's different now. I was too afraid to." Her voice was a bare whisper as she grabbed onto Tug's shirt in a death grip.

"Shh, it's okay. We'll figure this out." Tug pulled the blanket from the bed and wrapped it around her.

"Well, that is a plus," Dane said. "The council won't know what she looks like when she shifts, but we need to know what happens if she does. Could you try to shift for us here so we can see what we're dealing with?"

"What if I'm a freak half-snake?" she squeaked.

Tug lifted her chin and stared into her eyes. "Wouldn't it be better to know now, with people you can trust? It might help protect you." Tug smiled at her.

She glanced around and nodded. For some reason, Cecil trusted them. "You might want Jaycee out of the room. I don't know if I can control it and I'd die knowing I hurt her or your children." She looked at Jaycee, then glanced down at her belly. "You're so lucky. I always wanted to have children, but now I'd be too afraid to have them."

Remi pushed Jaycee behind Dane into Mark's arms. "I'm not leaving this room. She needs another female here." She glared at her mates.

Dane snarled. "You'll not move, Jaycee, when she does this and I mean it."

Gently, Tug helped Cecil stand and remove her clothes. Cecil hid her face behind her stringy hair, embarrassed by the scars of her past on her skin. They were strong reminders of the pain she had endured for six years.

His heart clenched and tears formed at the pain she had suffered. "I'm right here. Just concentrate on me. I'll help you." Tug cupped her cheek and stepped back as everyone watched and waited.

Cecil took a deep breath and closed her eyes. Bones popped, muscles stretched, and she screamed in pain as she fell to the floor. Her body shook and Cecil's eyes rolled back in her head.

He glanced up at Remi and frowned. Tug heard the growl and looked down at the wolf. Her coat of fur was a mix of blond, red, and brown, with tints of blue.

"Remi, look! She has the tongue of a snake and the fangs of a cobra." The doctor slowly moved forward, but she growled and backed away from him.

"Easy, Cecil. He just wants to see what other changes there are." Tug knelt down next to her.

The doctor ran his hand over her fur and shook his head. "Under the fur, she has skin like a snake."

Remi knelt down by her and smiled. "Doctor, do you think it might help if we give her our blood?"

"I don't know, Remi. There's a chance. It all depends which is stronger, the snake or the wolf, but maybe with your gene pool and the power you have, it would help."

Remi bit into his wrist and held it out to her. "Drink, Cecil. It can only help."

She whimpered and tried to back up.

“She’s afraid to hurt you.” Tug looked into her eyes. “Come on, Cecil, you can do it.”

Slowly she made her way up to Remi’s wrist and licked the blood that dripped down. Her body twitched and Cecil backed away, crying and lying down on the ground.

Tug once more pushed his hand through her fur and sighed. “The skin is soft and normal, but I’m afraid she still has the fangs of a snake and tongue.”

\* \* \* \*

*Cecil, can you hear me now through the blood connection?*

Remi’s voice broke through the pain and confusion.

*Yes, it hurts. Something is happening. Please stay away. I don’t want to hurt anyone.* Cecil curled up further away from them when the smell of the lab drifted to her. She tensed and raised her head towards the door. *They have found me. Protect your mate.*

Cringing at the pain, she slowly got to her feet and growled at the door.

Remi stood and grabbed Jaycee. “Dane, you and Tug stay in here with Cecil. It seems someone has tracked her here. Mark, let’s go! We can’t let them escape.” Remi opened the door and slipped out of the room with Mark.

She needed to shift back. Cecil wasn’t about to let them see her other form. Concentrating, her bones snapped, muscles stretched, and skin replaced fur as she slowly stood.

Tug wrapped a blanket around her naked form as he drew her behind him. “It’s okay. Remi will take care of the threat, Cecil,” he tried to reassure her.

“You don’t understand. If even one person from the lab is here, the others will know. They won’t stop until they have me and have destroyed everyone who knows about their labs.” She glanced over at Jaycee and the alpha, Dane.

“I’m so sorry I brought this to your home. I should have stayed away.” Cecil backed away and sat down on the bed abruptly.

The bed dipped down next to her and Jaycee took her hand into hers. “You’re not going anywhere, Cecil. Believe me when I say I’ve had my own nightmares when it comes to people hurting me. You’ll get through this and we’ll all help you. I know it’s hard to trust, with everything that’s happened, but I personally guarantee I will do everything possible to help you.” She nudged her on the shoulder and smiled at her, glancing at Tug. “Plus, I don’t think that man is going to let you out of his sight,” she whispered.

Cecil glanced at Tug, and he grinned at her, nodding. "She's not going anywhere without me," he declared, crossing his arms across his chest.

"And what makes you my personal bodyguard? You don't even know me. I could be dangerous." Cecil frowned, but she was pleased he cared.

Jaycee laughed and patted her hand. "I'm afraid most men around here do the Dom thing. He's the headmaster here at the club since my mate, Remi, stepped down."

"What is a Dom?" Cecil asked. "I don't understand. You have to remember, I've been locked up for more than six years."

Tug knelt down in front of her and lifted her chin up. "Don't worry about it, Cecil. I'll show you everything you need to know when it's time. A Dom is someone in control of every aspect of his submissive—his lover, mate. He wants only to please her." He leaned in and kissed her nose.

She pulled back, frowning at him. "I can't be with anyone. I'm a freak. Don't you get it? And, well," she added, looking down, "I've never been with anyone." She peeked up at him and his grin grew larger.

The door opened and Remi stepped inside, smiling. "Well, that's taken care of. We have the two who were following you downstairs, all locked up. I've sent out scouts to make sure no others were with them, and to cover their tracks. That should give us some time." He knelt down in front of her. "I want you to go with Tug and Rory. They'll keep you safe until we can figure out what to do next. I'll bring Jaycee and her sister, Sheila, over later tonight. Maybe they can change your hair color or something to help disguise you while you're here." He stood and nodded at Tug. "Take her out the back way. Rory is already waiting for you there. After we question the two we have downstairs, we'll know more and I'll let you know. Come on, Jaycee. I want you home with Mark until we talk to our friends downstairs." He took her hand and helped her stand, but she turned and smiled at Cecil.

"How would you like to have your hair a tri-color? You already have the blond. We could put streaks of black and red in it."

Cecil smiled and ran a hand through her hair. "I've never had my hair done before. They would just chop it off when it got in their way. I'd like that. Maybe we could style it too?" She wanted something normal for once, and maybe to look nice.

Cecil wanted to look pretty for Tug, now recognizing the signs her mother had once described. She sucked in her breath and shook her head.

He was her mate.

“Sheila is great at cutting hair,” Jaycee said. “I’m sure we can think of something. We’ll have a ball fixing you up. We’ll even make the men leave us alone so they won’t see the transformation until it’s done.” She winked at Tug as she moved towards the door.

Tug took her small hand in his larger one and pulled her up. “Here, put on these sweatpants and sweatshirt. We keep them here in case of an emergency. Pull the hood up over your head, too. That way they won’t see the blond hair.”

Turning her back on him, she pulled the sweatpants over her legs and laughed. They were three times too big, but at least they didn’t smell like the lab. Cecil grabbed the sweatshirt, pulled it over her breasts and brought the hood up, covering her hair.

She turned to see Tug smile. “It’s a little big,” he acknowledged, “but they’re clean and they hide everything.” He tucked a single strand of blond hair into the hood. “You ready?”

Cecil nodded, stepping up to him as he wrapped his arm around her.

“Just keep your head down,” he said. “Everyone will just think I have a new slave whom I’m training.”

Stopping, she glanced up at him and frowned. “Slave? I don’t understand?”

“Sometimes, in the world of Bondage, a master will have a woman who wants to be his slave. He does everything for her and she doesn’t do anything without her master’s permission.”

Rubbing her arms, Cecil glanced down at the floor. “I don’t know if I could do that. It would be just like being in the cage. If we didn’t do what we were told, we were whipped or starved.”

Tug hugged her. “Oh, Cecil. I’m sorry. I promise I’ll never hurt you. If any man ever comes after you again, I’ll rip him to shreds.” He leaned down, kissing her lips softly.

Cecil reached up and touched her lips. Her face heated and her nipples hardened. “That was my first kiss. Thank you,” she whispered. Emotions she never before had to deal with now clouded her brain as Tug lead her out the back door to an awaiting man.

She glanced up, surprised to find herself at the back door. A tall man leaned against the door frame and smiled at her. “So, this is the little pretty we get to guard.” He was as tall as Tug and had a small mustache.

“Is something wrong? Did I mess up again?” Cecil glanced behind her, nervous she had given herself away.

The man at the door laughed as Tug sighed. “No,” Tug said. “You didn’t do anything wrong, Cecil. It’s just me. I’ll explain later. We’d better

get going.”

### Chapter Three

Tug tucked Cecil under his arm and pushed through the door, scanning their surroundings. His Ford truck was in the back parking lot so they wouldn't have to go around to the front of the club. He pushed the electronic button to the truck, unlocking the doors, and helped Cecil in to the truck. Rory climbed in after her, dragging in his duffel bag.

He jumped in the truck and glanced at Cecil. "Keep the hood up until we get to my house, just in case someone else is out there looking."

She nodded and moved a little closer to him. "Thank you for everything you guys are doing."

Rory frowned. "Cecil, we would do this for anyone who's been hurt. Don't worry about it, pretty lady."

Tug nodded and pulled out of the parking lot, heading towards his home, making sure no one followed them. "We'll be there in about ten minutes. It's nothing fancy, Cecil, but it's safe and warm."

Cecil laughed. "Tug, I've been kept in a four-by-six cell for the past six years. Anything would be better."

"I don't know how you survived. You have more strength than you believe, Cecil." Tug wrapped his hand in hers and squeezed.

"No one should have to go through that, Cecil, and you'll never have to again. You just got yourself two personal bodyguards," Rory snarled. "The thought of my sister going through what you went through makes my blood boil."

Tug eyed Rory as they drove the rest of the way in silence. Something was up with him.

Tug pulled into the driveway and opened up the garage with his remote.

"Well, here we are, all safe and sound. No one will find you here." He smiled and opened his door, helping her out of his side of the car. She saw the Harley and slowly walked over to the bike, running her hand over it. Tears slipped down her face.

"My older brother used to take me for rides on his Harley before he left home to go into the service. We never heard from him after he left. Maybe it was good he left. After Dad died, I had no one, but I kept dreaming Sam would come and rescue me. I think that's the only thing that kept me going."

Tug stood next to Rory, his heart clenching at the pain he heard in



Cecil's voice. "I'll tell you what. When it gets warmer, we'll go on a road trip. Come on, let's get you inside. I bet you haven't eaten anything decent in, well, years." He held out his hand and she walked over, placing her small hand in his.

"I'd like that very much. I'd love to feel free, with the wind blowing through my hair. And I am hungry." She grinned at both of them as they stepped into the kitchen.

"Any time you're hungry, I want you to come in here and take anything," Tug told her. "My home is now yours. If you don't find something, ask me. Come, let me show you around now. Then I'll show you where you'll sleep. You can take a nice hot bath while we fix supper."

Cecil didn't say anything until they stepped into the master bedroom, and she looked around. "I can't take your room, Tug. I can sleep on the couch." Her eyes were big as she glanced at him.

"Not another word. You will be sleeping in my bed. You need the rest. Now, there is a bathroom over there through the door. Since you don't have any clothes, you can wear one of my T-shirts for now, if that's okay with you." He pulled open a drawer and handed one to her. "You'll find shampoo, soap, and an extra toothbrush in there you can use. The towels are under the sink. Now, go on and soak in the tub while Rory and I fix some supper. Take your time." He turned to leave, when she touched his arm.

"Tug..." She looked down at the floor as he turned to her. "Would you mind sleeping in the bed with me? I don't want to be alone."

He lifted her chin. "You sure you want me in the same bed? I don't want to pressure you, Cecil. You haven't experienced anything."

"My mom, before she died, used to talk to me about finding my mate. She told me what the signs were. I may not have experience and have lived in a shell, but I want you near me. I can't promise anything yet, but I'll try."

"Cecil, get in the tub. I'll take care of you, I promise." He kissed her nose and pushed her towards the tub.

"Um, Tug, one more thing. You might want to talk to Rory, because if I'm right, you're not the only one." She peeked at him and shut the bathroom door.

Tug stood there, stunned. His little mate was smarter than she let on. "Stupid hormones!" he growled and heard her laugh. Her laughter made him smile and tugged at his heart, sensing she hadn't laughed in a while.

He would have to make sure she laughed more often.

Walking through the house, Tug found Rory pulling out three

steaks from the freezer. "I thought she would like a good steak, baked potato, and salad. I see ice cream in there that we could have for dessert."

Tug leaned against the counter, and studied him. Rory was a few years younger than him, and had a black belt in Taekwondo. Tug had worked with him before. His family grew up in the area with his. "Cecil thinks you're her mate, too."

Rory stopped leaning against the fridge and stared at him. "How do you suggest we handle this? You have more experience with sharing than I do, and right now Cecil doesn't need us going at each other. She's going to need both of us."

Tug nodded. "You're right. She's going to need both of us. I have no problem sharing her with you, but there will be no others. She's never been with a man before." Tug reached down and grabbed the bag of potatoes from the drawer.

"Agreed on the men. I think I'd kill someone if they touched her. We're going to have to let Remi and Dane know." Rory unwrapped the plastic from the steaks and threw them in the microwave to thaw.

"They'll be here tonight after they talk to the two who were following her. They already know I'm her mate. I know you have an apartment above your folks' garage. When we get things settled, why don't you move your things in here? It's bigger and it will give us time to get to know Cecil."

Rory studied him as he pulled out the warmed steaks. "You're being awfully generous. Isn't this eating you up inside?"

Tug turned and faced Rory. "Yes and no. Do I want to share my mate with another man? No, but I like you, Rory, and I respect your abilities. Cecil has been hurt so badly it's going to take years for her to truly trust anyone. She's trying already and I, for one, am not going to disappoint her or hurt her. If I have to share her love, then I will, because I know she has enough love for both of us. I know she needs both of us."

Rory nodded, putting the steaks on the stove grill. "You're right. She's going to need us both. Maybe that's why she has two of us. Mother Nature knew she would need us both."

Tug poked holes in the potatoes and popped them in the microwave, turning to see Cecil leaning against the doorway, staring at both of them.

"I thought you were going to soak in the tub." He walked up to her and smiled down at her. He loved seeing her in his T-shirt. It engulfed her small body.

"I don't like being alone, so I thought I could help with supper." She smiled when Rory stepped up to them and brushed her wet

hair back. "We could use some help with a salad," he said.

Tug smiled and nodded as he stepped back, letting Rory show her what to do. Turning, he frowned as he heard a car pull up in the driveway. He glanced back at Rory, who stared at him. Cecil grabbed the counter, her knuckles white with fear. "I'm sure it's Remi or Dane," Tug assured her. "You guys finish the salad. I'll be back."

He moved around to the living room and looked out the window. He sighed, opening the front door. "I thought you guys wouldn't be here until later." He moved out of the way as Sheila, Jaycee, Mark, Dane, Remi, and Bo entered the house.

"We found out all we could out of the men, and the ladies here wanted to come. They brought over bags of clothes and things for Cecil. Why don't you help me get them out of trunk?" Remi opened the door and walked back out as the girls went into the kitchen.

"What did you find out?" Tug grabbed a bag and leaned against the car as Dane came around with Bo.

"It seems there are at least six labs here in the U.S. that these men know of. Each one is doing different experiments on wolves and other species. They're not only after Cecil, but three others that escaped with her, all females. One of the men was one of the scientists who spliced cobra DNA with hers. Her bite is lethal. "Dane leaned against the truck. "I take it from your reaction earlier Cecil is your mate?"

Tug nodded and stared up at the house.

"You're going to have to watch yourself, especially if you plan to mate with her."

"There is no 'if.' It will happen," Tug said. "Rory is also her mate and we've decided to live here for now. We want her to get used to both of us."

Remi stared at him, then nodded. "We did find out our genes are stronger than the snake's. So any children will be wolf, though they might have some traces of the snake DNA. We will never know. Also, we need to tell Cecil her father is still alive. We are already planning to go into the lab, but we need to talk to her about the layout of the place. I don't trust the doctor's or the guard's word on everything."

"She's going to want to go back to help." Tug glanced at the house. "But there is no way she's stepping a foot near that place."

\* \* \* \*

Cecil sat at the kitchen bar, laughing with Sheila and Jaycee. Never had she felt more at home than with both of them. Sheila worked on cutting her hair while it was wet. Rory watched the women as he sliced the vegetables for the salad.

Mark stood next to Rory, laughing. "I swear, you get three females in the room and any subject is open season."

"Mark, don't push it. We have to update Cecil on girl things. Go see what's taking them so long with the things we brought for Cecil." Jaycee stood next to her with her hands on her hips.

She laughed as Mark came around the counter and growled. "Are you telling me what to do? You know what happens when you start bossing us around."

"Knock it off, Mark. You can spank me later." She giggled and nudged Cecil.

"You like to be spanked? Are you crazy?" Cecil frowned a shiver went up her spine, but her pussy quivered with excitement. She glanced over at Rory and he grinned. *Damn, he knows.*

Jaycee laughed. "Oh, Cecil, you have so much to learn. Spanking can be well very erotic if the right man does it. It's not about punishment, but more about pleasure. There are so many different things a man can do to turn you on, and from what I hear, you have one of the best masters around. He'll be able to teach you everything."

"Umm, actually, I have two mates, it seems." Cecil glanced up at Rory. "That is, if what my mother told me is correct."

Jaycee and Sheila gasped. Rory nodded and grinned. "She's right."

"Okay, this is *so* not fair. First Jaycee gets three mates, and now you have two." Sheila pouted, but jumped as Bo came strolling in with the other men.

"You don't need two mates. I take care of your every need." He wrapped his arms around her from behind, and bit down on her neck.

"Hey, knock it off. I'm trying to cut Cecil's hair here. Did you guys bring in the bags?"

"Sure did." He nodded at the bags that Tug and Remi put on the dining room table.

Cecil stared at the bags, then at Jaycee. "You didn't have to do this." Tears slid down her cheeks. "I don't need much."

Jaycee stepped up to her and hugged her. "Every woman deserves clothes, shoes, and personal items. Most of the things were donated from everyone. I just hope they fit. You're so skinny. Your men had better fatten you up." She looked at Tug.

"Hey, we have supper cooking. I even have ice cream for dessert for her," Tug grumbled.

Remi sat down at the table and gazed at her. "Cecil, we need to talk."

Sheila spun around and glared at him. "Can't this wait? I'm not even half way done with her haircut."

Cecil squirmed in her chair. "You can do it while we talk, Sheila." She wiped her hands on the T-shirt. "I take it that they talked?" Tug pulled up a chair next to her and took her hand, squeezing it.

"Yes, we do have some good news. Your father is still alive. From what we found out, he's being held somewhere else in the building." Remi grinned.

Her body shook. "There's no way he can be alive. I saw them put him in the room. There is no way he could survive. They had more than thirty different poisonous snakes in that room." Tears slipped down her face. "I heard his screams," she whispered.

"See? I knew this would happen. Damn it, Remi, she's been through enough!" Jaycee yelled and stomped her foot.

Dane came up behind her and wrapped his arms around her. "Easy, Jaycee. We have to find out what's going on, and the layout of the place, if we're going in."

Cecil jumped up and paced back and forth. "You can't go in. There's no way. The place is heavily protected. It was just a fluke that the security system went down when it did. We were lucky to escape." Her hand flew up to her mouth.

"We know about the other three that escaped, and that there are six labs in the U.S."

She shook her head. "No, Remi. There are more than fifty the last time I heard someone talking. Each one has a different species they are experimenting on. They thought I was out of my mind and I kept them thinking that. It's the only way I could hear things and learn the security system." She sat back down at the table.

"I need some paper and a pencil. I'll show you what I know." She looked up into his face. "But I won't tell you where the others went. We promised to go in different directions so at least one of us would make it and try to get help for the others." Looking down at the paper that Rory put in front of her, she started to draw. "I was the weak one. I just wanted peace."

Tug and Rory leaned over and kissed her cheek. "Everyone wants peace and a safe place to live. You survived and now you have both of us to help you."

"Thank you. It's a three-story brick building. There's a basement with many tunnels leading to outer buildings. There are a total of six buildings surrounding the main one. All these buildings are protected by three different security systems. The first security system, which is close to

the building, is made up of gas mines wired to movement sensors.” She looked up and grinned. “Sorry, not too good with wording here.”

Everyone laughed. “You’re doing great, and the drawing is amazing.” Remi and Dane glanced at Tug. “You might want to have her talk to Will when all this is over. Her talent is too good to let it go to waste.”

Ignoring them, she drew in the second line of security. “The second line of defense is about eighty yards from the first. Snake pits every three feet, and Remi, they have every kind of poisonous snake possible.” She bit the end of the pencil.

She drew a small building in between the second and first line of defense. “This building here, I believe, is where the cameras for the place are watched. Or whatever it’s called. When we passed it that night, at least six men were inside. Now, the last line of defense, or first since you’ll be going in rather than out, is the standard electrical fence. I have a feeling they did that for people who just happen upon the building.” She sat back and studied the building.

“I was kept in the basement near the tunnel that goes to this building here.” She put an X on the building. “I know there are others being held there, but they could be anywhere now that we got away. They might have also changed some of the security system, but it hasn’t been that long. We escaped two days ago. It took me that long to get here. I can give you an outline of the lab in California. I was only there for the first year, but I remember some of it.”

Remi reached over and took her hand. “You’ve done enough for tonight. Maybe sometime tomorrow you can draw it like you did here.” He stood, taking the drawing with him.

“Umm, Rory, I think I smell burnt steaks.”

Cecil laughed as Rory jumped up and ran to the grill. “Well, I hope you don’t mind one sided a bit charred.” He grinned and held up the steak.

She shook her head. “I’m sure it will be fine. Just don’t burn the other side, please,” Cecil teased, trying to loosen up.

“Okay, move out of the way, Tug, and let me finish this haircut. She’s lopsided.” Sheila laughed, grabbing the scissors and pushing him away.

“Fine, I’ll finish the salad,” Tug grumbled and moved out of the way as Jaycee pushed into his seat, putting a small bag in front of her.

“This is for later, not tonight. Well, unless you want to wear one of them.” She nudged her. “Peek in the bag. I don’t want you to pull them out. We have to give our guys some surprises.”

Cecil peaked in the bag, then back at her. "I remember seeing some of these before we were taken at the mall. I was sixteen." Cecil grinned. "I think I'll wait a while before, well, you know." She glanced back at Tug and Rory, and both of them were grinning from ear to ear.

Her neck warmed and her nipples hardened just thinking of them seeing her in it.

"Hold still, Cecil! We'll never get this hair done." Sheila pushed her head down as she worked on the back of her hair.

"Sorry." But Cecil heard howls outside and jumped.

"Damn, Cecil! I'm sorry." Sheila yelled as she clipped the side of her neck with the scissors. She put her hand on the back of her neck. "Tug, get me a wet towel, and Dane, find that asshole outside."

Dane, Remi, and Rory were already moving to the door when Tug rushed over with a towel.

"Are you okay?" He kneeled down and looked up into her face.

"I'm fine. It just stung a little." She patted his cheek. "Sorry, Sheila, guess it's going to take me some time before I can relax."

"Oh, honey. It's okay. Hell, I would be jumpy too. There, I think it stopped bleeding. Let me finish this part, and the back, then we'll be done."

"No problem. And Tug, you'd better watch those steaks, since Rory went with Dane and Remi." She laughed. "I don't think I like totally burnt steak."

"I'm going to kill whoever was outside. They know better than to be creeping around my house," Tug grumbled, and went back to the kitchen.

## Chapter Four

Tug was checking the steaks when Dane walked into the kitchen. “We have company. Three men showed up at the club looking for Cecil, but they’re not from the lab. They say they are the ones who shut their security system down to the lab. One of them claims to be her brother.”

Tug watched as Cecil stood staring at Dane. “Is he here?” she whispered and glanced at him, clearly afraid.

He groaned and walked over to her, wrapping his arms around her. “It’s going to be okay. Why don’t you peek through the front window? I’ll have Dane move him into the light so you can see.” He nodded to Dane, who went outside, shutting the front door.

They slowly moved to the front window, and her body trembled against his. “I haven’t seen him in seven years, Tug. What if I don’t recognize him?”

“If he’s your brother, you’ll recognize something. Just take your time.” He kissed her neck and moved the curtain back. “Can you see?”

The man was as tall as Dane. He wore black leather pants and a black long-sleeved thermal shirt, and his hair was dark blond and shoulder length.

“My brother had a tattoo on his arm. I don’t remember which one. It was a dragon wrapped around a wolf. I can’t tell from here.”

*Remi, her brother had a tattoo on one of his arms, a wolf and a dragon.*

Tug pulled her back into his arms. “Don’t worry. Remi is asking him now. Watch.”

The man rolled up his sleeve, showing Remi his arm.

Cecil’s legs gave out and she clawed at his shirt, trying to stand. “He’s my brother, Tug. He came for me,” she cried and tried to catch her breath.

He scooped her up in his arms and sat down on the couch, holding her. “It’s okay, Cecil. See? He did come to help you.” Rubbing her back, Tug placed a small kiss on her neck.

The front door opened. Remi, Dane, Rory, and her brother stepped into the living room. Her brother slowly knelt in front of her. Tears slid down his face and his hand trembled as he reached up.

Cecil jerked back, her nails sinking into his skin. “Cecil, it’s me, Sam. I’m so sorry I didn’t come sooner. I didn’t find out everyone was missing until a year ago. My team helped me track you down. Did Dad or



Mom get out? What about Brandon or Missy?"

She shook her head. "They're all dead. At least, that's what I always believed, but Remi said Dad might be alive. I don't know how." She whimpered into his neck.

"God, no." He dropped his head. "I'll kill every one of them." He stood and looked at Tug. "Take care of my sister. I'll come back later." He moved to the door.

"No, please don't go." She slowly stood. "You just got here."

He moved back to her. "What did they do to you, little angel?"

Cecil cried and threw her arms around him, shaking. "I prayed every night you would come and save us. So many snakes, Sam, and now I'm a freak."

Both of them stood there holding each other until he turned and glanced down at Tug sniffing the air. "I take it you're her mate?"

Tug stood and held out his hand, shaking it. "I'm Tug Brimstone, and I'm not her only mate." He grinned and nodded at Rory.

Rory stepped forward and smiled at Sam, shaking his hand. "I'm Rory Sherwood."

"Two mates?" Sam asked.

She shrugged. "They're my mates." She sniffed. "Um, I'm afraid our steaks are charred." She giggled as Rory yelled and ran to the kitchen.

Smoke filled the room as everyone laughed. "I think we need to order takeout. Why don't we move into the kitchen?"

Cecil moved into Tug's arms as they walked into the kitchen. He hugged her. "You're being very brave." He kissed her head.

Rory opened the patio door to let some of the smoke out as Sheila and Jaycee got the dye ready. "Cecil, have a seat. Let's get this dye in your hair. Sheila can finish cutting after we get done, since we have plenty of time now." She laughed when Rory growled.

"Hey, I'm usually a good cook." He threw away the steaks.

"Remi, when is your team going to the lab? I'd like to go along with you. If there is any chance that our father is there, I want to be there for him." Sam sat down across from Cecil.

Tug leaned against the counter, watching Cecil. Goose bumps broke out Cecil's skin while Sheila put the strips in her hair. "Why don't you guys talk about this later?" He turned and opened the drawer, taking out the different menus and laying them down in front of Cecil. "Why don't you pick what you would like? All these places deliver."

Remi nodded. "You'd better order enough for Jaycee. She's been eating nonstop lately." He grinned and ducked when Jaycee went to smack him on the head.

“That is so not funny. I’m feeding three of your children here, so knock it off.” She frowned and glanced down at her belly.

Remi pulled her into his lap. “You look fine and the doctor says you’re doing great. I was just joking.”

“I always wanted children, but now...” She lowered her gaze. “I don’t think I should have any. What if the child is deformed?” Cecil glanced up at him, then at Rory. “Maybe we shouldn’t join. You can have other children with someone else.” She picked through the menus. The room grew quiet as he knelt down on one side and Rory on the other.

“We’re not letting you go, Cecil. We’ll discuss children later on.” Rory pointed at the menus. “Pick. You need some food.”

Cecil picked the pizza menu and handed it to him. “I like anything but fish, and we’ll talk later is right.”

“Are you getting sassy with me?” He smiled and leaned in, close to her ear. “Remember, I know your little secret.” Rory stood as she gasped.

“You wouldn’t.” Cecil said.

“We would.” He grabbed the phone, ordering the pizza as she squirmed in her seat.

For the next two hours, Jaycee and Sheila worked on her hair while she ate pizza and they chatted. But when she started to slump down in her chair, Remi stood and nodded towards the door. “Come on, girls, I think you’ve worn out Cecil. Plus, I’ll bet she hasn’t had a decent night sleep in ages.” Remi helped Jaycee with her coat and glanced at Sam. “You’re welcome to stay with us if you like.”

“No, please stay here. Can he stay here, please?”

Tug smiled and nodded. “I have two extra bedrooms. You’re welcome to use one. It might help her sleep better if she knows family is here.”

Sam smiled at her and nodded. “Let me call my men and I’ll have them come on in. They will also give us some added protection, if that’s okay with us. There are only three of us, but we’re the best.”

Tug nodded. “Just so they understand to stay away from Cecil, since we’re not yet joined.”

Sam laughed and pulled out his cell phone. “Believe me, they know better than to interfere with the mating process.”

“Knock it off, Sam. You make it sound like a business arrangement and I haven’t agreed to the joining yet.” Cecil turned, hugging Jaycee and Sheila as she said her goodbyes.

“I’m going upstairs to put some of these clothes away and crawl into bed.” She glanced at Tug and Rory. “You’ll come up, right?” Her

voice was a whisper; she was still afraid to be alone.

Tug laughed and pulled her into his arms. "You say you haven't decided about our joining, but you want us in bed with you?" he teased, kissing her head.

"I trust you two, and I can't be alone. I'm sorry."

He heard the tears in her voice and sighed. "Oh Cecil, I was only teasing. We'll both be right behind you. There is no way we would miss sleeping with our mate, but we will discuss our joining tomorrow after some rest, because it is going to happen. Now go on and take your clothes upstairs." He ran his hand through her now-short hair, and smiled. "By the way, I like the haircut and dye job. It's you."

She smiled and reached up, patting her head. "I know. I like it too. Thanks." Cecil picked up her small bag and one of the bigger bags. "Will one of you bring that bag up when you come, please?"

"I've got it." Rory shook his head. "I'll be up in a minute. I want to help Tug lock up and get your brother all set up with his team."

Tug turned to Sam as she stepped out of the room, going upstairs. "She doesn't believe your father is alive. What they did to her is anyone's guess," Tug snarled.

"I figured as much, but if there is any chance he is alive, I have to go. What did she mean, her children might be deformed?" Sam sat back down.

Tug paced back and forth. "When she shifts, Cecil is still mostly wolf, but now she has the fangs and tongue of a cobra. The snakeskin we believe is gone, but I don't know if we'll ever be able to reverse the damage they did." He nodded at Rory and stepped up to the window, closing it.

"We have to be really careful when we mate with her. The doctor told Remi he's not sure if she'll attack or not, and since we don't know if her bite is lethal, we'll have to take extra precautions," Rory said. "Like we don't have enough to worry about."

"Those fucking monsters. What did Remi do with the two they captured?"

Tug turned and grinned. "They are no more, and no one will find their bodies."

"Good. Remi plans to attack tomorrow morning. Cecil's going to be really nervous. It might be a good time to keep her busy." He smiled and headed towards the front door. "My team is here."

"We plan to do just that." Rory grabbed the bag and headed towards the stairs. "I'll meet you upstairs. Tug, I don't want her alone too long."

Tug nodded as two more men stepped into his house, sizing him up.

“Tug, this is Carl and Fredrick. They’re the best special agents around.” He grinned.

Tug reached behind them, bolted the doors, and set the alarm system. “Follow me. I’ll show you where you’ll be staying. I’m afraid two of you’ll have to bunk together, as I have only two spare rooms.” They all moved upstairs.

“No, we’ll take turns watching guard,” Sam ordered. “I’ll be damned if those freaks are going to get a jump on me. They already destroyed my family.”

Tug clapped him on the back. “I understand, but also remember, Remi has guards all around the house.”

Sam nodded. “I have the pack’s scent, and both Remi and Dane have already welcomed me into the pack.”

Tug had already felt the connection as soon as he had walked into the house. “Good.” He opened one door and pointed to the other across the hall. “These are your rooms. We’re down the hall. There is the bathroom for you to use.” He opened the door.

“I’ll see you guys in the morning.” Tug turned to head towards the master bedroom when Sam tapped him on the shoulder.

“Take care of her, Tug. Don’t let anything else happen to my little sister.”

He smiled. “Let them try.”

He couldn’t wait to have Cecil in his arms.

\* \* \* \*

Cecil crawled into the giant bed after putting away what Jaycee and Sheila had given her. This was her first night where she felt almost safe from their clutches. Pulling the pillows behind her, she leaned against the headboard as Rory came into the room, smiling.

“Where should I put this?” He held up the other bag.

“Just put it in the closet for now. I’ll hang them up tomorrow.” She nodded, then snuggled under the blankets. She had put on one of the long nightgowns since the T-shirt had smelled like dye and was covered in her hair.

Rory stepped into the bathroom, stripping out of his shirt. She watched the play of muscles on his back, making the tattoo of a wolf move as he bent over the sink splashing water in his face.

The door opened and Tug stepped into the room, closing the door behind him and locking it. He grinned, stripped out of his shirt, and threw it to the dresser. He unsnapped his jeans and pulled them down. He wore

nothing underneath them. His cock stood straight and hard. Tug reached up, pulling the band holding his long brown hair. His hair fanned out across his large shoulders.

He moved to one side of the bed and pulled back the covers, eyeing her nightgown. "I take it this was one of the items in the small bag?"

"The T-shirt was all stinky from the dye." Her face heated as he crawled into bed and cuddled up next to her.

"It's beautiful on you." He gently moved his hand down the side of her body, sending a chill through her.

Cecil glanced up and watched Rory move to the bed, his body rippled with muscles. "Umm, we're going to have to thank Jaycee and Sheila, that's for sure." He climbed in on the other side of the bed, lifting up on his elbow, and looked down at her, as did Tug.

"We're supposed to be sleeping." Cecil scooted further down on the bed.

"Don't you think you'd be more comfortable without this on?" Tug gently pulled on the little spaghetti strap.

"You've already seen me naked, Tug, so what difference does it make?" She grinned.

"Hey, I didn't, and I have to agree with Tug. This needs to come off." He snapped the strap in half and inched the silk material down, uncovering her breast.

"Hey, I just got this." She laughed and tried to grab the other side, but Tug beat her, ripping the material.

"We'll buy you many more just so we can peel them down your body. Move your hands, Cecil. Let us see your beautiful body." Rory kissed her bare shoulder, pulling the material from her hands, slowly exposing her breasts to their view.

Tug traced his finger around her nipple and leaned down, sucking it into his mouth. "Oh my..." Cecil reached for his head, but he grabbed her arm and put it under him, trapping her hand.

"No touching. Just relax. Let us explore." Rory grabbed her other hand, trapping it under his body while he leaned down, capturing her other breast.

"But..." Cecil couldn't think. Her body was burning up—needing what, she didn't know.

Tug kissed down her stomach, pushing the silk material further down her body. "Lift up, Cecil, so I can take this off, and leave your hand there at your side." He lifted her ass and pulled. The silk slid down the rest of her body as if someone had ran their hand down her skin, warming her

further. Tug slid in between her legs, grinning up at her.

“I can’t wait to taste you.” He glanced down at her mound and separated her lips, moaning. “Look at how wet you are.” Tug mumbled slowly, licking up one side of her clit.

Rory sucked her nipple in between his teeth and nibbled on it, sending little tremors through her body.

Cecil thrust her hips forward, wanting more, and froze when she ran her tongue over her teeth. Fangs poked at her tongue. “No!” She cried, jumping off the bed and running to the bathroom, locking the door.

She glanced in the mirror, opened her mouth, and cried, grabbing the cup and smashing it into the mirror. The glass shattered, falling around her and cutting her hand as she fell to the floor, hugging her legs. “I’m a fucking freak! I have to leave.” She cried, staring down at her hand. The blood dripped onto her leg, but she didn’t move, not caring.

The door handle shook. “Cecil, open up, honey. It’s okay.” Rory called through the door.

“Just go away and find someone else.” Gut-wrenching sobs shook her body. “I can never be with a man.” Cecil’s breath came in short gasps.

The door clicked as a key was turned in the lock, and both Rory and Tug pushed into the room. “Come here, Cecil, now.” Tug ordered, holding out his hand.

## Chapter Five

Tug glanced at the mirror, then at her hand as she placed her small bloody hand in his. *What happened?* her brother demanded.

*I'll explain tomorrow. She's fine. We have her.* Tug cut him off, grabbing a towel and wrapping it around her hand, as she stood. "Rory, grab the first-aid kit under the sink and a wet towel." He swung her up in his arms and carried her to the bed, sitting down on it.

"Look at me, Cecil." Tug ordered, but he was gentle when he lifted her chin. "We knew this might happen, but it doesn't change anything. We'll deal with it, and you're not getting away from us. When I first saw you outside with your hand missing, everything in me stopped. I didn't know why, but my wolf knew in that instant that you were mine. Now, let's see what damage you've done."

Rory knelt down next to them as they unwrapped the towel and gently washed the blood from her hand. One small piece of glass stuck out of her palm, but that was all the damage that had been done. Her skin was already trying to repair itself around the glass.

Gently, he pulled the glass out and watched as new skin replaced the torn skin. "You will never hurt yourself again, Cecil. Do you understand me? When we heard that glass shatter..." He placed his forehead to hers. "Just don't do it," he snarled and gazed into her eyes.

She gasped and reached up with her other hand, tracing his cheek. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hurt you. I want to be with both of you." Cecil's other hand, now healed, cupped Rory's face. "But I'm too afraid I might hurt you. If I were to hurt you..." She shook her head. "I couldn't live with myself."

Rory stood, put away the first-aid kit, and started cleaning the broken glass while Tug tucked Cecil into bed. "Stay. I'm going to go get a broom. I don't want you to wake up to use the bathroom and get cut."

Tug unlocked the door and made his way to the kitchen when Sam stepped in front of him. "What happened?" He gritted his teeth and his hands clenched into fists.

Tug sighed, and grabbed for the phone. "It seems when she gets excited, the snake DNA comes out. She was afraid she'd hurt us and ran to the bathroom, but Sam..." He gazed up at him. "This won't stop us. She's ours." He dialed Remi's number and waited.

"This had better be important or I'm going to rip your throat out,"

Remi snarled into the phone.

"It is. When you go into the lab tomorrow, get the same injection that was given to Cecil. Have the doctor bring two syringes of the stuff here," Tug said.

Remi didn't say anything at first. "I take it she starts to turn when..."

Tug cut him off. "Yes, and Remi, she won't mate with us. Cecil's too scared."

Remi grunted. "So both of you are willing to change for her?"

Tug glanced up at Rory as he came down the stairs. He nodded his agreement. "Yes, she won't be alone in this, Remi."

"Fine. I'll have the doctor come with us so he can get the right injections, but Tug, you know there is no going back."

"We know, but we have no choice." He clicked the phone off and gazed at Sam.

He smiled and shook his head. "My sister is going to be furious, but thank you. I couldn't have picked two better men to be with her." Sam and his men turned and went into the living room.

"Rory, you should inform your family what we're planning on doing." Tug moved to the stairs, but Rory grabbed his arm.

"I was thinking while you were on the phone. The others in the labs might not have people to lean on as she does. It also might help her adjust to have others around her."

Tug frowned and glanced up the stairs. "You're right. We'll have to talk to Remi when they get back. I know there are two empty cabins behind me we could use and another one on the left side. I'm sure Remi wouldn't mind us using them, but right now she's getting scared again." Tug flew up the stairs two at a time, Rory following. *Damn, forgot the broom.*

*I'll get it.* Rory turned and ran downstairs as Tug moved into the bedroom. Cecil was curled up in a ball. Fresh tears ran down her face, breaking Tug's heart.

He crawled up onto the bed and pulled her tense body onto his. "What's wrong, Cecil? Why the tears?" Tug wiped the tears away from her face and kissed her lips.

"It's nothing." She tried to pull her face away, but he held on to her chin.

"Don't lie to me, Cecil. It's something to make you cry. Now, tell me." He snarled.

"I didn't lie." She glared at him and he smiled.

"But not saying anything is the same as lying in my book. You



have two seconds to start talking.” He bit down on her shoulder and released her. “Or I will turn you over my knee and spank that cute ass.” He grinned and wiggled his eyebrows.

“Jeez, talk about being bossy. I was just feeling a little sorry for myself, that’s all.” She squirmed on his lap.

He frowned and nodded. “Things will look better tomorrow, I promise.” He kissed her nose and hugged her tightly.

Rory came in with the broom. “Everything okay?”

“Yes, already,” Cecil snapped.

Tug flipped her over his knee and smacked her ass. “There was no need for you to get all snippy on him when he was worried about you, Cecil.” He gave her two more swats to each cheek when she cried out.

“I’m sorry, please.” She reached back, trying to cover her ass, but he moved her hands out of the way.

“You’d better be.” He spanked her three more times and lifted her up, frowning at her, putting her beside him. Tears slid down her face as she stared up at the ceiling.

Rory slipped in beside her and lifted the covers over them. “Sleep, Cecil. Quit worrying about things. We’ll work this out.” He kissed her lips softly and lay down on his back.

“When I turned sixteen, my mom and dad threw me this big birthday party. There were more than thirty of us there, boys and girls. There was this one boy I had the biggest crush on, Mathew. But he had eyes only for my friend. That whole day I was hoping for one kiss, something. But, nothing. It’s funny—here I have two men who are my mates and I’m afraid to touch you. Even the wolf inside me is afraid to come out, afraid she’ll hurt someone.” She sighed and rolled over on her side, facing him as she closed her eyes.

“I’m sorry I’m such a coward,” Cecil whispered. “Good night.”

A single tear slipped down Tug’s cheek. “We’re all afraid, little wolf, but we each have to face that fear or we are nothing.” He bent down, kissing her head. “All my life I’ve been in control. In some ways I’m alpha, but I stepped aside knowing Remi was the most powerful and the rightful alpha of our clan. Don’t get me wrong—Remi and I butt heads often, but we respect each other. When Remi found out Jaycee was his mate, after all the things that have happened to her, I couldn’t figure out how Remi didn’t kill everyone in his path. But now, having you here and seeing what’s happened to you, I understand his actions. It’s taking every ounce of strength in me to control the rage I feel towards those who hurt you, but, like Remi, I know that right now the only thing that is important is protecting you, and to let others take care of those who threaten you.

Now that doesn't mean that if they showed up here, I'd step aside. It just means that my place is at your side, no matter what happens. Am I afraid? Hell, yes. Afraid you'll be taken away from us after we just found you, afraid you'll turn away from us and not trust us to protect you." Tug gazed down at her. "So you see, we all have our demons, but if we're together we can face them."

Rory leaned over and kissed her shoulder. "I have a very big family. I'm the oldest of eight brother and sisters, but I wasn't always the oldest. When I was about ten, my older brother Ran and I took off to go fishing. I had been bugging him nonstop for a week to go." He laughed. "I loved to follow my brother everywhere. He was five years older than me and our father was always so busy with pack life that Ran took it upon himself to do things with me."

"On our way down to the lake I decided we should take this shortcut, but Ran said no, that it was too dangerous. Well, I didn't listen and took off running down the path. I forgot about one side of the path, which had a steep drop-off, and I was running straight for it. Ran caught me just before I could plummet below, but he slipped and fell down the cliff. I sat there crying for a good ten minutes when I finally ran home to get my family. Ran died instantly, breaking his neck to save me."

Rory sighed. Cecil turned to him, cupping his cheek.

"Ohh, Rory, I'm so sorry."

"Thank you, but what Tug is trying to get you to understand, Cecil, is everyone has fears, but it's what you do about them that makes you who you are inside here." He laid his hand down on her chest, above her heart.

Tug leaned up and covered Rory's hand. "Cecil, you have both of our hearts right next to yours, keeping you safe—if you'll let us in. Let us be that family, or they have won. They will have finally beaten you."

"I'm so tired, but I'll try. Thank you for your stories. I knew it was hard for both of you to share those. Maybe one day I'll be able to tell you what they made me do." She tried to smile, but the pain behind those big brown eyes was haunting.

"We're not going anywhere, Cecil. Anytime you're ready, we'll be here." Rory kissed her cheek and lay down.

"Sleep. Tomorrow is another big day for all of us." Tug kissed her lips and curled up to her. His cock pushed against her ass cheeks and he closed his eyes, trying to ignore the heat.

\* \* \* \*

Cecil closed her eyes, hoping the nightmare wouldn't return tonight. She shivered at the thought. Rory pulled her closer to his body

while Tug curled up behind her.

If Sam found out what they had made her do, he wouldn't have anything to do with her. Even her mates might turn away from her.

"Stop worrying so much, Cecil. I can feel you trembling. No one's going to hurt you," Tug whispered in her ear.

She closed her eyes and took a deep breath. Cecil was safe, surrounded by those who would kill anyone who would touch her.

*She was blindfolded, naked, and starved as her captors led her out by a rope wrapped around her neck. Cecil shivered as her bare feet shuffled on the cold cement floor, trying to keep up without falling. The click of a door opening signaled they had reached their destination, but the scent of her small brother drew her into the room. Brandon was alive.*

*The rope disappeared from her neck and the blindfold was removed as she was shoved fully into the room. Cecil dropped to her knees, glancing up at her brother as he curled up in a ball, crying. "I'm here, Brandon."*

*She slowly crawled to him and pulled him into her arms. "I'll protect you." She rocked him back and forth when the holes in the wall opened. Snakes dropped into the room, hissing and angry. Slowly she placed him behind her, drawing the snakes' attention away from her brother. "Don't move or say anything," Cecil hissed. The snake inside her came to the forefront.*

*The snakes slithered back and forth, watching her silently, knowing she would destroy them if they touched her. Her venom was stronger and deadlier than any of them, and it dripped from the fangs that now protruded from her mouth. Cecil's vision changed to that of the snakes, catching any movement, her body ready to strike.*

*To Cecil's right something scuttled past her. Without thinking she grabbed it and bit down into the object, when she heard the cry. Brandon. Jumping back, she screamed as Brandon's little body shook. "No!" She tore through the snakes, killing each one that tried to attack Brandon, but she knew the damage had already been done.*

Cecil shot up out of bed once more and ran to the bathroom, hugging the toilet. "I'm so sorry, Brandon, so sorry!" she cried, throwing up everything she had eaten. The thud of feet hitting the floor sounded behind her as both men ran to the bathroom.

"Damn it!" Rory yelled, bumping into the bathroom door frame and stubbing his toe.

Rory stumbled into the bathroom with Tug next to him, and knelt down next to her, brushing the hair away from her face as her stomach heaved a second time. They whispered everything would be all

right, but she shook her head, afraid to believe anything.

Between the heavy wrenching of her stomach, sobs shook her body as the picture of little Brandon flashed in her mind. His shocked and horrified expression, and the terror in his eyes, would always haunt her.

Tug pulled her into his arms slowly after the heaving stopped. Rory cleaned her face gently with a damp, cool rag. "Tell us, Cecil. It will help. Who's Brandon?"

"Brandon is our younger brother." Her brother Sam sat down next to them and stared at her.

She dug her nails into Tug's arm, her body shook, and her lips trembled. They had a right to know. Cecil closed her eyes, laying her head on Tug's chest. "I had been kept in solitary confinement for more than two weeks. No clothes, no food, no light for two days when they came, wrapping a rope around my neck and blindfolding me. They took me to another cell. Inside the cell was Brandon. I held him and cried with him. It was the first time I had seen any of our family in a month. He was skinny and bruises covered his body, but he recognized me.

"That was when the holes in the wall opened and snakes poured into the room. I put Brandon behind me and told him not to move or say anything. The snakes wouldn't attack me, knowing I could destroy them. I was so busy concentrating on keeping the snakes away from Brandon when he moved his tiny leg..." She whimpered and tears fell down her face. "I thought it was a snake and I bit him. I could do nothing but keep the others off him. They took him away after I killed all the snakes. I can still see his little accusing face as they dragged him away."

## Chapter Six

Tug held onto their mate as she told her story. The more she went on, the more furious he became. The beast roared to come out and search for those who did this to her. He watched Sam carefully, hoping he would see she was the victim here too.

Sam stood and growled, punching his hand through the bathroom door. Cecil cried, then buried her face into Tug's chest.

"Easy, little one. He's not mad at you. It's the whole situation that he's furious at." Tug rubbed her back, kissing her neck, and glanced up at Sam, who closed his eyes and once again kneeled beside her.

"Tug is right, little sister. It's not your fault. We'll find them and make them pay, I promise." He reached over and lifted her chin. "I love you, Cecil." He stood and left the room, leaving them alone.

Rory stood and gathered Cecil in his arms, carrying her back to bed where he slowly laid her down, and stretched out next to her. "I don't know how you made it through all you've gone through. You constantly amaze us with your strength." Rory ran his hand over her face.

Tug stared down at them. Tomorrow would be a long day for all of them. Hopefully Cecil would sleep, now that she had opened up to them. He crawled into the bed and covered them all with the quilt. "Sleep now, Cecil. You should be able to sleep without nightmares now." He kissed her lips and snuggled down next to her.

His mind raced with the problems that lay ahead for them, but he was bound and determined to claim his mate.

\* \* \* \*

Opening his eyes, Tug glanced next to him, expecting to see Cecil, but he only saw Rory. He looked around the room and swung out of bed when he smelled bacon cooking. Tug smiled and shook Rory. "I think someone is cooking breakfast."

Rory sniffed and smiled as he rolled out of bed and stretched. "I didn't sleep worth a shit. I'll be glad when this crap is behind us." Rory walked over to his duffel bag, grabbed a pair of sweatpants, and stepped into them.

Tug pulled on his jeans and tucked his morning woody into his pants. "After breakfast, maybe we can all go and pack your stuff. It might keep Cecil's mind off what's taking place right now." He was moving to the door when Cecil pushed into the room, smiling.

"I was just coming to wake you two up. I have breakfast on the table." She glanced down at the floor. "It's not much since I haven't cooked in a while."

"I'm sure it's fine." Tug pulled her into his arms and kissed her. "What time did you get up?"

"I heard Sam and his team getting ready around five. I had to see him before he left." She smiled up at Rory as he kissed her cheek.

"Come on, let's eat before it gets cold." She pulled them down the stairs, grinning at the table.

Tug did a double take, then smiled at the plates piled high with bacon, omelets, and fresh homemade biscuits. "Wow, this is amazing. What kind of omelet?"

The men stood until Cecil sat. "I used to cook all the time. The omelets have peppers, cheese, and bacon in them. Maybe later we can go grocery shopping and I can cook you guys a big supper."

Tug bit into a biscuit and moaned. "Damn, this is almost better than sinking my cock..." He stopped and glanced at her hurt face. "Oh baby, I'm sorry. It's just that your biscuits were so good."

Cecil smiled. "It's okay. I know you guys are very sexually active. At least you like my biscuits. What about the omelet?"

Tug glanced over at Rory, who glared at him. He cringed, knowing he messed up big time. Getting up and moving to next to her seat, Tug kneeled down next to her and turned her chair towards him.

He lowered his head in her lap. "Please forgive me, Cecil. I didn't mean to hurt you. You can even take away the biscuits," he grumbled.

Cecil laughed, then leaned down and kissed his cheek. "You're so silly. Tug, look at me."

He raised his head and gazed into her eyes. "You've apologized. It was a slip of the tongue," she said. "We all have moments like that. Now, if you or Rory called out some other woman's name while making love to me, that would be a different story. I'd have to chop something off and put it where the sun doesn't shine." She grinned.

Tug flinched and cupped his cock. "Believe me, that won't happen, ever." He wrapped his arm around her neck and pulled her forward, kissing her hard. "Thank you for the great breakfast." He smiled, returning to his seat.

"Now, on to the omelet." He took a bite. "Damn, woman, can you cook."

Rory growled. "I'm going to gain so much weight. I hope you have a gym somewhere in this house." He shoveled another bite into his mouth and moaned.

Cecil rolled her eyes and laughed. "Stop it, already. So what's on the agenda for today other than waiting?"

"Well, we thought we'd go over to Rory's apartment and gather his things. I don't want you out in public so soon, Cecil. If you make a list of things you might need, I can have someone pick the items up."

Grabbing her plate, Cecil headed towards the kitchen. "I kind of figured it would be too soon to do anything normal." She dumped her dish into the sink, running the hot water.

"What are you doing?" Tug came up behind her, popping the last bite of biscuit into his mouth.

She flicked dish soap at him and laughed when a bubble landed on his chest. "Washing dishes. Jeez, do you need your eyes checked?"

"Rory, I think our mate needs some special attention." He grabbed the sprayer and sprayed the warm water at her.

"Hey!" Cecil screamed and ducked out of the way when Rory grabbed her arms, holding her in place.

Tug grinned and drenched the front of her white nightgown. "Hmm, look at those breasts." He turned the hose away and sucked her nipple into his mouth through the material.

"Guys, stop." She squirmed as Tug shot her again with the hose, soaking her all the way down to her legs. The nightgown hugged her body and he smiled, turning off the water. "What do you think, Rory? Are you still hungry?"

"Hmm, I can still nibble. After all, we're grown men." He scraped his teeth against her neck.

Rory cupped her breast, releasing her hands. Cecil jumped for the hose, turning on the water and spraying both of them in the pants. "Ha! It's only fair, so I can see too." She laughed as Rory wrestled the hose away from her, fully drenching her.

He went to step towards her and fell flat on his ass. Tug and Cecil laughed so hard they crumbled to the floor. "Oh my God, that was too good. I haven't laughed that hard in so long." She grabbed her stomach and leaned over, kissing Tug's cheek. "Thanks, both of you." Cecil kissed Rory's chin.

The doorbell rang and she glanced up, frowning. "They couldn't be back so soon, could they?" She tried to jump up, but slipped.

Rory grabbed her and laughed. "Settle down. I'm sure it's not them." He helped her up and pushed her towards the stairs. "Go upstairs and jump in the shower while we see who it is."

"But what if it's news?"

Tug pointed up stairs. "No one is going to see you like that. Now,

go.” He growled and watched her roll her eyes, heading upstairs.

“Men.”

The doorbell rang again and he unlocked and opened the door, to Mark, Sheila, and Jaycee. He stepped aside, smiling at the ladies as they strolled into the house..

“Did we have an accident?” Sheila laughed as Rory stepped into the living room.

“Funny. We were washing dishes.” Rory wiggled his eyebrows. “Any word?” he asked Mark.

“Nope, not a thing. These two were going nuts so I thought we’d come here to keep them busy.”

“Do I smell food?” Jaycee asked, walking into the dining room. She squealed. “Fresh biscuits?”

Mark laughed and hugged her from behind. “Jaycee, you just ate less than an hour ago.”

“It’s okay. Go ahead and help yourself. If I eat any more, I’m going to burst. Cecil baked them this morning.” Tug grabbed a couple of dish towels and the mop. “Just don’t come in here. The floor is kind of wet.”

Sheila peeked around the corner and laughed. “What did you do? Have a bath in the kitchen?”

“Something like that.” Cecil laughed, coming downstairs wearing a dark blue skirt and white silk blouse.

“God, Cecil, these things are amazing.” Jaycee pulled the last omelet over and took a bite, moaning.

“You sound just like those two in the kitchen. That’s all they did while they ate.” Cecil sat down next to Jaycee as Tug reached over to grab the plate of bacon, when Jaycee poked him with a fork.

“Don’t you touch that. I’m not done yet.” Cecil laughed as Tug snatched his hand back.

“Damn, Jaycee, all you had to do was tell me.” He laughed.

Mark shook his head. “Never get in the way of a pregnant woman and her food. Believe me, all three of us have learned our lesson. Ouch! What was that for?” Mark rubbed his hand where Jaycee had poked him. Jaycee grinned at Cecil. “Never make fun of a pregnant woman either.”

Cecil looked at Mark. “Do you think they’re in the labs now?”

Mark smiled and nodded. “The labs are now secure, but that’s all I know. Remi said it’s going to be a couple of hours before they can make sense of anything and see if there are any survivors. He said the place is like a maze downstairs.”



“You okay, Cecil?” Tug knelt down beside her and cupped her cheek.

She sighed. “I’m fine, just glad they closed that place down, but they’ll just start another one somewhere else.”

“One step at a time, Cecil. Once we sort out everything, we’ll have a better idea where to focus our attention. Now, if you will excuse me, I’m going to go change. It’s getting a little drafty.” He laughed and ruffled her hair.

\* \* \* \*

“You know, these biscuits are really good. You should make them for the next pack dinner,” Sheila said, breaking off a piece and popping it into her mouth.

“I told you they were great.” Jaycee laughed as Mark grabbed a roll.

“I have to taste it,” Mark said. “Usually the only time Jaycee moans like that is when...”

Jaycee slapped Mark in the stomach. “Don’t even say it.”

“You are evil.” Mark took a bit of the biscuit and his eyes got big. He looked at Cecil. “Oh, my God, Remi and Dane would go crazy for these. Quick, stuff a couple of them in your bag.”

“Please, if you want some, I can make you a whole batch for tomorrow morning,” Cecil said. “It’s easy, really.”

Jaycee practically drooled as she looked up at Mark. “Make a list. You’re going shopping.”

Rory laughed as he ran up the stairs. “Keep Cecil busy. We’ll be back.”

“I mean it, Mark. Sit down and make a list of everything she’ll need. We can make a couple of batches while we wait.” Jaycee pointed to the empty chair.

Mark pulled the chair out and grabbed the small pad and paper by the phone. “Okay, start listing off the things you need.” He sighed.

“Would you mind if I added a few other things to the list? I’d like to make a nice dinner tonight for them and they don’t want me going into town yet.” Cecil scooted her chair up and he nodded.

“Cecil, if you make us a couple of batches of those biscuits, I’ll buy you anything you need.” Jaycee smiled.

“Are you bribing my mate?” Tug growled behind Cecil and squeezed her shoulders.

“I offered to make a couple of batches of biscuits, so Mark is going to the grocery store. I thought maybe he could pick up the things I need for dinner.” She smiled up at Tug.

“Hmm, what do you have planned for dinner?” He traced his finger on her cheek.

“Well, I know everyone is going to be tired and drained when they get back, so I thought we could make a couple of large lasagnas, garlic bread with cheese, and peanut butter cream cheese cake for desert.”

“Mark, you’re going to need a bigger piece of paper.” Jaycee grinned and he moaned. Jaycee frowned at him. “What?”

“We weren’t invited to dinner, Jaycee.” Mark grinned.

Jaycee threw a piece of bacon at him. Tug laughed. “You are all invited. I have a feeling we will be going through all the files tonight. Mark, Rory can go with you to the grocery store, if you don’t mind stopping at his house so he can grab more of his things.”

Mark nodded. “I have the truck, so I see no problem with that. Okay, Cecil, start writing down what you need.” He pushed the paper to her and she began writing her list.

She glanced up at Mark. “We’re going to need two huge backing dishes. You know, the tin ones? Tug already has one, but I figured we’re going to need three of them.” She got up and opened the top cupboard and jumped to get the pan when Tug came up behind her.

He laughed, reaching up and grabbing the pan down for her. “Hey, I can’t help it if I’m short.” She turned, showing Mark the pan, and he nodded.

“Just put down baking pan and I’ll know what you want.”

Cecil moved back to her seat as Rory came down the stairs. “Mark is going to go with you to your place, then stop by the grocery store for us.” Tug pulled her up out of her seat and sat down with her in her lap.

“Sounds like a plan. Mom called and she has some things for Cecil, so I’ll bring them back with me.” He leaned down and kissed her. “She’s thrilled I found my mate and she can’t wait to meet you.”

Cecil glanced up at him. “She won’t be too happy when she learns I’m a freak. Maybe you should wait to invite them over here, Rory.” She tapped the pen on the table.

He grabbed her chin and frowned down at her. “I don’t want to hear that again, Cecil. You’re not a freak,” he said. “But I will wait until we get this mess cleared up. Ready, Mark?”

“Yep, got the list. Sheila, both of you stay in the house,” he ordered and stood up, heading to the door.

“Yes, almighty alpha!” Jaycee snapped. “Like we have anywhere to go.”

“Don’t get smart. That ass still gets red.” Mark growled and slammed the front door.

Tug lifted Cecil up, going to lock the door.

“You know, I have enough to make one more batch of biscuits, so let’s start those now,” she said.

## Chapter Seven

Tug sat at the table drinking a cup of coffee as he watched all three women in the kitchen making biscuits. Jaycee was covered in flour, Sheila had spilled the milk down her shirt, and Cecil just laughed, cleaning up their messes.

Jaycee leaned over, smelling the coffee. "You know, the only thing I truly miss about being pregnant is my coffee."

"You can't drink coffee when you're pregnant?" Cecil reached over, grabbing Tug's coffee cup from the table. "I've never really tried it." She took a sip and frowned. "Yuck! How can you drink that stuff?"

Jaycee laughed. "You should try the hazelnut coffee. Oh my God, it's so good. Hold on." Jaycee grabbed her cell phone and called Mark.

"Mark, grab a big tin of that hazelnut coffee." She glanced at the phone and growled. "I know I can't drink it, fool. It's for Cecil." Jaycee rolled her eyes.

Cecil looked at the door. "They're back."

Jaycee shut the phone and glanced at the door as he got up and walked towards the front door. Sure enough, two trucks sat in the driveway. The timer went off in the kitchen as Cecil got up, getting the biscuits out of the oven.

Sam and his two partners came into the house, followed by Remi, Dane, and the doctor carrying files, samples, and boxes of things.

"Sam, were there any survivors?" Cecil came around the counter and stared at all of them.

He shook his head and sat down in the chair. "Not of our family. I'm sorry, Cecil. They're all gone."

Tug jumped to catch her as her legs gave out. He turned and growled at Sam. Tears streamed down her face. "Little Brandon?"

Sam stood. "Dead." He stormed outside, slamming the door behind him.

"He blames me. I knew he would." Cecil cried into Tug's chest.

"Cecil, he doesn't blame you. He's just upset." He sat down on the stool, rocking her back and forth.

She wiped her face and glanced at Remi. "How many survivors did you find?"

Remi ran his hand through his hair and picked Jaycee up, sitting down with in his lap. "We got to six children in time. Three adult females and four teenagers were saved, but there were more than twenty we

couldn't save. The place was a mess. They were trying to move things out when we got there. Several of the head scientists got away, but we do have a list of all the lab locations. It's a start. There's so much we have to go through."

"Did you find my file?" Cecil tensed in his arms.

"Yes, that we got." He glanced up at her. "You are an amazing woman, Cecil. What they did..."

She glanced down at the floor. "I had no choice but to survive. I was trying to save my family, but I failed."

Dane came over to them and lifted her chin. "What they did to you and your family... You're lucky to be alive. We are all very proud of you, Cecil. You've helped many people. Thank you."

She put her head on Tug's chest and smiled. "I did nothing, but thank you."

Mark and Rory came into the room, carrying groceries. Rory put bags down and came over to them, shaking his head. "I'm sorry, Cecil." He rubbed her neck.

"Where are the survivors?" She looked at the doctor.

"We've taken them to the pack's clinic. Some of them had only been there for a year or less, but there are a few who had been there for as long as you were. It will take time, healing, and adjusting to their bodies."

"I don't think I'll ever get used to it," she mumbled into his chest.

"Cecil, why don't you go finish your cooking, so we can talk to them?" He lowered her feet to the floor and kissed her. "We'll get through this. Don't give up hope."

"I know." She moved into the kitchen, unpacking the groceries. Jaycee and Sheila stepped into the kitchen, helping her.

"Why don't we talk outside? Cecil doesn't need to hear any more today." Tug and Rory moved outside with the men.

He turned and glanced at the doctor. "Did you get it?"

The doctor nodded and reached into the bag, pulling out two syringes. "Are you sure you want to do this? Once we inject you, there is no going back. Your wolf will be dominant, but the snake will be there."

"Yes, I want it. She needs us." Tug rolled up his sleeve, as did Rory. "What about children? When you inject us, will her venom kill us if she were to bite us?"

"From what I've read of her file, the venom in Cecil didn't affect the others who were also injected with the same DNA. As far as children, there should be no problem. The children will have some of the same DNA, but it won't be as strong as the parents."

"Good. When will the change start?" Tug said as the doctor

pushed the needle into his vein and injected the serum into his blood.

"Immediately, from what I read in Cecil's file." He turned and injected Rory as Dane, Mark, and Remi stood and watched.

The serum was cold as it moved through his veins. His stomach clenched and he grabbed onto the truck. "Shit, this stuff hurts," he snarled as his knees buckled and he fell to the ground.

Cecil stepped outside. Her eyes got large and she screamed. "No! What the hell did you do?" She flew off the porch, but Remi caught her and carried her into the house, kicking and screaming.

"They can't! Why are they doing it?" she cried.

Tug tried to turn his head to Rory, but once again his body jerked. Fangs started to descend and his skin itched as it grew cold.

"You're almost there. From what I read, it took her about ten minutes to change." The doctor watched and waited. "The venom doesn't get that strong for a couple of days, but you'll be protected from hers now."

Sam came around the corner and waited. Remi came out of the house, shaking his head. "You have one pissed-off mate. Jaycee and Sheila have her cooking right now, but she is going to blow again when she sees you two."

Tug grunted as once again he tried to stand. Each limb felt like gel. His legs wobbled and he locked them in place. He threw his head back, glaring at the sky. "I'll kill them, I swear, Remi, if I get my hands on any of those scientists."

"I have a feeling you'll have your chance. Rory, how are you feeling?"

"Like I've been run over by a snow plow," he said, standing. "The senses are a little screwed up, but the wolf genes are slowly taking control again. The only true difference I feel are the fangs."

Dane coughed in his hand. "Well, I'm afraid your tongue is a little different."

"What?" He moved slowly to the side mirror on his truck, sticking out his tongue. "Well, damn, it's narrower, but it's not totally like a snake's. It is a little longer, which could be good." He grinned.

"Yeah, if she ever forgives us." Rory glanced at Dane and Remi.

"So, how much danger is she still in now that the lab is known?" Tug leaned against the truck, scanning the area.

"We can't know for sure, but instead of wanting her back, they might try to exterminate her," Dane said. "She is the one who got away, so to speak, and from what the records indicate, one of the first to be able to control the snake somewhat." Dane nodded toward the door. "You two had

better go talk to her. Jaycee says she is ready to come out here again.”

On shaky legs, Tug and Rory made their way back into the house, followed by the others. Cecil sat at the dining room table, her hands covering her face. “How could you do this? Don’t you know there is no going back?” She looked up at them, her eyes all swollen and red.

Rory picked her up and sat her down in his lap as he took her seat. He pulled up a chair and sat in front of her. “There was no choice, Cecil. You are our mate. What you go through, we go through. You’ll never be alone again.” He cupped her cheek, rubbing his thumb on it.

“Why would you allow them to do this?” Cecil demanded of Remi. “You’re their alpha.”

Remi smiled. “I’m afraid they wouldn’t have listened even if I did say anything, but they are right in what they did. I would have done the same thing if it was Jaycee.”

“Are men just totally warped or what?” Cecil asked Jaycee, who laughed.

“Honey, they are all warped and believe me, all three of them would have done it.”

Cecil shook her head and got up, going to the patio door. “I should have died with my family. At least then, both of you would have had a normal life.”

Chairs fell to the floor and growls filled the room. Tug grasped her shoulders. “I don’t want to hear that ever again, do you hear me?” He shook her. “Would you have Rory and me without a mate for the rest of our lives? What about all those they saved because of your information? Don’t they deserve a chance to live?”

Glancing around the room, she nodded. “I just wish both of you would have talked to me first. This affects us all.”

“Yes, it does, Cecil. We didn’t want you going through this alone.” Rory pushed his hand through his hair.

“But don’t you see? I’m still alone. You have the DNA in your system, but I have to live through the years of isolation, torture, and the memories of my family dying. No one can wipe that all away.” She moved to the kitchen, pulling the baking pans out.

“Cecil...”

“No, Rory. You did this, and I understand what you were trying to do, but no one will be able to understand what was done to me. The nights where I cried for hours on end just wanting to die, because they made me watch my mother being impregnated...” She slammed down the jar of sauce she took out of the bag.

“Baby...”

“Stop. Don’t you think I see how Sam looks at me, wishing I was Mom or Dad?” Sam stepped forward, but she shook her head. “It’s okay, Sam. *I* wish it was me there instead of here. Excuse me.” Cecil ran out of the kitchen and up the stairs, slamming the bedroom door behind her, leaning against it. She couldn’t catch her breath. Tears streamed down her face as she slid down to the door, collapsing on the floor. “Momma, I’m so sorry.”

The door inched forward. “Cecil, move away from the door,” Sam said.

“Just...go...away.” She cried harder.

Sam pushed the door open a little further and slipped in. He reached down, pulling her into his arms. “Cecil, stop. You’re going to make yourself sick.”

“I couldn’t save them, Sam. None of them.” She grabbed his shirt and held on.

“Look at me, Cecil.” He pulled away and lifted her chin up. “What could you have done? You were sixteen when they took you. No sixteen-year-old could have stopped them. Do you really believe Mom and Dad wanted you to die?”

“But...”

“No, Cecil, you know I’m right. Now, you have two mates down there that are pacing back and forth, worried about you.” He turned her around and pushed her towards the door. “Go to them, Cecil.”

“Let me wash my face. I’ll be down in a minute.”

Cecil stepped into the bathroom and stared into the broken mirror. She could still see the faded scars on her cheek from the first time she had tried to escape.

Turning on the cold water, she splashed it on her face. The cold water washed away the tears. She opened her eyes. Rory stood behind her and handed her a towel.

“Thank you.” Cecil wiped her face and turned to face him. “I’m sorry, Rory. I didn’t mean to make a scene.” Gazing up into his dark blue eyes, she reached up, rubbing his cheek, the five o’clock shadow rough against her hand.

“Cecil, everyone downstairs knows it’s going to take you time. Come on, let’s get down there before Jaycee decides to try to make the food for tonight.” Rory laughed, leading her out of the bedroom.

“That’s a bad thing?” She frowned.

“Honey, everyone knows Jaycee doesn’t cook and shouldn’t be in the kitchen.” Rory whispered into her ear as they stepped off the last stair.

“Hey, I heard that!” Jaycee snapped.



“Now, Jaycee, he’s only telling the truth.” Dane grinned. “You even said so yourself.” He flipped open a folder from one of the boxes they had brought in.

“Fine, but does everyone have to tease me about it?” She pouted and winked at Cecil as she stepped into the kitchen.

“Well, you already know how to make the biscuits, so that’s a start.” Cecil grinned, putting the last batch of biscuits in a large bowl.

Remi and Dane came over and each grabbed a biscuit, smiling. “Have to taste these so I know what they are supposed to taste like if she tries.” Remi teased Jaycee, kissing her cheek.

“Ha, that’s *not* funny.” Jaycee frowned. “Where’s Bo?”

Dane sat back down at the table, going over the files again. “He’s at the clinic, making sure we have enough security there. He’ll be by in a few.”

Cecil watched Tug and Rory as they worked on the files. Neither showed any signs of the injection, but she knew there would be side effects. It was just a matter of time. She had been sick for more than a week from the injection, but then again, Cecil had been starved and beaten.

## Chapter Eight

Tug glanced up at Cecil and knew she was watching him. She had been for the past three hours, making sure both he and Rory were okay. Cecil's file never mentioned the internal freezing, or what was first freezing before it turned to gut-wrenching pain. He glanced at Rory as beads of sweat formed along his forehead, and his hand was clenched into a fist by his side.

"So, are you two going to sit there and pretend you're not in pain, or are you going to go lie down?" Cecil glared at them both.

Everyone in the room glanced at them and frowned. The doctor moved towards them, but Tug waved him away. "We're fine, just a little pain." He snarled, glaring back at Cecil.

Cecil leaned over the table. "For Pete's sake! Let the damn doctor take a look at you. Please."

He grumbled, but stood and went to the den. "Come on, Doc."

Rory and Cecil followed them into the den. "Well, tell him," Cecil said to Tug. She put her hands on her hips, and sucked her bottom lip into her mouth.

"It's as if every organ inside me freezes, then the pain rips you apart." He fell down onto the sofa.

Rory sat down next to him and nodded. "After the pain starts to wear off in one area, it moves to the next organ."

The doctor glanced at Cecil and she sighed. "When they gave me the injection, this phase lasted about six hours." She hopped on top of his desk.

"What do you mean phase?" Rory asked.

"Hey, don't get all snarly with me. This was *your* bright idea," Cecil said. "I went through three phases. The second phase starts about halfway into phase one, and I'm afraid you should stay in here when it happens."

"Why?" Tug asked.

Cecil glanced up at him. "Because the snake DNA will try one more time to break through the wolf's. Your skin will turn to snakeskin. It will feel like your skin is turning inside out. You'll be cold, clammy, and no one should be in the same room with you. You'll attack anything in the room other than snakes." She smiled.

"I don't think this is funny," Rory grumbled.

Her smile quickly faded and her big brown eyes filled with tears. "I wasn't smiling because of you two. I was remembering when I turned. The scientists were in the room and I attacked one, killing him."

Rory started to get up, but fell down onto the couch, grabbing his stomach.

Tug doubled over and growled. "Get out, *now*."

Cecil jumped off the desk and pushed the reluctant doctor out of the room. "No, I have to be here in case something happens," he protested.

"I'll stay here and let you know. They won't attack me."

Cecil looked back at Tug and cringed.

His skin swelled and split open. Greenish yellow skin replaced the old skin. Fangs started to protrude, venom dripped out of fangs.

Rory fell off the couch, and soon joined Tug as his clothes fell away from his body. Cecil had been right. He didn't want to attack her, but he sure wanted to mate with her. His legs and arms disappeared into the skin of the snake's as he slithered around on the floor.

Tug rose, his body swaying back and forth. He flinched, staring at the big snake in front of him. *Damn, she was right*. He moved closer to her.

"I told you two. Well, at least you aren't deformed, as far as snakes go. In about a half hour, you'll change back."

"Cecil, is everything in there okay?" the doctor asked through the door.

She groaned and watched Rory attack the door as she sat back, not moving. "It would have been fine if you hadn't said anything. Now Rory has his fang in the damn door." Cecil moved very carefully to him.

"Easy, Rory. I have to get you unhooked. Please don't bite me."

Tug hissed, pissed off as she put herself in danger getting Rory unhooked. "Don't hiss at me, Tug. I can't very well leave him hooked to the door." She glanced at him over her shoulder. "I hope you two know I hate snakes, and if you bite me, Rory, I'm going to bite that little thing in between your legs." She grabbed his head gently, removing his fangs from the door.

She sighed and leaned against the door as Rory hissed at her. "*Don't* even think about it."

Tug curled up by her feet, staring when he felt the wrenching pain inside him start again. He hissed, moving away from her and into the middle of the room. He didn't know how much time had passed before he could feel his arms and legs pushing through the snakeskin. The shed skin fell to the floor.

The fangs retreated and his vision returned to normal as he

glanced around the room. His skin was covered in slime. "What's the...last phase?" he snarled.

Cecil moved out of the way as the doctor pushed back into the room. He glanced around the room and picked up parts of their fallen skin. "I want to take these to the lab. Do you mind?" He glanced at Tug, who shook his head.

"No, get them out of here."

Cecil stood and stretched. "The final phase, well, you're seeing it now." Then she backed up two steps.

Tug doubled over, throwing up everything he had in his stomach.

"Your body is getting rid of toxins from the snake," Cecil said. "You now have a special sack inside your throat where the venom is kept, but everything else is being thrown out by the wolf. I'll go get a bucket of hot water and the mop because it's going to stink in here in a few." Cecil moved towards the door, but the doctor stopped her.

"Cecil, wait. I want to get samples of this too." The doctor ran from the room, carrying the skins. Someone squealed in the kitchen and he knew it was Jaycee.

"Damn it, Doc. You could have put those away before you came in here." Remi snarled and came into the room. He watched Tug and Rory for a moment, then looked at Cecil.

"You okay?"

She nodded. "I'm fine. I'd better get the hot water and mop."

"Cecil, we'll clean you. Go keep Jaycee and Sheila company while I clean this up. Then I'm going to take a damn shower and get this crap off of me." Tug growled and slowly stood up.

Rory turned and glared at Cecil. "And don't think I forgot about that comment. When I'm up to it, I'll show you how small it is."

Cecil laughed, walking out of the room. "After all that, and you're more worried about the size of your cock. Jeez, talk about deranged."

Rory snarled as the doctor came in with a large bag, pulling out tubes and scooping the stuff off the floor. "Don't take your shower yet. I want samples of that stuff on your skin too." The doctor put the tubes from the floor in his bag and came at him with a small scalpel and test tube.

"You know, I swear you seem to be a little too happy to get a hold of this stuff," Rory said as the doctor gently scraped the goo from his skin.

The doctor smiled. "Most of the samples at the lab were either gone or destroyed, so any information we get here will help us tremendously. I don't think Cecil is ready yet to have a doctor poking around her." He swung around and put the test tube in his box.

"You'll not go near her for a while," Tug demanded.

Remi stepped forward. “Easy, Tug. That’s why the doctor wants to get as much as he can from you two. God, it stinks in here. What the hell is that stuff?” He squinted at the floor.

“I don’t know, but it needs to be cleaned up before it stains.” Tug was on his way to the door when it was pushed open and Cecil stepped in, carrying a bucket with hot soapy water.

“Cecil, don’t you listen to anything?” Tug grabbed the bucket from her and the mop.

She stuck out her tongue at him. “Yes, when it’s important. That smell is gagging everyone out here, especially Jaycee.”

“Damn.” Remi moved out of the room.

“Fine, but I’ve got this. Now, go.” He pushed her towards the door, but she stopped.

“Um, I got your robes for you.” She reached around the door where Sheila handed her the robes. “That way you don’t have to run upstairs naked. There are others here now and no one needs to see...” She glanced down at his cock.

“Jaycee, most of the pack has seen us naked. I don’t want us to get the robes all nasty. It’ll just be something else we’ll have to wash.”

Cecil crossed her arms over her breasts. “Really? Then you wouldn’t mind if I was to walk around naked in front of the men out there?”

The snarl started deep in his gut, rising up before he could stop it. “You’ll never...” He grabbed the robes. “Fine, but if you even *try* it, your ass will burn for days.”

“I thought not,” she said, “and the same goes for you too, Tug.”

\* \* \* \*

Cecil moved into the dining room, noticing more pack members going through the boxes from the lab. Very quietly she moved into the kitchen and started making supper. It would take at least two hours for three lasagnas to cook.

Sheila came into the kitchen, smiling. “A little much out there, isn’t it?” She nodded to all the people.

“Just a little, especially since I’ve been alone for so long.” Cecil saw Tug and Rory come out wearing the robes. She smiled as Sheila laughed.

“Good for you.” She nudged Cecil, but then frowned, and Cecil followed her gaze.

A tall, skinny brunette had her arms wrapped around Tug, pressing her breasts against him.

“Cecil, are you okay?” Sheila put her hand on her arm and she

pulled back into the kitchen, shaking her head.

“Don’t come near me right now, Sheila, and please tell that bitch to get...her ...hands....off Tug.” She bent over, grabbing her stomach.

Sheila ran out of the kitchen. Chairs scraped the hardwood floor, the room quieted down, and a woman’s cussing reached her ears.

Tug moved into the kitchen and Cecil backed away from him and ran into the kitchen counter.

“Get away. You smell like that bitch out there.” She hissed and knelt on the floor.

Rory came to her and bent down. “What’s wrong?” He lifted her chin up and gasped.

“Tug, go shower now and have Remi remove Belinda from the house.” Rory sat down on the floor and pulled her into his arms. “Easy, Cecil, I’m here. She’s leaving.”

Cecil closed her eyes and took a deep breath. “It’s never been this bad, Rory. God, what if I had attacked her?”

Remi and the doctor came in and knelt down next to her. “What set her off?”

The doctor pulled out a syringe and came at her with it. She hissed and tried to scoot back away from him. “Nooo.” Her voice changed as she watched Remi pull the doctor back.

“Don’t. They told you to stay away with that stuff. She’s not ready.” Remi snarled.

Rory tightened his hold on her and she could smell the snake inside him rising to the surface, coming to protect her. Once more she closed her eyes and laid her head on his chest.

“I’m okay, Rory. Push it down. That’s all we need is for two of us flipping out.” She tried to laugh, but failed.

Dane came in and sat down next to them. “I want to thank you, Cecil. Sheila told me you pulled back, afraid you’d hurt her.”

Cecil shrugged. “I can control it most of the time now, but seeing that woman wrapped around Tug was something new. I don’t know how I’d do if something more intense happened. I never had my mates with me, so I can’t tell.”

Rory kissed her cheek. “I know it takes a lot to push the snake back. When the doctor came at her with that syringe, all I wanted to do was attack him to protect her. We’re going to have to be careful until we’re mated. Maybe then the little things won’t affect us as much.”

Tug came into the kitchen, his hair wet, wearing fresh jeans and a wife-beater T-shirt. “Come here, Cecil.” He picked her up off Rory’s lap. “Go hop in the shower. Rory, I left an extra bottle of shampoo out. It took

me four rinses to wash that crap out of my hair.” He nuzzled her neck.

Remi and Dane stood. “What did you feel like when all this went down?”

Tug held her tighter and moved into the dining room. “When Belinda put her hands on me, the snake rose up and it took everything in me not to attack her. It knew she wasn’t Cecil, and it wanted her dead. You’re going to have to find someone else for the club right now. Until we’re mated, I don’t want to risk anything. After that, we’ll have to test it, but I could feel Cecil’s turmoil earlier.” He glared at the doctor. “I told you to stay away from her. Don’t do that again. I left the shower twice to come downstairs, but managed to turn around.”

Cecil scooted closer into Tug’s body, rubbing her cheek against his chest. She reached up and licked his neck. Pulling down on the V of his shirt, she nibbled on his chest.

Tug glanced down at her, his gaze heated. His breath hitched. “Excuse us.” Tug got up, carrying her upstairs to the bedroom. “What is going on, Cecil?” he whispered and slammed the bedroom door shut.

“I don’t know, but I need you now.” Cecil nipped at his chest. “Clothes off, Tug, now, please.” She squirmed out of his arms, ripping her clothes off as fast as she could.

*Remi, keep everyone away from our bedroom. Some sort of mating frenzy is upon us and I don’t know what we’d do if someone interrupted us. Be careful, Tug.*

The last of his clothes dropped to the ground as he grabbed her and threw her to the bed. “I’m sorry, Cecil. I can’t stop.” He grabbed her hands and placed them above her head. “Leave them there.” Tug leaned down and bit her breast. “Mine.”

“Ours!” Rory said as he moved up the bed and bit down on the other breast.

Cecil didn’t care what they were saying. Her body burned with need. She needed to mark them. Cecil tried to pull Tug down, but he grabbed her hands and snarled. “Rory, grab the strap up there. I don’t want her hurt. The snake is pushing me too fast and I don’t know what will happen if she struggles.”

“No, I need to kiss you, please, give me your neck, Tug.” Tug frowned but lowered his body to hers. He gently picked her up, but she didn’t want gentle. Her fangs descended in her mouth and she bit down on his neck, sinking her fangs in.

Tug howled in her ear as she raked her claws down his back, hanging on. His cock pushed against her opening and shoved in, breaking her virginal membrane and snapping her out of the haze.

Cecil jerked back, glancing up at his neck. Two small holes marred his neck. "God, Tug, I'm so sorry," she cried, but he covered her mouth in a heated kiss as he pumped in and out of her.

Her body heated and once again Tug grabbed her hands, pulling them above her head, and breaking the kiss. "Now, Rory, tie her."

Rory grabbed her arms and wrapped them with a silk tie. Cecil tugged, but she couldn't move as Tug grabbed her legs, lifting them and placing them on his shoulders as he pumped into her. His powerful thrusts shook the bed. Rory bent down, licking his tongue around her nipple.

Rory reached down in between her body and Tug's, rubbing her clit. "Come for him, Cecil."

She tensed as her body trembled and sweat broke out. Tug grunted. "Tug..." she screamed as ripple after ripple of pleasure tore through her body.

Tug lowered her legs and covered her body as Rory pulled back. He sank his fangs into her neck and sent another tremor through her body.

Cecil's took a deep breath as Tug removed his fangs from her neck, kissing his mark, and pulled out of her. But she didn't have time to relax.

Rory moved over her and slowly pushed his cock into her pussy. "I can't wait. I'm sorry," he hissed, moving in and out of her. He covered her breasts with his hands and pushed them up, kissing and sucking on them. "So beautiful, and ours."

His pace increased and she saw his fangs descend in his mouth. He released her breasts and nuzzled the other side of her neck, sinking his incisors into her neck.

"Rory, faster," she moaned. Their skin was drenched in sweat as he pulled back. With the speed of the snake, she sank her teeth into his skin, marking him.

Growling, Rory's cock swelled further inside her. His long blond hair covered his face and hers as she released his neck and groaned.

His seed poured into her body while he slammed into her three more times, triggering another orgasm. Cecil arched up and tried to get loose.

The silk disappeared from her wrists and she wrapped her arms around Rory. "I need a bath," she moaned, all of a sudden drained of energy.

Tug smiled down at her while Rory rolled over to the other side of her. "You want to tell us what happened? Not that I mind, but I hurt you when I took you. For your first time, we should have been gentle."

Her face heated and she glanced away from him, but he grabbed



her chin and brought her gaze back to him. "Talk to us."

"I don't know what really happened. When you were holding me downstairs and talking about that other woman..." She trembled. "It was as if I needed to have my mark on you."

## Chapter Nine

Cecil reached up, touching the holes in Tug's skin. They were now covered by new skin, but the skin was now darker than before. She turned to examine Rory, and his mark was the same as Tug's. "I think the snake inside wanted you to claim me. It was so weird. It was like I was in a dream. The heat was even painful, but I couldn't stop."

Tug glanced at Rory, and he moaned. "Damn, the doctor wants more samples." Rory grumbled and jumped off the bed, strolling to the suitcase that hadn't been there earlier.

Cecil shook her head. "I can't do that." She moved off the bed and stepped towards the bathroom.

"It's okay, Cecil. He wants samples from Tug and me. We're his guinea pigs. We've already warned him he's not to touch you." Rory pulled on a pair of black leather pants and glanced up at her.

Cecil licked her bottom lip. The man had a body any woman would want. "Umm, maybe you can put on some sweats or something."

Rory grinned. "Why, Cecil, are you ogling my body?" He cornered her up against the wall, tracing a finger down her body.

Tug snarled behind them. "Rory, we don't have time. The doctor is standing at the end of the stairs waiting for us." Tug leaned over and pulled Cecil towards the door, covering her in a blanket as he grabbed a dress he had laid out on the dresser.

"Come on, Cecil. I'm going to show you my private getaway." He unlocked the door and pushed her down the other hallway, opening a door.

"After you, my lady." Cecil stepped into the room and glanced around at the large bay windows that covered every wall of the room. In the middle of the room was a large whirlpool tub.

Tug reached over and flipped a switch, and soft blues played in the room. "I come out here and just stare into the woods. It relaxes me. I thought maybe you would like to unwind before you start supper."

"It's beautiful." Cecil watched as Tug started to run the water, then helped her into the tub.

"Come down whenever you're ready." He leaned down, kissing her lips. "We'll make this up to you, Cecil. I promise."

She frowned. "Make what up to me?"

He smiled and shook his head. "Your first time should have been romantic and slow."

Cecil shook her head. "Tug, *I'm* the one who started it all. Now go

on, because I don't want to see the doctor chasing you around. I might have to bite him." She laughed as he shut the door behind him.

"You aren't biting anyone but us," he said through the door.

Closing her eyes, she smiled and dripped the water over her skin. She had felt a sense of peace ever since she had marked her men and they had marked her. It was as if she was home. Reaching up, she turned off the water and turned on the jets. "Oh man, I can get used to this."

Drifting on and off to sleep, Cecil glanced into the woods—and jumped up, almost falling. The man's gaze captured hers as he stood at the edge of the woods. She shivered, hugging herself.

The snake man had come to claim her as he said he would, a year ago.

"No!" Cecil hissed and moved out of the tub, wrapping a towel around her, keeping her gaze on him. His head moved back and forth. His forked tongue snaked out and he stepped forward but stopped, glancing behind him. Then he looked back at her one more time before disappearing into the woods.

Very quickly she pulled on her dress and opened the door, running down the stairs. Both Tug and Rory met her at the bottom of the stairs, capturing her before she could fall.

"Wow! What's wrong?" Tug glanced behind her as Rory pulled her into his arms, but she squirmed and ran to the patio door, flinging it open, ready to track the man down herself.

"Cecil!" Rory grabbed her around the waist and pulled her back into the house. "What's wrong?" he demanded.

"He's here! He came for me just like he said he would!" she said. People around them backed away. Remi, Dane, Sam, and Tug surrounded her, glancing outside.

"Cecil, no one could have gotten past our guards." Remi frowned at her.

She hissed, backing away from him. "Then go look at his footprints, if you don't believe me." Cecil pointed to where he had been standing. Tug threw open the door and ran towards the stairs, shifting into wolf form as he did, his clothes falling in the snow.

He sniffed the air as he made it to the woods, running the outer edge, then he stopping right where the snake man had stood. Tug lifted his head and howled. His fangs curled over his lip as he ran back.

"I want to know how the hell a snake man could come this close to this house!" Remi bellowed. Everyone in the room scattered as men from the pack came out of the woods, their heads dipped down.

Tug grabbed his clothes in his mouth and ran into the house,

shifting back. "If he can get this close, we're too open." He growled and addressed Cecil. "Who is it? How do you know this snake man?"

Jaycee stepped up to Remi and wrapped her arms around him, looking up at him. "What if they're here because of me, not Cecil?"

Cecil shook her head. "He's not after you, Jaycee. At least, this man isn't. He wants me." She turned and sat down on a dining room chair, putting her face in her hands. "It was about a year ago when the scientists came into the room with this man. He wasn't a prisoner. He came and went as he pleased. One night, when I was having difficulty controlling the snake, he came into my cell."

Cecil shivered and she wrapped her arms around herself. "He just stood there staring at me for the longest time, then he moved so fast I didn't see him move. He was beside me, his hand around my neck, his fangs bared. He told me I was going to be his, that he had chosen me to carry his children. That with my DNA and his, he would have children no one would stop."

She glanced up at Tug and Rory. "He didn't touch me that night. He said I wasn't ready for him yet, but he would be back for me."

Rory and Tug moved towards her. Tug pulled her into their arms. "He won't touch you, I promise. You're ours and he'll have to kill us first."

Remi stepped forward. "Tug, your house is too open out here. You need to bring her to the pack house. We have the best security system and it's heavily protected. But your house's exposure is no excuse for the guards to have failed to spot this man." He turned his blazing eyes towards the four men standing on the patio door. "What the hell happened?" he demanded.

One stepped forward. "We had his scent, but he was too quick. Before we knew it, he had backtracked and got away from us."

Tug and Rory pulled her to the stairs. "Come, Rory, we're packing. Remi is right. It's not safe here."

The only thing she could think of was running, but Cecil knew the snake man, Rick, would catch her.

\* \* \* \*

Tug watched the play of emotions run across her face as she moved into the bedroom. He grabbed two suitcases, throwing them on the bed. "He won't get you, Cecil." He reinforced his words, wrapping his arms around her. "Trust us."

"It's not that I don't trust you, Tug. I'm afraid. This man is crazy and powerful."

Tug pulled back and smiled. "Honey, you haven't been with us

long. You'll see." He smacked her ass. "Now, put what you want in the suitcase."

Rory glanced at him, frowning as they watched Cecil put her clothes into the suitcase. *There's something she's not telling us.* Rory moved to her side as she shut the suitcase and glanced up at him. "You're keeping something from us."

Their bedroom door creaked open and Sam popped his head in. "You three ready? We have everything loaded. I'll be behind you in my SUV while my partners will be ahead of you in their truck."

Cecil moved towards the door, but Tug stepped in front of her. "This isn't over. We expect an answer when we get settled." Tug tipped her head up and gazed into her eyes. "We can't help you if you don't open up to us."

She nodded and moved around him, carrying her small suitcase.

"I don't like this. She's withdrawing from us," Tug mumbled, and grabbed his bag.

"Maybe Jaycee can get her to open up. She's been through hell and back." Rory pushed through the door after their mate.

Throughout the ride to the pack house, Cecil didn't say a word. Pulling up to the pack house, she smiled. "It's beautiful."

"Dane and his family built it. They used to live here until they built their own place about a mile from here." Tug jumped out of his truck and helped her out as Jaycee came over, grabbing her hand and leading her towards the house.

Tug sighed. Jaycee was going to help them. He and Rory followed them into the house where Cecil stopped, glancing around the room. She backed up a step and looked at him.

"It's okay. We're here. No one will hurt you here." Tug stepped toward her and wrapped his arm around her waist. "Go on. Jaycee will show you our room. We'll be up in a minute."

Tug watched as Jaycee wrapped her arm around her, pulling her up the stairs. "You'll love the kitchen. It's twice the size of Tug's." She laughed.

Remi stepped up to them. "Don't worry. Jaycee will find out what's wrong. With everything Cecil's been through, I'm surprised this hasn't happened sooner. Come on. We have coffee and I want you two to meet someone."

Glancing up the stairs, Tug followed Remi into the kitchen and stopped when he saw one of the members of the council. "Damn it, Remi. Cecil is going to have a fit."

"Easy, Tug. He's a friend of ours and I trust him. Matter of fact,

I've asked his help in this matter. He's going to be our ears and eyes, so to speak." Remi said, standing next to the council member. "Tug, Rory, this is Clayton Glands. He's from the Southern states and has been here for the past month, working behind the scenes. Not even the council members know he's working with us."

Tug stepped forward and held out his hand. "Please forgive me, but right now our mate is having a rather difficult time with everything and even the mention of a council member would upset her."

Clayton grinned and shook his hand. "No problem. I can completely understand."

A warm electrical current ran up Tug's arm and he frowned, stepping back as Rory shook his hand. His wolf howled inside him and paced back and forth.

"What the hell just happened?" Tug frowned and glanced at Rory seeing the same reaction he had when he shook hands with Clayton.

"Well, crap. That's never happened." Clayton rubbed his shaved head.

Remi frowned at Clayton. "What happened?"

Tug sighed. "This is going to be a mess." Tug walked over and fell into a chair. Rory sat down next to him. "I can read his thoughts and he can read mine." He glanced over at Rory, who nodded.

Clayton sat across from them as Remi paced back and forth. "You mean the three of you are mates?" He stopped, staring at all three of them.

"Well, have you ever heard of males hearing each other's thoughts? We can communicate through our pack link, but I read everything and I have no gift. Plus right now my wolf is ripping my insides trying to get at him." Tug glanced at Remi.

"Shit. What about Cecil?" Rory glanced at both of them.

Remi stopped and stared at the door. "We have a bigger problem right now. Jaycee says the two of you need to get upstairs. Cecil's broken down."

Tug jumped up and ran out of the room, taking the stairs two at a time. He burst into the room and froze. Cecil rocked back and forth on the bed.

Rory and he slowly moved to her. "What happened?" He glanced at Jaycee, quickly kneeling on the bed.

"They took some of her eggs, Tug. That man had his sperm...there is a child." Jaycee cried, rubbing her hands over her stomach.

Remi, Dane, and Mark moved into the room, surrounding Jaycee. "You need to settle down, Jaycee. It's not good for the babies." Remi

kissed her neck as Marsha stormed into the room.

“What did I tell you about getting upset?” She examined Cecil.

“Move away from her.” The witch Marsha pushed Tug off the bed, and pointed at Rory to back away. “She’s pulled into herself right now. God, what did they do to this child?” Tears slipped down her face.

“Jaycee, go make some of that tea I taught you to make. She’s going to need it. And get that man in the hallway in here. He’s going to help these two here bring her back.” Slowly Marsha placed her arms around, Cecil hugging her.

“Easy, child, I’m not going to hurt you. I know you can hear me, Cecil. You need to come back to us. You have mates here who need to hold you.”

Tug watched as Clayton moved into the room and gasped. He fell to his knees, grabbing his head.

Rory looked at him, and fell to his knees as well. Every thought and memory of Cecil’s played in their heads. Every single whipping, beating, and torture shook his body. Tears slipped down his face as all three men howled in pain and anger.

Cecil glanced up at all three of them, tears streaming down her face. “Now you know it all.” Her gaze drifted to Clayton, and she trembled. “Your council, but not?” Her voice was small and scared.

Clayton nodded as Jaycee came into the room and handed Cecil the tea.

“Drink this, Cecil. It will warm you and give you strength. You’re going to need it, with these three.” She smiled.

Jaycee laughed and cried at the same time. “We’re so much alike, it’s scary, but I’d never wish anyone the pain I went through. I’m sorry, Cecil.” She sat down on the bed next to her.

“I don’t even know what happened to the child, Jaycee. Was it a snake baby? Are they torturing it? It would be two years old on Valentine’s Day.” She glanced down at the tea. “I don’t know if I want to know. Am I bad because of this?”

The cup in her hand trembled, as she lifted the cup to her mouth. “I’ve dreamed of him and it is a boy. I don’t know how I know. I just do. How can a mother not want her child?”

Marsha patted her arm. “Child, you’re confused, been hurt and scared. In time, you’ll have your baby and you’ll love him. Just because he’s different, doesn’t mean you don’t love him, but he’s more like you than you believe. I see the tiny bundle. That man you saw earlier has him. That’s why he’s looking for you. The child needs you and won’t survive without you. He knows this.”

All three of them rose as Marsha got off the bed and stared at Cecil. “You’ll be fine, Cecil, you and your men.” She walked up to him and patted his arm, looking at all three of them. “It’s going to be rough, but you”—she turned her gaze on Clayton—“you have the gift. You’ll be able to help her son and make him yours.”

Cecil gasped and Marsha smiled. “Come on, Jaycee, let’s give these four sometime alone. You can talk to her later.”



## Chapter Ten

The door behind them closed and Cecil watched as Tug and Rory moved forward, climbing onto the bed next to her. "Cecil?"

Her gaze never left Clayton's. "How can this be?" Her body trembled while Tug and Rory scooted closer to her, taking her hands and holding them.

Clayton rose and slowly made his way to the bed, sitting on the edge of the bed. "My mother has three mates. I don't know how or why, but all three of you are my mates. I know you're scared, but I promise I'm not responsible for the labs. If you let me touch you, you'll be able to see I'm telling you the truth. About the council, my men and I are called in when they need help. You could say we're the muscle when things get out of hand, but I would never be a part of what happened to you."

She glanced at Tug, and he nodded. "He has been given the gift. That's why he is part of the council. Both Rory and I can read him, as he can read us."

Tug let go of her hand, and she slowly held out her hand to him. It shook as he took her hand into his. An electrical current shot up her hand and through her body. Cecil wanted to pull her hand back, but she held still. His memories became hers. His time on the council showed no knowledge of the labs. Clayton's powers were great, but he used them only when necessary.

Everything he had said was true. Her gaze flashed to his, and she smiled. "You're going to mate with Tug and Rory? Do I get to watch?" Her insides heated at the thought of watching Clayton burying his cock into Tug or Rory.

All three of them moaned, and shook their heads. "Of all the things you saw, you have to pick that out?" Clayton cupped her cheek. "I'm sure you'll be watching when it happens."

"Do you think you can help my son?" Cecil pulled her hand back. "I'm sorry my first child isn't yours."

"Cecil, you didn't do this. There is no need to apologize. We'll find him and give him the home that he deserves." Tug leaned over, kissing her. "So, are we still going to have your lasagna? Jaycee brought everything here with us."

Cecil laughed and glanced at Tug. "Well, if you want lasagna, I'd better get busy. But seriously, Clayton, please don't do what these two

dorks did and inject yourself with the serum.” Her gaze connected with his, pleading with him.

“I can’t promise that, and you know that. How am I supposed to mate with the three of you if I’m not the same? Now, off with you. I need to talk to Tug and Rory.” He stood and held out his hand.

He was taller than Rory or Tug and his bald head only enhanced his handsomeness. Cecil grasped his hand and he pulled her off the bed, drawing her inches from his body. He smiled down at her, cupping her cheek. “You have the biggest brown eyes. They remind me of Bette Davis’s eyes. I won’t hurt you, Cecil. I promise I’ll do everything to protect you.” He leaned down, kissing her soft lips, his tongue sliding across her bottom lip, then the top.

Clayton cupped the back of her neck, bringing her closer. Cecil’s breast rubbed against his muscular chest while he nipped her lip and thrust his tongue into her mouth. He moaned as he stroked her tongue and did the flamingo dance with it.

Cecil pulled back, grasping for breath. “You’re, um...well, I’d better get going.” Her face heated as they all laughed. Stepping around him, she made her way towards the door, then paused. “Please tell me before you do anything?”

He nodded and smiled. “Go on. We’ll be down in a few.”

Opening the door, Marsha stood there with her hand raised, ready to knock. Cecil smiled at the older woman. “Hi! I need to thank you for the help earlier.”

Marsha stepped aside and smiled. “Nonsense. It’s the least I could do. There is a strong bond between you and Jaycee. In many ways you two are very much alike. Come, I’ll help you in the kitchen and we can chat some more.” Marsha wrapped her arm around her, walking down the stairs.

“By the way, my name is Marsha. Everyone just calls me Mother, though, and you are welcome to also. Jaycee is my daughter, and right now she is really worried about you. You see, Jaycee has it rough being the alpha female here. Many females shy away from her because of her power and her mates, but you don’t. Why?”

They stepped into the kitchen. Cecil smiled, knowing Marsha was sizing her up. “I don’t know. It’s like I connected with her somehow the other night when they found me.” She opened the cupboards and Marsha opened the refrigerator, both gathering ingredients and utensils.

Cecil turned and stared at Marsha. “You have a glow around you. I can see the different colors. Jaycee has a similar one, but stronger. Clayton has one too, but it’s different.”

Marsha looked up and smiled. "You have the touch of life, child. I was born into a very strong family of witches. I can sometimes see things that are going to happen before they happen. Jaycee's gifts are many. The great Mother Nature has taken a shine to her, you could say. Grab the pans, dear. We'd better get these done or we'll have a late dinner—and you don't want that, with so many alphas around here." She laughed.

Grabbing the large baking pans, Cecil placed them on the counter and grabbed the package of ground beef, opening it. "What do you mean, I have the touch of life?" Cecil put the meat into the large skillet and broke it apart.

"You connect with children. Children will always feel safe in your arms. In other words, you are their protector. That's why you are having such a hard time with the loss of your child. Even though it was created in the lab, this child is yours and you know it's searching for you. I believe you even connected with Jaycee's children. Am I right?" She held her gaze, smiling.

Remi and Dane stepped into the kitchen. "You connected with our children? When and why?" They frowned at her.

Cecil stepped back. It was the first time she had felt threatened by them. Remi's aura brightened as he stepped forward.

Marsha slapped Remi in the head. "Quit scaring her, damn it. Both of you. It's a *good* thing."

All three of her mates poured into the room and surrounded her, frowning at Dane and Remi. "Why is she scared of you two all of a sudden?" Tug asked, not backing down from Remi.

Taking a deep breath, Cecil placed her hand on Tug's arm. "I'm fine, Tug. Remi and Dane are just worried about their children." She glanced up at Remi and Dane. "That first night when you found me, even before I had awakened fully, I could see all three of your children." She smiled and stirred the meat. "Your son is so much like you. He protected the girls, keeping them at bay until he knew I wouldn't hurt them. They're going to be very powerful when they're older. Your son is already very wise. He's the one who spoke to me." She glanced up at Remi. "He did say something I didn't understand, though. He told me our council is not the one that's connected to the labs. That there is another council I was overlooking, but I only knew of our council. I forgot about it until Marsha brought up the connection with the children. With everything going on around me..." Cecil frowned, glancing at Clayton.

"Fuck, I didn't even think of them," Clayton said. He reached into his pocket and pulled out his phone. "Remi, Dane. Have everyone meet us in the living room. We need to move now!" Clayton kissed Cecil's cheek

and headed towards the door.

Remi stepped up to her and grinned. "So, we have a son? The other two are girls, I take it?"

Cecil smiled, and nodded. "One of them reminds me so much of Jaycee. Her spirit is strong and she gives her brother hell, but she protects the smaller one. The smaller one is quiet, like Mark, but she is just as sharp."

Jaycee strolled into the room, laughing. "Well, that settles it. We need two girl names and a boy. Thank you, Cecil." She moved Remi out of the way and hugged her.

"I knew you were special." Jaycee glanced at Tug. "You'd better keep her happy or I'll turn you into a toad."

Marsha laughed as Dane growled. "Jaycee, what were you told about turning people into toads?"

She waved her hand and settled into a chair. "Hey, I have to have some fun sometimes."

Tug grumbled and moved out the door, followed by Rory. Cecil laughed and glanced at Jaycee. "The smaller girl told me you already had her name picked out."

Jaycee smiled and nodded. "One of the names we've all agreed on was Marcia."

Cecil smiled. "That's a pretty name and it fits her. I was thinking of a name for my boy. I've always thought of him as Cade." A single tear dripped down her cheek. "I don't know how to explain it, but I'm connected to him even though he didn't grow inside me. Does that make sense?" She glanced at Marsha, who nodded.

"Perfect sense. These scientists can take away nature's way of doing things, but they can't take away the bond a mother feels for her child. With your gift, your senses are stronger." Marsha pulled out a chair. "Come, sit. Let's try something." She patted the back of the chair.

Cecil slipped into the chair as Marsha placed her hands on her shoulders. "Jaycee, hold onto Cecil's hands. I want you two to concentrate on Cecil's child. If we do this right, Cecil will be able to connect to him and maybe we can see where he is. Cecil, use the bond you feel already. It will lead you to him."

Clayton came into the room and glanced at them. "If you're going to do this, I should be here. I'll be able to locate him." He moved next to Cecil, sitting in the chair next to her and placing his hand on her thigh.

"Let's do this." Clayton leaned over, kissing her cheek.

Marsha squeezed her shoulders. "Close your eyes, Cecil, and follow that link you have to your child."

Her hands were sweaty in Jaycee's, but she held on, not letting go. Power moved through her from Jaycee, Marsha, and Clayton. The hair on her arms stood up as she followed the blue haze to her son. *Cade, where are you?*

The blue haze spread wider and wider as Cecil traveled through space. Her connection grew stronger. She could hear his heartbeat, the little gurgles he made when they connected, and she could almost smell him. The color changed from blue to a blinding white. Blinking her eyes, she stared down at the two year old child in the crib. His big brown eyes held hers as his boney little hands reached into the air, trying to grasp her.

The mother/child bond was instant. Her heart beat faster, knowing she would always be able to tell where her son was. *I'm here, little one. Soon you'll be in my arms. Don't give up on us. Do you see one of your fathers? He's here with me. Let him in, Cade. He can bring you home soon.*

Tears dripped down her face as Cade looked up at Clayton and moved his hand towards him.

*I have him. Don't worry, little guy, we'll bring you home,* Clayton whispered and gently touched their son's cheek.

Cade giggled and laughed, but stopped as a dark shadow covered him.

*No!*

*Pull back now, Cecil! We can't let him know we know where he is!*

All three of them withdrew their magic, breaking the connection.

Cecil laid her head on her arms on the table and cried. "He's so skinny and alone. I didn't think I could bond with him, but I did. He's my son."

"He won't be alone for much longer, Cecil. We'll bring him home, I promise." Clayton rubbed the back of her neck, and stood. "I have to go make the arrangements." He kissed the top of her head and left the kitchen.

Marsha brushed her short hair out of her face. "Cade will be fine, Cecil. I see him in your arms soon."

Cecil lifted her head, flashing a smile at Marsha. "Thank you, both of you. It gives me hope. Now, we'd better get moving on dinner." Cecil stood and took the cooked meat off the stove.

For the next hour, Cecil and Marsha cooked up a storm as Jaycee laughed and tried to help, her swollen belly bumping into everything.

\* \* \* \*

Tug watched as Clayton paced back and forth, talking into the

phone. He'd never been attracted to a male before, but with Clayton and Rory, something had changed. He adjusted his cock in his jeans and glanced at Rory, who grinned.

"Damn it, Black, we knew they were up to something, and now we have the proof. We need to move on this." Clayton said into the phone. "What do you mean, we have to do it without council approval? They attacked all of us four months ago. That means war in my book!"

Remi and Dane snarled, their gazes never leaving Clayton's form.

"Fine, but don't come crawling to us when you need help, asshole." Clayton crushed the phone in his hand.

"I take it the council won't help with the plan?" Tug leaned back in the chair, tapping his fingers against the table.

Clayton glanced at him. "No. It seems the two councils are trying to work out their differences, not even informing me of this development. Black said we'd have to go alone on this one."

"Which means?" Tug's gaze met his.

"We have two choices. The first is we wait till my men get here, which will take us about a week to plan the attack. Or we go in silently and take the child. With the second choice, we'd have to be ready for attack, because there is no way this man will sit back and let the child be taken." Clayton plopped down into one of the chairs.

Tug leaned forward and frowned. "How do you know about this man, or this council?"

Clayton glanced around the room. "One of my father's knows him personally. He's had dealings with his father and their council."

Remi glanced at Dane. "We can't wait for your men. The thought of an innocent child at the hands of this man is unthinkable. We have enough men here to retrieve the child silently. Your men should be here in time to help us with the attack, if one happens. We'll deal with the ramifications later. Tonight, after supper, we can lay out the plans for the attack. Mark will have the layout of the grounds by then." Remi grinned, his clawed hand resting on the table. "Clayton, the council had better never come to my doorstep to ask for help again. They've shown they can't be trusted, even if it wasn't them doing the testing. They should have offered help for the victims, but they didn't."

Clayton held Remi's gaze. "You've heard most of the packs are breaking away from the council?"

Dane stood and stretched. "We know. The question is, where do you stand with the council? I'm surprised you haven't gone back sooner." He strolled over, grabbing a couple of beers from the bar.

"I've never been really considered part of the inner circle,"

Clayton confessed. "Only when they needed the extra muscle did they call. I'm done sitting in the wings while they destroy the packs' trust. It's time for the packs to take back the council like the old days, when leaders were elected. The council as it is now doesn't want to see the problems facing each pack. It's time."

Dane set a beer down in front of him. "How many packs have you heard from?"

"More than thirty-four have contacted my fathers and me. I believe it's time. What are you going to do?"

Remi glanced towards the stairs. "I believe we should talk later about this. We have new information you should be aware of, before you decide anything."

He turned his gaze on him. "I believe Cecil has supper ready."

Tug grunted and stood. "Good, I'm starving. I haven't eaten anything since breakfast, and all this talk about the council always leaves a bitter taste in my mouth. No offense." He grinned at Clayton.

"Did someone say he was hungry?" Cecil smiled, carrying one of the big pans of lasagna. Marsha, Sheila, and Jaycee all came in, carrying items, and set them onto the large conference table.

"We thought we'd make it easier on you and come down here. There's more room." Jaycee grinned, heading back upstairs for another load.

Laughing, Clayton glanced at the food laid out already. His mouth watered as he grabbed a piece of garlic bread and popped it into his mouth. "Oh God, she did it again." Tug moaned and rolled his eyes.

Marsha laughed. "Yep, that's Cecil's doing. She loves to make bread from scratch. You'd better make sure you have your kitchen updated, young man, because this is one of her passions."

"Man, I haven't had bread like this since I was small. Mom used to make stuff like this all the time." Clayton groaned, taking another bite of bread.

Cecil laughed, carrying down two large pies. "I could hear the moans all the way upstairs."

"Yeah, it sounded like a huge orgy or something down here." Jaycee wiggled her eyebrows. "And we weren't invited." She pouted.

Dane growled, and wrapped his arms around her waist. "There will be no orgies unless it's the four of us only."

"That's for damn sure," Clayton snarled, gazing at Cecil. Her face turned red, and she turned her back to him.

Tug almost burst out laughing as Clayton grabbed her around the waist, surprising her. "Mmm, I can smell you over the food." He licked the

side of her neck, and Tug watched as her nipples hardened.

“Clayton, please eat while the food is hot.” She squirmed.

“But this is just as hot.” He reached up, pulling on her nipple.

“All right, you two, get a room.” Marsha fanned herself, and scooped out some lasagna onto a plate for her husband, Ben.

“Yeah, really.” Jaycee laughed as Dane bit down on her neck.

Cecil pulled out of Clayton’s arms, and swatted his arm. “Enough. Eat.”

“I’d be glad to eat you.” Clayton stepped forward to grab her, but Cecil pulled a chair out in front of him, laughing.

“The food, silly.” She held the chair in place as he grinned.

“Fine, I’ll eat the food, but tonight you’re mine.” He grabbed a plate.

Tug came around the table and placed a kiss on her cheek. “He’s right. Tonight you’re ours, so make sure you eat enough. We want you have to enough energy.”

Once again her face brightened, and she smiled. “Don’t worry. I’ll be ready.” Cecil licked her lips and grinned.

“You keep doing that thing with your lips and I’m going to give you something to lick.”

Cecil grabbed a plate and dished out salad and lasagna as he came up behind her. “What? You just want me to lick and not suck it?” she teased, and dashed around the table, away from all three of them.

Rory growled next to him. “Will you stop? I’m all ready to bust at the seams here.” He reached down and adjusted his cock.

Tug glanced down at his cock and his mouth watered at the thought of sucking it.

“Tug, enough!” Clayton snapped. “The three of you are driving me nuts. I’m not going to be able to control myself much longer.”

Everyone laughed. “Aww, poor council man having problems?” Jaycee teased, earning her a swat from Remi.

Cecil sat down, staring at her food, then at Clayton, as he sat next to her. “So, what’s the plan?”

Remi sat down with his plate. “We’ve decided to go in silently, in three days. It will give us enough time to recon the location and get everything in place. During this time, all of you...” He glanced at all four women. “All of you will stay in the house. Jaycee, for the time being, we’re going to stay here until this is over. This way, we won’t be separated and it’s easier to defend.”

Her fork hit the plate. Cecil glanced up at Remi. “So you think they’re going to attack?”



Remi nodded. "Yes, Cecil, they're going to attack."

Tug sat down next to her, on her other side. "We'll be okay. Clayton has part of his pack coming in over the next two days."

She glanced over at Clayton. "Thank you."

"I know these next few days are going to seem like forever, but before long your son will be in your arms." Clayton took a bit of the lasagna and moaned, sending Cecil into a laughing fit.

"Enough already with the moans." She swatted his arm.

Tug ate while watching Cecil talk to the other women in the room. Her laughter filled the room, making everyone watch her. Her innocent soul, that of a child's, shone through to everyone who listened to her.

Marsha leaned over his shoulder and whispered, "Now you see why she's special. We're lucky they didn't destroy her spirit, because if they had, she would be a shell right now." She squeezed his shoulder, and moved back to her seat.

Cecil turned and placed her hand on his knee. "Are you okay? You're awfully quiet."

Tug leaned up and kissed her nose. "I'm fine, just realizing how lucky all three of us are to have you in our lives. Even though now I'm going to have to work out an hour a day at the gym to keep the weight off," he teased.

She tilted her head to the side and studied him. "Jaycee was telling me about the Valentine's Day dance at your club. Do you think if things are settled down...well, maybe you could show me your world?" She turned her attention back to her food, embarrassed.

He rolled her chair back a little and turned her towards him. "Never be embarrassed to come to us about sex. We want to please you. It's our job and pleasure." He reached up, placing both of his hands on either side of her face. "It would please me to show you our club, but there will be no others. Just the three of us. No other man will touch you."

Smiling, she nodded. "I wouldn't want anyone else. Now, eat, Tug. You've hardly touched your food. Isn't it good?" She frowned.

He laughed. "You know damn well it's good. I'll eat. Just make sure you do too." He tapped her nose and turned her around towards her plate.

## Chapter Eleven

Tug leaned back in his chair, patting his stomach. "I'm so full, I can't move." He grinned as Cecil grabbed his plate, shaking her head. "Well, then, I guess you won't be able to participate tonight," she teased, and dashed away from him.

He grinned. "Honey, nothing is going to stop me from eating dessert," he said across the room, embarrassing her.

Clayton and Rory laughed, but Tug's gaze landed on her large, perky breasts. Her nipples were the size of dimes and hard as rocks.

*Hmm, I think we need clamps for those babies.* Clayton glanced at him and he grinned.

The dishes in Sheila's hands smashed to the floor when the doctor came running into the room. "Damn, Doc, watch where you're going." She laughed.

"Sorry, Sheila, but I need to talk to the men alone." He stood near Remi.

"Well, I know when I'm not wanted." Jaycee frowned and moved to the stairs. "Come on, girls. Let's leave the little boys to chat."

Dane growled. "We'll show you later that we're no little boys."

Jaycee laughed, moving upstairs. Cecil stopped to glance at the doctor, then at him. "Go on," he encouraged. "We'll tell you later."

She nodded and went upstairs, carrying some of the dishes.

The doctor waited until the women were gone. Then he turned, placing a file on the table. "I finally have some good news." He glanced at Tug. "This file was tucked in another box. Cecil's file is extensive, and they started a new one. It seems the snake DNA does stay in the system. Now, she'll always have some traits. For example, if provoked, she'd be deadly, but as far as turning into a snake or passing anything on to a child, it's not going to happen."

Tug jumped up and leaned over Remi's shoulder. "What are you saying?"

The doctor smiled. "What I'm saying is that every month they had to inject her with the DNA because the wolf gene kills it after a while. Now, I don't know if it will eventually kill everything, but every aspect of the snake will be gone in a month, except for the venom. She will always have that as a protective measure, just like you two will."

Clayton glanced at him. "Then there is no need for me to take the injection."

The doctor glanced up and frowned. "Well, if what Tug and Rory

have told me is true, she'll most likely mark you. I don't know if any poison is released during this process, since I couldn't get samples."

Tug smiled. "Sorry, Doc, but it was too risky to have you in the room during the mating frenzy."

Clayton moved away from the table. "I don't have to worry about that."

All eyes turned to him. "Why?" Tug asked, knowing something had been bothering him.

He turned to all of them. "This stays in this room. Not even the council is aware of it, and I'll warn each of you that if word leaks out, I'll kill anyone who did it. My father's life is on the line here."

Clayton pulled a chair out and sat down. "You all know my mom is mated to three men. Well, what no one knows is that one of my fathers is a snake shifter." He held up his hand. "He left his family long ago, before he even met my mother. No one knows where he is or that he is alive, and we want to keep it that way." Clayton glanced at the doctor. "So, you see I already have the venom gland, but as you said, the wolf is stronger. In my case, I was born with it. It won't ever go away, but I have no other signs."

Remi stood. "That's how your father knew of this man?"

Clayton nodded. "When I called home earlier to tell them about Cecil, my father got on the phone and told me about him. His family is as old as mine."

Tug moved forward. "You know Cecil is going to have to be told. She'll be too worried otherwise."

Clayton sighed and nodded. "Yes, I know. I just hope she can accept this part of me." He turned to the doctor. "What about the baby? Did you find the file on him?"

The doctor shook his head. "No. I have a feeling that when he took the baby, he took the files on him, but with Cecil's DNA being stronger than his..." He nodded to Clayton.

Clayton stood. "He'll be like me." The doctor nodded.

Mark came into the room with a blueprint and laid it on the table. "I just got this." He glanced up and smiled. "Oh, just so you know, Jaycee and Sheila are trying to talk Cecil into getting her nipples pierced. Jaycee's even called Stewart over."

"They're what?" Tug ran up the stairs to the kitchen. All three women were at the table laughing when the three of them ran into the room.

Cecil glanced up, smiling. "Need something?" she teased.

Jaycee and Sheila giggled as he pulled her out of her seat and into the hallway, looking down at her breasts. "You have something you want

to tell us?" He reached up, pinching her nipples.

With her hands on his shoulders, she squeezed them and moaned. "Um, can't think. Oh, you mean about Jaycee's friend coming?" She gazed up at him, a large teasing smile on her face. "So would you like to see them pierced? Jaycee was also telling me about the clit piercing, but I thought I'd better ask you guys on that one." She giggled, as all of them growled.

"You will only get piercing done when we are with you. Is that understood?" Clayton grabbed the back of her hair, tugging her head back.

"I take it, then, you'll be up here when he comes." She laughed into as Clayton plundered her mouth.

Tug pulled down the front of her dress open, sucking one of her nipples into his mouth. The thought of rings attached to her nipples had him aching to sink his cock into her pussy.

Cecil pushed Clayton back. "Enough, unless you plan to start our night now."

Tug grumbled, knowing they had to go downstairs and finish up. "Call us when Stewart shows up. I mean it, Cecil. No man will touch you unless we're in the room."

"Fine, but I don't know what the big deal is. He's a professional." She moved back into the kitchen, adjusting her top before she went in.

"How the hell are we supposed to concentrate when all I can see in my mind is her nipples with rings in them?" Rory said as they moved back downstairs.

Remi laughed as they came into the room. "I take it Stewart hasn't shown up yet."

"Do you think we'd be down here if he had?" Clayton snapped.

Dane laughed. "Well, it's obvious we're not going to get anything done tonight. Why don't we go over the plans and the recon tomorrow together? I have a feeling our mates are up to no good."

"I'll have to agree with you on that one," Bo said. "Sheila is blocking me for some reason."

Remi growled. "So is Jaycee."

"She wouldn't!" Tug howled and dashed for the stairs. So much for his supper. With the work out he was getting going up and down the stairs, he'd be hungry again before the night was over—and he knew just what he'd eat.

\* \* \* \*

Cecil sat facing Stewart, her dress lowered, as he gently held her breast, marking her nipple. She glanced at Jaycee, who smiled, nodding. "Don't worry. It will be a nice surprise for them."

“Remember I’m next, Stewart. I want that tattoo you drew for me.” Jaycee held up the picture and showed it to her.

“Damn, that’s good. Could you do something if I drew it?” She glanced at Stewart, as the kitchen door banged against the wall.

Stewart jumped back and lowered his head. “Sorry, alpha,” he mumbled, glaring at Jaycee.

Jaycee stood up with her hands on her hips. “If you don’t mind, we’re having a girl thing. Now go!” she ordered.

Clayton, Tug, and Rory circled Cecil. “Didn’t we tell you we had to be here before this was to happen?” Clayton asked, glancing at her exposed breasts.

Cecil glanced at Jaycee, who went to step in between them, but Remi pulled her back. “No, Jaycee. Don’t interfere. He hasn’t mated with her yet. You should have known this could have happened.”

“What could have happened? What are you talking about?” Cecil glanced quickly to Clayton, but didn’t get a chance. He grabbed her and swung her up over his shoulder, stomping out of the room.

“Clayton, what are you doing?” Cecil squealed, as his hand came down on her ass hard.

Tug lifted her head up by her hair. “He needs to mate with you. You let another man touch you before him, Cecil, and he’s your mate.”

Frowning, she tried to push up onto his shoulder, but didn’t get far. He moved into their bedroom, lowering her body down in front of him as he pushed her up against the wall. “Can’t wait and won’t,” he said.

Cecil held still and stared at him as he lifted her dress above her waist and separated her legs. “How? You said you’d talk to me first.” She shoved him away from her, lowering her dress. “You lied to me.”

Clayton snarled and moved forward again. “And you didn’t lie down there when we told you to call us!”

Cecil shook, she was so furious. She stepped forward, nose to nose with him. “Who do you think I’m getting my nipples pierced *for*?” She poked his chest. “You three jerks. Those two dickheads behind you changed their DNA without telling me. I was at least hoping you would respect me and let me be with you.” She shouted so loud her throat hurt.

Both Tug and Rory moved up to Clayton’s side. “Dickheads! You called us dickheads,” Rory growled.

She turned her gaze on him, tears streaming down her cheeks. “Don’t, Rory.” She stepped around them all, and moved towards the door. “I need to be alone.” She slammed the door behind her.

Marsha stood in the hallway, shaking her head. “He didn’t do what you think he did, Cecil.”

*How the hell did she always know something was wrong?* “What? Yes, he did. I saw the fangs and smelled the mating scent.” She frowned, going down stairs.

“No, he didn’t take the injection.” Marsha grabbed onto her arm and stopped her. “He’s been too afraid to tell you.”

Cecil frowned, glancing up at the bedroom door. “I don’t understand.”

“You were in his mind child, think.” Marsha turned and walked away.

She sat down on the steps and tried to remember earlier. His memories flashed through her head and she stilled, coming upon Clayton’s father. No one knew of their family secret, keeping it hidden from everyone, including the council.

Cecil smelled him before he placed his hands on her shoulders, and gently squeezed. “I didn’t lie, Cecil. I wouldn’t do that to you.” He sat down next to her and glanced down at her.

“Only a few people know of this. We keep quiet because my father wants nothing to do with his family, and hasn’t had anything to do with them in fifty years. One of my father’s is a snake shifter. That’s why I’m like you, but I was born with it.”

Cecil glanced at him. “You were afraid to tell me. Why?”

“Cecil, look at what they did to you. I was afraid I’d turn you off.”

She shook her head. “You didn’t do this, Clayton. They did. I would have known the difference.” Would her mates always be afraid to tell her things that mattered? “I’m sorry about earlier. I really did want to surprise you guys. It’s the least I can do since I don’t have much to give you. And Clayton, don’t hide anything from me, please. I’d rather know the truth then be misled.”

Clayton picked her up and headed back upstairs. “Don’t you know you give us the world? Without you, there would be no Tug, Rory, or me.” Tug opened the door and closed it behind them.

He gently lowered her feet to the ground, lifting her dress over her head. “I need you, Cecil. Will you have me as your mate?” Clayton stood there, not touching her.

She smiled and stepped closer to him, wrapping her arms around him and bringing him down for her kiss. Cecil didn’t say a word as he lowered his head, exposing his neck, which was just what she had been waiting for. Her fangs sank deep into his neck and he hissed, picking her up.

Her back hit the wall as he pushed his cock into her pussy. “Ours!” He grabbed her legs and bent at the knees, pushing into her with

short hard thrusts.

Cecil released his neck, and leaned her head against the wall. "Mine." She smiled, touching his cheek.

"You're a quick one." He grunted, and sank his fangs into her breast.

"Clayton." Her body tensed and she raked her nails down his arms. Cecil's orgasm was quick and hard and came without warning.

He shot his seed inside her as he released her breast and howled, pumping into her three more times, placing his forehead to hers.

"Never thought of doing it against the wall." She giggled, kissing his lips. "Now, can I get my nipples pierced?"

Clayton shook his head, and smiled. "Soon. I have two others I need to see too, unless of course, you don't care to watch." He teased, nipping her neck.

Cecil glanced at Tug and Rory. Each stood, stroking his cock, their gazes heated, and fangs protruding from their mouths. "Oh my, I would say so. Can I help?" Her gaze met his.

"Hmm, I think that can be arranged." He slowly pulled out of her and turned to Rory. He moved so fast she was stunned.

Rory was on his knees with Clayton bent over him. "Cecil, honey. Hand me the lube on the table." He nodded behind her, and she grabbed it, handing it to him.

Getting on her knees, she kneeled in front, pulling his hair back. "My strong man." Cecil kissed his lips softly. "You're always so quiet. Are you one of those men who'd go wild if I were to push you too far?" She lay down and scooted under Rory. "Let's see, shall we?" She giggled, running a finger down his cock.

"Cecil..."

"Clayton, are you ready?" Cecil purred, and licked the head of his cock.

"Now, Cecil." Clayton grunted and pushed his cock into Rory's ass, pushing his cock into her waiting mouth.

"Umm," she groaned around his cock.

"You are so going to pay," he said.

Cecil pulled back and laughed. "Do you promise?"

"Cecil, quit teasing him and suck him." Clayton ordered in a voice that sent her pussy quivering.

She gently grabbed his balls and rubbed them, taking as much of Rory into her mouth as she could. Every time Clayton would push forward into his ass, Rory's cock would almost go down her throat, gagging her. Cecil licked a path down to his balls, and sucked one into her mouth,

moaning at his taste.

"Cecil, what the hell!" he roared and she knew he was ready to explode.

Sliding her tongue back up his cock, Cecil swallowed him at the same time Clayton buried his fangs into Rory's neck. Rory erupted into her mouth, sending his seed down her throat.

Rory tasted of nutmeg as she sucked him dry, and slipped out from underneath him, smiling, as he fell to the ground.

He lifted his head up and growled. She drew back and smiled.

"Now Rory, be good. We have to take care of Tug," she teased and glanced at Tug. His eyes burned with heat; his cock dripped of pre-come.

"Come here, Cecil," he ordered, his voice a deep baritone. The power of his voice washed over her, and she whimpered as she slowly crawled over to him and kneeled before him.

Tug lifted her chin up and smiled. "Suck me, Cecil." He wrapped his hand around her hair, and urged her forward.

Cecil licked the pre-come from his cock, and it jerked. "Suck it, Cecil. Don't play with it." He pushed his cock into her mouth.

Clayton walked up behind her and kneeled down, grabbing her breasts. "I love watching you suck his cock. It's so sexy. On all fours, Cecil. Rory is going to prepare your ass. He deserves the right to be the first to sink his cock in it."

A warm chill went up her spine as he stood. Tug went to his knees in front of her as Clayton stepped in behind him, gently lowering him down. "Don't release Tug, Cecil, or Rory is going to spank you," Clayton ordered, smiling.

She whimpered again when Rory slid in behind her, rubbing her ass with one hand and squirting lube into her ass with the other one. "I can't wait to sink my cock into your ass and see your ass red."

Her pussy juice dripped down her leg, she was so excited. Tug reached under her, grabbing her nipple and pulling on it as he grunted.

Rory pushed two fingers into her ass, slowly stretching her. "God, you're so tight." Rory raked his hand down her spine gently as he added another finger to her ass.

*Damn, damn!* Pain and pleasure mixed as he moved his fingers in and out of her. Her head dropped down, and she released Tug's cock, sucking in her breath.

"Someone has released the cock from her mouth." Rory snarled, and spanked her ass.

"Suck him, Cecil, and don't stop till he comes." Two more slaps



landed on her ass. At the same time, he removed his fingers and slowly pushed his cock past the tight ring in her ass.

Cecil cried around Tug's cock as she sucked him. "Take it all, Cecil," Tug said and pushed into her mouth further, as Clayton pumped into his ass.

"Move it, Rory. I can't hold off much longer," Clayton said and leaned forward, grabbing hold of Tug's hair and pulling his neck to the side. "Mine!"

He sank his fangs into Tug's neck as Rory slid his cock fully into her ass. His hands held tight on to her hips as he pumped in and out of her ass.

Cecil lifted her hand up and cupped Tug's balls, panting around his cock. Sweat covered her skin, her arm shook, and her body tightened as Rory reached under her and rubbed her clit. "Come, Cecil," he ordered.

"God!" she screamed, and swallowed Tug's seed as he released his load down her throat. Cecil released Tug's cock, and fell to the floor. She watched as Tug rolled over and grabbed Clayton, bringing him to the floor, and sinking his fangs into his neck next to her mark.

Clayton moaned, shooting out another stream of sperm onto Tug. "Damn, Tug!"

Cecil smiled and got up as Rory pulled out of her ass.

Going into the bathroom and turning on the shower, she stepped in. She sighed, letting the warm water relax her muscles. Never had she thought it possible to be so happy. The only thing that would make her happier would be to have her son in her arms. *Cade, Mommy's waiting.*

Tears mixed with the water. Tug's gentle hands pulled her back against his body. "You'll have him soon, I promise. We did get good news today, Cecil. The doctor found your earlier file and it seems the snake DNA is destroyed by the wolf's. Every month, you were injected with the snake DNA. You won't change anymore into the snake. The only thing that will remain is the protection: the fangs and the venom." He kissed her neck.

## Chapter Twelve

Tug grabbed Cecil as she passed out. "Rory, Clayton, get in here and help me." Tug picked her up and stepped out of the tub.

Clayton came in. "What happened?" He reached in, turning off the water.

Rory grabbed a couple of towels and followed them into the bedroom.

"I told her about the injections and the reversal process," Tug said. "I should have known it would too much for her."

Sitting down on the bed, they slowly dried her body and hair as she blinked her eyes open, staring at him. "Is it really true? Did I pass out?" She moaned and rolled her eyes, embarrassed.

He laughed and hugged her. "Yes, it's true, and, yes, you did. Don't do that to me again. You scared us all." He growled, nibbling her neck.

"Well, then, I guess I'll try not to." She giggled and sat up, pouting. "I guess Stewart's already gone now?" She grinned.

"No, he's working on a tattoo for Jaycee." Clayton laughed. "But I'm afraid her mates are having a fit about it too."

"Hmm." She got up, searched through her suitcase, and pulled out a small piece of paper. It was old and torn.

Cecil came back and sat on his lap, glancing up at him. "Do you think he could put this on my lower back?" She opened the paper, showing them.

A tear slipped down his cheek and his heart felt as if it was in his throat. "I'm sure he can do that," he whispered, taking the picture she had drawn.

"It's Brandon. It's how I remember him before we were taken. We were playing tag. He had this laugh." She wiped the tears away from her cheek. "Anyway, this way he'll always be with me."

Clayton pulled on his jeans. "You get dressed and I'll talk to Stewart. Maybe he can do both yours and Jaycee's tonight. It's still early."

Tug handed the picture to Clayton. Cecil got up and dug around in her bag again, pulling out a pair of shorts and tank top, then taking them into the bathroom.

Grabbing his jeans, Tug pulled them on and buttoned them up.

When Cecil walked back into the room, Rory growled, and

Clayton looked up. "What do you think you're doing in that get up?"

Cecil frowned. "What's wrong with what I'm wearing? I picked it out so Stewart could have access to my back and my breasts."

Tug moaned. "You didn't just say 'have access to my breasts'."

Rory moved toward her. "Yes, she did, and no one is going to have access to your breasts but us."

"Oh, please! You guys are being silly." She moved to the door and Tug grabbed her around the waist.

"Cecil, those shorts ride up your ass. A very nice ass, I might add, but no one needs to be staring at it."

She rolled her eyes. "I'm going to be sitting, Tug."

"Fine, but if one male..."

She covered his mouth with hers in a gentle kiss. "I love you, Tug. No man, except the three of you, will ever find his way into my heart as you guys have." Cecil moved out of the room and he groaned.

"She had to say that now." Rory clapped him on the back, laughing.

"You have to admit she keeps us on our toes. Never have I been more frustrated and happy."

Rory followed her down the stairs. "But if she shakes that ass once more, I'm going to pounce on it again." He grabbed her ass and pinched it.

"Hey!" She slapped his hand and laughed.

"Then quit shaking your ass," he grumbled as she laughed.

"I wasn't, but I can," she teased, swinging her ass back and forth with more emphasis as she headed towards the kitchen.

"If you keep that up, I'm going to sink my cock into that piece of fine meat." Tug said, and went to grab for her, but she took off, running towards the door and laughing.

The wolf inside him howled, and he took off after her.

Cecil ran into the room and smack into Remi's back. Tug caught her as she fell backwards. "I caught my prey. What do I get for a reward? How about some tail?" He rubbed his once-again hard cock against her ass.

"Later, Tug. I want my tattoo, please." She glanced up at him, smiling.

He sighed. "Fine, but tonight I get to sink into that ass."

She moaned and looked up as Clayton frowned down at her. "You let her wear this?"

Cecil growled. "*Let* me wear this? Excuse me, but I'm old enough to know how to choose my own clothes."

Tug pulled her back into his body and wrapped his arms around her. "Easy, Cecil, and for your information, we tried to stop her."

Her body sagged against him. "Please stop. I didn't mean to cause a fight between you two."

Clayton traced his finger along the top of the tank top. "No, I'm sorry, I shouldn't have snapped." He reached over and clasped the back of her neck, bringing his lips down on hers. His kiss was hard and possessive. Clayton let his powers roll over her. His cock hardened and he moaned, then pulled back, smiling. "Tonight we'll explain a few things to you, Cecil. Stewart will be done with Jaycee's tattoo in about an hour. Would you like a tour of the pack's dining hall and kitchen? There shouldn't be anyone in there." He held out his hand.

She smiled and placed her hand in his. "Thanks. We hadn't gotten over there yet."

Tug adjusted his cock. His body was rock-hard, ready to fuck. He and Rory followed Cecil and Clayton into the dining hall and stopped. The room filled with pack males.

"I thought it was going to be empty." Whistles and hoots came from around the room. Men stood, pushing forward for a look at Cecil's body.

Cecil moved behind Clayton, her small body shook as she clenched his shirt. "Not again, not again."

Tug moved up behind her and she jumped as he wrapped his arms around her. "It's okay. No one will hurt you." He kissed her neck, frowning at her reaction. He glanced up to see Clayton frowning, too.

They slowly moved back into the main house, hiding her between them. Cecil was shaking. "Cecil, no one is going to hurt you here." They stopped in the hallway and turned to stare at her. She wrung her hands in front of her and looked down at the floor.

"To keep us in line, the guards would take us in front of the men at the compound, naked," she said. "They promised to let every man there have their way with us if we didn't listen to them. They would let them touch us and poke us, but never fully attack us." Tears dripped down her face as Sam stormed into the hallway.

"What the hell do you think you were doing, coming in there dressed like that?" he yelled at her, before he could see her shaking.

Clayton spun around. "Enough!"

"I'll go change now," she whispered, and disappeared down the hall.

Sam glared at Clayton. "She's my little sister. I have a right to be furious."

“Shut up, Sam. We didn’t know anyone would be in there.” Tug pushed his hand through his hair and followed his small mate upstairs.

Cecil stood in front of the full-length mirror in the closet, staring at herself, then sighed. “I realized it wouldn’t matter what I wore. Men would still be men.” She smiled up at him. “I guess I still have issues I need to work out.”

Tug opened his arms and she flew into them. “We’ll work them out together, all of us. Now, come on. Stewart is ready for you.” He smiled, wrapping his arm around her as they descended the stairs.

Sam stood at the bottom of the stairs, frowning at her. Tug tightened his grip on her.

*Don’t you say a word. She’s having enough problems dealing with the past.*

Sam nodded, pulling Cecil into a hug when she got to the bottom. “I’m sorry about yelling at you earlier. I guess I still think of you as my baby sister.” Sam kissed her forehead.

Cecil laughed. “I’ll never forget that time when Grant came over to study for our final. You scared the crap out of him that night. We didn’t get any studying done.”

Sam grunted, walking next to them. “That little jerk only wanted to feel you up. Just because I was older didn’t mean I still didn’t have connections at the high school.”

“I think we need to go to your class reunion when they have one,” Tug said pointedly.

Cecil laughed again, stepping into the kitchen. “What are you going to do? Bite him? Most likely he doesn’t even remember me.”

Shaking his head, Tug moaned. “She just doesn’t get it, does she?” He glanced at Sam and he smiled.

“Nope, she’s always been like that, believing in people. That’s what always scared Dad and me.”

Cecil rolled her eyes. “Dad wasn’t worried about me. He trusted me.”

Sam grinned. “Oh, really? You know that time you went to that boy/girl party? Did you know Dad had personally asked two older kids to watch over you? He actually paid them to make sure no boys touched you.”

Tug laughed as Cecil’s face turned red, and she put her hands on her hips. “He didn’t! Oh my God, that’s why not *one* guy danced with me that night. Did he do it at all the dances at school too?”

Sam nodded, smiling.

“That is so not fair. I was a teenager, for Pete’s sake! Every girl is

supposed to have her first kiss and dance at that age.”

“Hey, I thought you liked your first kiss.” Tug grabbed her around the waist and grasped her hair, tilting her head back and staring into her gaze.

Cecil smiled at him. “It was amazing, but I lost so much, Tug. High school dances, the prom. They stole all that from me. I always dreamed...well never mind. I don’t think you want to hear that part.” She giggled.

Clayton growled behind them. “You dreamed of losing your virginity on prom night?”

She squirmed in his arms. “That is so not fair. Quit reading my mind! A girl is supposed to have some secrets.”

Jaycee laughed, moving next to her. “Don’t feel too bad, Cecil. I, too, missed all the dances, and the prom. That’s one of the reasons I wanted this dance on Valentine’s Day, to make up for all those I wasn’t at.”

Cecil pushed Tug’s hands away, and hugged Jaycee. “I guess you were right. We do have a lot in common.” She leaned back and smiled. “Do you already have a dress for the night?”

Jaycee shook her head. “No, I’ll have to wear something I already have. With all the trouble around, I’m not allowed to go shopping right now.”

Tug felt like a first-class heel. Here he had been, groaning the whole time Jaycee had been planning this event. “Tell you what. You two go online, find the dresses you want at one of the local stores, and we’ll have someone pick them up for you.”

Jumping up, Cecil gave Tug a big kiss on the lips. “This is going to be so much fun.”

Remi wrapped his arms around Jaycee. “I’ll even allow that ball thing you wanted to be put up in the hall too,” he grumbled, but smiled.

Smiling, Jaycee glanced up at Remi. “Thank you.” She glanced at him. “I know you wanted the club to stay the same, but for one night, will it hurt?”

He shook his head. “No, Jaycee. One night won’t hurt. Maybe we can do it every Valentine’s Day.”

“You’re a good man, Tug. Thank you.” She looked at Cecil, then nodded at Stewart. “Go on, girl! Get your tattoo and piercings.”

Cecil moved over to the chair once more, and smiled at Stewart. “Sorry about earlier.”

Stewart glanced up as all three of her mates surrounded her. “What do we start with?”

“Pierce her nipples first. That way they’ll be healed by tonight.” Clayton’s gaze heated as he reached down, pulling her tube top down and exposing her breasts.

“I’m afraid you’re going to have to mark the nipples again. They were just too tempting not to suck on them.” Tug smiled as Cecil moaned and glared up at him.

“Tug, cool it.” She squirmed as Stewart lifted her breast up and marked each nipple again.

Clayton smiled at him. “I think our mate likes to be on display. Stewart didn’t even have to tease the nipples to get them hard.”

“I believe you’re right. We might have to explore that more later.” Tug watched as the needle pushed through her nipple. She jerked a little, but held still while he placed the ring in her nipple.

“I think a pink diamond loop would look great in your nipples, and I know just the place to get them.” Tug’s gaze heated.

“My mom has this pink diamond choker she gave me to give to you. Look for a pink dress tomorrow, Cecil.” Rory ran his hand down her chest and gently traced her pierced nipple as Stewart finished the other breast.

“Okay, that’s done. Let’s get this tattoo out of the way.” Stewart snarled and put away the piercing equipment. “The four of you have made me so hard, it’s hard to concentrate.” He picked up the new drawing he had done of Brandon.

Cecil teared up as she saw it. “You do great work. Thank you.” She turned in the chair, leaning her breasts against the back of it, giving him her back.

Sam stepped up and glanced at the picture, smiling. “It looks just like him.”

“Where did you put their bodies, Sam? I want our family buried near each other.” Cecil glanced up at him.

He nodded. “I’ve already talked to Remi. He has arranged a spot just for our family. We’ll bury them in two days, before we get your son.”

She caught Remi’s eye across the room. “Thank you.”

“It’s the least we can do. There is a nice large oak tree that shades the site and a stream that runs around it. I think you’ll like it.”

“I’m sure I will.” She lowered her head, silently crying while Stewart worked on the tattoo.

*Rory, why don’t you go get the room ready for tonight? There is a box in the closet that Jaycee set in there earlier for us. Also, go to the greenhouse and get as many flowers as you can. Let’s give her a night of romance.* Clayton ran his hand through her hair.

*I'll go to the greenhouse. Rory, you set the room up and I'll meet you there.* Tug leaned down, kissing her cheek. "I'll see you upstairs, Cecil."

\* \* \* \*

Cecil watched as both Tug and Rory left the room, admiring their nice, firm asses. *Boy, I could bite into those.*

Both Tug and Rory glanced back at her at the doorway, smiling. Her face burned as Remi smirked. "Damn, does *everyone* do the mind thing?" she mumbled.

Clayton leaned down next to her ear. "You sent your thoughts through the pack link. Everyone can hear them. You need to learn to block them or send them to us on our private connection." He laughed.

She narrowed her gaze on him. "And how am I to do that? No one has taught me."

"We'll teach you tonight." He patted her head, grinning.

Cecil grinned at Jaycee. "You know, it would be pretty cool to maybe have a girls' link only. What do you think, Jaycee?"

Jaycee smiled and glanced up at Remi, who frowned. "Umm, I'll have to work on that one. I'm sure Marsha can help me with it."

"There will be no girls' link," Dane snarled. "You don't need to keep any secrets from your mates."

"Hey it could be just girl talk. You know, 'oh that guy has a cute ass' or 'he has big feet, wonder if...'" Jaycee squealed as Remi slapped her ass.

Cecil looked down at Clayton's feet, smiling when he lowered his head down in her vision. "And?"

She glanced away, smiling her face hot. "I think what the old saying is true, at least in your case." Cecil giggled. "But then, I haven't seen many cocks before."

Clayton ran his finger down her cheek. "Thank you, but I'm afraid your quest to see if the old statement is true is over. There will be no checking out other men's cocks. Is that understood?"

Smiling, she nodded. "But there are ways to find out how big a man is even if he is dressed. You do know this, right?" Cecil teased and grabbed the top of the chair as Stewart hit a sensitive spot on her back with the needle.

Mark snarled, drawing her attention. "I don't think any mated female should be checking out any man."

Sheila reached over and swatted him on the head. "Please, like you don't check out the females in the pack. Jaycee and I have seen all three of you doing that, so don't even start."



Tug ran into the room. "We have a problem. The clinic was attacked." He glanced at Cecil.

Remi released Jaycee, running out of the room. "Jaycee, take the females down into the tunnels now."

So it had started slowly. Cecil stood and tears filled her eyes. She knew it would be only a matter of time before they had retaliated. *Would they come for her now?*

*No one is going to touch you. Go to the tunnels, Cecil, with the women. You'll be safe there.* Clayton's voice was strong and comforting as she glanced up at Jaycee.

"He's right, you know. They won't get to us." She held out her hand and all of them moved into the pack house and down the stairs to the tunnels.

More than one hundred females, children, and guards filed into the tunnels from different openings. Marsha came up to them and wrapped her arm around Cecil. "Believe in them, Cecil. I know it's hard to trust, but they will protect you."

"I trust them, but they haven't seen these things in action. I have." Cecil moved to one of the chairs in the tunnel and sat down, watching the women comfort the children. That was when she heard one of the women tell Jaycee the snake men had broken through their lines of defense on the southern part of the pack lands.

Jaycee met her gaze and held it. "You will *not* do it, Cecil. Think of your child."

"They won't hurt me. They need me alive to take care of him." Cecil stood, but all of a sudden, two large men blocked her path.

Stepping up next to the men, Jaycee smiled at them. "Cecil, these are my brothers and they are now your personal guards."

Cecil shook her head and sat back down. "How could you, Jaycee?"

She kneeled down next to her. "I made the same mistake you were about to, Cecil. Look at me." Jaycee's alpha voice was strong and firm.

Jaycee smiled and took Cecil's hand, placing it over her swollen belly. At once all three of her children were there in Cecil's mind, comforting her. The boy's power filled her, connecting her with her own child, Cade.

She closed her eyes, surrounding him with love. *We'll be there soon, I promise, little one.*

*You'll never get my son!* Rick hissed into her mind, breaking the connection with her son. She jumped back, snapping her eyes open. Marsha pushed Jaycee out of the way.

“Give me your hands, now.” Cecil didn’t have a chance to argue as Marsha poured her power into her, connecting once more to the child’s father.

*You will die soon.* Were the only words Cecil understood as Marsha stood and smiled. “Now the men have nothing to worry about with that man.” Marsha turned, humming to herself.

“Okay, please tell me what happened.” Cecil’s gaze was angry and full of hatred.

“That man is now a toad and there is no reversal for Marsha’s spell,” Jaycee said. “His men won’t know what to do. It will give our men time to take control now and retrieve your son.”

“She really turned him into a toad?” Cecil smiled as Jaycee nodded.

“Marsha is very powerful. No one goes against her and she’s taken a liking to you. Better watch out, though.” Jaycee leaned over, grinning. “Once Momma claims you as her child to protect, you’d better listen to every word she says, because she has this way of punishing you...”

“Jaycee, enough. You’re scaring her and I’m not *that* bad.” Marsha frowned at her, waving her finger at her.

Patting Cecil’s hands, Jaycee rose. “Don’t worry, sister. We’ll take care of you. You’re family now.”

## Chapter Thirteen

Cecil paced back and forth in her living room. It had been two days since she had seen any of their mates. Even Jaycee hadn't seen her mates for the last two days and both of them were going nuts. Cecil's body burned, needing them to ease the sexual heat.

"I swear I'm going to kill them!" Jaycee threw her glass across the room. "They can send messages through the pack to us, but they can't contact us? This is bullshit."

Marsha shook her head. "Calm down, Jaycee. It's not good for the babies. At least we're out of the tunnels and it's safe around here. Did your dress show up yet?" she asked, changing the subject, the sly old lady.

Jaycee grinned. "Sure did, and I hope they choke when they see what I'm wearing."

Cecil laughed. "We're going to be in so much trouble when they see those dresses. At least they won't be able to make us wear something else since we'll be changing at the club tomorrow night."

Turning, Marsha glared at both of them. "Okay, what did you do now?"

Moving towards the food on the buffet table, Jaycee waved her hand. "They said we could pick out a couple of dresses, so we did. Nothing bad about that, but it just so happens our dresses are from a very exclusive designer who only designs for, well, how can I say this...?" She tapped her finger on her nose, turning to grin at Marsha. "For the hottest special clubs in California," she finished.

"You can't mean Francesca Grant?" Marsha's eyes grew large, as Jaycee nodded. "How do *you* know her, and why would she design gowns for you?"

Jaycee smiled. "Well, remember when we had all Clayton's things moved? That night, it seems a letter of Miss Francesca's slipped out of his stuff. This so-called letter mentioned she couldn't wait to come to the Valentine's Dance tomorrow night and be Clayton's escort for the weekend."

Cecil growled.

"Why that dirty double-crossing son of a bitch," Marsha said. "He is toad meat!"

"I called this Francesca, claiming to be Clayton's secretary," Jaycee continued. "Well, to make a long story short, Clayton never cancelled his date and she's furious. So she volunteered to make our dresses special for that night. Of course she'll be there too, just to make him squirm."

Marsha smiled. "Oh, this is better than toad meat."

Cecil sat down around the table as they told her their plan. "Oh guess what? We have a surprise for you, too." Cecil jumped up and ran upstairs, grabbing the garment bags and bringing them back down.

"This is your dress. We asked if she would mind making one more. Jaycee gave her your measurements." Cecil stepped off the stairs as Marsha carefully took the one bag and unzipped it.

"Oh my, your father is going to have a stroke." She grinned. "But what a way to go!" She laughed, tracing her hands over the silver silk dress. Marsha then pulled Cecil's dress out of the bag.

"My men wanted pink. What do you think?" Cecil giggled.

Marsha and Jaycee laughed. "I think they'll get more pink from your skin than that dress. My God, look at it. There are satin lace holes everywhere." Marsha touched the material.

"Yep, and Jaycee's is almost the same, except hers is black." Jaycee displayed her own gown.

"I have Pam coming over in a few. She's going to pick up the dresses and put them in the women's room under lock and key. That way, the men won't know what hit them. You're going to get ready with us, aren't you?" Jaycee asked.

"You're damn right, I am. Where's Sheila?" Marsha frowned, as Sheila came in, carrying her dress.

"Right here. I had to run back and grab the dresses for Pam. Do you honestly think I would miss out on this? Please." She laid her dress over the couch as all four of them laughed.

"Question. What if they don't get back before the dance?" Cecil nibbled her lip.

Jaycee growled. "They'd better. If not, we'll just wear the dresses and find us some other men who want to dance with us."

Cecil glanced down at the ground. "I don't think I could dance with anyone else, Jaycee. I'm just not ready for that."

*You will not be dancing with anyone but us, so don't worry about it. We'll be home in about two hours,* Clayton said into her head, and she jumped.

Then she smiled at the other women. "Well, it seems the boys are finally on their way back." The doorbell rang, and they all watched as their guard opened the door for Pam.

She came strolling in, rubbing her hands. "So, let me see them."

Jaycee grinned, opening her bag once more. "What do you think?"

Pam laughed so hard she grabbed her stomach. "I think you're going to get strapped to the spanking bench tomorrow night."

Shaking her head, Jaycee leaned over. "I used the spanking bench for a table," she whispered and once again Pam roared with laughter.

"You're so bad," Pam said. "Hand them over. I heard through the grapevine that they're on their way home. I want to get these all locked up. Are the shoes and things you need in the bags?"

Cecil nodded and handed her the dress. "Yep, everything is in there."

"Oh, wait," Jaycee said. "Pam, I wanted to know if you would like to be included in our girls' link only. Marsha has come up with a way so we girls can communicate privately without the men knowing about it." Jaycee turned to her brothers, who'd just wandered in. "And if one of our mates finds out, I'll know who to blame."

They grinned, holding up their hands. "Mom has already told us to keep our mouths shut," Lance, the youngest brother, said.

"Why do I have this feeling you're not telling me the truth?"

Jaycee stared at him, then turned to Pam. "So, what do you think?"

She nodded and Jaycee opened a tiny cut on her wrist. "Lick it." Pam frowned and licked the drop of blood.

At once Cecil could feel the connection to Pam, and giggled. "It's weird, isn't it? And the men can't break it either."

\* \* \* \*

Tug glanced in the rear view mirror at Clayton, who was on the phone. He slammed it shut. "Shit, Francesca is already on her way here and her secretary said she's turned off her damn cell phone."

Pulling into pack lands, Tug shook his head. "Cecil is going to be furious."

How was I supposed to know I'd meet my mates? And she's also going to be pissed you're giving a demonstration that night using a sub."

Remi laughed. "I think all the women are going to be pissed about that one. The only thing that might save both of your asses is that child in your arms."

Little Cade giggled as Rory blew a raspberry on his stomach. "Yep, this will be a nice surprise for her." Rory laughed. "I still can't believe Marsha turned that creep into a frog. Did you see his pet boa just swallow him whole? I thought I was going to die laughing."

Dane grumbled, "You wouldn't be laughing if you'd been turned into a toad. Almost feel sorry for the bastard."

Tug smiled, trying to think of a way to get out of the demonstration. He had planned it months ago. They were so dead.

*Um, Clayton. I hate to tell you this, but I kind of dropped your box of albums last night when we were moving your things into our room.*

Cecil's voice held a hint of fear.

Clayton clenched his fists together. *How many are broken and why didn't you just wait till we got back?* He gritted his teeth.

*I wanted to surprise you. Sorry, but only about ten broke.* Tug cringed. Everyone knew Clayton kept his prized albums in his room, bragging about how not one of them had been opened.

Tug's gaze matched his. *Please tell me you didn't open them.*

Clayton whispered through the pack's link. Tug heard the gasps from the men. *Well, I had to make sure they weren't all broken, didn't I?*

Pulling into the driveway, Clayton jumped out of the car and ran towards the house. Tug shook his head. It was going to be a long night. He got out, grabbing the baby crib, clothes, and other baby things they had purchased earlier, when he heard Clayton's howl of anger.

"Damn, I don't envy you two tonight." Mark clapped him on the back, as he grabbed a bag and carried it in the house behind him.

Cecil sat on the stairs in tears as she watched Clayton pace back and forth. "I didn't mean to, Clayton. It was an accident."

Tug had enough. "Clayton, enough! Give her a break."

Clayton's red eyes blazed up at him, but he didn't get a chance to say anything when Rory came into the house with the baby.

Cecil squealed, running to Rory, crying as she picked up her son, hugging him. "I've got you, Cade, I've got you," she cried, going to the rocking chair, just holding him and rocking.

She glanced up at Clayton. "Thank you," Cecil whispered to him.

All the anger disappeared, and he smiled. "He needed his mom." Clayton kneeled down next to them.

Jaycee sat on the couch, frowning at her mates. "You couldn't even contact me to tell me you three were okay, but you contact the guards?" she snarled.

"Don't start, Jaycee. It's been a rough three days," Remi ordered and picked her up, kissing her. He broke the kiss, staring down at her. "So, is there anything new going on that we need to know about?"

Tug laughed at Remi's subtle hint, waiting to see if Jaycee would tell them about the link she had created for the women. All of them had been furious when they had gotten the message from Lance about the link. Not only did Jaycee put herself at risk, but the babies too.

She pulled out of her arms. "Nope, we were good little girls. Sat here waiting for our men. Didn't even go out for a run either, which, I might add, was hard not to do." She slowly sat back down, watching Cecil.

Making his way up the stairs, Tug heard Clayton ask Cecil the same question. "No, we really didn't do much. Just got things ready for the

party tomorrow night. I can't wait to just have a quiet night with the three of you with all the dancing and games."

He stopped on the stairs and looked down at her. "Games? What games?" He glanced at Remi, who frowned.

"I didn't know anything about any games. Jaycee, what games?" Remi asked.

Jaycee laughed and waved her hand. "Oh please, simple little games really. One's going to be spin the bottle. We even had Pam set up poker tables, but of course we'll be playing strip poker." She grinned.

Cecil laughed. "It's going to be so much fun, just like high school. Oh, and guess what, Tug? Nancy said she couldn't wait for your performance. I didn't know you could sing." She looked up at him and grinned.

"I'd better go set this crib up. It's been a long day for Cade. I'm sure he'll sleep well tonight." Tug hurried up the stairs, cussing Nancy all the way upstairs. Him, sing? There was no way he was going to sing in front of everyone.

Setting up the crib, Clayton strolled into the room. "You know they're up to something, but what the hell is it?" Clayton grabbed one of the rails to the crib as Cecil came into the room, carrying a sleeping Cade.

Tug stood back and smiled. "There. All set up for you." He glanced at Cecil and frowned. "What?"

"Didn't you forget the mattress?" Cecil laughed as Rory came into the room carrying the mattress, which was already covered with a baby sheet.

"I've got it." He laughed and set the mattress in the crib. "I take it you've never been around babies." He smiled.

Cecil gently put the baby into the crib, staring down at him. "He's so tiny. It's hard to believe he's two years old." Cecil jumped, turning around to them.

"I almost forgot to tell you. Our dresses came today. I can't wait for you three to see me in mine. I've never felt so, well, sexy before."

Tug laughed. "Baby, you're sexy in everything you do." He kissed her lips. "Why don't you show us the dress?"

She shook her head, grinning. "Nope, can't do that. It's a surprise for tomorrow, but you're going to love it. I know you will. Well, let me go get the food out of the oven. You guys must be starved." Cecil almost danced out of the room.

Tug frowned at the door as she closed it behind her. "Now I *know* they have something planned."

Rory snorted. "You think? Even Remi, Dane, and Mark are trying

to figure out what's going on."

\* \* \* \*

Cecil moved into the kitchen, growling. "Do you believe those fools, especially Clayton, yelling at me over some damn stupid records when he has a freaking *date* this weekend?" She plopped down in the chair next to Marsha.

Jaycee tapped her hand on the table. "They know don't they about the connection?" She directed her question to Marsha.

"Yes, and I'm going to beat Lance's ass. Even Ben is being too sweet." Marsha said. "You'd think my own son would keep his mouth shut."

"Hmm, well then, they've caught us in one lie, disobeying their orders. How much trouble are we in?" Cecil glanced from Jaycee to Marsha to Sheila.

"Enough that we won't sit for a day or two," Sheila said.

"Well, we can't back down now." Jaycee got up and grabbed the silverware. "We'd better get supper on the table before they come looking for us."

Cecil moved to the oven and pulled out the large casserole dish of shepherd's pie. "Sheila, grab the biscuits." She pushed through the kitchen door, moving into the living room. All the men were sitting at the table talking when she walked in. They stopped and stared at her as she placed the dish down on the table.

"Hope you guys are hungry." She reached over, adjusting the dish, when Tug slipped in behind her, kissing her neck.

"I've missed you, and I didn't even get a kiss hello?" he said, lifting her into his arms, tilting her head back, and nipping her lip. "Open for me, Cecil."

Cecil nipped his lip back, and smiled at him. "I was scared, Tug. Don't do that again." She opened her mouth and he swept his tongue into hers.

His hand slowly moved down her chest to her breast and cupped it. Tug lifted up, holding her gaze with his. "We were fine. They didn't know what hit them and, with their leader gone, they are more confused. We're safe."

"For now, we are." Cecil pulled away and sat down while everyone helped themselves to the food.

"Now, this is comfort food." Mark groaned.

For the next hour, the men polished off the rest of the shepherd's pie, as Clayton, Tug, and Rory watched her.

Shaking her head, she grabbed her plate and Tug's when he was



done. "I think I'm going to clean up in the kitchen and take a nice hot bath. Want to join me?" she whispered into his ear, watching the rise of his cock in his pants.

He smiled up at her, cupping her cheek. "Sorry, sweetheart, we're all beat. We haven't slept in two days, but we'll make it up to you tomorrow night."

Cecil stood there staring down at him. "You're kidding, right?"

"Cecil, we've traveled more than a hundred miles today."

She nodded and left the room, going into the kitchen. Tears filled her eyes, making her vision blurry as she sat the plates into the sink and started the hot water.

"You okay?" Sheila asked, coming up and standing next to her.

"Yeah, I'm fine. So what? He doesn't want me. I can live with that." Cecil dripped some soap into the water as Jaycee stormed into the room.

"They denied me sex. Do you *believe* this? I haven't had sex in five *days* and when I ask for some, they denied me. Oh tomorrow is going to be payback time," Jaycee yelled.

Cecil smiled and glanced behind her. "Looks like we have more in common than we thought."

Jaycee narrowed her gaze on her. "You mean you asked too, and they said no?" She huffed. "You're just mated. I know for a fact that men can't keep their hands off you for the first month."

Cecil's lip trembled and she turned back to washing the dishes. "I guess mine can. Maybe they're finally seeing I'm the freak I am. Who knows? Maybe that's why Clayton didn't cancel his date." The dish in her hand broke, slicing her hand.

"What the hell happened?" Marsha stormed into the room and turned off the water, taking her hand into hers.

"It's nothing. I just wasn't paying attention. It will heal in a minute anyway."

Marsha wrapped a towel around her hand. "All of you sit down. This has to stop."

Jaycee sat down. "We're not the ones who screwed up and we're being punished. What's wrong with this picture?" She pouted.

"That's true, and normally, I would say screw them, but Cecil needs her men. Jaycee, you knew how bad you felt when Remi took off for days and then used those women. Do you want the same for Cecil?"

"No, I wouldn't wish that on anyone. I'll go get her men and I'll talk to mine." She stood up and turned around. "But I still say we should keep the dresses a secret."

Marsha smiled. "Of course we should. There's is nothing wrong with that."

Jaycee smiled and headed out into the living room with Sheila.

Cecil glanced up at Marsha. "Do I tell them I know about the demonstration and Francesca?"

Marsha pulled her into a big hug. "Honey, that's up to you, but if you want to start this out right, I would consider it. Your men are coming." Marsha got up and opened the kitchen door as all three men filed in and sat down next to her as Marsha closed the kitchen door.

"You wanted to talk to us?" Clayton said. "What happened?" He lifted her hand and unwrapped it.

"It's nothing. I just cut myself when a dish broke in the sink." Cecil sighed. "Wait here. I have to get something."

Cecil moved out of the kitchen and down the hall to the extra storeroom, grabbing Clayton's box of records. Pausing at the kitchen door, she took a deep breath and pushed into the kitchen.

Clayton stood up and glanced down at the box in her hands. "I believe these are yours," Cecil said. "None of them has been touched and your letter from Francesca is even in there too." Tears streamed down her face. "I'm sorry I lied to you. I was hurt when I found the letter, but it wasn't right to do what I did. I guess I still have a little teenager in me after all." She tried to smile, but failed.

He grabbed the box and set it down on the table, flipping through the records.

"They're all there," Cecil added. "I didn't open them. I wouldn't do that to you. I was going to give them back to you tomorrow." She glanced at Tug. "I made up that story about singing when Nancy called and told me about the demonstration. She couldn't wait to be your sub for tomorrow. I told her you would get back to her tonight about it." She turned to leave, but stopped glancing back at them. "Francesca is here in town. She's still coming to the dance and, yes, she knows about me. We also have a link now. Just a few of us girls, not everyone. Just Jaycee, Marsha, Sheila, and Pam. Close friends, that's all. I told Jaycee it would be too much for the babies to have every female in the pack." Cecil opened the door to leave, but Clayton reached up, closing the door. He pulled her into the room.

"Sit, Cecil." Clayton pulled the chair out and waited.

Slowly she sat down, glancing down at her hands in her lap. Clayton sat down next to her, and scooted her chair around to face him. "Look at me." He lifted her chin and wiped the tears away.

"I'm sorry, Cecil. I didn't mean to hurt you. In truth, I forgot all

about Francesca when I met the three of you. I've been trying to call her for the past two days to cancel our weekend plans. Do you really believe I would spend the weekend with her when I have the three of you?"

"I've seen pictures of her, Clayton. She's beautiful while I'm plain. You've only had sex with me once and already you're too tired to be with me."

Clayton leaned back, studying her. "You really believe that?"

She nodded. "The only men I've been with are you three. I have no experience. Maybe I didn't please you? I don't know. I've been locked up, remember?" She straightened her shoulders and stared him right in the eyes.

"Stand up, Cecil, and strip," Clayton ordered.

Glancing behind her, making sure the door was shut, she stood.

"Don't worry about the door," he said. "Worry about what we're going to do to you for lying to us."

Cecil shivered at his words and stripped out of the dress she wore, standing before them.

## Chapter Fourteen

Tug was furious as he swiped everything off the kitchen table. "Lie on the table, Cecil, face up. Now."

Cecil glanced at the table, then at him.

Clayton stood and placed her on the table. "Lie down," he snarled.

Lying on the table, Cecil looked up at the ceiling. She shook, but they would finish this tonight. All three of them stared down at her. Tug pushed her legs apart and moved in between her legs, leaning over her.

"You know, the first thing I fell in love with was your eyes." He leaned down, kissing each eye. "So innocent, but they held so much passion in them." He smiled. "You have this habit of biting your lip when you're nervous or scared. All I want to do is suck that lip into my mouth." He leaned down, and did just that.

She reached up to touch him, but Rory captured her hands and held them above her head. "No touching. Just listen." He moved down her neck, kissing and nibbling.

Stopping at her breasts, he licked around her nipples. "Your breasts are full and plenty for our hands. Your nipples are pink and perky, perfect to nibble." He pulled her nipple ring into his mouth and moaned.

Tug released her nipple and moved down her stomach, stopping to pay homage to the small scars on her belly. "Each mark on your body is a testament to your strength and courage."

He hooked his leg to the chair behind him and pulled it forward, sitting between her legs. Gently he raised one of her legs, kissing the inner spot behind her knee. "These beautiful long legs are meant to wrap around our hips as we sink our cocks into your pussy."

Little cries escaped from her throat as Clayton kissed her lips softly. "I loved watching these ruby lips surround Rory and Tug's cock. I can't wait till I can push my cock in between them."

Rory sat down on her left side and sucked her nipple into his mouth. Nipping it, she raised her hips, her body trembling on the table as all three of them slowly teased her.

"Hmm, I think I'll shave you tonight." He pushed his fingers through her dark blond curls covering her pussy. "The thought of my tongue sliding on your bare lips makes my cock so hard." Tug licked up one side of her pussy lips and closed his eyes, inhaling her unique scent. "You smell of honeysuckle," he murmured, separating her lips and licking around her clit. "Your little clit is so hard and pink. I think it needs a ring to match your breasts." Tug sucked her clit into his mouth hard. She

jumped, but he held her down as her body quaked, the small orgasm creating the juice he wanted to taste. Releasing her clit, he fucked her with his tongue, rubbing her clit with his nose.

“Tuuuug.” Cecil moaned.

“Hush, Cecil. We’re showing you how much we want only you,” Clayton murmured as he stood and undid his pants, guiding his cock to her mouth. “Suck me, Cecil. Take me into that warm mouth.” He gently turned his head towards Tug and pushed his cock into her mouth. “That’s it, baby. Oh, you feel so good, warm and tight.”

Rory lifted one of her hands and kissed her fingers. “Such small, dainty hands, but perfect for holding my cock.” He stood unzipping his pants, placing her hand around his cock. “Play with me, Cecil.”

Putting two fingers into her pussy, Tug stood, releasing his cock. He was ready to explode with need. It had just about killed him to say no to her little invitation earlier. The hurt flashed so fast into her eyes, he almost had her on the dining room table.

Clayton glanced at him and he nodded. All three of them pulled away from her and stared down at her. She blinked, focusing once more on her surroundings. “Turn onto your stomach, Cecil, with your legs dangling from the table.” Tug ordered.

Cecil slowly rose and scooted to the end of the table, rolling onto her stomach, her legs barely touching the floor. He stepped forward and pushed her further up the table.

Clayton grabbed her hands above her head. “Before we go any further, you have a punishment coming to you, Cecil. You’ve lied to us and you did something we told you not to. You will take ten swats to each butt cheek tonight and we will forget this ever happened.” Clayton leaned down, gazing into her face.

“But I said I was sorry.” She tried to pull out of his grasp, but he held her still.

“Hold still, Cecil. We’re very proud you had the courage to tell us the truth. That’s why the punishment is not as severe as it would have been if you had waited.”

“You didn’t tell me about Francesca and Tug didn’t tell me about his presentation. That’s not fair.”

“Enough. It’s time.” Tug ordered, and spanked her butt, avoiding her legs, which swung back, trying to get away. He ground his teeth and delivered the last slaps to her red ass.

Clayton released her hands and Tug helped her stand, turning her around to face him. He lifted her chin and cupped her cheek. “I’m sorry if my doing the presentation is upsetting to you. I set this up two months ago,

Cecil. I'm part owner of the club and headmaster there. It is expected of me to do this. In time, maybe you'll understand, but until then, I will lie low on the presentations until you are ready to participate in them. And, Cecil, you will participate in them. I can't wait to see you on the Saint Andrew's cross, all strapped up there at our mercy while everyone watches you. But for tomorrow, I'll move the demonstration to a private room so it won't interfere with the dance."

Cecil nodded and he picked up her dress, slipping it over her head. "Go take your bath, Cecil. We'll be up in a few." He pushed her towards the door and sighed as she left. Tug tucked in his cock, wincing. They had gotten her off, but they would wait until tomorrow night to take her for themselves.

"She still isn't going to believe us." Rory moaned, sitting down.

"Hell, I wouldn't believe me either, especially after all she's found out. Then there's the fact she's never been with anyone but us and she's feeling insecure," Rory said.

"But if we took her now, it would be just a hard quick fuck, Rory. I want our next time with her as romantic as we can give her. Then we can go for the quick hard fuck and prepare her for our world." Tug leaned back in his chair. "Well, what do you think?" He looked at Clayton.

"You're right, but she's going to be hurting tonight, still thinking we don't want her." Clayton stood. "Let's join her in the tub and pamper her tonight. It doesn't mean we have to make love to her."

Tug jumped up. "Damn it, Clayton, if I go near her, I'm going to take her so hard and long, she won't be able to walk tomorrow."

The door to the kitchen slammed open and Jaycee stood there with her hands on her hips. "I've heard enough. I wasn't going to say anything, but I can't have Cecil go through what I did." She sighed and glanced up at Remi, who stepped in. He nodded.

"Tug, you weren't here when my mates decided to take three females one night and leave me alone." Tears slipped down her face. "Cecil has been locked up for more than six years. She's confused and feeling like she's ugly. If you don't treat her like a mate should, it's going to hurt her bad. All she wants is normalcy. If that means she can't walk tomorrow, she'll smile, remembering it with fondness, Tug. But if you leave her with nothing tonight, she'll believe she's not good enough for you. Especially since you refuse to give up that stupid show. She'll take it that you rather be with Nancy than her."

"Okay, Jaycee, you've said your peace. Come on, we need to go to our room. You have a punishment coming for creating that link." Remi pulled her out of the room into Dane's arms and shut the door.

He turned, staring at all of them. "I normally don't step in the way between mates, but Jaycee is right about this. Tug, give someone else the show, because if you do this and not make love to her tonight, you're going to crush her. It's your choice, as it was my choice to totally screw up, and I pay each time she sees those women."

Tug watched as Remi left and he turned to Clayton. "Let's go."

\* \* \* \*

Cecil stood in front of the mirror as the garden Jacuzzi tub filled up. Could she handle her mate demonstrating with someone else? She hadn't met this Nancy. Was she beautiful like Francesca? Cecil stared at the scars on her face and on her stomach.

She dug in the bag Jaycee and Sheila had given her. "Where is it? Oh, here it is." She strolled over to the tub, getting inside and turning off the water, lying back and reading the instructions.

Setting the scar makeup on the tub, she ducked her head under the water and came back up, staring at Tug as he slipped into the tub. He picked her up and placed her on his lap, facing her. "What's this for?" He glanced at the tube of makeup and frowned. "You don't need this, Cecil."

Reaching for it, he handed it to Clayton, who stepped in the tub and lay back on the side of the tub, frowning. "Were you really considering wearing this?"

Cecil rolled her eyes. "Yes. You know, females do wear makeup, and that's special makeup for scars." She snatched it out of Clayton's hands and placed it on the floor. "Is Rory joining us?" Cecil glanced from Clayton to Tug.

"No, he's giving us some time alone with you since it was us who hurt you." Tug pulled her closer, kissing her neck. "I don't want to see that stuff on you tomorrow. It's fake, Cecil. I want to see the real you, the beautiful person you are."

Cecil glanced up into his eyes. "But you see, that's the problem. I don't know who I am any more. All three of you are strong, you know who you are, but me all I know is how to survive. How am I supposed to compete with women like Francesca or Nancy? How do I hold your interest in me when I don't even know who *me* is?" She lowered her head onto his chest. "I'm scared I don't have anything to offer you three. I have a ninth-grade education, no sexual knowledge. I don't even know who the president is." Tears streamed down her face, landing on his chest. Her body shook while she held onto Tug.

"Make love to me, Tug. Teach me what you like so I can please you." Cecil whispered, kissing his chest. Taking a deep breath, she met his dark, heated gaze. "Let *me* do the demonstration with you tomorrow."

Clayton moved behind them and kissed her neck. "Our poor little wolf, you'll find yourself and we'll be there with you, sharing your experiences."

Tug cupped her face in his hands. "And we'll teach you anything you want to learn." He kissed her lips softly. "No one can take your place in our hearts. Cecil, you're our mate and we love you. There is no comparison with any woman. All we see is you. Don't try and change yourself to please us. You've already captured us and we're not going anywhere."

Reaching around her, Clayton grabbed onto her breasts, squeezing and playing with her while Tug nibbled her lips.

Her body burned for her mates, their gentle caressing driving her higher and higher. One of their strong callused hands gently lifted her up. Tug's cock brushed against her soft folds, rubbing until it breached them, sliding into her pussy.

Cecil gazed into Tug's deep, dark brown eyes. "Put your hands behind my neck, Cecil, and lace your fingers together. Don't let go." His voice, strong and controlled, sent a small tremor through her.

Slowly Cecil pushed her hands up his muscular chest, running her fingers through the dark hair and around his neck, latching her fingers behind his neck.

Clayton placed his hand on her back and pushed her forward. "Relax, Cecil. Let us show you the different pleasures of the body." He nipped the back of her neck, separating her ass checks, rubbing his cock against her small hole.

"I've been waiting to sink my cock into your tight ass." Clayton pushed the head of his lubed cock past her tight ring, holding her hips still.

"Hurry up, Clayton. I can't hold still much longer." Tug grunted, biting down on her nipple.

Pain and pleasure fought for control in her body while her mates touched and slid into her. Clayton's cock, large and thick, pushed all the way into her ass.

Cecil started to unhook her hands when Tug growled and nipped her breast again. "Don't move them, Cecil."

"But...I need..." She laid her forehead on his.

"We know what you need. We'll take care of you, always." He licked his mark on her neck as he pulled out, hovering above her clit and rubbing it before he shoved back in. "Your pussy hugs me so tight. I can feel Clayton moving back and forth inside you, his cock rubbing mine through the thin wall. Both of us loving you as you were meant to be loved, Cecil, by only us."



His words warmed her heart like nothing else could. Tears filled her eyes and her body trembled as her orgasm rippled through her body. As she hugged Tug tightly, both of her men slid in and out of her, their orgasms creating another stronger orgasm. "I love you, all three." She cried letting the tears fall.

Her arms feel to her sides as Clayton pulled her back onto his lap, kissing her neck. "Shh, I've gotcha."

Tug stood, unstopping the tub and getting out. He grabbed a towel, waiting as Clayton slowly pulled out of her and washed her. "Go on. Out you go."

Grabbing her hand, Tug slowly dried her body, kissing every spot he dried. "Tug."

"We're not done, Cecil." He threw the towel onto the counter and swung her up in his arms, carrying into the bedroom. A fire blazed in the fireplace, candles lit the room, rose petals were scattered all throughout the room, and Rory lay on the bed with his arms held out. "Come here, Cecil."

Tug placed her into Rory's arms on top of his muscular form. "Our poor little wolf, never doubt our love for you, no matter what happens in the years to come. We might get mad, you might get mad, but we'll always be there to listen, hold you, and love you." He kissed her lips softly, sliding his cock into her pussy.

Cecil smiled, gazing into his big blue eyes. He had two days of stubble on his face, but he was so handsome. "Are we growing a beard?" she teased, kissing his chin.

He reached up, rubbing his chin. "Never thought of it. Do you want me to?"

She laughed. "Silly, anything on you is sexy. You choose."

"So you think I'm sexy, do you?" He nuzzled her neck, grabbing her sore bottom and squeezing.

Never did she think it possible that pain could bring pleasure, but just his squeeze on her ass heated her body once more. "Every one of you is sexy. Tug with his long black hair and his bad-boy looks, Clayton with his sexy bald head and dark green eyes could turn any woman's head."

The bed dipped behind her and Tug pinched her ass. "Bad boy? I'll show you what a bad boy can do." He laughed, separating her ass cheeks and pushing his cock inside of her. "And you, my dear Cecil, have an ass that is meant to sink our cocks into. Damn, you're fine," he said, pumping in and out of her ass while Rory countered his moves.

Clayton moved to the head of the bed and guided her mouth to his waiting cock. "Take my cock, Cecil. Let us all love you tonight." His hand in her hair guided her movements.

“Don’t come, Cecil, until I tell you, which goes for you two also.” Clayton reached down, grabbing one of her nipple rings, and twisted it.

“Clayton...” She tried to lift up, releasing Clayton’s cock, but Tug pushed her back down.

“Stay still Cecil, just feel.” He slapped her ass. “And don’t let go of Clayton. Suck him, Cecil.”

Pushing back into her mouth, Clayton leaned down to her ear. “Doesn’t it send a chill up your spine when Tug gives his orders? I used to sit in the club Ugg and watch him with his subs. He has this one touch that can send any woman over the edge. Shall we see if he can do that to you?”

He lifted up, pumping faster into her mouth as she whined. “Now, Tug, now.”

Tug reached down in between her ass and pussy, pushing his finger onto her skin, hitting Rory’s cock at the same time. Rory howled, but nothing registered as tremor after tremor shook Cecil’s body. Sweat dripped down her face to land on Rory’s chest. She could have sworn stars danced in her head, and Cecil couldn’t move a muscle as Clayton pulled his cock out of her mouth.

“Mmm, I knew that little mouth was dangerous.” He smiled, brushing her sweaty hair away from her eyes.

Rory rolled her over when Tug pulled out of her. “Poor baby, all tucked out.” He kissed her lips gently cuddling up to her still inside of her hard.

Cecil grinned. “How can you still be well hard?” She giggled.

All three of them laughed. “Because we’ve waited for two days to be with you.” Rory pulled out of her and she moaned. “Baby’s waking up.”

Slowly getting up, Cecil moved towards the crib. Cade lay there, smiling up at her. “Are you hungry, little man?” She reached down, picked him up, and cuddled with him.

“I’ll run down stairs and get a bottle for him.” Rory pulled on a pair of sweatpants, and she laughed.

“Better hope no one sees you and your tent there.” She sat down in the rocking chair recliner by the window.

“Well, I’m afraid you’ll have to take care of me after you take care of Cade.” He leaned down, kissing her neck.

Cecil smiled up at him. “It would be my pleasure to take care of you, dear sir. What do you have in mind?”

Rory laughed and headed for the door. “We’ll surprise you after you take care of Cade.”

Clayton walked over and picked the little guy out of her arms. “You, dear sir, should be sleeping, not interrupting Mommy’s sex time.”

He blew a raspberry on his stomach. "But you are a cute one, just like your Mommy. We're going to have so much fun this summer, little guy."

"Hand him over, Clayton. I haven't had a chance to hold him yet," Tug said, taking Cade into his arms and sitting on the arm of the chair with her. "You are one lucky baby to have a mother so beautiful and warm, but I'll let you on a little secret. When you're old enough, all three of us will teach you what it takes please a woman."

Cecil reached for her son. "Don't be talking like that. He's just a baby." She pulled Cade out of Tug's arms. "Just follow your heart, little one, and your woman will follow you anywhere," she told her son. "God, it feels so good to have you in my arms. It's like a part of me has come home. You might not have been in my belly, Cade, but I felt every little thing: your growth, movements, even your wants. I'm just sorry it took so long to get to you." A single tear slipped down her face as she put him in the crib, pulling his wet diaper off and changing him.

Rory moved into the room, grumbling. "I don't know what it is with pregnant women, but boy, is Jaycee in a mood."

Cecil laughed. "Rory, imagine having three babies about half the size of Cade in your belly, kicking and moving. And let's not forget the throwing up every morning. You'd be grouchy too." She picked up the baby, sitting back down on the chair.

"Yeah, I guess so, but she sure is protective of you." He leaned down, kissing Cade's head.

"In a way, Jaycee reminds me of my sister. She was so full of life, but always looking over her shoulder for the other shoe to drop. In a way, I do the same thing. I watch the three of you and I keep waiting to wake up and be back in my cell, to find this was all a dream." Cecil glanced down at the baby.

"The last two nights you were gone were the hardest for me. Jaycee and Sheila both stayed with me the last night, because the first night was horrible. The nightmares, waking to an empty bed, believing you wouldn't come back, then finding that letter." She put the bottle down, putting Cade over her shoulder and burping him. "I was thinking when things get settled, I'd like to finish school and take some classes at the local college. Have you decided where we're going to live?" All three men stared at her. "What?" She got up, putting Cade back into the crib, and covering him with the blue blanket.

"We're not going away, Cecil." Clayton wrapped his arms around her as she stared at Cade.

"I know that in my heart, but my mind still can't believe it." She turned in his arms and glanced up at him. "You know what I want to do the

most right now?"

Clayton frowned. "I'm almost afraid to ask, but what do you want to do?"

"I'd like the four of us to go for a run. You know, a midnight run under the stars and the moon. Can we? Just a short one? I haven't run since I was fifteen."

Clayton glanced at Tug. "Well, what do you think? You know this area the best. Is it safe enough?"

Tug nodded. "We should be okay, but only for a little while. Cecil, tomorrow is going to be a very long day for you." He smiled and held out his hand. "Come on, little wolf, let's go running."

Rory covered her with a robe from behind and she laughed. "Um, Rory? This is going to fall as soon as I shift."

"That's fine, but no one downstairs needs to see you naked."

She burst out laughing so hard her side hurt. "Well, if Tug is going to train me as his sub, all of you are going to have to get used to me being naked in front of others. Isn't that right?"

"In the club it's different. Everyone knows what's expected, but out in public, no," Tug snarled.

## Chapter Fifteen

Cecil stared at her reflection in the full-length mirror. She had never felt so sexy. The dress Francesca had made for her hugged her body. It was silky against her skin, and for once Cecil felt she could stand up against any female.

“So, how was your run last night?” Jaycee smiled behind her, combing her hair.

“It was great. We had so much fun playing in the snow. It felt so free. I didn’t want to come back to the house, but the guys insisted, and they were right. By the time we got back to our room, I was so tired I couldn’t move, but then it didn’t help making love two more times afterwards.” She giggled.

Sheila laughed. “Well, you have a lot to make up for. Did you like Pat the babysitter? Was Cade okay when you left him with her?”

Cecil smiled turning around. “Cade loved her. He’ll be fine, even though I hated leaving him for the night so soon. But I can still feel him, so it’s not too bad.”

The women’s lounge room door opened. “Hey, your men are here. You better get out here!” Nancy yelled.

“Well, ladies, are we ready?” Francesca rubbed her hands together. “Because I *so* want to make someone squirm.”

“Just don’t punish him all night, please. I want him to have some fun. And thank you for the dress, Francesca.”

“Oh honey, if anyone deserves this night, it’s you, and I promise I’ll let him off the hook early.” They all walked out the door and down the hallway to the main ball room. The sound of music grew louder as they pushed open the doors and walked into the room. All eyes turned on the five of them.

*Does anyone else feel like we just walked into the lion’s den here, so to speak?* Cecil’s palms grew sweaty as she found Clayton’s heated gaze. Tug’s expression and Rory’s was the same as Clayton’s as they moved towards them.

*Hell, I think we’re going to get eaten.* Jaycee laughed as all three of her men moved around her.

Clayton stepped in front of her, glancing at Francesca. “I take it this is one of your dresses?”

Francesca smiled. “Sure is, big boy. Doesn’t she look good

enough to eat? I've told her for the past hour she has to come to California and model for me. The men would buy everything she wears," she teased.

"She'll be doing no such thing. As it is, I'm tempted to take her back to the house to change," Clayton said.

"I don't think so," Cecil protested. "Didn't you tell me at the club it was okay for me to be naked? Well, I'm not even naked, so don't start. I think I look great and if you don't, too bad. Maybe someone who thinks I'm sexy will want to dance with me."

She pushed her way past her men to only be grabbed around the waist. "You dance with no one but us, Cecil. You are sexy as hell. That's the problem. Every male here is staring at you, wanting to rip that damn dress off," Tug said, biting the muscle between her neck and shoulder.

Turning in his arms, she wrapped her arms around him. "Tug, I've never felt sexy in my life, but rather like a piece of meat or lab rat. Last night was the best night of my life. Can you give me another to remember? Oh, wait. I have something for the three of you." Cecil turned and pushed back through the door. All three of her mates followed.

"You didn't have to follow me." She laughed as they growled.

"You're not going anywhere in that dress alone," Rory said as they pushed in behind her into the women's lounge.

"Umm, guys, this is the *women's* lounge." Grabbing her bag, Cecil pulled out three small boxes and handed each one to her men. "Happy Valentine's Day. It's not much, but I had to get you something since you three have given me so much."

All three frowned at the small boxes. "How did you get us something? You didn't leave the house, did you? You know the danger you're in." Clayton asked.

Cecil frowned. "No, Clayton. I'm not stupid. I made them. You can open them later or just throw them away if you don't want them." Cecil turned and opened the door to leave when Tug once more grabbed her around the waist. "Don't, Tug. You three have snarled at me for the past ten minutes. I've done not a damn thing wrong. I'm done. Get over it or leave me alone. I'm sure your sub Nancy will dance with you."

She moved out of his arms and stormed down the hallway, not caring if they followed or not. *I should have never made those stupid ceramic charms. They look like a child made them.* Cecil pushed open the door to the ballroom once more.

More than three hundred people mingled around the room. Streamers dipped through the ceiling, the band played slow songs, and roses from the greenhouse surrounded the room.

Making her way to the bar, Cecil smiled up the bartender. "Can I

get a glass of white wine, please?” She sighed when someone bumped her hip and she turned to see Jaycee frowning.

“Why are you here at the bar by yourself?” Jaycee glanced around, searching for Cecil’s mates.

Cecil thanked the bartender, taking the glass from him, and shrugged. She took a small sip of wine. “I guess they’re still mad.”

“Did you give them your gifts?” Jaycee grabbed the water Remi handed her from behind.

“Yes, they accused me of leaving the house. So I told them to throw them away or do whatever. I left them standing in the women’s lounge. I want to dance so badly and it looks like I might not get a chance. Have you seen my brother?” Cecil searched the room, spotting Sam dancing and laughing with a woman in his arms.

“Well, damn, so much for that.” She glanced down at her drink before Jaycee grabbed her arm and tugged her to their table.

“Mark, Cecil wants to dance.” Jaycee sat down next to Dane, who grinned up at her.

Mark stood. “It would be my pleasure to dance with you.”

He held out his arm and she smiled, placing her drink on the table.

“Why thank you, kind sir, but you don’t have to, Mark.” Cecil glanced up seeing her mates enter the room, scanning the crowd.

“Come. I want to dance, and a beautiful lady should never be left alone on Valentine’s Day,” he said, glaring at her mates as they made their way towards them.

Jaycee got up and grabbed her arm. “Damn, Cecil, we don’t have time.” She nodded towards the stage and Cecil moaned.

Jaycee grabbed her hand and pulled her away from Mark, moving to their positions. “You ready?”

She nodded. “Let’s do this and get it over with.” Cecil took her spot in the back as Jaycee moved to her spot on the left side of the room, Sheila on the right. Marsha moved up to the microphone, the band stopped playing, and all eyes turned to her.

Marsha smiled. “Ladies and gentlemen, tonight our brave alpha ladies have come together to create a special gift for their men. Please enjoy *Promises of Love*, written by our own Cecil.”

Jaycee and Sheila slowly walked down their chosen paths, singing the chorus lines, the band playing softly in the background. Cecil took a deep breath, glancing once more at her mates, who stood watching and listening.

\* \* \* \*

Tug gripped the small heart in his hand that Cecil had made for all

of them. The words “My heart belongs to my knights” were written on them. He looked at Clayton and a tear slipped down his cheek as they listened to words of the song written for them.

*“I stand alone watching the time slip by, waiting for my knight to end the fight. His strong arms defend my honor, but gently caress me, erasing all that is wrong. Yesterday’s tears of despair streamed down my face, today tears of hope appear. Before you were my dreams, today you are my reality: strong, loving, with promises of tomorrow.”*

Jaycee and Sheila slowly moved up to the stage and turned to stare at

Cecil. Cecil’s head was held high, and the gown flowed around her body with each move she made, never once giving away her nervousness. Slowly she made her way down the aisle, singing. Her voice, that of an angel, wrapped around Tug’s heart like nothing else. He trembled, listening to every word. Men and women alike didn’t take their gazes off of her as the spotlight moved with her every step.

*“The night is lonely, long and filled with pain. I close my eyes, trying to hold the tears at bay, but a single tear escapes, like that of the night rain I hear. Slumber is rare, but when it happens, your whispering campaign of promises of love fills my heart and keep me sane.”*

Cecil climbed up on the stage in between Jaycee and Sheila. They twined their hands together, each of their gazes meeting their mates. Tug sucked in his breath, seeing the tears in her eyes as Jaycee and Sheila once again sang the chorus.

Rory leaned over to him. “Aren’t you glad you called in Tom to take your place tonight?”

Tug nodded, watching and listening as Cecil started the next stanza.

*“The sun is out; I can now see you with clear eyes. The warriors of the past have come back to claim me, to protect me and love me. Your body moves with grace and your voice strong as steel, but when you whisper to me words of love and promises of the night I’m eager to embrace.”*

Mark, Remi, Dane, and Bo all moved up to the stage next to them. Tears flowing down their faces, they watched and waited for the song to end.

Cecil stepped forward, gazing directly at them, and sang.

*“Satin sheets, hands caressing, lips searching, our bodies merging. Candles burning, scents of roses filling the air, you are there. My lips touch yours, out tongues collide in a joyous ride.*



*My pain is just a memory, only raising its head once in a blue moon, but once again you are there with your sword raised high and ready to erase that which threatens me, wrapping me in your cocoon."*

Jaycee and Sheila stepped forward as all three of them sang the last chorus. When the last word was sung and the band stopped playing, everyone in the room stood clapping, whistling, and crying.

Cecil smiled, hugging Jaycee and Sheila. All three of them made their way to the stairs, laughing. "I swear Cecil, your voice sent chills up my spine."

Sheila rubbed her arms as Bo wrapped his arms around her, hugging her. "All of you were amazing. Thank you." He nodded to Cecil.

"Glad you liked it." Cecil's gaze met Tug's and she smiled, looking once more at the ground as all three of them stepped up to her. "I'm sorry I left in such a huff earlier."

Clayton wrapped his arm around her, moving her out of the hall and down to one of the private play rooms. "Not another word, baby. We're all ready to burst at the seams here," he teased, smiling at her.

Tug opened the door, stepped inside, and smiled, glad he had this room prepared for tonight. Cecil gasped, stepping into the room. Love songs played on the CD player, flowers of every kind filled the room, and candles created shadows on the satin sheets of the bed.

Cecil laughed, picking up a single rose and smelling it. "You didn't have to do this, but thank you."

Tug grabbed her hand, pulling her to him. "Yes, we did. Tonight you are our only focus. There will be no disturbances, no arguing, and no shows. Just us, Cecil." He kissed her lips softly.

She cocked her head to the side. "No shows?" Her voice was a whisper as she waited.

"No shows. Someone is taking my place. Dance with me." Tug wrapped his arms tighter around her, and his hands traveled down her back to her ass, squeezing it. "We love you, Cecil, all of us. You will be the only submissive I ever need anymore."

Cecil placed her head down onto his chest. Her tears soaked through his shirt onto his chest as she cried in his arms. Her nails sank into his back. "I won't disappoint you, I promise." She gazed up at him her eyes all red and swollen.

Clayton and Rory approached them, then all three of them opened their hands, showing her their hearts. "We'll always be your knights and we promise to keep your heart safe in our hands," Rory said as they all nodded, tucking their hearts into their pockets.

Tug kneeled down before her as did Clayton and Rory. He took her hand and kissed the palm. "Marry us, Cecil. Bond with us and join our hearts with yours." He pulled out a ring box and opened it.

Her hand shook as she took the box. Tears rolled down her face, her lip trembled as she traced the four small hearts that surrounded the large diamond. "You are my world, you have my heart, and I would be honored to be your lady."

Tug grinned, picking her up and swirling her around the room. He knew they still had many hurdles to face, but together, nothing would stop them. Glancing down at her face, he said, "Ours!"

THE END

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