

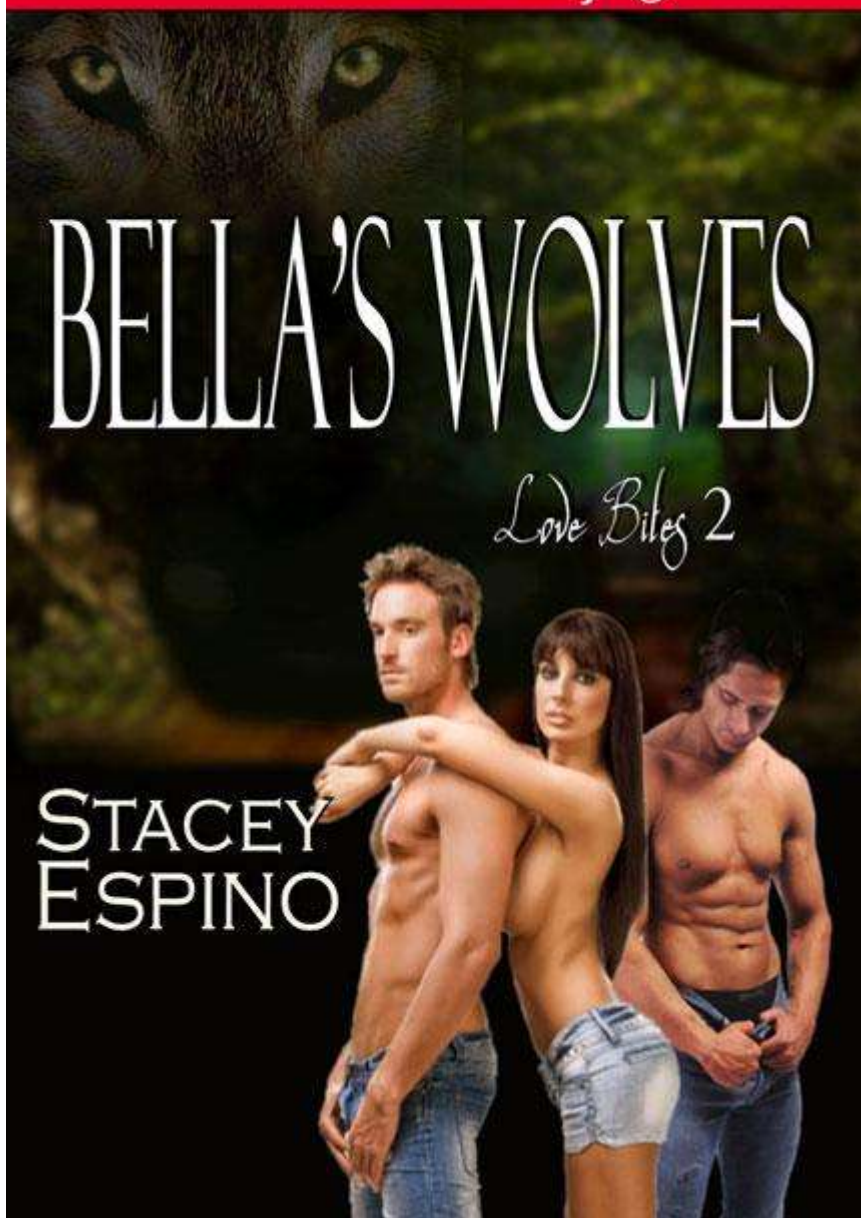
Siren Publishing

Ménage Amour

BELLA'S WOLVES

Love Bites 2

STACEY
ESPINO



Love Bites 2

Bella's Wolves

Being the fifth wheel on a group camping trip isn't Bella's idea of a good time. Rather than sulk, she decides to explore the old growth forests. She finds more than expected during her innocent hike in the woods. What will she do when two gorgeous men want to claim her body and soul?

Ben and Draco both believe they've found their mate—a human no less. Who does she belong to? They're both determined to win her over and be the first shifter to administer their love bite.

Genre: Ménage a Trois/Quatre, Paranormal, Vampires/Werewolves

Length: 28,620 words

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MENAGE AMOUR



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DEDICATION

To all my faithful readers. You make my writing worthwhile.

BELLA'S WOLVES

Love Bites 2

STACEY ESPINO

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Chapter One

"How much for a blow job?"

Bella whirled around, clutching her purse against her body. "Excuse me?"

As soon as she asked the question, she glanced down at herself and the surrounding area, realizing exactly what the man implied. He thought she was a fucking hooker. For the love of God!

When Amanda had told Bella to dress "hot," she assumed her friend had meant for her to dress sexy, not for the weather. They often went to clubs on the weekends, so the request didn't surprise her. Considering the sweltering heat and the questionable corner she was expected to wait at, Bella probably should have dressed for the weather. The sun had long set since she finished work at nine. She had just enough time to run home, shower, and change, before boarding the bus to meet Amanda at Bridgestone and Maple, the seediest part of town.

“How about five bucks?” asked the man that clearly didn’t belong in the ghetto. He was clean-cut, about twenty pounds overweight, and probably had a wife and kids waiting for him at home. Sometimes men sickened her, and right now she felt ready to hurl.

“Do I look like a five-dollar hooker to you?” Anger laced her question, even though she probably did look the part with her shorter-than-short black miniskirt, knee-high leather boots, and red leather tube top. Hey, a girl deserved to let loose and have fun. Dressing the part didn’t mean she jumped into bed with any man. In fact, it had been a long three years since her last boyfriend, but she wasn’t sweating it. With her luck though, she’d land a Prince Charming that came to street corners like this after work, only to return home and play Mr. Innocent. She didn’t have the time or energy to deal with losers like that.

“Ten?”

“Oh, Christ. Fuck off!” She crossed her arms over her chest, the valley between her breasts slick and moist from the humidity that wouldn’t let up. The man turned and disappeared into the shadowed streets, his footsteps marking a hasty retreat. Now that she thought about it, Amanda better hurry up because standing out here wearing next to nothing was a very bad idea. The next guy that came along could be a lot more threatening than the wannabe John.

Bella paced the sidewalk, hugging her purse to her bare midriff, and praying that her ride would show up soon. Only the streetlights changing in a regular pattern—green, yellow, red—at the intersection kept her company. She realized just how much she must resemble one of those elusive ladies of the night. If she got another indecent proposal before Amanda showed up, she’d have some serious self-esteem issues.

Since it was a clear night, she noted that the moon was nearly full, so grand and dominant in the night sky. She couldn’t peel her eyes away, craning her neck back to study the moon’s irregular surface. The sight brought her a sense of peace and comfort, as though the moon were a companion always keeping watch over her from above. It had been ages since she’d connected with nature. As a kid, she’d reveled in country life, savoring every moment she could spend at one with Mother Nature. Her parents were more than happy to spend the money to ship her off to expensive horse and survival camps for the summer. They had been her happiest memories growing up. Bella could handle the outdoors with her eyes closed and hands tied behind her back. She could outride any cowboy and prided herself on her survival skills. There was a box of old trophies and badges buried in her parents’ basement to attest to her superiority in outdoorsmanship.

That was the past.

Now Bella lived in the city, working a near minimum wage job with long, tiring hours. But it’s what she wanted—freedom and independence from her wealthy, controlling parents. Her parents felt like strangers, always speaking in riddles and never allowing her to cut loose and have fun like her friends. Her father continually told her she was special, which was why he felt the need to be so

overprotective. Bella didn't buy it. She'd live off the street rather than spend another year locked up in their deceptive paradise.

She closed up shop at nine most nights and was too tired to party afterwards, so basically she lived for the weekends. At twenty-nine, her days of partying became less and less fulfilling, but since it was Friday night and her only weekend off in a long time, she was up for anything.

Her roommate Amanda had met her "true love," or so she believed, so Bella's days of shared rent were drawing to a close. Of course, she was a bit jealous, even though she loved Amanda. Sitting on one sofa eating nachos while her best friend giggled and cuddled with her boy toy on another became nauseating, Bella looked forward to a night out with just the girls. She dressed to kill because she wanted to have a blast, to forget her financial worries, forget she was miserably single, and forget the fact that she wasn't getting any younger.

A car horn honked three times, loud, echoing off the mostly abandoned buildings. Bella jumped, her heart pounding behind her ribs. She turned to see the black SUV pull up alongside her, the streetlights reflecting off the sleek, painted surface. As the window lowered, techno music permeated the night air.

Amanda poked her head out the window. "Sorry we're late, Bells. Get in."

She didn't recognize the vehicle. Both she and Amanda took the bus, and Amanda's boyfriend, Keith, had a blue Honda. With the SUV's windows heavily tinted, Bella couldn't see who was driving, but opened the door to climb into the backseat beside her friends.

The interior smelled strong of expensive leather. Keith sat up front beside the driver, a guy she'd never seen before. His short, dark hair was gelled back, and he peered at her from the corner of his eye, with a smirk on his lips. Another good friend of Bella's, Sara, sat next to Amanda.

"What's going on?" asked Bella as her back hit the seat from the sudden acceleration.

"It's a surprise," said Amanda, who leaned to the side to appraise Bella's attire. "And what on Earth are you wearing? I told you to dress for hot weather, not like a skank."

"No, you told me to dress *hot*, and I did."

"I guess you can change when we get there. I've packed your things for you."

Bella wasn't one for surprises. The more she knew, the better. "For what?"

They pulled onto the highway, heading north. Bella's body tensed. She felt as if she was being kidnapped, and the anxiety she always tried to keep in check, bubbled to the surface. "We're going camping. *Surprise!*"

"You've got to be kidding me, Amanda." She felt smothered, mentally tallying up the occupants in the car—two couples...and her. No way would she be the fifth wheel on a camping trip. An unplanned

camping trip. It was bad enough listening to Amanda fuck Keith in the next bedroom when he slept over, never mind the same tent. She was going to kill her friend. That's the way Amanda was though, larger than life, determined to get her own way.

"It'll be fun. Listen, I've had to hear about your old camping stories for almost a year now. So now it's time to own up to your claims. I know you'll have a blast."

Bella leaned close, whispering into Amanda's ear. "Are you fucking nuts? You're both bringing guys and didn't think I'd feel uncomfortable being the only solo party on the trip? Shit, do you ever think?"

"It's not like that. The guys are gonna be off doing guy things. It'll be just the three of us most of the time. Just try to relax and enjoy yourself."

"This is ridiculous." She shook her head and crossed her arms over her chest. "We're not even prepared. Where're we even going?" From Bella's experience, a camping trip was a big ordeal requiring at least a day's worth of planning and packing.

"I packed everything. Don't worry. Dave knows of the perfect secluded spot off the Cariboo Highway. It's a long drive, but worth it. Try and get some sleep."

With a heavy exhale, Bella twisted to face the window. She tapped down her rising anger because she knew from experience how quickly she could lose control. Why fight it? Amanda always got her way in the end anyway. Sometimes she felt like they were an old married couple the way they'd argue and make up.

Camping? Maybe it wouldn't be so bad to get out of the city. The constant cycle of work and sleep could really drain the life out of a woman. Though she would have much preferred just the three girls, no boyfriends, what was done was done. Worst-case scenario, she could take off on her own and do some exploring and hiking. She'd bet her life that she'd outshine the two men when it came to survival skills. Men always had to be the best, had to be the providers and protectors. Bella needed neither.

Chapter Two

“Wake up, sleepyhead.”

Bella twisted and opened one eye. The leather seat creaked as she shifted. She’d actually fallen asleep during the ride, but after pulling that double shift at the store, she shouldn’t be surprised.

“What time is it?” Her familiar nighttime friend, the distant moon, stared down at her from a darkened sky.

“Around four in the morning. Come on, we’ve got to set up the tents.” Amanda exited out the left side of the vehicle after Sara.

Bella opened the door and stepped out onto the soft earth. The air had a sharp chill, causing her skin to break out instantly into goose flesh. With the weather being so hot in town, she didn’t even have a sweater with her, only the skimpy tube top. She felt like an idiot now. Amanda and Sara both wore blue jeans and a cardigan over their shirts. Bella was usually a jeans and T-shirt kind of girl. The whole outrageous ensemble was just for fun, to become someone else for one night.

At least her almost waist-length hair veiled her shoulders in a thin layer of warmth. No matter how many times she cut it, it grew back with a vengeance. Now she saved her money and let it have its way.

As she stepped away from the glow of the SUV’s interior lighting, her senses magnified, coming to life even in her sleepy state. The guys were already out in the clearing setting up, arguing with each other. Twigs cracked and snapped, and the low murmur of voices comforted her in the pitch black. The forest backdrop highlighted by the moon wasn’t at all inviting as she’d remembered from her previous camping experiences. After nightfall, she’d always been bundled up in her tent, not standing out in the open without protection. Bella easily imagined every variety of dangerous beast watching her from beyond the curtained symphony of insects. If she stared at the wall of blackened forest any longer, her

imagination would play dirty tricks on her and find images that didn't exist. She stepped closer to the light of the vehicle and helped Amanda and Sara unload the back.

"This is stupid," said Sara. "How are we supposed to set up when we can't see a thing? We should have come in the morning."

"We have the headlights," said Amanda, forever optimistic.

They each dropped an armful of equipment on the ground in the clearing. Every sound they created seemed too loud, magnified in the sleeping landscape. Her four companions made enough racket to wake the dead—or the bears and the wolves.

"How many tents are there?" asked Bella, assessing the disorderly pile of equipment.

"Two," said Amanda. "One for us. One for the guys."

Keith stepped over the pile of tents and sleeping bags. "Actually, I brought a pop tent for Isabella. I thought it would be romantic for each of us to have our own tent." He pulled Amanda against him and kissed her neck, making her squeal and slap his shoulder. Bella wanted to gag. They hadn't even started their grand adventure, and she was already the unwanted fifth wheel. Now she'd have to prove the bravery and survival skills she boasted about by sleeping alone in a little one-man pop tent. There would only be a couple millimeters of thin nylon protecting her from the elements and wildlife. She sighed, mentally tallying up the odds against her, but kept her mouth shut.

* * * *

"What are humans doing all the way out here? On our land?" asked Johan.

"They're not hunters. I don't scent their usual stench or gunpowder. It's not like tourists to come out this far." Ben crouched in the woods, still as a gargoyle, watching the humans that made an obscene racket—objects clanged, voices shouted, and car doors opened and slammed shut repeatedly. The group of humans was definitely not there to orchestrate some sort of sneak attack on the pack. They just happened to be in the wrong place—wolf shifter territory.

"How long you gonna watch them?"

"Until I'm satisfied they won't be a problem." Ben ran his hand through his hair and tested the air again. There were females in the group. The fragrance was unmistakable.

With their two alphas getting busy nearly every night with their mate, Ben was coiled tight. Living out in the bush with no female wolves and too far out in the wilderness to hook up with humans, it took just the sweet smell of a woman to make his cock ramrod hard.

"You haven't been yourself since Callen's pack started moving in." Johan stood and stretched, his movements only disturbing the air, not making a sound.

"I don't trust them. The whole merge has me on edge."

"They're loyal to Callen, and Ethan agreed that Callen is just as much our alpha as he is. Best get used to it."

"I'd still rather play it safe. You have to earn trust in my book."

Johan patted Ben on the shoulder. "I'm heading back. Don't stay out here all night." His tone was laced with concern. He disappeared into the undergrowth without a sound.

Johan might be heading back to camp, but not to a warm bed, not since their alphas' moved their little human mate into the small cabin. Construction had already begun on a new house, a magnificent layout that would house a growing pack. The next generation was brewing in Ingrid's stomach, making both Callen and Ethan overly protective, which said a lot. Everyone had to sleep outdoors in wolf form. It suited Ben fine, but Johan and Grant complained to no end.

Ben was at home in the forest, preferring solitude to city life. If he had his own mate, he'd be happier than a lark to stay in the northern forest forever. Many shifters turned soft over time, spoiled by the humans' modern cities and conveniences. Not Ben. He was one hundred percent in tune with his wolf and thrived in rustic, less than sublime, conditions.

With Johan long gone, Ben decided to move in closer. Damn, those humans were loud. As he observed the interactions between the people, he realized how much he missed spending time with his best friend, Callen. These days his main concern was his mate and his new role as alpha. About now, they'd enjoy scaring the wannabe survivalists with some grunts and growls from the darkness, but alone, it didn't have the same appeal.

Even a loner could get lonely.

It took the group of humans over an hour to set up the tents. The sunrise would waken the land in just over an hour. When the humans settled into sleep, rightful silence returned to the forest, and Ben moved in closer. Shifting into his wolf form, he crept in and took inventory of the campsite. There were two large dome tents and a smaller one on the periphery. At first he assumed they kept supplies in the small pop tent, but as he neared he could smell her. *His mate.*

He knew the truth the moment he smelled her unique fragrance. Something within him sparked awake. His wolf, as well as the man, knew the woman in the small tent was fated to him by the gods. There wasn't a doubt in his mind. Only now did he understand the pull of a mated male. He may have

resented his two alphas for favoring their female over the pack, but in an instant, he knew why. His protective and territorial instincts spiked to new levels. As the sun began to rise, he still paced the perimeter around her tent, chancing getting caught. It took all his resolve to return to the forest and away from the woman he hadn't even seen.

* * * *

Bella stretched her legs and sat up in the confined space. She rummaged through the duffel bag filled with clothes Amanda had packed for her. Although she didn't like the idea of Amanda going through her stuff in her bedroom back home, she nearly laughed out loud when she saw her worn blue jeans. After shucking her skimpy club clothes, she pulled them over her hips, then she added three layers to her upper body and two thick pairs of socks. The cold still clung to her bones. She needed a source of heat to dismiss the chill. Maybe she'd attempt to get a fire started. She could vaguely remember her childhood camping skills and hoped they'd come back to her when she needed them most.

Bella unzipped the tent opening and stepped out into the rustic, hushed surroundings. She could forget the real world existed living out in the woods. She could see things that had been hidden the night before. The tree line surrounded her, thick with underbrush. When she looked up, the forest canopy seemed to reach the clear blue sky. Wildlife flourished, birds singing and small animals clamoring in the branches around her. The air filling her lungs was pollution free and smelled both sweet and earthy.

During the night, she could have sworn there was something or someone on the other side of her tent wall. Sometimes she thought she saw the shadow of a wolf in the moonlight, but the next moment it was gone. She blamed her heightened senses on her frayed nerves. They were deep in bear and wolf country. One could never be too safe, and she had no protection. Thanks to her active imagination, and the potential for real danger, she got little sleep.

As Bella explored the immediate area, she realized that she'd changed over the years. She was no longer the young girl that thrived in the woods, in tune with Mother Nature. All she could think about was the running water, electricity, and warmth of her apartment. It saddened her that her hopes and dreams had fizzled into nothing since starting her adult life. She'd always dreamt of building a log cabin in the woods, living a simplistic life at one with nature. The opposite of how her parents raised her. Now, looking around, she realized what she had once loved now scared her. Her friends expected her to be at home in the wilderness, but she secretly hoped the guys would wake up, make a fire, and take control. She'd never admit that for the life of her.

Bella had lost her childhood dreams and that spark of believing she could do anything. Her parents had stifled all her fantasies, so she focused on escaping their control and getting her own place. Rather than use her freedom to reach her goals, to follow the path she'd always dreamed of, she'd forgotten her dreams. She also forgot how it felt to be at home in the forest, to use her imagination to escape reality. Bella had sold out.

A twig snapped in the forest. Bella wished she had some peanuts for the squirrels and chipmunks. She squatted down to try and spot some of the wildlife, but found nothing. It had gone eerily quiet, as if the animals and birds sensed danger. Bella sensed nothing but early morning peace. Once she stood and took a step back toward the camp, there was another snap coming from the same place. This time she ignored it. Daylight gave her newfound courage.

Bella rummaged through the supplies, realizing just how unprepared her party was. She found no wood or tools, just sports equipment, folding chairs, and a cooler filled with bottled beer. How were they expected to make a fire? Without an axe, she wouldn't even be able to collect wood.

No stirring came from either of the larger tents, so Bella decided to venture into the forest to collect kindling and maybe some fallen branches. Once she got a fire going, she'd feel a hell of a lot better. The morning air was bitter and chilled her all the way to her marrow. At least the two couples had each other to keep them warm. She'd spent most of the night awake, scared out of her wits, and shivering uncontrollably. When she got Amanda alone, she'd give her a piece of her mind, and hopefully they'd pack up and head out in the afternoon. What a waste of a weekend off.

She dispelled her irritation by hiking deeper through the underbrush. This was an old growth forest, so there was no shortage of dry twigs and branches. Her arm was full of kindling, but she kept moving deeper, enraptured by the massive moss-covered trees. She felt as if she were in the middle of a fairy tale, some magical place she only dreamed about once upon a time. Bella smiled to herself, feeling twelve years old again. Her legs burned from exertion, but it felt good. She was alive for the first time in years. Perhaps being kidnapped from the city was the best thing that could have happened to her.

Minutes turned into hours. Her stomach protested, but she hated the idea of returning to the campsite. She felt at home in this forest. Some natural force seemed to surround her, lulling her into peaceful submission. "Bella!"

The voice carrying through the forest was like a bucket of ice water to a sleeping body. She jolted to attention, completely oblivious to the time and place. The spirit of the forest had pulled her out of reality, and she was almost disappointed to regain her awareness.

Bella backtracked along the rough path of pine needles and leaf litter, following the sound of voices. They grew louder as she neared. Amanda's voice carried a hint of fear, and Bella felt guilty for being gone so long without word.

"Bella! There you are! Where in God's name were you?" Amanda ran over, closing the short distance between them once she emerged from the shelter of the forest, giving her shoulders a firm jostle.

"I was just hiking. I lost track of time." Bella winked. "Folklore says old growth forests have enchantments. Might not be so far from the truth." She dropped her pile of kindling at Amanda's feet. Everyone gathered around and looked from her to the wood she'd collected. Bella couldn't help but notice the two men carried no love for her, trying unsuccessfully to rein in their scowls of disapproval.

Amanda sighed heavily and turned to face her boyfriend. "See? I told you she had to be off doing her survival thing. Look, she brought us wood."

Keith stepped forward and crossed his arms over his chest. "Well, if she's as good as you say, then let's see her build us a fire." All the expectant eyes upon her made her nerves flare up. Did she even remember how to do any of this? She had no flint or matches. Did they expect her to create a fire from scratch or were the guys going to step up and help her? She felt so cornered, so alone. That feeling of love and belonging when in the forest was a sharp contrast to her current situation. She had the urge to run, to run free like the wild animals hiding from the light of day—no worries, no regrets, just the strain of her muscles.

"I brought the wood. Surely a big, strong guy like you knows how to use a lighter." Appealing to a man's Neanderthal pride always worked. The two men teamed up, attempting to build a fire. *Man build fire. Good.* She rolled her eyes and joined her two friends, now sifting through the supplies.

"Did you bring anything to eat besides beer and chips?" asked Bella. She was starved and hoping for a real campside breakfast consisting of hash browns and bacon on the open fire. However, there was no cast iron pan or any basic supplies. What were they thinking when planning this trip? They had to eat.

"We were gonna stop at the grocery store off the highway. Guess Keith forgot. We'll head out in a while and get what we need. It can't be too far." Amanda tried to salvage the situation, but the look in her eyes didn't inspire confidence. How long was she going to defend Keith to her friends, her parents, the world? She deserved better.

Bella could accept that Amanda would soon move on, probably to start a family with Keith. She'd be left behind—fine, but she hated that he constantly tried to put a wedge in their friendship. It was a miracle he'd agreed to let Amanda bring Bella on this adventure at all. She was certain Keith agreed under duress because if looks could kill, Bella would be dead and buried.

"I'm starving," Bella complained. Her stomach made itself heard.

Sara unfolded a chair and plunked herself down to remove a rock from her shoe. "I've already eaten a whole bag of chips myself. My diet's shot."

Amanda clapped her hands. "I know!" Her eyes twinkled with life when Bella felt like a zombie. That was usually the case. "We'll split up and search for berries. I mean, the pioneers survived in the bush, right? There must be something edible out there." She motioned to the wall of forest around them.

"This is Canada, not the tropics. We'll starve to death if we play *Little House on the Prairie*." Bella had had enough. She knew hunting for berries would be a waste of time, but Sara and Amanda sprinted off like schoolgirls, with high hopes of finding a source of food for the five of them.

She exhaled and dropped into Sara's seat, watching the gentle breeze rustle the leaves high in the forest canopy. It sounded like waves washing up on the shore, calming her and pulling her into daydreams. She'd had such little sleep that it was so easy to succumb to the heavy weight of her eyelids.

"I told Amanda it was a mistake bringing you here," snapped Keith.

Bella was startled awake from her semi-sleepy state, sitting upright in the chair and nearly collapsing with it. "Excuse me?"

Dave came up behind him, determinedly rubbing two sticks together. There was still no fire in their manmade pit, and they were no doubt pouting over their shattered manly pride.

Keith looked off in the direction Amanda and Sara had taken before continuing. "This is supposed to be a romantic weekend. You're supposed to be the fucking survivalist that makes things easy for us." He turned around and snatched the sticks from Dave and tossed them on her lap. "Be the hero and make a fire before you ruin this experience for Amanda."

"Like you care about Amanda. You're just sorry that your ego's bruised. You think having a woman save the day will help you feel better? Didn't you even bring matches? It's not exactly rocket science to light up some kindling and throw on a few logs."

He dragged a heavy hand through his hair. "No, I don't have matches. I don't smoke. Why the fuck would I carry matches?"

"Because you're camping in the woods?" she answered sarcastically. Every minute that passed made her more and more uncomfortable being trapped with these jerks. Keith might put on a pretty face for Amanda, but he threatened Bella. She didn't even doubt that he was capable of physically harming her. He was relatively big for a guy, and she was petite for a woman.

"You're a smart one, aren't you?" He put his arm around Dave's shoulders and leaned against him. "Take the truck back up the path and see if there's a store nearby. Check the highway signs. They should give you an idea of the closest rest stop. Bring back something to eat."

Dave nodded and took the keys Keith handed him. Great, now they'd be completely alone. No witnesses if he decided to kill her and hide her in the bushes, claiming she'd gotten lost hiking. Her wild imagination made her muscles tense and thoughts irrational.

As Dave pulled out of their camping area, the tires spinning on the dirt, she stood up and put distance between her and Keith.

He followed her. "Was anything you told Amanda true, or are you just completely full of shit?"

"Hey, I haven't been camping in years. And, for your information, I never asked to come on this trip. If I'd been told in advance to prepare for this, I'd have packed appropriately."

He stared at her for longer than a comfortable moment, his lips pursed. "You realize the reason Amanda hasn't moved out yet is because of you, don't you?"

"No it's not. And where is this coming from?"

His mood shifted to something darker. He stalked forward, getting in her space, forcing her to back up. She ended up tripping over one of the tent ropes, falling back on her rear end, and scraping her palms on the ground.

"There a problem here?" A deep baritone came from directly behind her. Without getting up, she tilted her head back and looked up, up, up at the man standing less than a foot away.

"Who are *you*?" asked Keith.

The mystery man bent over and helped her to her feet. His arm was thick with muscle. When she looked up at his face, he smirked playfully and gave her a wink. "My name's Ben," he said to her, ignoring Keith. Keith would be a fool to put on his macho display for this guy. He had to be a head taller and twice as broad. She couldn't stop staring—was she drooling?

"Thanks for that. I'm Bella." She broke eye contact and brushed the dirt from her jeans.

Keith stepped forward, and as if countering his movements, Ben stepped between them. "You camping near here? We're in need of supplies. Is there a store nearby that you know of?"

"I'm with a small group of hunters. You won't find any civilization around here for at least an hour's drive."

"Fuck," Keith muttered, and kicked the cooler nearest him. The glass beer bottles inside clattered together.

Ben put an arm around Bella's shoulder and led her away. His hand was big and so warm when her body shivered internally. "Are you hurt?"

"I'm fine. Just scraped my hands." *And bruised my ass.* He stopped dead and grabbed her wrists, turning her hands palm side up. He frowned as he examined her.

"I should take care of this. It's better if you come with me. I have a first-aid kit at my camp. Besides, you're freezing, and we have a fire going."

"I'll come along," said Keith from the distance.

Ben's calm aura transformed in an instant as his odd greenish-yellow eyes narrowed. "I didn't invite you."

"But you invite *her*? For a scratch?"

Ben took a deep breath, the tick in his jaw going strong.

"I can't leave my friends," said Bella. *Or let you take me into the woods alone.* She had no clue who this guy was, even if he'd been a gentleman. "Maybe you could help us build a fire?"

Her sexy stranger ran his hands up and down her arms to create warmth from friction. His touch sent tingles all the way to her clit. How long had it been since she'd been with a man? She couldn't even remember exactly. This blond stud brought out all her base desires. Ben had such a magnetic aura that reined her in effortlessly. He may not have realized the significance of saving her from Keith, but it meant a lot to her. "Okay. I don't want you to be cold. But you should still consider my offer."

Within minutes of bending down beside Keith and Dave's fire pit, Ben had the beginnings of a healthy fire going. She didn't know how he'd done it without flint or a lighter. Bella could respect a man's man, one that knew how to survive in the wilderness. It was a turn-on. Not that his shaggy mop of dirty-blond hair, perfect white teeth, and classic good looks had anything to do with her escalating hormone levels. His tall, leanly muscled body, with biceps straining in the sleeves of his white T-shirt, did nothing for her. Yeah, right! All she could think about was him wrapping those strong arms around her to fend off the cold. Why wasn't his skin broken out in gooseflesh like everyone else's when he only wore a thin T-shirt? Talk about survivalist and a thick manhide. Her pussy began to pulse with a desire she'd never really known. The men she'd been with in her life had done little for her libido, and none of her relationships had lasted more than a few months.

Ben brushed his hands together as he rose from the roaring flames and turned to face her with such intensity she felt weak in the knees. It was as if he knew what she was thinking, that he sensed her arousal and thrived on it like a man possessed. She froze when he moved in on her. All her natural senses were heightened. She could hear her heart pounding in her ears and the crunch of dirt under his heavy black boots as he neared.

"Awesome!" Dave slammed the truck door shut and joined Keith at the fire. "You do this?"

The bubble of intimacy, or what she believed to be an intimate moment, was shattered in an instant.

Chapter Three

Ben had previously had no intentions of showing himself to the campers. He'd remained on the periphery of the campsite all night, unable to tear himself away after picking up her unique scent. When she'd stepped out of her shelter in the morning, he rose to attention, spying her from the shadows of the forest. He wasn't disappointed.

His mate had long, dark hair and fair skin. Even in her disheveled state, he was awe-struck by her beauty. His cock hardened, knowing she belonged to him, knowing one day soon he'd have her under him. He couldn't keep his eyes off her or stop testing her scent on the slight breeze, like the finest perfume, one that was both new and familiar. He'd been waiting his entire life for her alone, and neither of them even realized it.

Ben had watched the girl as she entered the woods, following her, watching her, knowing she'd never hear or see him. The forest was his element whether as man or beast. Once, she was nearly atop him, oblivious to his presence as he crouched in the underbrush. He could feel her emotions, and it was a unique connection, one usually shared only between pack members. Ben closed his eyes and breathed in deeply. He hadn't even marked her, but already, they had bonded on a spiritual level. She allowed their link to take hold of her, drifting through the forest as if she'd lived there all her life.

Although he enjoyed watching his woman, staying close, he had no plans on meeting her until he had time to come up with a decent plan. She was one hundred percent *Homo sapien*, and he knew about human customs. His alphas were mated to a human, and she was not one to bend over backwards. They had their work cut out for them convincing her to accept their true nature. He wanted to be sure he didn't scare the woman off. He'd have to court her, earn her trust. Unlike a female wolf, she wouldn't follow her instincts.

His plan was going along fine until that bastard threatened her when she returned to the campsite. The limp dick raised his voice and stalked her, both unacceptable. Ben could smell the acidic scent of her fear, which only brought his beast to the surface. Threaten his mate and threaten him.

Without thinking, he moved into action, ready to rip the man's throat out. But once he was by her side, and knew he could keep her safe, his anger subsided and his rational thoughts returned. Tamping down the wolf was difficult when he was used to letting it run rampant. Living in the forest without taking leave to visit the city to socialize with humans, he'd lost a bit of his humanity with time.

"I'll speak with my friends. Maybe they wouldn't mind if your camping party joined us for dinner." He'd sensed her trepidation when he asked her to leave with him, but he had to get her alone to allow them a chance to bond. How could he get to know her or show her how much she affected him if Dumb and Dumber were on them like glue? He thought he'd have his work cut out for him getting a human woman to warm up to him, but he could scent her desire. It was potent, earthy, a hormonal signature made just for him—one he couldn't resist. As he watched her, his main focus was maintaining control when all he really wanted to do was knock her to the ground and fuck her raw.

"Great. Then we wouldn't have to worry about finding a grocery store," said Keith.

Ben stifled the growl rumbling to the surface. At some point, he'd have to leave her alone with the two men and every instinct within him screamed to stay by her side. There were two other females in their group. He'd wait until they returned, and then find Callen to tell him the amazing news that he had found his mate. Callen may be one of their alphas now, but he'd always be Ben's best friend. They got along so well together, but unfortunately their close tie had begun to unravel since Callen's mating. Although he'd resented his pack mate for months, all hostility now fizzled away. Ben knew exactly what Callen meant by the pull of the mating bond. Would he be able to give Bella his love bite, marking her as his, one day? Just the thought sent a shower of peace through his blood and made his cock harden simultaneously.

"How far out are you camped?" asked Bella, hooking her thumbs in the front pockets of her jeans. He could feel her discomfort and desire in equal parts. He wasn't that intimidating, was he? If she realized how easily she could wrap him around her little finger, she'd be brimming with confidence. He'd eagerly drop to his knees to get a taste of her sweet little pussy. She had no idea that he was made for her pleasure.

"It's a good hike from here." *Try miles away.* Travelling in his wolf form through the forest took no time at all. If he had to lead her group through the old growth forest, it could take hours.

Keith and the other man joined them, moving into their bubble of space without permission. "You said you were a hunter? What are you doing way out here, alone? You don't look dressed to hunt." This guy was proving to be more of a problem than he initially expected. Human males usually gave shifters a wide berth of space, without knowing why. They emanated a dominant energy that was usually enough to guarantee them undeterred visits in the city. Keith needed to learn some manners, and he'd love to teach them to him. But, no, he'd behave for Bella's sake.

The cold and harsh elements didn't affect Ben, even in his human skin. He had to remember that it would be seen as abnormal to be walking around in a thin T-shirt in the frigid morning hours. "I was just scouting the area nearby when I heard yelling."

“That would be Bella’s fault,” snapped Keith. “She wandered off and freaked out my girlfriend.”

He bit his tongue before replying. “Good thing she did or I’d never have stumbled across you.” Damn, he wanted to pull Bella against him. Her lips trembled from the cold, and he had the warmth to stave off the chill. He ignored the men, leading her away by the elbow. “Sit,” he told her when they reached a dark green canvas chair.

She complied and sat down with a wince. The poor girl had probably bruised her ass when she fell. He’d love to kiss it better, but that would have to come later. When the time came, he’d kiss every inch of her luscious body. Ben knelt on one leg in front of her, the fresh dew on the ground penetrating the knee of his blue jeans. He loved the feel of her skin against his. Her wrists were thin and feminine. When he looked into her eyes, hers were dark and wide, and he couldn’t help but stare. How could a virtual stranger have such an effect on him? He always believed he would choose his mate when he was ready, that finding “the one” was a bunch of bullshit. How wrong he was. There was no choice. Bella was the only woman for him, and he adored every detail from her big brown eyes and dark, flowing hair, to her full lips and small pixie nose.

“It’s nothing. Just a scrape.” She attempted to tug away, but his hands shackled her wrists. Could she feel what he felt when she looked in his eyes? Was the pull there for her, too?

“I don’t want a mark on you,” he said without thinking. He didn’t want to come across as overbearing and weird her out, but it was the truth. His woman would be taken care of, protected, and satisfied. Even a scratch wasn’t acceptable, in his opinion.

“It’s not your fault. Don’t worry about it.”

“I do worry.” She tried to replicate disinterest, a normal custom for human females, but he could feel the energy passing between them. No way was she that immune. “Tell me, Bella. Do you like being this deep in the forest?”

She whispered, “It scares me.”

“There’s nothing to be afraid of. You were made to come here.” He wanted to add, “made to be with me,” but stopped himself. Too soon.

“Maybe a lifetime ago, but I’m not a young woman anymore.”

“Age has no power over a person. We have the same dreams until the day we die. It’s only our fears that stop us from following our dreams.”

She smiled, and he felt the beauty of it radiate through his body. He wished he could tell her everything in one breath—that he was a wolf shifter, and that she was his mate. How would that go over?

Bella swallowed hard, and he decided he better back off for a while. He released her and stood to his full height. She was so fucking tiny, he could scoop her up and steal away into the forest. He

wanted to, but decided it was time to leave. The females were almost back. Their footfalls were easy to distinguish in the unpopulated area.

"I'll stop by later after I speak with my friends. Take care." He turned and glared at Keith and Dave before returning to the forest.

* * * *

Bella's mind was a muddle of emotions. The hunter was the hottest guy she'd ever seen, with a body to die for. If there was ever a man to risk a one-night stand on, it would be him...not that she would. He just had some sort of magnetic pull that was hard to resist. She was even tempted to leave with him, forget Keith and the whole forced camping trip. When he abruptly stood and left, she felt breathless and empty, like she should follow him to the ends of the Earth. He had a cute smile and the deep, hypnotic tone of his voice was comforting. She could listen to him talking forever. Bella wondered if he lived in the city. The thought of leaving without getting to know him, or at least get his number, filled her with dread.

There was no way he wasn't attracted to her. A man didn't look at a woman like she was something to eat if he wasn't interested. Ben had an animalistic quality that made her pussy pulse. His unique greenish-yellow eyes and full lips were a tempting distraction, making her feel more like a hunter than a woman. She watched him walk away until the forest consumed him. *Gone*. She sighed and mentally scolded herself for not flirting when she had the chance.

A few minutes later, Amanda and Sara returned to the campsite, empty-handed. "No luck?" Bella asked as she stood to meet them.

"Not unless you like tree bark and poison mushrooms for breakfast." Amanda dropped down on a fallen tree trunk and sighed. "I'm starved."

"Looks like we're in luck, babe." Keith moved to sit beside Amanda. "We're going to have dinner with some hunters. We won't have to leave to get food after all."

"If his friends agree to have us. That's if he comes back at all," said Bella. She hoped she was wrong and he returned. How could she ask for his number if he stayed away?

"He'll be back," said Keith. "He made us a fire. He's not going to let us starve to death."

The fire crackled, and Bella moved close to warm her hands. She couldn't stop reflecting on the way Ben looked at her. It had made her whole body heat, and she had to stop herself from imagining him naked. With every muscle straining against the cotton of his T-shirt, it wasn't difficult to envision.

She was no fool. The guy also had a hard-on for her. It took everything she had not to stare at the impressive bulge in his jeans.

"I say we should get out of here today," said Dave. "I mean, come on, even if he comes back, that's one meal. What about the fact we're starving now? What about tomorrow? This was a bad idea."

"Why didn't anyone think to pack food?" asked Sara. "Seriously. That's basic, isn't it? If I had known, I would have gone shopping, but you said everything was taken care of."

Amanda stood and whirled on Sara and Dave. "Sorry, okay!" She threw up her arms. "I was thinking about camping equipment, not food. I can't remember everything. It took me all day just to find all the pieces to the tent in the storage locker."

Their budding argument was cut short when a loud pop made everyone jump. It was like a mini-explosion, but there was no smoke or fire. Bella's hands flew to her ears as her heartbeat ran rampant behind her ribs.

"What the fuck was that?" Keith got up and approached the SUV with timid steps. "What the hell?" Everyone gathered around when Keith's guarded stance eased.

"How did that happen?" asked Dave, bending down to examine the truck tires. Bella peered over his shoulder. Both tires on the left of the vehicle were blown out, tilting the whole mass of metal to one side. The whistle of air continued to sound as the remaining air leaked from the holes. *Shit*. Of all the luck.

Everyone looked around, scanning the tree line. There was nothing to explain the tires self-combusting. They couldn't just blame the incident on a criminal because this wasn't the city. The tires probably couldn't handle the rugged terrain they travelled to get this far into the woods. They were completely alone in the wilderness and now had no way of getting back to civilization. Even with the spare mounted on the back of the SUV, they'd still be running on a flat.

"That's really weird." Amanda stood to the side rubbing her arms up and down. "What do we do now?"

"Honey, this trip was your idea." Keith dragged a hand through his black hair and exhaled in a growl. "Never mind. We'll head into the forest the way that hunter left. We should stumble on their campsite sooner or later. They'll have to help us now."

"What hunter?"

"I said never mind. Let's go." Keith tucked a crowbar under his arm and snatched Amanda's hand before plodding toward the forest. Dave and Sara followed with a flashlight. Bella knew it was unlikely they'd find what they were looking for. They had no survival training, and the forests this deep in the British Columbia wilderness were nearly impossible to navigate and full of creatures a camper wouldn't want to come across without a rifle. She remembered her night in the little tent when she

swore she saw the shadow of a wolf. What about bears? This was a very bad idea, but she didn't want to be left alone at the campsite either. Against her better judgment, Bella followed her friends into the underbrush. They were already calling out, hoping Ben would still be in earshot. Hopefully they didn't attract unwanted attention.

Chapter Four

Ben neared the clearing behind the cabin. He stopped and dropped his boots before shifting into his human skin. The long run through the forest did wonders to ease the burn in his groin and the rage he carried for the males sharing Bella's campsite. This new killer possessiveness was distracting. All he could think about was getting back to the human campsite. He stretched out his muscles before pulling his rolled-up jeans out of one boot and dressing. If he showed up naked and Ingrid happened to be around, Ethan would have his head.

He tucked the edge of his T-shirt into the waistband of his jeans and strode the remaining distance on two legs. Before reaching the log cabin, he already knew it wasn't empty. The hormonal signature of Ingrid's pregnant body was undeniable, and his connection to both alphas was ever present.

Ben bounded onto the front porch and reached for the door handle. Before his hand made contact, the door flew open and Ethan's large frame blocked the entrance.

"What is it?"

"I need to talk with you and Callen about something important." *I found my mate*. Ben tried to peer inside the cabin, but Ethan shifted to the side. He could only imagine what transpired in the bedroom, the air laden with the scent of sex.

"We're busy. Is it important?"

"You mind if I bring some guests over for dinner? I'll do the hunting and cooking." It wouldn't take much effort to shift and hunt down a deer to roast over the open fire out back. He really hoped Ethan was desperate enough to get back to Ingrid and wouldn't question him about the guests. Telling his alpha that he wanted to bring a group of five humans to their private residence wasn't something he expected to go over well. The least Ethan knew beforehand, the better.

"Bad idea."

“Don’t worry about Ingrid. I’ll take full responsibility for them. They won’t be a problem.”

Ethan dragged a hand through his thick black hair and chewed his bottom lip. After a few moments, he nodded as if agreeing with his own decision. “Glad you’re finally coming around.” Then he slammed the door shut.

Complicated? Hell yeah. Ethan thought he was inviting members of the new pack over for dinner. Ben refused to accept them since they started arriving. A few months back when they discovered that their pack member, Callen, was actually the long lost alpha to a pack of shifters in northern BC, things were bound to change. The new pack needed a leader and since their alphas, Ethan and Callen, had mated with the same human woman, merging packs was the next logical step. Having two alphas ruling one large pack was unheard of, but so far, Ben seemed to be the only one that had a problem with the newcomers.

They’d always been a small group, just the five of them, Ben, Callen, Ethan, Johan, and Grant. Joining the larger pack of eighteen put the numbers against them. Ben refused to trust the newcomers just because they claimed to be loyal to Callen. Their scent was foreign, and he had no desire to socialize or bond with them.

Now, Ethan thought he’d had a change of heart. Nope. But he wouldn’t argue the misunderstanding when it meant a free ticket to getting Bella on the property. If Ethan threw a fit tonight, Ben would just remind him that he had okayed the visitors. Sometimes a communication failure could work to one’s advantage.

It was time for him to return to his mate and bring her back to the cabin. *Let the courtship begin.* There were over a dozen new shifters roaming these woods. They weren’t as refined as Ben and his pack mates. They’d lived away from civilization and were more wolf than man, unfamiliar with human customs and behavior. If they thought Keith and his friend were a threat, they wouldn’t think twice before killing them and using the women for their pleasure. Ben’s blood ran cold after the unpleasant thought. If any harm came to Bella, he wouldn’t stop until he destroyed every last shifter from Callen’s new pack, even if it meant his own death or banishment.

“Where you off to?”

Ben turned to his right, only to find Johan squatting beside a large oak, watching him. “You wouldn’t believe me if I told you.”

“If you’re heading back to check on the humans, don’t bother. Last I saw, about five of the new guys were onto their scent. Bet you they’ve packed up and barreled back to the city by now.”

Ben’s heart rate increased as he envisioned another male touching or harming Bella. He was a good thirty-minute run from her campsite. “They’re still there,” he said, his voice monotone as he plotted the fastest way back to his mate.

“How would you know?”

“Huh?” He turned to his friend again, trying to focus. “Oh, I slashed their tires.”

Johan stood, his head tilted in disbelief. “You slashed their tires? I thought you wanted them gone? You do realize you’ve sealed their fate. If they can’t escape, those fucking wolves will rip them to shreds.”

He didn’t stand around to converse, but dropped down to all fours as his body shifted. His bones snapped and morphed as he went from man to beast in seconds. The change hadn’t caused him pain since puberty. It was as seamless as diving in the fresh water lake east of the cabin. In the blink of an eye, the change enveloped him, caressing his flesh, bonding all the facets of his mind into one. Once fully transformed, he leaned down and snatched his jeans into his mouth and bounded off into the forest.

* * * *

After an hour of hiking through near impenetrable forest and over downed trees and numerous obstacles, the group split up. Bella was too exhausted to argue when Keith led Amanda one way and told Dave to split up and go the other way with Sara. Nobody questioned the fact that Bella would be on her own. Like she’d raved, she was a queen in the forest. All her stories came back to bite her in the ass. She’d only been a kid when she got her survivalist awards. It was just one of the few things she had to be proud of in her life. The summer months spent away from her parents’ control were her best childhood memories. Those days had been about fun and innocence. The forest and potential danger around her was all too real, and she felt smaller than an ant in the center of awe-inspiring nature. Bella accepted her insignificance as she tried to make sense of the greenery around her.

She was lost. The distant footsteps and the sounds of the two couples arguing had vanished long ago, and every moss-covered tree trunk looked the same. If she knew for sure she’d come across Ben’s camp sooner or later, she’d have the energy to plod on, but only God knew where she was. She could be traveling in the opposite direction and deeper into oblivion. The sun was no longer high in the sky, and the thick forest canopy above her gave a sinister shadowy effect to the world below.

When the first set of glowing yellowish eyes stared at her from the thick tangle of brushwood in front of her, she stepped back on instinct. She held her breath when the second set appeared a few feet from the first. By the time she saw the third pair of eyes focusing on her every move, she’d resigned herself to a gruesome death. She had nothing to protect herself with, not even a utility knife.

Her voice failed to work when she attempted to scream. It was like a nightmare where nobody could hear her cries for help, but this was all too real. She could hear her heartbeat in her ears and

heaviness of her breathing as she gasped for air. As she mentally tallied the odds and all possible avenues of escape, nothing gave her hope. She was trapped, alone, and helpless.

"Don't you know it's dangerous to be walking around the forest alone?"

Bella whirled around, a voice the last thing she expected to hear in her last minutes of life. A very naked man leaned against a tree, casually raking his gaze up and down her body, unfazed by the wolves moving in around her. When she turned to watch her back, the eyes that had been watching her were gone.

"Who are you?" Her entire body was tense and on guard. She felt surrounded and vulnerable, not sure if the man in front of her was more of a threat than the wolves or a saving grace. Where were his clothes, and why was he so comfortable with his nudity? He leaned casually with one broad shoulder against the tree, his arms crossed over his muscled chest. *Keep your eyes up, Bella.* For the first time since the sun began to go down, she was thankful for the thick shadows surrounding them.

"My name is Draco. The question is who are you?"

His eyes were a greenish-yellow and seemed to glow in the dim lighting like the wolves' eyes had. When he took a step toward her, she moved away from him, closer to the wild animals. She felt like a trapped rat. "Stay away from me..."

"Would you prefer me to leave you alone with the wolves?" Then his deep baritone lowered to a whisper. "They don't like you as I do."

She had to stay safe, keep this stranger away from her. "My friends are nearby. My boyfriend will be looking for me." Did her trembling voice give away her lie?

"Boyfriend?" His eyebrows rose and humor rang in his voice. "Where is he? Shouldn't he be near you, protecting you?" He cornered her against a thicket.

"He'll be here."

"I don't think so." Draco reached out and ran his hand down her arm. "You're cold and all alone. Let me take care of you." Rather than freaking out, an odd sense of calm trickled through her blood. She became lost in his eyes, spellbound by his rugged masculinity. There were so many questions plaguing her mind—who was he, why was he naked, why did he look at her like she was the only woman in the world? But all that mattered now was his dominant presence, his mesmerizing voice, and electric touch. Even being buck naked, the man was warm—almost hot. And she was so cold.

"There were wolves," she whispered, barely able to form the words. Bella should be afraid, but every second felt safer with Draco.

"Are you afraid of wolves, little one?" He tilted her chin up, and she didn't pull away. In fact, she felt a pull between them, making her rational thought fizzle away. All that mattered was the here and now, she and him.

“Yes.”

“No wolf would dare touch you when I’m with you. Do you believe I can protect you?”

“Yes.”

He caressed her face, lightly running his fingertips along her jawline. “Do you believe in fate?” She leaned into his touch, closing her eyes and just absorbing the energy between them. “I’ve seen you before. In my dreams.”

She opened her eyes and looked up into his. He stood so much taller than her, so broad and all male. “I’m confused.” It was the truth. She felt as if she were drugged, unable to think coherently. Her fear had dissipated. Why?

“As am I. A little human female.” He chuckled. “I never would have thought.”

“Are you going to hurt me?”

He pulled away with a frown, his exotic eyes narrowed in disapproval. “I just saved you from the wolves. I’m not here to harm you.” Her mysterious rescuer ran a hand through his mop of shiny black hair. She examined the sharp planes of his face, his strong jaw shaded by new stubble, and his unusual eyes. He aroused a hunger within her that she couldn’t squelch, not even with her uncertainties. “Now...tell me your name.”

“Bella.”

He repeated her name as if savoring the sound. “*Bella*.” Then he licked his lips, firm, full lips that she craved to feel between her teeth. She swallowed hard as lust crept up her body like unstoppable wildfire. This was ridiculous. In one day, two men had aroused a passion deeper than all the men she’d dated put together, a hundred fold.

“I need to find my friends. I need to leave.” She had to breathe, to clear her head.

Draco grabbed her upper arm as she attempted to shift away. He tugged her against the hardness of his body and stared at her with a heated intensity. God, was he ever warm. She wanted to wrap her arms around his waist as much as she wanted to run away. “Why do you resist me? I know you feel it, too.” His free arm reached around her body, securing her to him.

“Draco!”

Bella’s body jolted as the booming voice startled her. Draco released her and turned to face an enraged Ben. She had to stop herself from smiling. She’d been so desperate to find him and here he was. The remnants of daylight highlighted his dirty-blond hair.

“Benjamin. Out patrolling the woods again? I thought we had that covered.” While Draco remained nonchalant, the volatile energy radiating out from Ben was palpable.

“What are you doing with her?” he snapped, stalking forward. With just low-hung, faded blue jeans and no shirt, she felt overwhelmed by all the muscled goodness. Both men had to spend their fair share of time in the gym with those chiseled pecs and abs. These men were unreal. They didn’t fear the elements or the beasts of the woods. She was afraid of everything at this point.

“Keeping watch. It’s not safe for a human to be hiking through the woods unattended.”

“Thanks for your concern. I’ll take over from here.”

Chapter Five

Draco didn't need or want help from Ben, the youngest wolf from the new pack. He'd come to investigate outsiders with a few others on their new claim when he'd come upon *her*. As soon as his wolf picked up her scent, he knew she was his female. It was strange how instincts could take over so suddenly, but he'd heard the stories about finding one's mate time and time again. When you found her, you knew, without a doubt.

He shifted and ordered his pack mates to give them privacy. Reluctantly, they skulked away, consumed by the forest. The fact that the girl was human amused him. Draco had always detested the human race. They destroyed wildlife for sport and ravaged virgin forest out of greed. They took more than they needed and only left a path of destruction behind them. Humans were weak, soft-skinned, and, in his opinion, the inferior race.

But there was no denying that he'd do anything for the frightened little human. His hatred did not include her. She was beautiful with big, dark eyes on a pale face and adorable feminine features. All his protective instincts seemed to surface when he drew near. She was his, and he had to take care of his own. In one moment, he had a new purpose in life. Unfortunately, he knew little about the human race, except that they didn't know shifters existed, one of many obstacles he'd have to overcome. Fate certainly had a sense of humor.

He'd watched her for a few moments before revealing himself. She might have feared him initially, but he could smell the moisture escaping her body as her hormonal signature fluctuated, increasing by the minute.

"You don't understand. Finders, keepers, friend." Draco had learned the ins and outs of his new pack from his new alphas, Callen and Ethan. They were fair and honorable. Finders, keepers was one of their ways—you kept what you hunted and shared of your own free will. He liked that. Although he'd normally be more than happy to share everything with his friends, he would not share his woman.

Ben moved forward, his eyes darting to Bella and back to Draco. Why was the shifter radiating such malevolent energy? You'd think Bella was his mate the way his eyes narrowed as if ready to kill for her. It made no sense. She was clean, with no scent of a male on her body, no claim of ownership, no love bite.

Draco wanted the merge to be successful. His pack had been desperate to find their true leader, and when they found Callen after decades of absence, they all vowed to make the merge work no matter how difficult. The new pack had only four members besides Callen, one being another alpha. So on top of adjusting to obeying two leaders when he never had to follow the rules of even one, Draco was forced to create friction by guarding his mate from his new pack member. He didn't lash out because if he could handle the situation diplomatically, he would. The elders of his group continually preached about the importance of the merge, but, if the young shifter pushed him, well, he wouldn't hand over his woman after just finding her.

"Finders, keepers won't work here. She's mine, Draco."

"Whose?" questioned Bella, looking between the both of them.

Draco furrowed his brows. "She's unmarked, which means she's up for the taking." While his voice remained steady, there was no denying the threat it carried.

"Back off while you can."

Bella's fear signature finally captured his attention. "What's happening here?"

Draco maintained his position in front of Bella. He'd shelter her body and protect her from his pack mate to the death if need be. The poor little human was scared and clueless. Ben was ruining everything. Although love was something that developed over time, the bond from finding his female was no less significant.

"Give me two minutes. I promise to explain everything." Bella shouldn't have to hear what they had to say. She was an innocent human and no doubt confused by their hostility. He took a couple steps forward until nearly chest-to-chest with Ben. They were similar in height and build, both several inches over six feet. "You don't understand, pup. The moment I picked up her scent, I knew. She's my mate, and I plan to mark her properly."

"I think you're confused," he grated out. "Maybe it's the new territory or something messing with your senses, but she's clearly mine. I've never been more certain of anything in my life."

"Well, isn't this perfect?" Draco threw up his hands and paced the area.

"In these parts, it's custom to wear clothing." Ben shook his head in disapproval.

Should he be ashamed? He'd never hidden his human flesh behind manmade clothing before. He spent most of his time in wolf form anyway.

"Is it? Are you threatened?" Draco chuckled, reveling in the shifter's discomfort. He knew his body was strong, and his cock nothing to laugh at, even semi-flaccid.

"No, but I know how to respect a woman. Exposing yourself is, well, just plain tasteless." Ben tilted his head to the side with a sly smile, thinking he'd gained some ground over Draco.

Draco turned when the air shifted behind him. Bella was attempting to sneak away. He shared a confused glance with Ben before going after her. "Bella...where're you going? It's not safe in the woods."

"I have to find my friends." Fear rang in her voice. He didn't want her afraid of him. Ben had ruined everything.

"I don't think Bella would be too pleased if your friends found them first, do you?"

Fuck. Eventually he'd have to reveal he was a wolf shifter and the truth would carry enough obstacles on its own. She'd blame Draco for not stopping an attack if the wolves decided to tear apart her friends. With a low growl, he turned to Ben. "Keep your paws to yourself."

Then he bounded into the forest. Once out of sight, he dove forward, landing on four canine legs. He was the logical choice for Bella's mate, not that pup, Ben. He'd never keep up with Draco in wolf form. The new pack was soft, used to living as humans and immersed in human culture. That was a sure fire way to lose sight of the wolf.

As he navigated the young saplings and underbrush with ease, his thoughts drifted. Draco would have preferred a female of his kind, but those were few and far between. He couldn't even remember the last time one was born. When the plague hit, decades earlier, few females were spared its devastation. Shifters that were mated with the remaining female wolves continually birthed males. Due to the lack of selection, many wolves turned to human females, creating a generation of half-breeds. His elders said the mating call was a gift from the gods, something you couldn't choose or turn away from. Now he believed the wisdom of their words. Bella's spirit called to him. Although he worried about the future of his species, he knew he'd never choose another over Bella, not even if a female shifter became available.

* * * *

"Was that one of your friends?"

Ben didn't consider any of the new pack his friends yet. He had been perfectly happy with just the five in his pack. Although he could accept Callen as a second alpha, only because they had been best

friends beforehand, the new wolves were another story entirely. What started out as putting up with them for the sake of peace just became a lot uglier. One of the newcomers wanted to stake a claim on Bella. Big mistake. Here he was trying to play the gentleman and take things slow when that fool presents himself buck naked to her, courting her like a savage animal. If he had sensed fear rather than lust coming from his mate, he would have ripped the older wolf a new one. The fact that she desired Draco at all put him at odds. Even if she didn't realize they were mates, the bond should have kept her from being sexually attracted to other males. Something was wrong. Perhaps the bond wouldn't solidify until he marked her, which had suddenly become his foremost goal.

"Um, yeah. He's in our hunting party. But that guy's a bit off his rocker. You should stay away from him."

She didn't look pleased with his answer. "About our situation... We have bigger problems than just being unprepared for meals. Our truck has two flats. Know anything about that?"

He shrugged. "No clue. But I did talk with my friends about dinner. It's all set." Once he forgot about Draco and focused on the woman in front of him, his guards lowered and desire welled up inside him. "You hungry?"

"Starving." Her smile was so sweet, she seemed to light up the darkening forest. Any time now and the residual sunlight wouldn't filter in through the trees. Then the wolves would come out to play. With so many newbies on their territory, he didn't trust being out alone with Bella. He could take better care of her at the cabin where the alphas could lay down the law if things got out of hand. "And cold," she added.

He took her plea as an invitation and wrapped his arm around her shoulders, tugging her to his side.

"Aren't you freezing with no shirt on?" She laid a palm against his chest. The simple physical contact made his groin stir. "You're hot. How is that possible?"

"A person can adapt to most things given time." Would she accept his wolf once he revealed the truth? Hollywood did a knockout job of messing up the truth about werewolves and every paranormal bump in the night. This wasn't *Twilight*, and his real identity would likely be met with fear. Normally, he could appreciate that, but not when he needed Bella to accept him, love him, and certainly not fear him.

"I used to feel at home in the forest, but that was a long time ago. Now I'm spoiled by modern conveniences." She sounded disappointed in herself for her change. As a human, there was nothing to be ashamed of for embracing the modern world around her. He could even appreciate his rare ventures into the city—soft beds, food served to your table, a gaggle of women giving him bedroom eyes. Now, there was only one woman for him, and he had to work fast to win her over before Draco or some other wolf tried to move in on his territory.

"I'd love to spoil you," he whispered. "If you'd give me the chance."

She looked up at the forest canopy, no doubt her eyes only picking up shadows, then back at him. Ben's sight was perfect at any time of night. "I hardly know you." She reached up and laid gentle fingertips on his jaw. "Your eyes..."

He jerked away and began to move, holding Bella's hand and keeping her close.

"Where we going?"

"My camp." He continued to trudge through the underbrush in his bare feet. His skin may be thick, but in his human form, he'd much rather have his boots. When he took off to find her, he hadn't been thinking straight and left them behind, only taking his jeans.

She came to a standstill, forcing him to stop. "What about my friends?"

"Draco will make sure they arrive unharmed." That he could assure her. For some reason, the other wolf wanted to please Bella, too. Draco actually believed she was destined to be his, which was ridiculous.

"He's going to find them in the dark, naked, with no weapons?"

"Trust me."

* * * *

Trust would be good, but it had to be earned, not accepted blindly. Draco and Ben were so unlike the men she'd dated in the past. They were wild and rustic—hunting, surviving, and running around the forest in little or no clothing. Even the bloodthirsty animals obeyed, just as she felt compelled to submit to these two men.

How easy it would be to believe Ben really wanted her and fall for his charms. She could sure use a fairy tale in her life about now, but accepting Ben would mean rejecting Draco. As nuts as he seemed, she also felt the same pull between them as she did with Ben. She must be more repressed than she thought. Going years without the affections of a man was taking its toll on her. Maybe if she got laid, her mind would clear. Right now, she desperately wanted to believe his sweet words, even if they were bullshit. At least today she could feel like a princess.

She followed alongside Ben. If he wasn't holding her hand and leading her, she'd never have made it out of the forest alive. He truly was a bushman, blindly navigating the dark tangle of underbrush with ease. His hand in hers was strong, rough, and so very warm. With her body chilled to the bone, she wanted to nestle against him, allow him to fend off the elements with his big muscled body.

Animals ran alongside them in the dark, cracking twigs and plowing through thickets. Their yips and snarls were blood curdling, making her press closer to Ben. Why weren't the wolves attacking them? Why wasn't Ben afraid? God, why did she get in that SUV back in the city?

"I'm scared," she repeated. It seemed the forest would never let them out. It kept going on and on like a great black maze.

"I've got you. We're almost there." The confidence in his voice brought her a measure of relief. This would be the last time she ever went hiking. Her heart could only take so much stoppage in a lifetime.

When the distant flicker of firelight caught her eye, she nearly melted in relief. Ben had to support her weight and eventually resigned to scooping her up in his arms. She didn't resist because her knees were weak and rubbery from the cold and hour-long hike. Being in his arms, as if she weighed a few pounds, made her feel feminine, protected. She cuddled against him, one arm secured around his neck. Damn, the guy even smelled good. A rich, musky cologne that she associated with a real man. It heated her body from the inside out.

After walking across a clearing, he set her down at the rear of a log cabin. A small fire burned in a fire pit to her right. There were no other people and no outdoor lighting, just the flicker of the flames cutting through the darkness, offering a small bubble of illumination.

"You have a cabin? I thought you guys were roughing it." All she could think about now was food and warmth.

"It's not mine. Well, it belongs to my friends and their wife. The rest of us camp outdoors." He motioned for her to sit on a downed log. "I'll be right back. I'm gonna get you a blanket and build the fire so I can make you something to eat. Give me two minutes." Ben's energy, even after the endless hike, was boundless. He jogged off to the front of the cabin and out of sight. Only after he was gone did she feel the wall of darkness begin to swallow her whole. Every sound became magnified as adrenaline flooded her bloodstream. Forget the stories of the dingo and the baby. She'd be dragged off by wolves if he didn't hurry back.

"Cold?" The deep voice came directly from behind her, right at her ear. Bella toppled off her log onto her knees. "Sorry, did I scare you?" Draco offered his hand to help her up.

"I didn't even hear you." She noticed he wore a pair of worn blue jeans now. They hugged his muscular legs like a second skin, and she couldn't help but appreciate his body, especially when she already knew what waited underneath. "Did you find my friends?"

"They were right behind me. They're a bit slow, but no harm will come to them. I promise you that." He scanned the area, testing the breeze with a deep inhale. When he decided to train his eyes on hers, she nearly gasped at the heat of his stare and the same glowing element to his eyes as Ben's. He smiled wickedly, moving toward her. She moved back, feeling as if a predator stalked her, but Draco was sexier than sin and she couldn't trust herself when he looked at her with such intensity.

"Ben's in the cabin. He'll be right back." Did she need to be rescued? Or did she want him to dominate her, force her to the grass and fuck her with his big, hard cock? She shook her head. This was so unlike her. She had no time for intimacy back home. Her job required long, tiring hours. Sex was always the last thing on her mind. Now, it seemed all she could think about. Something feral hid beneath her fear and uncertainty, ready to break free on a moment's notice.

"He's not here right now, is he?" God, his voice was deep. The shadows and flames licking his skin in equal parts revealed such rugged masculinity. His chest was chiseled perfection. What would he feel like? "I know what you're feeling, little one."

"What would that be?" Replicating nonchalance when she was as horny as a cat in heat, her mouth dry, and pussy pulsing was no easy task.

"You need me as much as I need you." He kept coming closer, and she continued to counter his movements. "If I slipped my hand into your panties, I bet you'd be soaked through."

Her mouth fell open. *The nerve*. Nobody talked to her so boldly, so crudely. Then why did it heat her body wickedly?

"You don't deny it." He smirked, and then dragged his tongue across his lower lip. She followed the movement, imagining what it would feel like against her own lips, or along her moist folds.

"I—I don't know you," she stuttered, wanting him, but knowing this was wrong. Why did she desire this man, here, in the middle of nowhere? The wolves watched from where the light of the fire couldn't reach. Was she confusing fear and lust?

"You must feel our connection. Our bond is driving me mad. All I can think about is fucking you, marking you."

This time she audibly gasped at his audacity. But she didn't refute him, needing him to be the aggressor to save her self-respect. If he didn't make the moves, she'd be throwing herself at him, begging him to relieve the deep pulsing waves between her legs.

Chapter Six

Draco had one chance to get her alone before Ben returned and clung to the human like cheap cologne. He knew Bella wanted him, not just because of the bond, but from genuine attraction. She raked her eyes up and down him appreciatively, wetting her lips and breathing heavily. The scent of her desire swirled around him, pulled him in, and brought out his beast. He fought the urge to take her. If she were a shifter, her erotic perfume would be the only signal he needed to take her forcibly. But, she was a delicate human, with odd customs when it came to sex and relationships, so he held back. If he had the knowledge Ben possessed, he'd already have ensured his victory with Bella. He needed and wanted to learn everything about her. How could he take proper care of her if he didn't know traditions, her dreams, and desires?

"I can hear the wolves whining. Why aren't you afraid of them?" Her voice was breathless, her eyes glazing over in lust. There was fear, too, which brought out his defensive instincts and endeared her fragility to him. Still, she reasoned that he couldn't protect her, care for her. She didn't know the half of it. In wolf form, Draco was large, black as night, and superior to the others in his pack. The shifters from the new collective were also abnormally large, but he'd still fight Ben for Bella if need be.

"Nothing will ever harm you, Bella. You're safe with me. Close your eyes and relax, feel our connection." He caressed her back over her thick shirt and up her neck to her jawline. When he reached her full lips, he dragged the pad of his thumb over the lush surface. She swallowed hard and looked him in the eyes.

"I'm not usually like this," she stammered. "I don't throw myself at strange men."

"You don't have to explain yourself. There's nothing wrong with listening to your inner desires." He pulled her against him, and her body didn't stiffen, but melted against his hard frame. It pleased him. As she closed her eyes and rested her head against his chest, the moonlight caught the smooth, milky-white line of her neck. His eyes lolled back in his head as a fresh spike of erotic heat made his cock

thicken and canines sharpen. It took all his resolve not to mark her right there and then. Shouldn't he? If Ben had the chance, he'd take it, so why shouldn't Draco?

He leaned down to her level and licked her pulse point, planting strategic kisses and nibbling her earlobes. She sighed and tilted her head to give him better access. "That feels so good."

"I can do a lot of things to your body if you'd let me, little one." He cupped her ass, tugging her closer, needing her pressed against him. She wiggled, spurring him on.

Draco heard a distant growl, waking him from his lust like a dip in the freezing watering hole out back. He twisted his head and shoulders, not willing to release his little human. She was his and no one else's. He responded to Ben's threat with a flash of fangs and a scowl that usually made smaller shifters cower in fear. Not Ben. He charged forward, deadly intent blazing in his eyes. Draco had no doubt there'd have been a fight if it weren't for their alphas joining them out back.

"Ben!" Callen warned, stopping the other man dead in his tracks.

Ben spun around, enraged by the order. "You heard what I told you. You'll have me stand back and watch while he tries to steal my mate?" The sincerity and strength of emotion in Ben's voice made Draco wonder if it could actually be true. Was she destined to both of them? Was fate that cruel?

Bella squeezed his arms, vying for his attention. "This is weird, Draco. What the hell's going on?"

"It's okay. Ethan and Callen will set things straight."

He hoped his new alphas wouldn't side with Ben just because they had a history together.

"We're all going to talk about this with level heads," said Ethan, the voice of authority. No one questioned anything he said—except his mate, Ingrid. She sidled up next to him in the dark, frigid night. He didn't look happy that she'd left the warmth and safety of their cabin, wrapping his arm around her and shifting her to stand between him and Callen as living shields.

Dozens of shifters stepped out of the inky blackness surrounding the fire, coming into plain sight. There would be a meeting, which was good. Draco would explain that Bella belonged to him and they couldn't refute a mating call. His pack had many elders and would be able to talk some sense into his new, younger alphas.

"Where did all these men come from?" Bella twisted in his arms, looking to the left and right, but not pulling away from the safety of his embrace.

"Soon, Bella. Soon everything will be explained to you. I promise."

Johan and Grant stoked the fire, adding wood and kindling until it roared to life, illuminating the area. Everyone gathered around, all the shifters wearing some level of clothing as per Ethan and Callen's rules when in Ingrid's presence. Draco led Bella to the edge of the cottage. Ingrid nodded once in understanding and led the girl into the cabin and out of earshot. Bella turned back and looked at him

with pleading eyes, but he had to deal with the situation at hand. Ben didn't move closer once Draco settled on an old log near the fire, but followed his every movement like a predator strategizing for the kill, his wild eyes dancing with firelight.

"Okay. Ben's just informed us that he's experienced the mating call from one of the humans camping in the woods." Ethan paced the area with his hands clasped behind his back. The others all sat around the fire, hanging on every word.

"As have I," Draco said.

Ethan sighed. "That's just one of the problems with this insanity. Pack mates fighting over a female? I think you've both been out in the woods too long. If you're both so sure she's your mate, have you even considered she could be fated to both of you?"

Both Ethan and Callen were mated to a human female, so how was this situation any different? Just because neither he nor Ben was an alpha in the pack didn't mean they weren't entitled to mate. It was one of the gods-given rights gifted to every shifter. If they were lucky enough to find their mate in a lifetime, they seized the opportunity.

"What are the odds of fate leading one human here? For both of us?" asked Draco.

"It happened with our mate," Ethan said. "But we're here to discuss the two of you and that girl inside."

One of the elders rose and spoke. "The gods can guide people to fulfill fate. The human's arrival may have been destiny fulfilling itself."

Callen joined in the discussion. "But we're the first triad mating. It's unheard of, but now it's happening again only a few months later?"

The elder replied, "You're all aware of the desperate situation with the shortage of female shifters. It's only natural that with waning numbers of females, more than one male would be called to a female. In most cases these days, it's a human."

"So you're saying she *does* belong to both of us?" asked Ben in disbelief. "We're expected to share her?"

"If the bond is true, she'll never be satisfied with just one of you. Until you both claim her, she'll feel lost and confused. Do you wish for her to suffer?"

"Of course not! *Fuck*." Ben whirled around, kicking kindling debris into the fire.

Draco remained quiet, trying to come to grips with what this could mean for him and his future. He had no problem with Ben or his new pack mates, but to share a female, especially when the other male couldn't stand the sight of him? Draco wanted to shift and run, run for miles and not stop until he was too tired to think. He'd lived a solitary life with his pack, deep in the northern BC forests. The only

confrontation he had with humans were with the occasional loggers. Once he'd caught Bella's scent, he'd known she was his mate. There were other females at her camp, but they did nothing for him. So, after a lifetime of wanting, and never expecting to fall in love and start a family, it was going to be pulled out from under him.

"You're both alphas, yet you share. How do you do it?" asked Draco, speaking to his two leaders.

"We both love Ingrid, and she couldn't choose between us," started Callen.

"And you gave her a double marking, don't forget that." Ethan crossed his arms over his wide chest.

"Whatever. The point is, when you love a female, you'd do anything for her, even if that means sharing with another man." Callen shrugged. "Plus, the sex is hot."

A rare smile pulled at Ethan's mouth, as if he fantasized about one of their many threesomes.

Draco noted Ben stealing glances at him, as if trying to gauge his reaction to the mess. Could it work between the three of them? Draco had nothing to offer but a blank expression, as he hadn't decided one way or another about how he would proceed. Should he steal his woman away, leave the pack, and start new somewhere far away? The thought of separating from the only thing he'd ever known sent a cold shiver up his spine. It would be suicide. Shifters lived in packs for their own safety and to maintain a link to their heritage. Too many wolves either humanized themselves, forgetting who they were by moving to bustling cities, or turned feral, never shifting out of their fur. Living in a pack, especially with wise elders, grounded its members and gave them a sense of identity.

"How can we know for sure?" said Ben. He threw up his arms, volatile energy radiating from him in waves. Draco was impressed. The amount of self-control needed to stay in human form when under such emotional stress was a rarity.

"What if I asked you never to see her again? Would you listen to me?" asked Callen.

"Fuck no!"

Ben and Callen had a special connection, a rare friendship, but Callen's new alpha status should have ensured a "yes" from Ben. Only a shifter truly mated to a female would sacrifice being outcast by their pack for not following orders.

Draco could see what they were doing, and it scared him shitless. He'd risk being shunned to keep Bella, too. What did it all mean?

* * * *

“So...” The beautiful woman wrapped in a loose navy wrap dress walked back and forth in front of a cast iron fireplace. The inside of the log cabin was rustic, everything Bella had dreamed for her own piece of paradise when in her youth. Nothing to rely on but nature itself. White mortar filled the seams between massive logs. The large bed Bella sat on was lush with thick bedding and an assortment of feminine pillows.

“Who are you?” The strange woman was pregnant, not someone who should be in a hunting party or risking the elements and wildlife surrounding the deserted cottage.

“My name’s Ingrid,” she said. Bella didn’t feel threatened by her. In fact, Ingrid’s presence was oddly comforting. Bella was usually a good judge of character, and her instincts told her she could trust Ingrid.

She watched the woman’s swollen belly as she moved, her hands perched on her rounded hips. “You’re carrying twins. Boys.”

Ingrid stopped dead and stared at her with a slack jaw. “What did you say?” She moved closer to the bed. “How could you know that?”

Bella wasn’t expecting such a harsh reaction. It was just a guess based on her size and the shape of her stomach. She’d always loved guessing games, odds, and applying science to folklore. The fact that she had been right had surprised her almost as much as Ingrid. “Lucky guess?”

Ingrid narrowed her eyes momentarily. “It doesn’t matter. What matters is that Ben and Draco are going to kill each other if you don’t do something to stop them.”

“Yeah...about that.”

“They’re not your everyday men, Bella. They’re special.” Ingrid ran a hand through her thick brown hair and exhaled heavily. “When Callen and Ethan both claimed to love me, I thought they were nuts, but I also knew in my heart that a relationship with the three of us was meant to be. At first I blamed my feelings for them on the love bites, but after a few weeks, when the effects of the claiming had diminished, I knew. I loved them both. It was fate that brought us together.”

Bella wasn’t sure what this woman was talking about. Love bites? Claiming? Ménage relationships? Maybe she was as crazy as Draco was for running around the forest naked. Bella really needed to get the hell out of the boonies and back to civilization. The city might have felt like a concrete prison most of the time, but it was safer than the woods and familiar. She needed reassurance after the past twenty-four hours. Why did her traitorous mind think she could find that comfort in either Ben or Draco’s arms? She shook her head and leaned over her knees.

“I just realized how crazy this must all sound to you at this point. I’m sorry for that. When everything gets sorted out, I’m sure we’ll be great friends. I promise. I’m not a crazy redneck. In fact, I’ll

pull my hair out if our new house isn't ready soon. Being pregnant with no indoor plumbing is *not* pleasant." Ingrid sat beside Bella on the edge of the bed. "You're from the city, right?"

Bella nodded.

"So was I. When you think back, do you ever remember nights feeling like you didn't belong, like there was something out there waiting for you, but you had no idea what?"

She nodded without having to think about it. That feeling was all too familiar. What did it mean?

"It's the mating call. It won't let up. It'll guide you, nag you, and drive you insane until you follow the right path." She paused. "I think fate led you to us—to Ben and Draco."

Bella knew exactly what the woman described. She lived like the shell of a woman in the city, not knowing where she belonged. But everything else?

A wolf's howl echoed outside the cabin, reminding her of her need to get out of Dodge. Panic sparked inside her. Where were her friends? Shouldn't they be here by now? Did these whackos hurt them? Did the wolves get them first? She had no vehicle to get out of the forest, no phone, no escape. The claustrophobic feeling of being trapped closed in around her, making her nerves flare and mind wander. What were they going to do to her? Knock her up and brainwash her like Ingrid? *Fuck!* "My friends. Draco was supposed to find them. I'm getting worried."

She bolted to her feet, moving to the only window, needing to breathe. The frame wouldn't budge. It was frozen shut from layers of old paint. "You okay?"

"I've gotta get out of here." She paced like a caged animal, feeling feral and desperate. This was like a nightmare turned reality, and she refused to accept it. *Refused*. She could feel the walls of that guarded place deep inside her fracturing.

"Calm down, Bella. Sit down. Do you want a drink or something?"

"I've gotta get out of here," she repeated, her gaze darting to all the exits.

The flames licking the logs in the fire mimicked the heat creeping up Bella's collar. Her face flushed, and her skin crawled. So this was what an anxiety attack felt like. Her mother claimed to have them all the time, but Bella thought it was a ploy to garner attention. Maybe not.

"I hope you'll forgive me for this later," said Ingrid. Then a sharp blow to the back of Bella's head stole her sight as she collapsed to the hard wooden floor.

Chapter Seven

“No! Wait!” Ingrid screamed. Ben followed Ethan and Callen around the side of the cabin in a mad dash. He’d sensed Ingrid’s spike of adrenaline, so his alphas would have felt it tenfold being mated to her. Something was terribly wrong.

“Faster, Ethan!” Callen growled, running just behind the other man. Ben would defend Ingrid with his life, as was his duty as a member of the pack, but he followed out of concern for Bella. If tough-as-nails Ingrid felt fear, no doubt Bella would be terrified as well.

Ethan kicked the door with a powerful blow, which exploded open with an echoing bang, and dashed to the bedroom. He dropped to his knees at Ingrid’s feet and wrapped his arms around her thick waist, laying his head on her lap. She looked up at Ben and Callen from her perch on the edge of the bed.

“She’s gone.” It was all she said and all Ben needed to hear before returning to the night and shifting forms.

Ben shook out his thick fur as he dashed into the cover of the forest. The night was pitch black, and Bella wouldn’t be able to see a thing with her human sight. At least all the wolf shifters were back at the meeting, but that didn’t mean she was out of danger. There were full wolves, bears, and many creatures of the night that would mean potential harm to Bella. She couldn’t be far. He had to find her. After testing the air, he picked up her unique scent. Relief flooded his veins. He was one of the best trackers. Once he had a scent, nothing could keep him from his target.

As he raced around obstacles and leapt over downed logs, a heavy body brushed against him. He turned to his left and noted the large black wolf racing alongside him. Draco. If the other shifter believed Bella was his, he’d need to ensure her well-being as well. Rather than protest, Ben accepted the other man’s presence because two wolves were better than one.

They reached a rocky outcropping, not uncommon in this part of the country. Bella's scent was strong, making his wolf crazy with the need to connect with her. He heard her faint whimper before he noticed her crouched down near a thicket, the terrain sloping up behind her. Draco shifted into his human skin before Ben thought to. She'd be terrified if two wolves approached her, only highlighted by moonlight.

"Bella? Why did you run?"

She surprised them both by bolting upright and wrapping her arms around Draco's thick neck. He held her close and whispered into her hair. "Don't be afraid of us."

Us. At least the shifter included him as he reassured her.

"She tried to kill me." Bella looked up into Draco's eyes. "She seemed so nice, but then she lost it and hit me over the head. When I came to, I started running and didn't look back."

Ben shifted before joining them. Good thing the darkness could mask their nudity. He didn't have the time to think about carrying along his pants when he had been desperate to find Bella. "Who tried to hurt you? Ingrid?" It was unreal. Ingrid was a modern woman. Surely she didn't see Bella as a threat. Could she have been jealous? Seen the girl as a rival? It didn't make sense since Ingrid was human, not primal, living off instinct, like a female shifter.

She nodded. "I want to go home. Please."

"Whatever you want," said Ben. He meant it. Whatever she wanted, he'd grant it, even if that meant losing her. Draco shoulder-butted him, obviously not as understanding if it meant giving up their woman.

"Where're my friends? You said they were right behind you when we got to the cottage."

"I'm sure they're there now." Draco smoothed her hair, hushing her gently. "Nobody will harm you or your friends. You're safe." Her breathing calmed, steadied, and her rigid body softened. Whatever Draco was doing appeared to work.

"Don't leave me out here alone," she whispered. "I said I could survive on my own, but I can't. I'm cold, I'm scared, and more lost than I've ever been."

"You have nothing to prove, Bella. We're here to take care of you." Ben moved closer, needing to feel her, to warm her chilled flesh.

She looked up at him, focusing on his eyes. Her lips were parted and full from crying. "Don't ask me why, but I feel safe when I'm with both of you, complete. I don't even know either of you, so I must be losing my mind."

"Sometimes you have to listen to your instincts," said Draco, leaning down and nuzzling her neck. She leaned her head back, eyes closed, and exhaled the breath she'd been holding.

“My whole body feels like it’s burning from the inside out,” she said. Draco pulled back. “No! Don’t stop.”

Ben felt lust-drunk on Bella’s pheromones. She was absolutely glowing with desire, her body ripe and willing. He was helpless to resist, and Draco already indulged in her sweet flesh, kissing her neck and holding her close.

Ben slipped his hand up under her shirt and caressed her back, loving the feel of her soft, feminine skin against his calloused palm.

“Yes, that feels so good.” She sighed.

Draco lifted an eyebrow and glanced at Ben. He only shrugged in response. No sense resisting her if she enjoyed their company. The rest could be sorted out later. Now he needed to discover Bella intimately. She gasped for air, staring up above the trees at the nearly full moon. It illuminated her face and highlighted her delicate features. The radiant energy from the moon teased the wolf inside him, which was desperate to be free.

Draco bent down in a crouch, lifting Bella’s shirt and kissing her stomach.

* * * *

An erotic fog squelched the fear and burning cold that had consumed her only minutes earlier. What was with these two men?

Her memories of the last few hours were sketchy. First, she had been in the warmth and comfort of the log cabin, talking with a pregnant woman. Bella had felt comfortable with Ingrid, even enough to believe she could trust her. How wrong she had been. Out of nowhere, the crazy woman whacked her on the head with a blunt object. She’d fallen to the ground and blacked out for what she assumed was minutes—maybe seconds. Her adrenaline-filled veins took over from there. She ran for the door and escaped into the woods, the moon her only source of illumination as she fled. Ingrid had tried to kill her, and Bella knew she needed to hide for her own self-preservation.

Bella tried to remember what they had talked about. Ingrid talked about ménage relationships, matings, and other nonsense. But it wasn’t the crazy topics of conversation that had bothered her, it was her own anxiety that had crept up on her until she felt ready to go mad. Was that why Ingrid hit her? Did she feel threatened for herself and her unborn babies? A simple slap in the face or splash of cold water would have sufficed if that were the case.

There was something about this place—and these two men—that brought out an array of her hidden emotions. On a normal day, Bella kept her cool and lived her life with little whining as her father had taught her. *A lady doesn't wear her emotions on her sleeve. Maintain your composure under all circumstances.* Her life wasn't ideal, but she rarely grumbled out loud and certainly didn't feel close to losing precious control.

She'd crossed that fine line back at the cabin, not even recognizing herself as anxiety took over.

Now Draco and Ben were here, and suddenly everything was better. Her fear dissipated because they could protect her. They'd never hurt her. It was illogical, but she knew. She liked the way they both looked at her with adoration in their eyes. Back at the cabin, they'd both fought in an attempt to lay claim on her. Two gorgeous, muscled men actually fighting for her—it was unreal. How would she even choose? Ben was more reserved, a dirty-blond Adonis. Draco was more aggressive, which only served to make her hot. His dark hair, rugged good looks, and intense narrowed eyes made her melt on the spot. These were real men, not like Keith and Dave, both soft and unskilled in dealing with women, in her opinion. She'd always craved and needed a dominant man, a man that would set her pulse racing, but she'd never found one in the city. Her past boyfriends had been easy to walk over, and even easier to kiss goodbye in the end.

Now her two admirers were here to rescue her. They touched and tasted and drove her wild with new, untapped desires. She was a grown woman. If she wanted to fuck one, maybe two guys in the Great Canadian North, then that was her prerogative. Who would they tell? She'd already cut ties to her hoity-toity parents years ago. There was no one else left to disappoint. Bella was on her own and ready to accept what these men offered—a night to remember.

Ben was behind her, Draco in front. Their male heat enveloped her, and she reveled in the bubble of protection they offered. Ben tugged up her shirt, and she raised her arms to help him undress her. Her skin tingled once bared to the night air, but she quickly forgot her discomfort when four hands explored and caressed every inch of her exposed flesh.

"You smell so sweet," growled Draco as he painted a trail along her collarbone with his tongue. Growl was the only word that could express the sound he made, as though he'd lost all humanity, retaining only an untamable nature that wouldn't be denied.

She closed her eyes as he descended to her exposed breasts. His hot, hungry mouth clamped over her aching nipple. Ben toyed with her other breast, snaking his arm around her body, teasing the bundle of nerves until it had its turn with Draco's skilled tongue. Was this real? The blanket of darkness hid their illicit act, but they were still out in the open, which felt so naughty. Her pussy pulsed as the men continued to torment her, making her desperate to be fucked.

"Lower," she managed to say. Draco moved down her stomach until he reached the edge of her blue jeans. He unbuttoned her and tugged the tight material over her hips. The night air on her moist folds felt exhilarating. Her thin lace panties offered little protection from the elements, and even less

from Ben's probing hands. His strong arms encircled her. Two fingers slipped under the material and penetrated her throbbing cunt.

"I know you're aching here, Bella. Let us make you feel good," Ben said in a deep, erotic whisper. Just the sound of his voice promised hours of mind-numbing pleasure.

"Yes."

"We both need you, little one. Can you handle that?" Draco nibbled her thighs, ripe and alive with sensitivity. Her entire body quivered, her knees wobbly. Ben lowered her to the soft leaf litter of the forest floor. She couldn't even feel the cold on her back or care about the fact she was about to get double fucked in the middle of the woods. All that mattered was allowing these two men to take her to that next level. She was no longer herself. Her inhibitions, self-doubts, and insecurities vanished, replaced with a heady lust. She watched the moon from its perch in the night sky straight above her. It seemed to watch her, telling her to go through with the act. She needed no encouragement. This was going to happen.

Both men stripped her of her remaining clothes, slowly, sensuously. Hot, naked and hornier than she'd thought possible, she reached for them, ready to beg, if necessary. Draco lowered his large frame over her body. His firm, hot skin scalded her, melting away her cool exterior. She loved the feel of his weight hovering over her. He kissed her, pulling her out of reality entirely. All that mattered was losing herself in Draco's kiss—his taste, his scent, and the way he devoured her like a man finding his lost love after a lifetime of separation. For now, she'd pretend to believe it.

He reached between them and rubbed circles over her swollen clit. The blinding pleasure of his touch forced her to break their kiss to gasp for air. Ben knelt near her head, his silhouette visible with the glow of moonlight behind him. He bent low and kissed her as Draco moved to the side of her neck. She had no clue so many nerves resided in her neck or the rim of her ear, but he found every sensitive place and brought her to the brink of a spontaneous orgasm.

"Bella," Draco growled. "Don't run from us again." He moved down her body with the fluidity of a graceful hunter. When he reached the juncture between her legs, he nudged her knees open and lapped at her moist folds.

Bella gasped from the initial intensity. Then she melted into the soft earth as Ben gently covered her areola with his mouth. The double stimulation had her body quaking with the need for release. Draco's assault on her pussy was just that—a dominant claiming of her cunt. He suckled her, nipped, and teased. It was the most beautiful thing she'd ever felt and never wanted it to end. Heat sparked to life in her toes, curling up through her extremities toward her core. She focused on the stream of liquid fire warming her from the inside out. Any minute and her cunt would explode.

Bella grabbed Ben around the neck and held on. "It's coming," she said.

“Good. Don’t fight it,” said Ben. “There’s more where that came from. A lot more.” Damn, she liked the sound of that. She’d need a hell of a lot more to make up for so many years of unsatisfying sex and abstinence.

As her orgasm loomed at the surface, waiting for its chance to break free, she felt an irrational, but primal urge to connect with her men on a level sex alone couldn’t provide. Bella sniffed the musky, masculine scent of Ben as she hugged him. *So tempting. Mine.* Without thought, she bit into the thick cord of muscle where his shoulder met his neck. The same instant as his blood hit her tongue, her body detonated in a blinding release. She cried out, enough to scare off any lurking animals in the vicinity. If it were day, she had no doubt a flock of birds would be racing for the sky.

She had just experienced the orgasm of her life, but she wasn’t sated. Bella needed more. “Fuck me,” she demanded. Her pussy felt void and achy.

Draco crawled up her body and gripped the base of his cock before plunging it into her inviting, wet heat. He slid in easily despite his impressive size. She moaned once Draco filled her to the brink, his pubic hair rubbing against her clit. The satisfaction made her eyes loll back in her head. Before thrusting, he propped himself up on his elbows and stared down at her.

She tried to focus on his handsome face, but could only think about sex and the way his cock filled every inch of her pussy. He ran the pad of his thumb over her lip, collecting a rivulet of Ben’s blood, and looked from the other man to her. “So...you like to bite?” His voice carried humor and the promise of pleasure and pain combined into one epic experience.

Bella thrust her pelvis up, needing him to continue working her body. Regardless, she didn’t want to talk and couldn’t explain why she had the urge to bite at her sexual peak.

Draco complied, pumping in and out of her body with unbelievable stamina. Every thrust soothed the ache inside her and built up an energy that she knew was the beginning of another beautiful orgasm. His cock was thick, hard, and he knew how to use it.

“You’re mine.” Draco’s dominant voice was clouded by her haze of lust. All she could do was agree, anything to keep him focused on pleasuring her. Then he bit her. The erotic heat from his mouth on her neck brought out a new, powerful orgasm. She’d barely had time to recover from the first and now had to deal with a fresh assault that stole the last of her humanity. With Draco’s mouth still latched on to her neck, she went limp, her body hot and pliant with that titillating heat from their connection. Ingrid’s words danced in Bella’s head—talk of markings and matings. As much as she believed the words to be gibberish, part of her understood. She had the overwhelming urge to suck, to bite.

Before she could sink her own teeth into Draco, Ben knocked him off her, and the two men began rolling on the leaf-littered forest floor next to her. “You prick! You marked her!”

Bella sat and gently touched her neck with her fingertips. The area was tender and moist and sticky from her own blood. She watched the men wrestle, muscle and bare flesh shadowed by

moonlight. Her vision was better now that it had time to adjust to the darkness surrounding them. Rather than worry about the men, she felt irritation. Her body still demanded more, so much more.

“Smell her heat. Are you telling me you’d have more willpower, pup? Hah! I doubt that.”

* * * *

Ben had to mark Bella, or Draco would have the only claim to her. She’d bitten him, but as a human, it held no meaning. He had to be the one to administer the love bite to make their union official. With a final shove, he broke the fight off with Draco and returned to his woman. He could certainly scent her body, so ripe and tempting. She wanted to be fucked, and he needed to be inside her sweet pussy.

Ben dropped to his knees in front of Bella. She looked at him with seductive eyes, nipping her lower lip playfully. Where had the nervous girl gone? The woman in front of him was a siren that he couldn’t resist. He traced the outline of her jaw with his tongue, savoring her taste.

“I need more,” she whimpered, her eyes closed. Her request almost sounded pained, as if these new desires besieged her. He needed no more invitation. His mate would be sated even if it killed him.

Ben wrapped an arm around her midsection and flipped her to her knees with ease. The luscious globes of her ass were full and perfect. He wasted no time in plunging his rigid cock into her moist cunt. She grunted and squealed when he impaled the full length of his dick in deep. Her moans of satisfaction spurred him on. Ben gripped her hips in a firm lock and fucked her hard. She pushed back against him, wanting every inch he offered.

“I never got to finish with you, Bella. You have my mark, but not my seed.” Draco knelt in front of Bella, holding the base of his cock to her face. “Be a good girl, and suck my dick.” She jolted forward, laying one hand on Draco’s thigh as she swallowed half his length with vigor. The sight felt oddly erotic to Ben, and he pummeled her harder and faster. As his orgasm drew closer, he leaned over her body, extending his sharp white fangs, and bit into the meaty flesh at the base of her neck while Draco watched.

The act of marking his mate, the one fated to him by the gods, rewarded him with his most intense orgasm yet. He continued to suckle her and pump his seed in her pussy, never wanting to pull away. When he finally slipped out of her heat, Draco’s roar snapped him to the present.

“Fuck!” Draco shouted, tumbling back on his ass. “She bit me!”

Bella scooted away from both of them like a skittish animal, blind fear dancing in her eyes as she crouched low. Her eyes reflected the glow of the moon.

Before he could process the sight, she was gone. In a flash of flesh and fur, Bella transformed into a lithe black wolf.

Chapter Eight

“Leave her!” Draco demanded, planting a hand on Ben’s shoulder when he leaned forward to shift.

“She’s a fucking wolf! I’ve got to catch her.” Ben raked both hands through his hair, his eyes wide with disbelief. “Did you know about this?”

“She bit my dick. You think I’d let her suck me if I knew she was a shifter?” Draco leaned against an oak, massaging his temples as he assessed the situation. There was no way Bella knew what she was. Her sudden sexual behavior had surprised him, but the fear in her eyes before she shifted proved to him that all the sensations she felt were new to her. Why hadn’t he sensed her wolf? She smelled one hundred percent human, acted human, was human. His mind raced. A real female shifter, one now mated to him and Ben... It was surreal. They’d each bitten Bella, and she’d bitten in return, not with human teeth, but sharp, wolfish fangs. His dick still throbbed with that tender mix of pleasure and pain.

“We can’t just let her run wild. She doesn’t know what the fuck she is,” said Ben. “What if the others find her first?”

Draco shrugged. “She has two love bites. Any male with the balls to try and mount her would have to have a death wish.”

“So what’s your plan?” Ben’s tone wasn’t friendly. His body quivered with the urge to lose his human skin. He understood because he also had to fight the desire to find and protect her.

“Let her run. She needs to come to grips with everything. If we smother her now, she’ll only revolt.”

“We have to tell Ethan and Callen. This is huge news.”

Draco didn't need to be told. The elders in his pack constantly reminded them of their doom if more female wolves weren't born. It was the beginning of a mass extinction. Even Ingrid carried twin boys, both a blessing and a disappointment.

They shifted and raced back to the log cabin. Ethan and Callen were both sitting on the rails of the porch, waiting. Only the soft light from a cabin window offered a scant amount of illumination.

"I tried to stop you before you took off," said Callen. "Your girl there's a shifter."

"No shit," said Ben as he dropped down to sit on the steps.

Ethan slipped off the rail and stepped closer. "This ain't a game, Ben. She could have killed Ingrid. She's so unstable that she started shifting in the cabin without even realizing it. Ingrid recognized her wolf eyes."

"She doesn't know what she is. Until today, I have no doubt she thought she was human." Draco realized he was standing there in the nude when Ethan lowered his brows and shook his head. The new pack rules. *Right*. He cupped his groin with his hand.

"Well, where the fuck is she?"

"She had a spontaneous shift after marking both of us. Bella *is* our mate, even her wolf knew it." Draco couldn't relax. His entire body was tense. He needed to give his mate time to accept her wolf, but not being near her made him restless. They were all bonded now, so permanent separation would be out of the question.

"Mate or not, she's a problem," said Ethan. "She needs to be found before someone gets hurt."

"You sound like this is a bad thing. Finding a female of our kind is something to celebrate." Didn't his new alphas realize the magnitude of this discovery? She was a female shifter, which meant there could be more, or at the very least, she might be mother to the next generation.

"It is a bad thing?" roared Ethan. Callen put a hand on the other man's shoulder to calm him, reminding him of his humanity.

"It's not that we think she's bad, but if she's just finding out she's a wolf, she's never been taught our rules. She could expose us, or in the very least, wreak havoc in the forest."

"Exactly! New wolves are feral, stronger than normal. I bet she's on a killing spree right now. Someone needs to find her and control her until she can be taught," Ethan said. Their alphas, although both dominant, were like yin and yang.

"We'll find her," said Ben, standing up. "I don't want anyone but us near her right now."

Draco couldn't have agreed more. As a wolf just discovering her dormant half, her emotions and hormones would be out of whack, making her volatile and hungry for sexual release.

“Hurry up, or I’ll hunt her down myself,” warned Ethan.

As Draco and Ben walked to the tree line, they looked up at the same time. The moon was almost full, a time well known for female shifters to break into heat. She’d be nearly impossible to satisfy until the pull of the moon faded with its natural monthly cycle.

* * * *

Bella awoke with a start. She scanned the area, realizing she was in the middle of the forest. Alone. Dark impenetrable walls of trees surrounded her, reaching up to the night sky. When she glanced down at her aching legs, she realized she was completely naked. Her mind raced with a muddle of images and memories. At least she wasn’t cold, in fact, her skin felt oddly warm...like Ben and Draco’s. That’s when she began to remember what she’d done with them. As much as the thoughts made her cringe, they also made her body heat with that same desire.

Where were they?

Something bad happened, but her memories were clouded. Did they use her body and leave her to fend for herself? No. As much as participating in ménage sex was completely out of character for her, she did feel a connection between the three of them. They were part of her, bound to her in some inexplicable way.

The more she thought about Ben and Draco, the more she craved them, needed them. Every minute she felt more and more alone, and the forest felt too big and intimidating. She stood on wobbly legs and took a few tentative steps over the leaf litter. Where the fuck were her clothes, her shoes? Her stomach protested violently, and her mouth needed moisture in the worst way. So much for being top survivor in her youth. All she wanted now was comfort and protection.

Bella wondered how far she was from the hunters’ cabin. Should she even try to find it after Ingrid tried to hurt her? She continued to plod forward, not sure which direction to take as everything looked the same.

“Are you lost?” The deep voice originated in the bushes, but a man soon appeared in front of her, emerging from the underbrush. And, of course, he was as naked as she was.

She cupped her most intimate parts, feeling exposed and uncomfortable with the stranger raking his gaze up and down her body.

“Who are you?”

"I'm your knight in shining armor." He smirked. The man was handsome, but not Ben or Draco. She had no interest in any man but them. He began circling her, bringing out her hackles. *Literally*. Her nails sharpened into thick claws, and her tongue felt the prick of lengthening incisors. Fur began to sprout out from her skin, and no matter how hard she tried to force the freak show to stop, it continued.

"What the hell's happening to me?" Even her voice began to morph into one she barely recognized. Was she dreaming?

"You're wolf. Like me." He smiled seductively. More than that—triumphantly. "You'll be the first female to join our pack in decades."

She wanted to shout that she wasn't his to claim, but could no longer speak. Bella dropped down to her knees, every muscle and bone in her body screaming out in agony as she fought to retain her humanity.

"Don't fight the change. It'll only make it worse for you." He squatted in front of her and ran a hand over her hair as if she were some stupid dog. She growled, and he backed off. "It's a shame you're already marked, but we can't be choosy when you're the only female we've come across. Your mates should have taken better care of you."

She repeated Ben and Draco's names in her head, a mantra as her rational thoughts slipped away. Red blurred her vision. Bella wanted this stranger ripped to shreds for daring to think he could control her. Once fully shifted, and before she could pounce, several more men crept out of the bushes. They held a length of rope, shaped like a noose.

A little voice inside her said to run, but a more primal urge made her desperate to attack. On four legs now, she backed up, somehow more steady in her wolf form than she had been on two legs moments ago. Her instincts fired off in warning. Her peripheral vision sized up the threat.

"Come on, sweet thing. Don't make this harder than it has to be," said the stranger. "You're the key to the future. You'll bear our pups for years to come."

Oh, she certainly didn't like the sound of that. His dangling cock looked mighty tempting to her sharp fangs. A little closer and she'd rip it off, hoping to wipe that confident smirk off his face.

No matter how self-assured her wolf might be, there were six of them and one of her. They rushed her, a few shifting, the others crushing her with their weight as they wrapped the rope around her neck. Bella yelped, but knew there was no hope. Where were Ben and Draco when she needed them?

As the kidnappers carried her off deeper into the forest, everything became clearer. Her father's words, always warning her to keep control to protect those she loved. He never liked her to argue with her mother, saying her mother was more delicate than her. She knew what it all meant now—Bella was a wolf like him. A deadly animal, with the ability to kill, to protect itself when threatened. She didn't

need help from Ben and Draco. Bella just needed to gather her inner strength in order to garner her freedom.

The power of the moon seemed to offer her undiluted energy, and she savored it. In a burst of action, Bella twisted herself free, landing on the ground. The men were surprised at this, looking dumbfounded as she snarled and growled.

“Nice doggie,” said one of the men still in human form.

She was no dog. She was a wolf, a glorious, powerful, black wolf.

Bella didn’t plan to take them all down. That would be impossible. But she wouldn’t be taken away as a prisoner or love slave. All she needed was a head start to get away. Her teeth and claws aided her well in her escape, and the wide open forest offered plenty of hiding places as she ran faster than she knew possible. Would it be enough?

* * * *

“Did you smell that?” asked Draco.

“Are you kidding me? Something happened here. Do you recognize the scent?”

The trail of Bella’s scent had led them here, beyond their territory. He couldn’t believe she’d run so far in such a short span of time. The scent of other shifters overpowered Bella’s sweet fragrance.

“They’re not from either of our packs.” Draco looked at Ben as if he felt apologetic for referring to their pack as two separate halves, when they had indeed merged. “They’re not from our pack,” he corrected.

“Do you realize what this means? Some rogues just found a female shifter. They’re more prized than gold. Only the gods know what they’re doing to Bella right now. *Our* mate.”

Draco rammed a fist into the nearest oak tree, shaking the entire length of the massive natural structure. He shook his hand as he snarled, “If they fucking touch her, I’ll destroy every one of them.”

Ben couldn’t contain his emotions any longer. “Are you blind? There was a struggle here. I even scent her blood. God knows what they’ll do to her if she keeps putting up a fight.” At least she was fighting, which was a blessing and a curse. She wasn’t willingly throwing herself at other males, but if she failed to comply, the rogues could hurt her. The image of her cowering in fear or pain made his blood boil.

"Hey." Johan and Callen joined them at the small clearing. "Anything?"

"Another pack of shifters have her," said Draco. "We'll have to follow the trail. I have no clue how many they have in their pack, so you may want to return to camp."

"If she wears your love bites, and they've stolen her anyway, they deserve what's coming to them." Callen, his best friend and alpha, stood beside him, ready to follow him into hell if need be. "I'm pretty sure they're from the pack that tried to move into SummitLake after the fire. I recognize the scent."

"Bastards!" growled Johan. "Don't mention this to Grant. I don't want him knowing they're so close to home."

Grant had lost his mate in the fire up north before they moved to their current location. He'd gone feral for months, until settling into an existence not much worse than death. Stripping a male of his mate was the cruelest form of torture. Most went mad or sought an early death, but Grant plodded on. The fact that he had a female shifter as his mate was a combined blessing—then he had nothing. They suspected this rogue pack of wolves of setting the fire, but had no solid proof. For shifters, territory was everything. It meant power, status, and future growth.

"We shift and go after her. Four of us taking them by surprise should be enough," said Callen.

Their wolves were larger than most, not to mention Ben and Draco were males stripped of their mate. He knew he'd fight to the death for Bella, as would Draco. She'd marked them both without realizing how significant the act was to a male. There would never be another woman for either of them.

Chapter Nine

The front door to the apartment burst opened, followed by the thud of numerous bags and supplies. “Where have you been!” screeched Amanda once she spotted Bella. “How did you get home?”

Bella could barely garner the strength to sit up on the sofa. Or muster the energy to care that her friends must have been worried sick the past few days.

“Three days! Three fucking days we looked for you with those nut cases!” Keith kicked a duffel bag as he entered the living room.

“The cops are coming by this afternoon to take the missing person’s report.”

After the strange wolf shifters had tried to kidnap her, she had a surge of energy that rolled up from deep inside her. She’d fought, she bit and clawed until free. The fools that remained human were the easiest to sink her teeth into.

Then she ran. She ran and ran and ran, never looking back. When she reached a lonely stretch of highway, she used an old tarp she’d come across to wrap around herself like a tarp dress before hitching a ride with a big rig trucker. Knowing she could unsheathe killer claws on will gave her the courage to ride half naked with the overweight man with the roaming eyes.

Once back in the city, she returned to her apartment, after getting the superintendent to open the door for her. She’d crashed on the sofa and hadn’t moved for over twenty-four hours. Her mind raced as she sorted out the new revelation that she wasn’t even a fucking human being. Now that her eyes had been opened to the truth, she knew Ben and Draco were no different than she was. What did their wolves look like? No, where the fuck were they when she needed them most? Why hadn’t they come after her?

She’d managed to piece together the puzzle of her identity as she lay awake for so many hours. She finally realized why her father insisted she go to survival camps every summer and holiday. It wasn’t

to get rid of her as she'd assumed all her life. It was to give her back the chance to discover who she was—a mix of human like her mother and wolf shifter like her father. She could now remember different talks they'd had. He'd been overprotective and controlling to protect her, from herself and the world. Why did he desert his heritage to play human? Bella knew all about the desire to fit in. Perhaps her father wanted to be like her mother, be *normal*. What was normal? She had so many questions that needed answers. The most important, why did it hurt to think about her mates? She needed them like a drug. She even felt herself withering from the inside out being so far away from them. But they'd deserted her when she needed them most. They had no idea how difficult it had been learning the truth about herself with no guidance, no support, and lost in a wilderness filled with predators out to imprison her.

She wanted to cry and be consoled, reassured and loved. At the same time, she had a new inner strength burning in her blood. All the nagging questions she'd had throughout her life all made sense. The pull of the moon and the forest, her feral desires, and the feeling that she was different from everyone else. It was surreal to learn that werewolves existed at all, never mind being one of them. But ever since that first shift, she'd had an acceptance of the truth, like a rebirth into something new and wonderful. If only she could stop feeling so barren and not think about Ben and Draco.

"Where have you been? How did you get home?" demanded Keith. "We had to wait for those bushmen to finally agree to drive us to the nearest town."

"Long story," she said, not wishing to elaborate. "And I hitchhiked."

"What? Do you know how dangerous that is, Bella?" Amanda dropped to her knees beside the sofa by Bella's head. "You could have been killed." She knew her friend must have been worried sick about her, but she still couldn't offer the truth. Even without being told, she knew her new identity should be kept a secret from *normal* people.

"Don't offer her any pity, Amanda. She's screwed us around for the last time."

How romantic. Keith saves the day and his girlfriend from the destructive influence of her wayward friend. She didn't have the energy to deal with him now. All she could think about was getting back to the woods, which was why she stayed rooted on the sofa. If she left the apartment, she knew she'd be drawn back to her lovers. They could answer her many questions and soothe the ache between her legs, but she had to resist the urge. She needed to make decisions with a clear head, with logic, not lust.

Tonight would be a full moon and somehow the wolf within her knew it was significant.

"You win, Keith. Whisk your woman away from my destructive influence." She still reclined on the sofa wearing her sack dress.

"Don't say that," said Amanda. "I'm not leaving you. Come on, let's get you in the shower."

“Amanda! Stop babying her. She’s not your responsibility.” If this were a cartoon, Bella imagined steam would be spewing from Keith’s ears.

She didn’t want to cause more problems for her best friend. “It’s okay. You do what you have to do, and I’ll hop in the shower. Promise.”

* * * *

Draco howled to the midday sun, the grief-ridden sound carrying through the acres of forest. They couldn’t find Bella. She’d vanished, her trail gone cold. After nearly decimating the small pack of nomad wolves, they learned that Bella had run off like a bat out of hell when they’d tried to capture her. None of them were able to catch up with her or track her unique scent afterwards. She could be anywhere in wolf or human form. Imagining her tired, hungry, injured, or worse made him crazy and not so pleasant to be around.

“It’s a full moon tonight,” said Ben. They sat together at the campsite Bella and her friends once occupied. Now, not a trace of her remained, but the human litter left behind.

“I know, Ben. Don’t you think I know that?” Tonight would be Bella’s first full moon as a shifter. She probably wouldn’t have the skill to stay human under the powerful influence of the moon, not without her mates. More than any other time, she’d need the men who’d marked her. Her body would be hungry and insatiable. If they couldn’t find her, she’d suffer needlessly.

He exhaled and leaned over, his elbows on his knees. Their elders had gathered the full pack around the fire the night before and explained the importance of finding Bella, not just because she was mated to Ben and Draco, but for what her existence could mean for the future of shifters. No one had suspected she was a wolf, which meant it was highly likely she was a half-breed, the first female half-breed known to exist. Male shifters could mate with human females, but the fix was temporary, because like in Ingrid’s case, the offspring were all male. Without new females born, their race would be watered down until it no longer existed at all.

“Let’s scour the forest again. We’ll break into groups and comb every inch from here to the tundra if we have to.”

Draco shook his head. “We’ve already looked everywhere. She’s not here. Her trail went cold at the highway.”

“Maybe she traveled back to the city.”

“That’s hours away. She’d never make it that far on foot. She must have gotten in a car. It’s the only logical answer.”

In times like these, Draco wished he had adapted to some of the humans’ modern conveniences, such as cell phones and internet, anything to help him find Bella.

Suddenly, Ben stood. “I’m going to the city. There’s no point sitting here wondering what’s happened to her when I could be doing something.”

“The city?” Draco followed alongside Ben as he stomped back towards the cabin. “I’ve never been to the city.”

“I have. Looks like you’ll have to trust me on this one.”

After a dip in the watering hole, changing into blue jeans and long-sleeved shirts that would enable them to blend in with the masses, they boarded the pack’s SUV and tore down the dirt path toward the highway.

Although the drive was excruciatingly long, Draco felt a stronger connection to Bella as they entered the city limits. Ben was right. She was here. How she’d gotten here, he had no idea, but that didn’t matter. She was so close he could practically taste her.

“She’s here,” he said. The sun was nearly set, casting the last of its light on the horizon, highlighting the pink and purple clouds above the cityscape.

Ben said nothing, steering the vehicle like a man on a mission, his eyes focused on the passing road signs. Bella’s companions had given them her intersection, thinking they’d get a drive all the way back to the city. They were lucky to get a lift to the nearest town. Draco had no love for the yellowbelly males or the whiny, unimpressive females from Bella’s camping party.

After more stops and turns, Ben parked the car on a spot along the side of the roadway. Twilight descended on the city, yet it continued to stay unnaturally illuminated from the multitude of lights. His wolf wanted to return to the forest, but not without Bella.

They slammed their car doors shut and joined each other on the sidewalk. Even at this late hour, humans passed by from both directions. They laughed, held hands, toted bags, and looked into the glass store windows. There were shifters, too, which surprised him. Draco had heard the stories about shifters abandoning their calling and living like humans, but found it unbelievable. These city wolves had no pack, no rules. They thrived on being the strongest and smartest in society, excelling at sports and business. Draco could see the lure, but to abandon their wolf, their packs, for material gain, didn’t make sense to him.

“Focus,” said Ben, tugging him by the sleeve. Draco walked in a daze, taking in all the surroundings. The humans were so much smaller than Ben and Draco, so fragile. They walked around them, oblivious to their proximity to creatures that could kill them in the blink of an eye.

They both stopped dead at the same moment, the pedestrians migrating around them like water passing by an unmovable boulder in a fast flowing river. "It's her." This time Draco took the lead, following Bella's unmistakable scent, pushing through the humans with little thought to blending in. Some shouted, some cursed, but most got out of his way.

The trail led them to an alleyway between two rundown brick buildings. The lighting was minimal as they entered, and the smell of decay and alcohol nearly overpowered Draco's finely tuned senses. Ruckus laughter came from around the corner, cutting through the relative quiet in the abandoned lane. Draco's muscles clenched as he kept his wolf at bay. His instincts warned him of danger before he picked up the mixture of adrenaline and fear from his mate.

* * * *

Bella couldn't resist the call of the moon. After showering, she managed to convince Amanda to let her leave their little apartment. Her friend was acting like a mother hen, certain Bella wasn't thinking straight. She supposed her recent behavior was to blame, but she had to get out of the confines of the concrete walls. Her skin crawled with the urge to shift. Bella could already recognize the call of her inner wolf and had learned how to control it. With the full moon looking down on her, she found it difficult to focus. All she could think about was her mates and the wicked things she'd like to do to them.

She wandered into an alleyway, feeling a feral need to wreak havoc. It was like a battle between humanity and savage desire within her. As much as she tried to keep control, to remember who she was, the need to fight, to dominate, overpowered her. Yes, she was looking for trouble and knew she'd find it in this area of the city, not far from her apartment. She and Amanda didn't have money to rent in the respectable areas where crime didn't pay a visit to the front door.

"Hey, baby. Looking for a good time?" She suppressed her smile before turning around to face three men, no doubt junkies. The alcohol on the breath of the closest one nearly made her gag.

"Very original," she said.

"What's wrong with her eyes?" asked the heavysset man with the shaved head.

Did her eyes now glow like Ben and Draco's? She hoped so. "Have you ever heard of the Big Bad Wolf?" She stifled a laugh. "Imagine if that wolf was me."

"She's nuts," said baldy.

"Who cares? She's cute." They moved in on her, and she reveled in her plans to give them a fight to remember, unsheathing a few claws, until two others slunk out of the shadows. Two male

shifters. Their eyes glowed, but they held no love for her. Their sneers made her pulse race. At least they wore clothes. Before now, she'd never have suspected they were anything other than two ordinary men. Now, she could recognize them for what they were.

"Well, surprise, surprise," said the blond. He parted the other men aside easily with both arms and stood in front of her, his eyes taking in every inch of her. "Never thought I'd see the day." He ran his hand over the length of her hair, still slightly damp from her shower. She jerked away, only to hit the brick wall behind her.

"She's marked," said the other shifter, tugging the collar of her sweater down to reveal the two small scars.

"Marked, but all alone." The blond dragged a tongue over a set of glistening white fangs. She wanted no part of him or his friend.

"We were here first," said one of the humans.

Bella wasn't an unclaimed item up for auction. Anger made her vision red, but she also knew she'd be no match for two wolves in the tight confines of the alley in human form. It had been a miracle she had escaped the others in the forest as her wolf. It appeared her luck had finally run out.

She thought her senses had deceived her. When she smelled that familiar musk associated with love, sex, and security, she thought it was only her mind giving her some measure of comfort in her final hour. But when she spotted Ben and Draco in the distance, she nearly cried in relief. They'd found her, come for her. She briefly closed her eyes as the rush of heat tore through her body. Her wolf wanted to be claimed again, to be double fucked by her two hard mates. They looked impossibly sexy in designer jeans, their shirt clinging to well-defined muscles. The contrast of Ben's dirty-blond and Draco's dark hair made her pussy pulse. *Mine*.

Chapter Ten

They rounded the corner. Five males had Bella backed into a corner. She wore blue jeans and a grey sweatshirt, her dark hair clean and sleek as it hung over her shoulders. At least she'd been cared for until now, not starved and filthy as he'd imagined. He wondered what human had laid a hand on her first because he'd like to snap him in two.

"She's afraid," said Ben. "I'll kill them all."

Ben took measured steps toward the group of males. He'd been too focused on Bella to realize that two of them were shifters. He'd have to remind them of their customs. You didn't mess with a marked woman. Even the soft, human-loving wolves in the city should know that fact.

When Bella's eyes met his between two shoulders, their connection was solidified. The world went away, and it was just the two of them. Her body visibly relaxed, and he reveled in the fact that his presence reassured her. It should. He'd kill for her without a second thought, and now that he was here, not one hair on her head would be harmed.

"You have company, Bella." The other men turned to face him. They assessed him, sized him up. He was taller and built more powerfully than even the shifters. Ben hoped they'd try and fight him. He ached to release the violent energy pent up inside him ever since he discovered wolves had tried to kidnap Bella back home.

"Unwelcome company," she said.

"Who the hell are you?" The larger of the two shifters puffed up his chest. Ben was too enraptured by his beautiful mate to laugh at the male's pathetic attempt at bravado.

"He's her mate," said Draco, standing directly behind the man.

"And who would you be?"

Draco crossed his arms over his chest. "I'm her mate, too."

Ben savored the look of fear that crossed over their eyes as they stepped out of reach. With Draco at his side, he ignored everything but the beauty in front of him. He pressed in close and wrapped his arms around her thin waist. "You okay?" he whispered.

"I am now. A little late showing up, aren't you?"

"Sorry about that." He leaned in low, admired her love bite, and inhaled deeply. The marks on her neck symbolized their bond, one that would continue to grow in strength. "I like your marks."

"I like them, too." She squeezed his biceps before running her hands into his hair. He could smell her desire, thick and potent. Without a cloud in the sky, the full moon bore down with its full power.

Ben turned his head to see how Draco was handling the males. The humans had run off, kicking empty bottles as they ran, and the shifters walked backwards, fear replacing their feigned dominance. Sharing his mate had been a challenge from day one, but if he had to choose a male worthy of his woman, it would be Draco.

"You know what you are," he said against her neck. A statement, not a question. He could even recognize her as a shifter now, when before she appeared human on every level. Her wolf must have remained dormant all these years.

"I do now." She tugged him closer. "Kiss me."

Ben couldn't refuse her. They were in a dank alleyway far from home, but as a female shifter under the light of her first full moon, her body would demand to be sated. He'd joked with his pack mates about the stories centered on the savage female hunger. Only Grant had experienced a wolf. The others could just dream. Now, Ben had his own woman to satisfy. He hadn't been disappointed when he thought his mate was human, but now, discovering she was a rare wolf was a miracle he never dreamed of.

He trailed his lips over hers, a gentle brush of affection. She wanted no part of his slow exploration, seizing his lower lip between her teeth and tugging.

"My body's hot, so hot," she whined. "I can't stand it any longer."

"Don't worry, sweetheart. We're here now, and we're going to help you through this."

"What's wrong with me?"

"Nothing. It's your first full moon as a mated female. Once we bond, you'll get relief."

"Bond?"

He licked his lips. "Once we fuck you. Both of us." His cock hardened just thinking about sinking into her moist heat. In their unique triad relationship, they'd need to take her at the same time to

complete their mating bond and ensure her next full moon didn't make her so feral. The new elders in their pack taught him everything he'd need to know about their new she-wolf.

"Yes, I need both of you." She kissed the mark she'd made on his neck. "I have so many questions."

"And I'll answer all of them. I promise. First, we need to get you out of here."

"But—"

"Our ride isn't far from here." He grabbed her hand and attempted to lead her out of the alley, but she stood her ground and shook her head. "What is it?"

"I don't think you understand, Ben." Her little fangs were visible as she spoke. Fuck, did it ever turn him on. "I need you *now*."

* * * *

Bella wanted to follow Ben and get out of the alley. The fact that her men had come for her at all still had her heart swollen, and she didn't want to be separated from them again. But it would be impossible for her to explain the desperate burn deep in her cunt. Her inner walls pulsed and throbbed in deep waves, so hungry to be filled. Her heart pounded behind her ribs, and she knew she'd be willing and eager to participate in any sexual act, anything to take away the craving.

"Bella, soon. Once we get you home, we'll make sure you're well taken care of."

"Please!" Remaining in her predicament for hours wasn't acceptable. She was ready to drop her jeans and bend over the asphalt littered with broken bottles and God knows what.

"Draco, get over here," called Ben. Her other mate joined them after scaring off the last of the troublemakers. "What should we do with her? She says she can't wait another minute."

The corner of Draco's mouth curled up, and he tilted her chin up to face him. "Are you that hungry, my little wolf?"

"Famished." They both converged on her, surrounding her with so much male strength. "Tell me, what makes a wolf better than a man?"

The two men looked at each other briefly. Then Draco rammed his fist into the brick wall a foot from her head. The mortar and brick crumbled from the hole he'd created. "All the better to protect you with, little one."

Ben grabbed her hand and pressed it against the rock hard bulge in his jeans. "And all the better to fuck you with," he said with a sexy smirk.

The gumline above her fangs quivered with the need to bite, to mark. She could barely control her breathing as her desire threatened to undo her. "No shifting, sweetheart. I don't feel like getting wolfy with you tonight," said Draco.

Ben kicked in a door, and they entered to find an old billiards club. It must have been closed down for years, like most of the businesses in this area. A thick layer of dust covered the counters and the plastic sheets protecting the pool tables.

Draco closed the door. It was dark and quiet inside, the only sound was her pounding heart in her ears. As she looked around, Ben pulled the tarp off one of the tables, revealing a relatively clean green felt surface.

"Since you say you can't handle the long drive home, you're gonna get your wish," said Ben. "Arms up."

She complied, raising her arms so he could slip off her sweater. Her skin was hypersensitive to the soft material, his fingers gently caressing her sides as he lifted the offensive material away. Ben hoisted her up on the edge of the table and went straight for her naked breasts. His mouth quenched her immediate need, but also fuelled her libido. With hooded eyes, she watched Draco undress. His golden, muscled body promised relief she so desperately needed. She wiggled on the spot, wishing her jeans would evaporate into nothingness.

"Please," she begged.

Draco chuckled, a deep sound that melted around her like dark chocolate. She closed her eyes as he unzipped her jeans. Ben lifted her so Draco could tug down her pants and underwear, leaving her completely exposed. The billiard club might have been closed down, but the room was large and open, adding to the titillation of their act.

"Lay back, Bella." She eased to her back, and Ben spread her legs, placing her legs over his shoulders. He peppered kisses along her sensitive inner thighs, moving ever so slowly to where she needed him most. "I can't wait to taste you."

His hot mouth descended over her cunt, warming her and pulling her into the depths of ecstasy. She expected to cringe when his tongue teased her clit because she was so overly sensitive, but she melted, already too far gone to resist. Every lap of his rough tongue sent thrill after thrill spiraling through her body. She panted and moaned, forgetting the time and place, focusing only on Ben's invasion.

"That's enough," ordered Draco. "I want her to come around my dick."

His crude words were enough to pull her orgasm to the surface, but just before she could revel in the shower of pleasure, Draco rolled her to her side and smacked her ass, hard.

“Hey!” She felt a growl roll up from her chest.

“You’re not allowed to come yet, my little wolf. First you have to sit on my cock.”

How could she remain pissed when the thought of impaling herself on his thick cock made her heart beat frantically in anticipation? He sat on the edge of the pool table, his erection aiming up and ready. She bent over, desperate to suck his dick and lick her love bite.

“Ah, ah, ah, not this time, sweetheart. Come sit on this.” He held the base of his cock rigid. She straddled him and sank into relief. Draco stretched and filled her so full of hardened male flesh that she felt ready to explode. “Ride me, Bella. And mark me proper this time.”

She smiled as she began working his erection. Every movement brought her a measure of relief, so she pumped her hips faster, gliding up and down his slick cock. As the world spiraled away once again, her wolf crept out of its hiding place, elongating her human teeth into sharp white fangs. She wrapped her arms around Draco’s broad shoulders, nuzzling his neck, deeply breathing in his scent.

Before she could mark him for the world to see, claiming what was hers, Ben’s strong hands gripped her hips, his fingers pressing deep into her soft flesh. His cock felt moist as he nudged her nether hole. She’d never realized until this instant that having both men penetrating her at once would be the only thing to kill her craving. He’d found something in the rundown club to lubricate himself with and now demanded entrance to her virgin hole.

Bella tensed, her fangs receding with her increasing anxiety. “Relax. You need this as much as we do. You’ve marked us both, Bella. Now you need to accept both our cocks.” Ben’s voice wasn’t threatening. It held the promise of pleasure in a deeply masculine baritone.

She hugged Draco tighter and nodded, knowing this was the only way to seal their triad relationship. Ben pressed his dick into her ass an inch at a time in slow, measured movements. At first she gasped at the initial sting and stretching of her muscles. She almost pulled away, fear blossoming inside her, making her tense and rigid.

“Play with her clit, Ben,” said Draco.

Ben reached around her with his free hand to roll the bundle of nerves in circles. The spike of heat was exactly what she needed to relax and receive the full length of Ben’s dick in her ass. She sighed when he filled her to the brim. He stayed motionless, giving her time to adjust.

“So tight,” he murmured, sounding close to letting his wolf free.

* * * *

Draco had to use all his strength not to come when Ben entered Bella's ass. Having another cock squeeze into her already tight body was exquisite torture. Now he could understand Callen's claims—double fucking a woman was incomparable.

Once Bella relaxed, even stirring against Ben, they began to work her body. Draco needed to fill her with his seed as Ben had in the forest, claiming her as his. Her soft full breasts pressed against him as the other man forced her forward with his weight. They were a coiled mass of fucking, the air thick with the perfume of their lovemaking. When he knew he couldn't hold on another second, he made his demands. "Come, Bella. Now! Milk my cock."

"Yes!" She dug her claws into his back, making him wince as she suddenly called out. Her pussy clamped down on his erection, pulling his orgasm to the surface. Ben cursed behind her, and together, the three of them were bound. As her claws eased from his flesh, a new stab of pain at his neck made him smile lazily. He savored Bella's claiming, proud to be hers. When she sat straight, her fangs out and a smear of blood on her lips, he'd never seen anything so beautiful. Her dark mass of hair was in disarray, her eyes glowing like a she-wolf.

Ben helped her off Draco's lap and cuddled her in a nearby chair. He expected to feel some level of animosity towards Ben when it was all said and done, but there was nothing. Fate knew what it was doing after all.

Chapter Eleven

"It's all yours," said Ethan. Their alpha had moved Ingrid out of the cabin and into the new compound less than a mile away, one with working toilets and running water. It had taken months to be built, but would now house all the pack, except Draco and Ben. Although they'd always be part of the pack, they wanted their own private life with Bella. They'd be a family. Ben was reluctant to take over the old log cabin, until Bella said it had been a dream of hers to live in the woods in a log home. She wasn't materialistic or high maintenance. Even in the three weeks it took for the compound to be finished, she'd slept in the woods with Draco and Ben in wolf form. Of course, they cocooned her body with theirs and not even a mouse would dare tread near when they were on guard.

"If you need us, you know where we are. Just give a howl," said Ben as he clapped Ethan on the shoulder.

Callen laughed, his eyes bright with humor. "If you ever tire of bathing in the watering hole, stop on by for a real shower."

"No thanks," said Ben. "I'd rather not spoil my wolf." Callen shrugged, not caring one way or the other. The new house had modern luxuries that Ben would rather not get accustomed to.

As soon as their alphas shifted, darting off into the forest toward their new home and their mate, Bella grabbed Ben's cock through his jeans. "Are we going to christen the new place?" she asked.

Draco growled and scooped her up from behind, making her squeal and kick her legs in protest. He gently dropped her on the large bed in the next room. "So how does it feel being the only female shifter in the pack?"

"I like it. I'd never felt complete until after my first shift. I wish my father hadn't hidden the truth from me."

"He thought he was protecting you. Living in human society, while being something that shouldn't exist, can't be easy for a child. He must have done it out of love," said Ben, sidling up next to her, brushing stray hairs off her face.

"I can see that now. Maybe one day I'll have the nerve to pay a visit."

Draco lifted the hem of her shirt and kissed her stomach. "It would be a crime not to let him know his granddaughters. The first three-quarter female wolves ever to be born."

"We all have a future thanks to the little pups growing inside you," said Ben, kissing her temple.

"Hey!" Bella shifted to her side. "Please don't call our daughters puppies. It sounds horrible."

"Whatever you say. Now, about that christening." Ben slipped his hand up Bella's shirt. Her stomach was still washboard flat, but wouldn't be for long. He couldn't wait to see her heavy with his children. Her breasts had grown and were now twice their usual size, not uncommon for she-wolves. Ben kneaded her swollen flesh, loving the billowy fullness. Draco unzipped her pants and snuck his hand down the front. When her body jolted, he knew the other man had slipped his fingers deep in her pussy. The scent of desire circled around the cabin, branding it with their unique signature. This was their home, the place they'd raise their young and create beautiful memories together.

They still had so much to teach Bella. She needed to learn how to hunt, how to sneak up on her prey, how to protect herself in times of danger. Ben and Draco were eager to teach her, even though she'd never need any of the skills with two protective mates by her side.

"I think it's only fair you mark Ben's dick, too," said Draco.

Bella smiled. "I could do that."

"I like my mark where it is just fine, thank you."

She twisted out of their midst and straddled Ben's legs. As she unbuttoned his jeans, she licked her elongated fangs teasingly.

"Bella...don't even think about it," he warned.

"Promise I won't bite."

She dropped her head and sucked the length of his cock into her mouth. Her tongue twirled around the swollen head, collecting the moisture before she deep-throated half his cock. He closed his eyes and savored the feel of her soft mouth suckling him with wanton abandon.

"You guys are killing me," said Draco, only a distant sound as Ben focused on Bella's skilled mouth and little else.

The bed jostled as Draco moved about, getting behind Bella. When he mounted her from behind, she squeezed Ben's thighs, her claws poking through the thick jean. She moaned around his

cock, sucking greedily as Draco fucked her from behind. The whole bed rocked, the wooden headboard smacking the log wall time and time again. Ben was glad the compound was out of earshot.

Bella popped off the bobbing erection suddenly. "More," she gasped. Their little she-wolf loved it when they double-teamed her. She needed them both and craved the dual stimulation. Ben couldn't complain.

"Whatever you want. Look how hard you've made me," he said. "Draco, get the lube."

Bella kicked off the Levi's coiled at her knees and crawled up his body. Her long dark hair tickled his skin as she crept up, positioning herself over his hard cock. She didn't wait for Draco to return before sitting on this thick girth, moaning as he filled her to the brim.

"Bad girl," said Draco as he returned to their bedroom. He was coating his prominent erection with clear lube as he walked. "If you weren't pregnant, I'd spank your tight little ass for starting without me."

"Do it anyway," she said.

He swatted her butt playfully, pushing her down until she pressed chest-to-chest with Ben. "I love this ass. I can't wait to fill you."

As the other shifter eased himself into Bella from behind, Ben felt the pressure increase against his own cock. *Heaven*. Bella panted and mewled against his ear. "You like that? You like both your mates' cocks shoved up your cunt and your ass?"

"Yes!"

They took turns pistoning in and out of her body, bringing her to orgasm in no time. Bella was insatiable, a sexy little miracle that continued to amaze him.

Once properly christened, they all shared the bed as the sun went down. The solitary window offered the last remnants of daylight as they each lay sweat glistened and spent in a tangle of arms and legs.

Ben kissed her forehead. "You sure you'll be happy living like this? You won't miss your city life?"

She scoffed, not even lifting her head. "The city has nothing to offer me. Since I was a little girl running in the woods, I'd play out impossible fairy tales. Now I'm a woman, and you've both given me the chance to live my dreams. How could I ever turn away from that?"

"I love you," said Ben.

"I love you, too, little one." Draco held her hand, his eyes heavy with the need to sleep.

Who knew that his enemy would become a close friend, a human girl would become his mate, and the union of their love could save their race?

THE END

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Stacey Espino resides in beautiful Ontario, Canada where she is busy raising her five school-aged children. She loves being a Canadian, but could do without the brutal winters. When she's not escaping into the romantic settings she creates on her laptop, she's reading one of the many books threatening to overtake her bedroom.

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