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CARTER'S TRYCK

LYNN HAGEN

The
ManLove
Collection



BRAC PACK 17

Brac Pack 17

Carter's Tryck

Tryck Santiago is a wolf shifter who loves riding his motorcycle, hanging with his brothers, and giving Alpha Maverick Brac a hard time. His motto has always been "If you can't fix it, burn it down." But what will happen when his toughness can't fix his mate's problems? And what's with all the tears?

Carter Santharian is a tall, slim Wood Elf. He's also graceful and quick-witted, so what was fate thinking when mating him to Biker Bob? The man's choice of clothes was blue or black, and the yellow bandana on his head reminds Carter only that two opposites may not attract.

Carter has to fight to make his own way in a world of shifters, and he now finds himself in with a mate who refuses to show any affection in public. Can he get Tryck to show his more tender side, or will Carter tire of the struggle and shimmer away?

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

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CARTER'S TRYCK

Brac Pack 17

LYNN HAGEN

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Chapter One

Tryck Santiago stood in Maverick Brac's office blinking his eyes rapidly. Nope, the man standing there was real. He was staring at the most ethereal-looking man he had ever seen. The man was snipping at Maverick, his shoulder-length golden hair was tied back in a leather thong, straight and soft-looking. His slim and delicate frame moved animatedly around as the man fussed over being called like a pet.

The man's voice called to a part of Tryck that he wasn't even aware existed. When the man shrank back in fear over something Maverick said, Tryck lost his goddamn mind. "Mine!" *Oh, fuck no.* Had he just said that?

The Alpha looked from the man he called Carter to Tryck, a smile widening his face. "Ah hell, this is going to be a riot. Karma must really love me." Maverick grabbed his side as he laughed, pointing between the two. "Irony is a motherfucker."

"What are you talking about?" Carter asked as he looked behind him. Tryck gasped at the golden eyes that locked onto him. The man was simply beautiful.

Tryck walked over to his mate, circled around him as his eyes raked up and down Carter's slim body, and then snapped his fingers at Carter. "Let's go."

When Carter just stood there unmoving, staring questioningly at Tryck, he blew out an aggravated breath. "Look, you have two choices here. Either you come with me willingly or I toss you over my shoulder, your choice."

The side of Carter's mouth pulled back in a smile, Tryck caught the moan that almost escaped his lips. If he thought Carter was beautiful before, his smile made him breathtaking. "There is a third choice, he-man."

Tryck growled. He wasn't one to play games. The pull was strong, and he needed to claim what was his. How dare the man stand there and argue a moot point. "There is no third choice." He snapped his fingers once again, pointing to the space right in front of him, but the stubborn man didn't budge.

"Uh-huh." Carter grinned and then shimmered out.

Tryck quirked a brow at the Alpha. "You knew about that little trick of his, didn't you?"

There was a faint glint of humor in the Alpha's eyes. "A riot." Maverick laughed.

Tryck turned on his heel and stormed from the Alpha's office, his brothers Law and Dagon at his flank. "Damn, Tryck, was that really your mate?" Law asked as he kept pace with him.

Tryck really didn't want to answer Law. His brother was the emotional one of the three. He would get all Dr. Phil on his ass about the whole mate thing. Tender emotions were one thing Tryck stayed the fuck away from.

He had to because if Tryck let his softer side come out, he would be perceived as weak, something he wasn't. He had his brothers to look out for.

He threw his hand up at Law as they approached their motorcycles. "I don't want to hear it, Law. Leave it alone."

"But you found your mate." Law protested, "Are you going to just walk away from him?"

Tryck snarled at his emotional brother, "He popped out, I didn't. If he doesn't want me, fuck him."

Dagon chuckled behind them. "I don't think it's a matter of him not wanting you. It may be a matter of you ordering him to follow you like a damn dog." Dagon threw his hands up when Tryck spun around and glared at him. Not him, too. "I'm just saying."

"He needs to learn to listen when told to do something." Tryck snapped. He wasn't going to follow behind Carter like the other warriors did their mates. Hell no, he wasn't that sappy. Matter of fact, he wasn't sappy at all.

"Your neck." Law shrugged. "I have a feeling Carter is going to have you eating out of his hands."

"Not in this lifetime." Tryck grumbled as he swung his leg over his bike. "Let's ride."

* * * *

Carter twisted and pulled at his hands as he paced back and forth in his dwelling that the Wood Elves had set up between the Brac territory and the Eastern pack, whoever they were. Maverick had given them five hundred acres to relocate to.

He thought of the war between the Wood Elves and the Shadow Elves. It was senseless. Carter had lost his entire family to the war and he wasn't even sure what the hell they were fighting over.

"What's got you all twisted up?" his best friend Teaky asked as he entered Carter's bedroom. Normally Carter didn't like anyone in his room, and Teaky knew this, but he had more pressing matters to freak out about.

Carter ran to his roommate, fisting the front of Teaky's shirt. "I found my other half."

Teaky brushed Carter's hands away, but not before he saw a glimmer of anger in Teaky's eyes. Carter ignored that. Ever since the war started, his best friend had been acting strange. He chalked it up

to the loss everyone felt as people they loved and knew died. “And you’re still here because?”

Carter began to pace again, looking at his best friend, and then down at his hands.

“Oh, crap. Don’t tell me it’s what I think it is?”

Carter shrugged.

“One of these days you’re going to have to give up your virgin status. You went on and on about how you were saving it for the other half of your soul. You found him, so get sweaty and funky, let him fuck you into the mattress and be happy,” Teaky said irritably.

Carter narrowed his eyes at his best friend. “Don’t make it sound so cheap. Binding our souls together is an ancient ritual that should be honored, not lessened.” There went that spark of anger again. Carter wasn’t in the mood to figure his best friend out right now.

“It’s sex, plain and simple. Go knock boots, get your groove on, cry out like a monkey, whatever you want to call it. It’s fun, hot as hell, and feels good as fuck.” Teaky shuddered. “Thanks, now you have me horny.”

Carter soured his face, slapped his hands over his Elvin ears, and chanted, “I’m not listening, I’m not listening.”

Teaky chuckled. “You’re such a prude.”

Carter waved his hand at Teaky as if to dismiss him. He had bigger problems. Not only was he afraid to have sex, he was scared to have it with the gruff-looking biker man. Somehow he didn’t think the man would be gentle, and that frightened him.

He was even more irritated that he didn’t even find out his other half’s name. Carter grumbled to himself as he shimmered back to the Brac estate. It chapped his khakis to no end with the knowledge that he would have to ask Maverick.

Well, maybe not, the men he had met might know. He made his way into the den, a room most of them hung out in. It amazed him at all the technology stored in that one room. Being one of the woodland creatures, they lived simply, no modernization. And it sucked. He and

Teaky snuck out often to indulge in the modern world. His favorite thing was chocolate. He couldn't get enough of it.

"Hey, Carter." Oliver tapped knuckles with him, a custom Carter found bizarre but caught on to quickly.

"I need to ask you something." He began his pacing again. This was so embarrassing. If his fellow elven knew he had found his mate and ran like a scared little chicken, he would be laughed at for centuries to come.

"Sure, fire away."

Carter noticed the other men in the room gathered around him. Great, just what he didn't need, an audience.

"Who's the man with the bandana on his head?" He wasn't reassured when Oliver laughed.

"Tryck?"

Carter groaned at the name. Who the hell named their kid Tryck? He flopped down on the sofa, covering his face with his hands. "This can't be happening." He ground the heels of his palms into his eyes.

"What's wrong?" Kyoshi asked.

Carter dropped his arms onto the couch dramatically and let out a loud sigh. "He's the other half of my soul."

The room went cricket-chirping quiet. "Somebody say something," Carter whined.

"You're so screwed." Tangee shook his head.

* * * *

Tryck opened up on the country road, his bike reaching one hundred miles an hour. The engine roared as he ate up pavement. An evil grin surfaced at the feeling of freedom. Adrenaline shot through him at the thrill. He whooped loudly as his two brothers tried to pass him.

He chuckled as Law succeeded in passing him. Tryck would give him that. Let him soak up that little bit of joy at finally passing his older brother. What the hell.

His speed dropped as Dagon signaled for him to pull over. Irritated at the youngest of them, Tryck pulled onto the grass running the edge of the road. This better be important.

“What the fuck?” Law asked as he pulled up next to Tryck.

“Hell if I know. He’s your brother.” Tryck pulled his sunglasses from his eyes, resting them on top of his bandana-covered head.

“Not when he’s acting like this, he’s yours.” Law looked over his shoulder as the motorcycle pulled up behind them.

Dagon flipped them off as he swung his leg over his bike and sauntered over to the field, taking a leak.

“You got to be kidding me,” Tryck groaned. Only Dagon would stop a perfectly good ride for his bladder. Tryck should have asked him if he had to *potty* before they left the Den.

“Your brother.” Law laughed.

“I can hear you two,” Dagon shouted as he zipped up. “Don’t claim me, don’t really care.” He flipped them off once more before swinging his leg back over his bike.

“Are you ready, or do you need to powder your nose, too?” Tryck asked as he started his bike, revving the engine to drown out Dagon’s answer.

Law laughed as they pulled back onto the road. Tryck pulled the sunglasses back onto his face, steering his bike toward town. The three pulled in front of the small diner.

“You two are real comical,” Dagon grumbled at them as Tryck knocked his shoulder into his little brother’s.

They entered the diner laughing. One of the mates pointed to a booth for them to sit at.

Tryck hated living at the Den with the pack but needed somewhere for his brothers to live after Alpha Crone called a hunt on their heads for being gay. Tryck wanted to kill the bastard, but Law

and Dagon talked him into leaving, reminding him that his mother and father would be hunted as well if they didn't.

Tryck hated tucking tail and running. It wasn't in him. At six five and three hundred and ten pounds, he wasn't a weakling by far. His father had thought he lucked out when his three sons were born warriors. Timber wolf shifters were the largest breed, but not all were warriors. It was an honor to be born one, until the Alpha found out their sexual preference. Tryck knew it was only an excuse to get rid of the three. The Alpha feared them.

Now they lived with Alpha Maverick and his crew. All warriors, all gay, big fucking deal. It meant nothing to Tryck except a pack his brothers could belong to. Apparently someone thought a wolf needed a pack. Tryck didn't, but his brothers did.

"What'll you guys have?" the mate Tangee asked, pulling out his pad.

"Give me a fat burger and some fries." Dagon tossed the menu onto the table.

"Same here," Law said.

"I want a nice rare steak with mixed vegetables." Tryck handed his menu over, noticing his brother's smirking. "What? I'm a growing boy. I need my veggies."

"You grow any more and your ass will spread."

Tryck threw a fork at Law's head. "Asshole."

"What are you men up to?" The warrior Cody asked, sliding into the booth with them. He owned half the diner. He guessed he could sit with them. It didn't matter to Tryck that they lived in the same house, didn't make them friends.

"Out riding till Cinderella here needed to eat." Law nodded his head over to Dagon.

"Shut up."

"Testy, too, must be his time." Law threw his arm up, laughing as Dagon cuffed the back of his head.

"Play nice in here. We have human customers," Cody warned.

“Will do.” Tryck chuckled at his brothers. He may not give a shit, but he wasn’t a prick—mostly.

“Oh, and Maverick wants you guys to stop at home,” Cody added before sliding out and joining his mate behind the counter. Tryck smiled at the little guy named Keata. Most of the mates at the Den irritated him, but a few were cool. Keata was too damn innocent for his own good, and looked at life through a child’s eye.

The smallest mate, Nero, was, well, Nero. He had every quirk under the sun. The guy wore blue latex gloves all the time. Then there was little Johnny. Strange guy. He wasn’t even going to get started on Gabby.

“What do you think Maverick wants?” Dagon asked.

Tryck shrugged his shoulders. No telling with the Alpha. Tryck may be fearless, but tangling with the six-nine Alpha made him think twice. Oh, he’d take him on if he had to, only if he had to. The Alpha wasn’t quite right in the head. That’s why he loved fucking with him.

Maverick would bring down pain in a heartbeat, and then in the next breath, he was all cuddly with his mate or Melonee. He spouted out about dreams he had, saying they told him things. Tryck would bet the Alpha was just missing a few screws. And if he had to hear one more time about those damned Fudgsicles. Tryck mentally growled.

“Guess we’ll find out when we get there.” Tryck leaned back when the food was served.

Dagon grabbed his burger before Tangee had a chance to set his plate down. “Hungry?” Tangee smiled.

“Always,” Dagon answered around his bite.

“Anything else?”

“Iced tea.” Tryck glared at his brothers, daring them to say anything.

Law twisted his lips to hide his grin. “Coke for me.”

“Me, too,” Dagon mumbled past his mouthful.

“Gotcha.”

All three dug in, not saying a word as they ate. Tryck had to admit the food was pretty good. George knew how to throw down in the kitchen.

"I'm stuffed." Law pushed his plate back as he patted his belly.

Dagon stared at Law's plate and then back at his. "Lightweight," he teased, chasing ketchup around with a fry.

"You'd eat your own mother if you could get away with it." Law tossed his napkin on his plate.

Tryck closed his eyes, waving his hands in front of him. "That doesn't even sound right. Shut up." His face scrunched up into a souring expression.

"I can't help it your mind goes right to the gutter," Law snapped.

"Fuck you, Law." Tryck was ready to go. He wasn't one to sit around and socialize. They had done what they came here to do. Now it was time to hit the road. It was a nice day out and time was being wasted sitting around this table. He could already feel the wind in his face.

"Now that doesn't sound right," Law teased, playfully batting his eyes at Tryck.

"You both are gross." Dagon finally pushed his plate away.

Tryck stood, tossing a few bills on the table. "Let's ride."

"Oh, yeah, now that's what I'm talking about." Law slid out, allowing Dagon freedom.

"Might as well go see what Maverick wants." Tryck slid his leather on, pulling his sunglasses off of his head and placing them back on his face. He nodded when Tangee waved bye to them.

Tryck looked at the town while waiting for his brothers to come from the bathroom. There had to be something more than this. Patrolling the estate got old. This town was too small. There was nothing to do but ride. He'd stay, his brothers needed it, but the dismal thought of living the next seven centuries here rankled him.

Life was too damn long to be bored out of his skull at such a young age. Three hundred was young when a shifter lived to be one thousand.

He still had so much time left to watch the weeds grow. There was a hunger inside of him that he wasn't sure how to satisfy. Tryck didn't even know what that hunger was for. All he knew was that it clawed at him to be fed.

"Ready?"

Tryck turned to see his brothers joining him. They stood on either side of him, knowing his moods just by the look on his face.

"It'll work itself out. He'll come back." Law squeezed his shoulder. He knew Law was going to bring Carter up. The guy couldn't let things like that go. But Law knew the emptiness that lived inside of Tryck also. One thing was for sure, Tryck was glad for his brothers. They kept him anchored.

"Let's roll." He wasn't into mushy feelings, even with his brothers. They were extremely close, but still guys. Come near him with tears and Tryck ran as far away as he could.

The ride went quick, since they lived only ten minutes from town. Tryck and his brothers pulled onto the gravel drive then parked their bikes.

Using his fob, he entered through the front door. Crossing the foyer, Tryck headed straight for Maverick's office.

"Tryck, so glad you graced me with your presence." Maverick sat behind his desk, tossing a blue stress ball into the air.

"What's up?" Tryck leaned against the door frame, shoving his thumbs into his front pockets.

"Not much. How's it going?"

Tryck growled. He didn't like to be jerked around. "Get to the point, why'd you want to see me?"

Maverick chuckled, sitting the ball on his desk. He leaned back, pulling at his soul patch as he studied him. The Alpha was definitely

strange. Maverick pointed at him. "You need a haircut. Go see Heaven at his shop."

Tryck clenched his jaw. "That's why you called me back here?"

"Yep."

"Damn it, Maverick." The guy was worse than Dagon. Tryck stormed out of the house, his brothers automatically following him.

"What'd he want?" Law asked as they made their way outside.

"A Dagon request." Tryck snapped at him.

"Oh."

"Hey!" Dagon huffed as they climbed back on their bikes. A fucking haircut. What was wrong with the wolf? He'd get a haircut the day Maverick stopped acting squirrely.

"Where to?"

Good question. Tryck threw his head back and roared out loud, releasing some of the pent-up frustration inside. It didn't faze Law or Dagon. They were used to it.

"City?"

"Perfect." Tryck spun his back tire, spitting gravel everywhere, racing from the house.

Once again he opened up, pushing his bike faster. The country setting melted away as they hit the highway. Tryck was frustrated as hell. He weaved around cars and trucks, his brothers following close behind.

He took the off ramp into the heart of the city, pedestrians in the crosswalk and traffic slowing him down. Why couldn't there be a pack here? This place was crawling with shit to do. Tryck led his brothers to a strip club.

They parked and entered through the back door. Loud rap music blared as men shook their moneymakers on stage. The three took a table closest to the stage, getting up-close and personal.

Normally Tryck would be the first one to find a hot piece of ass and take him out back, but thoughts of Carter swam through his mind as Dagon and Law hit one conquest after another.

There was no way he was allowing Carter to affect him. If the guy wanted to do the disappearing act over one small command, to hell with him.

“You about done?” he asked Dagon. His brother sat back down after his third round with a twink.

Dagon took a swig of the bottle of beer that he had left on the table, kicking his booted feet up onto the chair next to him. He took a long swig before shooting Tryck a dry look and tipping his bottle in deference. “You’re just pissy because Carter isn’t with you.”

He should have known Dagon would start in on him. It was only a matter of time before his brother thought he needed to have his opinion heard. “Whatever, where’s Law?” he was not going to have this conversation with his brother, either of them.

Dagon shrugged his shoulders. “He’s on round three in the back somewhere.”

They tossed back a few more beers waiting on Law’s ass. Knowing him, he was enjoying two guys at the same time. Tryck would never understand his brother so he never even tried.

Tryck couldn’t understand how Law played top *and* bottom. The dude was too damn big to catch. If anything, he would have put his money on Dagon playing both. But like him, Dagon was strictly top.

Dagon lowered his feet, sitting up straight, rolling his shoulders. “Think he’ll run out of steam anytime soon?”

“He better or I’m going to drag his ass back in here,” Tryck said irritably as he played with the top to his beer. Dagon may have been correct in saying that he was pissy because of Carter, but he wasn’t going to admit it.

Dagon laughed. “I dare you.”

Tryck shrugged, getting up from their table to hunt his brother down. He found him in a back room playing bottom boy. “You about done?” he asked as he stuck his head around the door.

Law looked over his shoulder while staying on all fours. “Ask him.” He jerked his head behind him.

Tryck looked over to the guy behind Law. "You 'bout done fucking my brother?" he asked as he stepped into the room. He was itching to get back, even though Carter wasn't going to be there.

"Shit, man. Get the hell out of here." The guy tossed a shoe at Tryck, just missing his head.

"Jackass." Law kicked the guy off of him. "Nobody talks to him like that."

Tryck grabbed the guy and knocked heads with him. "He wants you off of him."

"What the hell is *wrong* with you two?" The guy grabbed his clothes and took off.

"Get dressed, we're leaving."

"Fine, he was lousy anyway." Law quickly dressed, joining Dagon at their table.

"You ready, boy?"

"Boy, this." Dagon flipped Law off.

Law only laughed as they left the club.

Chapter Two

Carter sat in one of the barber chairs, bored out of his skull. Maverick had asked him to “pop” Heaven to the barbershop and babysit the guy. Well, he used the word guard, but it meant the same thing to him.

He stared at himself in the large mirror in front of him. What was he going to do? He had been fighting an urge to find Tryck, to seek him out, but common sense held him back. The guy was hot, though, with all that brown wavy hair to his shoulders, big, deep blue eyes, and that shadow of a beard on his face.

Carter wanted to purr and curl around him. *What the hell are you thinking?* The mental slap didn’t help. He wanted Tryck more than his next breath. This was ridiculous and stupid. How could he want a man that was polar opposite of him?

“I hear Tryck is your mate,” Heaven said as he cleaned up the hair on the floor from the customer who had just left.

“Yep, that would be correct.” Carter slouched in the chair, his brain at war about what to do. He glanced at Heaven sideways, wondering if the guy was going to say anything about it. It seemed everyone at the Den had an opinion once the shock of the news wore off.

“Congratulations.”

That wasn’t exactly what he was expecting. “How long are you open?” he asked, seeking a change of subject.

“Another hour. Thank you for staying with me. Murdock had patrol duty and goes nuts if no one can be here with me. He makes me close shop,” Heaven said as he put his broom and dustpan away.

Carter shrugged indifferently. "I didn't have anything better to do." *Except find my mate.* Maybe he was being childish in hiding. He could always shimmer out if Tryck became too barbaric. Why not go see him and find out what he was all about?

Carter sat up, his heart beating erratically and his palms becoming wet at the resolve to seek out Tryck. He was an adult after all, and he needed to start acting like one.

He glanced up at the clock, thinking the last hour was going to kill him. The thin second hand ticked around so slowly that Carter wanted to run over to it and spin it around until the hour was up.

The roar of motorcycles caught his attention. Carter's head snapped to the door when he heard loud talking and laughing. His hands gripped the seat when Tryck and two others came walking through the door. *Oh, God, what should I do?*

Tryck stopped dead in his tracks and stared at Carter, his blue eyes so intense, Carter could only lower his. He could feel them boring into him as he stared at his shoes. His knuckles were turning white from clutching the arms of the seat. His heart leapt when he heard the man finally speak.

"I need a haircut before Maverick drives me up the wall," that thick and sexy voice spoke. Carter kept his eyes downcast, watching booted feet walk by his chair. His heart was threatening to beat right out of his chest.

He gasped when his chin was abruptly lifted to look up into heated eyes. Carter could feel his body shaking. He tried to shimmer, but nothing happened. What the hell? He tried again, but...nothing.

"Are you going to pop back out again, *gatito*?" Tryck asked with a snarl.

Carter shook his head, licking his dry lips as a thumb caressed across his now moistened bottom one. His fingers dug deeper into the chair, his body coiled with tension as Tryck leaned down and the most masculine smell washed over him. His cock thickened, his hole

clenched, and he thought he was going to pass out. He was breathing in ragged gasps as Tryck moved intimately close.

Tryck whispered into his ear, "You are mine, *bebé*. Do not think of running again, *gatito*." The man grazed his lips over Carter's. The sensual act had Carter closing his eyes and leaning in. A deep-throated chuckle sounded next to his lips. "We have time for that later, *gatito*."

His chin was released, and Carter nearly fell forward with the empty air that now surrounded him. Tryck sat across from him, his intense stare never letting up as Heaven pulled the yellow bandana from his head and began to trim his mate's ends.

Carter watched Heaven's fingers glide through the soft-looking strands, envious that it was his fingers instead. Tryck's entire frame took up the seat, he was so large, enormously so. Carter fidgeted in his seat, watching in awe as Tryck pulled back his lips with a smile.

When his mate stood and brushed the hair from his neck, Carter went into panic mode. He tried to shimmer, but Tryck was crossing the space between them and grabbing his wrist in seconds. "No, *gatito*, you leave with me."

Tryck's low and seductive voice threatened Carter's very sanity. He could feel his Adam's apple bobbing as he swallowed loudly, shaking his head as he stared into those mesmerizing blue eyes. They were so damn intense, as if Tryck could see into his mind and know what he was thinking. "But I have to take Heaven home," he squeaked out as he pointed toward Heaven who was smiling at Carter.

"Law will take him." Tryck reached in his pocket and handed Heaven some money before gently pulling Carter from the shop. He followed like a lost puppy, wanting to be with Tryck and scared as hell at the same time. Carter was at a loss of what to do.

Carter stared at the motorcycle for a moment. "You've *got* to be kidding me." He crossed his arms over his chest and huffed. "I'm not getting on that."

Tryck watched him as he released Carter's wrist and walked over to his bike, swinging his leg over as he held his hand out to Carter.

He looked from the bike to his mate's hand, feeling the panic seize him once again. This time when he shimmered he ended up back at his dwelling in the woodland elf tribe.

Carter collapsed on his bed, balling up and covering his face. "Oh, God, I'm such a dork."

* * * *

Outwardly Tryck shrugged indifference. Inwardly, he cursed his mate for popping away once again. It was becoming frustrating as hell. He wanted to find out where he was and put Carter over his knee. A good spanking should teach his mate not to run from him.

"He seems skittish." Dagon chuckled as he climbed onto his bike.

"Who fucking cares?" Tryck started his motorcycle and pulled off, leaving his brothers behind. The emptiness was eating away at him. Would he ever find peace? It was as elusive as trying to grab smoke from its spiraling ascent, and dealing with Carter wasn't helping.

It was making that hole inside of him widen. Somehow, Tryck knew from a place he rarely explored that Carter was the answer to his emptiness.

Tryck pulled over to the soft shoulder, rubbing his hand over his face, and then looked out into the fields spread before him. He heard his brothers approaching, the thrum of their motors getting closer.

"Ready?" Dagon asked as he pulled beside him.

Tryck nodded and pulled back onto the paved road. He tilted his head back, letting the breeze wash over him with thoughts of those golden eyes, the scared look his kitten had when he saw Tryck enter the barber shop. Was he only running because he was afraid? He thought of the words his mother once told him in his youth. *Opening*

your heart to someone is a trust you must give sometime in your life, hijo.

Tryck wasn't sure if he was ready for that. Hell, he had to pin the popping elf down first. An elf, what the hell was fate thinking? He had no doubt he would be mated to a male. That went without saying. But to find out his mate was an elf had taken him by total surprise. He was unprepared for this but he thought he was handling this pretty well.

He pulled onto the gravel drive, cutting the engine and strolling inside, ignoring the looks he was getting from the mates in the den. Word had to have gotten out about him and Carter. Figures. Everyone in this house had a big mouth. Something that normally didn't bother him, but when it came to his mate, Tryck didn't appreciate the gossip. What went on between him and Carter was their business, no one else's.

"Haircut done. Now leave me alone," Tryck told Maverick when he spotted him in the hall.

Maverick grinned at him evilly. "Carter!" he yelled and then walked away whistling.

"Damn it, Maverick," Carter snapped when he appeared.

Tryck caught his mate's wrist before the pointy-eared man could disappear again. He was going to learn to stay in one spot for longer than five minutes, even if he had to hogtie him. The thought of tying Carter up set his blood on fire. *Later.*

"*Eres muy testarudo,*" Tryck snarled.

"Could you repeat that?" Carter gulped, his bound hand shaking slightly.

"I said that you are very stubborn." Tryck yanked the man toward him, Carter bumping into his side. "Come with me." Tryck turned on his heel as he pulled his mate to his bedroom, slamming the door behind him.

"If you pop out one more time, I will tie you to my side, understand, *gatito*?" He pointed his finger in Carter's face.

"Sir, yes, sir." Carter saluted him with his middle finger. "What is it that you keep calling me? Chicken?"

"No, I am calling you kitten. And if you flip me off again, I'm going to put you over my knee." Tryck was tired of playing these games. He was ready to claim what was his. Why was this man fighting him so much?

"In your wildest dreams, Biker Bob." Carter pulled harder to free his wrist. Tryck could tell that there was no real effort in Carter's struggle, or he would have freed him. He didn't take anything that wasn't freely offered. Tryck had a feeling Carter's struggles came from insecurities instead. He would help him through these.

He watched Carter scrunch his eyes as he twisted his wrist, making him realize something. "You can't shimmer away if I'm touching you, can you?" Tryck chuckled with satisfaction.

"Figured it out, did you, Einstein?" Carter tried to bite Tryck's hand, but he pulled away in time.

"I have something for you to bite, *gatito*." Tryck reached down with one hand to unsnap his jeans.

"Please, no," Carter whimpered, doubling his efforts to free himself.

Tryck released him, throwing his hands up in surrender. He tilted his head, eyebrows pulling together in a frown as he studied his mate. "You're afraid to have sex?" When his mate looked quickly away Tryck cursed in Spanish. "You're a damn virgin?" This was great, just great. Tryck wasn't sure if he had the patience to teach Carter, although a small part of him gloried in the fact no other had known his mate. Still.

Tryck leapt but when he saw his mate's eyes widen and his cheeks redden but Carter shimmered out.

"Carter!" Tryck yelled. It worked for Maverick.

"You guys have got to stop calling me like that. I feel like I need a collar." Carter pouted behind him.

Tryck whirled around. "I can arrange that. It seems you need one to stop you from running."

"I'm not running from you. I keep forgetting to turn the oven off."

Tryck had to bite his bottom lip to keep from laughing. It would ruin his intimidating glare. "Come to me."

Carter shook his head, taking a step back.

"I only want to hold your hand. Now come." His words were terse.

His mate inched forward, his eyes wary as he approached. No matter how much he wanted to close the distance and pull his mate to him, Carter needed to do this on his own. Tryck could see his mate's hand trembling when he raised it to take his.

He slid his hand over Carter's, knowing the man couldn't shimmer now that he had him. The need to run away from emotional displays of weakness didn't grip Tryck. Instead, he had a need to pull this man into his arms and comfort him. *Well, this was new.*

"Hi, I'm Carter." His mate smiled shyly.

Tryck chuckled. "We haven't been formally introduced, have we?"

"I know your name is Tryck, and every time I see you, those other two men are with you. I don't do orgies." Carter curled his lips in, his cheeks coloring.

"Those are my brothers, *gatito*, and no orgies are in your future." He gave a low growl. Reaching up, he fanned Carter's hair over his shoulder, letting the silky strands run through his fingers.

"Just holding hands, right?"

Tryck ran his thumb over the smooth skin of his mate's hand. "Just holding hands."

* * * *

Carter wanted to crawl all over Tryck and vomit from nerves at the same time. He did the next best thing. He leaned in and sniffed at

the man's leather jacket. Carter had a weakness for the smell. When he and Teaky snuck off one time to Texas, they watched a rodeo, and the smell of leather had hit him hard. Now if he could only combine leather and chocolate, his life would be peachy.

"You like what you smell?" Tryck asked in that rich voice of his. Carter leaned back, clearing his throat, his eyes darting around the room.

"Sorta."

Carter's body jerked nervously when Tryck pulled him into those strong arms. He slid his arms around his mate's waist and held on, terrified Tryck would take it further.

"Do not be afraid, kitten." Tryck ran his hands through Carter's hair, his scalp tingling at the touch. Carter closed his eyes, leaning into Tryck's hand. It was rough, but soft, if that made any sense. The feel of it on his skin made Carter want things he never thought he would be brave enough to ask for. He opened his mouth to ask Tryck to make love to him when they were interrupted.

"Where the hell are you?" A man came bursting through the door. Carter tried to pull away, and Tryck released him.

"Don't you know how to fucking knock?" Tryck snarled as he took a step away from him. Carter noticed the move, but let it go.

"Sorry, but we got problems. That blue guy just tried to take Melonee," the man bit out.

"Damn it. It was your idea to join a pack. We could be lounging somewhere tossing back Tequila." Tryck nodded toward Carter. "Law, this is Carter."

"Sup." Law nodded at him. What the hell was wrong with their mother and giving these guys such weird names? Carter nodded a hello at the man.

"Ahm was here?" He realized what Law had just said. Carter wasn't sure if the Shadow Elves knew the Wood Elves had relocated here. Was it just a coincidence? He didn't believe in those, so how did

they find out? Ahm was one nasty piece of work. The Shadow Elf thrived on misery.

"You're safe. No harm will come to you." Tryck tried to reassure him.

"You must not have met the guy. Harm is his middle name."

"And he hasn't met the Santiago brothers," Law said with a sneer.

Carter stared at him with an *oh really* look. "You're shifters, give me a break."

"I'd change my attitude if I were you. You're one of us now," Law advised him.

"Oh, special me, I get to join the all-exclusive Mickey Mouse Club." Carter gave a golf clap.

"He's got fire." Law grinned at Tryck. Carter rolled his eyes. If the guy only knew how much of a Chicken Little he really was. His quips only came out in high emotional moments, fear and nervousness being the top contenders, and boy did these brothers make him nervous.

"Come on, *gatito*." Tryck grabbed his hand and pulled Carter along, and there wasn't a damn thing he could do about it. He was going to have to ask Teaky what the hell was up with that.

He was dragged along and down to Maverick's office. He wondered if his mate was going to keep his hands on him all the time now that he figured out Carter's failure to shimmer when touched by him.

Maverick laughed when he saw Carter. "You guys haven't killed each other yet?"

"Is that your diabolical plan?" Carter narrowed his eyes at the large Alpha. He wouldn't put it past Maverick to think just that.

"Maybe." He smiled. "Now tell me about Papa Smurf."

"He's a nasty one. Don't pull any punches with him. He won't." Carter tried to pull his hand free, but Tryck wasn't having it. Fine, whatever. "About a year ago the Shadow Elves started attacking us, no provocation involved. They normally stay to the marshes, which is

why we were caught off guard. They only attacked at night, silently picking us off.”

Carter took a deep breath, the next sentence threatening his control on his emotions. “They wiped out my entire family.” He paused for a moment to compose himself and then continued. “Somehow Ahm has found out where we are. I’m afraid the drama, as you put it, has come to your quiet town.”

“Like we weren’t having issues already with rogues and humans.” Maverick dropped into his chair. “So how do we fight them?”

“You don’t.”

“That’s bullshit. They’re not unstoppable,” the brother he hadn’t been introduced to stated.

“We haven’t figured out a way yet. That’s why we’re here.” *Duh.* Carter tried again to get his hand free. “Look, I’m not going anywhere. Cross my heart, and hope to die, stick a needle in my eye.” He crossed his heart with his free hand. “I just want to go to the den.”

Tryck laughed as he stared at Carter. “I’ll stick something in you all right if you disappear again.” Carter yelped when Tryck smacked his ass. “I remember making that same promise once, *gatito*.” He winked at Carter. “I see we are more alike than we thought.”

“Why doesn’t that thrill me? I promise not to shimmer out.”

Tryck released him, and Carter shot out of the office. Tryck was a crazy bastard. He thought battling the enemy was difficult. Try dealing with shifters. Carter thought about shimmering for a split second, but breaking a promise went against his character. Why’d he have to be all noble was anybody’s guess, but it didn’t set right with him to go against his mate. He had promised so Carter would stick to his word. No matter how much he was tempted.

“Gotcha,” a wicked voice spoke in his ear.

Carter tried to scream, but the blue hand that clamped over his mouth prevented anything from escaping.

* * * *

“We could find out where they live and burn the place down,” Law offered.

“I could shoot a couple rockets into the den, or whatever the hell they call it.” Montana grinned.

“What happened to using our teeth and claws, or is that a little too caveman for you?” Remi asked sarcastically. “Because if it is, I’m outdated.”

“Dude, you were outdated the day you were born.” Cody laughed.

Remi flipped him off. “Kiss my ass.”

“We need to figure out this shimmer thing of theirs,” Zeus said over the speaker phone. “Why’d you go and invite more trouble here anyway?”

Maverick was tired of hearing that question. That’s what he got for a momentary lapse in judgment. Everyone wanted to point the finger at him for the bad shit. Did he get credit for his excellent leadership? *Hell no.*

The entire pack was in his office, all trying to figure out how to put down Papa Smurf and his ragtag crew of Smurfettes. They had the shimmering advantage, but how well could they fight? They were fucking elves after all. How hard could it be to bring down their Tollhouse?

“Who leads their tribe?” Zeus asked.

“Beats the hell out of me, I thought it was Carter.” As an Alpha, he should have found this out. Well, there went his one mistake for the year. “I’ll head out that way and find out.”

“You need backup?”

Maverick glared at his warriors, daring them to say one smart thing to the other Alpha. One headache at a time. He didn’t need any more enemies. “I’ll let you know if I do.”

“Keep me posted.” Zeus hung up.

“Like Grey wolves could ever help...” Tank looked over at Jason. “Sorry, man.”

The only Grey wolf in the pack shrugged his shoulders and smiled. "No harm."

"Okay, guys, we need to take a trip to fairyland and figure out what they know. I need a few volunteers."

Every hand in the room rose up. "Fine, toss your names in a hat." Maverick stood and left his office. Knowing his men, an argument was about to ensue. He didn't need to be there for that. He sought out his solace, finding his mate in the kitchen with the other mates of the pack.

They were all sitting around the table laughing and eating treats. Once his family started growing, Maverick had purchased a larger kitchen table, accommodating the larger number of mates. It seemed if they weren't all in the den—or attempting to sneak out—they congregated in the kitchen.

"Hey, babe." Cecil stood, and Maverick pulled him into his arms. Just that act alone was enough to soothe him. "You guys having fun?"

"Always." Gabby beamed up at him. Maverick was happy for the vampire. Gabby had been kicked out of his coven, never having any friends. He had a whole slew of them now.

"Where's Carter?" he asked when he noticed the elf wasn't in there with them.

"Haven't seen him since he freaked out about Tryck being his mate. I figured he packed his bags and got out of Dodge." Drew laughed.

Maverick didn't like the uneasy feeling that came over him. "He was here. He was supposed to be hanging out with you guys."

They all looked at one another, clueless. "We haven't seen him," George informed him.

"Carter!" Maverick yelled to the ceiling.

Nothing.

"Shit." He raced from the kitchen and back down the hall, the entire kitchen close on his heels.

“Tryck, call Carter,” Maverick instructed him, “He’s not with the other mates.”

Tryck growled. “I’m going to glue him to my side. Carter!”

Still nothing.

“We need to get moving, go to his tribe, and see if he broke his promise. Maybe he’s at home.” Maverick pointed to a few warriors. “Santiago brothers, Remi, and Tank, follow me. The rest of you guard the mates with your lives,” Maverick snarled.

The chosen rushed from the office, truck doors slamming, motorcycles revving as they made their way to Elvin territory.

Chapter Three

Carter paced the small confines of the room he was held in. He had tried to shimmer out countless times, but nothing happened. It was as if Tryck were holding his hand again. He looked down at his empty hand. He'd gladly hold any part of his mate right now if he could only get out of here.

Keys rattled in the door and then it swung open. He shrank back when the figure in the door chuckled menacingly, Ahm walking through.

"Why am I here?" Carter caught himself, the panic in his voice coming through, showing his fear. This man thrived on fear. He would only take enjoyment in making Carter beg. He had to compose himself and think rationally. Any other way wouldn't benefit him.

"I'll capture as many of you as I can until I feel you have paid for what you have done." Ahm moved in closer, his eyes void of any emotion. The blue man walked around him, raking his eyes over Carter in disapproval. He felt a shiver run up his spine. He wasn't going to get out of this. Ahm's cruel face cemented his belief. If only he'd been nicer to his mate, let him claim him. He would have that much right now, a memory to cling to while being a prisoner here.

"What have we done?" Carter cleared his throat, embarrassed that it had risen higher with the stress of the situation.

"Don't feign ignorance with me." Ahm sneered, taking a threatening step toward him. Carter couldn't help his reaction, he shrank back in fear.

"Oh, believe me, I'm not. This is ignorantly real."

“Then I see the truth is being buried. Well, let me enlighten you.” Ahm grabbed Carter, shoving his chest into the wall, his hot breath on Carter’s neck. Ahm pulled Carter’s arms higher behind his back, pain shooting across his shoulders and down his spine.

“It was a Wood Elf who started all of this. One of your very own killed my sister. Did you think we would not retaliate?” Ahm hissed in his ear. “We are neutral by nature. Your people started this.”

Carter was incredibly confused. Who in his tribe would commit such a heinous act? “But it wasn’t me. Please don’t make me pay for their crime,” he pleaded. His eyes closed, praying he was allowed to see Tryck’s face once more. See that sexy half smile pull up on that handsome face. Hell, if he got out of this, he would have sex, scream like a monkey, or anything else Teaky had called it.

“That’s probably the same thing my sister said. I have no mercy for you or your tribe.” Ahm viciously released him, shoving him aside as he slammed the door shut behind him. Carter rubbed at the pain now in his arms. How the hell was he going to get out of this? “Tryck,” he whispered his mate’s name. “Please save me.”

Carter slid his back down the wall and sat on the floor, pulling his knees to his chest as he wrapped his arms around his legs, hopelessness and despair engulfing him.

* * * *

“Where do they live?” Tryck snarled at the men gathered around the Timber wolves. He wasn’t in the mood to be jerked around. Carter was missing and he needed to find his mate. “I want their entrails at my feet yesterday.”

“I will not take you, shifter. It isn’t safe.” One of the tall and elegant men spoke.

Tryck was growing angrier by the moment. How could an entire race be so frightened? Didn’t one of them have the merit to stand up and fight for one of their own? “Grow a damn backbone. They have

my mate, damn it." Tryck was ready to burn this whole makeshift village down. He wanted Carter. He advanced toward the arrogant bastard only to have Maverick stop him. Tryck looked down at the Alpha's hand but kept quiet. He knew that if this clan didn't produce information on his mate soon, he'd light the wick himself.

"Is there anyone here willing to save one of your own?" Maverick spoke loudly. Tryck watched as person after person slowly backed away. It frustrated the hell out of him. He knew not all were fighters, but an entire clan of cowards? He couldn't even fathom living in a place like this. Even the leader looked shaken. The war had taken its toll, understandable, but surely some of them were fighters.

"I can take you."

Tryck twisted around, his nerves on edge from worrying about his mate. "Who the fuck are you?" his claws were out, his canines extended. If this guy hadn't volunteered, he would have torn this village apart.

"Teaky, his roommate and *best friend*." The possessiveness in the man's voice set Tryck's anger off into a whole other direction. He didn't have time for that now. His mate needed saving.

"Take me, now." He barked out his command. Teaky nodded, placing his hand on Tryck's shoulder. The Timber wolves all held hands as they shimmered into what looked like a watery gravesite.

"Is this a trick?" Remi looked around and then back at their tour guide. Tryck could see nothing but swamps and a few patches of land. It was someplace one might be if having a nightmare. The place looked desolate and empty. He was starting to have second thoughts about trusting this elf. Where they stood was no place for any creature to be.

"No, this is where they dwell," Teaky whispered.

All six shifters and the Elvin man crouched down, scanning the area. There was one thing that stuck out like a sore thumb amongst the reeds and water.

Tryck's heart plummeted when he saw the gray building that resembled a veterinarian clinic sitting on dry land. *No!* A snarl ripped from him, the familiar-looking building bringing back memories of a rescue not so far in the past.

"Isn't that the same kind of building we found Heaven in?" Law asked quietly.

Tryck slammed his fists at his temples, rage consuming him. If they harmed one hair on Carter's head, he would make them *all* suffer.

He didn't wait for anyone else, Tryck belly-crawled to the outer perimeter of the building. His eyes scanned the outer wall, seeing bars on the windows. Guess the doc learned the second time around. Only this time Tryck was going to make sure the sick fuck didn't get away.

* * * *

Carter threw his hands in front of his face when bright light flooded the room. Ahm walked in, carrying something resembling a bracelet in his hand.

"Get up." Ahm grabbed Carter roughly by his wrist, yanking him to his feet. Carter whimpered when the Elven pulled at his arm, trying his hardest to free himself. Ahm closed the bracelet around his wrist, a snick indicating that it had locked into place.

"Get it off," Carter cried, pulling manically at the trinket. Ahm backhanded him into the wall, Carter's head hitting it with a loud crack. He grabbed his head, pain shooting through it and dizziness assailing him. He could feel something warm trickling down the side of his scalp.

"Learn to obey," Ahm snarled, and then yanked Carter's arm roughly, leading him from the room. As soon as Carter cleared the door, he tried to shimmer. Nothing happened.

Ahm laughed satanically. "The bracelet stops you from shimmering. A little invention we Shadow Elves came up with."

Carter tried once again to remove the bracelet that now felt like a weighted shackle. He dropped to the floor before Ahm's hand connected with his face, his hands protectively over his head. He may have called himself a Sentinel when he introduced himself to Maverick, but that was a title the others in his tribe had given him when sent to retrieve Avantiana, now known as Melonee.

He wasn't a Sentinel, had never been in an altercation in his life. He now knew that his tribe had tricked him and threw the honorific title at him just so he would be the one to go retrieve the little girl—it had meant nothing to them. How could he have been so blind to them? He was no warrior. But now he found himself in need of such skills. Carter struggled as Ahm pulled him to his feet. He fought to free his arm, but the bracelet was locked tight to his wrist.

Ahm pulled him down a narrow hallway, forcefully shoving him into a room that resembled a hospital. He had been in one, curiosity making him visit a human one in Seattle on one of his explorations. He didn't like it then, and he didn't like it now.

"Place him up on the table," a man in a white lab coat instructed Ahm.

Carter squirmed and wiggled, fighting desperately to get free. He wasn't sure what was going on, but his instincts were telling him to get the hell out of there. Everything in that room screamed monstrosity. Something told him that if he was strapped to that metal table, he'd never be the same. Carter fought harder, kicking and biting as Ahm slapped him across the face.

He cried out when Ahm yanked his hair back, hissing in his face. "I told you to obey." The Shadow Elf picked Carter up and dropped him on the table. The doctor and Ahm pulled leather straps from under the table and secured his wrists and ankles. Carter's eyes darted around wildly as the doctor pulled his shirt up and prodded at his belly.

"He'll make a fine specimen."

Carter's body shook lying on the cold, steel table. He wanted Tryck. Where was his mate? Tears rolled down the side of his face and into his hairline. *Please, I'll do anything if you'll let me get out of this*, Carter begged inside his head.

His lungs seized when the doctor came back to the table with a syringe. Carter pulled at his restraints. "Please," he begged softly. "Please, don't."

Ahm grabbed his chin roughly, turning Carter's head to face the empty eyes, void of any and all emotions. "Beg all you want, no one is going to help you."

A roar ripped through the room. Carter tried to turn his head to see, but was unable to do so. The doctor paled, dropping the syringe and backing away. He tried once again to turn his head, but there was no need to. A large wolf came into view, attacking the cringing doctor.

Carter panicked, pulling so hard at his restraints that the leather had cut into his skin, blood welling up from under the straps. He bit back a sob, smashing his eyes closed, praying the wolves didn't kill him as well.

Why couldn't he see his mate once more, the other half of his soul? In what he could only assume were his last moments, Carter pulled up images of eyes so blue they reminded him of the ocean. A face shadowed in beard growth dying to be nuzzled, long wavy brown hair that he wished he could have touched, caressed.

What he wouldn't give to kiss those pouty lips, so full and tempting. Carter felt calmness come over him, the image of Tryck soothing him.

"Come, *gatito*."

Wow, he could even hear his soft and thick voice. Was it over? Did the wolf kill him already? Carter couldn't bear to open his eyes. He was terrified of what he might see. He felt tugging at his limbs and then strong arms pull him up.

Carter curled into that familiar scent, allowing the darkness to pull him under.

* * * *

“*Gatito?*” Tryck ran his hand over his mate’s face, felt the pulse at his neck. A relieved breath swooshed from his lungs. His mate had only passed out.

Tryck stepped over the dead body on the floor. The good doctor could only experiment on hell’s demons now. The other Timber wolves were fighting the Smurfettes, Tryck had only one thing on his mind—getting his mate home safely.

He made his way through the clinic, pushing the front door open with his shoulder as he carried his mate back to where they had left their clothing. Tryck lay his mate down on the foliage gently, quickly dressing before picking him back up. Carter was limp in his arms, his lips slightly parted as his head lulled back.

Tryck growled when he saw the dried blood in his mate’s hair. That beautiful spun gold shouldn’t be marred with crimson. He smelled the smoke, and knew his brothers had taken care of the building. He wouldn’t shed a tear for anyone in there. Their days of playing God were over. May they burn in hell.

“Where the hell is Teaky?” Tank asked when the others joined him. Remi had a gash under his eye—something a shift would heal in no time—the rest of the shifters looking no worse for the wear.

“If he screwed us over, I’m going to kill him. I have no fucking clue where we are.” Maverick cursed, slowly spinning around, scanning the area.

Tryck spun around, protecting his mate’s limp form as a body began to shimmer in front of them. No one was getting Carter again. He would fight to the death to protect what was his.

Teaky finally appeared, and the shifters automatically grabbed each other's hands as the Elvin man shimmered them back to the makeshift village.

"Can you take my bike back?" It rankled Tryck to ask Maverick for a favor, but he wasn't letting Carter go. It also irritated him because *no one* had ever ridden his baby before.

Instead of the smart-ass reply he expected from the Alpha, Maverick only nodded and climbed on to his hog.

Tryck climbed into the back of the SUV, Tank driving and Remi riding shotgun. Once they hit the gravel drive, Tryck slid over, ready to hop out and get his mate inside. He walked through the front door, ignoring the stares from the den as he climbed the stairs two at a time, kicking his bedroom door closed behind him.

He'd find out later what happened after he left the building. Right now all he wanted was to hold his mate. Grabbing the comforter from the bed, Tryck settled in the cushioned chair that sat in one corner of his bedroom.

He wrapped it around Carter's frail-looking body, settling back. "Wake for me, *bebé*." Tryck stroked his face, taking in his features now that Carter was stationary for longer than five minutes.

The Elvin creature was breathtaking. Tryck traced the shell of his elegant ear, smiled at how dainty it seemed. It came to a cute little point. He loved the golden hair that framed his face like a veil of magic, but what he wanted to see the most was those beautiful golden eyes.

"Tryck," Carter moaned, his eyes fluttering open. Tryck ran his fingers down his mate's face, happy to see him finally waking up.

"I have you, *gatito*."

Carter's eyes blinked a few times, they grew wide with horror, and then his mate started clawing at him. "I didn't break my promise, I swear," he cried hysterically. "I didn't break my promise. I didn't."

Tryck wrapped his arms around the screaming man, holding him in a vise to prevent him from hurting either of them. "Hush, I know,"

he repeated over and over again. Tears threatened to spill from Tryck as Carter kicked and bucked.

"No, no, no," his mate sobbed, grabbing at Tryck desperately. "Oh, God." Carter lay in his arms openly crying.

Tryck held onto his mate, tucking Carter's face into his neck. "I have you." Tryck did something he never thought he would. He began to softly sing to his mate in his native Spanish tongue. He sang a song his mother used to sing to him when he was a frightened pup.

He rocked his mate, starting the song over from the beginning. Carter lay in his arms crying as Tryck sang in his ear.

The crying lessened, Carter clinging to him as Tryck began the song again for a third time. He rocked back and forth, putting every tender emotion into the lyrics that he had kept hidden for so long.

His mate finally settled, his body gave up its rigid stance, and Carter soon fell asleep. Tryck continued to quietly sing, rubbing circular patterns around his mate's back. He never wanted to see Carter like this again.

The singing ceased, Tryck staring out of the large windows that ran from floor to ceiling, out into the foliage of the backyard. Carter hiccupped, his delicate fists clenching, and then relaxing again in his sleep.

Tryck stayed in that chair, rocking his mate and watching the shadows of the setting sun slowly creep across his room. He held on to what fate had given him, someone he could finally call his own.

* * * *

Johnny came barreling into the den, jumping up into the air as he ran. "I'm going to be a godfather!" He ran around the pool table, giggling, and raced around the couches, finally stopping in front of the other mates. "But I don't have to whack anybody."

"No way!" The other mates jumped up. "Gabby's pregnant?"

“Uh-huh. He just officially asked me to be the godfather.” Johnny puffed his chest out in pride.

“I hope he likes vomiting,” Heaven muttered as he picked one of his sons up. Blair helped Heaven with the other twin, carrying them upstairs.

“I hope he has twins like Heaven.” Drew grinned. “Two chatter boxes running around here.” He laughed.

“Will the baby be a vampire or a shifter?” Kyoshi asked.

“Guess we’ll find out when it’s born.” Nero nodded his head.

“More babies.” Keata whooped while doing a happy dance.

“Well, congratulations, Johnny.” Oliver tapped knuckles with him.

Johnny beamed at all of them. He was going to be the best godfather ever.

* * * *

Carter slowly came awake. Where was he? He noticed right away a heavy weight on his back. He stiffened, looking around until the room came into focus, a familiar smell infiltrating his nostrils.

Tryck.

Carter was lying on his stomach, Tryck draped over his back, snoring loud enough to wake the dead. He tried to wiggle from under the heavy weight, but Tryck only pulled him further under, his heavily-muscled arm tucking under Carter’s chest, sufficiently locking him into place.

Carter jerked his shoulder, “Hey, Biker Bob, wake the hell up. You’re crushing me.” The shifter grunted and snorted but continued to sleep.

Carter wedged a hand from underneath him and pulled at Tryck’s hair, noticing the bracelet still on his arm. The events of the day before came flooding back. He blinked back the tears, his head was already hurting from his previous nervous breakdown.

His cheeks burned from the remembrance of crying in Tryck's arms. *How embarrassing.* Carter wedged his other arm out. The man must weigh a ton. He pulled at the bracelet, flattening his thumb into the palm of his hand at an attempt to pull it off.

Carter stilled when Tryck began to nuzzle his neck. Oh crap, he prayed the man was doing it in his sleep, because if he was awake, oh crap.

"Are you feeling better, *gatito*?" the deep, whiskey-filled voice asked softly in his ear. Yep, he was awake. Oh man, he was awake and kissing his neck. Carter wasn't sure what he should do. Shimmering was out of the question. Even if Tryck wasn't touching him, the damn bracelet prevented it.

He was stuck like a tongue to a cold metal fence. He had to admit, it did feel rather nice. Carter shivered when Tryck pulled his hair aside, kissing the nape of his neck.

Tryck pulled him closer. His hand spanned over his belly, rubbing up and down. "Do not be afraid. I will love you gently, kitten."

Oh, God, this was it, his other half was about to take his virgin status away. Carter gulped and nodded into the mattress. He knew there was no way he could run away. Tryck and the bracelet were preventing it. He wasn't entirely sure he wanted to either. The kisses Tryck was placing on his skin were a new experience to him. Carter liked the way they made him feel. He rolled his head to the side, giving Tryck more room to explore with his soft lips.

His body shivered as Tryck ran his fingers over his skin, the contact going straight to his cock.

He suddenly became aware that all he had on was his underwear and Tryck, oh God, Tryck was naked, his hard erection pressing into Carter's butt.

Carter stilled, wondering what he should do next. He liked what his mate was doing to him so far. Correction, he loved it. The fingers running over his skin made his flesh warm everywhere the fingers touched.

Man it felt so good.

His mate slid his other arm under Carter, pulling his back to Tryck's chest. Tryck's hand went from Carter's belly to his cock, kneading it through his underwear. Carter moaned. Lust and desire sucker-punched him in the groin. His legs slowly slid apart as Tryck's hand worked magic on his body, making it feel things Carter never thought possible.

"That's it, *gatito*, Relax." Carter jerked when Tryck's hand slid past the waistband, palming his erection. His hand felt hot on Carter's cock, making him whimper with want.

"I've never..."

"I know, my kitten." Tryck kissed his ear, making Carter's eyes roll back. "Let me show you how good it can be."

Carter nodded once, closing his eyes to the sensations washing over him. Carter's hands reached up and grabbed the arm holding his body to Tryck's. He held on, moaning as Tryck's hand made love to his shaft. His hips bucked, pushing his cock into the pumping action Tryck was already performing on his shaft.

Carter swallowed when Tryck released his erection and slid his underwear down to his thighs. He pulled his knees further up, allowing his mate to pull them the rest of the way off. Tryck threw the covers back, the cool air raising goose bumps on his skin.

Tryck's hand ghosted down his side, over his hip, and back to his cock. Tryck's thumb spread pre-cum over Carter's throbbing erection. Carter's legs began to move as if he were riding a bicycle. Tryck chuckled. "Relax, *gatito*." Tryck let go of his shaft and placed a hand on his thigh, stilling his wayward legs.

Tryck then reached under the pillow, pulling a bottle of lube free. "Planning your attack all along?" Carter chuckled nervously.

"Sí, you are mine."

Carter watched Tryck's hands, watched as one unsnapped the cap and poured the clear liquid into the other. He licked his dry lips,

watching as the slicked hand disappeared, and then his ass cheeks parted. Carter was thrown into a world of sensation alien to him.

The wetted fingers circled around and around his aching hole, a slight pressure, and then circled again. He wasn't going to panic, no, he could do this. His hands gripped the arm that was across his chest tighter, his nails digging in as a finger breached him.

Carter's head swam with the foreign sensation, his body responding in ways to Tryck that Carter never thought it would. His head thrashed in Tryck's arms, as he cried out from the overwhelming sensation.

"Relax." Tryck nipped his ear then kissed the sting away. Tryck licked his way down Carter's neck, making his skin buzz with excitement. So this is what it's like. He wished he hadn't waited so long, hadn't been too scared to experience it before. If what Tryck was doing to him was anything to go by, Carter would never get enough.

Carter relaxed his ass muscles, unclenching his cheeks. He took a deep breath then nodded. That slight burn had turned into an unparalleled pleasure that he wanted more of.

Tryck moved the finger around, pushing a second one in. It felt odd, foreign, until Tryck did something back there, and Carter shouted. He wiggled around, humping air as electricity shot through his body. His whole being seemed to jerk as the sensations crashed through him.

"You like?" Tryck asked in that seductive voice that made Carter melt. It was guttural and seductive, making him want to hear it again.

All Carter could do was nod, his lips parted, panting as the sensations threatened to steal his very breath. Tryck did it again, and Carter came apart at the hinges. He pushed back, fucking his mate's fingers as he moaned. He pushed his ass back over and over again, unable to get enough of Tryck, enough of his mate's touch.

Carter became fuller. Tryck slid a third finger in, stretching him as he made the electricity shot through his body once again.

“Tryck,” Carter whimpered, his body coming alive for the very first time. He cried out in rising demand as Tryck’s fingers delved harder into Carter’s hole.

“I have you, *gatito*.” Tryck pushed his fingers deeper, scissoring them, and then pulled them free. “Now I will claim you.”

Chapter Four

Tryck was losing his mind to lust. Carter was hot and ready for him, coming unglued in his arms. His mate moaned his name and Tryck's chest tightened. He was panting in his arms, ready to give Tryck his body.

The need to roll his mate over and thrust deep was trying to overtake him. He knew he couldn't. Carter was a virgin, and special care had to be given. He lined his cock up, slowly pushing the head past the barrier of muscles, and then stilled to allow his mate adjustment.

He rubbed Carter's stomach. Once the muscles in his mate's abdomen relaxed, he pushed further in. Tryck fisted Carter's shaft, squeezing gently as he made his ascension deep within his mate's tight channel. When he bottomed out, he stilled once again, waiting for Carter to tell him when he could move.

"You feel so good," Tryck murmured against Carter's neck. "Have mercy on me." Tryck blanketed his mate's back, sliding his hands up Carter's arms, pushing them above his head and locking his hands around his mate's wrists, securing him in place. Carter tugged, as if to test his boundaries.

"May I move?" Tryck fought the primitive instincts to mount his submissive and take what was his. Carter had to tell him he was ready, even if it meant losing his mind.

"Okay." Carter nodded into the pillow. Tryck kicked Carter's legs up with his knees, and his mate's ass rose higher into the air. He tangled his ankles around Carter's, securing him in place. Tryck

kissed along his shoulder blades, brushing Carter's golden hair aside with his lips.

Tryck drove his hips forward, burying his cock into Carter's warm sheath. His mate whimpered below him, raising his ass higher for Tryck to take. "Come for me, *gatito*."

"I-I can't. Help me," Carter cried.

Tryck released one of Carter's wrists. "Do not move your arm." He instructed as he reached below his mate and grabbed his pulsating cock. Fantasies of tying Carter up played through his mind. Captivating images of leather wrapped around his delicate wrists, binding him for Tryck's own pleasure, was nearly his undoing.

He pumped Carter's cock, slamming into him rapidly at the same time. Carnal lust and desire flooded him systemically. It started at his toes and rocketed through his body like an orb sphere of static electricity. His blood was on fire.

"Tryck." Carter bowed his back, his body quivering as he mewled and panted. "Make me come."

"*Sí*, come for me." Tryck bit into Carter's shoulder, unable to stop himself. The whole room turned red from his shifting eyes as Tryck pistoned into Carter.

He raised his head. "Do you accept me as your mate, Carter?"

"Yes, Tryck," Carter shouted as he came. His mate bucked underneath him. Tryck had to hold him down as Carter's head fell back, and Tryck bit into him again.

He felt the ribbons of their souls unwind, but he gasped at what he saw. Two small transparent forms in the exact same image of him and Carter danced around one another, melded together, and then split apart, Carter's image entering Tryck and vice versa. Never had he heard of such a thing. His eyes were transfixed for a moment as the image disappeared. He couldn't believe what he had just seen.

He watched as Carter's small ghostly duplication disappeared into his sternum. His heartbeat stuttered and then synchronized with his

mate's. Was it because Carter was Elven? Whatever it was, it was the most beautiful thing Tryck had ever witnessed.

Tryck roared as he came, pounding hard until he was spent, sated.

"Tryck." Carter shook his head back and forth, sweat glistening on his body. "The union is complete."

"I saw us..." He wasn't sure what he should say. He pulled his mate to him, draping the smaller man over his chest, petting his beautiful hair.

"Wow, I was afraid of *that*?" Carter grinned, his golden eyes sparkling.

"No more fears." Tryck kissed his head and settled back, that gnawing emptiness slowly easing. That something he yearned for was lying in his arms now.

* * * *

Carter sat in the den, tugging at the stupid bracelet. There had to be a way to get it off. It was small and fragile in looks. Too bad looks were deceiving. He shifted around a little, trying to relieve the soreness in his bum from the claiming.

"What wrong?" Keata asked as he flopped down on the couch.

"That nasty blue man put this on my wrist, and now I can't shimmer." Carter was ready to go find a crowbar. Something had to work.

"We could cut open." Keata pointed to Carter's wrist.

"And what would we use to cut it open?" Carter quirked a brow at the little man. Keata's smooth skin turned crimson as he shrugged.

"We could go to horse barn."

Well, it was a shot, a long one, but what did he have to lose? "Fine, show me the way."

"Where are you two going?" Nero asked from the archway of the den.

“Horse barn.” Carter followed Keata through the kitchen and out of the back door, Nero trailing behind them. He wanted to ask about the blue gloves, but he didn’t know the man that well, yet.

He had a feeling being mated to Tryck, that his life was about to change. Carter thought of Teaky. He needed to get home, get a change of clothes, and let his roommate and best friend know he was okay. Maybe Teaky knew a way to get this damn thing off. His best friend was smart. If anyone could figure it out, he could.

Carter felt an evil vibe as soon as the three entered the barn. Something wasn’t right. His eyes scanned the small building, looking for anything unusual. Nothing seemed out of place, but that feeling wouldn’t go away.

“Here.” Keata handed Carter a pair of bolt cutters. Carter tried to slide one side in between his wrist and the trinket, but the jaws of the cutters were too big. Well, it was worth a try.

Nero dug through the small room in the back, pulling out a pair of wire cutters. “Maybe this, it’s smaller.”

Carter was able to slide the wire cutters in between the bracelet and his wrist. So far, so good. He pressed the handle together, but it wouldn’t cut.

“Let us try.” Keata and Nero both grabbed the handles, squeezing with all their might, but it didn’t even make a dent.

Carter was getting pissed. He grabbed the wire cutters and threw them across the barn. He wanted to shimmer. You never thought about things you took for granted until you didn’t have them anymore.

The three tried to scramble behind one another when a man came from behind one of the horses. “What do we have here?”

“Same thing I was going to ask you, buster.” Carter tried his hardest to hide the tremor in his voice. He wasn’t the bravest in the world, but it seemed the two men behind him were even more chicken than he was. Who was this guy?

"W-We live here. You don't," Nero said from behind Carter. Hell, Carter was trying to get behind Nero. Just because he was the tallest didn't mean he was the bravest.

"I can smell her on you." The man inched closer, baring his fangs.

"Oh boy, a vampire," Nero squeaked. The little blue-gloved man ran behind Carter and Keata, once again putting him up front. Didn't these two know he had more chicken in him than a poultry factory?

"Smell who?" Carter chuckled nervously. "I'm gay, no her on me anywhere." He knew the vampire was referring to Melonee, which in turn meant him as well since he was Elvin and carried that sweet scent. For some damn reason fate made their scent irresistible to vampires. *Why* was anybody's guess. It just was, and now they had to get out of this situation.

The vampire moved closer, his black pupils seeming to grow larger. "I want that smell." He leapt, all three screaming and running to get away. The vampire clamped his hand on Carter's arm, stopping him from rushing from the barn.

He turned to the other two. "Run!"

"We not leave you." Keata picked up the bolt cutters, swinging them wildly at the vampire. The heavy pair thunked the man in the head.

Carter was grateful, but these two little midgets needed to get out of here. Not that he was heroic. It just seemed wrong for them to be attacked. They were so damn short.

Carter soured his face, leaning down to bite the man, but the idea was repulsive. The vampire could have all kinds of germs. Instead, Carter kneed him in the balls.

The guy yelped. It seemed no matter what breed you were, the balls were still sensitive. Carter managed to wrench his arm free, and the three ran through the door, screaming at the top of their lungs.

Four extremely large wolves emerged from the forest. Carter had to stop himself from doing a one-eighty and hauling ass back into the barn. Did he mention how huge they were?

Keata and Nero must be used to them. They didn't bat an eye. They only pointed to the barn and screamed that there was a vampire in there. Carter watched as all three Santiago brothers came barreling from the kitchen, and headed into the barn along with the wolves.

"I'm outta here." Carter grabbed Nero and Keata's hand, yanking them into the house. He ran around the kitchen table when Tryck and his brothers came storming into the house, a look of pure rage on Tryck's face.

"And what were you doing out there?" Tryck demanded.

"Trying to get my lucky charm off." Carter held his wrist up, becoming pissed at Tryck's enraged tone. It wasn't his fault that a freaking vampire was in there.

"It isn't safe for you out there. I don't want you going anywhere unless either I or one of my brothers is with you."

Carter snorted. "I didn't win the election or join the mob. I don't need bodyguards. As a matter of fact, I need to skip my happy ass on home and get a change of clothes."

"You won't need to skip. I'll take you." Tryck circled around the table, but Carter ran the other way.

"I don't think so. Just because we are mates now doesn't mean we are tied at the hips. I can manage." Carter continued to evade him, placing the table between them.

"And how are you going to manage that, *gatito*? You can't pop in and out." Tryck snarled as he faked a left and nearly caught Carter.

"I'll get a ride from one of these guys, you Neanderthal." Carter made it to the side of the table with the door and shot out into the backyard. He had forgotten all about vampires and ball kicking. The thought of Tryck catching him and making him heel had him running across the backyard.

He panicked when he looked over his shoulder and saw Tryck and his brothers giving chase. His instinct for fight or flight kicked in, and since he was a chicken, he ran. Carter let out an unmanly scream when Tryck tackled him.

"Get off of me, you barbarian." Carter twisted around, but Tryck held him firmly with all those huge muscles. "You're wrinkling my two-day-old clothes."

"Then behave. You're acting like a madman." Tryck got up, pulling Carter up with him. "I will not have you running around this damn place on your own. It isn't safe."

"I've managed to live a whole one hundred and ten years without needing an escort to take a piss. I can make it home in one piece without Biker Bob and his family escorting me." He knew it! Being mated to Tryck *was* life-changing. He wasn't about to have his independence taken away.

Carter enjoyed his freedom, cherished popping in and out of different places, different continents. He loved seeing other cultures and popping into a ballgame and rooting for the other team.

Tryck was not about to take that from him. It was bad enough he had a shackle on his wrist preventing him from enjoying life. He didn't need one around his neck.

"Do you not remember the vampire that just tried to attack you? It isn't safe for you to wander around on your own. You are a Santiago now. You stick with us." Tryck grabbed Carter's arm, pulling him back toward the house.

Carter dug his heels in, wrestling to free himself. "I understand the dangers, but I won't be caged. Now let go, damn it." He twisted and squirmed, but Tryck wouldn't release him.

Carter knew what his mate was saying was true. There were a lot of dangers out there, especially around this place, but if he let Tryck dictate his freedom to him now, he would forever be shadowed. He couldn't have that.

"I don't need you." Carter curled his lips in as soon as the words left his mouth. He saw the pained expression on Tryck's face before his mate masked it. Tryck growled, shoving him toward his brothers.

“Guard him.” His mate walked away, leaving him with Law and...just what was the other guy’s name? He wanted to run after his mate, apologize for the harsh words, but Tryck was already gone.

“He’s only acting like this because he cares and is frightened for you,” Law said as the brothers led him into the house.

Carter turned around and stabbed his index finger into the palm of his hand. “Would that have been so hard for him to say instead of the he-man act?”

Law shook his head as he crossed his arms over his barreled chest. “Yeah, it is. Tryck doesn’t do well with weak emotions. Never has.”

He didn’t seem to do so bad with them when he claimed Carter. As a matter of fact, they poured out of him. What was with the dual personality? Was he afraid to show softness in front of others?

Carter couldn’t live with that. He wasn’t going to have a mate that was tender in bed but a gruff sourpuss around everyone else. If he couldn’t show Carter some warmth in public, Carter didn’t want to be mated to him.

Too late for that. Oh, shut up.

Carter groaned. He was arguing with himself now. This couldn’t be good. “Look, I need to get home. So either one of you guys can take me or I’m walking. It doesn’t matter either way to me.”

“I’ll take you.”

“Just what is your name, anyway?”

The man chuckled. “It’s Dagon. Nice to meet you, little brother.”

Carter eyed him. “Don’t call me that. It means Tryck is my brother, too, and that’s just gross.”

Dagon gave a deep laugh. “I like you.”

“Too bad, Tryck caught me first.” He giggled. “Fine, let’s go.” Carter looked around as they made their way to the front door, wondering where his mate had gone off to. He felt bad for what he said, but he had to stick to his guns. Well, some sticking, he was still being escorted.

Carter sighed. He had a feeling trying to keep his independence was going to be one tough battle.

* * * *

Carter was uncomfortable walking to his dwelling. It seemed the entire tribe was watching him. He knew mating outside of his race was extremely rare, but what was he going to do? Deny the other half of his soul? It wasn't his fault fate chose Tryck as his mate, and he wouldn't change it, no matter how pigheaded the man was.

And if he was totally honest with himself, he wouldn't change it. Tryck was stubborn and pigheaded, but Carter liked being mated to him.

They just had to work out the whole public display of affection thing, along with his independence.

The brothers must have seen the looks. They moved closer to Carter until he was at his dwelling. He would never admit it to them, but he was thankful. The looks he was getting made him feel like an outcast. The elders watched him with disapproval, and even some friends he had had for a long time seemed to turn their backs on him. It hurt, but Carter held his head high, even though he felt like a chicken on the inside.

He wouldn't give them the satisfaction.

"You are not welcomed here," one of his tribe members stepped forward and proclaimed. Carter glanced at the man's hands, making sure he didn't have a weapon. Wood Elves could be downright unreasonable sometimes, and he wasn't going to put it past them to fight dirty.

"Oh, yeah? Who was the one that negotiated five hundred acres, hmm? Me, that's who." Carter was becoming pissed. They were the ones who tossed the crown of Sentinel on his head and *made* him go after Melonee. They practically shoved him out of the door, and now they wanted to turn their backs on him?

And now that he thought about it, the title was something they just tossed at him to make him go seek out Maverick. They were even bigger chickens than he was!

A light went on over his head. They didn't think he would succeed. They wanted him to fail. None of them really liked him. Why, he didn't know. He had never done anything to offend any of them. What was happening to his race? The once peaceful Wood Elves were becoming self-served, and that wasn't like them.

They had thrown him to the lions—er, wolves—and couldn't have cared less. The title of Sentinel was supposed to be given to one who has shown bravery, he was the last person who should have been given the privilege.

The elder took a step toward Carter until Dagon growled. The frightened look on the elders face seemed to morph into anger very quickly. "Get your things and go."

All this because he mated outside of his race. Carter couldn't believe how they were acting. True, he was never their favorite, but to shun him because Tryck wasn't one of them? That was just downright unfair.

Prejudice in any form disgusted Carter.

"Watch your tongue." Dagon stepped forward. "Or I'll cut it out."

Carter quickly ran to his dwelling, holding back the sob as he grabbed his belongings. A sad feeling came over him at never seeing his fellow tribesman again. Why were they acting this way?

Was it all because Tryck was a wolf and he was a fey? It shouldn't matter.

But apparently it did.

Carter left the angry mob and walked into his dwelling. The sooner he grabbed some things, the quicker he could get out of here. What was he running back to? Who knew, but it was better than hanging around here.

"Hey, what are you doing?" Teaky asked as he came into Carter's bedroom. His best friend leaned against the wall studying him.

Carter wiped the tears on his sleeve, grabbing his things and shoving them into a bag. "I'm not welcome here anymore apparently. I'm packing my stuff."

Teaky stood straight, his voice laced with anger. "Who told you that?"

Carter snarled, "Shanta."

"That prick? His head is stuck so far in the past that he could smell what the dinosaurs had for lunch. Don't pay him any attention."

Carter shook his head. He understood what Teaky was saying, but he wasn't on the receiving end of the hateful words. It hurt like hell and he just wanted to put as much distance between his body and this village. "I'm not going to force myself on anyone. If I'm not wanted here, then I'll just go."

Teaky crossed his arms over his chest, glaring at Carter. "You're just going to walk away from our friendship?"

Carter's hands stilled at the anger in Teaky's voice. He'd never spoken to him like that before. Was it "pick on Carter" day? He took a step away from the bed, smiling at his longtime friend. "I'll still visit you. All you have to do is call my name." Carter looked down at his bracelet. "Well, maybe not. Do you know how to get this thing off of me?" Carter held his arm up, showing of his latest fashion piece.

Teaky looked shocked, and then he quickly masked it. His head bowed with a nod as he looked at Carter's wrist. "How did you...did Ahm put that on you?"

Carter nodded.

Teaky examined the trinket, holding Carter's hand as he turned his wrist. "I think I can. Hold on." Teaky let go of his arm and left the bedroom.

Carter continued to pack until Teaky came back into the room, a small key in his hand. "Let me try this."

Carter gave his best friend his hand, watched as Teaky inserted it and the bracelet fell free. The feeling of total freedom once again washed over Carter. He hugged the man to him, placing a quick

thank-you kiss on his cheek. "Thank you." He shoved the bracelet in his pocket, telling himself he was going to bury it as soon as he got back. No one should be held prisoner like that.

He wasn't going to leave it lying about so someone else could get trapped in it. Although the idea did cross his mind to slap it around Shanta's damn wrist.

It would teach him to judge people just because they didn't mate within their own race.

Barbaric bastard.

Teaky wrapped his arms around Carter, pulling him close. "I'm going to miss you," he whispered into Carter's ear.

Carter hesitated, Teaky had never acted this way before. It made him extremely uncomfortable. He cleared his throat, pushing at Teaky's chest, and stepping away from his roommate. "Well, I have to go. I'll visit."

He grabbed his bag and tossed it over his shoulder, taking one last look at his bedroom and his best friend. He had other things that needed to be carried out, but he'd enlist the help of the brothers for that. Teaky stood there with a stoic expression, but Carter knew it was a façade.

He chose to ignore it as he walked toward the bedroom door.

"You done?" Law and Dagon stepped into the room, Law eyeing Teaky, a look of disapproval crossing his face.

"Yep, I'm done." The brothers, along with Teaky, helped him carry his things to the SUV. They filled the back of it up, Carter taking a last look around before closing the back of the vehicle.

How had things changed so drastically? Not only was his tribe trying to adjust to a new environment, the one they left behind having been their home since the dawn of their existence, but now he was leaving it to start a whole new life somewhere else...again.

He felt displaced. Where did he really belong? Since the war, home hadn't felt like home. And then when they moved here, he never really unpacked his things.

Would he ever get a sense of home again?

He had no one now. His family was dead and he was leaving his best friend and tribe. He didn't even feel like he really had a mate. Not with the way Tryck was acting.

So who did he have?

Carter climbed into the SUV, watching the village he once thought of calling home as it slowly slipped away.

They made it back to Brac territory, pulling into the gravel drive. Carter stared up at the enormous house, a place that was now his permanent home. It looked more like a prison to him rather than welcoming arms.

He ignored the feeling and pulled his things from the vehicle, the other mates coming out to help. He had them put his belongings into Tryck's room, a room he wasn't so sure he was welcomed in anymore after his harsh words.

"Thanks." He gave a weak smile to the mates that had helped him.

"You are welcome." Keata smiled up at him. "Come to den later. We play games."

Carter smiled at the little man. "I will."

Well, at least he had the mates to pass the time with. It seemed as though Tryck had disappeared.

He didn't blame the guy.

Who would want to stick around and be insulted again? His fight for freedom had backfired on him, and now he was going to pay the price for it.

Carter yearned to be back in Tryck's arms, to be held and talked to like he mattered. With the way he was feeling right now, he needed it more than ever.

The others left him as he unpacked, folding his clothes neatly and storing them in the dresser. He hung up the rest, shoving his shoes in the armoire. Carter sat on the edge of the bed, unsure of what to do. He really didn't feel like playing any games right now.

Carter walked over to the window, shoved his hands in his slacks, and stared out into the forest. It really was a beautiful view.

“You all settled?”

Carter closed his eyes at the deep voice behind him. His mate had come back. He was afraid to turn around, afraid of what he might see in Tryck’s eyes. “Yes.”

Strong arms circled his waist, pulling his back to a solid chest. Carter almost cried out at the contact. Little did his mate know how much those strong arms meant to him right now. “Good.” Tryck kissed his temple before he lifted Carter’s arm. “How did you get the bracelet off?”

Nothing slipped by his shifter. A small smile tugged at his lips. “Teaky had a key.”

Tryck grunted as he turned Carter’s wrist this way and that. “And that wasn’t odd to you?”

Carter hadn’t thought about it, happy at the time to be free. How did his best friend happen to have it in his possession? There had to be an explanation. “Not at the time. I was just glad to get the shackle off of me. There has to be a reason why. I trust him.”

“I don’t.” Tryck growled low in his ear.

Carter wasn’t in the mood for another argument. He was tired, needed a shower, and was hurting from the ostracizing he just received. All he wanted to do was take a shower and go to bed.

“I’m tired.” Carter pulled from Tryck’s arms, heading into the bathroom. As much as he needed Tryck’s comfort, he didn’t want to argue.

He disrobed, regulated the water, and sighed as he stepped under and allowed the spray to wash away his pain. He leaned his head back, washing his hair, and then rinsed it out.

Stepping from the shower, he wrapped a towel around his head, and one around his waist.

Tryck’s eyes watched his every move once Carter came back into the bedroom. He couldn’t be sure if the look his mate wore was anger

or lust. Finding a pair of thin pajama pants, Carter dropped the towel around his waist and slid them on.

Tryck came up behind him, pulling the towel from his head, and grabbed a brush from the top of the dresser. Carter stood still as his mate untangled his hair. It felt so good, he almost feel asleep standing there.

He luxuriated in the feel of his mate's fingers running through his hair.

"Come to bed." Tryck led him, pulling the covers back as Carter slipped under them.

"Sleep, *gatito*."

Carter nodded, turning over as a tear ran down his cheek. Utter loneliness surrounded him. His mate crawled in behind him, pulling Carter to his chest as the shifter rocked him to sleep.

Chapter Five

Carter inched his way down, looking up briefly to make sure Tryck was still sleeping. Okay, the mechanics shouldn't be too hard. It was just a cock, a very large one, but still just a cock.

Carter studied his mate's flaccid shaft. Even at rest it was impressive. With his thumb and index finger, he picked the piece of flesh up and leaned in, licking with the tip of his tongue at the opening. The soft cock jerked.

Carter glanced up again, but Tryck still snoring loud enough to bring down the roof. He pulled the skin back, examining the V under the crown. He had such a beautiful uncut cock. He'd never seen one before, and it fascinated him. Well, okay, he'd never seen *any* man's cock before, but he knew Tryck's was different from his cut one.

He pushed the flesh forward and then pulled it back again, giggling as he made it talk. "I want to eat you." He used a gruff voice to try and imitate Tryck.

Carter pulled the skin back and barely touched his tongue to the glistening pre-cum that was beginning to leak from the head. The shaft started filling out, becoming even more impressive. Could he fit all of that into his mouth?

Taking a deep breath, Carter opened wide, sucking the bulbous head past his lips. He suckled on the helmet, swirled his tongue around to capture the leaking liquid, and then pulled back, staring at his saliva shining on the head. He smiled, sucked it in again, and pushed it a little further past his lips.

"Teeth, *gatito*, no teeth." Tryck moaned, running his hands through Carter's long hair, gathering it up as if his hands were a

rubber band, and then pulled it to tilt Carter's head sideways. Carter looked up. Big sapphire blue eyes were staring down at him. He smiled around Tryck's cock, and then lowered his eyes.

He was busted.

All Carter wanted to do was experiment. He had hoped Tryck stayed asleep while he became familiar with his mate's cock.

Guess it was too late now.

"Suck it." Tryck grabbed the base, feeding his prick to Carter.

Why did it turn him on to see Tryck's hand wrapped around his own shaft?

Carter opened, accepting the large cock, using his tongue to lick at the veins, and at the same time he tried to suck it down. He gagged, pulled back, and took a deep breath.

"Go slow, *gatito*. No need to rush. Take only what you can," Tryck encouraged him, petting his hair.

Even with Tryck's large hand wrapped around the base, there were still plenty of inches to spare. He opened again, making another attempt.

"That's it, love." Tryck's legs spread wider apart, giving Carter more room to explore. Carter wiped the spittle that was leaking down his chin, pushing further in until he knew he couldn't take anymore.

"Suck your cheeks in," Tryck instructed.

Carter did, creating a tight seal. Tryck held his head, moving slowly back and forth, using small measured strokes. Carter caught on, stilled Tryck's hips, and then began to move his head up and down.

"That's it. You got it," Tryck moaned. "Ouch...no teeth, *gatito*."

Carter opened wider, trying his best to keep his teeth from scraping flesh. His jaws began to hurt, so he pulled back, giving them rest while he sucked at the crown once more.

"*Sí*, just do that." Tryck cupped him under the chin, the other hand on the back of Carter's head, groaning out his pleasure. Tryck's hips began to move faster. "Gonna come," he warned.

Carter sealed his lips around the head, sucking vigorously, wanting to taste his mate.

He didn't have to wait long. Tryck cried out, and hot jets of semen shot to the back of his throat as Carter tried desperately to drink it all down. He was somewhat successful. It got a little messy, but he was sure Tryck wouldn't mind.

Tryck jackknifed, grabbing Carter under his arms and pulling him up, licking the wasted seed from his face. "You give good head, *gatito*." His mate grinned, twisted around, and then laid Carter down onto the mattress.

His large body blanketed Carter's, making him purr.

Tryck pushed Carter's legs to his chest, grabbing the lube from under the pillow.

Carter was extremely nervous. The last time they had sex he was belly down. Now Tryck would be watching him. He bit his bottom lip, eyes darting to his left, unable to look at his mate.

This was way too intimate for him.

"No, look at me, love. Watch me take you." Carter's eyes shifted back to his mate, his head slowly following. Tryck stretched and lubed him, and then gently pushed in. "See how you stretch for me?"

Carter nodded, looking down to where they were joined. It became a point of fascination to him. He reached down, allowing Tryck's cock to glide between his index and middle finger.

"Enjoy it, *gatito*." Tryck leaned forward, dropping to his arms. His hands cupped Carter's head, giving him his first heated kiss, his first kiss period from this man. Carter moaned, wrapping his arms around Tryck's neck and pulling him in, opening for Tryck's tongue.

He giggled and squirmed when Tryck rubbed his ears.

"Your ears are sensitive?" Tryck grinned into Carter's mouth, rubbing the tips of his ears once again. "That's sexy."

Carter's breath hitched when Tryck reached down and hooked his legs over his mate's massive arms, spreading him open wider. His

mate thrust hard, long, and deep, grazing that special spot that drove Carter nuts.

Carter pulled at his mate's hair, feeling lost to the onslaught of sensations. His toes curled, his ears wiggled, and his ass clenched as electricity shot through him. "Oh my god, Tryck. Yes!"

"Do it, *gatito*. Scream my name, come for me, precious." Tryck drove into him as Carter cried out, his seed splashing both of them.

He lifted his hips higher, feeling every inch of Tryck's cock in his ass. A piece of his heart broke off and drifted into those deep sapphire eyes. His mate was looking at him with such desire, such need, that all he could do was stare back at him. He was hypnotized by those dark and gorgeous eyes.

"Carter," Tryck called out as he stiffened, and then jetted into his hole. The veins in Tryck's neck stood out, sweat trickled down his temples as his mate gave one last thrust, and then he lowered his head, breathing heavily. "You are going to drive me crazy."

Tryck rolled over, pulling Carter into his arms as he sighed heavily and petted Carter's hair.

* * * *

"We want to go get something to eat," Blair stated to the warriors in Maverick's office. Cecil, Oliver, Keata, Kyoshi, and Carter stood behind him. Carter had no clue why he agreed to the uprising. Maybe because he knew it would piss Tryck and Maverick off. He loved a good tongue-sparring.

Making the Alpha's vein pop on the side of his temple had become a favorite pastime for him.

"That's not a problem. We can take you." Maverick stood.

"No." Blair held his hand in front of him, palm out. "I want to drive, and the mates want to ride with me. You can follow if you want, but we want a little taste of freedom."

Maverick looked over to the warriors and then back at Blair, "At least you said something this time, thank you. We can follow." Maverick held his hand out to indicate the mates could go.

"Really?" Blair asked in a happy voice and then cleared his throat. "I mean, really?" he said more calmly.

"I'm not a warden. Just because we want you safe doesn't mean we don't want you to have fun. You're not serving time."

"Hell, that's news to me," Cecil muttered.

Carter peeked over at Tryck, his mate watching him suspiciously. He shrugged, giving Tryck the most evil of grin he could muster. Tryck gave a low growl, his eyes challenging Carter.

Carter snickered. Oh, this was going to be fun. He winked at his mate and then ran for the door, laughing as he jumped into the SUV.

* * * *

Blair drove the large SUV down the country road. He docked his iPod and pressed the button. The music flooded the interior. The song "Ion" by a band called Placebo filled the truck.

Blair threw his right hand up as he jammed along. Cecil sat shotgun, playing an imaginary keyboard, strumming his fingers across his thighs.

Oliver sat behind Blair, both his hands were raised high as his shoulders bounced around. His lower body swiveled around as he jammed to the music.

Carter sat beside Oliver, his head nodding in short bursts to the rhythm.

Keata and Kyoshi were in the third row, doing some funky thing with their arms that resembled ocean waves.

Blair lowered his window, letting the wind blow across his face as he enjoyed the freedom of driving.

It had been too long since he was behind the wheel, and he was loving every second of it.

He saw the two pickup trucks and three motorcycles trailing behind them. He didn't care that they had an escort. The interior of the SUV was theirs, their private domain of freedom for the moment.

Blair palmed the steering wheel, spinning it to the left as he pulled the vehicle into an empty parking space. He didn't want to go through the drive-thru.

They all wanted to stretch their legs and enjoy their time out a little longer.

They went to the fast food place over by the police station. Blair snickered at the fond memory of when he and Cecil stole a truck to come here eons ago. They'd become partners in crime and best friends since then, something he never thought he would have.

* * * *

Carter looked around as he climbed out, Keata running up to him from the other side. "I never go here before."

"Me either, buddy. Guess we both will find out if they're any good." He looked over his shoulder. The Santiago brothers were talking and laughing over by their motorcycles, but he knew better. Tryck was watching him from the corner of his eye.

Carter made sure his hair was over his ears. Try and explain pointy ears to humans, impossible. He usually wore a hat when he went exploring, but he normally didn't care what he looked like as long as he could see the sights.

For some reason he cared what Tryck thought of him, cared how he looked. He didn't want to look geeky with a hat shoved over his head. It was bad enough his ears wiggled when he had sex.

He couldn't believe that happened. Now *that* was embarrassing.

They ordered their food and took a seat at a large booth, chatting away as they ate. Carter looked from the corner of his eye. Tryck was leaning back on his bike, his arms crossed over his chest, watching Carter watch him. His mate winked at him, and Carter looked away.

He could feel the heat creeping across his face. He'd never had a guy flirt with him before. It was exciting and pulse pounding. The side of his mouth pulled back slightly as he continued to stare at his mate.

"Dude, you got it bad." Oliver chuckled, bumping shoulders with Carter.

His gaze ripped away from his mate's, looking at the guys sitting around the table. "No I don't."

"That's like the hundredth time you looked at your mate." Blair laughed.

"I'm not looking at Tryck. I'm making sure no one has stolen our ride." Carter huffed. He thought he had been slick about it, but he must not have. All the mates were smiling at him. "What?"

"Liar." Keata giggled.

Carter waved a hand at them as he picked up his burger, the grease running down his hand. Maybe it wasn't safe to eat this. He set it back down. "I can't help it. He's hot," Carter confessed, feeling his cheeks burn a little more.

He liked the camaraderie, never before hanging out with a bunch of guys who were mated like him. It felt like a special kind of bonding going on between them.

Sure, he hung out with Teaky, but this felt different. Closer.

"I have to admit, he is that. But don't tell Maverick I said that. Those two already go head-to-head." Cecil snickered.

Carter glanced out the window once more. The warriors were talking, just hanging out, giving their mate's room to socialize in an outside setting. Carter had to admit, he liked hanging with the guys, but also liked the fact that his mate was close by.

To anyone else it would seem like the warriors were at ease. The mates knew better. They were being watched by their men.

"So why does he drive me so batty?" Carter asked while still watching Tryck. He wanted to go out there and crawl into this lap, and get fucked right there on the bike. *Avoid sex my ass.* Carter was addicted to it now.

The thought of Tryck taking him on the bike had his heart racing and his imagination running wild. What would it be like to have sex outdoors? He definitely wanted to find out.

"It's called being in love," Kyoshi offered, bringing Carter out of his thoughts.

Carter's head snapped around as Kyoshi's words registered in his brain. "Who says I'm in love with him?" That was ridiculous. *Love*? He wasn't sure he would call it that. Infatuation maybe, but love?

Oliver laughed as he shook his head, pointing a finger at Carter. "Your actions do. You haven't taken your eyes off of him for five seconds straight."

Who cared what Oliver said, Carter wasn't in love with big ole Biker Bob. There was no way. *No way*.

Carter fought hard not to look back out of the window. His eyes kept straying that way, but he forced them back at the last minute.

"How do you know if you're in love?" Carter became curious, needing to know. What he was feeling couldn't possibly be that. He had never been in love before, so he didn't have anything to compare his feelings against.

"Do you get tongue tied around him, palms sweaty, heart racing? Would you do anything for him?" Cecil questioned him.

Carter thought about it for a moment. "I become a nervous wreck around him, and yeah, I would do anything for him." He wasn't going to lie about it. No matter what happened between them, Carter knew he'd do anything for his mate.

"You in love." Keata beamed up at him.

Carter was shocked. How had he fallen in love with the gruff man? Tryck was prickly at best when they were together, gentle as all get out when they were alone. He decided to test this theory. "Excuse me."

He stood, making his way outside and straight to the man leaning back on his bike.

"What's wrong, *gatito*?" Tryck sat up, his eyes scanning the area.

Carter walked straight up to him and pulled him into a scorching kiss. The other warriors catcalled, whistled, and whooped.

Tryck set him aside, looking around at everyone as if embarrassed. "Later."

Carter was crushed. "So I'm good enough for the bedroom but not good enough for when we're in public?" Carter felt his heart breaking, he turned, running back inside to the other mates. He fell into the booth, wiping the tears from his eyes. He didn't want to be someone's dirty little secret, and that's exactly what it felt like. Everyone knew they were mates, but Carter had a feeling that if it were up to his mate, no one would know.

"What happened?" Blair asked.

"He doesn't want to acknowledge me outside of the bedroom." Carter sniffled as he wiped at his eyes.

"Give him time." Kyoshi patted his hand a sympathetic look on his face. Carter didn't want anyone's sympathy. He wanted to be left alone right now.

"No, if he can't let others see his tender side, then I don't want any of it." Carter cried as he shoved from the booth and ran to the bathroom, shimmering out.

He ended up back at his old dwelling. Even though the Wood Elves had openly said they didn't want him there, where else could he go? It hurt to know his mate didn't want anyone to know how he felt about Carter. What was so hard about giving him a kiss, or a hug? He wasn't asking for his mate to molest him in public, but a small sign of acknowledgement would be nice.

"What are you doing here?" Teaky asked from his bedroom doorway.

"Nothing, I just want to be alone." Carter rolled over onto his old bed and balled up. It hurt so damn bad. Was he ugly? Was that why Tryck didn't want others to know how gentle he could be? What was with the tough-man front?

It may not be important to some, but to Carter, it mattered. It mattered to him that Tryck acknowledge him.

The bed dipped, Teaky resting a hand on his shoulder, rubbing his hand up and down Carter's arm. "Talk to me."

Carter didn't want his best friend touching him. It felt wrong now that he knew Tryck's touch. Besides, they were best friends, always had been, but nothing more. Teaky was like a brother to him. He scooted away, wondering why his best friend was acting this way. "I'm okay."

He shouted in surprise when Teaky rolled him over, his eyes filled with rage. "I knew you shouldn't have gone with that shifter. He isn't good enough for you." Teaky tried to pin him down, tried to hold Carter's head while his lips hung dangerously close.

Carter fought with everything in him as Teaky ripped his shirt and yanked at his slacks, the snap breaking and his zipper coming down.

"What the hell are you doing?" Carter shouted while trying to free himself. He couldn't think straight. This was a nightmare. He scratched and clawed, fighting for his freedom.

"You should have been mine." Teaky growled as he ripped Carter's pants, making them split at the seam.

Carter bit Teaky's cheek, his teeth digging into flesh. Teaky shouted and grabbed his face, freeing Carter. He rolled over, but before he could shimmer away, Teaky cocked his arm back and punched Carter in his face.

Carter's hand instinctively flew to his face, covering the throbbing pain as he ended up in Maverick's office.

Thank God no one was in there. He sobbed as he crawled behind the leather sofa. He dropped to the floor and balled up, trying his best to pull his shirt closed.

His thoughts were chaotic at best. He didn't want anyone to see him like this. Why had his best friend done this to him? Carter covered his face as he wept.

* * * *

Tryck was enraged. How dare his mate shimmer out again. He stormed through the front door, heading straight for his bedroom. His heart had seized in his chest when the other mate's ran out to tell him Carter had disappeared from the bathroom.

Maverick stormed his way, grabbing his arm and whipping him around. "Follow me."

"Get the hell off of me. I don't have time for your bullshit right now." Tryck yanked his arm free. He was too busy worrying about his mate to deal with an enraged Alpha right now. He didn't care why Maverick was upset, it wasn't his problem.

"Follow me now!" Maverick used his commanding Alpha tone, glaring at him and begging with his eyes for Tryck to defy him.

Tryck faltered in his step. He had never seen him like this. Something had to be wrong. He nodded, following Maverick to his office.

He heard whimpering before he even made it to the door. Tryck pushed past Maverick, looking around the office until he pinpointed where the noise was coming from.

He knew that voice. Knew it like the back of his hand.

Tryck slowly rounded the couch and his heart stopped beating. Reality ceased to exist. He felt like he was in a fog, the voices around him echoing from somewhere off in the distance.

There was a man lying on the floor, he resembled Carter, but...it couldn't be his delicate mate. Tryck tilted his head, staring at the torn clothing and the bruise on the man's face.

"Who is he?" Tryck turned to Maverick.

"Tryck?" Maverick stepped closer, staring at him as if he had lost his mind. Maybe he had because none of this was making any sense to him. "It's Carter, your mate."

Tryck shook his head at the Alpha then looked back down at the man, wondering why Maverick would lie to him.

The man whimpered, and the entire room turned crimson, his vision shifting. His heart rate beat a thousand beats per minute as his chest began to contract and expand at an alarming rate.

All at once, everything came rushing at him, hitting him with a force greater than a tsunami.

Tryck's head fell back and an unearthly sound broke from his chest and then ripped from his throat. He dropped to his knees, his hand hovering over his mate. This man *was* his mate, his *gatito*.

"Tryck?" Maverick said his name again, but he wasn't listening. He swallowed, running his hand over his mate's hair. "Carter." He cried his mate's name softly. "*Gatito*?"

Carter backed away, his unfocused eyes darting around as his back hit the couch. "No!" he shouted. "Get away!" his hands flew up in front of him, blocking Tryck from making any moves toward him.

"*Gatito*." Tryck tried to reach for him again, but Carter scrambled further away.

"No, get away from me! You don't even want people to know about us." Carter pulled at his torn clothing, trying his best to make his shirt close.

Tryck saw his mate's pants ripped apart as Carter grabbed them too, trying to make his clothes close around his exposed flesh.

His canines punched through with such force his gums began to bleed. Tryck could taste the coppery liquid in his mouth as the wrath of hell tore through him. "Who did this?"

Tryck growled when Nicholas approached and knelt down by Carter. He wanted to protect his mate, keep everyone away.

"Not now," Nicholas said to Tryck as he slowly approached Carter.

"I won't hurt you, I swear." The doctor spoke softly to Carter.

Carter looked up at Nicholas, staring at him as if he were a stranger. His body started to shake, his fingers clenching his shirt closed. Carter whimpered, and then began to cry. It turned into hysterical screaming.

Tryck moved in. He didn't care what Nicholas said. He pulled his mate into his arms, holding on to him as he stood, cradling Carter tightly to his chest.

Tryck ran up the stairs, crashing through his bedroom door. He paced back and forth, unsure of himself. He didn't know what to do.

"Put him on the bed. I need to examine him." Nicholas spoke from the door. Tryck continued pacing. He couldn't bring himself to let go. He feared by letting go, Carter would be harmed all over again.

He wanted blood, he wanted revenge, but most of all, he wanted to take his mate's pain away.

"Tryck, he needs to be examined. I have to see what, if any, damage there is." Nicholas insisted in a soft, compassionate tone.

He nodded, took a step toward the bed, and then turned around. What should he do? He couldn't do it, couldn't let his mate go.

"Tryck."

He turned, walked across the room, and gently laid his mate down. Tryck watched in a detached state as Nicholas coaxed Carter to uncurl himself. His eyes scanned his mate's body as the doctor pulled the tattered clothes off of Carter.

He spun around, slamming his eyes closed when the doctor began to check anally. *God no!*

Tryck punched his head with his fists. Someone was going to die. Someone was going to die tonight and he would make sure it was long and drawn out. Whoever had done this would wish for death by the time he was done with them.

Nicholas approached him, touching his shoulder gently, but Tryck couldn't bring himself to turn around. He couldn't. His world was about to come crashing down around him and he couldn't allow that to happen.

"He wasn't violated."

The words took a moment to register. Once Nicholas's words sunk in, Tryck was able to breathe again. He turned and walked to the

bed. He stared down at his mate who was tucked in. "Please, tell me who," Tryck begged.

Carter buried his face, crying into the covers. His shoulders shook as he turned away from Tryck, giving him his back. "Teaky."

Tryck stormed from the room, flew down the steps, raced to his bike, and tore from the driveway. Raged filled him to the point where blood no longer pumped through his veins. Death did, and he was going to share all of it with that fucking dead man.

He leaned forward, pushing his bike past one hundred twenty as he raced to the small village.

His bike roared up into the center, jumping from it as soon as it stopped. He threw his head back and shouted. "Teaky!"

"He's not here," an Elvin man informed him.

Tryck's arms flung out to his sides, his nails elongating as his eyes shifted. His canines had never receded. "Bring him to me now!"

Tryck looked over his shoulder as two more bikes approached, his brothers. They parked their motorcycles and walked over, standing at his flank. "We know where he lives." Law led Tryck to a small dwelling.

Tryck tore it apart, but Teaky was nowhere to be found.

Chapter Six

Carter walked down the stairs after a long and hot shower. He wanted to forget what Teaky had done to him. The important thing was that he had gotten away before the man did something horrendous.

Nicholas had told him this and Carter had to believe it. If he didn't, what hope did he have to get past it? He had to deal with it and move on.

It had been two weeks since the attack, and Carter was starting to feel like his old self.

What his best friend had done was a betrayal of the worst kind, but he couldn't lock himself away in his bedroom. He needed to get out and reconnect. Carter didn't want to be alone right now.

He smoothed his hands down the front of his shirt, took a deep breath, and took a look around.

He knew there was no going back to his tribe. That last bit of independence died with the event that had taken place. He stopped on the bottom step when Tryck came through the front door, his brothers following close behind him.

Tryck crossed the foyer, pulling Carter into his arms. "I love you, *gatito*," he proclaimed loudly. Carter was shocked to say the least. His mate was acknowledging him in public? "Please forgive me for being such a fool."

"And an ass," Maverick added from the hallway.

"Shut the hell up, I'm trying to be romantic here." Tryck flipped Maverick off and then turned back toward Carter.

"Go on," Carter encouraged him. If this was a moment of insanity, he wanted it all from his mate. He may never get a confession like this again.

Tryck pulled the bandana from his head and got down on one knee as the foyer filled with nosey residents.

His mate looked around, seeing everyone watching him. Tryck turned back around and locked eyes with Carter. "I've never been good with soft and emotional, but I'm willing to try for you. I love you."

Carter would take it. The foyer clapped as Tryck rose, pulling him into strong arms and kissing him senseless.

"Pussy." Maverick laughed.

It wasn't so much the words that affected him. Okay, his mate's confession of love threw him for a loop, but it was the fact that he was openly acknowledging it in front of everyone that stole his heart.

Now he wanted to get tongue-tied? He could feel his cheeks heating, praying his ears didn't wiggle with the excitement. "I love you, too," he blurted out.

Tryck looked around. Carter could see how uneasy he was. It must have taken a lot for his mate to openly declare himself. It was a start. Carter took mercy on him. "Thank you," he whispered to his mate, and then yanked him up the stairs, Tryck running up them behind him.

Carter spun around as soon as they entered their bedroom, hugging his mate close. Tryck must have sensed his need because his mate just stood there, giving Carter what he needed, giving him the strong arms to wrap his worries in and let them float away.

"Are you okay, *gatito*? How do you feel?"

Carter hugged him tighter, unsure how to answer that. He'd locked himself in his room for the last two weeks. "I don't know."

Tryck picked him up, carrying him over to the chair and sitting down with him.

Tryck didn't protest when Carter clung to him. He held on, taking refuge in his mate's arms. They made him feel safe as they embraced him, giving him the security he needed at the moment.

"What should I do? What do you need?" Tryck asked.

"You're doing it, just hold me." Carter burrowed into the crook of his arm, inhaling the masculine scent that was uniquely Tryck's.

* * * *

Tryck was out of his element, standing on unfamiliar ground. His open declaration downstairs had made him feel exposed, but he knew his mate was feeling rejected, and he couldn't have that. Not after what happened, and not after realizing just how much Carter meant to him. This was his first time being in love, and it scared the hell out of him.

He wasn't sure what he should do, so he let Carter show him what he needed.

He still wanted to find Teaky and rip his entrails through his asshole. It was only a matter of time. The Elf would relax, let his guard down, and that's when Tryck would strike. For now, his mate needed him.

He was surprised when his kitten began to kiss his neck. Tryck thought it would be awhile before they were intimate again. After what happened, he would have waited until Carter was ready.

Maybe this was his way of dealing with it. He wasn't sure, never having been in that situation before.

Tryck tilted his head to the side, his eyes closing at the sensations. He could feel Carter's chest rising and falling quickly. His tongue ran a path from his ear to his neck, his mate's fingers clenching and unclenching in Tryck's hair. Carter devoured his neck with hunger.

"*Bebé.*" Tryck ran his hand through the golden spun hair, twisting it around his hand. He gave a light tug, the erotic tongue-play stealing

his breath. Carter moved around until he was straddling Tryck's lap, his hands placed palms down on Tryck's chest.

"Please," Carter begged into Tryck's mouth.

"What is it that you need, love?"

Carter shook his head, his eyes pleading with Tryck to tell him. Carter's hunger was clawing at Tryck. He sat forward, and in one swift move he went from sitting in the chair to laying his mate out on the carpet. He'd never heard such needy whimpers before and they were driving him mad.

Tryck pulled his mate's pants off and then relieved him of his underwear. His hands skated up the inside of Carter's thighs, spreading his mate's legs apart, his eyes drinking in the beautiful sight before him.

His control was tenuous, taking every ounce of restraint in him not to plow into that tight-looking hole. Tryck cupped Carter's balls, dancing his fingers around them, and then lifted his mate's shaft, feeling how much Carter wanted him.

Carter reached up and pulled his bandana from his head, letting it drop to the floor. "*Chupa.*" Carter's mouth was smiling, but his eyes were on fire with lust.

"You want me to suck it?" Tryck seductively teased.

"Uh-huh."

Tryck lowered himself, his tongue extending out to run from base to tip. Rarely, extremely so, did he suck a cock. For Carter, he would do this. In his three hundred years, maybe five times at most had he tried it, never enjoying it, but he knew with his mate, he would relish it.

Tryck ran his tongue from base to tip one more time before closing his lips around the head. His tongue skimmed over the spongy head, lapping at the pre-cum that was leaking out copiously from Carter's shaft.

"Oh god, that feels good." Carter clawed the carpet, hissing through his teeth. Tryck slicked his finger from the saliva in his

mouth, inserting it into Carter's tight hole. He sucked vigorously as he finger-fucked his mate.

"Oh shit, Tryck," Carter panted.

Tryck held on, having no clue what was happening when Carter began to shimmer, taking him along for the ride. He thought Carter couldn't do that when he touched him.

He looked up when the sun blinded him. They were lying in a green field—where, he wasn't sure.

"Don't stop," Carter begged.

Tryck threw caution to the wind and devoured his kitten. Carter keened, his legs pulling up as he began to fuck Tryck's mouth. The scene melted away, now they seemed to be on some sort of beach.

His high-strung passion must be enabling him to do this. Tryck dug his knees into the sand and swallowed Carter down, pumping his cock as Carter shouted. Tryck yanked his jeans off, using spittle to lubricate Carter's hole, and then slid in. He pushed his mate's legs back, watching as his cock sawed in and out.

Carter's hands grabbed sand, his fingers digging in as Tryck fucked him with his very soul. The scene changed once again. If he wasn't mistaken, they were on the plains of Africa. He had watched the animal channel and seen pictures of it.

Tryck pounded into his mate, his cock filling his mate's sheath and stretching it wide. He pulled back, leaving just the head in, and then slammed back in. Carter reached under his legs, pulling them tighter to his chest.

"My beautiful Elf," Tryck crooned to him as he thrust harder. Carter stiffened, his back arched, and he came, crying out Tryck's name as they shimmered back to his bedroom. Tryck jetted into him, roaring as he released his seed.

He collapsed forward, hiding the smile as Carter's ears wiggled. He thought that was the sexiest thing ever.

Tryck pulled Carter to him, laughing at the pure joy that raced through him.

His mate was something else, so timid in bed and so full of fire outside of it.

"What the hell just happened?" Carter asked.

"You took me to paradise, *gatito*."

* * * *

"Hey, I need a spokesperson, since you did so well in the foyer." Maverick chuckled.

"Fuck you." Tryck kept walking.

"Oh, don't be like that, come on."

Tryck growled but kept walking, trying his best to ignore the Alpha. He would never in a million years admit to the fact that he enjoyed the bantering between the two.

"Pussy." Maverick chuckled as they parted ways, Tryck headed to the kitchen to get his mate something to drink. He tried his best not to take offense to the word. This whole showing his emotions thing was making him irritable.

Why Carter insisted on public displays of affection was beyond him. The guy knew he loved him. Wasn't that enough? Hell, he'd sucked the Elf's cock. That should have said it all.

Tryck grabbed the bottle of juice, staring at it as he realized what he had done. Carter had him running around like an errand boy. *I have a feeling Carter is going to have you eating out of his hands.* Law's words playing in his mind.

Tryck stomped upstairs, thrusting the bottle into Carter's hand.

"I don't know what happened between you and the juice, but don't take it out on me," Carter teased.

"I'm not your errand boy. Next time get it yourself."

Carter tossed the bottle on the bed, glaring at Tryck with those golden eyes. "Are we back to that, Biker Bob?" Carter began to shimmer.

“Oh no, you don’t.” Tryck grabbed his hand. He cursed when they ended up in a pasture standing next to a donkey.

“How apropos, I was just thinking how much of a jackass you were being.” Carter smirked at him.

“Take us home,” Tryck bit out.

“You mean take us to your cave? Because that’s exactly how you are acting, Mr. Bipedal,” Carter shouted at him. “Is it that hard for you to show me that you care?”

“Caring has nothing to do with you wanting me to run around for you.” Tryck knew he was letting Maverick’s words get under his skin. It was a fucking bottle of juice, for crying out loud. Trivial compared to the real reason he was angry. The Alpha perceived him as weak, something he wouldn’t tolerate.

Tryck took a mental step back, examining how he was handling this situation. He wanted to apologize, but again, that was a sign of weakness.

Carter grabbed the front of his T-shirt, shimmering them back to the Den. “Fine, you’re home,” his mate spat before angrily walking away.

How did he keep sticking his boot into his mouth? *Opening your heart to someone is a trust you must give sometime in your life, hijo.*

Tryck rubbed a hand over his face. He knew if he didn’t trust his mate with his heart, with his manhood, he would forever lose what they were slowly building together.

Shit wasn’t easy though. He searched the house until he found his mate in the library staring out of the window, looking as lost as he felt. “I’m sorry, *gatito*.”

“Why? What happened to make you snap at me like that?” Carter asked the window.

Tryck bit the bullet and circled his arms around his mate’s waist, pulling Carter’s back to his chest. “Maverick. He sees me as weak now after my public confession.”

Carter turned in his arms, his eyes wide and his mouth hanging open. "Is that what this is all about? You're afraid someone is going to look at you as weak for showing me how much you care?"

Tryck nodded.

"It takes a strong man to show another how much he loves them. It's not weakness."

Tryck's brain tried to process Carter's words. It got twisted around instead to say, "*It takes a weak man to show another how much he loves them. It's not strong.*"

Tryck fought a mental battle to make the words un-jumble, to let them flow the way his mate had just said them. He had conditioned himself for too long, and now he was paying the price for that.

"I'll keep trying, *gatito*. Please have patience with me."

Carter kissed him softly. "As long as you keep trying, I'll keep listening."

He had to fight the urge not to back away when Mark came into the library. "Dinner is ready."

"Thanks," Carter replied.

"I love you, kitten." Tryck cupped his mate's face. "Just remember that."

"I know, but it's nice to hear it and see it." Carter led him by the hand to the dining room. All eyes were on them as they entered. Tryck didn't look at the Alpha, didn't want to see the humor in his eyes.

They ate, Carter constantly touching and leaning in for a kiss. Tryck felt like a man with a gun aimed at him. He patted himself on the back when dinner was over. He had survived the public affection without snapping at his mate.

* * * *

Carter knew he was laying it on kind of thick. All he wanted was for Tryck to get used to openly claiming him. He saw how his mate squirmed around, and he loved him even more for trying.

Tryck laid his hand on the small of Carter's back, walking him out of the dining room. "Would you like to go for a ride?"

"Still trying to get me on the back of the deathtrap?" Carter chuckled.

"It's safe. I promise."

Carter followed Tryck, wanting to skip along at how happy he was. He wasn't really afraid of riding. He just loved teasing his mate about his favorite mode of transportation. The guy seemed to be in love with the thing.

Tryck grabbed a helmet off of another bike. "Wear this."

"Why? You're not wearing one," Carter argued.

"Yo no voy a luchar en este." Tryck growled.

"English, buddy."

"I am not going to fight you on this," Tryck repeated in English.

Carter grabbed the helmet, tucking his pointy ears in as he put it on. He flipped the helmet up and glared at his mate. "I feel like a dork in this thing."

"A safe dork." Tryck looked around and then kissed him.

"You better watch out. The kissing patrol may catch you and jail you."

His mate ignored him and swung his leg over the beast. He wasn't going to harass Tryck too much.

The man was trying.

Carter grabbed Tryck's shoulders, climbing onto the back and hugging his shifter close. He ground his erection into his mate's back.

"It's the other way around, *gatito*. I grind you."

"Picky, picky." Carter slammed the visor down. "I can't hear you."

Tryck started the bike, driving at a turtle's pace. "I won't break. Show me what this thing can do," Carter yelled from inside his helmet, knowing shifters had superior hearing.

Boy, he should be careful what he wished for. His mate tore up the road, going at least ninety miles an hour. Carter hugged him closer, not sure he would be able to shimmer them out in time if they wrecked.

Tryck slowed the bike, pulling off into the forest.

"Why did you stop?" Carter asked when the bike came to a complete stop and he pulled his helmet off.

"Because we are going to live out one of my fantasies, *gatito*. Strip."

Carter didn't like that gleam in his mate's eyes. He climbed off, handing Tryck his helmet. His fingers shook so badly, he couldn't get the buttons to cooperate on his shirt. His mate brushed his hands aside, having him naked from the waist up in record time.

"What if someone sees us?" Carter asked nervously.

"Then I will gouge their eyes out for looking at your pretty little ass." Tryck unsnapped Carter's pants, letting them pool at his ankles. "Step out of them."

Carter did, standing there afraid one of the shifters on patrol would catch them. Tryck held his arms out and Carter climbed onto the front of the bike, straddling his mate. It felt strange being naked when Tryck wasn't.

He gulped when Tryck pulled a thin leather strap from his jacket pocket. "Give me your hands."

What was his mate planning on doing? Carter gave Tryck his trembling hands, watching as Tryck tied them together. Oh hell, all he needed was chocolate right now and this would be perfect. "What are you doing?"

"Relax, *gatito*. I will not harm you."

Carter knew that much, he was just curious. "W-What's that?" he asked when Tryck pulled something else from his leather jacket.

“Your pleasure. Now lean forward.” His mate pulled him until Carter was leaning over his mate’s left knee. He bit his bottom lip when he felt cool gel slick his hole. Tryck spread it around, pushing his fingers inside.

“Relax,” Tryck repeated, and then Carter felt something other than fingers enter him. He leaned further into his mate, giving Tryck more room to do whatever he was doing. Carter stiffened when a humming vibration began in his hole.

“T–Tryck.”

“I have you.” Tryck caressed his back, pushing the device in and out of him. Carter closed his eyes, rocking back and forth as the thing inside of him hit that sweet spot, sending his lust higher.

The feeling of steel between his legs, the hard device humming away in his ass, and the texture of denim under his arms sent Carter over the edge. He cried out as he came, his ass clenching around the vibrations, sending him even higher.

“That’s my kitten, come for me.” Tryck thrust the thing harder, spreading his ass cheeks wide.

“The...you...ung.” Carter couldn’t get his mind to work. His brain had melted, and his synaptic gaps were misfiring as his orgasm turned him into mush.

The hard device was removed, Tryck’s soft fingers replacing it. “I’m going to fuck this hot hole of yours.”

Carter’s cock was coming back to life at those words. He liked the dirty talk. “Fuck it.”

Tryck pulled him up, unsnapping his jeans and releasing that gloriously uncut cock of his. Carter tried to wiggle around to take it, but it was impossible in this position and with his hands tied.

Tryck lifted him up, spinning him around until Carter’s chest rested on the motorcycle, his ass presented to his mate. Tryck pulled Carter down, impaling him. “*Gatito*,” Tryck murmured and then began to move.

Carter pushed his feet onto something steel, giving him purchase to slam back onto Tryck's cock. "Yes, *gatito*, fuck me."

Encouraged, Carter planted his bound hands on the bike and thrust back harder. His cock was stuck between his belly and the bike, giving him a nice rub-off job. Tryck's hands ghosted over his back, the feeling of his light touch giving Carter goose bumps.

"Oh, God, Tryck, I'm gonna come again."

Tryck grabbed Carter's waist, taking over the thrusting, plowing into him. "You look so good bound," Tryck grunted.

Carter's fingers balled up, his cock exploding at the same time Tryck shouted. His mate pulled Carter's ass repeatedly down onto his cock, hissing out before slowing down.

Carter collapsed onto the front of the bike, useless at this point. Tryck reached up, untying the leather and rubbing circles around his wrists with his thumbs. "I want to tie you to our bed, watch your eyes glaze as you come for me."

"Hush, you're going to get me hard again. Two is enough."

Tryck chuckled and then kissed his back. "My mate can't hang?"

"Oh, I can hang. Give me a pot of coffee and a Viagra and we can fuck like bunnies." He laughed. "Now can I get dressed before someone sees my pale ass?"

Tryck pulled free, Carter groaning at the loss. His mate helped him dress, Carter too damn whipped to do it on his own. Tryck stuffed himself back in, redoing his pants.

His mate took the leather strap, binding Carter's hair with it. Carter tried to move away, but Tryck didn't let go. "Why don't you want your hair tied up? It looks good."

Carter shrugged, looking down at his feet. "My ears are sticking out."

"But I like your ears." Tryck ran a finger over the shell of his pointy ears, making Carter shiver.

“You do?” His ears had never bothered him before. They defined who he was. But that need to look his best for his mate made him want to hide them, embarrassed that they were different.

Tryck kissed one ear, and then the other. “I told you they are sexy. I wasn’t lying to you.”

Carter blushed as he beamed up at his biker mate. “Thank you.”

Tryck growled when a hand grabbed Carter’s arm, yanking him away from his mate. Tryck lunged, grabbing at the man behind Carter.

“Let him fucking go,” Tryck snarled as his canines slid from their sheaths.

“No, he’s mine.” Teaky yanked at Carter, but Tryck pulled him back.

Carter was terrified. He reached out and wrapped his free arm around Tryck’s neck as he closed his eyes.

Chapter Seven

"Let me go," he cried out. Carter slammed his eyes closed, thinking of Maverick's office. All three shimmered as he struggled to get free.

When he opened his eyes, Maverick, along with three other warriors, were staring at them.

Tryck yanked Teaky's arm, reaching in his pocket and clamping the bracelet around Teaky's wrist. Carter had wondered where that bracelet had gone. "I've carried this around waiting to use it on you." Tryck snarled at Teaky.

Carter yanked free as the Sentries surrounded Teaky. They must have seen the look of terror on Carter's face. He couldn't believe his best friend was at it again. What the hell was wrong with him? In all the years he had known the man, he never acted this way before.

"You can't keep me prisoner," Teaky shouted, his eyes darting around wildly as Tryck held him in place. He could tell his mate was fighting not to kill the man. It was clearly etched in his eyes.

"You'd be surprised what we can do," Maverick barked out menacingly. He turned to Carter. "Is he the one who attacked you?"

Carter nodded, hiding behind his mate. He hated the fact that he was such a chicken heart, but facing his attacker, even if it was his best friend, was more than he could bear right now.

Maverick's clawed hand snapped out, and gashes instantly appeared across Teaky's face. "You harmed one of mine."

Tryck pushed Carter behind Loco, circling around the bound man. "Why? He was your best friend."

Carter wanted the answer to that very question. He could see the veins in Tryck's neck straining, his anger barely leashed.

"He brought Ahm here," Teaky snapped.

"No, I didn't," Carter squeaked out. "Whoever killed his sister started all of this."

"Bitch shouldn't have threatened me." Teaky immediately curled his lips in, realizing too late what he had just confessed.

"You?" Carter's head spun. Did he even know this man at all? This wasn't the best friend he had grown up with. This was a complete stranger standing in front of him. "You started this war? You are the one responsible for wiping out my entire family?" His voice was rising. "You are the one that made us relocate from our tropical paradise?" Carter felt like he was going to be sick. The person responsible for it all had been right under his nose the whole time, smiling in his face and sharing a fucking dwelling with him.

Tryck fisted the front of Teaky's shirt, taking him down to the floor. "I should kill you for what you did to my mate, but I know just the punishment for your crimes." His mate threw his head back. "Ahm!" he shouted, the blue Shadow Elf appearing.

"How dare you call me," Ahm sneered at them all. He took a step toward Carter but Maverick blocked his way.

Tryck got up and shoved Teaky at the blue man. "Here's what you have been seeking. Ask him how he had a key to your bracelet." Tryck grabbed Carter's hand, showing the Elf his mate was free of it, and then pointed to Teaky's hand.

Ahm roared, grabbing Teaky by his throat. The man turned to the room of shifters. "This doesn't make us friends, but the war will end now that I have the one responsible." The man shimmered out with his prisoner.

"That was cold." Maverick shook his head.

"Bitch shouldn't have attacked what was mine," Tryck stated matter-of-factly. He pulled Carter into his arms, kissing him deeply.

"Pussy," Maverick teased. Carter could feel Tryck tensing in his arms. Carter broke the kiss and turned to the Alpha.

"You're just mad that Tryck is one hell of a kisser. Don't be a hater." Carter gave the Alpha a raspberry.

Maverick chuckled, turning to sit behind his desk. "I'm only giving the macho man a hard time. I know he hates PDA."

Carter felt Tryck relax in his arms. He looked up into sapphire blue eyes, seeing how they seemed to burn into his own. Yeah, his man loved him. "I love you."

Tryck growled, pulling Carter up and carrying him to their room.

* * * *

"So how do you play this game?" Carter asked when Keata handed him a controller.

"Watch me." Keata went through the game by himself first, and then turned and smiled at Carter. "Got it?"

Carter scratched his head as he looked at Keata and then his controller. "That's a lot to remember. Why can't we just race?" he'd seen the racing game before, it looked simple enough to start him off with, but Keata wanted to play this complicated one with mazes and coins. There was even a large gorilla in it.

"It will be fun." Keata said the words a little slowly, pronouncing each one carefully.

Carter laughed as the game began, jumping around, trying to make it through the maze before Keata's man did. He became irritated when the high-placed ponytail that Tryck had put his hair in kept smacking him in the face.

Tryck swore Carter to secrecy about playing in his hair. Tryck loved combing it, putting it into different styles for him to wear. He wore the styles with pride, knowing Tryck had done it. The only problem was the lashing he was taking now.

The other mates joined them, cheering both of them on. Carter dove across a canyon, swung from a rope, and then crawled through a mine field until he reached the end, beating Keata's man.

"Okay, I like this one." Carter laughed. He won. *Go him!*

"I want to play." Gabby wobbled over, his belly distended with child. "It looks fun."

"Just don't jump around and pop that kid out." Carter laughed as he handed his controller over.

Gabby waved him away as Tangee grabbed Keata's controller.

"Hello, Carter."

Carter smiled down at little Melonee. "Hey, princess, you want to play the next round?" He had gotten to know the little fey better, spending time with her outside in the backyard on her swing set. She was a little chatterbox, but such a delight to be around.

He didn't regret not telling the tribe about her. She was happy here, and all the men loved her. It would have been tragic not only to her, but the entire household if she was given to the Wood Elves.

This is where she belonged, and Carter would make sure this was where she stayed. She was quite the beauty at the age of eleven, and acted so grown up already.

Typical Fey.

They wanted to grow up so fast, if they only knew being grown up wasn't all it was cracked up to be.

"Yup." She ran over to the two battling it out, waiting anxiously for her turn. Carter wondered what happened to the psycho bitch, Maribel, who tried to take Melonee. Ahm had rescued her from the shifters, but no one had heard anything about her since. He had a feeling they would see her again.

Carter's heart skipped a beat when Tryck wrapped his arms around his waist, hugging him close. "Hi, *gatito*."

Carter would never get enough of that deep whiskey voice. He shuddered at the vibration that ran through him when his mate spoke. "Hey, Biker Bob."

Tryck chuckled. "Who is this man you keep calling me? I feel jealous."

"You should be. He's totally hot. Gets my panties all wet every time he comes near me."

Tryck threw his head back and laughed and Carter couldn't help but laugh as well. His mate's was just that contagious. "If you wear panties and they get all wet, we have problems, *gatito*."

"Maybe I was thinking of someone else." Carter laughed as he raced away from Tryck, his mate chasing him down.

"I'll teach you to think of someone else." Tryck called out, catching him before Carter made it to the top of the stairs. Tryck tossed him over his shoulder, Carter laughing his ass off. He grabbed the back of Tryck's jeans, sneaking a free grope. He loved how Tryck behaved in public now. His mate had come a long way from trying to make him heel.

"I want to make your ears wiggle," Tryck said as he entered their bedroom.

Carter's mouth hung open. "No, you didn't just say that." He smacked Tryck on the ass while still hanging over his shoulder.

Tryck lowered Carter to his feet. "Sí, I want to make them do a happy dance."

Carter must have turned every shade of red imaginable at the mention of his wayward ears. "Don't make fun of them." He pouted.

Tryck pulled the rubber band from Carter's hair, running his thumbs over Carter's points. "Never, they are perfect."

Carter's breath hitched when Tryck snaked his right hand behind Carter's neck, cupping and caressing the nape of his neck, the other hand unsnapping his pants. "So perfect."

Carter opened for Tryck, his mate licking Carter's lips and then diving in. Carter wondered how he had gotten so lucky with a gorgeous man like his mate. Yeah, he was rough around the edges, but that's what made him Tryck Santiago.

He whimpered when Tryck fished his cock out, pumping it slowly, seductively in his hand. "May I tie you up?"

Carter bit his bottom lip and nodded. Tryck walked him backward, kissing him with renewed enthusiasm. Carter rocked his hips, trying to sink his cock into his mate's hand. Hell if it didn't feel good as fuck.

Tryck laid him out onto the bed, pulling his clothes from his body. "I want to drink you, pretty."

Okay, his mind was officially fried. Tryck grabbed the leather strap he had used before from the nightstand, pulling Carter's hands above his head, tying them to the headboard.

"You are such a beautiful sight." Tryck got naked, crawling between Carter's legs.

His hand grabbed the base of Carter's shaft. "Hello, pretty," Tryck said to Carter's cock.

Carter's toes curled when Tryck opened wide and took his cock to the root. He grabbed the headboard, and his mind floated away like a cloud in the sky, the only things left behind were the primal needs of man. The need to have his mate inside of him, loving him, and fucking the hell out of him was making his entire body shiver. His hole quivered at the thought of Tryck filling him.

Carter pulled his legs up, planting his feet on the mattress, his neck straining from the onslaught of sensations coursing through him as his head tilted back, calling out into the night. Tryck was consuming every cell in his body.

He was lost to his mate's touch.

Tryck pulled his hips up, sucking and licking like a madman. Carter's ass was lifted into the air, and Tryck maneuvered around until Carter's legs were over his mate's shoulders. Holy crap, he never thought sex would be this all-consuming.

"Tryck!" Carter shouted to the shadows in the room, his body jerking around as he came. Tryck lowered him, kissing the head of his cock before grabbing the lube.

Tryck's eyes were wild with lust as he inserted two lubed fingers into his aching hole. His hips hitched into the air, wanting Tryck's fingers to go deeper. He mewled as his mate drug his fingers over Carter's hot spot.

"That's it, *gatito*, purr for me." His mate smiled at him seductively, making him shudder with delight. Those blue eyes bore into his as Tryck added a third finger.

His mate leaned forward, his tongue snaking out to capture one of Carter's nipples, sucking it between his lips. Carter squirmed under him, rocking his body at the sensations shooting through him.

He groaned when Tryck used his teeth, biting his nipple as his fingers plunged in and out of Carter's ass.

Oh hell, he wasn't going to survive this. He cried out when Tryck released his nipple, leaning back to look down at him.

Carter pulled at his bound hands, wanting desperately to touch the golden skin before him.

Tryck removed his fingers and then entered him, dropping down onto his forearms, kissing the tips of Carter's ears as they wiggled around. He didn't care what his ears did right now. He wanted his mate to make love to his body in the wickedest of ways.

Carter's lips parted, his eyes darting around as he drowned in the scent of his mate, in the feeling of being totally dominated and taken over. It freed him from thinking. His only job right now was to enjoy every touch, every thrust. And he was enjoying it tremendously.

Tryck pulled Carter's left leg up and placed it over his hip, pushing his hands under Carter's ass, pulling his mate up to him. Carter couldn't take the hurricane brewing inside of him. It was too much. "Tryck," he whimpered.

"Don't fight it, *gatito*. Give it to me, let me take over." His mate's hands smoothed over his body, touching him in the most intimate ways.

Carter fell back into the ocean of Tryck's ministrations, slowly sinking into what his mate was doing to him. His body was no longer his. Tryck owned it along with his heart and soul.

He was home. Carter finally felt like he belonged somewhere, and that somewhere was in Tryck Santiago's arms.

"Come." Tryck growled as he pounded Carter's ass, Tryck's cock rapidly moving in and out of him.

The sensations came to a head, it strained his body and then Carter exploded, his body racing to do as his shifter commanded. His cock pulsed with seed, and his balls drew up tight to his body. "Tryck," Carter cried.

Tryck growled, going deeper, farther before his canines descended, biting into Carter and taking him once again to heaven.

Tryck whined into Carter's shoulder. He could feel Tryck's cock throbbing inside of him, releasing his seed to Carter.

His mate licked the wound closed and then rested his forehead on Carter's chest. "I love you, *gatito*."

He smiled, knowing he finally had a life with someone who loved him and wasn't afraid to show it. "I love you, Biker Bob."

* * * *

Carter limped once he climbed off of the motorcycle, Law and Dagon snickering.

He shot a glare at them.

The other mates piled out of the SUVs and trucks, the warriors walking them into the fast food place. The man behind the counter looked shocked as the Brac pack ordered the entire menu and then some.

Law thought Maverick was insane for bringing them here like this. The Alpha insisted they should come. He wasn't right in the head in his opinion.

"Isn't Cody going to be pissed that we gave our business to his competition?" Carter asked Maverick.

"Nah, shove Keata in his face and he forgets the world exists. We're safe from his wrath." Maverick laughed.

Tryck held Carter's hand, asking him what he wanted to eat. Law was happy his brother was so openly affectionate now. Tryck deserved it. It had been a long time coming. Tryck had sacrificed a lot to make sure his brothers had a pack they could belong to, and his happiness was the final payoff.

"This ain't food," George mumbled. "It's a heart attack waitin' to happen." The cowboy twisted his lips, looking at the menu as if it disgusted him. Law chuckled in agreement. Although he did like a fat, greasy burger once in awhile.

Tank grabbed his mate, kissing him quiet. "Don't get all jealous because it isn't your cooking."

"We can burn the calories off when we get home," Evan whispered to Lewis.

"Now that sounds like a plan." Lewis chuckled as Evan wrapped his arms around his mate.

"They don't have onion rings," Caden complained.

"I'll buy you some later, pup." Mark wrapped his arms around his mate, kissing him on his temple.

"Chicken tenders." Keata raised his hand and shouted.

"I'll order you some." Cody pulled his mate's hand from in the air. "And a strawberry shake." Keata beamed up at him as Cody glared at Maverick. "We have all of this at the diner, ya know."

"I have my reasons." Maverick chuckled.

"Burgers and fries, burgers and fries," Cecil and Blair chanted, sharing a knowing look, Maverick and Kota groaned. Law had heard about their escape when Blair first arrived here in Brac Village. He was glad he wasn't around when they stole the car. From what he'd heard, Cecil had calmed down some from his days of giving everyone hell. But the mate still had piss and vinegar in him.

"I want a shake, too." Johnny pouted.

"I'll buy you anything you want, pretty baby." Hawk lifted Johnny into his arms.

"Don't forget to get Gabby something to eat," Murphy reminded Ludo. "He's craving chocolate and fried mushrooms."

"That doesn't even sound right." Ludo soured his face.

"Come here, you little devils." Heaven chased his sons around the dining area, trying his best to corral the toddlers in. Murdock ran around the other way, lifting them both into his arms.

"Gotcha." The little one's squealed as their daddy carried them over to Heaven.

"I want an ice cream cone." Oliver winked at Micah and laughed.

"I'll buy you one if I can lick it off of you," Micah purred in his ear.

"At least I don't have to serve all these greedy bastards." Tangee laughed.

"They'd all get a Coke and call it a day." Loco kissed his mate's tattoo of flames on his neck.

"It doesn't look clean in here, Gunny. I don't want to eat here." Nero bit his blue gloved fingers.

"Then I'll make you something at home, nutter." Gunnar picked his mate up into his arms.

"This is so bad for your heart." Nicholas shook his head. "I agree with George, just a heart attack waiting to happen."

"Then you can restart it, sexy." Jason laughed.

"I want whatever Remi is having." Drew smiled adoringly up into his mate's face.

"I'm having a Drew burger with a little cock on the side," Remi whispered.

"I heard that." Dagon scrunched his face up in disgust. "Don't forget to pick Melonee up a kid's meal. Gabby wouldn't let her leave his side. Montana can fend for himself."

"I'll have five burgers, four fries, four fried mushrooms, two desserts, and a diet Coke," Law told the man behind the counter that looked like he was ready to run for the door. When he just stared at Law with his mouth hanging open, Law leaned across the counter. "Did you get that?"

The man stood motionless.

"I think we fried his brain." Maverick smiled. "Lean in a little closer, Law."

Law rolled his eyes at the squirrely Alpha. He had searched the backyard but found no pot growing, so he was still at a loss of why the Alpha acted the way he did. And the fucked-up part was, that was all Maverick. The thought was scary as hell.

Law leaned in closer, waving his hand in front of the comatose guy, growling when the smell of fresh morning dew and peaches swam over him.

"*Mine.*" He growled at the man behind the counter.

"God, I love my dreams." Maverick chuckled.

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.

Also by Lynn Hagen

Everlasting Classic ManLove: Brac Pack 1: *Maverick's Mate*
Everlasting Classic ManLove: Brac Pack 2: *Hawk's Pretty Baby*
Everlasting Classic ManLove: Brac Pack 3: *Sunshine's Savior*
Everlasting Classic ManLove: Brac Pack 4: *Remi's Pup*
Everlasting Classic ManLove: Brac Pack 5: *Stormy Eyes*
Everlasting Classic ManLove: Brac Pack 6: *Oliver's Heart*
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