



*Pride Law: Book Three*

*The Alliance*

*By*

*Loribelle Hunt*

## **The Alliance by Loribelle Hunt**

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### **The Alliance**

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**Dedication**

To all the great people in my life who are a continued source of support and inspiration.

## Chapter One

The edginess was back.

For a week, Isaac had felt watched and had caught wisps of a sweet alluring scent on the unseasonably warm winter breeze. A scent he'd given up hope of tracking down years ago. *Morgan*.

The first time, he'd been in the city, his treasured Savannah, a place he protected like a zealot from other shifters. Coastal Georgia belonged to the werelions, and they weren't about to give it up. No one entered his city without his knowing. He was positive she was there, but she eluded him.

Every time he caught her scent he tried to backtrack. Tried to hunt her down. His cat to her human. She shouldn't have been able to hide. Shouldn't have been able to conceal herself so well. If his best friend and trusted lieutenant, Davis, hadn't also been convinced she was close, he might believe he was losing his mind.

The frustration had become a pounding beat through his body that demanded to be satisfied, and that was impossible to do until he found her. *Morgan*. He remembered a sweet eighteen year old girl on the cusp of womanhood. A girl he didn't dare get too close to but even then, twenty-two years old and feeling overwhelmed by the needs of the Pride, he'd known what she was to him. His mate. The one woman who'd ever make him whole. The only woman who could assuage the terrible ache

throbbing through him now.

He'd met her on a business trip to Charleston, just up his own coast and considered neutral territory to the other werelion prides in America. It was his first day in the city, when he checked into a pretty little B&B, chosen because it backed up to a large forest. She claimed to be visiting elderly relatives in the house next door.

He felt an old twist of bitter frustration, now knowing that for a lie. He was certain she'd sought him out, orchestrated their meeting, and being charmed by her as he was, *knowing* what she was to him, he'd been unable to resist when she joined him for dinner every night. She regaled him with tales of a gruff but affectionate older brother, of a mischievous and carefree younger sister. She couldn't have been faking the wistfulness in her eyes when she spoke of her childhood home on the beach or the sadness when once, just once, she said her parents were dead.

Then after one too short week, she disappeared. The neighbors didn't know her. The name she'd given was faked. He didn't even know where that childhood beach home had been. Not that he'd once in the ten years since stopped looking for her. She was his, whatever her real name was. He *would* have her. It was as simple as that.

Of course, now it seemed she was coming to him.

She had no idea what he was. He hadn't dared to mention shapeshifters. That was something you eased a mate into when you were ready to claim her. When she was ready to be claimed, and she'd been much too young then. Hell, he'd been too young.

She may not know what he was, but she had to realize he'd be angry about her disappearance, about her continued absence. Young or not, he had not imagined that connection. Had not imagined the interest returned in her gaze.

He heard vehicles approaching, and then Davis was at his side, standing and waiting and watching on his front porch. Davis had been with him in Charleston, had had the same reaction to her as Isaac had. Sometimes it happened that way for werelion males. Sometimes they shared a woman out of love and respect. Pride Law. No woman was left to one man. They were sensual men. They loved with a fierceness

unmatched by human males, and two protectors were always better than one.

"If the reports are right, it's her," Davis said.

"If the reports are right, I'm going to tan her hide," he answered with an accompanying growl. If the reports were right, everything he'd assumed about her was a lie.

Davis chuckled, but it was forced, and there was no mistaking his anger. He radiated with it. "Me first."

The edginess, the alertness riding him hard for a week wasn't just about finding his recalcitrant mate. He'd been approached about forming an alliance with a weaker pride from central Florida. Reluctantly, he'd agreed to a meeting, but insisted they come to him. His territory, his men, his strength. The Florida group had agreed. What choice had they had? And Isaac and Davis had begun gathering information on them with slow, methodical precision.

The other pride's king was a couple of years younger than Isaac, but unlike him, Nathaniel was younger when he became king and hadn't been surrounded by older, experienced, loyal soldiers. He had sisters, one a year younger and one ten years younger. And he had an aggressive pride moving into his territory.

That was all about what Isaac had expected. More personal information had been harder to ferret out, and with his distraction over Morgan, his head hadn't been in the game. Then he'd received an email late the previous night with full names of the sisters and an old photo attached. Morgana and Bethany. She was just a child in the photo, holding her infant sister, but seeing it had filled him with a mixture of tenderness and rage.

She'd sought him out, given him a false surname and shortened first name, run and hid, and now at last, she was returning. Car doors opened and slammed shut, and he waited as she climbed out. She stopped next to the car, and he thought his heart would explode from his chest. Her hair was pulled back so it fell in a long straight sable tale. It looked shiny and soft, and he wondered what it would feel like on his skin, but he didn't dwell on that as his gaze took her in.

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She hadn't changed much in ten years. She still had the soft features that made her more pretty than beautiful, still had the same sad whiskey colored eyes. But the years had been kind to the teenaged promise. Average height for a woman, but small enough next to him to be petite, she was thin and curvy in all the right places. She had full high breasts and a luscious, round ass. He had to force himself not to salivate.

This was definitely Morgan, the girl-child he recalled, and she had no idea what was in store for her. No idea what the price would be for the alliance her brother sought. He didn't give in to the urge to stalk forward and brand her as his. He waited her out. Calm. Patient. Ready for the hunt.



## **Chapter Two**

Morgan reached for the door handle. Her fingers convulsed around it, but she didn't pull on it to swing the car door open. She wasn't ready to face this music. A few years ago it might have been doable, but she didn't have to be a shifter to feel the fury rolling from the two men on that porch. Oh yeah, they'd figured out who she was. And they were not happy about it. Or something.

The house was something, too. Almost as intimidating as them. A huge two story, it had deep porches on both levels that from where she was sitting appeared to wrap around the whole house. There was a front door flanked by windows and a few feet down in each direction French doors stood open to the warm still air. The front door was closed, however. Unwelcoming. Was that a message for her? It felt like it. The place was so different from the little beach cottage on the central Gulf where she'd grown up. A world away, socially and economically.

It wasn't just this house, the king's house, either that was a sign of the prosperity of this pride. They'd seen many like it driving on the winding road coming in, and when they'd reached this center circle, a park had been visible through the trees. She hadn't seen it firsthand yet, but she was pretty sure Isaac's house faced that park with others surrounding it. They'd be the homes of his senior soldiers and advisors. Her pride had once had a similar arrangement with the senior members of the pride living closest to the king.

And all that speculation and remembrance of werelion culture

wasn't steadying her nerves one bit. She took a deep breath, fingers clenching on the stupid handle, and turned to meet her brother's sharp gaze. "We don't have to do this," he said, voice soft in the closed confines of the car. "We can find another way."

She shook her head, once again tears hot and scalding and infuriating burning in her eyes. There was no other way. Either Isaac offered them the protection of his pride, or they accepted the other offer, and she just couldn't do that. She'd have to convince Isaac—or maybe Davis would be easier to deal with—that they needed shelter.

They were all that was left of a once strong and proud pride. Their fall was a long and sordid one she had no wish to relive now. She sucked in a deep breath and squinted up at the porch, cursing her evil luck. Of course she was nervous and shaky. Of course she would drop her contact lenses into the sink, and then rip one trying to get it out. And of course she couldn't find her glasses. She was literally walking in blind. But delaying the inevitable was getting her nowhere.

"Let's get this over with," she muttered and opened the door, shutting it behind her with a bit more force than necessary.

Nathaniel caught her arm before she could march forward. "Stay behind me with Beth," he said.

Biting her bottom lip, she glanced over to see neither Isaac nor Davis had moved, and she knew they would force her to go to them. She shook her head. "Bad idea."

Nathaniel followed her gaze then gave her a hard look. "I taught you well, but you aren't as strong as me and sure as hell not as strong as those two." He paused and looked back at the porch before speaking in a low, controlled tone. "They're both furious. What am I missing here, little sister?"

Her throat closed, and she didn't dare try to answer, responding with a shrug before pulling free of the gentle fingers on her elbow and moving forward. Nathaniel stuck to her side while Bethany trailed behind them, the gangly teenager quiet and subdued for once.

She stopped at the bottom of the steps, her siblings halting with her, and stared up at Isaac. She knew that face so well, dreamed of it every

night, and now the intense eyes she remembered held her ensnared. Davis was a silent presence at his side. They looked enough alike to be brothers. She wouldn't be surprised if they were at least cousins. They were both tall, six-foot-two she guessed, with wide shoulders and a build shown off by tight T-shirts. Biceps bulged, and she caught her breath at the strength evidenced in rock hard chests. They shared the same bright green stare too. Possessive. Hard. Intimidating. She shivered and tried to find differences between them, but there was just one obvious one. Isaac's sandy blond hair brushed his shoulders while Davis' just curled around his ears.

Isaac just stared at her a long moment before his gaze swept down her body and back up again, lingering over her breasts. It brought her body to instant awareness. It might be just a couple of weeks before Christmas, but she was dressed for a warm south Florida winter, in a short skirt and silk tank top. Thankfully, it was as warm in Savannah. This year at least. Not that anyone would've guessed by looking at her. She shivered under his scrutiny, her womb clenching, her nipples tightening, and of course he noticed.

"Come here... Morgana, isn't it?"

She lifted her foot to obey before his tone of voice registered. Biting down on her lower lip, she nodded, paused, then shook her head and didn't move closer. She became more aware of him, and the aroused tension in his frame, as his heavy lidded eyes focused on her mouth.

"Morgana." It was impossible to miss the warning in his voice this time, and she was afraid her whimper was audible. She grabbed Nathaniel's arm in time to stop his jerk forward.

"I don't know who you think you are, but my sister doesn't owe you loyalty. She's not a member of your pride."

Isaac gave her a cold hard smile. "Is that right, Morgana? You want to set him straight, or should I?" His cutting glance went to Nathaniel. "And you're in my territory. You want to consider that before you try to interfere with what I do."

She felt Nathaniel bristle next to her, felt his own anger rise to meet Isaac's, and knew there was no time left to delay. No time left to

prevaricate. She turned her back to the porch, to the two men holding onto their anger and frustration by such a thin thread, and faced her brother.

"Wait," she murmured, putting her palms on Nathaniel's chest when he started to move forward anyway. "I'll explain this later. But I'm the only one who can fix it now."

He glanced over her head, then back to her. "You're sure we can trust these people?"

She sighed. Yeah. After she made her deal with the devil, she was positive he'd protect her family. She didn't answer her brother. She turned on her heel and marched up the steps.

"It's just Morgan."

Isaac gave her that hot intense look that had made her tremble with desire even as an inexperienced teenager before stepping forward to meet her. That he went that far surprised her. Until he spoke.

"Ten years, Morgan. What are we going to do with you?"

"I have an idea or two," Davis drawled.

She snapped her head around to look at him. It was a miracle she didn't give herself whiplash. She'd always thought he was the more easy going of the two, always thought he'd be easier to live with. If the look in his eyes was anything to judge by she was dead wrong. With a groan she dropped her face into her palms. She was in serious trouble, and the worst of it was she was pretty sure once all the bitching and posturing was done, she'd like it. A deep cleansing breath later and she looked up, meeting first one hard gaze then the other.

"I'm sure you both have plenty to say. Could we discuss it inside?" Two hard looks. Hanging onto her rising temper, she huffed. "Please?"

That got her a narrow eyed look from Isaac and a grunt from Davis. But neither of them backed off and opened a path for the door. Two hard, *pissed off* predators. It was getting pretty clear her long absence and sudden reappearance was not going to be something either one of them let go anytime soon. What did she do now?

"I was eighteen," she said, almost pleading. "I had a brother and a sister that needed me, and a pride we've struggled to hang onto." She

glared at Isaac. "We weren't as lucky as you. We were alone."

He glared back. "You think I'm king of the pride because of luck?"

"You had support," she snapped back. "You had other people around you who weren't just willing but eager to protect your legacy until you were old enough and strong enough to do it on your own. We didn't."

There was so much more she needed to tell them, but not until she was sure she and her siblings were safe. Not until she was sure he wouldn't barter one of them away for something greater than land and money, a kind of power that was just beginning to be hinted at in the shifter world. A power her baby sister possessed.

This time his gaze was considering, filled with questions he didn't voice. "Once you walk through that door, kitten, I won't let you leave me again."

Here it was. The demand she'd been expecting and fearing. "And my brother and sister?"

"Are they part of the deal?" Davis asked, anger coloring his tone, and this time she smiled. Tired. Bitter.

"Look at what I've done. How can they not be?"

The silence stretched so long she didn't think they'd respond. "We can leave if that's what you prefer," she said keeping her tone low, modulated to betray none of her emotions, but there was no doubting she was issuing an ultimatum.

Isaac spun away, paced a few feet, and stopped with his back to her. He stood tall and rigid, the muscles in his back so tense she longed to run over and try to sooth him. Her heart ached when she accepted she might have waited too long. He may never forgive her. She couldn't do anything but wait him out, and she turned back to Davis who was watching her with the calm, steady eyes she remembered.

"You're asking for a lot of trust," he whispered.

"I know."

"Morgan," Nathaniel interrupted. "Why don't we go back to the hotel and wait until they're ready to talk to us."

She nodded, knowing he was right but heart sore all the same.

They hadn't quite rejected her, but she hadn't been welcomed with open arms and affection, either. *What did you expect, Morgan? You could have at least kept in touch. Could have at least tried to explain when it might have made a difference.*

Her foot touched the top rung, and a low menacing growl filled the air. She froze, her gaze going to the king who stalked toward her.

"Don't you dare," he ordered. He grabbed her hand, tugging until she went to stand between him and Davis. Then he looked at her brother and sister. "Your sister is welcome, of course. You know I have to reserve judgement on your brother."

She started to shake her head, but Nathaniel stopped her. "Accepted," he snapped and glared at her. "Not one word, Morgan."

"Normally," Isaac said, his voice filled with drawling amusement, "I'd object to someone speaking to my mate like that, but I think I'll let it slide this time."

She sighed. Nathaniel glowered. *Great.* This was just what she needed. "Mate?" he asked her. "You might have mentioned that earlier. Say ten years ago when you met him? And for sure when we decided to come here."

He was angry and acting the big brother, but he wasn't paying any attention to her at all, and her guard went up at the way he was studying Isaac. Like a bug under a microscope. Like a rabbit on which he was getting ready to pounce. And Isaac was giving Nathaniel equal scrutiny. Wonderful.

"Your house is epic," Beth said, breaking the silence in a sweet tone that Morgan knew all too well. She was as good at diffusing tense situations as she was at starting them. Beth winked at her and turned her dimpled smile on Davis and Isaac. "Don't suppose you have any bread and peanut butter. Breakfast was a long time ago."

It wasn't at all, but there was something in the shapeshifter makeup that seemed to make it impossible for them to imagine a female going hungry. For a moment they just stared at her, and then with a chuckle Davis spoke.

"You're gonna be trouble, aren't you?"

“Absolutely,” Beth answered with that good-natured twinkle and just a hint of smirk that made everyone adore her.

Nathaniel sighed and slung an arm around her neck. “You’re going to be the death of me,” he grumbled, but it was an oft repeated refrain, and his lips curved in a slight smile as he said it.

Beth leaned up to smack a kiss on his cheek. “You love me anyway,” she boasted.

“Oh, I don’t know, squirt. You can be pretty annoying,” he joked and then laughing, jumped out of the way before her elbow could connect to his side.

Unable to help herself, Morgan leaned back against Isaac’s chest and watched her brother and sister tease each other with the single-minded lack of mercy the closest of siblings shared. They moved into the yard, giving Morgan space to speak to her mates. To convince them.

“Do you see why now?” she murmured, afraid to tilt her face to look at him. Afraid he didn’t see or didn’t care why she’d made the choices she had.

His hands settled on her hips, his lips lowered to nuzzle her neck, and she was so lost in the sensation she almost missed his response. “If we were talking about another mated pair, I’d advise forgiveness. I’d order them to move on.”

“But you can’t forgive me?” she whispered, dreading the answer.

He sighed and turned her around. His eyes bore into hers, searching, and she wondered if he’d find the answers he wanted. Then he stepped back and opened the door. “Remember what I said, Morgan. I fell in love with that girl all those years ago, and I want to get to know the woman.”

She caught her breath, stunned and disbelieving of his declaration. It was as if he read her mind.

“Give it time. You’ll see it’s true. I won’t let you leave. You should be sure you can live with a man like me before you agree.”

The way he said it made her weak kneed. He was talking about more than just his personality. His eyes were hot, so hot, and greedy as he

took her in with long, slow pauses over the most feminine parts of her body. It reminded her there was so much she didn't know. About sex. About him. About those hushed rumors the single women spread concerning this pride's king.

"What kind of man are you?" she asked, worried the rumors were true and half afraid they weren't.

His answering smile was pure male dominance. "I'm the alpha here, and I'll never let you forget it. I'm used to being in control, and I won't give it up." His voice took on a sexy persuasive tone. "Give me your trust, Morgan, and I swear you'll never regret it. I can give you so much pleasure, kitten."

Oh god, how the hell did she respond to that? She didn't trust pleasure or sweet talking men. She hadn't spent the last years any more innocent than he had, not that she was mentioning that. And he wasn't trying to sweet talk her, was he? He was giving her fair warning, and his eyes promised to follow through. She didn't know if she could handle the intensity, the savagery, she saw in them so she looked away, first down at her feet and then over at Davis. A mistake. He wore the same look as Isaac.

"I don't think...I'm capable of what you seem to want."

Davis gave her a slow sultry smile that made her toes curl. "Don't worry, baby. We don't expect more than you can handle, but we *will* push you to your limits."

What were her limits? She had no idea and wasn't sure if she wanted to find out. Somehow she controlled her body and face, didn't give away how confused and scared and okay, maybe a little turned on, she was. Before she could frame a response a smooth honeyed drawl came from behind her.

"I didn't realize we were having company today. We would have stopped by sooner."

She spun around, always wary of a threat but part of her recognized Isaac and Davis hadn't reacted at all. They weren't worried. Of course, this was their home. Their pride. She noticed Nathaniel take Beth's wrist and maneuver her behind him while his stance remained loose and



relaxed but ready for anything.

Two men. One woman. The men were tall and broad and stood like every predator she'd ever known with a casualness that didn't conceal a wary watchfulness. But it was the woman who gave her pause. She was small, curvy, pretty, but Morgan knew better to judge her on how she looked. Her friendly smile was belied by the hard glint in her eyes. Morgan would bet the meager contents of her savings account this woman was a shifter. Female shifters were so rare most believed they didn't exist, and the ones who did believe, who knew they existed, for the most part fell in the *don't turn your back on* category. Knowing there was a female shifter in the pride made Morgan feel a hell of a lot better about bringing her sister here. Not that she was ready yet to trust them with her family's secrets.

The bigger of the two men moved around her and up the short path to the stairs. A quick glance at Nathaniel and she knew he'd come to the same conclusion. He wasn't a werelion, but he was a predatory shifter. His eyes narrowed, and he growled low in his throat.

"Declan," Isaac said. He indicated Nathaniel by lifting his chin in his direction. "Nathaniel. My mate's brother. Don't kill him yet, okay?"

It was said with a dry undertone, but Morgan wondered if there wasn't an edge of order under it. Declan paused where he was looking first at Nathaniel then Isaac then her. Then he cocked an eyebrow while the man behind him burst out laughing and pushed forward, jogging up the steps before anyone could stay him. He stopped right in front of her, and she had to fight not to flinch away when he lifted his hand. He noticed her reaction though, and it dropped before he could make contact with her chin.

"A woman's first response shouldn't be self preservation when being welcomed into her pride," he said. His voice was soft, gentle, but his eyes glittered with demand.

She followed her instincts for once and stepped to the side. She tried to move around him and get to her brother, but Davis grabbed her hand before she could sidle by. He shook his head, and she tried glaring at him until he released her. Knew she failed miserably. It was a pleading

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look. She'd come to deal with him and Isaac, and she was overwhelmed. She couldn't handle anyone else until she knew where she stood and processed that.

### Chapter Three

Davis wanted to punch Isaac. Any fool could see Morgan and her family had been pushed to the breaking point. He pulled her up under the shelter of his arm, and the fact she didn't utter one protest should have been a giant red flag of warning to Isaac. He didn't say a fucking word.

"Enough," Davis commanded, using the low controlled tone he knew would be obeyed. Pinning Carlos, Declan, and Sunny with his most domineering look, he issued the order Isaac should have. "You three, go home. Now."

Morgan turned into him, pressing her face against his chest. He wrapped his arms around her tight enough she murmured a protest, but he was beyond fucking caring and glared at Isaac.

A glance at her brother showed he was torn. He had two sisters to protect, but the one in Davis' arms had clearly chosen. That reluctance to abandon her to two men he didn't know, even though he still had a younger sister to protect, decided Davis. Some would see it as a weakness. Davis saw it more as drawing a line in the sand that said, *if I sacrifice one for the other what am I worth?* And the answer was not a fucking thing. Davis knew from the bitter experience of a child who'd had no control over his own world.

It was Declan, with that assessing wolf's gaze of his that nodded and nudged, then bullied his mates off the porch and away from the house. Davis would owe him big for that silent support. And still, Isaac didn't utter a word of protest. Instead he opened the door wide and

gestured for everyone to follow him inside. Morgan waited to follow Nathaniel and her younger sister who brought up the rear.

They walked down the long central hallway to the kitchen in the back where Isaac was already making sandwiches. Beth went to help him, keeping up a constant stream of chatter as she worked.

Nathaniel and Morgan sat and watched. Her brother was tense, but he was controlling it. Morgan, on the other hand, couldn't contain her skittishness. She fidgeted and wouldn't meet anyone's gaze, not even Nathaniel's which glowed with exasperation. Davis could guess why. The werelion hadn't known Morgan had two mates in this pride, and he didn't like being surprised. It wasn't until the simple lunch was prepared and on the table that anyone but Beth spoke.

"What happened to your pride?" Isaac asked before taking a huge bite of sandwich.

Nathaniel and Morgan exchanged a long look. The scents in the room changed. Nathaniel's to anger and Morgan's to something that wasn't quite fear. Neither touched their food.

"It started common enough," Nathaniel said. "I was fifteen when our father died and a couple of his lieutenants, who had ties to other prides, decided to return to them."

Davis wasn't surprised. That kind of thing often happened when there was a shift in pride dynamics. But from what they'd been able to determine, Morgan and her siblings were all that was left of their pride.

"Then a couple years later another group left. For a few years it was a slow trickle. The last five years it's been constant."

Nathaniel shrugged, as if it was no big deal and common practice for prides to hemorrhage members. Davis wasn't buying the casual, short explanation. Something else was going on, but instead of calling him on it, he let it slide. For now. When they got Morgan alone they'd find out what was really happening in central Florida. Davis had a worried suspicion it was something they needed to be aware of. Not just to protect Morgan and her siblings, but in the event it impacted their own pride.

"So it's just the three of you?" he asked.

This time it was Morgan who answered. She was nervous, though.

Hesitant. "If we find a safe place, there are others who might like to follow us. Weaker members of our pride."

His guard went up. There was much more to this story than a pride disbanding because its strongest members didn't want to follow a young untried king. One look at her face though and he knew he wasn't getting an explanation any time soon. She'd taken on a closed withdrawn expression.

It was Beth who broke a long uncomfortable silence. "If we're staying I want to go look around. Can I?" she asked Isaac.

"Sure." He nodded and sounded casual, but Davis recognized the calculating glint in his eyes. "Let me call my brothers. They can show you and Nathaniel around, while we have a word with your sister."

Davis did want some answers from her, but he knew once they were alone words would be the last thing on his mind. Thank all that was holy, Isaac's brothers would keep them away and occupied for hours.

The calls were made, and while they waited for Carlos and Fisher to arrive, Morgan withdrew more and more into herself. He wondered what she was stealing herself against. Did she not want them? Was she afraid of being with them? He was the first to admit they were intense. It was bad enough one on one, but when he and Isaac shared a woman, as they often had, he knew they could be overwhelming.

She moved with her brother to the front door, while he and Isaac lingered outside the kitchen. They couldn't hear the siblings' whispered conversation but there was no mistaking the angry glare Nathaniel threw their way. He didn't want to leave Morgan alone with them, may even have wanted to take both his sisters and flee. He stiffened seconds before the door opened but followed Carlos and Fisher out without protest, Beth at his side.

Alone. Finally. With the girl who'd haunted his dreams for a decade, and thank god, was no longer a girl. There was nothing childish about her curves, her generous breasts, the delicate structure of her bones. She had her back to them and he waited, breathless as she reluctantly turned around and leaned against the door. A deep breath made her breasts rise in unconscious enticement and left him torn between rushing

forward to taste and touch or staying rooted to his spot and just breathing her in.

But then that quandary was solved as Isaac, never one to hesitate when immediate action seemed preferable, stalked forward. Davis followed with less of a rush. Isaac would have her first. They hadn't discussed it. Hadn't needed to. He was the more dominant of the two of them and a king unused to being denied. That he'd waited so long for her had him walking a thin line of control. As he drew closer, Davis could see Morgan's eyes enlarge as she realized that control was about to snap. To her credit she straightened her spine and stared back, not showing any fear of the large feline who'd paused in front of her though there was a hint of it in the air.

"What? I don't even get roses first?" she asked, voice dripping with sarcasm.

Davis bit back a grin. Their little human had teeth. Isaac, however, was not so amused. Davis knew he would be later, once he'd slaked the raw edge of his desire. And then...then Davis would take his time. He'd take her slow. Would savor each taste and moan.

## **Chapter Four**

Morgan knew she was being stalked, knew Isaac wanted her a little afraid of him to appease those angry possessive instincts of his. She understood. She'd grown up surrounded by werelions—strong males accustomed to dominating their mates. She understood, but she didn't like it. She didn't want to be protected, coddled to the point of madness. Given half a chance he'd wrap her in cotton and hide her away. Davis would no doubt help.

She couldn't stand the idea of that, so she lashed out without thinking. Davis was amused and that pleased her, but her question only seemed to make Isaac fiercer. The appalling thing was she liked it. This side of him was primal, testing the constraints of his human side, on the edge of civilized. She'd caught a glimpse of it when they'd first met, but that memory was nothing like the reality of his reaction to her all grown up. She was in trouble. He'd be rough, unrestrained, primitive. Her body started to ache, an answering throb of desire rushing through her.

But still...there was that kernel of fear, of uncertainty. She looked around, judged his and Davis' positions, and prepared to dart around them. Before she could even order her feet to move though, Isaac lurched forward. His palms slammed against the door on either side of her head, his body pushed against hers to cage her in.

This time she did whimper and was relieved no one else was around to hear her sissy response. He was broad through the shoulders, his body corded with firm muscles, and had a cock she could feel pulsing

through his jeans, long and hard and insistent against her belly. He stared down at her face, eyes obsidian black and unreadable. She thought he'd kiss her, but he didn't.

Taking his time, he lowered one hand. Down the side of her face, over her throat, stopping for a moment to spread his fingers like a collar before moving that slow glide down. His skin was rough, as if he worked with his hands a lot, and it teased over her collar, down her arm to her wrist.

He seemed to be weaving her into a web of need, and she was panting by the time he moved to her waist. His fingers edged up under the bottom of her tank top, dragging it up as he explored her belly, the bottom of her ribcage. She held her breath as that hand moved higher.

His pelvis pushed into her, holding her still so he could use both hands. She could have told him the move wasn't necessary. She couldn't move if she wanted to. Then again he *was* keeping her from melting into a puddle at his feet. Damned man would probably like that so she kept the thought to herself. Besides who could think?

Using both hands he ripped the tank top down the middle leaving her standing there with two useless flaps and her bra. When he did a partial shift and lifted sharp nails to those straps she protested.

"No!" She reached for the snap on the front and glared at him. "This is my favorite bra. Don't you dare destroy it."

He watched her with catlike eyes while she unsnapped it, moved just enough so she could wiggle her arms free and drop it to the ground. She had no idea why she was cooperating. Hell, she was even eager. Then his tongue lapped at her nipple, sensation shot through her, and she didn't have to wonder anymore. That first touch seemed to be all the gentle he could manage.

Hands gripping her hips, he lifted her against the door until her breast was level with his mouth, then he swooped in to suckle at her. The first rush of pleasure was so intense it bordered on pain, but soon she was gripping his head, holding him close, trying to get closer.

Her body burned. A rising conflagration with no relief in sight. And still his mouth stayed on her, teasing her nipple, tasting her flesh. She



almost sobbed when he broke away, but he only switched to the neglected breast. This time there was a definite bite of teeth, and with a startled gasp she jerked, arching her body against his.

His cock pressed against her thigh, and she froze a moment to feel the length of him against her. She wanted to see it, wanted to feel it—first with her hands and then thrusting into her. And maybe later, he'd let her taste him. She wanted to do that. Wanted to explore him with her lips and tongue and just a hint of teeth.

She maneuvered her hands between them and shoved until he gave her enough room to reach the snap on his jeans. It was easy. The zipper was trickier and when she tugged on it, he froze, lifting his head to stare into her eyes. The veneer of civility was ripped away. There was nothing tame left in his gaze. He was all need, primal and wild. She worked her hand between the denim and the zipper, cupping and protecting that tender flesh before she pulled the zipper down. She wanted to go slow, wanted to tease, but she craved him too much. He was hard and pulsing in her hand, soft skin encasing a steel rod.

She pushed his jeans down, and they clung to his hips, but she didn't care since his cock was now free for her to explore. She danced her fingers up and down the length, then wrapped them around his girth, squeezed and pumped. With a savage snarl he yanked her skirt up, ripped her panties off, and spread her wide for him. He held her gaze as she guided him to her entrance. Kept her pinned against the wall as he thrust into her. There was nothing slow or gentle about his invasion, and even wet and wanting she felt every inch of it.

Isaac was drowning. The scent of her arousal surrounded him, fogging his brain. He wanted to consume her and struggled to regain some semblance of control. It was impossible. She was hot and slick, her pussy tight but welcoming as he thrust into her to the hilt, and froze at her soft mewling sound of distress.

Fuck. He knew better. Yeah, he liked his sex on the rougher side, but he always made sure the woman he was with was ready for that step. With Morgan, though, his hormones were in control. His cat side was in control. His instincts had just taken over.

He stared into soft brown eyes gone big with shock and tried to slow the hammering of his heart while withdrawing from her with forced gentleness. He gritted his teeth at the exquisite sensation. He was clasped in heaven. He meant to separate them, to take her upstairs to the big empty bed that had been waiting so many years for her, and make love to her the right way. But when her tight little cunt convulsed around the head of his cock he couldn't make himself do it. He worked back in slowly this time, giving her more time to adjust to his length and girth.

When he was once again inside her, he bent his head to take her nipple between his teeth. The touch was soft and gentle, seducing rather than claiming. He sucked her, worried her nipple with his teeth before moving to the other side.

With a happy little sigh she gripped the back of his head to hold him to her and hooked her ankles at the small of his back. She rocked her hips, lodging his cock deeper inside her body, and he sucked in a ragged breath. She accepted his invasion into her body if not yet her life.

Now to learn to master both.

He moved one hand to cup her ass, holding her tight to his torso, and braced his other against the door by her head. He couldn't resist nibbling on her delicate ear before leaving a trail of soft kisses to her chin. From there it was impossible to resist her rosy full lips, and he chanted to himself as he traced their outline with his tongue. *Slow slow slow.*

The temptation was too great when she opened her mouth for him though. Slow went out the window. He licked at her, lapped her up, and started to fuck her. It was rough and hurried and out of control, and when she moaned into his mouth, when her fingernails dug into his shoulders and urged him on, he was exultant.

She was with him at last. His woman, his mate. His love. Giving herself over, letting him take her along for the wild ride that his less civilized self needed like air. And then she was crying out, her body shaking, her pussy convulsing in a tight grip around his cock in a way he could only describe as mind blowing. He felt as if he were jumping off a ledge with her as he threw his head back, gritting his teeth against an answering roar, and spilled inside of her.

He leaned his forehead against the door next to hers, turning for one moment to leave a biting kiss on her neck before resuming his position. It took several minutes to catch his breath, for his heart to slow to its normal rhythm and strength enough to return to his body to release her. She was still quivering when he stepped back. He grabbed her waist when he was no longer supporting her, and she swayed.

Her eyes were wide and dazed, her lips reddened and puffy from his kisses. His stubble had left faint scratch marks on her breasts. He should feel bad about that, but she wore that dreamy, well fucked expression, and he just couldn't dredge up any regret.

A throat cleared behind him, and he glanced over his shoulder to see Davis propping one shoulder against the wall, arms crossed over his chest. Isaac pulled his jeans up, zipped himself up, and grinned at his best friend. He was trying to look casual, but Isaac could see the strain on his face and knew that erection had to be painful. If Morgan were any other woman, Isaac would step aside and probably say something completely inappropriate like *she's all yours*.

Of course, Davis wouldn't be reacting like this to any other woman. He straightened from his relaxed position against the wall, his expression and body language betraying the creature he was. Not the easygoing guy he showed the world, but a werelion. Predatory. Hungry. On the prowl. He didn't say a word as he watched Morgan, finally strolling forward. Isaac turned to look at her.

So beautiful. She'd pulled her skirt down, put her bra back on, and held her ruined tank top in one hand. With a cute dazed expression, she stared down at the shirt then looked up at him and grumbled.

"You didn't have to ruin it."

He was sated for the time being. He could tease now. "Don't you think you look better without it? I should buy you a closet full of lingerie and keep you half naked all the time."

Her eyes narrowed, and he smelled her spike of temper. He managed, in the nick of time, to contain his laughter but there was no hiding his grin or her answering huff of aggravation. She was a surprise, a delightful one. As a teenager he'd seen nothing but a sweet innocent girl.

No hint of a temper that would flare to life, no hint of a woman who would stand up to him. The feline side of him wanted to get her all riled, wanted to see that flush on her cheeks, the sparkling eyes, and then pet her down, stroke her into coming apart in his arms again. She would be so much fun to fight—and make up—with.

Davis interrupted his thoughts. “Do you have a bag in your car?”

She bit her bottom lip and shook her head. “We left everything at the hotel. We didn’t know if you would take us in.”

Davis nodded and turned to Isaac. “Why don’t you run over to Fisher’s and see if Jaz has something she can borrow until we get her things back?” His gaze returned to Morgan, trailed down her body. Isaac knew exactly what was on his friend’s mind. “I’ll show Morgan around upstairs. I bet she’d like to get cleaned up.”

Sure she would, but it was a process she’d be repeating quite a lot that day. With a jaunty wave and a light heart, Isaac let himself out to go raid his sister in law’s closet.

## Chapter Five

Morgan had grown up with werelions. She knew what they were like. Half wild, sensual, commanding men. She hadn't been prepared for her reaction to the ones who were hers though. Once she'd dressed, well as much as she could, she'd recovered her missing brain cells, but they'd taken immediate flight when Davis stepped forward.

Her sex spasmed and her blood sang, just meeting his gaze. He wanted her, and he wasn't hiding it. She warned herself to be cautious, but there was no use. Her body responded to that look, and why should she hide it? He was her mate. She was free to appreciate him. And as he led her up the stairs, appreciate she did. *Oh my*. Broad shoulders, tight ass, long muscled legs.

At the landing he turned right and led her to the end of the hall. The room they entered was decorated with in *Southern Living* taste, with two large dressers, an armoire, a small desk, and a huge king sized bed. Her heart skipped a beat when she looked at it and realized it would sleep three with ease. But though it was furnished, the room felt unlived in.

"That's the closet," he pointed to a door on one wall while turning in the opposite direction. A couple of feet from it was a set of French doors that opened onto the veranda. She wondered if she could see the stars from there. "Bathroom's over here."

She followed him, glad she'd left her sandals downstairs as she walked over thick, soft carpet. She bet it cost a fortune, just like everything else she'd seen, and it felt decadent, felt as if she was being spoiled with

the simplest pleasures. Then she stepped in the bathroom, and her mouth gaped open.

A smiling Davis appeared in front of her. "Didn't your momma ever tell you that's how you catch flies?" he teased, but before she could compose herself, his mouth swooped down on hers, and she was lost.

It was a lazy, sultry kiss. He took his time, exploring with his tongue, nipping with sharp teeth. It was a long slow tease of a kiss. He sipped at her. Savored her. She was panting when he broke away, clutching at his shoulders for support, ready to throw herself at his feet and beg him to do it again. He could stand there and kiss her all damned day, but he didn't. With a knowing smile, he stepped away, walking over to the huge jetted tub and fiddled with the handles.

She took the opportunity to look around. The room was huge, bigger than her bedroom back home. There were three sinks in the long vanity, tons of storage space, a walk in shower that she swore she saw benches in, and then, of course, that tub. It looked big enough for an army. She sighed her anticipation as it began to fill and Davis pulled out a bottle of bubble bath from under the counter. He squirted some under the faucet while she took off her bra. Then he put the bottle up while she shimmied out of her skirt. When she was naked he lifted her over the rim of the tub, and she sank down into its warm cocoon, leaning back to close her eyes. Bliss.

She heard two thumps, figured the sounds were him removing his shoes, and expected him to join her. Whatever. There was plenty of room for both of them. The whole other side of the tub was empty. But when he got in he nudged her. She scooted over, muttering there wasn't enough room to sit side by side and knowing it was a lie. Her eyes flew open when his fingers closed around her waist and he lifted to sit across his lap.

"Umm." She frowned. "There's plenty of room." She waved her hand. "Over there."

Davis wasn't paying any attention to what she said though. He stared at her breasts, his fingers gliding with languid intent up her ribcage.

"Mmm," he murmured, bending his head to blow a hot breath over

her nipple. It was wet from the water and puckered in response. She wasn't cold, but she shivered. "But you're not over there."

She'd just had sex, and it felt a little weird to be sitting naked in another's man lap so soon.

"You two move fast," she murmured. "No flowers, no chocolate, no talk."

"Talk, baby. I'm listening." His tongue licked over her nipple, and she gasped, grabbing his biceps and holding on. "You need to be wooed? Seduced?"

This time he sucked her nipple into his mouth. He was gentle, soft, *blazing* hot. She stopped breathing for several seconds, then turned to straddle him, rubbing her pussy over his cock. She was desperate with want. She needed him moving with the same lazy seduction deep inside her.

"I'm so easy," she muttered.

Chuckling, he released her nipple and lifted his head to look in her eyes. The backs of his knuckles grazed her cheekbone in a feather soft stroke, and he smiled. "But only for me."

Arrogant. But she kind of liked it. She smiled back. "Just shut up and kiss me, Davis."

"With pleasure."

But he didn't move. He stared at her lips, licked his. She thought for sure she'd combust as soon as he touched her. His lips were firm, and she opened her mouth for him, running her tongue over his lips. They felt smooth and slick and parted for her exploration. He tasted like coffee and man. Temptation laced with sin.

When his tongue met hers, she groaned and pressed closer. He took his time, paused to catch her lower lip between his teeth for a quick nibble, before kissing her again. This time he turned up the heat, confidently taking her mouth, one hand twisted in her hair to hold her at just the angle he wanted.

His cock throbbed against her, and her desperation rising, she ground herself against him. Still kissing her, he untangled his hand from her hair and put both on her hips to lift her. She guided his cock to her

entrance but didn't take him in until he stopped kissing her and met her gaze. Then she lowered herself onto his shaft, lost in his eyes as they widened and began to glow bright blue, as they must in his werelion shape. Stunning.

Neither said a word as she began to ride him. It started as long slow glides up and down his length. Warmth spread through her and she let her head fall back and closed her eyes. He felt *so* good. He filled her up, touched every raw aching nerve ending with each advance and retreat. She didn't want it to ever stop. Then his hand was between them, and his thumb brushed over her clit.

She gasped and her head snapped up, eyes wide open. He wasn't looking at her. His gaze was focused down at where they joined each other. He moistened his lips and touched her again. She braced herself for the next jolt of sensation, but instead of that feather soft teasing he was firm. His thumb brushed back and forth over her clit, and suddenly her arousal was anything but the languorous heat of just minutes ago. She kind of resented him taking her up so fast, but she couldn't find the voice to protest.

Switching to two fingers he squeezed her clit, then rolled it between them. She moved faster, harder on his cock, taking him as deep as she could. She whimpered when he bumped against her G-spot. The pressure on her clit increased, not quite painful but on an edge somewhere between hurt and pleasure.

He seemed to swell inside her and one hand gripped her hip, urging her faster while his fingers worked magic on her clitoris and teeth clamped around one nipple. She screamed when the orgasm overtook her, rushing through her in shuddering waves. When she felt his hot cum fill her she collapsed against his chest. She became aware of his heart hammering beneath her ear, his fingers still digging into her flesh. She smiled knowing she'd bear marks from his possession. It should bother her but she was too damned sated to care.

She must have dozed off because when he murmured to her to sit back the water had cooled. He picked up a washcloth and cleaned her with slow thorough efficiency that kick started her libido. He smiled when



he dipped the cloth between her legs and she tilted her hips to meet him. Too bad her groan was ache not pleasure.

"I think you've had enough for today," he murmured, leaning forward to nuzzle her neck.

She felt the scrape of his teeth and fear froze her in place. Neither of them had bitten hard enough to break skin. Shifters were very careful not to do that because their saliva mixed with a woman's blood and created an unbreakable mate bond. A woman could have multiple mates, but for a male shifter there was only one.

Knowing they were her mates and accepting the reality of the bond were two very different things, though. She knew they'd never let her go now that she was in their territory, but she wanted the chance to get to know them as an adult before anyone took that step. She wasn't ready, and she was suddenly very aware she was alone with a werelion struggling against his instincts. He'd gone hunting still, and his eyes were wild and glowing. She didn't dare move a muscle. Didn't even breathe.

## Chapter Five

Davis fought for control. The scent of fear clogged his nostrils—heavy, sweet, and intoxicating. His lion side wanted to gorge on it. On her. The man was insulted, even a little angry, that she would let him have her body but the second his teeth had found her nape she'd withdrawn, fearful.

He had to get out of the room before he did something unforgivable. Like bond with her anyway, fear or not, permission or not. Sometimes it really sucked to be subject to the instincts of a wild animal.

Never looking away from her—the lion wouldn't allow him that much freedom—he stood and stepped onto the bathmat next to the tub. Water poured off of him, and her eyes went straight to his erect cock. The gaze felt like a touch. Soft. Tentative. He groaned, wrapped his hand around the base and pumped, applying more pressure with each stroke. Fuck. Was he reduced to masturbating in front of his mate?

One look in her eyes, and he couldn't stop himself though. The scent of fear was soon overcome by her arousal, lush and full. Like the woman. She walked on her knees to brace her hands on the edge of the tub, that avid greedy gaze never moving from the pumping of his fist. When she licked her lips and then bit down on the bottom one, he groaned and let his cock bump against her mouth.

She looked up at him. Her eyes still held a hint of fear, but they were also dazed with curiosity and arousal.

"Taste me," he ordered, his voice gone guttural with desire. He

almost didn't recognize himself. Had never felt this kind of need before or this much craving to dominate. He wanted to own her, body and soul. God help him. This new development in his personality wasn't something he liked, but he couldn't seem to help himself.

"Morgan," he whispered when she still hesitated. "C'mon, baby."

Then the pink tip of her tongue darted out over the head of his cock, and he had to clench his fists to keep from grabbing her and ramming it down her throat. His groan seemed to make her braver, though, and she wrapped her hand around the base of his erection. She blew hot air over him before leaning forward to taste him again. This time she lingered, her tongue finding every curve, every bump, every pulse point on the head. When she sucked him into her mouth, he gave into temptation and twisted his fingers in her hair. He fought the urge to drag her closer. Thankfully, she didn't need any urging.

Her lips closed around him, and she sucked while taking in more of him, until her mouth met her hand. He shuddered at the sensation of bumping the back of her throat, but it lasted just a second, and then she pulled back. Only to repeat the action. Once, twice, oh so slowly. If she kept this up he was going to lose his fucking mind. He might have already.

She hummed on her next stroke, and he wanted to reverse positions, wanted to do some tasting and humming of his own. But there was no way he was going to give up her hot little mouth yet. He looked down at her head bobbing on him, taking her own sweet time, and noticed the thick plush carpet he stood on, and grinned. She mumbled a protest when he tried to pull away and lift her off her knees.

"Just for a second, baby," he said, anticipation flooding through him when she obeyed.

He helped her out, then lay down on the rug. She arched one perfect eyebrow, teeth nibbling her bottom lip then dropped to her knees between his legs. "Oh no you don't," he almost snapped. "Turn around."

The more he thought about it, the more he had to taste her. Now. Her eyes widened with shock and her hesitation was easy to read as she turned her back and straddled his torso. Her pussy wasn't anywhere close

to where he wanted it, though. Hands hooked around her thighs, he tugged until she moved into position. Her knees rested above his shoulders, and he stared up at her swollen pink folds. Moving his hands to her ass, he pulled her down to his waiting mouth and flicked his tongue through the folds. She was wet from the bath and arousal, tasted like sweet nectar, and when he inserted his tongue into her opening, she gave him a low sweet moan and rocked against him.

But she'd forgotten about his cock. He lifted her a bit, just enough to speak. "Morgan, every time you stop, so do I."

Where had that little mean streak come from? He had no idea and at that moment, since his cock was between her lips again, he didn't really care. It was hard to concentrate on his task while she suckled him, and he knew he would come too soon. He wanted her to come with him. He applied himself with gusto. Using his tongue on her clit in a fast then slow method, he brought her to the edge of orgasm. Her body quivered, her skin was hot under his hands. He molded her ass and pulled her closer, wondered for an instant how she'd react if he slapped her butt. He'd just decided to find out when Isaac entered and met his gaze over those perfect round globes. Morgan, sucking his penis with single-minded enthusiasm, didn't notice Isaac. Didn't see or hear him remove his clothes, or if she did, she didn't react.

Isaac squatted down next to them but didn't interfere. "Does anyone get to join in this party?" he asked, startling Morgan so she tried to pull back. He stopped her with a hand on the back of her head. "Oh no, sweetheart. You finish with Davis. Then I'll have a turn."

She didn't react for several seconds so he rocked his hips to refocus her attention. Either the move was a little too forceful or she was so relaxed she'd loosened her grip on the base of his erection, because suddenly most of his length was in her mouth. She swallowed hard, massaging the head of his cock and he was gone, coming down her throat before he could control the reaction. Afraid of hurting, or hell drowning her, he rolled away and lay on the floor at her side, breathing hard, his heart racing.

Isaac studied them both a minute. He'd been surprised at his surge

of jealousy when he'd walked in and seen them. He and Davis had shared many women over the course of their friendship, and she was just as much his mate as Isaac's. Maybe it was the being left out that bugged him, even though he'd known when he'd gone to find her some clothes Davis would take the opportunity to fuck her.

Still, there was no denying what a punch in the gut it had been to walk in on them. He hadn't expected taking a mate to effect him like that. He was a werelion king. Not even he was exempt to Pride Law. No woman was allowed to mate into the pride and belong to one man alone. They were always part of a group relationship. Sometimes it was two men, sometimes three. He knew he'd never allow anyone but Davis to touch her though. He scowled. Some might object to that. Old traditions died hard, and it wasn't unusual for a pride king to allow others, not a trusted part of his own three or foursome, to have sex with his mate. It was believed to strengthen the ties the stronger members felt to the king and pride.

But there was no fucking way Isaac would allow it.

He rubbed a hand over his face then tried to watch with a dispassion he was hell and gone from feeling as Morgan sucked off his best friend. An impossible task. She had a sweet mouth and a seductive body. He wanted to inhale her. Wanted to imprint her so fully onto his senses he'd be able to find her anywhere in the world. Wanted her to want him with the same intensity, the same driving need he felt. His lion side was clawing for freedom. Demanding they claim her, mark her, lock her away if necessary to insure she'd never leave again.

God help them all. He was so close to the edge.

He knew when Davis came. His ragged groan gave him away, and his scent changed, spicy and satisfied. It was all the permission Isaac needed. He scooped her up from the floor, then carried her back into the bedroom. Her eyes were dazed, her scent ripe and intoxicating with a hint of frustration. He smiled. She'd been close but Davis came first, and before his friend could rectify that situation, Isaac had carried her off. He should at least feel a twinge of guilt, but the truth was he was beyond higher thought at the moment.

Dropping her to the bed, he stood over her and took a deep breath. She sprawled back, her long hair fanned around her like a wanton angel, and he took the time to just take her in. The euphoria was exhilarating. No more dreams. No more trying to quench his need in someone else's body. All he needed in the world was lying there waiting for him like the gift she was.

It wasn't enough just to look at her. He climbed into the bed, lying down next to her almost afraid she'd disappear when he touched her. Using the pads of his fingers, he traced the contours of her lips and was rewarded with a breathy, needy sigh as she turned her body into his.

"Isaac, I need—" she whispered, and he placed his fingers across her lips, shaking his head.

"I know what you need, sweetheart."

His kiss was a light peck. She opened her mouth for him and mewled a protest when he ignored the invitation. He'd get to her mouth soon enough. There was so much silky smooth skin to explore first. And explore he did. He wanted to taste every inch, wanted to drive her crazy with need before driving into her.

He could guess how Davis had taken her. Slow and gentle and focused on her pleasure to the exclusion of his own. Isaac wanted to give her the same tenderness, the same care, and he tried to reign in his instinct to demand and control. But despite his best intentions, his primitive side was in full control. He left biting little kisses down her throat, over her shoulders, on the plump sides of both breasts before attending to those pert little nipples that made him lose his mind.

He sucked one into his mouth, soft and gentle at first, allowing the pressure to build, allowing her arousal to spike, as his hand slid down her belly, over her pelvis and slipped between the folds hiding her sex. At first, he just cupped her, but it wasn't long before her scent intensified, sweet and heavy as gardenias in bloom. He suckled her harder, this time using his teeth, and she rocked her hips against his hand, complaining in a low ragged voice when he didn't give her what she wanted.

"Damn it, Isaac, I'm going crazy. Make me come!"

The order was spoken in a near whisper, but there was no doubt it

was an order, and with a suddenness that surprised him fury mixed with his desire. He lifted his head and looked into her face.

“Isaac,” she practically sobbed. “Please.”

Oh he would please her all right. In his own way and his own time. He smiled and let his grip on his feral side slip a bit, was rewarded by that husky little catch in her breathing, the eyes going wide. Her scent changed, a bit of anxiety added to her desire. Despite that her body moved against his, restless and pleading.

He heard the bathroom door open behind him, heard Davis’ soft steps as he entered the room and walked around to the other side of the bed. Isaac hid his amusement as Davis gave Morgan a half grin that most of the pride had come to realize meant trouble. Their sweet little mate didn’t have a clue though. She returned the smile. His eyes were calculating when he met Isaac’s.

“It’s too soon to do it the right way. Some things do need to be discussed first.”

Davis, perceptive as usual, understood Isaac was close to snapping, his need to dominate his mate driving him hard. Her demand made him want to restrain her, tie her limbs to the four bed posts and show her exactly who was in charge. Deny her an orgasm until the desire made her so insane she’d do anything he asked in and out of bed. He needed to have that mastery over her body. Over her life. He wasn’t proud of it, but he had to own her body, heart, and soul.

“Probably,” he said, agreeing with Davis.

“What are y’all talking about?” she asked, confusion in her voice, reason returning to her eyes. That wouldn’t do at all, but before he could do anything about it, Davis joined them on the bed. He took her wrists in one of his and stretched them over her head. Leaning down, he sucked her bottom lip between his teeth and lingered before releasing it.

“We’re talking about restraining you.” She tugged on her wrists but was no match for Davis. “Tying you up on this bed and doing whatever we want to you.”

There was no mistaking the surge of fear in her scent. Davis sighed. “We would never hurt you, baby. We love you. You have to trust us.”

"I don't even know you," she whispered. "I met you once when I was a teenager."

Isaac's growl filled the quiet room before he could stop himself, and she flinched back from him. It seemed she shrunk back into herself, erected a shell between them. That made him want to roar. What the fuck was going on here? The idea of being restrained and pleased by her mates shouldn't induce that kind of fear. Anxiety, trepidation, sure. But this cloying sick scent of fear? It didn't make sense. Unless...

"You've done this before?"

She shook her head. "Never." So why the aversion?

His eyes narrowed and drifted down her body. Her skin was smooth and flawless, her face flushed, her eyes wide and afraid. It was a mystery, and being half cat he'd always loved puzzles. He made a decision he hoped wouldn't leave him with blue balls for days and got off the bed. Davis gave him a startled look, but he ignored his friend and looked at her.

"When you're ready to come to us on our terms, let me know, kitten. I won't take you with limits, and I won't take you with the stench of fear in the air either."

He bit back a grin at his friend's almost sub-vocal groan. He didn't appreciate being tossed to the sidelines with Isaac. But for this to work, it had to be both of them.

Morgan looked back and forth between the two of them, and her eyes narrowed. "Let me get this straight. You won't have sex with *your mate* unless I'm tied down? Both of you?"

"Unless you're willing to trust us. To let go of your fear? Yeah, that about sums it up," Davis answered, sounding resigned.

Isaac figured he'd get his ass kicked later. For now he had to remove temptation and Morgan, red faced, eyes glittering, lying naked on their bed, was pure temptation. He got up and retrieved a pair of shorts and tank top from the top of the dresser, tossing them to the bed.

"You're about the same size as Sunny and Jaz. Those should fit."

Well, except the part where Morgan was a bit taller and better endowed. The tight top and short shorts would be damned near illegal on



her and torture for him.

She picked them up, her gaze full of suspicion and distrust. "Sunny is the one I met earlier?"

"Yes. Mated to my brother Carlos and their wolf, Declan. Jaz is her twin sister, and she's mated to my brother Fisher and another wolf, Asa."

Morgan arched her eyebrows then pulled the shirt over her head. "You seem to be collecting werewolves."

He shrugged, watching her scoot to the edge of the bed. "I'm not interfering with mate groups. They're grown. They can make their own choices."

She bit down on her bottom lip again, a habit he was beginning to find adorable. "Yet, you gave me a hard time about my brother being here." There was a hint of temper in her voice, and he wondered how to bring it out to the open. He suspected he'd find a pissed off Morgan fascinating.

"Your brother is a pride king. And the wolves have more than proven their loyalty over a long period of time."

"My brother was a pride king," she said, voice heavy with bitterness and she shimmied into the shorts and snapped the buttons. When she was dressed she tilted her chin in the air and glared at him. "And I want to see him now. We have to decide what to do."

There should not have been a *we* in her statement. Hell no. Her choices were made. His fingers gripped her chin and forced her to hold his gaze.

"You're staying here, kitten. His fate is still to be decided."

She licked her lips, that little pink point bringing him to hard throbbing attention. "And my sister?"

Her mistrust stung, but with effort he ignored it. He released her and backed away, shrugging. "I already told you. She's welcome."

She looked at him a long time before she nodded as if accepting his statement. Hell, she should. He wouldn't lie to her about this, doubted he'd ever be able to lie to her about anything, which is why he refused to give what could end up being a false promise about her brother.

No more words were spoken as they all tramped downstairs. A few

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minutes later her siblings returned, and he had to bite back a growl of protest when she dragged her brother outside for a private conversation. She wasn't happy when she returned, giving him a stubborn angry stare before dragging Beth with her upstairs to her assigned room.

## Chapter Six

He left Davis puttering around the kitchen preparing dinner and followed Nathaniel outside. The younger man stepped off the porch into the yard and turned to stare up at the second floor with its one lit window.

"She's pretty pissed at you," Isaac said, aiming for an easy, conversational tone.

"She'll get over it," Nathaniel responded with dry amusement.

"Wanna tell me why she's so angry?"

Nathaniel turned to him but avoided the question. "You haven't marked her." There was a hint of censure in his voice.

"She isn't ready." Why was he explaining? "She needs time."

That earned him a considering look. He got the feeling there was a hell of a lot here he wasn't being told. "What did you think of the tour?"

He didn't think Nathaniel was going to respond to him but after several long minutes and a deep breath, their gazes met. "You're strong. And your people are loyal."

There were undercurrents Isaac guessed at but couldn't get a good read on. "I am. And so are they."

"You're certain Morgan is your mate?"

"Without a doubt. Don't look at my not marking her yet as a sign of doubt."

"And my other sister? Beth? You'll protect her as you would Morgan?"

Isaac nodded. He had a feeling he knew some of what was going on now. "Of course. And you? You don't want to stay?"

Nathaniel's civilized mask fell, and from one second to the next he was feral and aggressive though he made no move to strike at Isaac. "I am reclaiming what is mine."

"Not so easy to do alone," Isaac said and his heart skipped a beat. Morgan would be devastated if something happened to her brother.

But Nathaniel's grin was as sharp edged as a knife and strong as tempered steel. "I do have some loyal subjects left."

"Those weaker pride members Morgan mentioned?" Isaac cocked an eyebrow. They wouldn't be any help in aiding Nathaniel take on a dominant pack moving into his territory.

"Some of them aren't as weak as they appear. Men without ties have no weaknesses and nothing to lose."

"I see."

And he did. Nathaniel had allowed an appearance of vulnerability to spread while he settled the females of his pride in safe places. The last were his sisters. Isaac felt a grudging admiration move through him. The arrangements would allow Nathaniel free reign in his quest without having to worry about guarding his back. Isaac didn't think he would have been able to give over his baby sister under the same circumstances.

"I already said my goodbyes to my sisters." He met Isaac's gaze a long moment before turning and striding away, but he stopped at his car's door. "Watch out for them. Beth is...special. I can't guarantee my enemies won't come after her since she isn't mated."

His warning was clear. Take care of things with Morgan pronto. Isaac sighed. He wouldn't force the bond on her, but she was safe here with him. They both were. He watched as Nathaniel left then returned to the house to deal with his stubborn mate.

\* \* \* \* \*

A few days later Isaac was going crazy. Morgan ate meals with them and avoided them the rest of the day. She never allowed herself to be caught alone or unaware. His lion side was going nuts, pissed he was denying them what they both wanted. He was sick and damned tired of the wall she'd erected between them and determined to do something about it.

Which was why he found himself outside his mate's bedroom eavesdropping on a whispered conversation between his mate and young sister in law. He scowled and leaned closer. Why were they whispering?

"It's safe, Morgan. There are at least two female shifters here. Sunny and Jaz." He stiffened at her words. "And I'm going cuhrazy! I need *out*. I need to *run*."

He grinned despite the topic. He recognized that sweet wheedling tone Beth used on Morgan and knew she'd get her way, whatever that was. He heard his mate heave a put upon sigh.

"Things aren't going well, Beth. Give it a few days, and I'll try to bring up the subject, okay?"

There was a long silence, and when Beth answered it was in a voice so soft he had to strain to catch the words. "I can't, Morgan. I'm wound too tight. I'm afraid I won't be able to control the cat."

He sucked in a deep breath, realization turning to outrage. Damn it. He'd known there was something not right about Beth's scent but he'd ignored it, chalking it up to being twisted up about her sister. But that difference was the same his baby sister and both his sisters in law had. Beth was a shifter.

He made himself stand still and use his senses, take in the emotions in the room. And, well, hell. Beth was close to losing control. For a shifter to feel that wild it must have been weeks since she'd shifted, and if she hadn't it must not have been safe. Another piece of the puzzle of Morgan's reappearance fell into place. He pushed the door open and stepped inside, strangling his anger and focusing on his need to protect his women.

"How long?" he asked Beth, watching in amusement as she subtly shifted to stand between him and her sister.

"Since what?" she asked, tilting her stubborn little teenaged nose

into the air, and he let the amusement free with a chuckle.

"Since you shifted, darlin'. It's dangerous to go too long."

Her gaze dodged away from his, and he thought she'd refuse to answer, but she did after a few long seconds. "Three weeks," she muttered and began to pace.

When she passed by him he caught another scent so soft, so subtle, he almost missed it. He stalked to Morgan, grabbed her close, and leaned down to sniff her neck. There was no mistaking the spiciness her natural scent had taken on. He was instantly hard, his lion scraping at his mind to throw her to the floor and take her now. He forced himself to step away and tried to clear that scent from his nostrils. It didn't work. She was in heat, and it appeared being sisters, their bodies had a shared rhythm.

This was a major problem. Beth had to get out for a run, but he couldn't leave Morgan unguarded. The very idea made him want to snarl. If she'd accepted him in her bed and her heart, if she'd accepted the bond, he'd be able to leave her under the guard of some of his senior soldiers. But she hadn't. And if Beth wasn't also in heat, he'd take her to run on his own, but in her current condition he was incapable of risking her to one guard. Even if he was that guard.

He almost said no, but Beth was watching him with a wary expectant expression, and he knew he couldn't dash her hopes. Couldn't leave her with her solitary struggle for another couple of days. Much as he hated it, there was one option. He doubted Morgan would like having a babysitter, his brothers in particular. She was still wary around them, reluctant to trust. Well, tough shit. Her safety came first and maybe exposure to his sister in law would help thaw Morgan out.

"This afternoon at two," he told Beth making his voice stern. "And you follow orders to the letter."

Her smile burst over him, and she lurched forward, throwing her arms around his neck for one quick squeeze before jumping back. "Thank you," she whispered.

He couldn't answer. He watched Morgan over her shoulder and the soft grateful expression on his face made his throat clog up.

## Chapter Seven

Morgan fidgeted at the table, anxiety making it impossible to sit still, and watched as Sunny strolled around her kitchen, her baby son riding one hip and babbling in happy, cheerful gibberish. He was a cute little thing, chubby with big shining blue eyes and a shock of red hair. And his momma was wrapped completely around his tiny little finger. Morgan found the dichotomy amusing and fascinating.

Sunny was hard and tough, pure predatory hunter. Until she looked down at the boy in her arms. Then she softened. Amusement and love and maternal exasperation filled her eyes when he refused to get down or go to his fathers. She'd waved them out of the room, but in the entire time Morgan had been there—forty minutes—one or the other had poked his head in no less than five times offering to help. The last time Sunny had snarled and pointed a wooden spoon at Carlos until laughing, hands held up in surrender, he'd backed out into the hall.

When he was gone she set the spoon on the counter, looked down into her son's big blue eyes and said, "You will not grow up to be an obnoxious male."

The baby laughed and pin-wheeled his arms while his mom held him up and spun around in a circle, laughing with him. "Yeah. Right. You'll be just as bad as them." She smacked a kiss on his cheek, resettled him on her hip, and went back to mixing cookie dough. "I am in so much trouble," she said with a laugh.

Morgan laughed with her, and a companionable silence stretched.

When it was broken Morgan's guard went up, tense and suspicious at the sudden change in conversation.

"Your sister is like us," Sunny said, her tone light and easy as she turned to look over her shoulder at Morgan. Her smile was slight. "It's okay, Morgan. She's safe here."

Morgan swallowed past a hard lump and nodded. "I hope so."

"I suppose you're here so Isaac and Davis can take her running?"

There wasn't any point in prevaricating, was there? It was obvious Sunny knew their secrets already. Morgan was irritated that Isaac had shared that information, but there wasn't anything she could do about it at the moment.

"Yes."

The dough was ready, and again Morgan offered to help. Again Sunny waved her back to her seat as she began scooping little balls onto a greased cookie sheet with an ice cream scooper. Morgan was amazed she pulled the whole process off one handed. She was so focused on Sunny's actions she almost jumped out of her skin when Jaz sailed through the back door. She gave Morgan a small, shy smile and went straight for the baby.

"Hand over my nephew, big sister," she said, laughing when the baby tried to lunge from his mother's arms to his aunt's.

Sunny released him with a bright smile. Morgan swore she could feel the woman's joy, her love of both her child and her sister like a swelling force in the room. Jaz spun him around, and his cackling laughter soared with the emotions.

This time Carlos didn't bother to look inside and ask if they needed anything. He strolled right in and plucked the baby from Jaz's hands.

"Hey!" she protested. "It's my turn."

Grinning, Carlos kissed her cheek. "Later," he said and turned to leave the kitchen. The baby's laughter faded down the hall, and Morgan felt a sense of unease. He'd served as a barrier of sorts against any serious conversation. Not that an infant would remember any of their conversation, but Sunny had seemed reluctant to get serious while he rode her hip. And Morgan knew that calculating gleam she'd seen in the other



woman's eyes all too well. She'd grown up with werelions after all. There was something on Sunny's mind, and Morgan had a good idea what. Sunny's next words confirmed her suspicion.

"You seem tense," Sunny said while putting the cookie sheet into the oven. She moved to the fridge and pulled out a bottle of wine and a bottle of water while Jaz got two glasses. She kept the water for herself and Jaz poured, handing a glass to Morgan.

"It's muscadine from a vineyard the pride owns," she offered.

Morgan wasn't much of a drinker so she took a cautious sip of the white wine. It was light and sweet, and she sipped again while waiting for Sunny to bring up the subject she was sure she would. Shifters were nothing if not nosy, and Morgan had had enough time to see this family was close knit. Sunny and Jaz would consider their brother in law's life their personal business.

"I'm surprised Isaac hasn't done something about your tension levels. They're through the roof." Of course, she was a werelion. She'd be able to scent it. She continued with a sly glint lighting her eyes, "There's a fun to way to cure that, you know."

She didn't quite come out and ask why Isaac wasn't fucking her senseless, but the question was unmistakable. Morgan looked at both women. Jaz was more reserved, but her eyes were as open as Sunny's. The sense Morgan got from both women was an easy offer of friendship. Of kinship. Morgan didn't have friends. She couldn't discuss this with her younger teenaged sister, or god forbid, her brother, but she needed to talk to someone. She was so confused, so torn up inside.

"He hasn't touched me since my first day here," she whispered, embarrassed to be broaching such a delicate subject with two women she didn't know well even if they were for all intents and purposes her sisters now.

Sunny's eyes narrowed. "Why? His scent is mixed with yours so he did at least once. It would be extremely difficult to stay away after that. The mating instinct is damned near impossible to fight."

Morgan stared down at the table. Her fingers twisted together on the flat surface in an effort to not give away her roiling emotions. Like that

would help. She needed advice and these two women, from what she'd been able to determine, knew Isaac better than any others in the pride. A hot flush heated her cheeks, but she lifted her chin to meet Sunny's gaze.

"I don't think I can give him what he expects."

Sunny scowled. "He just wants you."

She snorted. "No. He wants to possess me. He wants to own me. He wants surrender and doesn't want to leave me an ounce of control."

She sat back, surprised at the rush of words.

Jaz sucked in a breath, then chuckled. "You're talking about sex." She arched an eyebrow at Morgan's wondering expression. Had Isaac been with Jaz? It wouldn't be unusual in a werelion pride. "Don't worry. I've heard the same rumors as you no doubt have."

"They aren't rumors," she said, not caring if her morose tone gave away her confusion.

Sunny leaned forward, her expression curious and eager while her voice took on a light hearted teasing. "Oh yeah? Do tell."

"Nothing to tell. He told me..." She took a deep breath. How far was she going with this little confession? She couldn't stop now. "He told me he wouldn't touch me again until I agreed to his terms. And he was specific about those terms. They involved restraints."

The mood in the air seemed to shift, and Sunny leaned forward to pat her sister's hand. "Don't worry, honey. Asa and Fisher would never ask that of you. Now if you asked them..." She let the statement trail off and winked at Morgan, but she didn't appreciate the joking tone.

Hell, no. Mating to a strong, dominant male was one thing. But such complete sexual submission scared the hell out of her, and the image that rose to Morgan's mind scared the bejeezus out of her. The south Florida pride's king had been blatant in his desire for her, and the way he'd looked at her made her stomach revolt even now. She recalled how Victor had whispered what he wanted to do to her in her ear, in a crowded room where she couldn't escape. His promises were full of dominance and pain and humiliation. She wanted none of it and knew his threats colored the way she viewed Isaac's demands. Before she knew what was happening the whole story poured out of her. She felt as if all

the emotion had been drained when she was done, shaking and worn out and still full of fear. Unfortunately, she hadn't realized during the recitation that she'd acquired an audience beyond Sunny and Jaz.

"I'm going to kill him," Isaac said in a freezing cold voice from where he stood flanked by his brothers in the doorway.

His fury was easy to read. He vibrated with it, and despite knowing how dangerous he was in his current condition, she couldn't leave him like that. She didn't hesitate to stand, to approach and stop in front of him, to lift a hand and cup his face. She shook her head.

"No. He can't reach me here. I'm safe here." Why was it so important to ease his mind? To try to reach him? He stared at her a long moment, then scooped her up into his arms before she knew what was happening.

"Keep Beth safe," he ordered his brothers who murmured their affirmatives. She ignored them.. She was so caught up in Isaac. He didn't say a word as he left the house and took the short walk back to his home. Davis met them in the foyer, cocking one eyebrow in question. Isaac shook his head and walked straight to the stairs. On the jog up she tried to find a way to reach him, to protest. Her stomach twisted in nerves as he walked down the long hall to the room she'd been sleeping in alone. He dropped her on the bed and stepped back. Davis followed them in and shut the door.

"What did I miss?" he asked, and Isaac recited her story. She sighed as his expression morphed to match Isaac's. Coldly furious.

*Shit. How can I fix this?* She had no idea. She was distracted when Isaac yanked his shirt over his head. There was no denying the man was *hot*. There was nothing soft about him. He was broad shouldered and sharp angled, with thick muscles that spoke of hard work and dedication. She wanted to count the ridges on his stomach and explore them with her mouth. She wanted to pet him, even knowing he was one hell of a dangerous animal. He could eat her for lunch. Maybe that was part of the appeal. He smirked at her, and rolling her eyes, she moved to sit on the edge of the bed. Just great. She had to get out before she got stupid with hormones.

He shook his head and moved forward, caging her between his legs, leaning over and forcing her to lie back, his palms on either side of her body. "Oh no, sweetheart. You aren't going anywhere. I'm going to show you the difference between me and this man who scared you."

She gulped. Oh god. How did she get in these situations? Worse, she should have been terrified. But the promise in his eyes wasn't cold and cruel—nothing like Victor's had been. Isaac's gaze was molten, and her body responded against her will. She groaned.

"I don't think that's such a good idea," she whispered.

He smiled. "We'll see."

Then he stripped her, quick and efficient. She felt a surge of anxiety when she recalled his promise from a week ago. He took her wrists in his hand and held them over her head. "There are many ways to restrain someone, kitten," he said before leaning down to lap at her nipple.

It tightened to a painful hard point under his ministrations, and he abandoned her too soon. With any other lover, she would have demanded he return, but she'd learned that lesson at least. He must have seen the capitulation in her eyes because he smiled.

"That's my girl." He looked down at her and watched as Davis, who'd joined them on her opposite side took the other nipple between his teeth. With a gasp she arched her back, the sensation streaking through her. Like Isaac, he stopped too soon. She wanted to yell. Doing things their way meant being denied herself? Was that it?

"Dominance and submission are different from abuse," Isaac said, and that hard angry look was back in his eyes. She realized some of it was directed at her. "We don't want to hurt you." He paused, and his eyes grew heavy and slumberous with the promise of mind blowing sex. "Unless that turns you on. Sometimes a spanking can be very erotic."

She could see in his expression the idea turned him on, and she shivered as an image took form in her mind of being bent over his lap. Would he touch her in other places while his hand slapped her ass? The corners of his mouth crinkled.

"Not so opposed to that after all, hmm, kitten?"

"I don't know," she managed to breathe out. She'd never considered

it before, and now she wondered. He was talking about pleasure not pain. Right?

Davis had left the bed while they'd spoken, and now he returned with a handful of scarves. Her eyes widened when he took his place next to her again. He let the trails of the scarves touch her neck, dragged them down her chest, between her breasts, before stopping over the juncture between her thighs. She couldn't stop herself from widening enough so the fabric fell between them a light hiss over her sex. Davis chuckled before leaning down and sucking one nipple into his mouth. Heat and lust surged through her, and she didn't pay much attention when Isaac took one wrist, wrapped a scarf around it, and pulled it taut above her head. His task completed, he took her free nipple between his teeth while Davis repeated the procedure with her other hand.

When Isaac broke away from her, he wore a satisfied expression, and she couldn't move her arms. Panic swept through her, but she forced it down. She owed them, owed herself, to find out if this was something she could do. Something she could like. They were the experienced ones, not her, and she clung to the belief that two men destined to be her mates would be incapable of hurting her. Unless she wanted them to. Her stomach clenched at that idea but not from fear.

Then Isaac was leaning over her again, and she stared at him, trying to read his intentions. "I'm not going to tie your legs this time, Morgan. We'll get to that later." He held up the last scarf, and a vulnerable note crept into his tone. "But I need you to trust me. Completely, kitten."

She bit her bottom lip. "You want to blindfold me?" What else would he do with that last scarf?

"Yes." His response was stark, a little harsh. It left him bare. Knowing she had such a deep effect on him, on his control, gave her courage. She nodded. He lifted it to her face.

"But if I want it off..." she rushed and was surprised when he paused to smile at her.

"We can scent your fear, darlin'. We'll know when you've had enough."

How could she argue with that? Especially now when she was tied up in such a tight ball of need and curiosity and anxiety? She wanted to know why it meant so much to them to have her like this. Why women agreed to do it. Why all of a sudden the idea of surrender was so much more appealing.

Then she was blind. Her world gone dark. She froze, the anticipation exhilarating and terrifying at the same time. They didn't give her time to dwell on it though. Two mouths tasted her, both sucking on her nipples with a suddenness and hunger that made her cry out. She wanted to cradle their heads to her but was reminded she couldn't. There was a hint of sting when fabric abraded wrists.

"Oh god," she mumbled. "I don't know if I can take this."

"Mmm. Yes you can, baby," Davis murmured between licks. Then he started kissing his way down her body, swirling his tongue over her skin as he went, while Isaac concentrated on her nipples. When Davis settled between her legs, kissing her inner thighs, Isaac kissed his way to her throat. She felt the scrape of sharp teeth from both of them, but instead of the fear from the last time, now there was anticipation. She felt an answering expectation from them. There was just one problem.

"No! Not while I'm blind," she rushed to explain.

After a few seconds, the blindfold was untied and pulled away. Isaac was staring down into her face, and when she couldn't stand his intensity anymore, she looked down the length of her body to where Davis waited. His expression just as tight, just as restrained.

"It's time, baby," he said.

She knew he was right. Knew they struggled against primal instincts, and not bonding with her made them dangerous to everyone who came into contact with her. She felt a dimmer version of their strain and couldn't understand how they stood it. She nodded. "I know."

Davis was somber. "You won't regret it, Morgan. I promise. No one else could be as cherished."

Her heart swelled, and she ignored the tears pricking her eyes. She was tempted to lay her head back and close her eyes, but she wanted to see the bite coming. She couldn't manage more than a nod, and his head

bent back to her leg. Recalling his mouth on her sex, her entire body clenched in anticipation. So she was ready, so close to orgasm when his teeth pierced her skin it was no wonder she catapulted over the ledge. He lapped at the bite a moment then moved to thrust his tongue into her. At the same time, Isaac's mouth closed on her neck.

He sucked at the skin, and she was torn between anticipation of his next move, and being lost in the sensations Davis was building again. Then Davis' tongue moved to her clit, circling a few times before he bit down on the small nub of nerve endings. She cried out as she came again, and Isaac's teeth sank into her skin. She felt the force of him rush into her mind and body, but didn't have time to accustom herself to it. They kept her body always on edge. No more easy orgasms.

Every time she got close they pulled back. She wanted to sob, was sobbing by the time Davis pushed a finger into her anus. She froze and waited, so close to orgasm she knew if he thrust it back and forth just a bit she'd come in a mind blowing explosion. God, please let him move that finger. She held her breath waiting. Nothing. She opened her eyes.

She saw Isaac first, sitting back and watching, a small mischievous smile on his face. Then she looked down at Davis. His mouth was no longer on her, but his hand hadn't moved.

"You've had anal sex?"

It was safe to assume so, right? After all, she hadn't responded in a timid or negative manner. She'd moved against him, trying to take him deeper. She nodded and something dark and jealous seemed to move through his eyes.

"Well, that makes things easier at least," he said meeting Isaac's gaze. Isaac rolled toward the nightstand, opened the top drawer, and tossed a tube of lubricant to Davis. Morgan's entire body locked up, and Davis gave her a questioning look.

"No?"

Her heart hammered. It had been a long time since she'd done this act, but she'd loved it. She nodded. "Yes," she whispered.

His answer was a smile and a flip of the lid, but Isaac moved before he did. He untied the scarves, and she was surprised to feel a twinge of

regret, before he rolled to his back and pulled her on top of him. Davis removed his finger in the process, and she groaned in protest.

*Damn it.* She'd been so close to coming. But then she was so focused on Isaac she almost didn't care. He gripped the back of her head with one hand and pulled her down to kiss him. She felt his other hand between them as he guided the head of his cock to her entrance. She held her breath as he pushed. She was hot and wet and so horny it was no difficult task. When he was seated deep inside her, she took a moment to breathe and enjoy the sensation. Isaac chuckled and pulled her back for a kiss.

"You're nowhere near there, sweetheart," he murmured against her lips, not giving her a chance to question what he meant. After a moment she knew anyway. Davis' hands shaped her ass, molding and squeezing before spreading her. Then his fingers pressed into her, cool and wet with lube. She groaned and tried to push back, but they held her still so Davis could draw it out, a slow torture of pleasure. She couldn't stand it anymore and again tried to entice him with the movements of her body.

He slapped her ass. She froze at the stinging sensation, but her insides clenched then convulsed. Isaac groaned and rocked his hips, gripping hers so she couldn't move, but she felt herself grow slicker, felt his easy slide in and out of her body.

"Oh yeah. She likes that," he ground out between clenched teeth, and she hid her face in his neck, mortified. Holy shit. She did like it. Why had she been resisting so much?

Davis leaned over, his chest flush with her back, his cock nudging her ass, and he nibbled her ear. "We're mated, baby. Everything will be different. Your responses. What turns you on."

She could only nod as he moved back a bit and positioned himself. She stared into Isaac's eyes, digging her fingernails into his shoulders as she braced herself for Davis' invasion. His cock head entered her, and he groaned then stroked her back.

"Relax, baby."

Gradually, she did as Isaac rocked inside her with gentle strokes, his fingers playing over her clit in a teasing rhythm. When she tried to move against him she also moved against Davis, and he slid farther into



her anus with a harsh inhalation that she matched.

His hand gripped her hip and held her still while he eased more of his length inside her. He gave her an inch, withdrew an inch, then gave her two more over and over until his entire length was inside her. She'd never been so full. Never been so turned on. When they began to move, Isaac's strokes in opposition to Davis' so she wasn't filled by both at any one time, her mind disintegrated. She became nothing but a being of sensation. Of feeling. She wasn't capable of anything but accepting what they gave her.

When Isaac swelled inside her and growled for her to come with him before claiming her lips in a marauding kiss, she had no choice but to obey. It wasn't until he slipped from her body, spent, that she realized Davis hadn't moved during that wild ride. He remained hard, throbbing so much she felt every pulse.

She straightened so she was still on her knees, still impaled on his rigid glorious cock, but with her back pressed to his chest. She turned her head, lifting one hand to grip the back of his head. His kiss was fierce. Out of control. She loved it. With a hand pressed against her belly, he began to move, slow deep thrusts that made her catch and hold her breath. He was building her back up with focused precision. The sensations were exquisite.

Isaac was having none of that, she guessed. With the easy grace of a cat, he pulled his legs free of hers and Davis' and repositioned himself in front of her, laying on his side, propped up on an elbow inches from her sex. His tongue stroking over her clit was so much of shock she almost fell. Davis held her up, his movements never stopping as Isaac's mouth covered her, drove her up so high she was sure she'd crash and burn. When his teeth closed around her clit and tugged, she exploded. Her entire body shook, the force of the orgasm took her breath, took her every thought. She became nothing but sensation for so long she was afraid she was lost. When she came back to herself, she was laid out between them, sucking in air, unable to open her eyes.

Someone leaned over and kissed her. He was tender, his tongue teasing the seam of her lips. Isaac chuckled as he withdrew, and she heard

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the satisfied smirk in his voice. “That’s what we mean about surrendering to us, kitten. And you do it beautifully.”

## Chapter Eight

It was so warm it had been easy to forget Christmas was around the corner, but standing on the back porch overlooking the park it was impossible to ignore. The balmy evening was filled with chatter, laughter, good humor. A group of women sat on the large center gazebo gossiping while the men strung lights over the palm trees that surrounded the area in a large circle. Every now and then one of the women would yell a teasing comment to one of the men, and the group around her would dissolve into gales of laughter.

It was twisting Morgan up, that easy camaraderie, at once familiar and alien. Twice she'd started to rise from her perch on the rail to go join them, but each time she resisted. She could see Sunny and Jaz and knew they'd welcome her, but she didn't know the others, and she wasn't yet sure of her place here.

Isaac and Davis hadn't introduced her to anyone. They'd shared her bed for the last three nights, had dissolved her fear and apprehension, had whispered to her in the night about everything. Their lives, the pride, her childhood. But neither had said much during the daylight hours except to tell her they loved her at odd moments, sometimes for no reason she could determine at all. It wasn't that they *weren't* speaking to her, more like they were...waiting her out. She just didn't know for what.

She heard heavy steps behind her on the porch but didn't turn to see who it was. There were just two men it could be. Isaac stopped at her side. She studied his profile as he checked out the activity in the park with

a small smile of satisfaction.

"Coming along nicely. Why are you hiding on the porch?"

She blinked, surprised at the bluntness though why she should be startled at the question was beyond her. She shrugged one shoulder. "I don't know anyone. I didn't want to intrude."

He scowled down at her. "You're the pride king's mate."

Her stomach rolled in a violent heave. She hoped they didn't expect her to be the kind of king's mate her mother had been. Hadn't that practice fallen out of favor with their generation? With Isaac's pride? She jumped when hands gripped her hips from behind, turned her to see they belonged to Davis. He was barefoot, which explained why she hadn't heard him. He nuzzled her neck.

"So tense, baby." Teeth nipped her, and she melted inside. "I can fix that," he whispered. Promised.

"Later," Isaac interrupted, and his voice was as thick and heavy with arousal as Davis'. "Morgan just pointed out that we haven't introduced her to anyone yet."

Davis sighed his disappointment and took her hand. "Let's get it over with then."

He tugged, but she didn't move.

"Wait. There's one thing I need to know."

Two intense sets of eyes focused on her. "What?" Isaac asked.

She took a deep breath. How the hell was she supposed to ask? Just spit it out? "My mother was a pride king's mate." Now what? *Get it over with, Morgan.* "She couldn't always be sure where she was sleeping."

Isaac stared at her a full minute then threw his head back and laughed. She was torn between punching him and stalking off. This was *not* funny. He must have seen her distress because he sobered and pulled her close to circle his arms around her.

"Kitten, that tradition is dead here. We aren't sharing you with anyone."

She felt something loosen inside her as that last little bit of resistance to mating with them dissolved into dust. Once she stopped fighting it, she felt the force of the connection between them, felt the

strength of the bond. If she weren't so unsteady with the unexpected power of it, she would have grinned at their stunned expressions. And then the power of teasing was beyond her when Isaac pressed against her front and Davis her back. Hard. Male. Unyielding. *Hers*.

"The introductions can wait," Isaac said with a rasp in his voice that echoed her growing arousal, and she agreed wholeheartedly.

Everything could wait. His pride. *Hers*. Christmas. Worry for her brother and sister. She wanted to freeze time in this perfect moment, with her heart swelled to bursting and her future a promising expanse before her. Isaac's lips brushed hers, and then he leaned his forehead against hers.

"You're here. And you're staying. I love you, kitten," he whispered.

She'd never heard that vulnerability from him before. It was sweet, endearing. He'd been as worried about her as she was about him. She cupped his face in her palms. "Where would I go?" she teased.

Behind her Davis growled. "Nowhere without us, baby."

With a contented sigh, she leaned back against him. "Works for me."

She couldn't remember the last time she felt like she *belonged*, the last time she hadn't worried about that feeling being taken from her. His arms circled her waist, and his chin rested on her shoulder. She was happy and cherished and, even if she wasn't quite ready to return the words, loved.

Just then a countdown went up from the park, and she turned to look. Night had set in, the decorating was finished, and a couple of kids held a box with cords coming from it to turn everything on. Beth ran up the stairs, maneuvered herself into position between Morgan and Isaac, and took her hand. She hid her smile when she studied her little sister. She was still in that half child, half woman stage of life and held her breath as the numbers counted down to one. Then the area was a blaze of lights, and Beth was grinning like a fool.

"Isn't it epic? This pride is epic," she murmured, staring straight ahead as if she was afraid Morgan might disagree.

*Damn, twist the knife a little harder, baby sister.* But that was unfair.

Beth had grown up with uncertainty, always being afraid, never felt safe. Hell, Morgan could relate. After her parents had died safety became a thing of the past, but at least she'd been old enough to deal with it.

"It is epic," she agreed, teasing her sister by using her favorite slang word and looping her arm through hers. "We fit here."

Beth's radiant smile was matched by the happiness and satisfaction gleaming from Isaac's and Davis' eyes. Morgan wanted to bask in it but instead found herself pulled off the porch by her laughing sibling to see the lights. Isaac and Davis trailed after them.

For the next few hours she did meet the pride, but it was her sister who introduced her while Isaac and Davis hovered nearby. She felt cherished and protected and desired. Every now and then she'd turn to catch one of them watching her with hot greedy eyes, so when the music started she wasn't surprised to find herself dancing between them, the evidence of their desire hard against her back and belly.

She sucked in a deep breath and wondered if all the couples around them knew she wanted to rip her clothes off and offer herself to her mates. Her head fell back to rest against Davis' chest as Isaac left a teasing trail of kisses up her neck. She hung onto his biceps and pressed her thighs together in an effort to tame the sensation winding her body into a tight cord of need. His teeth nipped and Davis' hands roamed to brush the sides of her breasts. The craving grew until she knew she couldn't contain it, knew it would take over her mind and body. Torture and ecstasy in one. And then it stopped.

Isaac stepped back, giving her a grin of wicked intent. She would have melted into a puddle at his feet had Davis not been holding her up.

"I think it's time to put our mate to bed," he murmured to Davis while holding her gaze.

She was on board with that plan. And none of them were thinking of sleep. When had she become such a wanton woman? Who cared? Each one grabbed a hand and urged her to turn back to the house. It wasn't until they reached the porch steps that she thought to resist.

"Beth?"

Davis' smile was indulgent. "She already went in, baby."

"Oh." She really was losing it, so wound up in them she'd missed her sister turning in.

"And you better move that pretty little ass of yours if you don't want us to take you here on the porch," Isaac almost growled. She hoped he didn't mean to scare her because the threat had the opposite effect. The low rumble vibrated through her, heightening her arousal to a fever pitch and making her pussy spasm in anticipation. She hurried inside and upstairs to their room

But inside she had an attack of nerves. The door shut with a quiet snick, and she turned to face them. Davis had already pulled off his shirt and toed off his shoes. His fingers paused on the button on his jeans and she held her breath, waiting for him to shuck them too.

"Scared, kitten?" Isaac asked and her gaze flew to him.

He was already naked. Davis moved into her line of sight. She *forgot* how to breathe. They were both so tall, broad shouldered, muscled. So male. Magnificent. *Hers*. And it was time she started acting like it.

"I'm not afraid of you," she told them, then took her time getting out of her clothes. She wanted to be naked, wanted them inside her *now*, but the delay was worth it for the expressions on their faces. Focused. Avaricious. It made her feel powerful, as if she had some control in this relationship too. She hadn't even been aware that was missing. With a grin she hoped was saucy, she climbed onto the bed and lay on her side, propped up on one elbow. "Well?" she asked in clear invitation.

Davis took her up on it and lay down next to her. He wrapped one hand around her head and pulled her close for a slow, thorough kiss. Then the bed dipped behind her, and Isaac's hands stroked down her side to her thighs before moving back up and circling around her body to cup her breasts. He pinched her nipples, rolled them between his fingers in a light caress that was maddening.

Still kissing her, Davis trailed one hand down her belly to the juncture between her legs and paused to cup her sex. Her hips moved against him, but he didn't part her folds to stroke her until she stilled. His touch was too gentle. She was wet and burning up and desperate for release, writhing between them. It wasn't until she begged that Davis

rolled over and plunged into her. It was all she needed, that hard sure stroke, for the orgasm to surge up and sweep her away.

“God, baby. Too soon,” he growled.

She focused on his face, a mix of pain and pleasure stamped over his features, as he rode out the last contractions of her orgasm. His eyes glittered with emotion. Lust. Love. And she knew she couldn’t hold those words back any longer, knew he had a right to hear them.

Smiling, she leaned up to kiss his cheek. “I love you.”

His eyes widened a second before his mouth descended on hers for a bruising kiss while he thrust and withdrew from the clasp of her body. With a low cry, he came, but she didn’t get the chance to cling to him afterward, to exult in the joy filling her heart. When his tense muscles relaxed Davis rolled over, and Isaac was looming over her. He gave her a slow, sinful grin then flipped her over and pulled her to her knees. She felt his cock prod against her entrance and was instantly keyed up again, yearning for another explosive orgasm. She rocked back against him, but he held her off with one hand maintaining a tight grip on her hip.

He leaned forward, covering her, and whispered in her ear. “What about me, kitten? Do I get the same sweet words?”

She wasn’t feeling very generous. She was needy and frustrated and maybe a little mischievous. “You have to earn them,” she teased.

Earn them he did. She was unprepared for the sensual onslaught. He entered her with a swift thrust, his cock stroking her hard and fast as his fingers found and strummed her clit. Each time she was close to coming, however, he stopped or changed his rhythm or lightened the pressure.

Her mind was foggy with lust, her body tight with need. When his teeth closed over the sensitive spot at the bottom of her neck right next to her collarbone, she exploded. The orgasm consumed her, left her weak and shaky. He gently lowered her to the bed, and she rolled onto her back to stare at him. He leaned over her, tense and still hard, and studied her with a small, satisfied smile. “Well?”

She cocked an eyebrow, feeling more confident and secure than she ever had before. “Well what?”



## The Alliance by Loribelle Hunt

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She knew what he wanted. With a mock growl he rolled onto her, entering her once more and leaving her gasping for breath.

“Come on, kitten. Fair’s fair.”

His strokes were deep and slow, and she swore they touched her heart. She ran her hands up his arms, dug her fingernails into his shoulders as his thrusts grew more hurried, just a touch desperate. She smiled, then laughed. She felt so free. “I love you too, you arrogant cat.”

Her name on his lips when he came was the sweetest sound she’d ever heard. She drifted to sleep lying between them, their promise of love filling her heart.

### **Author Bio**

Loribelle is like the South she calls home. Hot and sultry. Languid and sexy. Magnolias and gardenias scent her silk lined boudoir, and men and children alike bow to her magnificence...

Okay, maybe it isn't quite that glamorous. She does have two smart and lovely daughters who give her a run for her money and a son that will one day be someone's model of a romance hero. (She promises.) Her husband is a real life hero, and Loribelle just tries to keep up with the demands of military life. In between, she writes a book or two.

She's had every job under the sun, but haven't most writers? That Army military police, bookstore manager, waitress, wedding photographer, Web site designer experience has to come in useful sometimes. As they say in the South, it all washes out in the end.