



DETERMINED *Mate*

HOLLAND BROTHERS, 21st

TONI GRIFFIN

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*THE HOLLAND BROTHERS, BOOK 2*

TONI GRIFFIN

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## DEDICATION:

To Mum and Dad

Thank you for always supporting me in anything I do.  
I couldn't have asked for better parents.

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## CHAPTER 1

Jason Matthews sat in his idling car on the side of the road staring at the sign in front of him. *Welcome to Leyburn. Population 8653.* How had his life managed to turn upside down in so short a time? Jason could still feel the tightness in the muscles of his healing body as he tried not to think about that fateful night not even a week ago. Thanks to his werewolf genetics, most of the bruises and cuts had healed while he was on the road. Jason knew it would take a lot more than the fading of his bruises for him to be able to live any kind of normal life again, and he hoped that coming here was the first step.

Brian had sounded so happy in his new life when he'd talked to him, and Jason hoped his friend might be able to help him heal. Friends since kindergarten, Brian had offered to share his blocks with a shy and uncertain Jason, and they had barely left each others' sides since. Which was why Jason had felt like he'd lost a brother when Brian had been kicked out of their pack. Jason missed his friend and could really use his help at the moment.

Running his shaking hands through his hair, Jason tried to pull himself together enough to make the phone call he knew he had to. Taking a deep breath, he picked up his phone and hit the button for Brian's speed dial. Jason

listened as the phone rang in his ear.

"Jase. How are ya, man?" came the voice of his best friend as soon as the phone connected.

"Bri." Brian couldn't get anything else to come out of his mouth. He knew Brian would start to worry if he didn't pull himself together soon.

"Hey, what's wrong? You okay?" Brian knew him so well. Even after not seeing each other for weeks, he could tell when there was something wrong with Jason. Jason quickly gathered his nerves and plunged on with the reason for his call.

"Yeah, man, I'm okay. Hey, look, is that offer to visit still open?" Jason asked. He knew it was a lot to ask, seeing as Brian was newly mated and all, but he had nowhere else to go and could really use his friend right now.

"Hang on. I'll just make sure it's okay with the guys." Fuck. Jason had forgotten that Brian was living with Marcus and his three brothers. He started to shake thinking about being around so many men. Jason could hear Brian's muffled voice in the background talking to the other guys. What seemed like forever later, Brian came back to him. "Sure, man. When can you be here?"

"Umm. I'm sort of at the town limits now," Jason replied hesitantly.



"What! Shit, Jase, what the hell happened?" Jason knew Brian was going to flip when he found out, and he wasn't really ready to talk about everything that had happened to him yet.

"I'll tell you when I get there." He knew it probably wasn't what Brian wanted to hear, but it was all he could do for now; he was on the verge of tears as it was. It was taking everything he had not to break down.

"Okay," Brian replied.

After Brian had given him the directions on how to get to his and Marcus's place, Jason hung up. Taking deep breaths, he could feel the tears start to gather in the corner of his eyes.

"Shit! Get it together, man. You can break down later." Jason sat there on the side of the road, trying to gather his courage to start the short drive that would take him to his best friend. Five minutes later, he was finally ready to head out. He wiped his face to try and remove all evidence of his tears, but Jason knew he probably wasn't completely successful. Jason clicked his indicator on and pulled out onto the road.

Driving through the centre of town, Jason thought it looked to be a nice little town. He made note of a couple of the shops lining the main road. The local supermarket looked to be a decent size. There was a kids' arcade that

was, at the moment, filled with teenagers, as it was the weekend, and what looked to be a tattoo parlour with the words '*Eternal Ink*' in flowing script across the top of the building.

Jason followed the directions Brian had given, and less than ten minutes later he pulled to a stop outside the address he'd written down. Jason double-checked the paper to make sure he was at the right place. The house was huge, two stories. Jason thought it couldn't have been more than a couple of years old as the place still had that newly built look about it. The walls were painted a light cream colour with a deep blue trim running the length of the roof. There was a dark chestnut door with what looked to be a frosted glass centrepiece, allowing the afternoon light through but still maintaining privacy.

Taking a deep breath to settle his raging nerves, Jason got out of the car. As soon as he closed the door, he looked up and saw Brian standing in the doorway leading into the house. Jason didn't know what came over him, but at the sight of his best friend, he started running towards him. Brian engulfed him in his arms and gave him the hug he so desperately needed. Holding his best friend in his arms and having the familiar scent settle in his body, Jason broke down in tears. He knew Brian was worried about him and would have questions, but he just couldn't seem to pull

himself together at the moment.

Brian tightened his hold on him and whispered in his ear, "Shhh, Jase. It's going to be okay. Whatever the problem is, we can get through it together."

Jason couldn't reply at the moment, because a lump had found its way into his throat and had decided to take up permanent residence there. He just needed to hold his friend. Eventually the sound of twin growls broke through the fog in his brain, and he started to pull back.

Brian looked back towards to house. "Marcus, cut it out. You know I love you. This is my best friend, Jason. Now give it a rest."

"I know you love me," Marcus said, "but could you please loosen your hold on your friend? I don't want to hurt him, and my wolf doesn't like the sight of you in another man's arms."

Jason pulled back and looked at his friend. Brian gave him an apologetic look, and Jason smiled at him to let him know it was okay.

"Jason, this big brute here is my obviously overprotective mate, Marcus."

Jason noticed Marcus had stopped growling almost as soon as he had let go of his friend. He smiled at Brian's description of his mate and turned to say hello when he realised he could still hear someone else growling.

Brian rolled his eyes. "And the even bigger guy behind him is his elder brother and the Leyburn pack Alpha, Alex. Alex, what's your problem?"

When Alex didn't respond, Jason glanced towards the big man and shrank back at the sheer size of him. Jason was not comfortable around big men after what he'd been through, and this guy was huge. Coming in at five foot six, Jason was short by werewolf standards, and anyone over six feet looked huge to him. This guy must have been at least six foot five and was sexy as hell. He had beautiful tanned golden brown skin, short dark wavy hair just long enough to rub your fingers through and deep chocolate-brown eyes. He also had what looked to be a fit, muscular body and must have topped the scales at two fifty. There was a hint of some tribal looking tattoo licking at the edges of his neck on his right side that continued down his arm past his elbow.

He was watching Jason with the sexiest smile gracing his lips. Jason tried to get his emotions under control and took a deep breath. This didn't help at all, as the most stunning scent he'd ever come across hit him. It was wild and masculine with a slight hint of sandalwood. Jason's eyes widened as his cock twitched and realization hit. He drew in a sharp breath then turned and ran.

He was in no shape to have a mate. The only person

he'd been able to bear touching him in the last week was Brian. God, this had been a mistake, coming here was a mistake. What was he going to do now?

"Jason. Stop. Wait. Where are you going?" He could hear Brian yelling at him. He could also hear the thud of someone larger chasing after him. He just hoped he made it to his car, then he would be safe.

"Oh no you don't. You're not getting away from me that easily." Jason heard the words growled behind him just before he was tackled to the ground. Jason had tried fighting last time and it only ended in even more pain, so he curled himself into as small a target as he could and waited for the blows to land. He couldn't help it when he started to cry.

"Hey, I'm not going to hurt you." Alex voice was deep and went right through him. He could hear more running behind him, and suddenly Brian was there, pulling Alex away from him, his voice angry.

"Alex, you need to get off him. What's your problem? Since when do you go tackling people to the ground?"

"He's my mate!"

"What? Are you sure?"

"Yes, I'm sure" Alex growled. "I was almost sure after hearing his voice when he called this morning. Now

that I've met him, I'm positive. Plus his scent is driving me crazy."

"Shit! Well, he's still my friend, and you need to get off him. Something's happened to him. The Jason I know would never have run from his mate. One look at you and he would have been all over you like white on rice. Now move." Alex slowly pulled away and stood up next to his brother. Brian knelt down on the ground next to Jason and gently started to rub his back, trying to calm him down. "Jase. Come on, man. You need to calm down. Take deep breaths. It's okay. No one here will hurt you. I promise."

Jason tried to take a deep breath to calm his racing heart as Brian suggested. In the back of his mind he knew he was safe with Brian, but his body had just reacted. Brian continued to rub his back and, after a minute, Jason was able to calm down enough to talk to his friend.

"I'm sorry," he whispered.

"Not your fault, man. Why don't we go inside and get you settled into your room? You look like you haven't had a decent night's sleep in a while. You can take a nap." Jason really could do with some sleep. He'd hardly slept at all since the attack. He'd even driven through the night last night, just wanting to get to Brian as soon as possible.

"Sleep sounds good," Jason said quietly as Brian helped him up. Jason noticed both Marcus and Alex still

standing there watching what was happening. He felt like such an idiot. Great first impression he'd given. Oh well, not a lot to be done about it now.

Jason slowly made his way inside with Brian's arm wrapped around his shoulders. He didn't pay any attention to the inside of the house as he was still too worked up from freaking out. He was also a little tense with both Marcus and Alex following them into the house. It looked as if Alex had gone to his car and retrieved his bag. He didn't remember asking him to but couldn't make his brain work enough to care.

Brian opened a door and shuffled him into what he assumed was a guest bedroom. Jason made his way directly to the huge bed in the centre of the room, pulled the covers back then sat on the edge of the bed. He couldn't work out what he was supposed to do now. His brain felt like it was wrapped in fog. Brian knelt down in front of him and took his shoes off before standing and gently pushing him back so he was lying down. The covers were pulled up and Brian kissed his forehead before taking a step back.

"Try and get some sleep, okay, Jase? We can talk later." Jason just nodded slowly as he curled himself into a ball and closed his eyes. It didn't take very long before his exhaustion caught up with him and he drifted off into what he hoped would be a dreamless sleep.

\* \* \* \*

Alex waited until Brian and Marcus quietly slipped out of the room. Marcus lightly squeezed Alex's shoulder on the way out, trying to convey his support as he stood and watched his mate succumb to exhaustion. Ever since hearing that sweet, hesitant voice through the phone earlier, Alex had suspected the man was his mate. It had taken just one look at the little man in Brian's arms and he knew he was a goner. Alex didn't like the idea of his mate in another man's arms and couldn't have stopped the growl from coming out if he'd wanted to, but even he could tell something bad had happened to him recently. All Alex wanted to do was take the little man in his arms and ease all his hurts. Then rip to shreds those who had hurt him.

Jason's piercing blue eyes showed a depth of hurt that nearly broke Alex's heart, not to mention the fact they were still red-rimmed, attesting to the fact his mate had been crying recently. Looking over his mate, Alex couldn't believe how small he was. He looked so delicate, but Alex was sure under all the hurt was a spitfire that could handle being mated to a possessive Alpha like him.

Alex knew he would be possessive. Even having just met Jason, he already didn't want any other man near him, especially until he could claim him as his own. His wolf was riding him hard to just bite his mate and claim



him. Alex was fighting his wolf just as hard because he knew he would have to give Jason time to heal after what had happened to him.

Alex quietly placed his mate's bags in the corner and stepped up to the side of the bed. Bending down, he gently ran a hand through his man's beautiful blond hair. Jason whimpered quietly in his sleep at the touch.

"Please let me in," Alex whispered. "I know you've been through something horrible, but please let me try and help you through this. I would never hurt you." Alex gently kissed Jason's forehead. The sweet, tangy scent of his mate went through his body, and Alex was forced to bite back a moan as desire raced through his system and his cock went hard in a matter of seconds.

Alex turned and quietly left Jason's room, closing the door gently behind him. Alex stopped and let his head fall back against the closed door. Taking a deep breath, Alex rubbed his hands over his face then attempted to get his racing emotions under control. He needed to talk to Brian and find out if he knew what Jason had been through. He didn't think so, but Alex needed to be doing something, and that was the only thing he could think of at the moment.

Alex willed his still hard cock to shrink so it wasn't as painful. Taking another breath, he pulled away from the

door and headed down the hallway following the sounds of his brothers' voices. Alex found all three of his brothers and Brian sitting in the family room. Brian was curled in his brother's lap, obviously upset at what had happened earlier. Alex walked over to the unoccupied recliner and sat. Leaning forward, he rested his elbows on his knees and rubbed his hands over his face again.

"Brian?" Brian looked up from where he had his head buried in Marcus's neck and Alex could see tear streaks on Brian's cheeks.

"I don't know, Alex. God, what has he been though?" Alex could tell that Brian was not only telling the truth but also hurting as much as he was at Jason's behaviour this morning. Marcus was gently rubbing Brian's back, trying to soothe his mate.

"Shit. I was kind of hoping you could shed some light on why my mate is so terrified of me. I take it this is a recent development?" Alex sat back and ran his hands through his hair in frustration.

"Last time I spoke with him, everything was fine. I think he was copping some shit from his folks about me being gay, but apart from that, he seemed normal. We joked and had a nice long talk. Whatever has happened has been within the last week. I definitely think he's going to need our support with whatever he's dealing with."

Alex nodded his agreement. Jason was his mate, and he would help him anyway he could. He just had to hope that Jason would let him.

"I hope you know you can count on us as well if Jason needs anything." Simon spoke quietly into the silence. Rick nodded his agreement.

"Thanks, guys. I think we're just going to have to take it a day at a time and hope that Jason can learn to trust us as much as he does Brian." Alex let the silence descend again as his thoughts swirled in his head. He realised he was going to have to take things slow with his mate, earn his trust, and get to know the young man. It was obvious Jason wasn't up to any type of physical relationship at the moment. Hopefully that would change in time, but he wouldn't push no matter how hard his wolf rode him.

The sound of a scream, followed by sobbing, rent the air. Alex sensed immediately that it came from the guest room and was out of his seat and running before anyone else even thought to move. Shoving the door open, Alex saw his mate curled in the foetal position in the centre of the bed with his eyes closed tight. Great racking sobs shook his body, and the sight nearly broke Alex. Alex quickly settled on the side of the bed and gently rubbed his hands down Jason's back.

"Shhh, sweetheart. It's just a dream. You're safe

now. No one here will hurt you." Alex tried to soothe his mate with his voice as his hands kept rubbing up and down his back. Jason was still asleep, caught in the midst of god-only-knew-what nightmare. Slowly, the tightness around his eyes eased a little as Alex kept rubbing and murmuring to him.

Alex looked up to see Brian clinging to Marcus in the doorway, a look of utter helplessness on his face. It took some time, but eventually, Jason uncurled his body from the position Alex had found him in and his breathing seemed to even out. Alex contemplated lying down with his mate to continue to soothe him in his sleep but thought better of it when he remembered Jason's reaction to him earlier and how scared he'd been.

Jason had kicked off the blanket during his troubled sleep, so Alex picked it up from the foot of the bed and gently laid it over his mate. After placing a light kiss to Jason's forehead, he quietly left the room. Alex didn't say anything to anyone as he stalked through the house. He had to work out some of the frustration coursing through his body. The best way was to go for a run as a wolf, but he didn't want to leave his mate at the moment so he decided to go downstairs to the gym they'd set up in the basement and work it out that way instead.

## CHAPTER 2

Jason awoke slowly, not recognizing the room he was in. He blinked a couple of times to try and clear his eyes so he could see the room properly. Looking around, he noticed the room was very spacious. There were two doors. He assumed one led to either a closet or bathroom, and the other would hopefully lead him out to wherever the hell he was. The bed he lay in was large and made of thick pieces of wood stained a dark chestnut brown. The sheets were a rich deep blue, and Jason felt about as comfortable as he thought possible at the moment. Looking at the clock on the bedside table, Jason realized it was getting on to late afternoon and he'd slept most of the day away. He hadn't slept so long in nearly a week.

Hearing voices floating into his room, Jason started to remember some of the events from earlier that day. God, Brian must think he'd lost his mind. Jason drew in a sharp breath as another thought came to him. Had he really met his mate and then run away from him? Jason moaned as he remembered Alex tackling him to the ground, trying to stop him from leaving.

Jason didn't know if he could deal with finding his mate at the moment. Why did he have to meet him *now*?

Why couldn't this have happened a week ago, then he never would have been at that stupid bloody club. Jason closed his eyes and quickly shook his head. He did not want to think about that night right now. Now he had to go and find Brian and try to explain his actions without going into too much detail.

Climbing out of bed, he padded barefoot across the floor. Gently opening one door so he didn't alert anyone to the fact that he was awake, Jason found himself looking into a hallway. The rich aroma of roasting meat filled the air, and Jason figured that Brian would be in the kitchen cooking; he knew the joy Brian found in cooking for everyone.

Sniffing the air again, Jason turned right out of his room and followed the tantalising smell to the kitchen. Leaning his hip against the doorjamb, he had to smile at the sight his best friend made. Shirtless, with a cloth stuffed into the back pocket of his jeans, Brian swayed his hips as he sang along to the music softly playing in the background while he peeled vegetables for dinner. Jason let out a little chuckle as Brian failed miserably to stay in tune with the music.

Brian looked up at him at the sound of his chuckle and gave him the biggest smile. God, he'd missed his friend. Jason slowly walked into the kitchen and embraced

his friend again before sitting at the table so he could continue to watch Brian work.

"You want a drink?" Brian asked him. Jason knew it wasn't the real question he wanted to ask but was grateful for the small reprieve.

"Yeah, that would be great. Thanks. Whatever's going is fine." Jason watched as Brian poured him a glass of iced tea and set it on the table in front of him.

"You know I'm here for you if you ever need to talk, right?" Jason could hear the uncertainty in Brian's voice.

"Yeah, I know. I'm just not sure I'm ready to talk about it yet." He tried to smile at Brian to let him know he was okay, but he didn't think he pulled it off.

"You know, Alex is shitting kittens at the moment." They both chuckled a little at mental image Brian's statement had conjured.

"What am I going to do about that, Bri? I so did not expect to find my mate here. I just needed some place to get away for a while, you know? I need to sort my life out and try and move on. I know I'm not real comfortable around large men at the moment. I guess I forgot how big you told me Marcus and his brothers were." Jason grimaced at the thought of the mess he was in.

"I don't know that you have to do anything. Alex is

a great guy and a fantastic Alpha. He's kind and considerate, and he cares for all of his pack, no matter what. He won't push you into anything you're not ready for."

Jason's mind raced as he thought about what Brian had said. "You know they kicked me out just like they did you," he stated quietly.

Brian looked up from what he was cutting. Putting the knife down, he slowly made his way to the table. He sat in the chair facing Jason's and took Jason's hands in his. "I thought it might have been a possibility, but I didn't know for certain." Brian gave his hands a small squeeze in support.

"Yeah. Turned out that it didn't matter to the folks what had happened to me. As soon as they found out which club I'd been seen in, they did the same as your parents and went to the Alpha. They're all a bunch of narrow-minded assholes anyway. They disowned me, but at least they let me gather my things before asking me to vacate their property. I was lucky and managed to grab a few of your things last week before they were all thrown away. I had them stashed in my room. They should still be in the car."

"Thanks, man. You're better off without them anyway. I can't tell you how much happier I am here, happier than I ever was at home. The only thing missing



was you, and you're here now." Brian smiled at him then stood to return to his veggies.

Jason heard a noise behind him and turned, only to draw in a quick breath when he saw Alex standing in the doorway with his arms crossed over that sexy-as-hell chest and a look on his face Jason couldn't completely read. He looked angry and sad at the same time. Alex noticed Jason watching him, and his expression changed. A smile curved up and graced that perfect mouth.

Alex slowly made his way into the kitchen and seated himself at the table. The careful movements made it obvious he was trying not to spook Jason. Jason hesitantly returned his smile. "I didn't know you had woken. Did you have a nice sleep?"

"The smell of Brian's cooking drew me here. I'm sorry, but I'm not real comfortable around large strangers at the moment," Jason mumbled as he looked down at the tabletop. He noticed the condensation from his glass had made a small puddle of water on the table and started to wipe it away. Alex reached for his hand, but Jason pulled away quickly. "Sorry," he mumbled again, still not looking up.

"Jason, look at me please."

Jason didn't want to but knew he should. Alex was the local Alpha, with the power to force him to leave his

territory. Jason didn't think he would, but he couldn't take that chance as he had nowhere else to go. Jason slowly looked up into Alex's beautiful deep brown eyes.

"You are safe here. No one will hurt you. You are my mate, and I will protect you with everything I have. No one will ever lay a hand on you again unless you give your permission. Not even me. You can stay as long as you need or want. As my mate, I hope that will be a very long time." Jason had to smile at the last statement Alex made. He nodded to acknowledge his understanding.

"Thank you. I hadn't really thought any further than getting to Brian. I just needed my friend so badly. I never thought I'd meet my mate. I know I'm not what you would have chosen, just please give me some time."

"What do you mean 'not what I would have chosen'? You're sexy as hell, and I bet you're usually a little spitfire who gets into more trouble than is good for you. I know you're loyal to your friends from everything Brian has told me, and they love you. I also know you've been hurt. I just hope that you can trust me enough one day to tell me what you've been through. But until then, we'll just get to know one another. I promise not to push you into anything you're not ready for."

Jason smiled at Alex. He had a lot to think about and try to wrap his mind around. A comfortable silence

descended on them. The silence lasted nearly ten minutes until they were interrupted by Marcus and two men who could only be his two other brothers. Jason tried his hardest not to flinch at the sight of all the large men in the room, but he didn't think he completely pulled it off as Alex got up and moved to the chair next to his. Alex slowly reached forward and took Jason's small hand in his rather large one. Alex gently squeezed his hand, making him think that Alex maybe understood what he was feeling at the moment. The next words from Alex confirmed it for him.

"Try to relax. Remember what I said. You're safe now. Would you like me to introduce you to them?" Jason gave Alex a small nod and took a deep breath.

"Guys, this is Brian's best friend and my mate, Jason Matthews. Jason, I would like you to meet my youngest brothers, Simon and Patrick, but everyone calls Patrick Rick." Alex pointed to each of them as he introduced them to him so he would know who was who.

It was easy to tell they were all brothers. Good genes must run in the family. They all seemed to have that sinfully sexy smile, chiselled features, and messy, dark brown hair that looked like they'd just gotten out of bed. They were all over six feet tall as well. Looking at the four brothers in the kitchen, Jason thought Rick might be the shortest. He seemed to be only an inch or so above the six-

foot mark. Jason gave the brothers a small smile and tried not to shrink back into his chair.

"Hey, man, nice to meet you," Rick said to him. Jason nodded his reply.

"Welcome. Mum's going to go gaga over you. She already adores Brian." Jason looked up at his friend as the comment made by Simon sunk in. Their parents didn't have a problem with them being gay? Jason wondered what it would be like to be loved unconditionally no matter who you loved.

Brian nodded at his silent question. "Maryanne and Joe are fantastic. Marcus was the last to come out of the closet, and that was only when he introduced me to them. They love their boys and have opened their arms to me as well. I think the only thing they're disappointed in is that fact that Maryanne really wanted some grandcubs to spoil." His friend smiled at him.

"Of course they welcomed you, baby. Who wouldn't love you?" Marcus growled at his mate as he walked up behind him and wrapped his arms around Brian. Jason could see Brian relax completely into his mate's arms as Marcus started to nuzzle at his neck.

That's what I want, Jason thought to himself. His smile faded as he thought about the fact that, even though he wanted it, he didn't know if he would be able to handle

it.

Jason spoke before he could really think about what he was saying. "Being gay doesn't exclude us from being parents. There are so many options these days. You could get a surrogate or choose one of the many children already in the world who are in need of a loving home. You can adopt or even become a foster parent." Everyone was looking at him by the time he finished his speech. He shrank back a little at having so many eyes on him.

"Sweetheart," Alex murmured. Jason sucked in his breath and looked at Alex. He wasn't used to the endearment, but he had to admit it sounded nice coming from Alex. "Did you want to have children one day?"

Jason didn't know what to say to that. He had always imagined that one day he would be a father. Even when he figured out he was gay that thought never changed. He nodded silently in reply to Alex's question. Alex took his hand again and squeezed it gently.

"It's certainly something for us to talk about later. I have to tell you though, I'm definitely not opposed to the idea of a little one running around with your beautiful eyes and that smile of yours. On second thought, maybe not. They would have me wrapped around their little fingers in a matter of seconds."

Jason was so happy that Alex hadn't just dismissed

his wishes that he quickly leaned forward and lightly kissed the man on the cheek before sitting back in his chair.

The look of shock that crossed Alex face as he realised what Jason had done quickly softened into something he couldn't quite read. Jason gave him his most impish smile. It felt good to flirt again. He didn't know if he was ready for anything else, but he knew in his heart that Alex would never hurt him.

"You're going to be the death of me, aren't you?" Alex leaned forward and growled in his ear. The sound travelled all the way through his body until it reached his cock where it seemed to take up residence. Jason gasped, then moaned as his cock hardened quickly. The sound of someone clearing his throat made its way through the fog in his head and he turned to see Brian grinning at him. He grinned back at his friend.

"Dinner is almost ready. You boys want to set the table?" There was a flurry of movement as everyone jumped up and started gathering items to help Brian set the table for dinner. In a matter of minutes, they were all seated around the table in the dining room while Brian pulled a huge standing rib roast out of the oven. Jason sat back and watched the dynamics of the group around him. Alex, being the head of the family, stood to carve the roast while everyone else passed around the veggies and dished up

what they wanted. Jason hadn't had much of an appetite lately, even though most werewolves ate larger portions and more regularly than humans did.

"Sweetheart?" Jason looked up to see a question in Alex's eyes.

"I've not really been that hungry lately." Jason shrugged.

"Come on, baby, you have to eat something to keep up your strength. Plus Brian's a great cook and will get offended if you don't eat the welcome dinner he cooked you." Alex started to pile food on Jason's plate as Jason looked at Brian. He knew Brian was a great cook as they had been friends for going on twenty years. He also knew Brian wouldn't get offended by him not eating, but he would eat what he could to keep Alex happy.

Dinner passed in relative silence as everyone was too busy eating to talk. Jason did eat, not nearly as much as everyone else, but what he did have was delicious. Brian stood once everyone was finished and started to clear the table and Jason got up to help as well.

"Why don't you guys go in the family room and put a movie on? Jase and I will be there when we're finished in here." Brian leaned down and kissed Marcus before taking the dirty dishes into the kitchen. Jason liked the look of that and quickly kissed Alex on the cheek again before

scurrying into the kitchen behind Brian. He could hear Alex's chuckle as the guy walked through the door leading into the rest of the house.

"How're you doing, Jase?" Brian quietly asked him as he started to wash the dishes. Jason picked up a towel to dry with as he thought about the question.

"I'm doing okay I think. I'm not sure I'm ready to jump into a relationship with Alex yet, but I'm willing to take things slowly and see where this goes. He's my mate, after all, and have you seen him? God, was there something in the water when their mother was pregnant or what?" Brian broke into laughter at his question.

"You won't believe this, but I said exactly the same thing. Only I said it in front of all the guys." Brian smiled and nudged his shoulder into his. They continued chatting while they cleaned the kitchen and put away all the dishes. When they were done, they wandered into the family room. "So what did you decide on? Romance, comedy, or drama?" Brian asked as he walked over and plopped right down in his mate's lap as Marcus sat in one of the recliners.

"Action," was the resounding response from everyone. Jason noticed Brian roll his eyes at the movie choice but watched as a smile graced his face and he snuggled back into Marcus's hold. Jason stood there, gently nibbling on his bottom lip as he looked around the room



wondering where he should sit. Rick and Simon were seated next to each other on one of the sofas, and Alex was sitting on the other. He could either take the recliner for himself or take a chance and sit beside Alex. He chose Alex.

The smile Alex gave him when he sat down was worth it. Jason took Alex's hand when it was offered and sat back to enjoy the movie. It was your typical action movie with guns, explosions, and a kick-ass car chase. Alex would lift his hand every now and then and lightly kiss the back of it. Jason smiled whenever he did this.

For the first time that week, Jason felt his body relax as he finally started to believe that he might be safe. He leaned against Alex's shoulder and watched the movie, barely noticing when his eyes closed as his body decided it was safe to sleep.

Gentle arms around Jason's body lifted him up then settled him against a warm, hard chest. The masculine scent mixed with a hint of sandalwood tried to break through into his sleep-addled brain, and Jason moaned. "Shhh, sweetheart, go back to sleep. I'm just taking you to bed." Jason quieted down and snuggled into the warm chest and lightly kissed the underside of Alex chin.

The arms around him tightened slightly then relaxed again. Jason heard a door opening then he was gently laid

down on a bed and covered with a heavy blanket. Jason slowly opened his eyes as he felt Alex's hand running through his hair. He watched as Alex leaned down and softly kissed him.

Pulling back, Alex continued to caress his hair. "Go back to sleep, sweetheart. I'll see you in the morning. If you need me at all during the night, I'm at the top of the stairs, first door on your left."

Jason nodded before closing his heavy eyes and briefly feeling Alex's soft lips pressed against his again. As sleep pulled Jason back down, he heard the door quietly close as Alex left the room.

## CHAPTER 3

Alex slowly made his way upstairs after tucking Jason into bed. He hated the thought of his mate being under the same roof and not being able to hold him while they slept. Alex understood that he needed to give Jason time, but his wolf didn't. All he understood was he'd had his mate in his arms and let him go. Alex clenched his teeth as he tried to suppress his wolf. Walking into his room, he quickly shucked his clothes before making his way to the bathroom.

Stepping into the shower, Alex let the hot water run over his keyed up body. Alex placed his hands on the tiles and dropped his head. The hot water was soothing on his skin as it ran down his back, calming the muscles it passed. Alex just stood there for a time. His body slowly relaxed, the water doing its job and easing away all but one of his tense muscles. Alex picked up the soap and started to wash himself. Running his hands over his body, Alex moaned and, reaching down, took his hard cock in hand and gently stroked from base to tip. Running his finger over the slit at the head of his cock, Alex gathered the pre-cum at the tip on his fingers then took a firmer grip around the base of his shaft.

Alex's thoughts were on his sexy little mate as he continued to stroke his cock. Remembering the feeling of finally having his mate in his arms sent a bolt of pure pleasure straight to his balls. Alex licked his lips in the hope that he would still be able to taste his mate and groaned at the thought of those plush soft lips pressed against his. Reaching his other hand down, he gently squeezed his balls and thought about what it would feel like to have those wonderful lips wrapped around his cock, to be thrusting into his mate's warm, willing mouth.

"God, Jason." Alex moaned as the thought of Jason caused him to erupt, his cum shooting out of his cock to paint his stomach and the shower tiles with his release. Giving his body a minute to recover from one of the most intense orgasms of his life, Alex slowly completed his shower and dried himself.

Alex crawled into bed, but even after his orgasm he was too keyed up to sleep. Pulling out his sketchpad and a pencil, Alex started working on some ideas for new tattoo designs. Alex would often sit and draw for hours on end and, completely losing himself in his drawings, often lost track of time. He was startled out of his concentration when there was a light tapping on the door before it slowly opened.

Jason stood in the doorway, still dressed in the shirt

and shorts he'd worn when Alex tucked him into bed earlier. Alex thought he looked like he was ready to bolt back the way he had come.

"Hey, sweetheart. Everything okay?" Alex asked as he closed his pad and placed it on the floor beside the bed, along with his pencil. He looked at the alarm clock briefly, noting that it was just after one in the morning. Shit. He really shouldn't have still been awake.

"Umm." Jason was looking down at his feet but Alex could still see him biting his bottom lip. Alex had to strain to hear what Jason said next. He was so quiet that, even with his superior hearing, Alex had trouble. "I had another nightmare. Can I sleep in here with you? I don't think I'm up to sex, but I was just hoping that maybe you could hold me. I kinda feel safe with you."

Alex's insides were doing cartwheels. Jason felt safe with him already. He couldn't stop the huge grin from spreading across his face. "Whatever you need, sweetheart. All you ever have to do is ask and I'll give you anything within my power." Alex looked down at the sheet he had draped across his lap and realised Jason probably wasn't up to sleeping with him completely naked. "I usually sleep naked. Would you feel more comfortable if I put on some boxers?" Alex smiled again at the small nod he received in reply to his offer.

Climbing out of bed, he walked to the chest of drawers that sat near his large window. He could feel Jason's eyes following him the entire way, tracing over the tattoos he could see from behind. Slipping on a pair of boxers, Alex then made his way over to Jason and held out his hand. Jason looked at his hand for a moment before lifting his gaze from the tattoo Alex had on his chest to look him in the eye. Jason gave him a small smile as he placed his hand within Alex's. Alex closed the door before leading Jason back to his bed. Pulling the covers back farther, Alex slid in then gently pulled Jason down beside him. Alex turned his bedside light out and wrapped his arm around his mate.

Alex couldn't believe his mate was finally in his arms. The feel of his mate against his bare chest and the spicy-sweet scent of Jason caused Alex's cock to harden. Jason whimpered and tried to pull away at the feel of Alex's cock pressed against his ass.

"Shh, sweetheart. My body is just reacting to you being so close to me. You feel so good in my arms. We won't do anything until you think you're ready. Okay?" Jason nodded and calmed back down, pulling Alex's arms tighter around his chest. Alex sighed and kissed the back of Jason's neck.

"Sleep, sweetheart. I'll be here if you need me

during the night." The reassurance seemed to be all Jason needed as his breathing evened out and he fell asleep. Alex relaxed his body, and ignoring the hard-on snuggled against his mate's ass, he too fell asleep.

\* \* \* \*

Alex was woken several times throughout the night by Jason's whimpers and moans. During these times Alex spoke quietly to Jason, trying to soothe him while rubbing his hand over his chest. Jason would calm almost immediately at the sound of Alex's voice and drift back into what Alex hoped was a dreamless sleep.

When the alarm finally sounded the next morning, Alex wasn't sure exactly how much sleep he had gotten, but having Jason in his arms was well worth the sleepless night. Alex clicked the alarm off and quietly slipped out of bed to take a shower and get ready for work, leaving Jason to catch a few more minutes of sleep.

Walking out of the bathroom twenty minutes later, Alex had a towel wrapped around his waist. He squatted down beside the bed and gently kissed Jason as he ran his hands through his soft blond hair. "Sweetheart." Jason looked so cute when he was all sleepy and groggy-looking.

"Huh?" Jason mumbled.

"Hey, baby. Did you want to get up and have breakfast with us or did you want to try and get some more sleep? Unfortunately I have to work today, but I'll be back for lunch." Alex smiled at the look of confusion on Jason's face as he tried to take in everything Alex had said. It didn't look like his mate was a morning person.

"Umm, I think I'd like to have breakfast with you. Can I have a shower first? I feel revolting, and I must stink."

Alex smiled. "I love the way you smell but go ahead and have a shower, sweetheart. I'll meet you downstairs when you're finished." Alex leaned in and kissed Jason again. This time, however, Jason tentatively kissed back. Alex gently swiped his tongue across Jason's bottom lip, and Jason opened his mouth. Alex groaned at the taste of his mate. The kiss went from gentle to passionate in a matter of seconds, before he felt Jason pushing at his chest to try and break the kiss. They were both breathing hard as Alex looked down at his mate.

"I'm sorry," Jason mumbled.

"Nothing to be sorry for, sweetheart. That was wonderful, but I can wait for anything more." Jason just nodded and swept the covers back to get out of bed. Alex stood and walked to his closet to dress for his day at work. Once he was dressed in his usual garb of jeans, tight black



t-shirt, and boots, he made his way downstairs.

When Alex walked into the kitchen he went straight to the coffee pot. After pouring himself a cup, he headed to the dining room where his brothers and Brian were already seated.

"Alex," Brian said, "have you seen Jason this morning? I went to check on him when I came down, but he wasn't in his room."

Alex smiled as he thought about his mate upstairs in his room. At this point in time probably naked in his shower. His smile very nearly turned into a moan.

"Yeah. He's taking a shower. He had a rough night."

"And how would you know what sort of night he had?" Rick asked, teasing him.

"He would know because I spent the night in his room." The quiet answer came from behind them. Alex turned to see Jason standing in the doorway, his cheeks flaming from his admission. His hair was still damp and he was wearing one of Alex's shirts, which looked to be about four sizes too big for him.

The shirt hung nearly to his knees, covering whatever Jason was wearing underneath it as well. At least Alex hoped he was wearing something else under it. Alex had to bite back a growl at the thought of Jason nearly naked in the presence of so many other men. He stood and

walked towards his man.

"I hope you don't mind but I really didn't want to put my dirty clothes back on," Jason said quietly as his cheeks turned a light shade of pink.

"Sorry, sweetheart. I should have thought and gotten you your clothes. But then again, I think I like you in my clothes." Alex's gaze roamed over his little mate once more before wrapping his arms around Jason and pulling him in against his chest. Alex heard a small squeak come from Jason before he crashed his lips down on Jason's and took possession of his mouth. Alex ran his hands down Jason's back. Grabbing hold of the t-shirt, he lifted the edge and felt underneath. Alex slowly pulled back from the kiss. He looked down at Jason. His lips were swollen, and eyes were a little glassy. With a smile on his face, Alex placed a quick peck on Jason's lips before taking his hand and walking back to the table.

"Sorry, sweetheart, but I had to check."

"Check what?" Jason looked at him with a confused frown on his face.

"What you were wearing under my shirt. You look sexy as hell in my shirt, by the way," Alex said, grinning. Jason's cheeks went an even darker shade of red, and Alex decided he loved that look on Jason.

Alex seated Jason at the table in the chair that he'd

previously occupied. "Coffee, sweetheart?" Alex asked as he headed into the kitchen.

"No, thank you. I can't stand the stuff. Just some juice if you have it, please."

Shocked, Alex turned to look at his mate. His brothers were all evidently thinking the same as him. "How do you not like coffee? I thought everyone drank it."

"I just never cared for it. I think the different coffees available look really pretty and delicious, but I just can't stand the taste. Don't like the smell much either. I'm more of a water or juice person."

Alex shrugged and went into the kitchen. He set about pouring his mate a glass of juice then returned to the dining room and set it on the table in front of him. He placed a kiss on Jason's head before heading back to the kitchen to get them something to eat.

A half hour later, Alex couldn't put off leaving for work any longer. He had customers who booked months ago for the opportunity to get a tattoo by him. The other two artists Alex employed, Suzie and Brent, were busy as well but not nearly as booked so far in advance as he was.

"I've got to get to work, sweetheart. I'll be back for lunch around one. Brian has the day off today, so why don't the two of you keep each other company?" Jason smiled at him and leaned over for a goodbye kiss. The kiss was soft

and sweet. Alex pulled back soon after it started; he knew if he let it go on any longer, he was going to be riding with a hard-on, and that wasn't fun. Jason had a wicked glint in his eyes as he pulled back, his lips curving up into a sexy smile.

"Alex..."

"Yeah, sweetheart?"

"Umm... What is it you do for a living?"

Alex smiled. "I'm a tattoo artist. I own my own shop, Eternal Ink. It's on the main drag in town. I started it about five years ago, and so far, business seems to be going well."

"Hey, I saw that place on my way in yesterday. Wow, you own that?"

Alex nodded. "Yep, and that's why I should really get going. I have appointments I'm going to be late for if I hang around you any longer."

"Well, come on then, big guy. I'll walk you out." Jason stood and held his hand out for Alex. Taking Jason's hand, Alex headed in the direction of the garage. Alex turned the lights on and opened the garage door before walking over to the bench that held his helmet and black leather riding jacket. He heard Jason whistle behind him and turned to see Jason walking towards his bike.

"Please tell me you'll take me for a ride on this

beauty." Alex chuckled as he shrugged into his jacket. Grabbing his helmet, he walked over to Jason and looked at his bike. He'd bought himself the 2010 Indian Chief Classic in thunder black as a birthday present earlier in the year. His business was doing well, and it had been time to trade in his old bike so he thought, why not? Alex loved his bike. He rode it all the time apart from when they went anywhere as a family. Then he just jumped in one of his brothers' cars.

Alex was pleased that Jason seemed to like bikes as he really didn't want to have to give his up. Wrapping his arms around Jason, he whispered in his ear, "How about tonight? We'll go for a nice long ride then we can go for a nice long run." Jason shivered in his arms as a low moan escaped from between his lips.

"Sounds wonderful." Jason then moved his head until he was right in front of Alex and raised his lips for a kiss. Alex growled and deepened the kiss almost immediately. The thought of riding his bike with his mate behind him gave him an instant erection. Grabbing hold of Jason's hips, Alex pulled him forward until their bodies crashed together. Alex thrust his tongue in Jason's mouth, demanding he open for him.

Alex could still taste the juice Jason drank with breakfast. Gentling his kiss, Alex slowly pulled away.

Jason was panting hard when they finally stopped kissing. Jason's lips were wet and swollen, and Alex thought they had never looked better. Alex got his body under control so he didn't bend Jason over and take him right there in the garage before he was ready.

Stepping back, Alex turned and threw his leg over his bike. Looking once again at Jason, Alex smiled. "I'll see you at lunch, sweetheart." Alex started his bike and the low, deep rumble filled the garage. He pulled his helmet into place, and the bike roared as Alex headed out for what he guessed was going to be a long morning at work.

## CHAPTER 4

Jason sighed as he turned from the garage to head back into the house. He passed Marcus, Rick, and Simon on his way, as they were all headed out for the day as well. Wishing them all goodbye, he made his way into the kitchen and found Brian busy at the sink doing the dishes again.

"Need a hand?"

"That would be great, thanks." Brian passed him a towel to dry the dishes. "The guys are totally hopeless. They used to have Maryanne come round twice a week to clean up after them. I told her not to worry about it now. I'm only working part time at the moment so I need something to fill in the rest of my days."

Jason laughed at that, and they worked quietly together until the kitchen was restored to its original condition.

"So, what do you want to do now? Watch some TV or talk, or we could watch a movie or talk, maybe read a book and talk, or we could even go for a walk and explore the town together and talk at the same time? What's it going to be?" Brian grinned at him from where he stood leaning against the sink.

God, Jason couldn't believe how much he'd missed his friend. Jason knew Brian would eventually weasel the details out of him about what he'd been through. Just like Brian would know that Jason would need to get it out, and he wouldn't cringe away when Jason broke down and cried.

Suddenly overwhelmed with love for his friend, Jason wrapped his arms around Brian and hugged him tight. Jason rested his head on Brian's shoulder and just held him. Brian's arms wrapped around his back and squeezed him tight.

"Thank you," Jason choked out around the lump in his throat.

"Anytime you need me, you know I'll be there for you," Brian replied quietly. They stayed like that in each other's arms for a while longer before they both pulled back and looked each other in the eyes. They both broke into similar cheeky grins.

"Why don't we watch a movie first? Something not quite so testosterone-filled as the one last night, seeing as the big guys aren't here. We can have the heart-to-heart a little later. I don't think I'm quite ready for it yet." Brian nodded his acceptance of the plans, and they made their way into the family room.

They managed to find a movie they both agreed on, even though there wasn't a great deal to chose from that



wasn't action. Brian and Jason both agreed that was going to have to change. They would try to broaden their mates' horizons one movie at a time. Brian settled on one large leather sofa, and Jason took the other. When Jason looked over at Brian, he seemed to have a cheeky look about him.

"What are you thinking over there?" Jason watched his friend's cheeks turn a light shade of pink.

"Nothing. Let's watch the movie." Brian giggled as he nodded towards the television that was showing the start of their movie.

"I don't think so. Come on. What were you thinking about?"

Sighing, rather dramatically Jason thought, Brian let him know his thoughts. "Marcus and I got busted by Alex and Rick right here," Brian giggled again.

"What?" Jason sat up and looked at his best friend. That hadn't been what he was expecting to hear. "You were caught having sex right there on that couch?" Jason couldn't stop the laugh that burst from his lips. God, how embarrassing that must have been!

"Well, we weren't exactly having sex. We'd just finished when they walked in the door. But we were still, umm, connected, if you know what I mean." Brian's blush deepened, but he chuckled quietly at the situation. "Marcus came home for lunch the day after we mated, and, well...

you get the picture."

"Remind me never to sit on that couch." Brian snickered at his comment, and they settled down to watch their movie. After the movie finished, Brian helped Jason unpack his things and empty out the contents of his car. Jason had managed to save a few of Brian's possessions prior to them being thrown away by his parents. Jason didn't think Brian cared too much about his clothes, they were easy to replace, but things like his photo albums from his childhood and some books that Jason knew meant a lot to Brian weren't so easily forgotten. Jason even managed to grab Brian's iPod and laptop.

Jason was glad he'd been able to give the items that meant the most to Brian back to his friend. Jason was lucky that when his parents had disowned him they'd at least allowed him to pack his stuff prior to leaving the premises.

After Jason had put away the last of his possessions, he walked into the kitchen to see Brian with his computer on the dining table and his phone plugged in to it. Smiling to himself, he went to the fridge and began pulling items out to start making lunch for everyone.

Twenty minutes later, Alex walked in the door, and Jason's heart started beating faster at the mere sight of the drop-dead gorgeous man. He couldn't help the smile that broke over his face as Alex walked up to him and enfolded

him in those strong muscular arms and pulled him against his warm chest.

"Hey, sweetheart, you having a good day?" Alex growled in his ear, causing a shiver to run down the length of his spine and making his cock twitch and come to life. Jason nodded, not yet ready to let the man in his arms go. Taking a deep breath, the scent of his mate filled his lungs. Jason was unable to hold back the small whimper that escaped. "Shhh, sweetheart. It's okay... We'll work through it together. I promise." Alex placed a kiss on Jason's head and slowly started to pull away.

"Thank you."

"Come on, baby, let's have some lunch. I'm starved." They settled at the table and Brian put away his computer. They were soon joined by the other brothers and lunch got underway. It was a noisy affair with everyone talking while they ate. The time passed quickly, and before Jason knew it, he was getting a goodbye kiss from Alex as he once again walked out the door and headed back to work.

Jason helped Brian put the kitchen back to rights then the pair of them headed to the back veranda with a book apiece and a large pitcher of iced tea. "So, you ready to talk yet?" Brian asked him quietly a little while later.

Putting his book down, Jason turned to his friend.

"Yeah, I suppose. I've put off talking about it since it happened." Jason took a deep breath to try and settle his nerves. "So... last Saturday I was feeling pretty restless. I was missing you, and both Jessie and Dean had plans with their families. So I decided to check out that new club, Amoureux, that recently opened on Bennet Street. I think it's French for lovers, but my French sucks so I could be wrong.

"Anyway I'd heard that it was supposed to be gay friendly, so I thought why not. I got there, and the place was hopping. Good music, friendly people, and the dance floor was packed. I had a couple of offers, but nothing I was interested in so I declined and continued to dance."

Jason paused and got himself a drink of tea. After drinking half the glass, he settled back in his lounge chair and looked out at the trees in the back yard. Brian was silent next to him, just waiting patiently for him to continue.

"There was one guy who was really determined. No matter how many times I turned him down he kept coming back. He wasn't bad looking I suppose, over six feet, fairly large build. More fat than muscle I think though. He had blond hair and eyes that were a really light shade of blue. But there was something in his eyes that just didn't seem right. Deciding I'd had enough and to call it a night, I went

to the men's room just before leaving. I admit I wasn't paying as much attention as I probably should have, but I really wasn't expecting him to grab me as I was walking out of the stall. I felt a sharp pain in my arm, and when I looked down, I saw him inject me with something. I still don't know what the hell it was."

"Shit, Jase... What happened?" The sound of Brian's voice was enough for his memories to lose their grip on him for a moment before they dragged him back down. Jason could still remember the burning sensation of the liquid working its way through his body.

"I know we have a higher tolerance for drugs and alcohol than humans, but whatever the hell it was, it was strong. My body went lethargic and I was unable to shift or fight back. The drug took complete hold of me within a minute, I reckon. I did manage to get a good punch in before it took total effect, but it wasn't enough. We were the only ones in the bathroom at that time, and after the drug took hold, it just looked like I was drunk and couldn't stand up by myself. The worst thing is that I remember everything. The drug only shut down my body." Jason wiped at his cheeks as he felt tears sliding down.

Brian reached over and took his hand, gently squeezing it to offer him the support he needed. "The guy had introduced himself to me earlier in the evening as

Hank. I have no idea if that was his name or not. Anyway, Hank put his arm around me and walked me right out of the club as if we belonged together. I couldn't do a thing to stop him. I was unable to talk or fight or even walk properly. He was practically dragging me as it was. My mind was screaming out for help, but no one could hear me. He took me to a deserted area of town where he went about raping me repeatedly before he beat me to within an inch of my life. I think if I'd been human I would have died. He then left me there for someone to hopefully stumble across."

Brian had moved at some point during his tale and now sat with Jason hugging him tight. Jason could hear the steady stream of "shit shit shit" coming from Brian. Jason's body shook and he tried to draw in a ragged breath, wanting to get the rest out now that he'd started.

Brian's arms tightened around his body. Jason reached for his iced tea, wanting the cool liquid to soothe his throat. After placing the empty glass back on the small side table, he turned around in Brian's arms so he was facing his friend.

"He said I was the best fuck he'd ever had. And if I managed to survive, he would find me again when he was in the mood. I don't know how long I was with him because it was still dark when he finally drove off and left me, but I was just starting to get some feeling back in my legs and

arms.

"When I was able to move again, I managed to find my phone and call Dean to come get me. It took Dean an hour of driving around to find me as I had no idea where I was. I was a mess when he arrived. You know we can't go to the hospital 'cause of how fast we heal so Dean took me to his place and cleaned me up a bit and let me rest. He took me back home later that afternoon.

"When I got home, someone had told the folks they'd seen me exiting a gay club with a man as they were driving by. They didn't let me explain what had happened. They simply asked if I was gay, and when I nodded, they disowned me on the spot. Told me to pack what I wanted and get off the property. So I did. I stayed with Dean for a couple of days to sort things out with my business and heal some more then I jumped in the car and headed here. Now I guess you know why I was a little skittish when I arrived."

"Fuck, Jase, you should have gone to the police, man."

"I couldn't, Bri. The only thing I knew was his height and hair and eye colour. Do you have any idea how many six foot, blue-eyed blonds there are out there? I couldn't even tell you what type of car he was driving. I was so terrified that my body wasn't working I couldn't seem to concentrate on anything other than what he was

going to do to me."

"Shit! You've got to tell Alex, man. He's your mate. He'll want to know what you've been through."

"I don't know if I can. What if he decides he doesn't want me after he finds out what I've been through? What if he decides it's all too much trouble?" Jason pulled his knees up to his chest and wrapped his arms around them, resting his head on his knees.

Brian gently ran his hand through his hair, caressing him. "That's never going to happen. I know Alex is already falling for you. You're his mate, and nothing you can tell him will send him away. You need to trust that and tell him what you've been through."

"I'll think about it. I know I like him, and I want to get to know him better. I think it would hurt too much if I lost him." They sat in silence for a long time, Jason finally letting go of the tears and hurt he'd been holding in since that night. Brian never left his side.



## CHAPTER 5

Alex pulled into the driveway at about six that night. He was later than usual, as he had stopped off to get a present for Jason on his way home. He'd had a smile on his face all day at work. Suzie and Brent had noticed his mood and commented on it a time or two. Alex wasn't ready to spill the beans about finding his mate yet, so he evaded their questions and concentrated on his customers. This was difficult in itself, as Alex's thoughts always seemed to swing back to Jason, and he found himself wondering how his mate was.

Walking into the kitchen with his gift, he noticed Jason wasn't anywhere to be seen. Brian looked up at him and stepped away from Marcus whom he'd just been wrapped around. "Can we talk in the living room for a minute?"

Alex looked at Brian and frowned. "Can it wait until after I've seen Jason?"

"No."

Alex's frown deepened, but he followed Brian into the living room. Brian didn't sit down but turned and looked Alex directly in the eyes.

"Jason is in your bed resting at the moment." Alex

cocked an eyebrow at Brian's statement, but before he could ask any questions, Brian continued. "It's where he wanted to go. He felt safe there last night and needed to feel that again." After taking a deep breath, Brian went on. "We talked this afternoon. Well, Jason talked and I listened. He told me about what happened."

"Shit. Can you tell me?"

"No. That's up to Jason. I told him he needs to tell you, but it's up to him to share those details. I will tell you that you need to go slowly. He's scared you'll leave him if you find out what happened. I know Jason likes you and feels safe with you, and after what he's been through, that's amazing. I don't know if I would have been as strong as he's been if it had happened to me." Alex could see the shiver that raced through Brian's body at that thought. "He's had a very emotional day. Just be gentle with him. Alpha or not, you hurt my friend, and I will find a way to make you pay. He's been through enough."

Brian had managed to stand up straight and keep eye contact throughout his speech. Alex had to give it to him; it wasn't just anyone who could look their Alpha in the eye and threaten him without backing down. Alex smiled at Brian. He knew the friends were very protective of each other, though he'd never thought his brother-in-law would threaten him. Not the little florist.

"Trust me, Brian. I have no plans of ever hurting Jason. If I did, I would gladly stand still and allow you to take your vengeance, as I think my life would be over anyway." Alex held out his hand as a sign that he understood what Brian was telling him. Brian took a step forward and shook his hand. "Go back to Marcus and tell him I said you need cuddles. I have a mate to go find." Alex turned and headed up the stairs to his room.

Opening the door, his gaze immediately went to the small creature curled up in the centre of his bed holding his pillow close against his chest. Walking quietly into the room, Alex made his way to the bed and sat down next to Jason's sleeping body. Alex sat there for a minute just looking at the troubled expression on his mate's face. God, he'd give anything to be able to take the pain and memories away that his mate had to face every day.

Reaching up, Alex smoothed the hair back from Jason's eyes. "Sweetheart, it's time to wake up," Alex murmured softly as he leaned forward and lightly kissed Jason. Jason stirred, his eyes fluttering as he slowly came back to the land of the living. The smile that broke over Jason's face at the sight of Alex caused his heart to turn over in his chest.

"Hi." The tentative response came right before Jason flicked his tongue out and ran it over his dry lips.

Alex was mesmerised by the sight, his eyes following the movement of that small, wet, pink tongue. Alex could feel the growl growing in the pit of his chest.

"Sweetheart." The words came out low and husky

"Sorry." The pink staining Jason's cheeks and the impish grin curving his lips told Alex he wasn't sorry at all. Alex sat up before he forgot his promise to take things slowly and mauled Jason right here and now.

Jason slowly sat up as well and scooted back so he was leaning against the headboard.

"Evening, sweetheart, I heard you had a bit of a hard day." No matter how slowly he'd promised to go, Alex needed a connection to his mate at that moment and reached out to take Jason's hand in his. Jason's hand felt so small and warm within his that Alex wanted to enfold the rest of his mate in his arms as well.

"Yeah, not one of my best days." The light seemed to fade out of Jason's eyes as he thought about his day. Alex didn't like that. He wanted his mate to be happy and healthy. So time to change the subject, he thought, before Jason could sink further into his memories.

"I bought you something today." As Alex spoke, he reached down the side of the bed where he'd placed the bag with Jason's gift. Pulling it onto the bed, he looked at Jason, whose eyes were starting to glow with excitement.

"You got me a present? Why?" Jason looked confused even as he reached for the bag Alex was holding.

"You'll see." Alex smiled as Jason pulled the new soft black leather jacket from the bag.

"Oh, wow! You got me a jacket for your bike? Does this mean you're really going to take me for a ride tonight?" At Alex's nod, Jason leapt forward, throwing his arms around Alex's neck and planting kiss after kiss on his face. Alex laughed at Jason's enthusiasm before slowly extricating himself from his mate's arms.

"Come on, babe, you need to get dressed. We'll have dinner with the guys then we'll go for that ride I promised you, and a nice long run." Jason's smile was huge as he threw the covers back and jumped from the bed, running to the bathroom. Alex's eyes zeroed in on the tight naked rear running away from him. The laughter sprang from between Alex's lips before he could even think about holding it back.

Looking back at Alex over his shoulder, Jason grinned wickedly at him. "What?"

"Nothing, sweetheart." Alex chuckled again as he got up and headed to the door. "Have your shower. I'll go get you some clothes and meet you downstairs when you're finished."

Blowing a kiss at Alex, Jason turned and walked

into the bathroom. The sound of water running nearly had Alex abandoning his plans to go downstairs. The mere thought of hot water running over Jason's tight body had Alex's cock hard and throbbing in seconds and his good intentions drying up fast. Alex turned towards the door and his wolf snarled at him from within, letting him know he wasn't at all happy about walking away, yet again, from his mate.

Alex pressed the heel of his palm against his straining erection, trying to get his body to calm down, then headed to Jason's room to grab him some clothes. Once he'd left them on his bed, he headed back downstairs to the kitchen and salivated at the wonderful smells of Brian's cooking. Everyone turned in his direction as he walked through the doorway.

"How is he?" The concern in Brian's voice was evident and made him happy that his mate had someone else who cared so much about him.

"He's good. We're going for a ride then a run after dinner. Speaking of which, what is that tantalising smell?"

"Baked chicken parmesan. Should be ready in about ten minutes."

Alex sat at the table and talked about his day with his brothers. He enjoyed living with them, and they'd always been a close family, never really going into that

whole sibling rivalry thing you so often find. It was nice to be able to sit and talk over the events of their days with his brothers. Yes, he was their Alpha and they deferred to him when it came to anything to do with the pack, but first and foremost, he was their brother, and they never let the other get in the way of their relationship.

Just as Brian was removing a huge tray of bubbling chicken from the oven, Jason walked into the kitchen and settled himself into Alex's lap. To say he was surprised at Jason's actions would be an understatement, but he wasn't going to argue with his mate when it got Alex what he wanted. Alex wrapped his arms around Jason's waist and buried his face in his neck. Inhaling deeply, he caught the scent of his own soap on Jason's skin, but underneath that was the unmistakable scent of Jason himself.

Jason turned his head and moved his arms up until he was holding the back of Alex's head. Alex swooped in and took Jason's mouth like a man dying of thirst. Jason reciprocated, and soon their tongues were doing battle.

The sound of a throat clearing brought them both out of the fog that had descended. Alex slowly pulled back from the kiss, licking once more over the swollen lips of his mate, trying to get one last taste. Another throat clearing made Alex growl as he turned to look at the others around the table. Jason giggled as he climbed from his lap, but not

before patting his chest and saying, "Down, boy." Jason then took his own seat at the table and settled down to eat dinner.

The sun was just starting to set by the time everyone was finished with dinner. Turning towards Jason, Alex noticed the look of excited anticipation on his face. "So, sweetheart, you want to get going?"

"Yep," Jason said as he jumped up from the table. The smile on his face fell as he looked down at the table covered with their diner dishes.

"Don't worry about it, Jase. I'll take care of these. You go have some fun."

The smile came back full force.

"Thanks, man. I owe you one." Jason leaned down and quickly kissed Alex before he ran from the room and could be heard running up the stairs.

"Thank you, Brian," Alex said as well. He knew how much his mate was looking forward to this. Alex waited, and Jason was soon heard running back down the stairs and was back in the kitchen in a matter of moments, jacket in hand.

"See what Alex got me today?" he said excitedly to Brian.

"Nice, man." Brian turned to Marcus with a pout on his face. "Why don't you ever buy me anything?"



Alex laughed as he grabbed Jason's hand and dragged him to the garage to the sounds of his brother trying to placate his mate. Alex walked to the bench holding his gear and shrugged into his jacket. He grabbed the spare helmet and handed it to Jason. "Here, hopefully this should fit you fine."

"Thanks." Jason took the helmet and put it on.

"Have you ever been on a bike before?"

"Nope. Always wanted to though. Always thought guys who rode them were sexy."

Alex growled at Jason's last comment. He didn't want his mate thinking that way about anyone else but him. "Swing your leg over and rest your feet on the pegs there," Alex instructed as he watched Jason climb on his bike. "Remember, don't touch the exhaust pipe; it gets extremely hot and I don't want to see you hurt."

Jason nodded at his instructions and settled himself on the pillion passenger seat. Alex climbed on and kicked up the stand.

"You can scoot forward and wrap your arms around my waist if you like. Or you can sit back and hold on to the strap." Alex smiled as he felt Jason snuggle up as close to his back as he could get. He moaned at the feel of his mate's cock resting against his ass.

Alex, trying to get his brain working again, shook

his head. "Remember when we go around a corner to lean into it. You won't cause the bike to fall, but if you fight it and lean the other way we could have problems."

"Ok. I'll do my best."

"We'll go slow until you get the hang of it."

"Thank you, Alex."

"Ready?"

"Yep, let's go."

Alex started the bike. He loved the feel of the powerful machine vibrating between his thighs. He slowly eased out of the garage, and the arms around his waist tightened slightly as they got underway.

Jason was a natural on the bike, never once doing anything to cause Alex any problems as they rode. The hard-on Jason was sporting, on the other hand, was causing Alex all sorts of concentration problems, not to mention Jason's wandering hands every time they came to a stop. After a nice long ride around town, Alex headed the bike in the direction of the pack lands so they could go for a run.

Pulling to a stop in the deserted car park, Alex kicked the stand down and turned the bike off before reaching behind him and grabbing Jason around the waist. He hauled his mate around in front of him so they were now sitting face to face. The little squeak that burst from Jason's lips at the unexpected movement didn't deter Alex

in the least from his plans. Ripping his helmet off first, he then made short work of removing Jason's as well. Wrapping his hands in the hair at the base of Jason's neck, Alex crushed their mouths together. Jason didn't try to fight him. He just submitted and opened his mouth, allowing Alex to take what he wanted. Alex gripped Jason's hips and settled him more fully on his lap so their cocks were rubbing against each other. Jason started to rut against him, trying to get enough friction to feel good.

Pulling back from the kiss, Alex started to nibble his way down Jason's neck, licking at Jason's pulse as it beat faster and faster. Jason's breathless voice whimpered in his ear. "Alex, please... I need..."

"Shhh, sweetheart, I know what you need. Alex started sucking up a mark on Jason's neck as he reached down and unsnapped the button on his jeans then lowered his zipper. Fishing his hard and aching cock out of his underwear, he moaned when the cool breeze hit the wet, dripping slit at the tip of his cock. Alex soon had Jason's beautiful cock out in the open to join with his. Pulling Jason closer, he heard the whimper his mate made as their cocks touched. Alex abandoned his mate's neck to look at the sight of their cocks rubbing together. Moaning himself, Alex reached down and wrapped his large hand around both cocks and started to jack.

"Oh god, Alex. I'm not going to last. Feels so fucking good."

Jason was thrusting his hips nearly uncontrollably through Alex's fist. Alex tightened his grip, and it seemed to be all Jason needed as he arched backward, his head falling away and leaving Alex a beautiful view of his exposed throat. Jason's cry hit the air just as his cock started pulsing in Alex's hand and he spilled his seed into Alex's palm. The sight of his mate in utter rapture was all it took for Alex's orgasm to burst forth and his cock to start erupting sticky ropes of cum. Alex did his best to catch it in his hand as they didn't have any spare clothes with them.

One arm still wrapped around Jason's back, Alex tugged him forward until he was leaning against Alex's hard chest. They were both trying to catch their breath as Jason took hold of Alex's wrist and brought his palm, still sticky with their combined releases, to his mouth. That sexy tongue came out and started lapping up their salty essence. Alex growled at the sight of his mate licking away his cum.

"Fuck that's hot," he managed to get out.

Jason didn't pay him any attention until his hand was completely clean. Then he tilted his head up, silently begging for a kiss. Alex bent down and gently, slowly kissed the man who was starting to mean more to him than

anyone else in the world.

"You okay, baby?" Alex asked as he pulled back.

"Mmm hmm." Jason nodded as he snuggled farther into Alex's chest with his arms tightening around him.

Alex's cock, which had softened after their combined release, twitched, wanting to rise again as Jason settled in his lap. "Come on, sweetheart. Let's get undressed and go for our run."

"Don't wanna move yet. I'm comfy."

Alex chuckled at the quiet reply from his mate. He quickly swatted Jason on the ass to get him moving. "We have all night to snuggle when we get home. And I'm not exactly comfortable sitting here still fully dressed with my dick hanging out." Alex grinned at him.

"Fine then." Jason pouted.

Alex swatted him on the ass again as he climbed off the bike. Once they were both standing, they started undressing. Alex got distracted along the way as his mate's gorgeous body was slowly revealed to him. Snapping out of it, Alex quickly shucked his boots and pushed his jeans and boxers down and off. Shrugging out of his jacket, he pulled his shirt over his head.

Looking up, Alex noticed Jason had undressed and was staring at his body, his eyes glowing with what he thought was stark appreciation. Jason licked his lips and

stepped forward. He stopped just before touching him and sucked in a breath. Gently placing his hand against Alex's left pectoral muscle, he traced the flowing script of Alex's new tattoo with his delicate fingers.

"When did you get this done?"

Alex had known today, when he'd decided to get the tattoo of Jason's name inked above his heart, that his mate would see it tonight. He'd just hoped Jason liked it and understood why he'd had it done.

"Today. I had a cancellation, and Suzie had some time between customers. I drew the design, and she inked it for me. Do you like it? I can't get the other one I've planned until after I've seen you change." Alex snapped his mouth shut, annoyed with himself that he was letting any weakness show. Jason was his one big weakness. Looking down at Jason, he relaxed a little at the awe and curiosity evident on his face.

"I can't believe you had my name tattooed on your chest." Jason paused for a minute then started again. "I don't know if it makes me vain or really possessive, but I love the fact that my name is forever going to be on your body." A sexy little smile graced his lips. "What's the other tattoo you have planned?"

"I have an image of my wolf on my left shoulder blade gazing over towards my right side." Alex turned

around so Jason could see what he was talking about. "I want your wolf on my right shoulder blade gazing back at mine." Alex took a deep breath. He couldn't see Jason, so he didn't know what his reaction to this would be. "My wolf was the first tattoo I ever got. I always wanted to have my mate's image inked next to his."

Jason's fingers were gently outlining the tattoo of his wolf before moving farther down to trace the tribal designs that started halfway down his left side and ended mid thigh. Jason's hands slipped away from his body as he stepped in front of Alex then lifted his small hands to once again trace his tattoos. Jason ran his hand lightly over the design stretching from his neck over his right pectoral and down to his right forearm.

Jason's quiet voice floated up to him. "One day I think I'd like to lick every one of your tattoos."

Alex groaned at the thought of Jason running his tongue over his body. Grabbing Jason's hands from their teasing places on his body, Alex couldn't help but see the lust burning in Jason's eyes. Alex couldn't hold back and pulled his mate's smaller body against his own hard, muscular chest. He joined their mouths together in a rough, passionate kiss.

Jason's body seemed to melt into his hold as he submitted to the will of Alex's fierce mouth. Slowly pulling

back, Alex nipped Jason's bottom lip one last time before releasing him from his hold and taking a step away.

"Come on, sweetheart. Time to change so we can go for our run."

"You expect me to think after that?" Jason replied somewhat breathlessly.

Alex smiled at the effect he had on his little man. "Yep, come on. I want to see you."

Jason seemed to gather his thoughts, and he smiled at Alex as the change started to take over his body. Alex could hear the bones re-shaping and see the fur erupting over his mate's little body. It only took a matter of seconds for Jason's body to take on the complete change from man to wolf. And god, what a stunning wolf his little man made.

Jason was a white wolf with black flecks running through his coat. He was also a lot bigger in wolf form than Alex expected. Alex had seen Brian's size as a wolf. Brian was taller than Jason, and Alex expected that to carry through to their other forms as well. The fact that Jason was nearly as large as his brothers in wolf form pleased him greatly.

"Fuck, you're gorgeous, sweetheart," Alex said as he squatted down to get on an even level with his mate.

Alex ran his hands through his mate's thick velvety coat, memorising every detail of his mate while in this



form. Standing back up, Alex stepped back and finally let go of the firm hold he'd had on his wolf and let the shift take him over. After several moments, Alex shook his body to help everything settle. Looking up, he realised Jason was sitting in front of him with his head tilted to the side, watching.

Alex sat on his haunches, waiting for Jason to make the first move. He wasn't going to scare his mate away in this form any more than he was when he was human. Jason got up and slowly walked towards him. Upon reaching his side, he stopped and buried his head against Alex's neck. Alex bent down and rubbed himself against his mate's side, lightly nipping him. Alex couldn't yet talk to Jason while in this form. As Alpha, Alex could communicate with any wolf in his pack while they were in their wolf form. However, as Jason hadn't been formally accepted into the pack yet, this was not possible. And as Alex was yet to officially mate with Jason, they hadn't formed the mind link that allowed mates to talk telepathically with each other either.

Stepping back from his mate, Alex gestured towards the woods, and seeing Jason understood what he was saying, they headed off for a run. Alex showed Jason the pack meeting place where they held their gatherings every full moon. Every pack had a meeting place, somewhere

safe where they could gather and run together as a group. They ran through the bush chasing after rabbits and anything else that caught their attention. After nearly an hour of constant running, they made their way back to the clearing the pack used. Jason trotted to the centre of the clearing and laid down to rest. Alex walked over to him and curled his body around that of his mate before closing his eyes. The feel and scent of his mate so close to him soon had him drifting into a light sleep.

## CHAPTER 6

Jason woke a little while later feeling warm and safe. Lifting his head, he realised he was still a wolf and that he and Alex had fallen asleep in the middle of the clearing. Alex was large for a wolf. Jason should have realised he would be, being as big a man as he was. Jason knew, however, that the size of your wolf wasn't always relevant to your size as a man. He was a good example. Jason was under average height for a man, but as a wolf, he was nearly on par with those who led the pack. It had been the same in his old pack as well. Jason wondered if his size had anything to do with the fact that fate knew he would be the mate of an Alpha.

Alex was a magnificent wolf, Jason thought to himself as he ran his eyes over the sleeping body. He was large with a thick, dark brown coat that would help keep Jason warm on winter nights when they ran and slept together like they had tonight. Jason leaned down and started to lick Alex's muzzle. It didn't take long for one of those deep chocolate-brown eyes to open and look at him. Jason stepped back to allow Alex to rise. Even though they couldn't communicate with each other in this form at the moment, Alex seemed to understand that Jason thought it

was time to go home.

The pair of wolves made their way side by side through the bush and back to the solitary vehicle in the car park. Jason sat on his haunches and watched as the magnificent animal in front of him turned back into the sexiest man he'd ever seen. Thinking about his human form, Jason started the change. The wind had a bite to it that Jason hadn't noticed while he was a wolf, but standing there naked he certainly felt it. Alex held out his clothes for him, not even worried about himself.

"Come on, sweetheart. Let's get you dressed and then we'll head home."

"Sounds good to me, although it does seem a shame to cover that body of yours in clothing." Jason smiled at Alex as he took his clothing and started to get dressed. He could hear Alex chuckling as he too started to dress.

"You can unwrap me again as soon as we get home."

"Promise?" Jason still wasn't sure if he could go through with everything, but he knew he wanted to try a little more tonight.

"Yeah, sweetheart, I promise. Let's get going."

After they were both dressed again, Jason shrugged into the soft leather jacket Alex had given him. He still couldn't believe Alex bought him a jacket. Pulling the

collar up, Jason breathed in deeply, the scent of butter-soft leather surrounding him as air filled his lungs. Opening eyes he hadn't realised he'd closed, he noticed Alex already seated on the bike waiting for him with an indulgent smile on his face. Blushing at being caught, Jason quickly did up the jacket and secured his helmet before joining Alex on the back of the bike. Jason snuggled up close to Alex's back and wrapped his arm around his middle.

The ride home was over faster than Jason would have liked. He was hard and aching as Alex pulled into the garage. Grinding his hard cock against Alex's ass, Jason moaned and started to move his hands down the front of Alex's hard body. He was stopped just shy of his goal by large hands.

"As much as I love making out with you on my bike, how about we take this inside where we can stretch out and be comfortable?"

Jason lowered his head against Alex's back and, breathing deeply, he tried to get his body under control. Jason nodded his agreement before pulling back to remove his helmet and jacket. When Jason noticed Alex had also removed his riding gear, he wrapped his arms around Alex's neck and reached up for a kiss.

Alex's tongue thrust into his mouth, pulling a moan from somewhere deep inside Jason. His hips were pulled

forward and he could feel the hard length of Alex's cock against his stomach. Annoyed at the height difference, Jason pulled back a little then jumped, wrapping his legs tightly around Alex's waist, his hard cock now in the perfect position against Alex's.

Alex's hands went to the twin globes of his ass, squeezing hard, and Jason felt them making their way through the house. Jason attacked Alex's neck, sucking and biting at the pulse he could feel beating just under the surface. Latching down hard, he heard a groan torn from the other man and his back was slammed against the nearest wall. Slowly releasing his prize, Jason turned to the beautiful man in front of him, hoping all his feelings were reflected in his eyes. Jason could feel his own heart beating frantically as he saw the dark bruise gracing his mate's neck. Alex ground his cock hard against Jason's, pulling a whimper from deep inside him.

"Are you okay, sweetheart? We can stop if you need to." The fact that Alex was willing to stop everything right then showed Jason just how much he really did care about what Jason had been through. He wanted Alex as his mate, but wasn't sure if he was ready for everything just yet. Jason did know that he really wanted to see Alex come again though.

"Thank you. It means a lot that you'd be willing to

stop and take things slowly. How about we take a shower? I think I would also really like it if you claimed me. If that's okay?" Jason ducked his head, not really certain of the response he'd get after his announcement.

Alex gently urged his chin up so they were looking eye to eye. "It would be my pleasure to claim you as mine, sweetheart. We can wait as long as you need for the sex. I'm not in any hurry, even if all my wolf wants is to be buried balls deep in your sexy little ass." Jason blushed at Alex's words. "Let's get that shower."

Alex pulled them away from the wall and started again towards his bedroom. Jason chuckled as he looked around and noticed for the first time that they had stopped on the stairs, about halfway up. Alex smiled as he leaned forward and quickly kissed Jason.

Jason snuggled in, tightening his hold as they made their way into Alex's room. Walking them straight into the bathroom, Alex gently lowered Jason to the floor. "Why don't you get undressed, and I'll start the shower." Jason nodded and proceeded to peel his clothing from his body for the second time that night. When he was naked, Alex turned from fiddling with the taps in the shower and stopped immediately. Jason watched as Alex's eyes roamed over his naked flesh. "God, you really are gorgeous."

Jason blushed at Alex's words. "Your turn, big guy."

I want to see you naked again."

Alex smiled and started pulling his clothes off. Jason chuckled as Alex got tangled trying to shuck his jeans, forgetting he still had his boots on.

"That's enough out of you, little one. Give me a hand here."

Jason was still chuckling quietly when he went to his knees in front of Alex to help undo his boots. Once he'd managed to remove Alex's boots, he tugged the jeans the rest of the way off. Leaning forward, Jason gently placed a kiss on each of Alex's thighs before slowly getting back to his feet. After taking Alex's hand, he was then dragged into the shower.

The feel of the warm water pounding on his skin felt so good he couldn't contain the small moan that slipped from his lips. Alex reached over his shoulder and grabbed the soap. Working it to a lather, he gently started to rub his soapy hands all over Jason's body. Jason moaned again when Alex reached his hard, aching cock. Thrusting his hips forward through the tunnel of Alex's strong fingers felt like heaven.

Alex turned him around and pulled him so his back was against his hard chest. Alex slid his arms around Jason's body and wrapped those wonderful fingers back around his aching length. Feeling Alex's hard length



rubbing against the top of his ass, Jason tried not to flinch as the feeling of a hard cock against his ass brought back memories of that night. He mustn't have been too successful as Alex's body stilled.

"Sweetheart?" Alex's deep voice questioned in his ear.

Jason didn't know what to say. He wrapped his arms around his middle and tried to pull away from Alex. Alex, on the other hand, wasn't going to let him go. Removing his hands from Jason's softening cock, Alex, pulled him tighter against his chest.

"Baby, you know we won't do anything you're not ready for, right? I'd never hurt you."

Jason nodded slowly. "I know. I'm sorry. I wish... I wish I could give you what you want. I want to. It's just that I don't think I'm ready. The feel of you there is bringing back memories, and I don't want to associate you with that night."

"It's okay, sweetheart. I know you're not ready. I'm sorry. I should have been thinking more about where I was holding you. We'll go slow and take our time. Work up to the big stuff." Alex kissed the top of his head.

Taking a deep breath, Jason turned in Alex's arms and stood up on tiptoes to lightly kiss Alex, silently thanking him for understanding. Smiling impishly, Jason

knew what he was ready for. "Just 'cause I'm not ready for that yet doesn't mean I can't do other things though. Like I really want to see how you taste." He went to his knees in front of Alex.

Jason could practically see the blood pumping into Alex's cock as it stiffened back up in front of his eyes. Leaning forward, he licked his tongue from the base of Alex's cock to the tip, coming away with a drop of pre-cum on the end of his tongue. Swallowing it down, he whimpered at the flavour that burst across his tastebuds. His mate tasted like ambrosia, sweet with a slightly salty tang.

Jason felt Alex's hand grip his hair as his face was tugged up so he could look at his mate.

"Are you sure about this, sweetheart?"

Jason just nodded as he tried to tug his head back towards his waiting feast. Alex's grip in his hair loosened, but he never let go completely. Jason enjoyed the connection with Alex as he leaned forward and enclosed his lips around the tip of the hard cock in front of him. Hearing the groan from above, Jason smiled to himself and worked his way further down the hard length. Having no gag reflex he kept going. Jason kept working his way down Alex's considerable length until his lips met the hairs at the base of his cock.

"Fuck-fuck-fuck... Shit, sweetheart. So good. No one's ever taken all of me before."

Jason smiled as he slowly pulled back, hollowing his cheeks and working his tongue along the thick vein that ran up the length of Alex's cock. Pulling off when he reached the tip, he looked up to see Alex panting above him. Opening his mouth, he worked his way back down again. He tapped Alex on the hip, letting him know it was okay for him to move. Jason stayed still, just increasing his suction and moving his tongue as Alex started up a steady rhythm of movement in and out of his mouth.

"Shit, baby. Not going to last much longer."

Alex's thrusts soon lost rhythm as he got closer to his climax. Jason reached down and wrapped his hand around his own throbbing length, quickly tugging in time to Alex's thrusts. With his other hand, he reached up and cupped Alex's balls, gently squeezing them. Alex let out a roar of pleasure as the hand in his hair tightened its grip and he shoved his cock down the back of Jason's throat. Feeling Alex's cock pulse in his throat, he pulled back slightly so Alex spilled his seed in Jason's mouth where he would be able to savour the taste.

The very taste of his mate's cum was all it took to send Jason over the edge, and he came, shooting his cum over the shower floor. Jason continued sucking on Alex's

length until he started to soften in his mouth. Pulling back, he gently kissed the tip of Alex's cock before large hands reached down and pulled him to his feet. Jason was lifted higher in the air and pressed back against the wall of the shower before a hard body slammed against his front and Alex leaned forward and, in one swift movement, bit into the side of Jason's neck.

Jason's body was unexpectedly sent into orgasmic bliss as his cock hardened and exploded at the feel of his mate biting and sucking on his neck. He could feel the mating link snap into place as Alex slowly pulled back and licked his neck to help close the wounds. Before his brain could form any kind of coherent thought, his mouth was taken in the most erotic kiss of his life.

Pulling back from the kiss only when it was necessary to breathe, Jason smiled at his mate. Alex reached around and turned the water off before placing his hands on Jason's ass and walking them from the shower. Alex dried them the best he could without letting Jason move. Jason's head was resting against Alex's shoulder, his limbs wrapped tightly around Alex's body, as exhaustion quickly stole over his body after his two orgasms. Once they were as dry as they were going to get, Alex took them to bed.

Alex somehow managed to get them into bed and

the covers pulled up without Jason ever having to let go of him once. Snuggling in closer to Alex, Jason felt his body truly relax for the first time in over a week.

"Sleep love," came the soothing tones of his mate's voice, so Jason did.

## CHAPTER 7

Alex was locking up his tattoo studio a week later when his phone rang. Trying to juggle his helmet, jacket, and keys, Alex managed to pull his phone from his jeans pocket and answer before the caller hung up. "Hey, Mum. I'm just leaving work. Can I call you back when I get home?" Alex asked as he made his way towards where his bike was parked.

His mother's voice admonished him from the other end of the phone line. "What do you mean you're just leaving work? It's damn near eight o'clock, Alex. You should have finished hours ago."

Alex sighed. "I know, Mum, but I had a last minute change to the schedule, and the client ran longer than usual. I'm beat. It's been a hell of a day, and all I want to do is go home and kiss my mate."

"Speaking of mates, when are we going to get to meet him?"

"I know you want to meet him, Mum. He just needed some time. He's been through hell. Even I don't know everything that happened to him yet. The only person who does is Brian." Alex hated the fact that Jason still hadn't told him what he'd been through, but he knew he

needed to give his mate time and show him that he could trust Alex. "How about I discuss it with the guys when I get home and see if we can get together tomorrow night? Does that suit you?"

"Ok, honey. You let me know. Take care and tell your brothers we love them."

"Will do, Mum. Bye." Alex hung up the phone and slid it back in his pocket. Alex shrugged into his jacket before getting on his bike and doing up his helmet. Pulling the bike fully upright, he started it and kicked up the stand. The low rumble of his Indian sent shockwaves right to his balls, and he was half hard before he'd even pulled out into traffic.

Riding home as fast as he could without breaking the law, Alex found himself anxious to see his mate. Over the last week, Jason had started to come out of his shell a little more each day. He no longer flinched when Alex or any of his brothers touched him, and he was getting more adventurous in bed. Stopping at the red light, Alex let his mind wander back to last night when he and Jason were in bed.

Jason had made good on his promise to lick every one of Alex's tattoos. It had been utter torture to lay there and let Jason slowly lick his body. Alex's hands had fisted in the sheets a number of times. When Jason had finally

taken pity on him and taken his cock deep into his throat, it hadn't taken Alex more than a half dozen thrusts down that perfect throat before he shot his load into his mate's warm, wet mouth.

A car horn behind him brought him suddenly back to the present. Groaning at the aching length between his thighs trying to forcibly push its way out from behind his denim jeans, Alex set off for home again.

Pulling into the driveway, Alex parked his bike and ripped off his riding gear before practically running inside looking for his mate. He could hear the noise from the television and several voices coming from the family room, but Jason was waiting for him just outside the kitchen, a wicked smile gracing those perfect lips. Jason must have felt the emotions running through his body through the mating bond they shared.

Walking right up to Jason, he leaned down and covered his mate's plush lips with his own, wrapping his arms around him and lifting him up as he deepened the kiss. Jason's arm wrapped around his neck, and his fingers threaded through the hair at the back of his head.

Biting down gently on the tongue that had come out to play, Alex's hands moved lower until he was cupping Jason's perfect ass. Slowing the kiss, he pulled back to look at his mate. "God, I missed you today. I'm sorry I'm so



late."

"I missed you as well." Jason leaned forward and placed a gentle kiss against his lips. "If you let me down, I'll get us some dinner." The blush covering his mate's cheeks was sexy as hell. Jason nuzzled into his neck as he mumbled, "I didn't want to eat without you." Alex's heart jumped at the admission.

"Come on then, sweetheart. Let's go get something to eat." Alex walked them into the kitchen, still holding Jason in his arms. He reluctantly set him on his feet once they were in the kitchen. Alex got them both some iced tea to drink and sat at the table to watch as Jason placed the plates of meatloaf with mashed potato in the microwave to reheat.

Alex's stomach rumbled as the scent of the food hit him. Once the food was hot, Jason placed it on the table, and they settled down to eat dinner together. After Alex had taken the edge off his hunger, he wanted to broach the subject of his parents coming to dinner. "My mother called as I was leaving work." Alex could see the tension start to work its way into Jason's muscles as he stopped with a fork paused before his mouth. Gently placing his fork back on his plate, Jason lowered his head.

*"I know I have to meet them, and Brian says they're great, but what if they don't like me? What if they think I'm*

*not good enough for their son? I mean look at me. I can barely keep from jumping when someone touches me. I'm trying to move on but—"*

"Oh, sweetheart, come here." Alex scooted his chair back as he reached over and pulled his little mate into his lap. Jason snuggled up against his chest as soon as he was settled. Alex rubbed his hand up and down Jason's back, trying to alleviate some of the tension residing there.

*"Baby, they're going to love you just as much as I do. Nothing you can do will change that fact. They understand you've been through a traumatic experience. It won't matter to them. They'll love you more for the fact that you're determined to get your life back."*

Jason was looking at him with a stunned expression on his face.

*"You love me?"* The question whispered through his mind

Alex couldn't help the grin that broke across his lips. "Yes, sweetheart, I love you. I started falling for you the first day I met you when you ran from me." Alex leaned down and kissed his mate tenderly, trying to convey the depth of love he felt for his little man.

Breaking the kiss, Jason's sparkling blue eyes stared at him, and the depth of emotion rolling through them was incredible to watch. Jason ducked his head back down and

buried it in his neck. Alex loved it when Jason snuggled into him. It felt like he was trying to burrow under his skin. The softly whispered words, "I love you too", reached Alex's ears and made his heart leap. Alex tightened his arms around his mate as he tried to calm his racing emotions.

"So does this mean you'll meet my parents tomorrow?" Alex felt Jason's small, reluctant nod against his neck and smiled as he realised how much courage it took for his mate to agree to that. "Come on, babe. Let's finish dinner then go join the guys and watch a little mindless television before bed."

*"Can we skip the TV and go straight to bed? I think I'd like it if you'd make love to me. I can't promise that I won't freak out halfway through, but I'd really like to try. I want to make love to my mate."*

Alex's breath caught in his throat at the words he heard in his mind. Placing his hands on either side on Jason's face, he moved him until he could look him in the eyes.

"Sweetheart, are you sure? I don't mind waiting until you're ready."

Jason didn't reply right away. Alex held his breath waiting for his mate's reply. He'd wanted to be buried deep in his little man since the first moment he laid eyes on him,

however, he completely understood the need for patience and taking things slowly.

"I'm sure." Those two little words had Alex up and striding out of the kitchen with Jason still in his arms. Jason's laughter rang out as Alex made his way through the house.

*"What happened to dinner first? I'm still hungry."*

*"We can eat later. This is more important."*

*"Okay."*

As they passed the family room heading for the stairs, Alex yelled out over his shoulder. "Someone call Mum and Dad and invite them for dinner tomorrow. I expect you all to be able to make it." Alex stopped and thought for a minute before adding, "You might want to call Jake as well and see if he can join us." Alex didn't hang around to find out if they'd heard him. Instead, he took the stairs two at a time and nearly broke into a run when he reached the top landing.

"Who's Jake?" The muffled question worked its way up to his ear.

"My Beta and best friend. I thought it was high time he met you as well. And with him here, he can take your oath on becoming pack."

"Oh, okay," was the soft, breathy reply.

Once they reached their room, Alex gently placed

Jason on his feet and closed the door behind them. Leaning down, he kissed his mate, trying to reassure him that everything was okay. "We'll take things nice and slow." The hesitant nod he received in reply seemed to be all Jason was capable of at the moment.

Alex placed his hands on Jason's hips and started to walk him backwards towards the bed they'd shared every night since Jason had come to him. Once Jason's legs hit the side of the bed, Alex sat him down on the edge and reached for the hem of his shirt. Jason pulled his arms up while Alex removed his shirt and threw it towards the clothes basket.

Alex knelt on the floor in front of his mate. Running his hands over Jason's tight body had his cock stirring in his jeans. Leaning forward, he took a light brown nub into his mouth and sucked. Jason moaned and started to pant when Alex increased the suction then bit down on the nipple in his mouth. After soothing the abused flesh with his tongue, Alex pulled away and moved to the other one. Dragging Jason's left nipple into his mouth, Alex looked up to see an expression of downright need on his mate's face. Alex's hands roamed down Jason's body as his lips, teeth, and tongue continued to work the nipple in his mouth. Reaching Jason's jeans, Alex slowly lowered the zipper and undid the button.

Releasing the nipple from his mouth, Alex stood and lightly pushed his mate back until he was lying flat on the bed. Reaching down, Alex grasped the waist of Jason's jeans and dragged them from his body. Watching as the material was peeled from his mate's body, Alex suppressed a moan when he realised his mate had gone commando. Cocking one eyebrow, Alex looked up to see a notably flushed Jason looking back at him.

*"Surprise."*

"How am I ever supposed to get anything done anymore if I'm always going to be imagining you walking around commando?" Alex's cock was throbbing constantly behind its confining barrier.

Jason chuckled at Alex's dilemma. "You're a smart man; I'm sure you'll figure it out." After removing the jeans completely, Jason scooted into the centre of the bed to watch as Alex undressed himself. Alex almost sighed with relief when his cock sprang free from behind its prison of fabric. It was already leaking heavily, and he reached down and spread the pre-cum over the head of his cock before pumping himself a couple of times.

Never taking his eyes from the sexy man in the bed, he could see the effect he was having as Jason's breathing sped up and his cock twitched. The small whimper that escaped Jason's lips caused Alex's cock to jump in his hand.

Walking over to the bedside table, Alex pulled out the drawer and rummaged around until he found the half-full bottle of lube. Placing it on the bed beside Jason, Alex climbed in and settled his body over Jason's. The feel of their naked cocks rubbing against each other was heaven. Alex leaned down and took Jason's mouth in a demanding kiss while he ground his pelvis against Jason's. Pulling back from the kiss, Alex made his way down his mate's body, stopping to lick and nip at all the exposed skin along the way.

*"I'm going to love you so completely you'll never forget this night, sweetheart."*

Jason's breathless reply filtered through his mind.  
*"Oh god, yes... please."*

Alex loved the effect he had on his mate. Finally reaching his prize, Alex decided to torment his lover a little longer and bypassed the stiff, aching cock in front of him. Dragging his tongue from the base of Jason's balls to the top, the flavour of his mate was tantalising on his tongue. Quickly sucking in one orb then the other, Alex rolled them around in his mouth before pulling away again.

Jason's hands were fisted in the sheets, and he was pumping his hips, trying to bring his cock in line with Alex's mouth. Gripping Jason's hips, Alex applied a little pressure to still their movements before finally putting his

mate out of his misery and swallowing Jason's cock.

*"Oh-god-oh-god-oh-god"* was the litany playing through his mind as Alex increased his suction and brought his tongue out to play. Alex loved the sound of the soft, breathy noises coming from his mate. Removing one of his hands from where it was on Jason's hip, Alex brought one of his fingers into his mouth and sucked it in alongside Jason's cock to get it good and wet. Removing his finger, Alex trailed it over Jason's balls until it came to rest against his mate's quivering hole. Jason tensed suddenly, but Alex just let his finger rest there.

*"Shhh... Relax, sweetheart. Remember this is me, and I would never hurt you for the world."*

Alex continued his assault on Jason's cock, pulling back until only the head remained in his mouth. He lapped his tongue through the slit in Jason's cockhead, gathering as much leaking fluid as he was able. Once Jason's body had relaxed enough, Alex gently started to apply pressure to help relax the guardian muscle. As he slipped his finger in to the first knuckle, Jason's ass clamped down on him.

*"Breathe, sweetheart."*

A breath of air seemed to explode from Jason's body, allowing his muscles to relax. Pushing his finger completely into Jason's body, Alex let it remain there for a minute before slowly moving it in and out again. Jason



tried to thrust his cock down Alex's throat when he started to increase the speed of his finger in Jason's ass.

Stopping his movements, Alex pulled away from the very tasty cock and reached for the lube beside Jason. Grabbing the bottle, he squeezed out a small amount onto his fingers before discarding the tube and swallowing Jason back down to the root. Inserting a second finger into Jason's tight ass with ease, Alex quickly found what he was looking for and rubbed against his sweet spot.

This seemed to be all Jason could handle as his cock swelled. Jason cried out above him as hot streams of cum shot down the back of Alex's throat. Alex continued to lap at Jason's cock until he was sure there was nothing left. Pulling back, Alex kneeled and looked at the sight in front of him.

Fingers still buried deep in his mate's ass, spent cock trying its hardest to perk right back up again, and a blissful expression on his face all combined to form a picture that nearly sent Alex over the edge before he got anywhere near Jason's ass. Wrapping his fingers around the base of his cock, Alex squeezed hard to try and stave off his impending orgasm.

Leaning down, Alex took Jason's lips in a punishing kiss, thrusting his tongue into Jason's mouth at the same time he inserted another finger in his eager hole. Alex had

discovered earlier in the week that Jason enjoyed the taste of his own cum, especially when it came from Alex's mouth. Moving his fingers in and out of Jason had the desired effect on his body and stretched his hole sufficiently to be able to take Alex's thick length.

Pulling away from the kiss, Alex looked at the dazed expression on his lover's face. "You ready, love?"

"Oh yeah. I want that cock in my ass so badly."

Grinning at the fact that Jason was obviously looking forward to this, Alex just had one more question for his little man. "How do you want to do this, sweetheart?"

"Umm, just like this. I don't think I'm ready to be taken from behind yet." Alex smiled, wanting to reassure his mate that he liked the idea of being able to watch the pleasure on Jason's face as he took him for the first time. Leaning back, Alex removed his fingers and reached again for the lube. Generously coating his cock, Alex scooted forward and lifted Jason's legs from the bed to wrap around his hips.

"Keep your eyes on mine, sweetheart, and remember that I love you more than anything else in the world."

Jason nodded at Alex's words. Lining up his cock, Alex gently pressed forward. Jason gasped for breath

beneath him as the head of Alex's cock slipped past the first ring of muscle. Stilling, Alex waited for Jason to relax around the invading object. *"I love you, sweetheart."*

*"Love you too... God, please move... You're killing me here."*

Alex chuckled at his mate. "Your wish is my command." Sliding forward, Alex buried himself balls deep in Jason's tight heat.

"Ahgh!" Jason cried out.

Alex gave Jason a moment to get used to his cock before pulling back almost all the way and thrusting back in again. Starting up a steady rhythm, Alex bent forward and thrust his tongue into Jason's mouth with the same rhythm that his cock was taking his ass. Jason reached between their bodies and started to tug on his once again rock-hard cock. Moments later, he was grunting into Alex's mouth as wet heat spread between them and Jason's ass clamped down on his cock.

Pulling out of the kiss, Alex gripped Jason's hips and started to pound into him. He was so close he could feel his orgasm shoot down his spine into his balls. Half a dozen thrusts later Alex leaned forward and sank his canines into Jason's neck as his cock emptied itself deep into his mate's ass. The knot extended from the end of his cock to attach itself to Jason's prostate. Jason cried out

again as he was thrown over the edge into yet another orgasm, cum erupting from his cock.

Alex collapsed on his arms over Jason, careful not to squash his mate as they were still joined. Alex lightly kissed his mate. *"You okay, sweetheart?"*

*"Never better. That was amazing."*

The spasms still working their way through Jason's body continued to cause his mate to make the most incredible sounds Alex had ever heard. Once the knot released them from their coupling, Alex slowly withdrew his softening cock and made his way to the bathroom to clean up and get a cloth for Jason.

Having wiped himself down, Alex made his way back into the bedroom, only to find Jason passed out in the same spot Alex had left him, cum slowly leaking from his well fucked ass. Alex enjoyed the sight before he cleaned his mate up.

Climbing into bed, Alex pulled the covers over them after he pulled Jason against his chest. Jason curled into him but remained sleeping, and the light snores coming from his lips were adorable. Leaning forward, Alex kissed his mate good night before closing his eyes and settling into a contented sleep.

## CHAPTER 8

Jason sat straight up in bed. He was breathing hard, and his body was covered in a light coating of sweat. He hadn't dreamed about that night in a nearly a week, but he wasn't so lucky tonight. A hand on his shoulder nearly made him jump out of bed while he let out the most unmanly sound he'd ever heard.

*"It's ok, sweetheart. It's just me. Why don't you lie back down?"*

Jason shook his head as he tried to get the images out of his mind. He didn't want to keep reliving that horrible night in his dreams. He wanted to be able to live a normal life without nightmares.

The bed shifted behind him before large strong arms wrapped around him, and he was dragged back against Alex's hard chest. "It's ok, sweetheart, I have you." Jason sat there, letting the love his mate had for him calm him down again. "Do you want to talk about it? It might help."

"Not really. But I suppose I should." Jason just sat there in the quiet while he thought about everything. Did he want to tell Alex? Would Alex still love him after he found out what had happened? Jason didn't know if he was strong enough to survive if Alex didn't want him anymore, just

like his own parents. But Alex had a right to know everything about him. They were mates, and mates weren't supposed to keep secrets from each other. If Alex decided he didn't want him anymore after Jason told him, he would just have to leave again.

Taking a deep breath to steady his nerves, Jason started his story. Alex's arms tightened around him as Jason told him about going to the club and dancing. He told him about how Hank wouldn't stop looking at him, how he'd decided to head back home but stopped at the toilets first, about feeling the prick as the needle was jabbed into his arm and the utter hopeless feeling of not being able to control his body.

Tears were running down his cheeks as Jason tried to explain to Alex what it was like to be screaming for help and not have any sound come out. How he couldn't even feel his wolf, as if he'd been hidden away from him. He could feel Alex's muscles tighten as Jason talked about the hours he'd spent in Hank's hands being beaten and raped repeatedly, then being left alone just as he started to get movement back in his body.

Alex listened as he told him how his parents had heard about him being in a gay club, about how they didn't even care about what had happened to him.

Jason felt raw and exposed when he finally came to

the end of his story. His eyes stung from all the tears he'd shed, and his throat hurt. Alex's hands continued to move over his body, grounding him. Jason tensed up and started to worry as Alex, who had remained quiet through his story, still didn't say anything.

The deep rumbling voice of his mate finally broke through the silence. "Sweetheart, I'm so sorry you had to go through something so horrible. I can't even begin to imagine what that was like for you. I can't change the past, but I can promise that I'll always protect you in the future."

Jason finally started to relax as Alex's words filtered through to him. Jason turned around in his mate's arms and snuggled in as close as he could get. Whispering softly, he asked the one question that he needed to know the answer to desperately. "Does that mean you still want me?"

Alex's arms tightened as the answer came in his mind. *"Oh, sweetheart, nothing you ever do will make me not want you. You've been through something that no one should ever have to endure. And I can't tell you how proud I am of how far you've come in trusting me and my family."*

Jason lightly kissed the side of Alex's neck. *"You make it easy to trust and love you."*

"Thank you, sweetheart. How about we go have a nice warm bath to wind down and relax then we can try and get some more sleep?"

Jason liked that idea and nodded his agreement. Alex's arms tightened around him, and he lifted Jason and carried him to the bathroom.

Alex sat on the edge of the bath with Jason still in his arms and started the bath. Jason loved the feel of his muscular mate and ran his hands over Alex's back. Leaning forward, he gently kissed the tattoo of his name over Alex's heart. "Did I ever tell you how much I love seeing my name inked into your skin?"

Alex chuckled. "Maybe once or twice, but you're more than welcome to tell me again. I'm glad you like it."

Once the bath had sufficiently filled, Alex stood and moved them into the bath. Resting against Alex's strong chest, Jason let his mate and the warm water do their work and soothe the tension from his body. Of course, with Alex running his hands all over Jason's body, there was always going to be a part of his body that was tense. If he wasn't mistaken, Alex was in a similar way.

Wiggling his hips, Jason smiled at the sound of Alex's indrawn breath when their cocks rubbed together. Jason pulled back so he was straddling Alex's groin, then leaned forward so he could kiss his mate. Keeping the kiss soft and gentle, Jason explored the depths of Alex's mouth. Jason gasped, pulling out of the sweetest kiss of his life as a fingernail was scraped across his left nipple. Jason arched



his back and closed his eyes as his right nipple was pinched between Alex's strong fingers. A warm, wet tongue soon soothed away the hurt.

*"Have you ever thought about getting your nipples pierced, baby?"* Alex's thought came to him as he continued to lave and bite at his nipples.

"Ah shit." Jason moaned. "Not until now I hadn't. Would you like me to?"

Alex pulled back and looked him in the eyes. "I think you would look hot with silver barbells through these," Alex replied as he flicked both nipples.

*"Shit. I can't think when you do that. If I do, I want you to do it, Alex."* Jason was surprised at the deep possessive growl that came from Alex at his request. Alex moved his hand to cup Jason's ass cheeks and stood.

*"Time to take this back to bed, sweetheart."* Alex grabbed a couple of towels and wrapped one as best he could around Jason before walking them back into the bedroom. Jason didn't want to let go of Alex. His emotions were still all over the place. Alex patted him dry before lowering him to the bed. *"Let me dry myself, sweetheart, then you can be back in my arms again in less than thirty seconds."*

Jason lowered his head and let go of Alex so he could get dry. He hated feeling so clingy and needy, but he

just couldn't help it at the moment. Alex crawled into bed and pulled Jason back into his arms in the promised time frame. Alex lifted his chin so he could look into his eyes.

"It's okay to want to be held, sweetheart. You've had a bad night. Any time you ever just want to be in my arms, you let me know, day or night. I'll never turn you down." Alex kissed him before reaching down and pulling the covers up over them. "It's four in the morning, sweetheart. Why don't we try and get some more sleep, then tomorrow, you can come with me to the shop and we can see about getting those piercings."

Jason's eyes were already closing before Alex finished talking. The warmth of the bed combined with the feel of Alex's heartbeat under his cheek lulled him back to sleep.

\* \* \* \*

Jason was in the kitchen helping Brian put the finishing touches on the salads for the dinner with Alex's parents when a hand came out of nowhere and flicked his nipple. Jason jumped and sucked in a breath through his teeth as pleasure raced through his body, making his cock throb. He could hear Alex's chuckle behind him. Jason turned around and hit him in the chest. "No fair. I am so not

meeting your parents with a hard-on. Now go and make yourself useful and help your brothers with the grill."

Alex bent down and kissed him before making his way outside. Jason turned back around to see Brian watching him with a question on his face. Jason grinned then lifted the hem of his shirt so Brian could see his chest.

The shocked expression that graced Brian's face told Jason that he'd managed to stun his best friend. "Dude! When the hell did you get that done? Did it hurt? Does it feel good?"

Jason laughed as the questions started to tumble out of Brian's mouth. "Alex took me into work early this morning and did them. He asked if I'd ever consider it, and I said yes as long as he did it. It hurt like a bitch at the beginning. I'm glad we heal fast, or I'd probably still be in a great deal of pain. And yes, they feel fantastic, especially when Alex plays or sucks on them."

The sound of a throat clearing behind him stopped his discussion with Brian. Jason quickly pulled his shirt down and turned to face the room. They had been so engrossed with each other they didn't realise anyone else had joined them in the kitchen. Alex stood there with two older people who could only be his parents. Jason could feel his face turning red as he thought about what they'd just overheard him say.

*"Oh god. Why didn't you warn me?"*

Brian was laughing uproariously as he walked up to Alex's parents and hugged them hello before heading outside to no doubt tell the story to Marcus.

"Sweetheart, I'd like you to meet my parents, Joe and Maryanne Holland. Mum, Dad, this little spitfire is my mate, Jason Matthews." Silently, Alex added, *"What fun would that be?"*

Oh, his mate was going to die. Yes. A nice, slow, torturous death. *"You just wait. I'll deal with you later."*

*"I'm looking forward to it."*

Jason turned towards what he supposed were now his in-laws. "Umm, it's nice to meet you." His face still burning, Jason stepped forward and held his hand out to shake. A chuckling Maryanne looked at his hand before stepping around it and enfolding him in her arms. Jason noticed they were roughly the same height as he brought his arms up to hug her back.

"You're family now, just like Brian. It's lovely to meet you." She pulled back and looked him in the eyes. Jason thought the only way to describe the twinkle in her eyes at that moment was wicked. "It's also nice to know my son is taking such good care of you."

"Oh god." Jason wanted to die.

"Maryanne," Joe Holland said, "don't embarrass the

boy. It's nice to meet you too, son. We hope you and Alex will be very happy together."

Jason nodded as Alex walked up and enfolded him in his arms. He was dimly aware of the door leading outside opening and closing, but he just wanted to hide behind Alex for a while.

"How embarrassing," Jason mumbled.

Alex chuckled again. "It's fine, sweetheart. My parents are cool. Plus I think it's hot that you love it so much when I play with your piercings." Alex finished his sentence by tugging on one of said piercings. Jason stepped back quickly but couldn't stop the groan from escaping.

"We've already had this conversation. I refuse to go out there sporting a hard-on. I've already embarrassed myself enough, thank you very much."

"Okay, sweetheart." Alex bent down to quickly kiss him before he grabbed his hand and dragged him outside.

Ten minutes later, the doorbell rang. Simon got up to go answer the door as everyone settled back to their conversation. It was just luck that Jason was looking at Rick as the new arrival walked through the door to join them outside. Rick's back stiffened and his nostrils flared. An expression of what Jason thought was a mixture of deep longing and hurt quickly flashed over Rick's face before he managed to get his emotions under control.

Jason turned to look at the arrival, who he guessed was Jake, and noticed the same tension in his neck muscles as well. Alex introduced him to his friend and second-in-command, and they all settled down around the table to talk while they waited for the food to finish cooking.

Dinner was delicious. Considering the diners were werewolves, the meat was, of course, rare; the bloodier the better in Jason's opinion. He couldn't stand an overcooked steak, and there was nothing worse in his opinion. But Marcus had done a wonderful job.

Jason's gaze kept flicking back and forth between Rick and Jake as dinner had progressed. He noted they sat at opposite ends of the table. Jake didn't once look at Rick except when he had to. Rick, on the other hand, barely took his eyes from Jake. Jason wondered if there was anything going on between the two of them.

*"Alex?"*

*"Yeah, sweetheart?"*

*"Umm. Is there anything going on between Rick and Jake?"*

Alex looked at him and cocked an eyebrow at his question. *"Not that I know of, why?"*

*"It's probably nothing. I just thought they looked a little tense around each other."*

Alex turned to look first at his friend then his

brother. *"Hmm. Now that you mention it, they do. I wonder why."*

*"I'm sure they'll let us know when they're ready."* At least Jason hoped so. He had a feeling he knew what the problem was, but he wasn't about to voice his suspicions just yet. If Rick wanted to talk, Jason was more than happy to listen, but for now he had more than enough of his own problems to deal with.

After dinner, they retired to the family room so everyone was comfortable. Alex couldn't conduct the oath ceremony for Jason to join the pack, as his role was to be beside Jason as his mate when he gave his word. Jake stood in the centre of the room, and Jason and Alex positioned themselves in front of him.

Jason knelt and lowered his head, offering his neck as a show of submission. Jake's deep voice broke the silence. "Do you, Jason, accept this man, Alex, as your mate? Do you wish to join with his pack and place your trust and loyalty in them, always believing they know what is best for their people? Do you declare yourself to be free of any other pack ties that may bind you?"

Jason looked up so he was looking into Alex's eyes as he answered. "Yes" was the only word that he could get out. Alex's face lit up as Jason felt the pack bond slowly slip into place.

When Jason pulled his eyes away from Alex, he looked back to Jake, who was nodding and smiling at him as well. "Welcome to the pack, man. May you two be very happy together."

Alex grabbed his hand and hauled him to his feet before kissing him to within an inch of his life, breaking away only when it became imperative that Jason breathe again. Jason noticed the other family members waiting to congratulate him on becoming pack. After Rick hugged him, Jason watched as he quietly slipped from the room, looking back only once as Jake shook hands with Alex.

\* \* \* \*

Before Jason realised, the night was drawing to an end and he was hugging Maryanne goodbye as they stood at the door. "Now, you make sure that son of mine takes good care of you, you hear me?"

Jason smiled as he stepped back from the hug. "Yes, ma'am, I'll make sure he does."

Alex wrapped an arm around his waist as he pulled him close against his side. They shook hands with Joe, and Alex's parents left. Walking back into the family room, Simon and Jake were deep in conversation about the lack of realism in some movies these days. Jason noted that Rick



hadn't reappeared since he'd slipped out an hour or so earlier.

Alex settled down in one of the large leather recliners and pulled Jason down into his lap. Jason felt his cheeks burn and let out a small surprised squeak as he landed in Alex's lap.

*"Do you have any idea how incredibly sexy you are when you turn red?"*

Jason could feel his face flame further at Alex's words, and he tried to bury his face in Alex's neck.

"Nope, no hiding, sweetheart."

Jason heard Alex growl at the same time he reached down and tweaked one of his nipples. Jason jerked and moaned, finding himself as hard as a rock in a matter of seconds. Jason repositioned himself so he was straddling Alex's hips. Bringing their hard cocks into line with each other brought a low rumbling growl from his mate. Jason loved the noises Alex made, and he could feel his cock start to leak.

Alex's large hands landed on his ass, and he kneaded the soft flesh through his jeans. Jason moaned as he leaned forward and started working up a mark on Alex's neck. Alex stood, still holding onto Jason. Jason smiled as he went back to work on Alex's neck, thinking that if he wasn't careful, he would forget how to walk soon, as Alex

was always carrying him everywhere they went.

"Sorry, guys, but it looks like I need to take care of a few things for my baby."

Jason brought his head up and looked back to the men on the couches. He grinned at them before wiggling his eyebrows. This caused both men to start laughing. Alex popped him on the ass.

"Jake, thank you for coming, man. If there's ever anything I can do to help you when you find your mate, just let me know."

Jason saw the laughter drain from his face.

"No worries, man. Have fun."

The words were there, Jason noticed, but the emotion behind them was all wrong. Just as he was about to say something, Alex turned and walked them out of the room.

As he was set on his feet inside their room, Alex stepped back and cocked an eyebrow at him. "Now I do believe you said something about dealing with me later?"

Jason grinned as he whipped his shirt off over his head and slowly walked backwards towards the bed. Jason ran his hands over his tight abs, bringing his fingers up to pluck at one of his new piercings. A low moan was pulled from his throat as he copied this action with his other hand.

Alex leapt and tackled him until he was pinned to

the bed beneath his strong muscular mate. As Alex started ripping at his jeans, Jason chuckled and decided that he'd been right, and this was the only way to deal with his mate; give him exactly what he wanted. Who was he to complain really? It was a definitely a win-win situation all round.

## CHAPTER 9

The following Monday, Jason found himself home alone as everyone else was at work. Jason loved that he could work from home and didn't have to get dressed up and go into the office day after day. He often found himself sitting at his computer, fiddling with the websites he designed in nothing but a pair of jeans. Today he'd managed to pull on one of Alex's shirts as well. He knew how much it turned Alex on to see his mate in his clothes. Jason wasn't going to argue; this way, he could smell Alex all day long even though he wasn't here.

Jason had informed his customers before he left that he would be taking an emergency two-week break, but if they had any urgent issues, they all had his number. His fingers were itching to get back to work and get the design juices flowing again. He really loved his job and couldn't imagine doing anything else. One of the great things about it was that he could do his job from anywhere. As long as there was a high-speed internet connection he was good to go, so his relocation to Leyburn wouldn't affect his work at all. Jason knew he was good at what he did, and customers would continue to recruit him as long as he continued to deliver.

Jason was slowly working his way through his mountain of e-mails when the doorbell rang. Saving the reply so he wouldn't lose any information, Jason got up and made his way through the house to the entryway. Jason unlocked the door, but before he had the chance to grab the handle, it turned, and the door was shoved back into the wall. Jason was knocked back, and his head connected with the ground with a resounding crack.

Before Jason could even open his eyes to find out what the fuck was going on, he felt a sharp jab in his left arm and heat start to radiate down to his fingers and back through his body. Jason's eyes snapped open at the all too familiar feeling, and panic gripped his body as Hank stood over him, an evil glint in his eyes. His lips curled up in what could only be described as a snarl.

"Hello, baby, did you miss me? I told you I would find you when I was ready for more."

Hank crouched down over him. He reached behind him and closed the door, making sure to lock it so they wouldn't be disturbed. Jason tried to shudder at the thought, and he tried to scramble backwards as well, to get away from this mad man, but his body had stopped working. Shit. Whatever the hell that drug was it worked fast. He did the only thing he could think of and screamed in his head for his mate. "*Alex!*"

\* \* \* \*

Alex was cleaning up his work station after a customer had left. His inks were all put away precisely and the customer chair had been cleaned and disinfected with alcohol. Alex was about to go and see if his next customer was waiting when he was hit with such an overwhelming sense of fear and hopelessness it nearly brought him to his knees. Holding on to the doorframe to steady himself, Alex was hit again, this time with an image of a rather heavy-set blond man, his face contorted into a snarl. He was leaning over Jason, with what looked to be an empty syringe in his hand.

Alex nearly cried out as his mate's voice screamed his name in his mind. Alex didn't think; he just ran. He pulled his keys and phone out as he ran through the waiting area, and he didn't stop when Suzie yelled out to him. Pushing the door open, he dialled Marcus as he raced to his bike. He was just straddling the bike when Marcus answered his call.

"Get home now. Jason's in trouble."

"I'm on my way."

Alex ended the call and pushed his phone into his pocket. Alex started the bike and headed for home as

quickly as he could. *"Hang on, baby. We're coming."* Alex didn't know if Jason could hear him. He tried searching for the connection he had with his mate but could barely feel him. Alex clenched his teeth and accelerated even more. The need to get to his mate was so strong, and his wolf so close to the surface, Alex didn't know if he could stop himself from changing. As it was, he could see hair starting to sprout down his arms and his nails lengthening. If that man laid one hand on Jason, Alex would kill him.

Alex could see the police car behind him as they turned onto their road. Pulling to a stop outside their house, Alex jumped from his bike and ran. He heard the crash as it hit the ground and the low rumble of the engine idling behind him, but he didn't care. All that mattered was getting to his mate. Alex could hear Marcus running behind him as they reached the front door.

Realising the door was locked, Alex didn't take the time to try and find his keys. Instead, he stood back and kicked the door with all his strength. The wood around the lock shattered, and the door swung open.

Alex ran into the house, followed closely by Marcus, who had drawn his weapon. Following his mate's scent, Alex ran into the kitchen. The scene before him nearly caused his heart to break, as well as sending white hot anger throughout his veins. Jason had been stripped

naked and was bent over the table. He'd obviously been beaten. The man standing behind him had his cock in hand and was paused at Jason's entrance, about to rape his baby.

Because he didn't want his mate hurt again, Alex didn't even think. He launched himself into the air and tackled the man to the ground. Alex came down hard on the man and didn't even break momentum as he let his fists fly into the stranger's body. Alex had no idea how many times he hit him. It wasn't until Marcus wrapped his arms around him from behind that anything managed to filter through his anger.

"Alex, you need to stop. Let me handle him. Jason needs you." The thought of his mate had Alex leaping up from the now unconscious man beneath him and racing to find his mate.

Marcus must have moved Jason as he was no longer on the table; he wasn't anywhere in the kitchen from what Alex could see. Making his way into the family room, he found his mate wrapped in a blanket, lying on one of the couches. Alex reminded himself to thank Marcus later as he made his way over to his mate.

Alex could see a dark purple bruise on Jason's right cheek from where he'd been hit, his lip was swollen and split, and blood ran down his cheek to pool underneath him. Alex could also see the twin tear tracks that had silently



leaked from his mate's overwhelmed body.

"Shh, sweetheart, you're safe now. I'll never let him hurt you again." Jason just continued to stare at him, his body barely moving. Alex gently ran his hand through his mate's hair and stroked his cheek, careful not to cause any more pain. "How about a bath, hey, baby? We'll go and get you nice and clean, and then I think you could do with a nap."

Alex hoped to Christ that Jason agreed with him. He'd never felt so isolated from his mate. He couldn't even imagine what it was like for his little man to be locked inside his body and not be able to communicate with him at all. From what Jason had told him, he could be like this for several hours.

"Try to relax, sweetheart. Remember that I love you."

Alex gently kissed his mate as he lifted him into his arms and started to make his way to their room. Two police officers were walking through his front door as Alex walked into the passageway. He recognised them both as pack and acknowledged them when they greeted him. Alex informed them Marcus was in the kitchen then turned and made his way upstairs.

Alex gently placed his precious bundle on the bed and lightly kissed him again. "I'm just going to quickly go

run a bath, and then I'll be right back." Alex made his way into the bathroom and got the tub filling with warm water. After making sure he had everything within easy reach, he went to collect his mate.

Alex stripped off his clothes then unwrapped the blanket from around Jason. Alex's heart broke when he noticed the bruises scattered across his mate's torso. "I'm sorry if this hurts, sweetheart. I'll try and be as gentle as I can be." Alex bent and picked his mate up and walked back to the bathroom. Placing his mate gently in the warm water, Alex kept one hand under his mate's head to help support him. Alex knew Jason had no control over his body at the moment and didn't want to cause his mate any additional harm. After washing Jason's body, paying careful attention to all the bruised areas, Alex lifted him from the tub and reached over for the towel.

Once Jason was as dry as Alex could get him, they made their way back into the bedroom. Alex leaned down and pulled the sheets back before climbing in with Jason still in his arms. Alex pulled the blanket up and manoeuvred Jason until he was resting with his head on Alex's chest, an arm wrapped around his waist. Alex continued to gently rub his back and place little kisses over his face.

It took some time, but Jason's breathing eventually

evened out, and Alex could only hope he was able to rest while his body recuperated from the drugs that had once again been forced on him. The thought of what his bright, sexy little man had been forced to endure had anger coursing through his body once more. A light tapping at the door brought his attention.

Marcus poked his head in. "How is he?"

"He's bruised and battered. But apart from that, I don't know, as he can't talk. I can barely even feel our mate bond." Alex managed to get the words out around the lump that had lodged in his throat at the thought of what his mate had gone through.

"He's strong, Alex. He can get through this with your help. I know he can." Marcus seemed to steady himself before he continued. "Paul and Steve hauled that lowlife away. He was still unconscious when they threw him in the back of the car. Suzie called, and I let her know to cancel your appointments for the rest of the day. I didn't think you'd be going back. I'll leave it up to you to contact her about any more time you think you might need off." Alex nodded at his brother in understanding. "I know you might not want me to, but I have to go tell Brian what's happened. He's Jason's best friend, and he would kill me if I didn't tell him."

Alex thought about that and conceded that Jason

might want his friend as well when he woke up. "I know. Can you call Rick and Simon and let them know as well?"

Marcus nodded. "Will do. Take care and I'll bring Brian back a little later." And with that, Marcus slipped from the room and quietly closed the door behind him.

Alex rested his head back against his pillow and looked down at his sleeping mate. He knew the peaceful look on his face wouldn't last once he woke up, but they would deal with it. As long as they were together, they could deal with anything. And with that thought running through his head, Alex finally let the tension drain from his body and the exhaustion take over as darkness claimed him, too.

## CHAPTER 10

### *Three Months Later...*

"Harder, Alex. Argh god, please... Harder." Jason heard himself begging, but he didn't care. He didn't care about anything at the moment but his mate's hard cock working away at his tight hole. He was kneeling on the bed, his hands braced against the headboard to stop himself from banging against it as Alex hammered away behind him.

At Jason's pleas, Alex's hands tightened on his hips, and he pulled him forcefully back onto his thick cock at the same time he thrust his hips forward. Jason screamed as the pleasure raced through his body. Alex continued to hit his sweet spot with every forward thrust. His cock hard and dripping, Jason was so close, that one stroke would take him over the edge into orgasmic bliss, but he was unable to move his hands from where they gripped the headboard.

"Please, Alex. Please, I need..." Jason's brain had shut down at some point, rendering him incapable of complete sentences. Jason could feel the heat and sweat of his mate as he covered his back and growled in his ear before a wet tongue swiped across his neck where his

mating mark was.

*"I know exactly what you need, sweetheart."*

And with that statement, Alex sank his teeth into Jason's neck as his cock pegged his gland repeatedly. Jason screamed again as his cock swelled and exploded, covering the sheets beneath him in his seed. His ass clamped down on the thick cock buried in his channel and he felt volley after volley of hot cum sear his insides. The knot extended from the end of Alex's cock, attached to his prostate, and sent him straight into another orgasm. Black spots obscured his vision as he collapsed onto the bed beneath him. He was distantly aware of Alex coming down on top of him.

*"Sweetheart? Are you okay?"*

*"Ummm, I think you melted my brain."* Jason could hear Alex's chuckle behind him. Jason snuggled into his mate's warmth and enjoyed the feeling of being safe and loved.

Alex had taken such good care of him after Hank had found him that day. The feeling of warmth and safety Jason had awoken to after everything that had happened went a long way towards being able to live his life with only a few hang-ups along the way. He was determined not to let Hank beat him.

Jason still woke occasionally from a nightmare where Alex and Marcus hadn't gotten to him in time. But

Alex was always there to talk about it whenever that happened.

After Marcus had arrested Hank, they found out he was wanted in three other states on similar charges of kidnapping and rape. He was facing at least thirty years in prison. Jason shuddered at the thought of having to face Hank again when he told his story to everyone in court, but it was something he knew he had to do for himself.

But that was later. Now, it was a lazy Sunday morning, and he had a mate to enjoy it with as they spent the day in bed. Wiggling his hips back against Alex's groin, he turned his head. "Ready for round two, baby?"

His very large mate growled as he flipped Jason to his back and settled himself on top.

"Always ready for round two with you, my very determined mate." And with that, Alex slowly slid into his ass as he took Jason's mouth in a rough kiss.

Oh yeah, Jason thought, definitely a day to be spent in bed.

The End

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Well, what can I say about me? I'm twenty-eight, married and a mother to one. I work full time, and when I'm not spending time with my family or friends, you can find me either reading on my laptop or writing.

After spending god knows how much money on my reading obsession (yes, I can admit I'm a little obsessed), I decided to give writing my own book a try. I still can't believe someone thought it was good enough to publish.

I'm certainly not going to argue with them.  
I hope you enjoy reading my work as much as I enjoyed writing it.

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ALSO BY TONI GRIFFIN

Available at **Silver Publishing:**

THE HOLLAND BROTHERS

*Unexpected Mate*

*Determined Mate*

## REVIEWS

### What *Queer Magazine Online* Says About *Unexpected Mate*:

Unexpected Mate is the first in a new werewolf shifting series from Toni Griffin. Set amongst smaller towns in what appeared to me to be a more rural backdrop gives it a special charm. I also enjoyed how Tori writes the brothers all living together yet separate from Mum and Dad. This gives another layer to the story that is almost a bit "boys gone wild", yet creates a wonderful sense of pack and camaraderie.

Marcus is a wolf determined not to be gay, so therefore he mustn't be. Dating female members of the pack and sleeping with them only confirms that, right? Wrong. The abrupt about face from denial to acceptance is well written, playing true to form as his brother's step forward to provide a much needed dose of reality. Marcus is a protective character, showing intensity with all emotions, but also displaying a fun-loving side. This fun-loving edge is the perfect foil for Brian.

When we first meet Brian, he has been exiled from his own pack. I connected with him quite quickly. Empathy was a powerful motivator as feelings of misplaced trust, trepidation, resentment and a basic feeling of fed up mix together in a volatile package. Brian shows true depth of emotion as the plot line develops. Contentment, tenderness and a side order of cheeky are the result, making Brian a very likeable character.

It is obvious there will be further instalments to this series and I, for one, can't wait to read them. I would recommend this story to anyone who enjoys shape-shifter or paranormal stories written in a contemporary style.

Written by Nerine Petros