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Everlasting Classic

NICHOLAS'S WOLF

LYNN HAGEN

The
ManLove
Collection



BRAC PACK 14

Brac Pack 14

Nicholas's Wolf

Dr. Nicholas Sheehan lives under his father's thumb—Dr. William Sheehan even picked out a fiancée for him—until he was called to the house of Maverick Brac. All his father's plans fell by the wayside when he finds he can't resist the man with the long scar running down his face.

Jason Colt is a grey wolf living in a den of timber wolves. Alpha Zeus traded him off like yesterday's underwear without a thought. His body scarred and his soul broken, Jason thinks of himself as the ugly duckling amongst swans.

Having been isolated his whole life, Jason struggles to understand humans, especially his mate. He can't fathom why such a gorgeous man doesn't want to leave his side, so Jason fights the pull and orders his mate away.

Will Jason be able to get past his torturous self-doubt and be able to claim what fate deemed as his, or will Nicholas be left without a mate to call his own?

Note: Each book in Lynn Hagen's Brac Pack collection features a different romantic couple. Each title stands alone and can be read in any order. However, we recommend reading the series in sequential order.

Genre: Alternative (M/M or F/F), Paranormal, Vampires/Werewolves

Length: 27,814 words

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Brac Pack 14

LYNN HAGEN

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Chapter One

Dr. Nicholas Sheehan rubbed his eyes with the tips of his fingers, yawned widely, and dropped into his bed. He had just worked a forty-eight-hour shift. It was finally over.

Most doctors liked the long hours—some had just grown used to it—but Nicholas hated them. He often thought about opening a private practice of his own. He knew he would enjoy normal hours, but his father had been against it.

Dr. William Sheehan, Nicholas's father, had so many letters after his name he could start his own alphabet. That wasn't Nicholas's desire. He didn't care what PHD he held. Whatever happened to caring for the sick for the sake of caring?

His father wanted Nicholas to follow in his footsteps and run the cardiology department. This wasn't Nicholas's dream, only the ambition of a money-driven man like his father.

What Nicholas enjoyed was taking his time with the patient, helping out the less fortunate, and feeling like he made a difference. Not attending fundraisers for the sake of being seen by the right people or the country club that he had a membership to, something his father had insisted upon.

Responsibility sucked when it pertained to something you hated doing. His father groomed him from a young boy to aspire to be the best. There was nothing wrong with that, when it applied to the things you *wanted* to do.

Dr. William Sheehan had Nicholas's life all mapped out for him. Problem was, he never bothered to consult Nicholas. Staring at the ceiling, with a sheet draped over his naked form, Nicholas wished he could move to a small town, work at a small clinic, and feel as though he was a part of some community. A private practice or small clinic was preferable over a large hospital that only cared if you had insurance or treated you like a number on a chart. He wanted more than to just rush someone in, patch them up, and send them on their way.

Many of the doctors thought he was crazy for caring so much, for going that extra mile. Nicholas thought they had forgotten their oath and needed a refresher course.

His father even had him engaged. *Engaged*. What happened to finding someone you fell in love with and settling down? When did it all become so formal?

Nicholas turned over, staring at his dresser as he ran his hand through his hair.

His engagement was a joke. Nicholas tried to tell his father he was gay, and what did his father have to say about it? That it didn't fit into his plans, keep it to himself, and marry Rebecca Winston, daughter of the hospital director.

Rebecca was a nice enough girl, and was nice about the whole situation. They both agreed it wasn't what they wanted. She wanted to be an actress, perform on Broadway. That didn't fit into her father's plans either.

The only rebellious thing he had done in his life was work in the emergency room. The people there came from all walks of life. Nicholas enjoyed meeting them, talking with them, and helping them beyond just treating them. He carried cards to local homeless shelters,

battered women's shelters, and numerous counseling centers for various problems.

One day he would grow a backbone and tell his father he wasn't going to live his life according to Dr. William Sheehan. One day.

Nicholas had to correct himself. There was one other rebellious act he performed, removing the bullet from a man outside the hospital in the privacy and confidentiality of Maverick Brac's home. It had been thrilling, felt like secret agent type stuff. He had refused payment. To Nicholas, it was more of a middle finger up to his father.

He turned over, wary of the way his life was going. He had to get some sleep. He and Rebecca had to meet their paternal figures at the country club later that evening. Who scheduled a dinner after pulling a forty-eight-hour shift?

Dr. William Sheehan, of course.

* * * *

"Nicholas, dear." Rebecca accepted a chaste kiss on the cheek.

"Rebecca, looking lovely as ever." Nicholas held the door open, allowing his fiancée to slide into the passenger's seat.

Nicholas nodded at the butler as he made his way around the car and slid in.

Rebecca blew out a breath. "Finally, alone."

"I know. If your butler were any further up our asses, he could tell me what I had for lunch."

Rebecca laughed. "So true. Do we really have to go to that boring country club? I have tickets to go see the play at the theater."

"Our fathers took time from their busy schedules to dine with us. The least we could do is attend." Nicholas used his haughtiest voice, trying his best to sound like his father, succeeding at it, too. That was scary.

"I feel like cutting loose, getting drunk, and flipping *Daddy* off." Rebecca stared out of the window.

“No one said we had to show up on time, just show up.” Nicholas shifted gears, steering away from the country club.

“Oh yeah, I like the way you think. Maybe we could hit a night club. Lots of good-looking guys there for me and you.”

“Deal. Let’s go get this dinner over with then, pretend your menstrual cycle just started or something, and get us out of there early.”

“It’s called a period.” Rebecca rolled her eyes as she dug through her purse. “Gay men never can get that right.”

“Doctor, hello?”

“Just get us there. I’ll get us back out in less than twenty minutes.” The atmosphere in the car changed, both feeling the excitement rush through them to cut loose and get what they both wanted, a good-looking guy.

Nicholas reluctantly turned the car back toward the country club and then handed his keys over to the valet. He entered through the grand glass ornamented doors and spotted his father a few tables over. Nicholas escorted Rebecca in that direction.

They ordered their dinner, Nicholas engaging in talk of hospital matters and patiently waiting for Rebecca to give her performance.

True to her word, “Daddy, my tummy feels bad. I want to go home.” She pouted and laid her hand on her lower abdomen.

“What are your symptoms?”

“Cramps, bloating, sore ovary, and a massive headache.”

“Uh, right, that’s something your mother can help you with.”

“Nicholas, would you be so kind as to escort my daughter home?”

“Yes, sir.” Nicholas fought hard not to smile. He had to bite the inside of his mouth at Rebecca’s acting skills. If he didn’t know she was faking, he would have totally believed her.

Rebecca played the role until the club was out of sight. “Hell, yeah, let’s go party.” She whooped.

Nicholas couldn't help but laugh. She was so carefree. Rebecca was great to have as a friend, not so great to have as a fiancée. She didn't have the correct anatomy for his preference.

"I need to change." Rebecca opened her purse, shimmied out of her slacks, tossed them into the back seat, and yanked on a miniskirt. Next she unbuttoned her blouse and tossed that aside as well before donning a red sequined halter top. Her sensible designer pumps were thrown aside, spiked heels coming out.

"Good god, woman, how deep is that bag?"

"Deep enough." She laughed. "I was hoping we would go party and was prepared for it." She smiled and held up her bottomless purse.

"What's our code phrase?" Nicholas asked as he drove down the interstate.

"This club is ridiculous."

Nicholas nodded. They had devised the phrase to let the other know if someone was bothering them. It wasn't that Nicholas couldn't fight. He just wouldn't.

He needed his hands to operate, and that was pretty difficult when they were in a cast or splint. If the phrase was spoken, they ducked out. Too many times men had hit on him and wouldn't take no for an answer. It didn't always end so well. He'd already sprained a pinky once in a fight, and his father had had a fit. Nicholas hadn't cared about that. What he did care about was that he wasn't allowed to perform any surgeries, major or minor, because of it.

Using a code phrase was a much wiser option.

Nicholas pulled into the nightclub parking lot. "Come on, Nicky, let's dance." Rebecca was out of the car before he even had it parked.

"Slow down, Becky." Nicholas chuckled. He pocketed his keys and stared at the building for a moment. Nameless faces crowded the entrance, all looking to have a good time.

There had to be more to life than this. He was controlled by his father and forced to find meaningless sex in nightclubs.

Nicholas wanted more. He wanted a home with a loving partner, a job where he could take the time to know not only the patient, but the family as well. Call them by name and know their history without looking in a chart.

"I need a hard cock tonight. Don't you want one, too?" Rebecca giggled as she entered the club.

Nicholas pushed past the crowd as they made their way to the dance floor. The place was packed and jumping. This was a place he could lose himself in, a place to let go and forget his mapped-out life, forget he was Dr. William Sheehan's son, even if he felt like the loneliest person in a room packed with sweaty bodies.

He dirty danced with Rebecca but scanned the crowd for a potential lover for the night. Placing his hands on her shoulders, Nicholas spotted a hot guy smiling at him. "I think I scored."

"Not fair, I want to score, too." Rebecca pouted.

"Keep dancing like that and you will, honey." Nicholas smacked her on her ass as the hot guy moved closer. He locked eyes with the stranger as the guy moved behind him.

Nicholas's blood was on fire. The stranger rocked behind him, gripping his hips and pulling his back into the stranger's chest. Rebecca moved around them, grinding her pussy into the stranger's thigh.

"Sorry, sweetheart. I only have eyes for him." The man's voice was deep and alluring, filling Nicholas's thoughts with dirty images of a hard cock in his ass. It might be meaningless, but at least it was something at the moment.

Rebecca threw her head back and laughed. "I know, but if I keep dancing like this, my hot guy will come along."

The stranger smiled. "Then by all means, grind away."

Nicholas's head fell back onto a solid chest. The hard cock pushing against his ass made him want to drop his pants right there on the dance floor. It had been too long. Too long since he had felt another man giving him what he craved.

"Brent." The name was whispered into his ear.

"Nicholas." He replied.

"I want to fuck you, Nicholas." Brent growled into his ear as he grabbed his hips, pulling Nicholas's ass into his denim-covered cock. Nicholas almost lost his load right there on the dance floor. It had been a while since he had sex. With the hours he worked, it was a miracle he had any at all.

"And I *want* you to fuck me." Nicholas laced his fingers together behind Brent's neck as they swayed to the music, their bodies rocking from side to side. He could feel Brent's hard cock pressing into his ass, and his body shivered from the contact, his hole clenching in excitement of what was to come.

"Bathroom?"

"Yeah." He grabbed Brent's hand, pulling him in the direction of getting fucked.

"What about your friend?" Brent asked as Nicholas neared the restroom.

Nicholas laughed. "She'll be okay until I get back." Rebecca may *look* helpless, but she was far from it. Anyone who thought of messing with her would regret it as soon as her lethal knee made contact with their groin.

"Sounds good to me." Brent followed Nicholas into the bathroom, slamming him into the wall as soon as the door closed.

"Slow down, I don't do rough." Nicholas pushed Brent back.

"Drop 'em." Brent growled, his eyes narrowing at Nicholas's hesitation.

Nicholas brushed it off. This was a one-off. What did he care about wanting more? There would be no cuddling afterwards. "Condom?"

"We don't need one. I'm clean." Brent reached for Nicholas.

Nicholas swatted his hand away. "Hell no, we aren't doing a damn thing without one." Not only was Nicholas sane, but he was a doctor and knew all the creepy crawlies a man's penis could drip with when

going bareback. *Not a chance in hell.* If he had known they were coming here, he would have shoved a few in his pocket.

The dispenser in the men's room was empty, and neither one had one on them. Maybe Rebecca did.

"Let me go ask my friend. Maybe she has one." Nicholas headed for the door.

"I said we don't need one." Brent pushed Nicholas against the wall. He had to turn his face or risk getting it smashed into the ugly yellow ceramic tile.

"Get the hell off of me." Nicholas struggled, pushing back to get his hands free that Brent, if that was his real name, had pulled behind his back. What a fucking psycho.

"You know you like it rough. All gay men do." He growled into Nicholas's ear.

"And what psychotic person told you that?" Nicholas slammed his head back hard into Brent's face. The man let him go as Nicholas grabbed the back of his aching skull. Oh hell, the movies made it seem so easy to do. He stumbled around for a moment, feeling a bit dizzy. He grabbed the countertop, hoping he didn't pass out on the filthy restroom floor.

"You broke my fucking nose." Brent was looking at his hands in horror, the blood splattering his chin and shirt. "You fucker." He growled as he cocked his arm back and punched Nicholas in the nose.

His head flopped back on impact. "Ah, fuck!" Nicholas hopped around. His face felt like it had just exploded. What was with multiple head injuries tonight? He spun around and turned the faucet on, splashing the cold water on his face to staunch the bleeding. Leaning his head back, he pinched his nose.

"Sorry, I, uh, didn't mean to take things out on you," Brent offered as he tried to clean himself up. He handed Nicholas a handful of paper towels.

Nicholas grabbed them. "What gives?" He wet the paper towels and held them to his face, a massive headache adding to his problems.

This was going to swell. There wasn't going to be any way of hiding from this.

"I caught my long-time partner cheating. I guess I had a chip on my shoulder, wanted to take it out on someone," Brent said as he shoved his hands into his pockets and stared at the floor.

"Not the right way to handle things. You just tried to rape me."

Brent's head snapped up as his face paled, his jaw dropping to his chest. The smeared blood only made his expression more dramatic. "I-I, that, oh, fuck."

"Relax. If you promise not to pull any bullshit like that again, I won't press charges." Nicholas pulled a card from his wallet. "Here's the number to a very good counselor that can help you get past this." He shoved his wallet back into his pocket as he held the card out.

"I promise, I swear." Brent's hand shook as he took the card. "You just carry these cards around?"

Nicholas shrugged, regretting it as he winced. "I'm a doctor. It's what I do."

Brent cleared his throat, looking thoroughly ashamed of himself. "I really am sorry." He held the card up. "I promise to call. I've never done anything like this in my life. I'm an accountant, for fuck's sake."

"Then let's go dance since we have matching noses now." Nicholas knew he should get home and put ice on it. Fuck it, let Father yell at him. He helped someone out tonight and that was why he had become a doctor in the first place.

"What the hell happened to you, Nicky?" Rebecca gasped as Nicholas rejoined her on the dance floor.

Nicholas looked over at Brent, who had hung his head. "It was that good."

Brent looked up from under his lashes. He looked astonished and grateful as a small smile tugged at his lips. He gave Nicholas a nod. "I promise."

Nicholas lost the urge to dance and led Brent outside. Once again that longing to have someone to call his own tugged at him as they walked over to what he assumed was Brent's car.

The two sat on the hood, observing the partygoers either heading in or coming out. The night air was warm, and the stars were out, as many as you could see in the city. Nicholas loved stargazing, but time and obstructed view prevented it. They must have been in the club longer than he remembered, transitioning from evening to night.

Why couldn't life be simple? You grow up, go to college, get a degree, and then put it to use doing something you really loved. How you wanted to do it. No parents to get in the way, no excruciatingly long hours, just at peace with every minute you were at work.

"An accountant, huh?" Nicholas broke the silence.

Brent blew out a ragged breath, lay back on the hood, and crossed his fingers over his chest. "Yeah, not something I really wanted to do. I followed my dad, and his dad, and so on."

It seemed they had one thing in common. Nicholas knew how Brent felt. To live up to your parent's expectation seemed to steal a part of your soul when it wasn't what you wanted.

"I met Henry about three years ago. He was the perfect partner, at least in my eyes." Brent shrugged his shoulders. "I figured if I wasn't happy working, at least I could be happy at home. What happened caught me from left field, never saw it coming. I came home early today, knew something was wrong when clothes were strewn throughout the house leading to the bedroom. I heard them, heard the moaning."

Nicholas wanted to reach out when a tear ran down the side of Brent's face, but he held back. He could see the pain in Brent's eyes. The struggle he was going through, it was so raw it was heart-wrenching. It still didn't excuse what he did, going from a victim to making someone else one wasn't the solution.

"I didn't want to open that door. I knew I had to, couldn't live with the not knowing." Brent took a deep, cleansing breath and then

continued. "There they were, limbs everywhere, and Henry taking it up the ass. He never let me top, but all of the sudden he's a bottom? What the fuck?"

That was anyone's worst nightmare when in a relationship. "I don't know what to say, Brent. Henry was an asshole. Do me a favor and use that card I gave you. I know it seems like your world is falling down around you, but it does get better. I wouldn't advise trying to date right now. You'll only take it out on your new partner, and that's not fair to either of you." Nicholas squeezed Brent's shoulder, trying his best to give support, to show that someone cared.

"Crap, I can't believe I screwed it up with you. You probably don't want to set eyes on me again, but if I get the help I need, go to this counselor, can we maybe hang out sometime?"

Nicholas knew he couldn't. Brent had a long road ahead of him. The aggression he showed was only a part of a deeper problem, and he wouldn't allow himself to become a part of that. "Get the help you need. I promise to check up on you, see how you're doing."

"I guess that's as good as I'll get. Thanks, Nicholas."

"I'm going to check tomorrow. If you haven't made an appointment, then I'm going to press charges. I know it's forced therapy, but I think in the long run you'll benefit from it." Nicholas slid from the hood, searching the crowd that was exiting the club for Rebecca.

"I want you to know I'm serious." Brent reached into his wallet, extracted a business card. "Here's my information. If I don't call to make that appointment, I just made it easier for you to find me." Brent smiled sadly at him before getting into his car and pulling away.

With his business card in hand, Nicholas felt better about him being out on the streets. Brent was just in a world of pain. He just hoped Brent went somewhere and slept it off.

Nicholas dropped Rebecca off once they had pulled over and she had changed back into her conservative clothing. It had been one hell of a night. He just shook his head when a truck honked at Rebecca's

exposed brassiere. She really was beautiful. If he was straight, he would be all over that. But watching her do her presto quick change did nothing for him.

“We could make up a story. Tell your father we were accosted by a drugstore when we stopped to get cramping medicine.”

Nicholas thought the offer was sweet. “I won’t lie.” He held his hand up to hush her. “I won’t tell him where we were or that you were with me, but I will tell him I was in a fight. It makes me feel dangerous.” Nicholas laughed.

Rebecca shook her head. “Your neck.”

“Gee, thanks, *fiancée*,” Nicholas joked as she climbed out of the car giggling.

Taking a deep breath, Nicholas steered his car out of the drive and onto the main road. Tonight wasn’t exactly like he’d expected. Instead of getting laid, he counseled and intervened. He felt good about helping Brent out, but he was still horny as hell.

Pulling into his drive and cutting the motor off, Nicholas climbed out and went inside. What a night.

Just as he sat his cell phone down, it rang.

He hit the send button without looking at the caller ID. “Hello?”

“Dr. Nicholas Sheehan?”

Nicholas blew out a breath. He knew that voice. He never would forget the deep timbre that demanded respect and immediate attention.

“Hello, Maverick Brac.”

Chapter Two

“How the hell did I get volunteered for this?” Jason asked as he sucked his thumb. That was the second time he missed the nail. “What do I know about roofing?”

“You shouldn’t have opened your mouth,” Tank grumbled as he leaned back on his heels.

Jason threw his arms in the air. “How is telling Maverick the roof is leaking volunteering?” He looked down at his thumb. It was redder than hell, but thankfully he was a shifter and knew there would be no lasting damage.

Tank rolled his eyes as he pointed at Jason. “You saw it. You fix it. Duh.”

That was the craziest motto he had ever heard. Who in their right mind told two Sentries to repair a roof just because they had noticed a leak? Jason flipped Tank off as he waved his sore thumb back and forth. The sucker really hurt. “And how did you get roped into this?” he asked as he picked his hammer back up.

Tank narrowed his eyes and once again pointed at Jason. “Standing next to your big mouth,” he huffed.

“An online printout of ‘How to fix your own roof’ does not make us professionals. Why couldn’t he hire someone?” Jason dug into his tool belt and gathered another handful of nails. He was going to have to figure out how to set them down without half of them rolling off of the roof. He tucked a few under both knees. Okay, that wasn’t the smartest idea, now his knees hurt.

“You know Maverick doesn’t like strangers here with all the mates running around.” Jason watched as Tank tugged at the safety

harness that was tightly wrapped around the guy's humungous frame. It was amazing they made them that large. It had to be six times larger than a regular large.

Jason grabbed a handkerchief from his back pocket and wiped the sweat from his face and neck. The sun was beating down on them, making Jason's skin turn a bright red.

With his skin feeling as though it were burning in the hot sun and his thumb hurting like hell, he was downright irritable. "He could have locked them all in the dungeon or something."

Tank rolled his eyes as he swung the hammer. "We don't have a dungeon, retard." Tank drove the nail in and set the next one up.

Jason ignored him. It was hot as hell up on this roof, and all he wanted to do was take his shirt off and wipe the sweat from his body like a normal person would do. The problem was, Jason wasn't normal. His body was littered with scars from his days in the Eastern pack under Alpha Jackson's rule.

The now-dead Alpha was one sadistic bastard. The maniac had taken a cat o' nine tails to him every time he disobeyed and then sprinkled minute amounts of silver in the open wounds so he couldn't heal from them.

His body resembled something that had gone through a meat grinder. To make matters worse, the new Alpha, who had challenged Jackson and won, had traded Jason off to Maverick like yesterday's underwear.

It seemed no one wanted his ugly-duckling ass around. That was fine by him. He didn't need anyone anyway.

"You wanna pay attention to what you're doing before both our humpty-dumpty asses fall off and break numerous bones? Healing hurts like a bitch," Tank called over to him.

He had been so lost in thought that he hadn't noticed how close to the edge he had wandered to. Grabbing the safety rope, Jason pulled himself back up to where he was working.

Jason lifted the hammer to strike the next nail when it flew out of his hand. He watched it smack the roof, skid down, and then fall over the edge. Jason crawled over to the edge, looking over to make sure it hadn't hit anyone.

"Hey, watch it," Tank yelled.

"Guess I'm done then." Jason shrugged as he crawled over to the Timber wolf. "Unless you have an extra hammer?"

Tank eyed him for a moment then grinned. "Nope, guess we're done."

"Then let's get out of this damn heat." Jason unbuckled his tool belt and dropped it on the roof with all the other supplies rolling around.

"Did I tell you I'm afraid of heights?" Tank peered over the edge, and shuddered.

"You climbed up here and worked half the day and are just now telling me this?" Jason asked as he gathered the supplies and tools, trying his best to make them sit in one pile without rolling off of the edge. They should have brought a bucket up here.

"Climbing down is the scary part." Tank eyed the edge once more.

"You're tied off, no chance of falling." Jason climbed onto the ladder then looked over at Tank. "I'll go first. That way if you do fall and take half the roof with you, I'll already be on the ground." He made his descent before Tank could say anything else.

Tank was his friend. His mate, George, was his other friend. Even though Jason lived in a house full of people, he pretty much stayed to himself. He was a Grey wolf living amongst beautiful people, and it bothered the hell out of him. More than it should. It was a constant reminder of what he wasn't or what he would never have. A mate. Who would want someone as scarred or broken as he was?

"Hold the ladder," Tank shouted from the roof.

"I swear you better not fall. Even a shifter wouldn't recover from your fat ass breaking every single bone in their body," Jason shouted back up to him. Tank was far from fat. He was over three hundred

pounds of pure muscle, and having the warrior fall on him would be lethal.

“Just shut up and hold it.” Tank grouched as he began to climb down.

Jason grabbed the ladder, making sure the shoes were planted firmly on the ground. Why didn’t Maverick just use scaffolding? It would have been safer than an extension ladder. Especially with Tank’s large frame scaling it.

“Thanks.” Tank patted him on the shoulder as he set his feet firmly on the ground. Jason nearly fell over with the massive hands pounding on his back.

Jason eyed the ladder and then looked up at Tank. “Think we should move the ladder?”

Tank waved his hand. “Nah, who’s gonna mess with it?”

Somehow Jason doubted Tank’s words. The mates were always into something, and a ladder leaning on the side of the house would be a huge temptation, especially to the Alpha’s mate. Cecil had a way of causing trouble even when he was sitting still.

“Okay.” Jason shrugged as he followed Tank into the house. What he needed right now was a shower to get rid of the grime he could feel covering his body.

They both made their way upstairs, only to be sidetracked by a group of shifters standing outside of Melonee’s door. She was the little human girl who lived here. Jason didn’t interact with her, but she was still cute as a button. He didn’t want to scare her with his scars, so he kept his distance from her.

“Why does she have all those red bumps?” Maverick asked from the doorway. He looked terrified to go into her room.

Tangee, Melonee’s brother, shrugged. “Maybe chicken pox or measles, not sure. She’s had her shots, though.”

“Is that why she’s scratching everywhere?” Maverick took a step into the room when she whimpered but then stepped back. “Is she contagious?”

Tangee rolled his eyes. "You can't catch human diseases, remember?"

"Get a hold of that human doctor, what was his name?" Jason watched as Maverick tapped his chin in concentration before snapping his fingers. "Dr. Nicholas Sheehan." Maverick looked over at Melonee then shuddered. "Never mind, I'll go call him." The Alpha took off down the stairs.

"Wuss." Tangee chuckled as he walked into his sister's room.

"What's chicken pox and measles?" Jason asked the warrior Remi, who was standing outside the bedroom door with everyone else.

"Beats me." The warrior shook his head as he stared into the room.

"It's something human kids get. Little red bumps show up, you scratch your skin off, your mom puts some pink stuff on it, and then it goes away." Remi's mate, Drew, answered Jason's question.

"Your skin comes off?" Jason was horrified. An image of the seven-year-old little girl skinless was disgusting. Humans were some strange creatures.

"Not literally. It just feels like it. Someone needs to find out which human mates have had it. Those who haven't could catch it, and it can be deadly to adults." Drew looked from Remi to Jason as if they should go around and take a survey.

"None of you can get it, pup. You're immune to human diseases now," Remi said to his mate.

Jason wasn't so sure about what Remi had just said. He didn't want to take any chances of having his skin fall off. "It's contagious?" Jason liked this less and less.

"Not to wolves, humans." Drew rolled his eyes and threw his hands up in the air. "I'm gonna go call my mom, see if I've had it."

"You can't get it," Remi called out, but Drew ignored him.

Jason looked back into the bedroom. The little girl was crying while her brother tried to stop her from scratching her skin off. The

image was still gross. Even though he hated his scarred skin with a passion, he preferred it over being skinless. Though Drew had said it was a figure of speech, the image plagued Jason's mind.

He knew very little about humans. Even though there were humans in Pride Pack Valley, where the Eastern pack resided, Jason never mingled.

Until he came here, there was no need for him to find out. Now he found himself ignorant as hell when it came to humans. George tried to teach him, but there was so much to learn.

"The doctor is on his way," Maverick yelled upstairs.

"Sorry, I can't hear you. Why don't you come up and tell me?" Tangee shouted down.

"Not likely. Nice try, though," Maverick shouted back as he laughed.

Confused at the conversation, Jason left it alone. He would probably sound stupid asking someone to explain it to him. His father had kept him isolated growing up, and then Alpha Jackson did the same when he was a soldier, so the everyday things people took for granted were lost on him.

Sadly, even humor. His father had been ruthless with his upbringing, and Alpha Jackson had been cruel beyond imagination. He hadn't really known humor. There was never an occasion for it in his life.

"My mom said to get some calamine lotion," Drew shouted down to Maverick.

"On it," Maverick yelled up then ran out of the front door.

"Chicken." Drew laughed as he walked into the little girl's room.

"Won't you catch it?" Jason called after Drew.

"Nah, my mom said I already had it." The mate helped Tangee stop his sister from annihilating her skin.

"Doesn't anyone hear what the hell I'm saying?" Remi complained. "No one can catch it."

Jason shook his head. He would never understand humans.

"I'm gonna go find a wall to talk to." Remi walked away looking frustrated, as did a few more warriors, leaving Jason and Tank staring into her room.

"Think we can catch it?" Tank asked as he took a step back.

"I'm not sure. Remi said we shouldn't be able to." Jason thought Remi had a pretty good idea about walking away. He looked over his shoulder when Maverick stopped at the top of the staircase, tossed a brown paper bag at Jason, then took off.

Jason caught it then pulled out its contents. It was a pink bottle. What was he suppose to do with it?

"It's for Melonee." Tank pointed into the room.

"Does she drink it?" He turned the bottle over, reading the back.

"Not sure, should we try to give it to her in a glass of juice to hide the taste? I saw Tangee do that when she had to take cough medicine once." Tank looked over Jason's shoulder at the bottle.

"It says to rub it on her." Jason pointed to the small print.

Tank took a step back, waving his hands in front of him. "You gonna do it?"

"I thought you were." Jason tried to shove the bottle in Tank's hand. He wasn't going anywhere near her. He didn't care that Remi said they couldn't catch it. Images of his skin falling off made him try harder to shove the bottle at Tank.

"Nu-uh. I'm not catching that. Drew said it could kill adults." Tank batted Jason's hand away.

"Then why are you trying to send me in there?" Jason knew he was the ugly duckling, but damn, the warrior was trying to kill him off.

Tank grinned at Jason. "Give it to Tangee."

"Still sending me in there," Jason mumbled.

"Throw it." Tank made a tossing motion with his arm.

Jason's brows rose to his hairline. "What if I hit the kid?"

"Aim for Drew. He's hardheaded." Tank laughed.

What the hell did that mean? “Uh, Drew, got a bottle of pink stuff here,” Jason called into the room.

“Scaredy-cat.” Tank chuckled.

Jason snorted. “Like you’re not.” Damn right he was afraid of his skin falling off, even if it couldn’t really happen.

“Thanks.” Drew grabbed the bottle from Jason. He wiped his hand on his shirt where Drew touched it. Hey, Drew’s hands were on the bumps, so Jason took no chances.

Once again Maverick was on the top step, pointing toward them. “She’s in there.” Maverick took off again.

Jason stared at the most beautiful man on the planet. The Adonis excused himself as he pushed past him and Tank and walked into Melonee’s room.

Jason’s head swam as he stared at the magnificent creature. His beauty was unrivaled. Jason wanted to roll around in the man’s scent, howl at the moon, and paint masterpieces in homage to the man’s beauty.

“You okay?” Tank asked as he waved his hand in front of Jason’s face.

Jason ignored him, leaning further into the room. Had god created anything more spectacular? His heart beat faster in his chest as he watched the gorgeous Adonis sit on the side of Melonee’s bed.

Jason couldn’t take his eyes off of him. He had a bandage across his nose. Jason felt anger surge inside of him. Who the hell would mar such a gorgeous face?

He dropped his eyes when the man looked over his shoulder at Jason. Jason’s fingertips dug into the doorframe, stopping himself from running into the room and making a fool of himself.

Why would someone as godly as this man want an ugly duckling like him?

He looked up when the little girl cried. The Adonis had a needle in his hand, pushing it into her arm. Jason watched as the clear tube

on the end of it turned crimson. The man withdrew it and taped her arm.

The handsome creature couldn't be in there. He would catch it, and he was an adult. *He would die.* Jason tore across the room, grabbing the human around his shoulders and pulling him into the hallway.

"What are you doing?" Tank asked in shock, his mouth hanging open as he stared at Jason.

"Saving him. He could die." Jason pushed the human behind him, reaching into the little girl's room and shutting her door then backing him and the human farther away from the contagious red bumps. There was no way he was allowing any skin to fall off of the most beautiful man he had ever laid eyes on.

"But he's the doctor. It's his job to risk his life," Tank argued.

"Hell no, not happening." Jason snarled. There was no way this beautiful man with a bruised nose was going to die. Jason thought he was going mad. What the hell was wrong with him? The guy's scent was driving him nuts. He felt the man fisting his shirt in his hands. He was holding onto Jason. Something deep inside of him relished that feeling, the feeling he was protecting the man.

"Problem?" Maverick asked from the top step.

"Jason pulled the doctor out of Melonee's room, said he could die." Tank stuck his finger at Jason as if he were a toddler tattling.

"Drew said human adults could die from it," Jason argued. "And this man shouldn't risk his life."

"Human?" a voice asked quietly from behind him. Jason lowered his head as he closed his eyes. Oh shit, he was in trouble now. He opened his eyes and stared at Maverick.

"Jason?" Maverick tilted his head, his eyes questioning.

Jason pushed the human farther back, afraid the Alpha would harm him now that he had let the proverbial cat out of the bag. He would fight the large wolf to the death if he thought he was going to touch one hair on the gorgeous man's head.

“We need to talk.” Maverick spoke softly.

Jason wasn’t sure if he could interpret that low voice as anger or concern coming from the Alpha. All he knew was that he couldn’t let any harm come to the man standing behind him, the man who was counting on his protection. His fingers still dug into Jason’s shirt, reminding him that he was a protector.

Anger tore through him as he shifted, snarling at Maverick to stay away.

“Have you lost your fucking mind?” Tank yelled at him, but Jason was too angry to listen. He had to get the human out of here. Get him safely away from the Timber wolf pack. He would die before he allowed any of them to harm the man.

“Tank, don’t,” Maverick cautioned. “I think I know what’s going on.”

“Please tell me before I have to kill his dumb ass for threatening you.” Tank growled.

“Ah, yeah, I’d like to know, too.” The stranger raised his hand.

“Sorry, doc. I didn’t mean for this to happen,” Maverick apologized but stayed his distance.

Tangee opened the door, squealed at the sight, and then slammed it shut.

More warriors slowly ascended the stairs, and a few came up behind Jason. He snapped and growled, pulling his muzzle back as his ears flattened. A hand reached into his fur, soothing him. It was the human. Jason couldn’t turn around to acknowledge it. He had to protect him, but the hand was comforting, wanted.

His senses came alive at the touch. He felt giddy as the fingers tightened in his fur. Jason wasn’t sure what was going on, but *no one* was getting near the human.

* * * *

"Stay back," Maverick warned the Sentries behind the snapping Grey wolf. The wolf's body language was telling Maverick that Jason planned on defending the human to the bitter end.

"What the fuck is going on?" Commander Hawk bellowed but listened.

"Jason, calm down. I only want to talk. No one is going to harm your mate." Maverick squatted down as a collective gasp sounded.

"Mate?" the doctor asked. "As in, he's my mate. Wolf mate?"

Maverick nodded but never took his eyes from Jason. He was deadly right now. Jason would harm anyone who went near the doctor.

"And why does he think his mate is threatened?" Hawk asked.

"Because he let the word human slip, doc caught it, and he thought I was going to harm the human because of it." Maverick needed to get the Grey wolf calmed down. If he jumped near Maverick, the whole pack would descend on him regardless of his warning.

Sadly, Maverick didn't know too much about Jason. The Sentry had kept to himself a lot, never volunteering a conversation or telling anything about himself. He knew Jason wouldn't harm anyone unless there was a reason, and defending your mate against a threat, whether real or not, was the mother of all reasons.

"Do you trust that he won't harm you?" Maverick had an idea.

"I think so. He seems to be doing a pretty good job defending me right now," the doctor answered.

Maverick watched as the doctor ran his fingers through Jason's coat. The Grey wolf leaned into it but still held his stance. It was a good sign.

"Reach behind you and open that bedroom door. Walk backwards so Jason will follow you. Close it once you both are in." Maverick's breath caught when the mate, Keata, came around the corner in his tiger form. The warrior Cody would kill Jason to defend his mate. This was getting ugly fast.

The doctor must have read Maverick's face. He pushed the door opened and yanked the wolf back, slamming them inside.

"Keata, you know better." Cody dropped to his knees as he rubbed his mate's fur.

Maverick could only thank whoever was watching over this psychotic-ass pack that the doctor cleared Jason from the hall. He honestly believed Jason wouldn't have harmed the tiger, especially with the tiger being so small, but Cody wouldn't have chanced it.

"Now what?" Hawk asked.

"Now we let them bond."

Chapter Three

Nicholas must have suffered from last night much more than he originally thought. Once he woke up, he was having a CAT scan run on him.

He watched as the wolf padded over to the window seat, hopped up on it, and just watched him.

“Uh, mate, huh?” Boy, his father was going to love this one. The engagement would probably be off with this bit of paranormal news. Nicholas was far from stupid. He caught the gist of the conversation. He was no expert on wolves, but he did know they mated for life. This was too surreal.

“Can you do that thing you just did and turn back to a human? It’s kinda hard to have a one-sided conversation.” Nicholas watched as the wolf jumped down, padded over to him, and gently pushed his head into Nicholas’s leg, turning him. “Oh, you don’t want me to see. Uh, okay.”

He waited for a moment, and then the deepest timbre voice called to something deep inside of him as the man-wolf talked.

“Thanks. You can turn around.”

Nicholas’s skin melted at that deep, rich timbre voice. The man could make millions if he tried his hand at one of those phone sex operations. Turning, Nicholas took in the sight of a man that called to his baser instincts. He liked rugged-looking men, and Jason was the most rugged man he had ever laid eyes on.

Jason was back in the window seat, a blue comforter wrapped tightly around his shoulders. He had hair the color of chestnuts that fell in waves down to his shoulder. A scar ran from his right temple to

his jaw, and big chocolate brown eyes looked at him cautiously, curiously.

“Are you naked under there?” Nicholas joked as he sat on the carpet, leaned his back against the door, and pulled his legs to his chest. He could sit here all day and stare at the handsome man.

Jason just nodded. Okay, so he wasn’t big on talking. A taciturn man. “I’m a doctor. I know what the male anatomy looks like. I promise not to drool if you show me yours.”

A low growl sounded across the room. “You shouldn’t be looking at other men.”

Uh, right. This situation and conversation belonged in the Twilight Zone. “I do it professionally.”

“Like a hooker?” Jason growled louder.

“Not quite. Don’t you know what a doctor is? People pay me to...okay, not a good way to explain that. I heal people, or try to.”

“Like a wolf physician?”

Nicholas scratched his neck, confused as hell. “I don’t know about wolf, but I am a physician.”

“Why are you scratching? Did you get the bumps?” Jason sat forward, alarm filling his eyes. This could not be real. There was no way a handsome man like this guy was interested in him, a wolf at that. Okay, the wolf part was a little freaky, but everyone had their kink.

“No, just a nervous habit I have. I already had the...bumps when I was little.” Nicholas watched as Jason sat back, pulling the covers tighter around him. The guy couldn’t be that modest. He had to be hiding something. Nicholas laid his arms on his knees. “Was that really a tiger I saw in the hallway?”

Again, Jason just nodded. Nicholas didn’t think he would get an answer, but Jason leaned back, turned his head toward the window, and spoke. “Kyoshi and Keata, two of the mates here, were kidnapped by humans. Taken from Japan and brought to America to be used for sex. Some human named Paul helped them hide until the warrior

Storm went to get them and bring them here.” Jason paused, and Nicholas watched as a faraway look crossed Jason’s face. “Kyoshi is Storm’s mate. Keata is Cody’s. I wouldn’t have harmed him.”

“I didn’t think you would have,” Nicholas offered. There was something about Jason that called to the protective side of Nicholas. Although the man was at least a foot taller than him and built like a brick house, he seemed small and vulnerable at the moment.

“I wouldn’t have. When their mate’s claimed them, the shifter gene kicked in. They shifted into tigers. They didn’t even know they had it in them.” Jason stared out into the night, speaking as if remembering something instead of giving an explanation to Nicholas.

“What do you mean, claim?” Now that sounded interesting. If sex was involved, he was all for getting a piece of that. Nicholas’s tongue was already tingling at the thought of licking Jason from head to toe.

Jason clenched his jaw as he shook his head, never once looking at Nicholas. “Nothing.”

Spoilsport. “Can I move closer?” Nicholas felt a need to be closer, to touch, and to hold the man in his arms. He wondered if it was the mate thing but knew there was more to it than that. Nicholas knew in his heart that Jason was the man he could come home to, to laugh with, and to share his life with. He would make the perfect partner.

Jason turned his head, studying Nicholas. “Why?”

Nicholas shrugged. “I don’t like talking across the room.” He watched as Jason looked at the door then back at him, anxiety written all over him.

“Yeah, come over here,” Jason said, as though an army was going to invade at any moment.

Jason pulled back as Nicholas walked over, the comforter pulled tighter yet again. He took a seat on the opposite end of the window seat, feeling better now that he was closer. The man had the most stunning brown eyes Nicholas had ever seen. He wasn’t Hollywood stunning like the other men seemed to be in this house, but he had a

rugged quality to him that drew Nicholas in and made his cock rock hard.

“Why are you staring at me?” Jason asked defensively.

“You have beautiful eyes.” He could feel his face heating up at the confession.

Nicholas sat there, studying Jason’s face. The man seemed shocked by the compliment. Why? His rugged handsomeness was turning Nicholas on. Surely the guy knew how good he looked? “My name’s Nicholas. I just realized that I hadn’t told you that yet.”

“I thought you were the physician?”

Nicholas couldn’t understand how Jason was so...so...what’s the word he was looking for? Lived in a cave? Under a rock? “That’s what I do, not who I am.”

“I stayed in the estate a lot, didn’t get out much. Forgive me, Nicholas.” Jason smiled tightly, but his eyes showed Nicholas that he was afraid and curious.

Nicholas pulled his legs back to his chest. “I know what you mean. I practically live in that damn hospital. It seems like I never leave.”

“Do you go to humans’ houses like the wolf physician visits pack houses?”

Nicholas shook his head. “I wish. That’s what the hospital is for. The sick go there and I try to heal them.” How in the hell was this handsome man so naïve? Nicholas knew there were all sorts of people in all walks of life, but there had to be an explanation to how innocent this man was to the world and how it worked. No one was that ignorant of...humans. Maybe that explained it. Jason was a wolf. Maybe he hadn’t mingled with humans or their world.

“Oh.” Jason looked embarrassed as his eyes lowered.

Nicholas wanted to change the subject. He didn’t like that Jason was uncomfortable. “How can you shift?”

Jason bit his bottom lip. “I can’t tell you.” He locked eyes with Nicholas. “And you can’t tell anyone you know about us.”

“Maverick trusts me. I would never betray that. I wouldn’t betray you.” And Nicholas wouldn’t. Something was going on here, something between him and this wolf that he didn’t fully understand, but the idea of betraying him turned Nicholas’s stomach.

“That’s good.” Jason nodded his approval, and for some reason that made Nicholas happy.

His cell phone went off, interrupting his happy moment. Nicholas pulled it from his pants pocket and checked the caller ID. His father. Someone he didn’t want to talk to right now. He touched the pad, silencing it as he shoved it back into his slacks. Jason watched his every move.

“My father. Someone I never look forward to speaking with,” Nicholas volunteered when he read suspicion in Jason’s eyes. For some reason he didn’t like that. He wanted the wolf to trust him. “He tries to run my life. Always has.” Now Nicholas found himself staring into the night. Why couldn’t his father leave him alone and let him live the life he wanted to?

“My father did the same, then my Alpha, then the Alpha who won the challenge, and now Maverick. I don’t think anyone trusts me to make the right choice.” Jason sounded bitter and resentful. Nicholas felt the same way about his own father. He watched as Jason shifted around a little, tightening that blanket around his shoulders again.

Nicholas smiled. “It seems our lives are more similar than we thought.”

Jason nodded. “It seems that way.” Jason watched him stand, stretch, and then slide his loafers back on.

“I have to get that blood work to the lab. She has chicken pox, but I saw something unfamiliar when I examined her eyes.” Nicholas jumped back when Jason leapt up.

“You’re leaving?” Jason’s voice sounded strained and panic filled.

“I’m coming back, Jason. I promise.” Nicholas laid his hand on the comforter, touching a firm arm. The driving need to be near this man was threatening to undo his sanity. He couldn’t understand it and

didn't care to at the moment. All he wanted was to get under that comforter and explore every inch of that ruggedly handsome man.

Jason gulped. "When?"

"Soon. My shift starts tonight. I have to work forty-eight hours, but I promise to come back here when it's over." The thought of leaving Jason was making Nicholas's chest hurt. There wasn't any reason he should be feeling this way toward a man he'd just met, but a feeling of belonging settled inside him.

"Two days?" Jason sounded so despondent that it tore at Nicholas's heart.

"I promise, I'm coming back." Nicholas leaned up, placing his hands on Jason's strong shoulders, and kissed the wolf. Jason gasped, stood stock-still as Nicholas plunged his tongue in. He took advantage of Jason's lowered defense to explore his mouth, but the wolf didn't stay stunned long. His arms wrapped around Nicholas, pulling him in closer, devouring him like a starved man. Nicholas thought he was going to run out of air soon.

Nicholas knocked the blanket aside, grabbing onto hot flesh as he opened his mouth wider. Jason grabbed his hair, pulled his head back as he licked down Nicholas's neck. Nicholas moaned, his hands running over Jason's back as the wolf pulled him even closer. He had guessed correctly. The wolf was gloriously naked and tasted rugged and manly. He felt Jason's erection prodding his stomach and wished it was pressing against his ass instead. The need to be loved, to be with someone who didn't care who he was, ate at Nicholas.

Nicholas froze when he felt raised skin under his hands, multiple scars. How the hell did such a beautiful man become so scarred? He cried out when Jason pushed him back, screaming at Nicholas to get out as he quickly picked the comforter up and shielded his body, but not before Nicholas saw the horrendous scars slashed across him in every different direction possible.

"Get out, now!" Jason roared.

"I don't want to go." Nicholas cried as he tried to reach for the wolf, but Jason pushed him back again. This couldn't be happening. He *didn't care* about the scars. He wanted the wolf. The one person who made him feel whole and loved. Nicholas was desperate to feel that closeness again. To feel those strong arms wrapped around him.

Maverick stormed into the room and blocked Jason as someone grabbed Nicholas from behind and began to pull him away.

"Maverick, I don't want to go," Nicholas screamed and reached for Jason as he begged while being pulled from the room. He tried to break free, struggled to get back to the man who had held him like Nicholas had meant something, but the man holding him was too strong. He didn't want to leave Jason. *Please no.*

"For now, you have to." Maverick looked him straight in the eye, sadness filling them.

Nicholas knew he wouldn't win this. That he would be forced away. Everything in him wanted to grab Jason and never let him go. "Jason!" Nicholas shouted as he reached for the wolf, trying one last time to break free.

"Now!" Jason yelled around Maverick.

Nicholas hung his head as he was escorted from the room. His wolf didn't want him there, and he wasn't going to force himself on anyone. His heart was breaking, a lump forming in his throat as he swallowed past it and looked Jason in his eyes. "I'll be back, just like I promised," he said softly.

"Don't." Jason sounded so defeated, as if he was truly saying good-bye. Nicholas would be back, no matter what the wolf said.

* * * *

Maverick sat back in his chair, feeling like a total shit for making Nicholas leave. He picked up the phone and dialed the Alpha of the Eastern pack. "Zeus, it's Maverick. I need you to tell me about Jason." Maverick heard a sigh on the other end.

“I knew this phone call would eventually come. What has he done?”

“He found his mate, but it’s having a negative reaction on him.” Maverick had been outside of Melonee’s room guarding her while Jason sat next door with his mate. He heard the yelling and charged straight over. Mate abuse was something he would not tolerate. He was stunned to see Nicholas fight so hard to stay with the Grey wolf as Jason ordered his mate away.

“From what I know, his father never let him out of the house. He was isolated, alone. Then when he matured, Jackson had his goons storm Jason’s home. His father was killed, although Jason thinks he just moved away. That’s what Jackson fed him. Anyway, Jackson never let him leave the estate except when he made him do his dirty work, which I’m not too sure what it was, but he never was gone more than a few hours.”

Zeus sighed again. “When I took over, the man was too terrified to leave his room. He performed his duties here but stayed to himself, shut everyone else out. He’s what some would refer to as a recluse, but he still takes his job seriously, only goes out when he has to.”

Maverick cursed inwardly. His warrior had one fucked-up life. He wanted to kill Jackson all over again. Even though Jason’s father was dead, he wanted to kick his sorry ass as well. No child should be raised that way. It also explained a lot about Jason’s behavior. It also made him feel like shit for not getting to know Jason better. “Do you know about his scar?”

“You mean *scars*. I saw them once, all over his body. I heard Jackson didn’t let them heal by sprinkling silver dust in them. Not enough to kill him, a minute amount, enough to where shifting wouldn’t heal them.” Zeus growled. “Jackson was one sick bastard. Jason’s scars are more serious on the inside though. Those are the ones he’s hiding from.”

Maverick knew it took a large amount of silver to kill them. That’s why when his warrior, Murdock, was shot, he wasn’t instantly

killed by the silver bullet. The sadistic bastard, Jackson, had known what he was doing to Jason. "Thanks. How's Jasper?" Jasper used to be a member of Maverick's pack until he mated the Alpha Zeus. He was as feminine and lethal as they came. Made killer-ass chocolate chip cookies and had a mouth that put sailors to shame.

Zeus chuckled. "Keeps me on my toes. He's nuts, but I love him."

"Thank god he's your headache now. Tell him I said hello."

"Will do. Call me if you need anything else."

Maverick hung up, wondering how he was going to handle this whole situation. Jason had a very ugly past. Maverick was determined to make sure he didn't continue to suffer by keeping his mate away. The Sentry deserved happiness for once in his life.

* * * *

Nicholas's father was livid. He took one look at his son's face, and Nicholas thought steam was going to come out of his ears. There was no "are you okay" or "dear god, what happened." It was "how can you disgrace our name by acting like a commoner." *Really?* What were they, fucking royalty?

The only thing on Nicholas's mind was Jason. He had to stop himself multiple times from tossing it all away and running back there. Maverick wouldn't let him in anyway. He told Nicholas to come back when his shift ended and made sure he drilled it into his head to keep their secret close. He assured Maverick that he wouldn't breathe a word about it, but being away from Jason was suffocating. His chest was heavy, and his heart hurt.

Nicholas did not care about Jason's scars. He only wanted the man he dreamed of so many nights. Nicholas knew there was someone out there for him, had dreamt of meeting that perfect someone. And he had. Jason. He...

"Here he comes again." One of the nurses brought him out of his thoughts as she warned him. His father stormed the hallway toward

him. Dr. William Sheehan was acting more like a child throwing a temper tantrum than an adult. He really didn't need this right now.

"Has your fiancée seen your face?" his father asked smugly.

Like that was something he should fear. If his father only knew. "Yes, as a matter of fact, she was the first one to see it."

His father smirked at him. "And what did dear Rebecca have to say?"

She told me to lie to you and gave me a good cover story. "She offered me her makeup concealer and boxing lessons."

Dear old dad didn't think it was funny. Nicholas did. "Now see here..."

Dr. William Sheehan, dial three one two.

"Duty is calling you." Nicholas smiled as he walked away. God he loved paging systems.

"We're not done with this," his father shouted as he stomped away.

"Oh, yes we are," Nicholas sang as he grabbed a chart and walked into the patient's room.

* * * *

Nicholas got off the phone with Dr. Savant, the counselor he had sent Brent to. The guy had been true to his word and set up appointments to see her. He was glad Brent was getting the help he needed, and it took a load off of his mind.

Nicholas went back to scribbling in a chart he had been writing in before the phone call when he felt the hairs on the back of his neck rise. Looking around, his eyes scanned the floor. Nothing seemed out of place, but he couldn't shake that feeling. Setting his pen down and flipping the chart closed, he handed the file to a nurse.

Something wasn't right.

Nicholas pushed the door open and walked up the stairwell. He couldn't quite put his finger on it, but something was pulling him in

that direction, and as insane as it sounded, he followed. He followed the feeling until he found himself standing in front of the lab.

Scanning the hallway and finding no one there, he opened the door and went in.

"Hey, doc." The hematologist waved him in.

"Hey, Tiny, how's everything going?" Nicholas discreetly looked around the lab. Why couldn't he shake this feeling? He walked over to the six-foot-three man sitting at his microscope.

"I was just about to check out that blood sample you gave me."

"And?" Nicholas moved closer, the need to grab it and run hitting him strong.

"Give me a minute, let me check it out." Tiny grabbed the vial and sat back down, setting the tube of blood on the counter next to him. Nicholas had to get that vial. Lunging forward, he grabbed it from the table. His actions looked manic and his thought process erratic as he stared at the crimson tube in his hand.

"Problem, doc?" Tiny sat there with his eyes trained on Nicholas.

"This was a personal favor." Nicholas spoke to the vial as he let it roll in the palm of his hand, watching the hemoglobin move around its glass housing.

"I know. That's why I couldn't get to it right away."

Nicholas shook his head. "No need, I've changed my mind." Pocketing the tube, he smiled at Tiny.

"You okay?" Concern crossed Tiny's brow.

"Yeah, it's just been a long night." Nicholas backed away and pushed out of the lab. The door snicked closed as Nicholas wondered what the hell was wrong with him. He looked to the far end of the hallway. A man was standing there, his eyes set on Nicholas.

Run!

Nicholas walked quickly to the elevator, waited on its descent to his floor as the man moved faster toward him. *Come on*, he thought as he repeatedly smashed the button.

The doors dinged open, and Nicholas jumped on, slapping the door close button repeatedly as he hit the ground floor button. The man yelled as the doors slid together. *Shit*. His heart was beating out of his chest. He had to get out of here. Nicholas had no idea why he was doing this, but something told him the stranger wouldn't stop until he had that vial, some inner instinct making him protect it.

He hit the stop button on the elevator as he extracted his cell phone. *Please pick up*.

"Doctor?"

Nicholas blew out a breath. "Maverick, someone's after me, and I need you to come get me now."

"Where are you?"

Nicholas could hear sheets rustling in the background. Well, at least the wolf was taking him seriously. "Between the second and first floor."

Chapter Four

Jason lay in his bed feeling as though the world were lying on his back. The horrified look stared him in the face nonstop since Nicholas left. Those hazel eyes wouldn't go away. They even chased him into his sleep.

He groaned as he rolled over, punching the pillow from frustration. Jason missed Nicholas, wanted to feel those soft lips on his again, arms snaking around him and pulling him closer. His hand skated down his chest. A growl ripped from him when he felt the scars under his palm. For once in his life, he wished he could be someone else, someone his mate deserved. Not this throwaway that was lying here pitying himself.

"Jason!" Alpha Maverick pounded on his door. His bedroom door swung open, making Jason jump up. He became angry that he couldn't even get time to himself in his own damn room.

"This is my bedroom. Can't I at least have respect enough here for you to wait until I invite you in?" He didn't care that he was speaking to the Alpha this way. Jason had to fight for something in his life, and the right to his privacy was all he had. He quickly pulled a shirt over his head, covering his scarred chest.

"Fine. I just wanted to inform you that your mate is in trouble and we're heading to the city to get him. So go on back to whatever it was you were doing." Maverick left his door open as he walked away.

"Crap." Jason shoved his feet into his boots and ran after Maverick. His heart beat out of his chest wondering what was going on with the physician. He would kill anyone who harmed Nicholas.

“Glad you decided to join me,” Maverick tossed over his shoulder as he joined the other men in the foyer. “Okay, move out,” the Alpha yelled to the Sentries, and the Timber wolves all raced from the front door, climbing into their trucks as they tore from the gravel drive.

Jason rode with Tank, his eyes trained on the road as his thoughts jumped from one scenario to the next. “Did Maverick say what kind of trouble the physician is in?”

Tank looked over at the Grey wolf. “No, he just said we needed to get there as fast as possible.”

Jason leaned over, looking at the speedometer. “Can’t you go any faster?”

“I’m going over one hundred. You want me to hit the red button?” Tank quirked an eyebrow.

Jason glanced up at him. “Huh?”

“You know, men in...never mind.” Tank shook his head.

“Is it much further?”

“Not far now.” Tank chuckled. “You know, Papa Smurf?” he groaned and shook his head, remaining quiet for the rest of the ride.

The trucks pulled into the emergency parking lot, the warriors all getting out, congregating over by the Alpha.

“I need you guys to be subtle. This hospital is full of humans. Go in, scout around. If you locate Jason’s mate, walk him out slowly. I’m guessing we have some rouges in there, try not to shed blood. Call if you find him,” Maverick instructed.

Jason felt a twinge when the Alpha referred to the physician as his mate. Looking up at the building, he saw humans walking in and coming out, some just standing out front. Where they all here to see Nicholas?

They only had one wolf physician. Shifters could pretty much heal all on their own. Was there only one human physician? It didn’t seem right, there were too many humans. Jason cursed himself for his isolation and lack of knowledge. The least he could have done was watch television to figure some of this out, but television had never

interested him. He never even left the Den to go places when the other warriors went out.

"Jason, you're with me," Maverick called over to him.

He followed the Alpha, his eyes darting everywhere for Nicholas. Did this many humans need help? George had told him that humans could heal themselves with the small stuff but that they were fragile compared to the wolves. They needed medicine and operations to help them when their bodies couldn't do it on their own.

"Keep an eye out for your mate. We need to get him out of here."

Jason nodded. He noticed more humans with those white coats like Nicholas wore, but none of them were Nicholas. "There are a lot of humans here," he whispered.

Maverick smiled kindly at him. "I know, we'll be out of here as soon as we locate him. Just stay with me."

Jason flinched when Maverick grabbed his arm and pulled him back the way they came. "Montana and Storm found him. I can see them. Let's go."

Jason practically ran to the exit. A growl ripped from him when he saw the big mountain called Montana with his arm around his mate's shoulder. He wanted to tear him apart.

"Montana, get your fucking arm off of him." Tank cuffed the guy in the back of his bald head. "He's Jason's mate, are you nuts?"

Jason pulled Nicholas away, glaring at the Sentry. A hand snaked around his waist, an arm pulling him close. Jason looked down to see Nicholas looking up at him, his eyes smiling.

"Hi." His mate leaned up, trying to kiss him again. Jason released him but stayed close.

"Let's go. Those rogues won't stay clueless for long." Maverick waved his arm, signaling everyone to roll out. Jason pulled Nicholas into the truck with Tank, putting him by the door, away from the other Sentry. *Mine.*

“He should be in the middle, Jas. The door makes him vulnerable.” Tank started the motor, putting the truck in gear and pulling out. Jason gave a low growl.

“I’m just saying. Believe me, George would kick my ass back to his Wyoming if I even looked at your mate cross-eyed.” Tank chuckled as he pulled onto the highway.

Jason knew the Timber wolf was right, but putting his mate next to the wolf didn’t sit well. Glaring at Tank, Jason reached down, placed his hand on the physician’s waist, and gently pulled him over his lap, setting him in the middle. He watched Tank’s hands, making sure both of them stayed on the wheel.

“Hey, doc, heard you needed rescuing.” Tank spoke to Nicholas but never looked at him. This satisfied Jason. Nicholas moved closer to him, settled himself into the crook of Jason’s arm, and exhaled softly.

“Something like that.” Nicholas smiled up at Jason from under his lashes. Jason’s cock bulged in his jeans. The urge to lie him down across the bench seat and claim him was strong. He glanced over at Tank, who had a smirk on his face. Jason growled low, pulling Nicholas tighter to his body.

“Promise not to watch.” Tank chuckled.

Jason glanced into the back seat. It was small, just an extended cab, but they could fit. “Pull over.”

“I don’t think that’s a good idea, Jas.” Tank looked over at him.

“I just need to get into the back seat.” Jason encouraged Nicholas to climb back there by lifting him up by his waist and turning him.

“I won’t crash. Go ahead and climb back there with him, and I can’t believe I’m telling you to do that.” Tank shook his head.

Jason climbed after his mate, Nicholas crawling into his lap as soon as Jason turned and sat. His mouth trailed kissed down Jason’s neck as his hands pulled at his shirt. He had performed in front of others before. There was no privacy when he was in Jackson’s

clutches. Tank sitting in the front seat didn't bother him. But Tank seeing Nicholas naked did.

The feeling to shield them melted away when Nicholas grabbed his cock through his jeans. Jason spread his legs as his head thunked the window behind him. Nicholas reached in, grabbing Jason's hardened cock, and pulled it free, his thumb gliding over the head, smearing pre-cum, and making Jason forget who he was.

Nicholas took his mouth, kissing him ravishingly. Jason slid Nicholas's white coat off, pulled the green top over his head. He liked the pajama-like garments the guy was wearing. It made getting to him easier. Nicholas lifted up as Jason pulled his pants down. Nicholas's cock sprang free, and it was hard. The head was a deep red, clear liquid leaking out.

"We need condoms." Nicholas moaned as Jason licked his nipples.

"What are those?" Jason breathed around the taut peak.

"No you don't, doc. We can't give or get human diseases," Tank informed him from the front seat.

"Are you sure?"

"I wouldn't play with your life like that." Tank looked at him in the rearview mirror.

"Lube?" Nicholas asked.

Jason heard Tank rummaging around up front then a bottle was tossed into the back seat. "George gets kinky in the truck." The big wolf blushed then trained his eyes on the road, trying his best to give them privacy.

Nicholas lifted once again, but this time it was for Jason. He pushed his pants down past his knees, allowing Nicholas his first real look at the cock he had palmed. Would he turn away in disgust at his scars? Nicholas grabbed the lube, pulled Jason's hand up, and slicked his fingers. Nicholas pulled forward, lying against Jason's chest as he waited for Jason to reach behind him.

Jason gave a low growl and pulled one cheek to the side as he slid two fingers in. Nicholas's head fell back, and as his lips parted, a small panting noise escaped them. Jason kissed a path down Nicholas's chest, circling his tongue around one of Nicholas's nipples as his fingers stretched him. He breathed Nicholas's scent in, his senses going wild at the scent of this beautiful man in his lap.

"More," Nicholas cried out.

Jason slid a third then a fourth finger into him, Nicholas impaling himself as he rode them. "My mate." Nicholas spoke the words to the night.

Jason drove his fingers deeper at the words. Words he never thought to ever hear in his lifetime. Nicholas leaned forward, tracing a finger down the scar on Jason's face. Jason turned his face, pulling away, his jaw clenched, lips thinned.

Nicholas whispered in his ear, "They don't bother me."

Jason growled low. "Don't lie to me."

"I'm not. They give you character. Makes you mysterious, dangerous, and that turns me on." Nicholas licked the scar from temple to jaw. Jason drove his fingers even deeper.

"Fuck me," Nicholas pled.

Jason's hand pulled free, grabbing the base of his cock as Nicholas slicked Jason's cock before tossing the bottle aside and lining himself up. Jason groaned as Nicholas slowly lowered himself, his hands cupping his mate's ass as he stretched Nicholas's body.

Wild primal feelings coursed through him at the sensation of being buried balls deep inside his mate. *His mate*. Jason closed his eyes momentarily at the word.

"So good." Nicholas buried his face in Jason's neck. There were small shock waves radiating throughout his body. Never had sex been this consuming. Jason pulled Nicholas up by his bottom, and then Nicholas slowly sank back down. His hands clutched Jason's hair and pulled him forward as he tilted his head and took possession of his mouth. Jason felt like he was on fire.

Jason grabbed his hips, thrusting up as Nicholas slammed down. His balls were drawn tight to his body, and he knew he wasn't going to last long, not with his mate in his arms.

"So close," Nicholas whispered across Jason's lips.

"Claim him," Tank voiced himself.

"What is that?" Nicholas asked Jason as he devoured his tongue. Jason thrust harder. Skin slapping skin sounded throughout the truck.

"Claim him," Tank repeated.

Jason growled, biting Nicholas's lower lip as he thrust harder.

"If he claims you, you're bonded for life. He's your mate, yours alone. Your souls are one," Tank informed Nicholas.

"Claim me," Nicholas begged as Jason fucked him. Jason cupped his face, stared into those beautiful hazel eyes, silently pleading with Nicholas.

"I can't do that to you. You deserve better." Jason felt as though his world were shattering around him. As much as it hurt to say those words, it was the truth. The man in his arms was too good for him.

"Shut the hell up and claim him," Tank argued from the front seat.

"What do I need to do?" Nicholas asked as he drove down onto Jason's shaft. Electricity shot through him, and Jason pulled his mate tight to his body, hugging him close as he thrust deeper. Nicholas ran his hands through his hair. "Please," his mate begged.

Jason shook his head as he took Nicholas, his eyes locked onto Nicholas's, and then he swallowed.

"D-Do you accept me as your mate, Nicholas?" Jason asked in a terrified voice.

"Yes," Nicholas breathed.

"Say his name, doc," Tank shot back at him.

"Yes, Jason."

Jason growled, pushing Nicholas forward, cramping himself into the backseat as he got to his knees and drove into Nicholas, his mate. Nicholas pulled his hair as he wrapped his legs around Jason's waist. "Harder," Nicholas cried as his head hit the center console up front.

The truck swerved, Tank getting it back under control as he fought to keep his eyes on the road and not what was happening in the truck.

Jason pulled at Nicholas, exposing his neck as he sank his canines into his mate's flesh. He thrust harder as Nicholas cried out, bathing him as Jason sucked at his skin.

"Fuck, man." Tank growled as he let the window down for fresh air.

Jason wrapped his arms under Nicholas's shoulders and pulled him down onto his shaft as he cried out, his cock pulsing inside his mate. It was done. Nicholas was his. Jason thrust a few more times before he buried his face into Nicholas's neck.

Jason knew that the Timber wolves felt a physical connection when they bonded, felt it happening. Grey wolves were different. It just happened, nothing fancy. They only needed to have sex, as with all paranormals.

Tank parked the truck in the gravel drive, on the opposite end the others had pulled into, as he shouted for someone to watch his truck, racing through the front door.

Nicholas was panting, his hand running under Jason's shirt, feeling the sweat-soaked skin. Jason reached back to pull his hands free.

"Don't," Nicholas begged. Jason hid his face in Nicholas's neck as he allowed Nicholas to explore his shame. They were mates now, and eventually the doctor would see him, eventually.

"Oh shit." Maverick slammed the truck door closed, effectively sealing them inside.

"Kiss me." Nicholas pulled Jason's head up, locking his lips onto his.

"I'm sorry." Jason ran the tips of his fingers down Nicholas soft, smooth face. "I'm sorry I tied you to me."

"I'm not." Nicholas grabbed Jason's ass, stopping him from sliding out. "Not yet."

Jason nodded, pushing his half-hard shaft deeper into his mate. "I'm broken," Jason confessed with his lips kissing Nicholas's.

"That's why your mate is a doctor. I'll heal you here." Nicholas placed a hand over Jason's heart.

Jason thrust, those words wrapping around his heart as he took his mate again.

"Sometime tonight." One of the warriors banged on the door thirty minutes later.

"I think we need to get inside." Nicholas kissed Jason before pushing the large man back.

"Okay." He released his mate, pulling his jeans up then helping Nicholas dress. Jason climbed out first, placing his hands on his mate's waist as he helped him down. He blocked everyone's view as Nicholas pulled his shirt over his head.

"I think it's a bit late for modesty." Nicholas chuckled.

"Mine." Jason growled.

Nicholas reached up and kissed him softly. "Yours."

"Ready?" Maverick asked as he snickered.

"I have Melonee's vial of blood. They were after that." Nicholas reached into the backseat and grabbed his lab coat, rummaging in the pockets and extracting the glass tube.

Maverick's face darkened. "Why would they be after her blood?"

Jason pulled Nicholas close, softly growling. His mate ran his hand over Jason's back, soothing him.

"I'm not sure, but everything in me screamed to get it and run. It may be nothing, an overactive imagination, but I retrieved it and ran. There was a man waiting for me when I came from the lab. He chased me to the elevator, so it has to be significant, right?" Nicholas handed the vial to Maverick.

"I'll give this to the wolf physician, let him examine it." Maverick clutched the small container in his hand as he led them into the Den, warriors surrounding them as they walked into the foyer.

Nicholas slid his hand into Jason's, following everyone inside.
"How is she?"

Maverick shuddered. "Still red."

Nicholas laughed. "It's a common childhood disease. She'll be fine."

Jason pulled on Nicholas's hand, stopping him. "You have a musical laugh." He blushed when he realized everyone heard him.

"Thank you." His mate reached up and pulled on his shoulders, bringing him in for a kiss. *Nicholas really likes to kiss*, Jason thought.

Nicholas leaned back, looking past him to see heads sticking out of the den.

"He ours?" Keata asked.

"No, he's Jason's." Cody picked his mate up, holding him in his arms.

"Oh, goody." Keata beamed.

"That's the tiger you saw," Jason whispered into his temple.

"Really? Somehow that face doesn't fit the tiger. The man seems...naïve. Nothing like a ferocious tiger," Nicholas whispered back.

For the first time in his life, Jason felt like laughing. His mate was adorable. A smile threatened to tug at his lips as he held Nicholas in his arms. His mate was making him feel things he had never before experienced. He was amazed at the joy that ran through him just from hearing Nicholas speak.

"Hello. I'll need your identification card to log you into our computer and give you a fob." Nero, with his blue latex gloves on his hands, was holding his hand out waiting for Nicholas to hand it over.

"I, uh, left it at the hospital in my locker." Nicholas looked over at Maverick.

Maverick smiled then laughed. "Nicholas, this is Nero. Our resident security monitor, electronics expert, and accountant."

"Oh, okay. I really need to get a CAT scan done," he mumbled.

Jason once again felt a smile trying to break free as he ran his hand over his mate's back and then led him upstairs.

Chapter Five

Jason cleared his throat as he stood in the middle of his room. "This, I guess this is where you'll sleep."

"Your room?" Nicholas looked around. It wasn't the same room they had first been in on their first night meeting. Nicholas looked around and noticed there was nothing to indicate that it was his mate's room. No personal photos, not even personal items that people normally tossed about lay anywhere. It was as if he was afraid to make this his home, afraid to commit to it.

Jason gave Nicholas one of his slight nods. He studied his mate. Jason was just so ruggedly handsome. He reminded Nicholas of those cowboys he had seen out west when he bought one of those vacation packages to experience the whole outdoor thing. The men there were manly, smelled of leather and sandalwood, and had driven Nicholas nuts. Jason was like that. He had a stubborn jaw that seemed to clench all the time, a strong, straight nose, and even that deep-as-whiskey voice that Nicholas could listen to all day.

It sent shivers down his spine every time Jason opened his mouth. Chestnut eyebrows furrowed at him. "You're staring at me again."

Nicholas curled his lips in, fighting the smile at how innocent this man truly was. Oh, he fucked like a god, but he was innocent to the outside world, it seemed.

He didn't think his mate would welcome a smile right now, though. The man bathed in self-recrimination. He hung on every word Nicholas spoke, taking them apart to examine for any sign of rejection. Nicholas would have to be careful and choose his words

carefully until Jason got to know him better. Until he found out the wicked sense of humor Nicholas had.

“I’m sorry. I wasn’t trying to be rude.” Nicholas could feel the lack of sleep kicking in. He must look a mess. He glanced around and noticed the room lacked mirrors. “Can I use your bathroom?”

Jason nodded toward a door to the left of the room, his eyes following Nicholas as he walked across the room. Nicholas closed the door behind him, finally able to take a deep breath. What a night this had been.

His head tilted when he saw that the bathroom mirror was covered with a T-shirt. Did Jason loathe himself that much? Leaving it be, he splashed water onto his face, drying it with the soft towel draped on the bar behind him. He could smell Jason in it. He inhaled deeply before replacing it and opening the door.

Jason had turned the bed down. He was now sitting in the window seat. It seemed to be his favorite spot. His head turned when Nicholas emerged, watching his every move as he made his way over to the bed. “Aren’t you going to sleep?”

Jason shook his head, staring back out into the night. Nicholas wanted to argue but felt the thirty-six hours that he had worked pulling him down.

* * * *

Jason crouched at the end of the bed, watching his mate sleep as the early morning sun peeked through the blinds. Jason could hear the birds chirping and the breeze running through a few trees outside. He had opened a window, hoping the fresh air was enjoyable to his mate this morning.

He looked so fragile. Humans were, after all. Jason had been so afraid of hurting him when he claimed him. They weren’t built tough like shifters were. He would have to be careful with him.

Jason traced the scar on his face that Nicholas had trailed with his tongue last night in the truck. How could his mate not be disgusted with it? It just didn't make sense to Jason how his mate could accept him, scars and all.

"I can feel you watching me," Nicholas said as he opened his eyes.

Jason jumped from the bed. He had been watching over his mate all night, making sure no harm came to him. Jason watched as Nicholas stretched, smiled up at him, then extended his arms. Cautiously, he walked back over, slowly climbing onto the bed.

"Morning." Nicholas pulled him down, laughing as he kissed him.

"Why are you laughing?"

"Morning breath. It stinks."

"No it doesn't." Jason leaned in and sniffed. "I have superior olfactory senses, and it doesn't stink."

Nicholas laughed again.

"You're laughing again. Why are you laughing at me?" Humans still confused Jason. He would have to learn them now, more than he tried to figure the other mates out.

"I'm not laughing at you, babe. I'm laughing because you make me happy."

He did? He made this human happy? How? Jason wanted to know because the sound sang to his heart. Whatever it was that was making him smile, he would repeat it over and over again. Jason had been isolated for so many decades that his mate's voice sounded like the windows had been flung open in his soul and the fresh air was wafting through.

"You have any food around here?" his mate asked as he kissed and nipped Jason's neck.

"You need to be fed. Come on. George will feed you." Jason pulled his mate from the bed, hearing Nicholas's stomach growl. He wasn't doing a good job taking care of him. This was the one person

in life that wasn't going to throw him away, so Nicholas's health came above anything else, even his own.

"Hang on, babe. Let me use the bathroom." Nicholas sashayed toward the bathroom, looking over his shoulder at Jason with lust-filled eyes. His cock hardened at that look.

Jason watched as his mate disappeared. He was taking this well. Jason knew humans didn't know about them, so why was his mate being so easy about this, about him? He ran his hand over his chest, thinking of how his scars didn't bother his mate. How could that be when even *he* cringed at the sight?

Nicholas walked out of the bathroom a few minutes later, a wide smile on his face. "Ready."

Nicholas pulled Jason's hand, tugging him along as he opened the bedroom door. "Show me this George."

Jason grabbed his mate, pushing him behind him when Kyoshi's tiger form padded by. The tiger stopped, stared up at Jason then at Nicholas. He let out a small yowl, batting at Nicholas.

"No, Kyoshi," Jason warned him gently.

"It's okay. I think he wants to play." Nicholas applied slight pressure to Jason's back, moving him aside as he knelt down, scratching behind the tiger's ears. "Aren't you adorable?" He smiled, Jason hovering over him.

The tiger rolled to its back, batting all four paws at Nicholas's hand.

"Don't hurt him, Kyoshi." Jason took a step forward, unsure of what to do. His mate was delicate. The tiger could hurt him.

"He's not." Nicholas laughed as Kyoshi chewed lightly on his hand.

"Dragonfly." Storm chuckled as he caught up to his mate.

Nicholas stood, and Jason pulled his mate into his arms as Storm approached them and smiled lovingly at the tiger. He knelt down, rubbing the tiger's belly before standing again, facing them. "Hi, I'm Storm."

Nicholas shook his hand. "Nicholas."

Jason slid his hand into Nicholas's, separating it from Storm's.

"Nice to meet you. Don't mind my mate. He's new at shifting and loves to be in his cat form." Storm reached down, scratching behind the cat's ear.

"He's adorable." Nicholas pulled Jason close when he let off a low growl. Storm looked over at Jason, studying him for a moment before smiling.

"It's good to see you mated, Jason." Storm led the cat away.

"He seems nice."

"Mine," Jason growled, pulling Nicholas close. Nicholas was the one thing in Jason's life that belonged solely to him. He would kill anyone that threatened to come between them. He knew Storm wasn't flirting, and neither was Nicholas, but his possessiveness kicked in and made him want to hurt anyone that came near his mate.

"Dear god, I have a caveman. Come on, feed me."

"I'm sorry. I forgot." Jason's face fell as he pulled Nicholas down the stairs. He would have to take better care of his mate. Forgetting to feed him would be very bad.

"Well, if it isn't my buddy, Jason." George smiled as Jason guided Nicholas into the kitchen.

"George, this is, uh, my mate. His name is Nicholas." Jason pulled a chair out, sitting his mate down. George watched him closely then nodded over at him.

"Glad to meet ya," George said as he turned back to the stove, spatula in hand.

"You, too." Nicholas smiled.

"My mate's hungry, can you feed him?" Jason didn't like that he had to ask anyone else to see to his mate's needs, but he was a horrible cook and didn't want to kill the guy. He was an expert at burning toast and prayed he never had to cook for his mate.

"Coming right up." George began to toss things around, pans clanking as he broke egg shells.

Jason stood behind Nicholas's chair, placing his hands on the back of it. He watched George scramble eggs, slide bread into the toaster, and push sliced potatoes around the grill. His mate was going to enjoy this. Jason did every time George cooked.

* * * *

Nicholas watched Jason, but his wolf didn't growl at George. So it was okay to talk to the smaller men, but not the big ones. *Gotcha*. Nicholas made a mental note not to touch the bigger ones.

"It smells good, George." Nicholas's stomach was trying to claw its way out to get to that aroma. It had been a long time since he had a home-cooked meal. His mother wasn't the cooking type. The cook at his parents' home was good, but it had been years since he lived there. He usually grabbed whatever was in the hospital cafeteria, and the nights he wasn't working, he ordered out or ate at a restaurant.

George turned to Nicholas and smiled as he nodded. "Thanks, I'll have it ready for ya in no time." He twirled the spatula in his hand and began to whistle softly.

Nicholas reached down to his cell phone when his hip began to vibrate. He prayed it wasn't his father. Nicholas was so not in a mood this morning to listen to his bullshit. He knew sooner or later he would have to hear his father's mouth, but he would prefer later, much later. It seemed Nicholas got an instant headache any time he even looked at dear old dad.

He tapped the screen and put the phone to his ear. "Dr. Nicholas Sheehan," he answered.

"Well, don't you sound all professional."

Nicholas smiled at Rebecca's voice. He was aware Jason was standing right behind him dissecting his every word. "Hey, Becky."

"Nicky, your father's in a rage, screaming about you leaving in the middle of a shift. He called me, wondering if maybe I had an

emergency that pulled you away. Where are you?" Her voice was filled with worried concern.

Nicholas scratched at his neck, not wanting to have this conversation right now. He felt Jason still his hand, his fingers soothing over the irritated skin. Nicholas leaned into his touch. "Away." God, just feeling Jason touch him was like a calming balm to his soul. It instantly made him relax.

"Away? Did you get lucky?" She laughed.

"As a matter of fact I did, real lucky." Jason was everything he wanted, broken and all. There was no one else on this planet Nicholas wanted. Jason made him feel safe and protected, loved and wanted. Even though he had parents, Rebecca, and his job, Nicholas had always felt alone, until he met Jason.

"You go, boy. Hike that ass up once for me." Peals of laughter were heard through his phone. Nicholas had to pull it back so his ear wouldn't bleed. Rebecca Winston may come from money, but she sure as shit didn't act like it. Nicholas smiled. He was glad they were able to become friends despite the situation.

He giggled as he put the phone back to his ear. "I'll try to remember."

Rebecca sobered. "Is he hot?"

Nicholas looked up over his shoulder at his mate. "He's gorgeous." Jason blushed, his fingers sliding under Nicholas's jaw, his thumb caressing Nicholas's bottom lip. Nicholas had an urge to drop to his knees right here in the kitchen and suck Jason off until he collapsed.

"No fair, you always get the hot ones." Rebecca pouted.

"They're all yours now. I'm keeping this one." Nicholas forgot George was in the kitchen when Jason's eyes hooded, sliding his thumb into Nicholas's mouth. His tongue whirled around the pad, as his lips closed around the digit. He began to suck it with enthusiasm, watching Jason's eyes close and his lips part. Jason groaned, and Nicholas tossed the phone down onto the table.

Nicholas stood, wrapping his arms around Jason's neck as he sucked Jason's tongue down his throat. Jason inserted a leg between his, and Nicholas ground his balls into it, needing the pressure relieved. His head fell back as Jason sucked his way down his neck. Jason's hands slid up Nicholas's back as he pulled him closer. Nicholas rode his leg harder. He was so close.

When Jason reached down and squeezed his cock through his scrubs, Nicholas cried out, shooting into his pants. Jason sucked on his neck, rubbing his sensitive skin as Nicholas floated back down.

"Holy shit, no wonder Tank attacked me last night."

Nicholas looked over his shoulder. George stood there open-mouthed with a spatula stuck in his hand, smoke billowing from the grill.

"You're burning your food." Nicholas pointed to the stove when his words didn't seem to register.

"Shit." George spun around, scooping the home fries up and tossing them into the sink.

Nicholas turned back around. Jason's chocolate brown eyes were staring deep into his. He leaned up and kissed his mate, Jason's leg still tucked between his. Jason's hand pushed past the waistband, sliding his finger down the crease of Nicholas's ass, tapping at his starburst.

"God, yes." Nicholas pushed back. The finger slid into his hole as Jason watched him with a set jaw, looking as though he was determined to make his mate come again. Nicholas rode that finger, another sliding in beside it. Jason placed his free hand on Nicholas's back, stopping him from falling back.

"Ah, fellas, I'm still here." George cleared his throat.

Jason pushed his fingers deeper, making Nicholas slide up his thigh. Oh, fuck, he was going to come again just by those determined eyes locked on his, that jaw clenched, and those lips thinning out. Jason twisted his fingers, hitting Nicholas's prostate, and Nicholas

shouted, unloading for a second time. Jason laid feather-light kisses down his neck, rubbing his back.

"I'll be back." George ran from the kitchen but not before Nicholas saw the bulge pushing at the front of his jeans.

"Do you want more?" Jason crooned into his neck.

"Please, fuck me," Nicholas begged. Jason spun him around, pulling his scrubs down as he shoved his jeans to his knees, using Nicholas's come to lube his hole. Nicholas shouted when Jason rammed into him, grabbing his hips as Nicholas grabbed the counter. It was hard to spread his legs with his scrubs at his ankles, locking them into place. Jason pulled him up, bending him over the counter as he hammered into him.

"Oh, shit." Maverick spun back around, walking out of the kitchen.

"Harder, Jason," Nicholas whined as Jason thrust deeper. Jason's hand reached around, grabbing his cock and thrusting it up and down as he split Nicholas in two. Nicholas bowed his back as he came, Jason shouting behind him. He fell back to the counter, no good for anything but sleep right now.

Jason gently lowered him, pulling his scrubs back around his waist, and pulled him to his chest. "Can't move," Nicholas moaned. Soft lips kissed the back of his neck as Jason moved him to the chair and sat him down.

"George left the eggs. Do you want them?" Jason grabbed a plate, piling them on.

"Sure." Nicholas waved a boneless hand at Jason, not sure if he had the strength to even lift his arms to eat. He had never had such fantastic sex in his life. Jason was like an addiction that he couldn't get enough of. Nicholas glanced at the wolf and knew he was falling deeply in love with the man. Jason was everything Nicholas had been looking for.

Jason brought the plate over, turned Nicholas's seat, and then sat down next to him, feeding him eggs. He opened, taking what Jason fed him, but not really tasting them.

"You need sleep, baby." Jason touched his face tenderly, making him melt all over again.

Nicholas looked down, shocked to see that the plate was empty. He didn't even remember eating them all. "Come, I'll carry you." Nicholas wrapped his arms around Jason's neck as his mate pulled him from the chair, too sated to argue.

Jason held him close as he carried him upstairs. Nicholas wanted to protest when the wolf set him down, but quickly changed his mind when Jason began to strip him down. Nicholas obediently lifted his legs as Jason tugged his clothing off and then tucked him in.

His mate went to the bathroom, wet a towel, and brought it back to clean him from their play in the kitchen. The warm cloth felt wonderful on his skin.

"Sleep." Jason kissed his forehead, brushing the stray hair from his eyes, as Nicholas closed his eyes and forgot the outside world existed.

* * * *

Maverick stuck his head around the corner, scanning every square inch of the den before looking over his shoulder and nodding. "All clear."

Maverick's mate, Cecil, walked around him as the other mates followed. Cecil turned to Maverick, rolling his eyes, as he crossed his arms over his chest. "We're not virgins, and we're not prudes. We do know what sex looks like." Cecil pointed his finger back and forth between his chest and the Alpha's. "We've become experts at it. No need to shield us."

Maverick narrowed his eyes as he stared down at Cecil, his jaw clenched. "My mate doesn't need to witness another mated pair having sex."

Cecil snorted as he reached behind him, rubbing his bottom. "It sure as hell seems to turn *you* on." Cecil thought Maverick was going to break him in half this morning.

"That's not the point and you know it." Maverick growled. "The point is...well...when I think of it, you'll be the first to know." He stormed off.

Cecil stood there stunned for a moment. It was extremely rare his mate became flustered. A smile pulled at his lips. It was sexy as hell to see the big, bad Alpha get all tongue tied.

"Is he gone?" Drew whispered.

Cecil spun around and stared at the group. He walked to the den entrance and stuck his head out, looking around the foyer and down the hall. "He's gone."

"This is better than those erotic gay books Remi bought me," Drew said excitedly as the mates tiptoed out. They crept up the steps, hoping to find the new mates in a compromising position somewhere outside their bedroom. It seemed they didn't care where they were. When the urge hit, they went at it like bunnies.

Thank goodness Melonee was confined to her room until her *red bumps* were gone. Cecil remembered what it was like when he first mated Maverick. How thrilling and exciting it had all been, and it still was. His Alpha couldn't seem to get enough of him, and Cecil most definitely would never get enough of that drop-dead gorgeous mate of his.

Maverick had drug Cecil out of the den this morning, down the hall, and tossed him over his desk in his office, ripping his clothes off and plowing into him. Cecil *had* to see what all the fuss was about.

"Maybe they're downstairs," Oliver whispered. They had to be quiet with the Timber wolves exceptional hearing.

"Let's go." Cecil laid a finger over his mouth as they crept back down, in search of the newly mated pair.

Chapter Six

Jason kissed the back of Nicholas's neck as his mate reached up for a book. It seemed like he couldn't get enough of him.

He was addicted to his mate's scent, the look of passion as he came, and the way he shouted Jason's name. It was all an effective aphrodisiac to set Jason's blood on fire.

"I want you." Jason kissed the words into his skin as his tongue trailed along his mate's neck.

Nicholas moaned, pushing his ass into Jason's groin. He pressed his erection against his mate's nicely rounded globes, his needs spiraling higher with the act.

Jason ran his hand up his mate's back, gently pushing him over the desk in the library. He slid his hands into the waistband of his green pants as he slowly lowered them to Nicholas's ankles. Jason rained kisses down Nicholas's spine, and then over each mound before parting his globes and running his tongue around his tight star.

"Oh, hell." Nicholas pulled one leg up as he pushed his ass back, rocking his body onto Jason's tongue.

Jason licked around his puckered skin, his thumb sliding in as his tongue trailed south, running over Nicholas's sac that was drawing tightly to his mate's body.

"Jason, please. I need you." Nicholas whimpered.

Sex was the one thing Jason knew how to do best, and he was going to give that gift to his mate over and over again.

Nicholas seemed to thrive when Jason touched him. He had yet to be fully naked in front of him. He always took his mate from behind

except when he claimed him, and Nicholas couldn't see in the dark interior of the truck.

Jason wouldn't be able to take that look of horror again. He made sure only his pants slid down to his knees when he took his mate. Nothing more. He allowed Nicholas to touch his scars from under his shirt, but that's as far as he would allow it. His mate was determined to touch him, so Jason would give him that much.

"Fuck me, now," Nicholas demanded with a groan.

Jason pulled the small packet of lube from his front pocket, wetting his mate's pink hole. He tossed the empty packet onto the desk as he pushed three fingers in.

They fucked so much in the past two days, his mate stayed ready, but Jason would always stretch him first. Nicholas was fragile. He wouldn't risk harming him.

When a fourth finger fit comfortably inside, Jason knew he was ready. He was still growling at himself for taking his mate so roughly in the kitchen this morning. That had been crass, selfish, something Jason would never do again. His mate meant the world to him. He would never harm him.

Grabbing his cock, Jason lined himself up and then sunk into that sweet, glorious star. His canines began to extend with the powerful feeling rushing through him. The room became crimson as his eyes shifted as well.

Jason's head fell back onto his shoulders. The feeling was like nothing he had ever felt before. He reached down and slid a finger in alongside his cock, feeling his shaft gliding next to it as Nicholas's body clamped down on his cock and finger. His entire body shivered as he stared at the point of connection for a moment.

"Oh my god, Jason. Yes, more," Nicholas mewled.

Jason slowed as he slid a second finger in, then a third. He began to move again, amazed at how his mate's hole stretched for him. "Am I hurting you? Do you want more, Nicholas?" Jason asked as he rocked in and out.

“No, not hurting me. I want more. Yesss,” Nicholas hissed.

Jason slid his fingers out, reaching down into his front pocket for the mini vibrator. He took a moment to lube it and then pulled his cock free. His mate protested with a whimper, but Jason stilled him with a hand on his back. “Lie still, Nicholas.”

“Okay,” Nicholas agreed breathlessly.

Lining the vibrator up with his cock, Jason slowly pushed back in. He knew he had a thick girth and a long length, his cock was more than enough to please his mate, but Jason wanted to see this, wanted to give his mate the experience he knew Nicholas would thoroughly enjoy.

He hit the small button at the top, the vibrator buzzing to life.

“Jason,” Nicholas cried out as he clawed at the desk.

Jason finally smiled for the first time in a very long time. His mate bucked his hips, rocking back to impale himself fully onto Jason’s cock and the toy.

Jason had to hold the base of his cock so he wouldn’t lose his grasp on the small purple silicone. Once he had a firm grip, he thrust harder, giving Nicholas the pleasure he was clawing the desk for.

Leaning forward, Jason grabbed Nicholas’s hips, stilling him as he blanketed Nicholas’s back with his chest. “Hold still, Nicholas. I want you to feel it.” His voice was husky in Nicholas’s ear. Jason closed his eyes, feeling the vibrator humming throughout Nicholas’s entire body, drawing them both closer to the edge.

“Jason, please move. I’m gonna come,” Nicholas panted.

“Come for me. Let me feel your body explode,” Jason whispered in his ear, and Nicholas cried out. Jason grabbed the base again, slamming into his mate, sinking his teeth into his mate’s neck as the room shattered around him. Brilliant displays of bright lights sparkled as he came.

Jason’s chest was expanding and contracting heavily as he watched his mate become unglued underneath him. It was the most erotic sight he had ever seen.

He ran his hands over Nicholas's back, feeling the sweat that covered his mate's body.

Jason slowly removed his softening cock and the toy. He set the vibrator on the desk as he pulled Nicholas up and turned him around, holding him tightly in his arms.

Never in his life had anyone accepted him the way Nicholas had, and for the first time in a life filled with torment, Jason was falling in love.

He knew the doctor deserved better than a throwaway, but Jason was determined to do whatever it took to keep Nicholas in his arms.

* * * *

Cecil cleared his throat, looking around at the other mates as he felt his skin flush. "I'm gonna go find Maverick, later."

Cecil ran from the library door, ready to shoot his load as he raced down the hall. Now he could see why Maverick had attacked him this morning. A part of his brain reprimanded him for invading the newly mated couple's privacy. But the larger part of his brain was jumping with glee at the sight and couldn't wait to find his mate. Yeah, he was twisted like that, who cared.

"Me, too." Johnny spun around and ran up the stairs as all the other mates raced to find their warriors.

* * * *

"You can go with me," Nicholas offered as he grabbed his lab coat. "I do need something to change into. Cummy pants aren't in style." He chuckled as he pulled his white coat on and then pulled his hair free from the collar.

Jason grunted. "I don't like the fact that you're leaving the house. It isn't safe. We still don't know who was at the hospital searching for

you. I don't like this. Tank goes with us," Jason stated as he crossed his arms over his chest, looking like he wasn't going to budge on this.

"Okay, anything you want. Are you ready?" Nicholas still didn't know what he was going to do about his job. He knew he still had it.

But did he want it?

There had to be something better out there, something better than the long shifts in the overcrowded city.

It was too impersonal. He still dreamed of working in a small town clinic where he could get to know the families he treated. The bonus to that would be getting out from under his father's thumb. That wasn't why he wanted to do it, but it sure was a big incentive. Working with his father felt like he was being strangled more and more the longer he worked there.

Jason slid his hand into Nicholas's as they walked from the bedroom. They descended the stairs and searched the estate for Tank.

They found him sitting in the kitchen, looking adoringly at his mate as George stood at the stove cooking.

Jason released his hand from Nicholas's and then placed it on the small of his back. Nicholas had never been touched so much in his life, and he loved every minute of it. He would mourn that day Jason stopped touching him every five seconds.

"Will you go with us, Tank? My mate needs to retrieve his personal items," Jason asked as his fingers caressed over Nicholas's back.

"Sure." Tank stood from the table and then narrowed his eyes at the two standing there. "But no sex, okay?"

Jason pulled his hand from behind Nicholas's back and rubbed his chin. "I'm not sure I will be able to keep that promise. But I'll try."

Nicholas had never seen Jason playful before, and he absolutely loved it. A smile tugged at Jason's lips, and Nicholas stood there spellbound. His mate needed to smile more often. It transformed his face from ruggedly handsome to fucking spectacular.

Tank sighed and tossed his hands up into the air. "I guess that'll have to do. Where to?" Tank grabbed a few more pieces of fried chicken before following behind them.

"Nicholas?" Jason turned to him and smiled. Nicholas was busted watching his ass. He didn't give a shit. Jason had one fine-looking ass worth worshipping. He could feel his cock getting hard just staring at it.

"Uh, oh, my condo." Nicholas walked up behind his mate and slid his hands into Jason's back pockets, feeling like he was a teenager again. His cock stayed hard, which was incredible considering he was thirty-five years old. His stamina seemed to have tripled since being with his wolf.

He hadn't come so many times since he hit puberty, but Jason amazingly brought him to the edge so many times that Nicholas feared his body fluids were going to dry up.

Jason reached behind him, lightly manacled Nicholas's wrists, acknowledging Nicholas's need to be close. That was another thing Nicholas loved about his wolf. Jason always made sure his emotional needs were met. A man would have to be insane to give Jason up. Not only was he fine as hell, he was the whole package, scars and all. He could eat crackers in Nicholas's bed any time.

Nicholas sighed as he pulled his hands out of Jason's pockets once they reached the truck. Jason turned and circled his hands around Nicholas's waist as he gently lifted him into the backseat of the extended cab.

"Oh, no, you are *not* sitting back there with him. No porno today," Tank protested as Jason began to climb in back.

"My mate will not sit by himself, Tank." Jason climbed into the back, shutting the cab door on Tank.

"Damn it," Tank grumbled as he made his way around the front, sliding into the driver's seat. Jason watched as he pulled his cell phone out and stabbed at the buttons. He glared at Jason from the

rearview mirror. Jason stuck his tongue out at Tank before looking away.

“George, get your hide out here. You’re riding with me.”

Jason looked down at his mate, seeing Nicholas curl his lips in as he fought the laughter. Jason grinned. He loved when his mate smiled or laughed. It was the next best thing to making love to his man.

* * * *

They made it to the city without giving a free show. Jason wanted to take his gorgeous mate in the backseat, but Nicholas had refused to give the pair up front a reason to complain. Jason settled for groping his mate instead. Jason could see that George was flushed by the time they pulled into Nicholas’s underground parking garage.

Being with Nicholas was like a whole new learning experience for Jason. He saw things that he had never seen before. His mate opened his eyes to a slew of things, and Jason soaked it all up like a pup learning how the human world worked. Only Jason wasn’t a pup. Nicholas never made fun of him or belittled him while he taught Jason how the world worked.

The four took the elevator up as Nicholas pulled a small plastic card out and swiped it, opening the door, and letting them in. “Make yourselves at home while I grab a few things,” Nicholas said as he walked toward a back room.

Jason stood by the door, looking around his mate’s home. It was luxurious. He could see that Nicholas was used to nice things. Jason wasn’t sure he could give him that. It wasn’t that he didn’t have the money. Jason just wasn’t sure he could get used to all of it. It felt overwhelming. He lived his whole life in a sparse environment, living off of the basics. Nicholas had anything but the basics in his apartment.

There was a leather sofa and matching chair. Nice rugs lay throughout. Everything shined and glittered around him. Jason shoved

his hands into his front pockets, feeling a little lost in this expensive place.

He spun around and growled when a woman came barging through the front door. His first instinct was to protect his mate, even from this female. Jason eyed the door Nicholas had gone through before looking back at the woman.

"Oh shit," she cried when she saw the three men standing there. "I don't have any money on me." She dropped her purse, holding her hands up.

Jason reached down, plucking the pink thing from the floor and handing it back to her. He noticed her hands trembling as she accepted it. Was she cold? He sniffed the air and smelled fear pouring off of her.

Why would she fear them? They had done nothing to make her uneasy. He gave a low growl when it dawned on him why she feared them. Jason was insulted that she would make assumptions. He knew he was an ugly duckling, but she didn't have to automatically assume he would harm her.

"I-Is Nicky here?" She clutched her purse to her bosom, her eyes darting between the three.

"Who are you?" Jason asked in irritation. He looked her up and down, disapproving of her judgmental ass.

"His fiancée." Her hands went to her hips, glaring at Jason. "You know, his soon-to-be wife." She challenged Jason's glare, taking on a pissed off look. He no longer smelled fear. It had turned to anger. Jason could give a shit less if she was mad.

Jason cocked his head, searching the human phrases and customs he was familiar with. His nostrils flared, and he could feel the shift fighting to change him. "His mate?" he roared. This couldn't be, Nichols was his, and *no one* was going to take his doctor from him.

"Jason," Tank called his name in warning as he stepped closer. George moved an inch closer to the woman in a protective manner.

"I'm his mate!" Jason slammed his fist into his chest, coming to his full height. Rage like he had never felt before rolled over him. He didn't care if she was a female. He would fight to keep his mate.

"Oh, you must be the hottie." She laughed as she stuck her hand out. "I'm Becky."

Jason was thrown by her quick change in mood. Now she smelled happy. Damn if women weren't a confusing lot. "What is this hottie?" Jason sneered at her hand.

"Becky?" Nicholas called as he walked out of the back room.

"Uh, Nicky, what's going on here?" *Becky* asked as he eyed Jason.

Jason pulled his eyes away from the female and watched his mate cross the room. He growled when his mate hugged this Becky woman. If Nicholas didn't release her, there was going to be some serious problems in this luxurious apartment.

"It's a long story and I don't have time to sit down and tell you about it." Nicholas introduced Becky to everyone. Jason wasn't impressed. Jealousy had his hackles raised, and his claws were itching at his fingertips to come out.

Nicholas was the first good thing to happen in his life, and Jason felt threatened. He didn't like feeling this way. He had an urge to push the woman right back out of the apartment. Jason knew he was acting childish, but his fears of Nicholas finally seeing him as the ugly duckling and leaving him had his nerves wound tight.

The woman was beautiful and Jason knew it. Obviously so did his mate. Jason inched closer to his doctor, wanting to pull the man into his arm and stake his claim.

"I need to pack a few things. Can we visit later?" Jason calmed some when his mate wrapped his arms around *Jason's* waist. Jason pulled him tight to his chest and felt like giving this woman a raspberry.

"Sure, we'll do lunch, call me." Becky waved to everyone as she left.

“Will you please explain to me why she said she was your mate?” Jason snarled.

His mate sighed. “Have a seat.” Nicholas waved the three over to the leather sofa and chair.

“You don’t have to explain anything to us.” Tank took a seat on the chair and pulled George into his lap.

“No, no, you deserve to know I’m not cheating on Jason.” Nicholas poured them all a drink then passed the tumblers around to everyone.

“My father has mapped my life out for me.” Nicholas began to explain as he took a sip of the brandy. “Since I was a small child, he had everything planned down to who I was going to marry and where I would work.”

Jason growled, but Nicholas didn’t acknowledge it. Instead, he slid into his Jason’s lap, running his hand up and down Jason’s leg. “I told him I was gay, but he said that didn’t fit into the plans he made. ‘Suffer through it and forget about it,’ he told me.”

“That’s harsh,” Tank offered.

“That’s Dr. William Sheehan.” Nicholas snorted and then took a sip of his brandy. “Anyway, Rebecca knows I’m gay. She wears my ring but knows that it signifies nothing but friendship. We are trying to figure a way out of it. Her father is the director of the hospital. He can close a lot of doors for me if I break the engagement. My dream is to work in a small town clinic. I know it sounds silly, but I want to know my patients on a personal level.”

“You could always work at the Medical Center. It’s on the opposite end of town, nice folks there.” George sat forward. “I’m sure they could use the help. Probably won’t pay for all this.” George waved his hand around Nicholas’s condo. “But you’d be living with us anyway being mated to Jason. We got humans at the Den that could use you. To be honest, the wolf physician is good, but he’s a little backward when it comes to us humans.”

* * * *

“What about the bad reference I would get from where I work now?” Nicholas finally felt a spark of hope. Could he possibly have his dream job? He wanted to believe, he really wanted to, but he feared it would all be too good to be true. He mentally crossed his fingers as Tank took over the conversation.

“Maverick could talk to them. He financially helped to build the place,” Tank offered.

Nicholas bit his thumb nail as he looked between the two men. He prayed like hell that they knew what they were talking about. “Call him, ask him for me, Tank.” Nicholas felt giddy. He would *finally* get out from under his father. And the bonus was that he would be able to be with his wolf without having to leave him to work two day shifts. Nicholas turned in Jason’s lap, straddling his mate’s hips as he leaned in for a kiss.

“There they go again.” George chuckled as Tank talked on his phone with Maverick.

Nicholas ran his fingers through Jason’s long hair. He wrapped his fingers in the silken strands and gave a light tug as he took possession of Jason’s mouth.

Nicholas broke the kiss and stared into Jason’s chocolate brown eyes. His cock was so hard he pressed it into Jason’s rock-hard abdomen. The sensation shot through his body as he groaned.

“Take me,” Nicholas demanded. Jason growled and then slid from the couch, taking them both to the floor.

Nicholas was thrilled as Jason yanked his pants off, and swallowed his cock down his throat. This was the first time his wolf sucked him off, and Nicholas couldn’t get enough.

“Toys, I have toys in my nightstand,” Nicholas cried as Jason sucked him to the back of his throat.

His wolf let Nicholas’s cock slip free from between his lips and then smiled seductively at him. Jason jumped up and raced to the

room, and was back in less than five seconds, dropping the lube and a dildo next to Nicholas's hip. Jason pushed his legs back, lubed his aching hole, and then slowly inserted the toy into him. Nicholas panted as he took the girth of the dildo into his ass. Jason was bigger by far, but his mate hadn't prepared him much, and there was a slight pinch and burn.

Nicholas placed the pads of his feet on Jason's shoulders as his wolf licked up the side of his cock. He fucked Nicholas's ass with the dildo, making him squirm with pleasure.

Nicholas writhed, pulling at Jason's hair as he was taken higher.

Jason licked his way up until he was at the head of Nicholas's cock. His mate looked up at him and grinned before taking Nicholas into his mouth.

Nicholas's head fell back as waves of sensation crashed over him. The strongest emotions he'd ever felt clawed at his very soul as Jason proved to him to be a skilled lover. Nicholas whimpered as Jason applied a tight seal around his cock and took him to heaven.

"I love you, Jason," Nicholas cried out as he came down his mate's throat. Jason seemed to go wild at those words.

He released Nicholas's cock and then stood above him, staring down at him. Nicholas swore he saw Jason's eyes glittering with unshed tears as he divested himself of his clothes and then positioned himself between Nicholas's legs.

Jason threw Nicholas's legs over his shoulders and entered him, pounding into Nicholas with the force of a fierce storm. Jason leaned forward, capturing his lips as he fucked Nicholas into unconsciousness.

* * * *

"Are you sure I didn't harm him?" Jason asked as he cradled Nicholas in his arms. He stroked his hand up and down his mate's back as he cursed his lack of self control.

“Nah, just fucked him into next year.” George chuckled. “He’ll be fine.” The cowboy mate waved a hand as if to dismiss Jason’s worries.

Tank and George had run into the spare bedroom, giving in to their own release as Jason went wild in the front room.

“Then why hasn’t he awakened?” Jason stroked his man’s face, fear racing through him at his mate’s closed eyes. He had gone nuts when Nicholas closed his eyes and wouldn’t wake up. He ran into the bedroom the other couple was in, dragged Tank’s half-naked form out, and demanded he do something. Tank’s only advice was to cover his naked mate. That didn’t help.

Jason breathed a sigh of relief when Nicholas’s eyes began to flutter and then finally opened. “Damn, can we do that again?” His mate whispered with a smile.

Never in a million years would he understand humans. Jason pulled his mate close, inhaling his scent for comfort as he tightened his arms around him.

“Maverick said you have a job. Come see him when you get back.” Tank chuckled.

George elbowed his mate. “Why’d you have to tell him now? There gonna go at it like rabbits again.”

Tank growled. “That means I get to have you again.”

“Carry on, fellas.” George pulled Tank from the chair, leading him back into the spare room. “And it’s my turn this time, damn it.”

“Hey.” Jason ran his hands over his mate’s head, brushing the hair from his eyes. “You scared me.”

“Hi.” Nicholas smiled at him. “I’m sorry.” His mate cuddled closer.

Jason gulped and then asked. “Did you mean it?”

Nicholas furrowed his brow in confusion as his hazel eyes stared up at Jason. “Did I mean what?”

“That you loved me?” Jason knew that words were spoken in the heat of passion that meant nothing when the clothes went back on, but

if his mate didn't mean it, he didn't think he'd be able to handle that. Nicholas had come to mean the world to him, and he loved the man deeply.

"Yes." Nicholas nodded as he blushed.

"I...I...I love you, too." Jason clenched his fists as tears brimmed in his eyes. He felt weak and stupid for crying just because his mate said he loved him and meant it. Wiping them away, he turned his head toward the window, staring out into the night.

* * * *

"Don't, let me see all of you." Nicholas turned his wolf's head back. Jason had once again clenched his jaw, and he could tell his mate was fighting his emotions as he stared into Nicholas's eyes.

Nicholas pulled his mate's head down, giving him a soft kiss before clearing his throat, fighting back his own tears. "I need to stop at the hospital. Let them know I won't be working there anymore, and my wallets in my locker." Nicholas brushed the back of his hand over the moisture gathering in his eyes.

Jason nodded but said nothing. He helped Nicholas get dressed. Nicholas noticed that his wolf treated him like spun glass but said nothing about it. He had a feeling Jason needed that right now. Nicholas had to admit, in a small part of his soul, so did he.

Nicholas packed what he wanted to take, Jason helping him. He chuckled when Tank and George emerged, wearing big goofy grins on their faces.

"This all of it?" Tank asked as he carried boxes down to the truck. Nicholas nodded.

"Can I ask you something?" Nicholas turned to George.

"Sure."

"Why do you wear a bottle of water in a gun holster? You don't have to answer if you don't want to." Nicholas handed his mate the last box as he shut all the lights off.

"I was attacked by a vampire. He damn near killed me. The myth about them changing you is false, but now my thirst is unquenched. I crave my meat bloodier, too. Tank made this for me, so my hands are free." George pointed to the holster and looked up at his mate with such awe in his eyes that Nicholas had to look away.

"So we have wolves, tiger, and now vampires. I really need that CAT scan." Nicholas shook his head as Jason wrapped him in his arms, kissing him on his head.

"Nah, you ain't loony. The rest of the world is." George beamed at him.

Nicholas shook his head as he laughed. "If you say so."

The four climbed into the truck and headed for the hospital. Nicholas's gut tightened as the ominous building came into sight. He had a feeling this wasn't going to be pretty. His father wasn't one to just let things go.

Tank pulled into the emergency room parking lot and shut off the motor. Nicholas bit his bottom lip as he stared at the hospital. Jason climbed out and then placed his hands around Nicholas's waist, helping him out of the truck. Tank and George got out and joined them.

Nicholas stared up at Jason as he patted him on the chest. "Really, I won't take long," Nicholas promised.

Jason captured his hand and held onto it. "You won't be left unguarded." He growled.

"Fine, let's go." Nicholas pulled his wolf along as he went inside, Tank and George following close behind.

As soon as they walked into the emergency department, Nicholas spotted his father heading toward them looking angry as hell. What else was new?

"What the hell is the meaning of this? Have you lost your mind leaving in the middle of a shift, and who the hell are these ruffians with you?" Dr. William Sheehan bellowed at his son as he pointed to the men standing beside Nicholas.

Nicholas rolled his eyes. *Here we go.* “Hi, father. I’m fine, how are you?”

“Don’t give me that. I want answers!” His father’s face turned a shade darker.

“Fine, here is my answer. I quit.” Nicholas waved at the three to follow him as he walked into the doctors lounge and crossed the room into the locker room. He emptied his locker, praying that dear old dad dropped it. Somehow Nicholas knew it wasn’t over yet.

The four exited the lounge, and Nicholas felt his temper rising as his father stormed over to them.

“You can’t do that! You won’t find work anywhere else, I promise you that, and what about your fiancée?” Nicholas watched as his father changed three kinds of red again. His anger vanished when Jason laid his hand on Nicholas’s lower back. That small show of support was enough to calm him down.

“You know, you’re going to have a heart attack if you don’t learn to control your temper.” He smirked at his father. He felt free for the first time in his life, and he wasn’t going to allow his father to ruin it for him.

“Why you...” His father raised his hand as his eyes narrowed into slits.

Jason leapt in front of Nicholas, blocking Nicholas’s father from striking his son. “I’ll kill you.” He threatened the man in front of him.

Nicholas stood there stunned. Never had his father ever raised a hand to him. What was wrong with him? So he wasn’t following the plan, big deal. Was it that important to him? Did his wishes outweigh Nicholas’s happiness?

His father sneered at Jason. “You turned my son’s head, didn’t you? Look at you.” His eyes raked Jason up and down in disgust. “You’re not fit to shine my shoes. Who cut your face, your mother, too stupid to go below the neck?”

“Father!” Nicholas was shocked beyond belief. Tank had to pull his wolf away from his father. “*Never* speak to me again.” Nicholas

ground the words out between clenched teeth as he pointed his finger mere inches from his father's face. He spun on his heels and walked away. The three men with him followed close behind. Nicholas was mortified at his father's behavior.

"You'll regret this!"

Nicholas spun around. He didn't care who heard him as he shouted across the floor, "The only thing I regret is being your son." He grabbed his mate's hand, pulling him along as he got the hell out of there.

He couldn't believe he had never seen his father's true nature before. He stopped at the truck when he realized he'd forgotten something at his condo. "Crap."

"What's wrong?" Jason asked as he pulled Nicholas close.

"We have to go back to my place."

Tank drove them there, pulling into the underground parking lot. All four exited and made their way to the elevator. When the doors slid open, Nicholas gasped. It was the man from the hospital, and he had someone else with him. Nicholas backed away when the man noticed him and hissed, his fangs gleaming in the elevator lights.

Chapter Seven

Jason smelled his mate's fear before he saw the two men. He quickly pulled Nicholas behind him as his canines punched through his gums.

"Where is it, doc?" one of them demanded.

"Oh, hell," Nicholas cried behind Jason as his mate's fingers dug into his back.

Jason ignored the pain. There was no way he was going to let these two bloodsuckers get to his mate. He finally had someone who loved him, and he wasn't going to lose that.

"Get into the truck." He shouted behind him.

Nicholas grabbed George and ran for their truck.

"Ready?" Tank asked.

"Hell, yeah," Jason growled as he rolled his shoulders and smiled at the two vampires. "Show me what your mama taught you, little girl."

The first attacked at the exact moment Jason's claws shot out of his fingers. He tore a gash across the vampire's chest and punched him in the face at the same time. Jason's moves were swift and precise. The undead man stumbled back but recovered quickly and came back at him.

Jason knew he wasn't as strong as a Timber wolf. Grey wolves relied on numbers as their strength. The thing faked a right and swung around Jason's left side at lightning speed. He jumped onto Jason's back, sinking his fangs into Jason's shoulder.

As stupid as the thought was, he didn't want any more scars on him. Nicholas had to deal with enough of them. Jason ran backwards,

ramming his back into the wall as hard as he could. He swung his head back into the vampire's face.

Jason spun and slammed the undead creature into a cement pillar, effectively dislodging him.

Jason gulped air down before rising. It felt as though he wasn't getting anywhere with this thing. Now he could see why Montana used weapons.

"Watch out," Tank yelled.

Jason cursed. He had let his mind wander, and now the vampire he had been fighting was racing toward their truck. He was afraid to shift. They were in an underground parking lot in the city. If anyone saw them right now, it would look like a bunch of humans fighting. If he shifted, no telling what the humans would do.

He gave chase, his eyes darting up to see his mate sitting in the extended cab with a horrified look on his face.

Jason growled. No one was getting to his mate. The man had brought him out of the darkness to see a whole new world of passion and love, and this creature was not going to take that away.

Leaping into the air, Jason landed on the vamp's back. He sunk his canines into the thing's shoulder, tearing flesh in frenzy. His weight had knocked the thing to the concrete, his claws shredding into its back. He had to destroy it while he had the upper hand.

"Why won't you die?" He heard Tank yell and then laugh. Jason didn't think he would ever understand the warrior. He knew Tank used lines from movies, but having never watched them, they were lost on him.

Jason smelled his mate. His head shot up to see Nicholas and George sneaking out of the truck and coming at them with a tire iron. Now was not the time for his mate to try and help. The vampire must have spotted them, too. He renewed his efforts to free himself, hissing and bucking to get the weight off of him.

"Get back in the truck," Jason yelled to his mate.

"Fuck, you look hot." Nicholas smiled. What was wrong with his mate? He knew his canines were extended and must be a bloody mess. His eyes had shifted to crimson, and his claws were razor sharp and protruding...but hot?

"Now," he growled.

"Fine. Remind me to try and help you again." Nicholas sniffed before opening the truck door and climbing back in. Maybe his mate did need that CAT scan. He had explained to Jason what it was, and it seemed the right thing for his insane mate.

"I'm done playing with you," Jason snapped at the body underneath him. With all of his strength, he separated flesh from bone and tore the vampire's throat out. He wasn't quite sure how to kill someone who was already dead, but this method seemed effective enough. The thing wasn't moving.

"No, Jas. Use your claws and tear his heart out," Tank yelled at him from a few cars down. Jason nodded, turned the thing over, and plunged his claws in, hoping his delicate mate wasn't watching such a savage display.

"I think I'm going to be sick," he heard his mate comment. Guess the guy was watching.

"What the hell do I do with it?" Jason asked as he held the muscle in his hand.

"I don't know, keep it as a trophy," Tank teased him.

"Use it as a paperweight," his mate chimed in.

Jason shook his head and dropped it onto the man's unmoving body. Now all he needed was a shower.

"Fuck."

Jason quickly turned at Tank's outburst, thinking more vampires had come. His eyes followed where Tank was pointing. There were security cameras throughout the garage, recording everything that had just taken place.

"Now what?" Jason asked as he got to his feet and looked around to see if anyone was coming.

“Let’s go see who was watching us.” Tank tossed aside the undead body as he walked toward them.

Jason ran to the truck, wiping his hands clean as best he could on his shirt before grabbing his mate gently by his waist and lowering him. “I can’t leave you here. You’ll have to come with us.”

“And I’m chopped liver?” George snipped.

Jason shook his head. Humans. “Come, George.”

“I ain’t a dog.” George ignored Jason’s hand and climbed out on the other side.

They took the elevator to the security office where Nicholas had directed them. The door handle was bent, and the door was slightly ajar. This wasn’t good. “Stay behind me,” Jason said to his mate.

“Okay.” Nicholas grabbed the back of his shirt. Jason could feel his fingers trembling. He reached behind him and gave a gentle squeeze to his mate’s wrist.

“I’m okay.” Nicholas rubbed his face into Jason’s back. He had never seen anyone as affectionate as his mate before. The guy thrived on touching him.

The four walked into the security office, expecting to engage in another fight. Jason braced himself to defend what was his, but no one was there.

“Aw, man.” Tank walked over and knelt by the desk. A human male was dead on the floor, his skin torn away at his throat.

Tank rose, blew out a breath, and pulled his cell phone out. He entered a sequence of numbers then placed it at his ear. “Maverick, we need Nero.”

* * * *

Nicholas leaned against the wall, watching the smaller man do his thing. How he typed with those latex gloves on was anyone’s guess. Nero had assured everyone that he could make it all go away. Those

weren't his exact words, but Nicholas got the gist of it, along with a lot of stuttering and "It's...complicated" thrown in there.

His hand was shaking as he lifted it and ran it through his hair. Jason walked away from the group and leaned into him.

"Are you okay?"

Nicholas gave him a nervous laugh. "Sure. Just dealing with lions and tigers and bears, oh my."

"I don't understand." Jason cupped his face, tilting it back to look into his eyes as his thumbs caressed his cheekbones. Why was it every time the wolf did that he became lost in those chocolate brown eyes?

"Nothing. I just had no idea so many otherworldly creatures existed and were around me." The image of his mate at his most savage played through his mind. He wasn't lying when he said Jason was hot. But what he didn't say was that it scared the hell out of him, too. Not that he thought his mate would harm him. It was just that he hadn't expected it.

Sure he saw him change into a wolf in front of his eyes, but what he saw today was totally different. More primal.

"I'll get you home. What did we come back here for?" Jason asked gently.

"I don't honestly remember now." He was more focused on the knowledge that the warriors were down in the garage disposing of the bodies and cleaning up the blood. More focused on Nero wiping away all records of it ever taking place.

It didn't matter if he wanted to walk away from this sci-fi adventure or not, he couldn't. The thought of leaving his wolf was too unbearable. He was in it for the long haul, a thousand years according to Tank, so he'd better get used to this.

Nicholas smiled up at Jason. "I'm fine. I was just shocked."

"You know I would never let anyone or anything hurt you, right?"

"I know." And he did. Jason had turned into a creature from hell to defend him, and Nicholas knew without a doubt that Jason would die to keep him safe. If that didn't say I love you, then nothing would.

“I’m sorry about your father, too.”

* * * *

“I’m sorry.” Jason ran his fingertips down Nicholas’s cheek. The only reason his mate’s father was still alive was because, well, he was his father. If anyone talked to his mate like that again, he would kill them.

And if another vampire threatened what was his, then Jason would find the coven they slept in and burn it to the ground.

They lay in bed, Jason holding his mate close, his hands running over such a smooth and flawless back.

He had asked about the reference to the lions and such. His mate was patient with him, took his time to explain human things without making Jason feel dimwitted. He loved his doctor so much.

Nicholas turned in Jason’s arms. “Show me.”

Jason was jolted from his thoughts as his mate’s hazel eyes locked onto him. “What, mate?”

“You, your scars.” Nicholas watched him intently. Pure panic seized Jason at the thought of his mate seeing him as he truly was. “Please.”

He swallowed around the lump of fear that had formed in his throat. “Why?”

Jason cursed himself for the tremor in his voice. Reaching down, his mate pulled his shirt up an inch, exposing years of abuse and pain.

Nicholas leaned forward and kissed the few inches of skin that became exposed. He ran his tongue along the hair running from his navel to the waistband of his sleeping pants. Nicholas lifted his shirt a little higher, kissing the first scar revealed. He trembled as he watched in horror.

Jason reached down and grabbed his shirt, trying to push it back down. Nicholas couldn’t see this. His mate would hate him and look at him with pitying eyes. Jason couldn’t handle pity. Not now, not

ever from this gorgeous man. He was an ugly duckling and would always be one. Why couldn't his mate accept him for what he was and leave it alone?

Nicholas rubbed the back of Jason's hands. He glanced up at Jason and then Jason pulled his own shirt up with the help of his mate's hands. They were guiding his, showing what had been done to him for his refusal to follow orders. His hands shook as Nicholas kissed his abdomen. Those kisses seemed to heat his skin wherever Nicholas's lips touched.

His shirt inched up some more, Nicholas kissing the ugliest scar of them all. It ran from his left nipple and curved around to his right hip. A wet tongue trailed back down as his mate caressed his hand. Soon, Jason's whole body shook as his mate pulled his shirt over his head.

"Please, don't," Jason begged softly.

"Shh, you're beautiful." Nicholas's tongue sucked at his scared nipple, taking it into his mouth.

"No, I'm an ugly duckling." Jason quickly wiped away the tear that ran down the side of his face before his mate could see it.

"I thought you were my wolf," Nicholas teased as his hands spanned across Jason's chest. Jason watched him closely. There was no look of disgust, no pity filling his eyes, but what he did see was a look of unadulterated lust. Jason closed his eyes. It was too much, just too damn much.

"Look at me," Nicholas pled as he hooked his hands into the waistband of Jason's sleeping pants and then slid them down and off. He was fully naked for the first time since at the hands of his cruel ex Alpha. Jason slowly opened his eyes, stealing a glance at his mate. His fingers itched to grab the comforter and cover his shame.

Nicholas's eyes raked over his naked form, as if appraising it. "Damn, that is one fine body you've been hiding from me."

Jason turned his head, looking into Nicholas's eyes to see so much love that his heart felt as though the tomb it had been sealed in was

finally opened. Nicholas leaned forward and kissed at the tear Jason hadn't even felt leave his eye. "I have you," Nicholas promised.

Jason nodded, trusting that his mate wouldn't turn his back on him, wouldn't hate him for being so broken. He watched as Nicholas grabbed the lube, slicked Jason's cock, and then climbed onto him, impaling himself as he skimmed his hands over Jason's chest, running his fingers over each individual scar.

"So beautiful," Nicholas whispered as he took Jason's cock. Jason growled, turning them over as he threw his mate's legs over his arms. "Fuck me, wolf." Nicholas laughed as he bowed his back, allowing Jason to go deeper. His thrust turned into long strokes that made Jason feel possessive of his mate. Nicholas accepted him, scars and all. He wanted to shout to the rooftops that he loved this man with every breath in him.

"Mine," Jason growled low as he bent down and lapped at Nicholas's neck.

"Yours. Only yours." Nicholas ran his hands over Jason's chest as he cried out. "Fuck me, harder, wolf."

Jason pushed Nicholas's legs back, his eyes locking onto where their bodies met, and whimpered at the beautiful sight. His thrust increased as his balls drew tight to his body.

Nicholas grabbed his cock and began to stroke it quickly, his free hand tracing the scars over Jason's chest.

Jason welcomed his mate's soft hands. They soothed his worried soul, and he pulled back until only the head of his cock remained in his mate's tight and heated hole then plunged forward, reveling in the feel of Nicholas's body.

Nicholas arched his back and cried out. Ropes of pearly white seed shot out in a pulsating rhythm.

Jason watched in fascination for a moment before the pressure on his cock was too much. He thrust in once more, and then his spine stiffened with the impact of such a glorifying orgasm. He shouted out

as he hammered into Nicholas, emptying his seed into his mate's tight ass.

Jason released Nicholas's legs, gasping for air as he pulled his cock free and landed on the bed beside his mate. Jason grabbed Nicholas and pulled him close, inhaling his scent as he cradled Nicholas in his arms.

* * * *

"Where do you think they're at now?" Drew whispered as the mates crept down the hall.

"Right here." The group spun around and stared at him wide eyed. Jason chuckled as they blushed and sputtered. "So, I live in a house of voyeurism?" he asked no one in particular.

"Well, we wouldn't be if you two weren't exhibitionists," Cecil defended them.

Jason's brow rose as he stared at the Alpha's mate. "I don't think it's exhibitionism when you mates are seeking out a show."

Cecil blushed again as he stared at his feet.

"Buy some DVDs." Jason ruffled Cecil's hair as he walked away.

"Dang it. Busted," Johnny whined.

"Come on, let's find something else to get into." Blair exhaled loudly.

The group grumbled complaints as they followed Kota's mate.

* * * *

"Doc!"

Nicholas dropped the medical magazine he had been browsing through and ran from his room. Murdock was pulling his hair out in the hallway and shouting loud enough to wake the dead.

"Doc!"

"I'm right here." He pushed past the frantic man and raced into their bedroom. Heaven was on all fours crying and panting, his belly swollen to full pregnancy. Nicholas still couldn't wrap his head around a man being pregnant, but now wasn't the time to think about it. "Contractions?"

"If you call feeling like my fucking gut is being torn out a contraction, then yeah," Heaven snapped as he tried to slowly crawl across the floor.

"Okay, let's get you down the hall." Maverick had spared no expense in getting a room sterilized and set up as an operating room for the delivery of Heaven and Murdock's pups. They had found out a month ago that they were having twins. Nicholas had had to scrape Murdock off of the floor at the news.

Nicholas was curious as hell to see if the shifter was going to deliver human babes or real pups. He was too embarrassed to ask. Well, he was about to find out.

"Murdock, go get Maverick," Nicholas yelled. Murdock stood there looking a little green. "Damn it, Murdock, if you pass out again I'm going to neuter you."

Murdock paled and nodded his head before closing his mouth and taking off.

"How the hell do you deal with such a squeamish mate?" Nicholas asked as he tried to help Heaven up, but the wolf wasn't cooperating.

"With a pair of scissors and a spatula if the fucker passes out again!" Heaven yelled. Okay, so the wolf wasn't good at handling pain. He had to stop the pregnant man from trying to crawl under the bed. What was that about? Heaven whimpered, and Nicholas rubbed his back while he waited on the Alpha.

Maverick ran in and pulled Heaven from the floor as if he were as light as a pillow. They all rushed down the hall and through the door to the makeshift operating room. Maverick laid Heaven gently onto the operating table and then backed away, looking just as pale as Murdock did. "Scrub up."

Maverick's eyes widened at Nicholas. "Oh, hell no. I paid for this room. That's my contribution." Maverick backed away until he reached the door.

"What is it with you shifters? You can go hunt and kill, but can't handle a guy giving birth? Fuck, that just doesn't even roll off the tongue properly." Nicholas pushed the Alpha from the room. He was on his own here. Heaven screamed again, and Nicholas stuck his head out of the door.

"Murdock, get your ass in here now."

"Why?" the father-to-be squeaked out as he shook his head and backed away.

"I swear to god, Murdock, if you don't get your ass in here now, I'm going to withhold sex for the next two centuries," Heaven bit out. "I just might anyway because this shit hurts!" he emphasized his words by screaming through another contraction.

Murdock stood there with his mouth opening and closing, his eyes wide with fear. Whether from the threat or the event taking place, Nicholas wasn't sure.

He shook his head. This was going to be as fun as watching lunatics run around a psychiatric ward.

Chapter Eight

Nicholas wrote in his chart as he examined the healthy twin human boys. The father was resting peacefully, and Murdock was still passed out. The queasy father made it until Nicholas cut Heaven open, and then he flat-out fainted.

“Aren’t you two beautiful?” he cooed at them as the twins sucked on their tiny fists and stared up at Nicholas.

“Everything go okay?” Jason asked as he stole into the room.

“Hey, babe.” Nicholas leaned up and kissed his mate. It felt good to see him after so many hours working frantically to deliver Heaven’s babes. The wolf physician, as everyone referred to him as, was helping a shifter over in the Eastern pack with silver poisoning and couldn’t make it. Nicholas had truly been left to do the task by himself, but he handled it, barely. “Everything went fine. It would have helped though if I had a conscious father to assist me.” Nicholas pointed down at Murdock still out cold.

Jason laughed as he stared at Murdock. Nicholas froze at the sight. It wasn’t the first time he saw him do that, but his breath seemed to leave his lungs at the magnificent picture his mate made. “You’re breathtaking.”

Jason cleared his throat and pointed at the twins. “They’re so small.” Nicholas knew Jason was uncomfortable with compliments and didn’t comment on the subject being changed.

“Would you like to hold one?” If his mate could turn any more white, he would be a ghost.

Jason’s eyes widened at the question. “Oh, no. I’d break them.” His mate backed away, waving his hands frantically in front of him.

Nicholas ignored him and lifted one of the babies and placed him in his mate's arms, showing him how to hold the head properly. Jason looked good cuddling a baby.

"Nicholas, please. I'm going to break him." Jason didn't move a muscle. It was quite comical. He resembled a statue holding the sleeping boy.

"No you won't." He patted his mate's arm as he looked at Jason.

Murdock finally started to come around, groaning as he pulled himself up. He held his head for a moment and then blinked a few times.

"Ah, the proud papa finally awakens," Nicholas teased. He turned back to his mate and pushed up on the balls of his feet to kiss his cheek.

Jason shook his head as he gripped the babe tighter in his arms. "Stop it, mate. I'll drop him if you touch me."

Nicholas chuckled. He wanted Jason to experience this, to show him that he wasn't a monster or an ugly duckling but a real person who had real feelings and could be a part of the household, not just sit back and watch life go by, but participate in it.

Murdock walked in a trance as he stared at the bundle in Jason's arms. Nicholas sighed, lesson number two on infant care.

* * * *

Nicholas looked up as Dr. Carmichael entered the Medical Center. He found out that the wolf physician really did have an actual name. The good doctor was just so used to the reference that he never corrected anyone.

"Hello, Dr. Carmichael." Nicholas shook the doctor's hand. He had been working here two months now, two whole glorious months, and loved every minute of it. His father had blown a gasket, trying his best to call the Medical Center and blemish his name, but Maverick had secured his job. He wasn't worried about it.

He had decent hours, got to spend every night in his wolf's arms, and Jason was making progress. He didn't hide behind clothing when around Nicholas. He still refused to look at himself in a mirror, but one could only take so many steps at a time.

"Is there some place private we could talk?"

Nicholas closed the chart he had been making notes in. "Sure, it's close to my lunch break. Why don't we head to the diner?"

They walked to the diner, it was such a beautiful and sunny afternoon.

When they entered, the mate Tangee told them to sit anywhere. Nicholas loved this small-town feel. It was quaint, vintage kind of. He learned the pack had a few businesses they ran here. The mate, Mark, owned the garage, although Nicholas wasn't too sure he could be considered a mate. He was human, but his wolf was more the submissive one. The warrior, Cody, owned half this diner.

Dr. Carmichael chose a booth off in a secluded corner. They thanked Tangee for their menus and ordered their drinks.

"I got the results of Melonee's blood work." Dr. Carmichael spoke softly as he played with a sugar packet.

Nicholas leaned forward. "And?"

"There's an anomaly in her blood."

An anomaly? For some reason this sent a chill up Nicholas's spine. She was a sweet little *human* girl. She looked healthy. What could be wrong with her? They ordered their lunch as Dr. Carmichael sat in silence.

Finally Dr. Carmichael looked around before lowering his voice further. "We need to go see Alpha Maverick. He needs to know this, too. It may explain why the rogues can't stay away."

Nicholas had been warned about the rogue vampire and rogue wolves that kept attacking this small town. He was even warned about the humans who had kidnapped Heaven and experimented on him. Maverick had told him that something was attracting them and that

the Timber wolves were trying to figure it out. How did a little girl tie in to it?

They straightened when Tangee brought them their lunch. It was eaten in silence as more people filled the small diner. Nicholas was itching to ask but knew the wolf physician wouldn't risk being overheard. He smiled when Jason strolled into the diner, spotted him, or should he say, scented him, and smiled. His wolf was learning how to smile more often, and it was a beautiful one at that.

"Hey, babe." Jason leaned down to kiss him as Dr. Carmichael smiled.

"Hello to you, too, sexy." Nicholas beamed up at his handsome wolf.

"Wolf Physician." Jason nodded his greeting as he sat down next to his mate.

"Hello, Jason. Good to see you out and about."

Nicholas cuddled close. He found that he always did when Jason surrounded him. The man smelled heavenly.

"I'll see you at the house this evening." Dr. Carmichael excused himself, threw a couple bills on the table, and left the newly mated pair to enjoy Nicholas's lunch hour.

"We still have thirty minutes." Nicholas wiggled his eyebrows.

"Then let's not waste them." Jason said as he kissed the skin behind Nicholas's ear.

Jason extracted him from the booth, grabbing the keys from Cody as he pulled Nicholas upstairs to the small apartment over the diner. It was fully furnished, so they had a bed to romp around on.

"Bring any toys?" Nicholas panted as he hopped onto the bed and stared up at his mate.

"Wouldn't leave home without them." Jason chuckled as he pulled the vibrator from his front pocket along with a packet of lube.

"First." Nicholas slid to his knees, pulling his pretty boy from Jason's pants. "Looks delicious." Nicholas ran his tongue along the

heavy vein, slurped at the pre-cum, moaning at the taste. He swallowed his mate, humming as he twirled his tongue around.

“On the bed, you give the best damn head, but I wanna come in your ass.” Jason took a steady breath.

Nicholas laughed as he yanked his scrubs off, Jason tossing him on the bed. His mouth watered when Jason pulled his clothes off the rest of the way. “So beautiful,” he said as he ran his hands over Jason’s skin.

“Turn over. This has to be quick.”

Nicholas got to his hands and knees, spreading his legs apart as his mate lubed him then slid his cock along with the mini-vibrator inside of him. Damn if the wolf wasn’t a god when it came to sex. His head dropped forward, hissing through his teeth as Jason rocked in and out of him, the vibrations stimulating his prostate and sending him into another world.

“Want more?”

How much more could his wolf give him? He already had a cock and vibrator up his ass. Nicholas didn’t think it could stretch any further. But Nicholas wasn’t one to shy away from pleasure. “More,” he whined.

He gasped when he felt himself opening wider. What was his wolf doing back there?

“Does it feel good?”

“Hell, yes.” Nicholas bowed his back like a cat stretching, his mind going blank as the sensations assaulted him.

* * * *

Jason ran his hands over his mate’s smooth skin. Shivers ran down his spine at the sight of him naked, at the sight of him dressed, hell, at the sight of him period.

He smiled as he looked down at his mate. His baby was clawing at the sheets, crying and whining, just what he wanted to see. He

reached down to wrap the leather band around the base of his cock to hold the vibrator and small dildo in place on either side of his shaft. Grabbing his mate's hips, he thrust forward, watching the starburst stretch wide for him. He would never get enough of that sight.

Nicholas was everything he could ever want in a mate, a healing balm to his soul, an aphrodisiac to his libido, and the beat to his heart. Jason was his mate, and he was Nicholas's wolf.

THE END

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lynn Hagen loves writing about the somewhat flawed, but lovable. She also loves a hero who can see past all the rough edges to find the shining diamond of a beautiful heart.

You can find her on any given day curled up with her laptop and a cup of hot java, letting the next set of characters tell their story.

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