

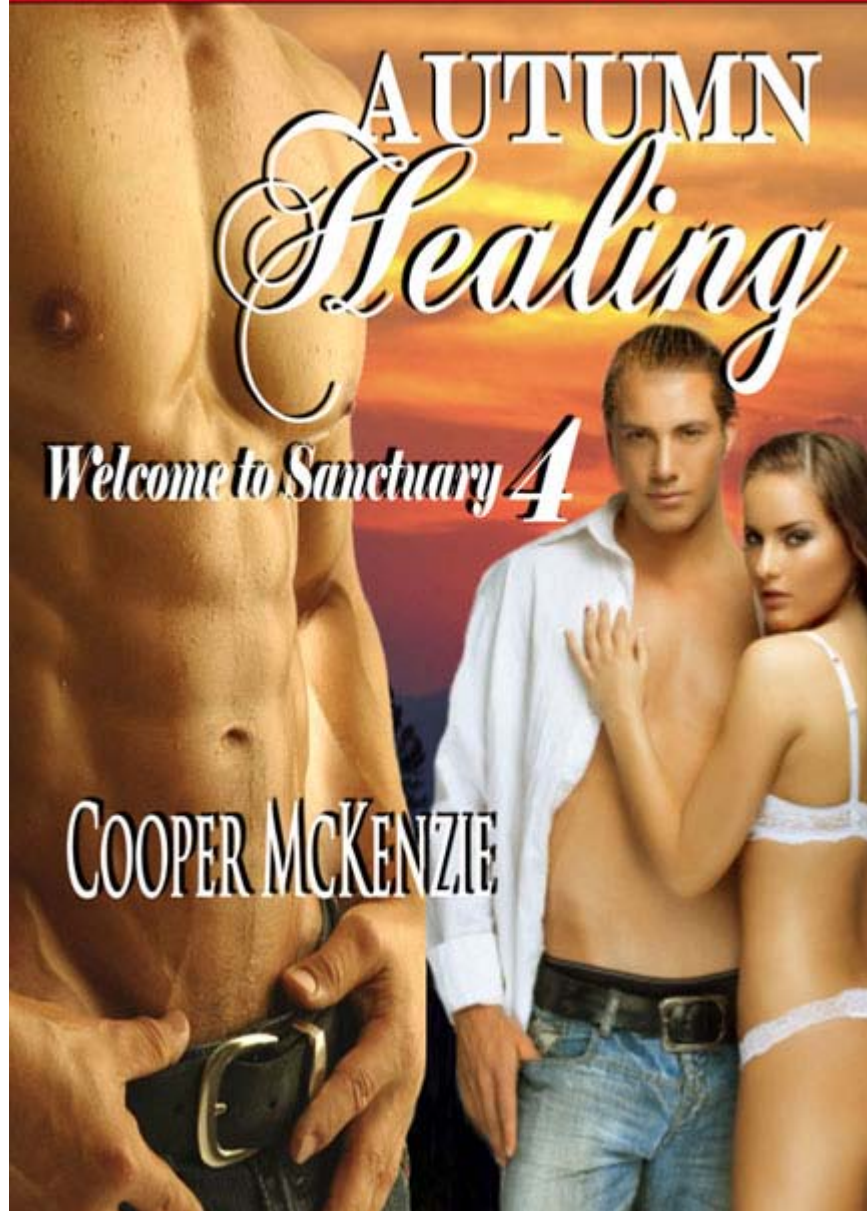
Siren Publishing

*Ménage Amour*

# AUTUMN *Healing*

*Welcome to Sanctuary 4*

COOPER MCKENZIE



## Welcome to Sanctuary 4

# Autumn Healing

Army veteran and midwife Autumn Ryan's spirit is shattered. She just wants to find a cave to hide in. Instead, her father sends her to Sanctuary, where everyone is expectantly waiting for Spring to give birth to the next generation of Sullivan shape-shifting Irish Wolfhounds. As soon as she meets them, Autumn is drawn to Evan and Frank. For the first time in her life, she feels a contentment and peace she's searched the world over for.

Frank and Evan envied their brothers but discounted the possibility that the last Ryan sibling would be their mate. Then Autumn walks into their furniture-making shop, and all they can think about is claiming their mate. But Autumn has painful secrets haunting her.

Can they heal their woman and find the kind of happiness their brothers have found? Will she stay long enough to help Spring have her babies? Or will she cut and run?

*Note! Even though each title in the Welcome to Sanctuary series is stand-alone, we recommend reading this book in sequential order.*

**Genre:** Ménage a Trois/Quatre, Paranormal, Shape-shifter

**Length:** 21,420 words

# **AUTUMN HEALING**

*Welcome to Sanctuary 4*

**Cooper McKenzie**

**MENAGE AMOUR**



**Siren Publishing, Inc.**  
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# **DEDICATION**

To Jillian, Stacy, Stephanie, and all my loyal readers who encourage me to keep writing. Thanks for your continued support!

# AUTUMN HEALING

*Welcome to Sanctuary 4*

**COOPER MCKENZIE**

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## **Chapter One**

Autumn Ryan wondered if she could really go through with what she was about to do. All she wanted to do was find a cave to crawl in until she felt up to dealing with life and people again. Instead, her father had talked her into going to Sanctuary to visit her sisters and brother, all of whom had gotten married three months earlier.

While she'd kept in touch with her siblings, only her father knew why she'd left the Army six months before her enlistment was up. He was the only one she'd allowed to visit while she'd undergone therapy to find her way back to life. He had promised to keep her secret until she was ready to share with the rest of the family.

"You cannot hide forever. They are your family," her father pointed out just the week before during his last visit. "They love you and want to see you. And Sanctuary seems like a very special place. You might find the healing you're looking for there."

So, instead of hunting for a cave with electricity and running water, Autumn packed her belongings into her twenty-year-old SUV and followed the detailed map and directions to Sanctuary, North Carolina that her father had left. She'd only had to stop twice during the seven-and-a-half-hour drive from the nation's capital to the mountains of western North Carolina. Once was for gas and food. The



second time had been to throw up the greasy hamburger she'd eaten.

Just as she was about to give up and try to turn around on the narrow logging road and head to Raleigh where her parents lived, the terrain flattened out and the forest ended. She slammed on the brakes when the road abruptly ended at a pile of logs painted bright orange and yellow.

She froze as the logs morphed into a sand-colored concrete and steel barricade. A barricade she'd driven ambulances around, between, and beside too many times to count. When she began to hear echoes of screaming men in pain, she took a deep breath and blinked several times. She sighed when she once again stared at a pile of brightly colored logs.

"Welcome to Sanctuary," she read aloud the sign just above the blockade. "Okay, so Dad's directions were right on the money. What the hell am I going to do in the middle of the woods? I'm a medic, not a woodsman."

Looking around, she turned left into a parking lot. A small silver car that she thought might belong to her second oldest sister, Summer, sat alone in a gravel parking lot big enough to hold a dozen vehicles. At the far end of the parking lot sat a huge metal building that looked big enough to house an eighteen-wheeler or two.

Once she pulled in and parked next to the car, Autumn sat for a moment, enjoying the stillness and silence. No sirens, no explosions, no city sounds, and no one calling out in pain or low, intense voices trying to reassure an injured or dying soldier that all would be well. All she could hear was the soft whoosh of a gentle breeze through the treetops. Taking a deep breath, she felt a small portion of the tension that had knotted her shoulders for the past year ease.

Looking in the rearview mirror, she took a moment to check out this place where her father had sent her. In the Army, she'd learned that taking a few seconds to stop, look around, and take stock of the surroundings before moving in could save your life and the lives of those depending on you.

The clearing was bigger than she'd first thought and encompassed several acres. Through the shadows from the mountains to the west, she saw a number of buildings set in a half circle. As her gaze took in the scene, she wondered if she hadn't driven down Alice's rabbit hole into Wonderland. Or maybe this was the set for some funky fantasy movie.

Turning in her seat, she looked out the back window to make sure her mirror wasn't playing tricks on her. But the view remained the same. Whatever Sanctuary was, her father had sent her here. This was where her brother and two sisters now lived with two men each. That thought sent a small stab of jealousy through Autumn as she took in the scenery.

Closest to the parking lot and the metal garage building sat an ornate Victorian house. It was painted peach with hunter green and navy blue trim. A wraparound porch and three-story circular tower were decorated with intricately cut gingerbread work.

She wondered what it would be like to sit in one of the rocking chairs and just spend an afternoon watching the grass grow or the clouds float by.

*Hmm, sounds like a plan. I only hope the home's owner won't mind.*

Next was the biggest, reddest barn she'd ever seen. Only it wasn't a barn. It stood three stories tall with a wide covered deck out front and lots of windows on all three levels. There was a sign just above the first floor windows, but she couldn't read it from here.

Moving on, she took in a trio of log cabins, each with a wide front porch. They looked like some of the other cabins she'd seen on her drive through the mountains. At least they looked like they belonged in this mountain hideaway. The one to the left was smaller and obviously decades older than its companions. Its logs had weathered silver while the others appeared much newer in construction. Could it be the original homestead?

The last building had Autumn swallowing hard as she fisted her

hands. The gray granite castle was built of stone with a flat roof and a square turret at each corner. The pale-gray structure too closely resembled the desert castle where she had been held prisoner for two weeks before being rescued. Sure, it looked exotic and medieval, but just the sight of it caused Autumn's stomach to knot and her breathing to grow harsh. The big difference between this building and the one in her nightmares was that satellite dishes and antennas topped one of the turrets.

Climbing from the truck, Autumn decided to leave her things until she was sure she would be staying. As she locked and slammed the driver's door closed, she heard the whine of machinery coming from the metal building at the end of the parking lot.

Crossing the parking lot toward a well-marked path that circled in front of all of the buildings, she took a deep breath and froze. Instead of clean mountain air as she expected, her lungs filled with an aroma so enticing she froze mid-step. Another breath and she identified individual scents of healthy male sweat, fresh cut wood, and some kind of spice.

She gasped as her body responded immediately. Her nipples beaded, her clit throbbed, and her pussy flowed with sex. Never before had she been so aroused. Following the scent like a cat tracking a mouse, Autumn approached the garage. The scent grew stronger the closer she got to the open sliding door.

Just inside the open garage door, she stopped. Halfway across the room, two men were feeding a large, thick sheet of wood at a huge machine. She decided to wait until they finished before making her presence known. Her next thought was to question to which of her siblings these two fine specimens belonged.

One of the men lifted his head and looked out of the corner of his eye for a second before returning his attention to the wood panel in his hands. Something deep in her pelvis and behind her clit clenched in reaction. What the hell was going on?

In profile, the man was gorgeous. She couldn't wait to see what

his entire face looked like. The knowledge that he had a twin knotted her nipples even tighter.

Her immediate physical response shocked her.

She had been around thousands of well-built men in the past six years. More than a few of them had been good-looking in one way or another, and during her first year in the Army, she dated and slept with many of them. After her first year in the Army she'd accidentally overheard two of her conquests talking about how she was sleeping her way up the ranks. As they comparing notes as to her performance, she took a long, hard look at herself. She didn't like what she saw. She was, indeed, becoming a slut. After that, she looked at anyone in a green uniform as a patient, not a potential sexual partner.

Then "The Incident" happened and since that time, men had become a source of fear, not pleasure.

Until now. For the first time in more than a year, she wanted to lie down on the closest flat surface and beg for one of these men to fuck her boneless.

## Chapter Two

Hearing an almost silent footstep, Evan Sullivan looked away from what he was doing just enough to see someone standing in the doorway. When he realized it was a woman and she didn't appear to be threatening, he turned his attention back to what he was doing. They could not stop planing the tabletop now without ruining it. And he and his brother, Frank, had spent the four days piecing the damn complicated thing together. This was the tabletop's final trip through the planer and any hesitation would mar the top.

Once the wood cleared the machine, he helped Frank carry it to the sawhorses where they would do the fine sanding and then staining and varnishing. Only then did he turn and acknowledge the visitor. Taking off his safety goggles and sawdust-covered baseball hat, he headed for the open doorway.

"Hi, can I help you?"

"I was wondering if you could tell me where I could find my brother and sisters?" the woman asked as she stepped farther into the building.

She took three steps in then stopped and assumed an "at ease" stance that spoke of military training. She looked familiar and yet different than the pictures he had seen of Autumn Ryan, the only member of his in-laws' family they had yet to meet. Her jaw-length curly hair was redder than that of her siblings and longer than in the last pictures she'd sent just a week before the wedding. The wild curls looked cute on her.

As he approached, so he didn't have to yell at her, the fear and hunger he saw in her amber eyes surprised him.

His gaze dropped and he took in the black ARMY T-shirt and khaki cargo pants that hung from her. While her sneakers looked brand new, the rest of her outfit appeared worn. Forcing his eyes back to her face, he saw she hadn't noticed his perusal. She was busy looking around the workshop. He thought it was just as well as he didn't want to scare her to death.

Taking another step, the scent of fresh apple cider and spices teased his nose. *Mate*, his brain registered. With that, his cock filled, and an intense craving for this woman urged him to tackle and claim her. This was the woman destined to spend the rest of her life between him and his brother.

Turning his head, he looked at Frank who'd moved up beside him. Did he recognize her as well? Or was he the only one affected by the earthy scent wafting on the air?

When Frank turned and met his gaze with wide eyes, Evan nodded with a single drop of his chin. The brothers smiled at each other and then turned to look at their mate. He was surprised to find her staring at them with an uneasy expression.

"This is Sanctuary, isn't it?" she asked when he hadn't answered in a timely manner.

"You must be Autumn," Evan said.

He slowly closed the last few feet between them. He did not stop moving forward until he wrapped his arms around her back and hugged her close.

She immediately went stiff in his arms. "Uh, yeah, that's me," she said.

She sounded lost and confused but felt like heaven in his arms.

"I'm Evan Sullivan, and he's Frank," he said as Frank eased up behind her.

"Welcome to Sanctuary," Frank said by way of greeting.

Evan leaned down and nuzzled his nose along the side of her neck where it flowed out into her shoulder. He took a deep breath to confirm that the delicious scent of their mate was, indeed, coming

from this woman. Hugging her even tighter, he frowned. Under the loose, baggy clothes, she was thin. Too thin. He could feel her ribs under her shirt.

“Mmmm, mate.”

When he released her, Frank twirled her around and gave her a hug and a sniff of his own. When he felt how delicate their woman was under her baggy clothes, he looked over her shoulder at Evan as if asking what was wrong with her.

Evan shrugged in response.

When Autumn squirmed in his arms, Frank released her with a sigh of regret. She eased to the side and back, not stopping until she was out of their reach. Shifting slightly, she positioned herself to keep them both in sight.

What the hell had happened to her to make her so wary of men? And how were they going to claim her as their mate if she wouldn't even let them touch her?

Before he could voice his concerns, Autumn wrapped both arms around her middle as if to hold herself together. In seconds, the scent that swirled around them soured with her fear.

“We're mates, aren't we? Like our siblings? That's why I'm feeling this way, right?”

## **Chapter Three**

Autumn cringed when she heard the words that had just come out of her mouth. What the hell was she thinking? To admit you felt emotion was to give them the power. She remembered her drill instructor screaming that during basic training when she and her fifty or so comrades-in-training were soaking wet, freezing cold, beyond exhausted, or starving.

She'd taken that sentiment to heart. After trying to find comfort in the arms of a different man every night, she'd finally realized there was no comfort to be found. After that, she became the ultimate Army medic, caring for her patients with skill and competency while ignoring any sexual innuendoes that were tossed her way. It took only a few months before the men who had dealt with her on a daily basis changed her nickname from Runaround to Stone Cold Ryan.

Looking from one brother to the other, her breathing stopped. Two gorgeous men watched her with an intense attraction mixed with concern. She had seen pictures of these men with their brothers. The latest photos had been when they stood in their wedding finery with their parents and the three happy couples.

Though the brothers had similar features, each set of twins had different shades of brown hair. Evan and Frank's were a sandy brown, which they wore long enough to pull back into bands at the base of their skulls.

Their bone structures and features were strong, masculine, and identical. The only difference she could see between the two men was that Evan's eyes were bright green while Frank's were sky blue. They stood several inches over six feet and were as wide as doors with



muscles rippling under skintight, sweat-soaked T-shirts.

“What are you feeling, ladybug?” Frank asked as he eased another step closer. His gently spoken question brought her mind back to the sexual hunger zinging through her body like flies on steroids.

Could she put into words what she was feeling? Sure, she’d read erotic romances, but she’d never been one to verbalize her feelings or make demands. Looking into Frank’s sparkling eyes, she took a deep breath.

Since she didn’t know how to lie, she answered honestly. “My nipples ache they’re so tight. My pussy is creaming so hard my panties are wet. Though I’ve never been a hugger before, I want to snuggle with you, and it doesn’t matter which one. I feel like my body is going crazy.”

She didn’t move when the men growled deep in their chests before closing the small distance between them so they formed a triangle. Each man wrapped an arm around her back when her knees wobbled and she swayed.

At their touch, the crazy, itchy feeling lessened, and she sighed with relief. She looked from one to the other. “What’s wrong with me?”

The men grinned and moved even closer. Evan shifted around behind her as Frank moved to stand chest-to-breast with her, making a human sandwich with her as the filling. She closed her eyes and relaxed as their heat engulfed her. Then she gasped as long, thick erections pressed into both her belly and lower back.

All at once, the tiny, nagging voice that demanded she volunteer for every dangerous assignment and stay too busy to think, as she kept looking for an ever-elusive something that would bring her happiness and contentment, stilled. For the first time in her life, Autumn felt like she belonged.

“Nothing’s wrong with you, sweetness. It’s the pull of the mating bond,” Evan said. He slid an arm between her chest and his brother’s and cupped a hand under one full breast, causing her breath to stop

again. "It's stronger than an attraction you would feel for another human because the Fates have determined we are to spend our lives together."

"Really?" she asked, not sure she believed him. "I've never felt like this with anyone before."

The two men froze. "How many men have you been with?" Frank asked, his voice growly with suspicion.

Autumn's belly clenched at his dark and disapproving tone. Instead of looking at him, she dropped her gaze and stared straight ahead as she forced out the word, "A few," she answered cryptically, not wanting to admit the truth, "but none of them were serious."

She was twenty-five years old, far beyond being an innocent virgin. Blinking hard, she tried to keep sudden, unexplainable tears hidden. A good soldier did not cry, no matter what.

She stiffened but did not fight when a finger slid under her chin and lifted her head until she looked up into Frank's face.

"How many is a few, ladybug?" Frank asked, his tone now soft and gentle.

"It doesn't matter," she answered, suddenly feeling defensive. She then sniffed as a single tear escaped her left eye to roll down her cheek. When Frank caught the tear on the pad of his index finger and licked it, her pussy gushed again.

She tried to read his expression, but before she could make sense of it, he lifted his head to look over her head. All she could see was his strong, tanned jaw and neck. She was still looking up when the two men pulled their arms from around her and took a step back.

Immediately, the lonely feeling of inadequacy that had haunted her all her life returned. No matter how well she did in school, how many awards or accomplishments she'd received in the Army, there always seemed to be someone who was better. A little smarter, a little faster, a little stronger. She'd always felt out of step, always racing to catch up, always trying to make the grade. Even here, with these two, she suddenly felt like she had failed.

"I'm sorry," she said in a soft, tight voice just before she turned and headed toward the open doorway at a fast march. "I'll go say hello to my family before I leave."

As she walked away, a squeezing ache blossomed in her chest.

"What the fuck?" one of the brothers cursed.

"Where the *hell* do you think you're going?" the other growled.

In the next second, two large, hard hands clamped onto her shoulders. She stopped walking but did not look back.

"I'm going up there," she waved toward the semicircle of houses, "to find my brother and sisters and say hello before I get back on the road."

"No way," was flatly stated in a stereo masculine growl.

"You're staying here where you belong," the man on her left said. Tilting her head to the side and up, she saw it was Evan of the bright blue eyes. "You are our mate."

"What does that mean?" Autumn asked.

"Being our mate means that for the rest of your life we will fulfill your every wish, want, and desire. We will keep you safe, happy, and satisfied in every way you can think of," Frank answered. "We will never leave you, never cheat on you, and will love you until our dying breaths."

"Huh?"

"Come back inside," Evan requested, his voice so deep and sexy a hot thrum of awareness shot through her.

He turned her around and then each man took possession of a hand. As soon as their skin slid over hers and they led her back inside, the strange pain in her chest eased.

Once inside, Frank let go of her hand long enough to slide the oversized door closed with a loud rattling clatter. Though they now stood in near darkness, Autumn felt no fear, only anticipation.

"Do you think that will keep anyone out?" Autumn glanced at the tall metal doors.

Evan shrugged as he shifted to face her. "Probably not, but it will

slow them down. And if someone does come inside, we'll have plenty of warning."

"Warning?" Autumn asked as Evan wrapped his arms around her lower back and lifted her off the ground. She grabbed his shoulders as warm, hard lips covered hers.

"Mm-hmm."

He brushed his lips back and forth across hers in a sensual introduction, causing her toes to curl inside her sneakers. She sighed as he nipped at her lips, first the top one and then the bottom one. Then he traced the seam between them with the tip of his tongue. She'd been kissed before, but this man took kissing to a whole new level of expertise.

With a sigh, she parted her lips to allow his exploring tongue entrance. In the next second, she gave herself over to the need to mate her tongue with his. Soon they were dancing back and forth between their open mouths. When his hips canted forward and he pressed his cock against her belly, she shifted against the solid rod, amazed at the white-hot blaze he ignited in her with such a simple, yet bold touch.

She was ready to tear off Evan's clothes to get to bare skin when a low growl broke the silence behind her. She whined when Evan tore her lips from hers to look over her shoulder.

"What?" Evan growled, clearly not happy with the interruption.

She felt heat grow behind her just before Frank slid his arms between her and Evan. He pulled at her middle, trying to get his brother to release her.

"It's my turn." His words sounded deep and growly while at the same time whiney, like a petulant child demanding his turn on the swing.

## **Chapter Four**

Evan made a grumbling sound deep in his throat, startling her. “I’m not finished,” he said as he tried to take a step back still holding her tight.

“Guys, I am not a doggie toy to be fought over,” she said, trying not to giggle at the mental image her words invoked.

The men froze and looked at her. “You’re not?” Frank asked with a sexy grin that sent shivers of awareness and hunger from tits to clit.

“No, she’s a cuddly baby-doll,” Evan said with a chuckle.

He shifted her higher against his body and dropped his hands to just below her ass cheeks. He parted her legs around him, and Autumn found herself wrapping them around his back. She sucked a breath when he nuzzled his cheek against hers before licking at her earlobe.

“Go away, Frank, you’re bothering us,” he said softly when Frank growled again.

“She’s my mate, too,” Frank said, moving even closer. He rubbed his face through her hair before dropping down and caressing the back of her neck with his lips and chin.

“Oooo,” Autumn breathed as she tightened her grip on Evan.

She had never before thought of the back of her neck as an erogenous zone. But as Frank gently brushed nibbling kisses from the edge of her shirt up to her hairline, her juices flowed freely as she squirmed in Evan’s arms.

“Ah,” she moaned when he shifted his attentions to the side of her neck.

At the same time, Evan kissed his way across her cheek to the

opposite side. They gently nibbled on her earlobes for a few seconds before working their way to where neck met shoulders.

When they licked that spot at the same time, she trembled and began to pant. They then took the skin between their teeth causing her pussy, clit, and everything to clench even tighter. Two heartbeats later, an orgasm unlike anything she'd ever felt before rolled through her.

Instead of releasing her, the brothers began to suck at the skin, prolonging her release until she felt like she'd just run a marathon straight up the side of a mountain.

"I can't breathe," she whimpered.

The men lifted their heads and Frank eased back just enough for Evan to set her down. When her knees gave way, they reached out and caught her between them once again.

"Are you okay?" Frank asked. He turned her around and pulled her to lean against his powerful chest with his hands wrapped around her hips.

"Mmmm," was all she could get her mouth to say.

Evan moved away, but Autumn did not have enough brain cells firing to worry about where he'd gone.

Opening her eyes, she looked up at Frank and smiled. "Wow."

"Wow, indeed," Frank said as he leaned down and kissed her lips.

Unlike Evan's kiss of instant arousal, Frank's gentled and soothed. He eased her back to earth from the stars while at the same time keeping her arousal from completely dying away. When he finally lifted his head, Autumn found herself clinging to him like a koala to a tree branch.

She wanted, no, needed, more than a few hugs and kisses or a couple of hours of hot sex in a rented room. From these two men, she wanted all they could give her. Unfortunately, all she had to offer in return was herself, a broken shell of a woman. Shoving that thought away, she decided it was time to ask for what she wanted.

"Mmmm," she breathed as she laid her cheek on his chest, trying

to snuggle even closer. "I want more."

At her soft admission, Frank's chest moved under her cheek and she felt more than heard him take a quick breath. He tightened his arms around her before slowly, slowly easing his hands across her back until his hands rested on her hips. His fingers spread out to cover her ass cheeks.

She steeled herself, preparing for him to bolt with Evan hot on his heels at her bold demand. Instead, he took a half step back and looked down at her. His expression was both wary and hopeful. In the next second, Evan leaned over his brother's shoulder, wearing the same expression.

"Are you sure you want us to claim you?" Evan asked.

"Because if we do, that's it. You are ours forever. There will be no other men. We don't share," Frank continued.

"What about other women? Will I have to share you?"

The brothers shook their heads, looking serious as death. "Whether or not we claim you, there will never be another woman for either of us. We've found our mate."

At their words, Autumn felt the big, cold, empty space in her chest where love was supposed to reside shrink. The men eased forward, so the three of them once again formed a triangle.

"Do you think we could fool around without you claiming me?"

Both men's eyes widened as they moaned softly and shifted their hips. When she glanced down, she saw why they looked so uncomfortable. They were aroused. What had to be huge male erections pushed hard against the plackets of each man's jeans.

Without embarrassment, Evan reached down and adjusted his cock into a more comfortable position. "Sweetheart, we'll do this however you want, but don't make us wait too long to claim you or you'll have two very grumpy wolfhounds following your every move."

Autumn nodded. "So, how do we do this?"

How was she supposed to satisfy and please two men? How could

any woman? Would they get jealous if she spent time with one without the other?

Before she could panic and make a run for it, Evan leaned down and licked at her lips. "First, you have to stop thinking so hard."

"Noticed that, did you?"

"It was kind of hard to miss," Frank said. "What's wrong?"

"Do I really have to tell you?" she asked, dropping her head forward as her cheeks began to burn with shyness.

"If you want us to fix it, you have to tell us what's wrong," Evan responded.

Autumn mulled over his words for a few seconds before nodding. "That makes sense. Okay, but please don't think I'm stupid or anything. How am I supposed to make the two of you happy? Will you get jealous if I spend more time with one brother than the other? Say I have a fight with Frank, will you always take his side? Will I always be the odd person out?"

When the men just looked at her with wide, surprised eyes, Autumn turned and walked away. She couldn't do this. She was an emotional wreck by herself. How was she supposed to heal herself while the need to be with these two pulled at her?

She'd barely taken three steps when hands once again clamped down on her shoulders, holding her still. In the next second, hot, hard male bodies pressed against her sides and long, thick, denim-covered erections brushed against the back of her arms.

When hard hands sharply smacked her ass, she squeaked in protest.

"First of all, you don't worry about pleasing us. Just standing there breathing makes us happier than you'll ever know," the brother to her right leaned in close and said softly.

"Second, you do not walk away when we are talking about something important and never ever hide your emotions. If you're mad or upset about something, say so," the one to the left continued. "We can take anything except you walking away from us. If you



haven't noticed, we're a little bigger than you are."

That earned them a watery snort as she thought about how easily it would be to put them on their asses without breaking a sweat.

"If you're sad, tell us. We'll hold you while you cry, and then we'll go out and do anything we can to put a smile back on your face," the one on the right said.

"Sure, there will be days when one or the other of us will want you all to ourselves. That's okay," the left one continued.

"As long as you love us both and we all communicate, things should be fine. When decisions need to be made, we sit down and make them together. If you ask me something and I say no, don't go to Evan and try to talk him into allowing it. A no from one of us is no from both of us," Frank, to her right, finished.

"And if I do?" She lifted her face and looked into Frank's bright blue eyes.

"Be prepared to be turned over my knee and spanked."

Autumn's eyes went wide, and her nipples clenched at the thought. "Really?"

Frank blinked. A smile that brought to mind all her dark sexual fantasies crossed his face. He reached up and wrapped his hand around the back of her neck and began to rub his thumb back and forth. "Like that idea, do you, ladybug? Do you like to get spanked?"

Autumn swallowed hard. "I don't know," she said. "While I've had sex before, it was usually of the 'wham-bam-thank-you-ma'am' variety, not so much kinky sex. Though I have read—"

"Read what?" Evan asked.

He took her hand and lifted it to his lips. After kissing the palm, he licked his way up each digit before pulling her pinkie into his mouth and sucking it deep inside.

Autumn gasped as shivers flashed through her body. Her pussy clenched, and her knees weakened. Before she could collapse, the men moved even closer. Evan pushed his erection into the side of her left ass cheek then rubbed it back and forth. As if they'd

choreographed the move, Frank did the same on her right.

She moaned as feelings of need, want, and a strange aching filled her to overflowing.

“Answer Evan’s question, Autumn,” Frank urged in a deep, dark voice that reminded Autumn of blackstrap molasses. Dark and rich and oh–so-sweet. The fingers of one hand continued to work out the knots at the base of her neck as his other hand reached for her waistband and began to undo her belt.

“I read erotic romance,” she confessed on a sigh.

“Mmmm,” Evan reached down and began to pull her shirt from her pants as he leaned in and brushed a kiss over her lips. “Has what you read given you any ideas? Any fantasies you’d like to try?”

“A few,” Autumn admitted, suddenly feeling shy.

The men shared a deep, sexy laugh. Frank leaned in and kissed her. Evan released her hand and slid both hands under her shirt. She moaned softly as he stroked his way from waistline up her chest. When he cupped a breast in each hand, her overactive brain shut down, and all she could do was feel.

All she could do was gasp as Frank pulled her away from his brother and swept her up into his arms.

## Chapter Five

If they wouldn't risk running into Spring, Frank would have carried their mate to their bedroom on the third floor of the Wash House. But he knew he couldn't last that long. When Evan met his gaze, he read the same intense hunger that he felt in his own bones. There was no way either one of them could wait long enough to get to a room with a bed.

In that instant, he understood why his brothers had been as rash as they had been with their own mates. All he could think about was getting Autumn naked so he could bury his throbbing cock deep inside his mate. He knew Evan felt the same way and that they would not be leaving the workshop until they had done so. He also knew in his bones that before they let this building, Autumn would be begging for them to claim her, and they would.

Frank knew what they had to do. It wouldn't be pretty, especially for Autumn's first time, but he vowed they would make it up to her soon. Right now, desire rode too close to the surface for any of them to last long. But with every surface in the room covered with wood dust, the workshop was too dirty for what they were about to do.

Evan angled his head toward the back of the room. Frank nodded in silent agreement and followed. In seconds, they crossed the room and passed through the door that led to the office. Without hesitation, they kept going until they entered the storage area at the back of the building.

A glance toward the woman in his arms and Frank grinned even as his cock throbbed with excitement. Autumn watched with curiosity, but he did not read fear in her. That was good. She felt it

and wanted the mating, even if she didn't know exactly what pulled her toward them. Even if she asked, he would have a hard time explaining except to tell her what his mother had told them when they had come of age.

"The Fates have matched you with the perfect mate, and if you are lucky, very lucky, you will find each other. Then, for the rest of your lives, you will find happiness, contentment, and joy."

Autumn shifted in his arms, and he looked down at her. "You okay, sweetheart?"

She nodded. "Did you guys make all this furniture?" she asked as she looked around the storage area. Tables, chairs, benches, and parts of handcrafted beds half-filled the room. Unlike the workshop, they tried to keep this area clean. The furniture was wrapped in plastic to keep them dust-free as they waited for delivery to their new homes.

Frank nodded and leaned down for a kiss. He wasn't sure how much longer he could wait, but he knew it wouldn't be long. He could feel his dog jerking hard at his tenuous control, demanding to claim its mate.

With one eye on where he was going, he followed Evan to the oversized dining table in the center of the room. Along the way, his brother picked up a stack of blankets from near the doorway. The table was the perfect height for what they needed. By the time he reached the table, Evan had several packing-blankets spread across the table to soften their woman's resting place.

Frank set their woman on her feet next to the table, and with an inner strength he didn't realize he had, took a step back. But Autumn would have none of it. She followed, and, reaching for the hem of his shirt, she pushed it up his chest.

"Mmmm," she hummed as she leaned in.

He sucked a breath at the feel of her tongue against his skin. His cock screamed that he'd better speed things up or else he was going to embarrass himself by coming in his pants. Before he could stop her, she'd turned away and did the same thing to Evan, who growled in

response.

Then she stepped back. Reaching down, she grabbed the hem of her own shirt and in the next heartbeat stripped it over her head and dropped it to the floor behind her, exposing a bright red sports bra which followed the T-shirt to the floor.

“I feel so...so...so out of control,” she said as she toed off her sneakers. “All I want is to get naked and rub my body all over yours and more.”

With that admission, Frank’s fear of moving too quickly evaporated like smoke in a high wind. She felt the mating pull just as strongly as he did. All would be well.

After pulling his shirt over his head and taking off his shoes and socks, he undid the button of his jeans. As he pulled the zipper down, he checked the others’ progress. Evan wore only a pair of loose black boxers.

Autumn, wearing only a pair of red boy short panties, stood with her arms wrapped around her middle, staring at the floor. She was too thin, shadows delineating each rib and her hipbones prominent. She looked tense as a bowstring and scared as a kitten in a room full of hungry dogs.

“Autumn? Sweetheart, what’s wrong?” he asked as he shoved his jeans down his legs and struggled to get his lower legs out of them.

As soon as he was free, he crossed to her. Evan beat him there by seconds and wrapped himself around their woman.

“Ladybug, what’s the matter?” Frank asked as he stroked her spine.

Evan leaned in and nuzzled his cheek against hers. “Do you want to stop, sweetness?”

She shook her head. “I just need a minute. It’s been awhile since I’ve never been naked in front of anyone. I’ve been sick,” she admitted softly, as if they couldn’t see for themselves. “I picked up a parasite in the desert, but I got treatment, and I’m better now.”

Evan huffed a sigh of relief, which matched his own.

“Look at me, sweetheart,” Frank said, shifting to rest his chin at the edge of her shoulder.

It took a few seconds, but finally, she turned her head so they were nose to nose.

“You are beautiful. You have nothing to be ashamed of. We’re your mates. We’re allowed to see you naked, and honestly, I can’t wait to explore every inch of you.”

He watched her anxiety ease and her smile grow mischievous just before she gave a tiny nod. “Does that mean I get to explore your bodies, too?”

“Absolutely!” the brothers said in unison.

“Now?”

“Anytime you want, ladybug,” Frank answered as he pressed his cock into her side. “We are at your command. All you have to do is ask.”

She nodded then bit at her lower lip. She looked excited, but nervous. “I’m no good at being in charge when it comes to sex.”

## **Chapter Six**

Autumn held her breath, waiting for the brothers' response. When it was deep masculine laughter, she relaxed.

"Don't worry about it, ladybug," Frank said as the two men shoved their boxers to the floor and stepped out of them.

Before she could get a good look at their groins, they knelt before her and helped her out of her panties. She looked down and wondered what their response would be as her secret was revealed.

"Ooooh, lookie here, our mate has a tattoo," Evan said once she was naked.

"It's a dog head," Frank said as he looked up at her and winked.

Both men then brushed their fingers over the tattoo that sat just inside her prominent right hipbone. Neither man commented on the pussy that was bare except for the small triangle that pointed to the top of her clit

"It's a wolfhound," she clarified. "A group of girls from my class went and got them once we graduated from basic training. The others chose butterflies or flowers or hearts. When I saw this on the wall I had to have it, though I couldn't explain why. I guess now I know."

Evan looked at her with a proud expression before leaning in and kissing the wolf. Frank's expression was awe just before he leaned in and licked at the tattoo. Then a hand ran up the inside of her left leg, weakening her knees once again.

Evan caught her before she hit the floor and shifted her to straddle his lap. His cock pressed into her lower belly, and her nipples raked across his chest hair, causing them both to suck a breath. He wrapped his big hands around her hips and tilted them forward. That move

pressed her erect clit against the base of his cock. She moaned when he began to lift and lower her so she rode up and down the underside of his thick, solid length.

Shifting her shoulders, Autumn dragged her sensitive nipples across his chest as Frank turned her head so he could kiss her.

When she could not stand the multiple stimulations any longer without going completely out of her mind, she broke the kiss.

“Please. Fuck me,” she whimpered.

Without a word, Evan lifted her until the rounded head of his cock brushed against her entrance. Then he just held her there, suspended above him until she turned to glare at him.

“Can I claim you as well?” he asked in a deep growly voice that only made her ache more for him to fill her empty cunt.

Not able to find the words, she nodded in response. When he quickly lowered her, filling her to capacity with his cock, she cried out as she clenched at his shoulders.

“Oh shit, you’re so tight,” he growled.

Still controlling her hips, he held her still with their groins tightly pressed together as she adjusted to his size. Glancing into his face, she knew the wait was costing him but what few brain cells still worked appreciated his effort. She tried to relax the muscles that were clenching around his cock as she grew accustomed to the overly full feeling caused by this well-endowed male.

A few seconds later, a need for more rose up in her. Shifting her legs so she had control of her legs, she began to lift and lower herself, riding his cock in long, slow strokes.

Looking into his eyes, she grinned at the intense expression of passion he wore. “Like that, do you?”

“Mmmm,” he responded, as his fingers tightened over her and he began to move her faster. “You have no idea how much.”

“God, that is so damn sexy,” Frank growled, pulling her attention away from the man she rode.

Looking at Evan’s twin, she found him slowly stroking his cock



as he watched her every move. The dark, fleshy length with its dark crimson head looked yummy. It had been ages since she'd given head. She hoped that it was like riding a bicycle—you never forgot.

“Stand up, Frank,” she gently commanded.

He met her eyes for a single heartbeat as if questioning her words. But he obviously saw she was serious, for he scrambled to his feet and moved to stand next to them.

Before she took him in, she looked at Evan who moved her even faster up and down his length. “You don't mind, do you?”

He looked shocked. “Hell no. Do whatever feels right, sweetness.”

Autumn gave him a quick kiss before turning back to the cockhead only an inch from her lips. Parting her lips, she extended her tongue and licked the drop of clear fluid from his slit.

“Mmmm,” she moaned.

Opening her mouth even wider, she took the first couple of inches and she swirled her tongue around the head. Frank growled as his hands slid through her hair to cup the back of her head. His hips shifted as she began to bob up and down on him, taking more and more of his length in.

Autumn hoped that by dividing her attention between the brothers she would be able to hold off her orgasm, but her plan failed when Evan held her hips still and began to thrust up into her harder and faster than before.

As a ball of white-hot fire built just behind her clit, she knew she needed one more thing to make this encounter complete. Pulling off Frank's cock, she met Evan's burning hot-green gaze.

“Claim me,” she ordered roughly.

Without waiting for his response, she returned to sucking Frank while gently cupping his balls with one hand. Long before she was finished with him, he pulled from her mouth. When she reached for him, he stepped beyond her reach as if knowing what was coming.

“Come, sweetness,” Evan ordered gruffly.

He wrapped a hand around the back of her neck and tilted her

head to the left just before he bit her. The instant his teeth entered her skin, she screamed as the fireball of her orgasm exploded. A heartbeat later, heat filled her core as Evan came. His roar was only slightly muffled by the shoulder he was sucking on.

Her orgasm rolled through her like waves in a bottle until Evan pulled his teeth from her and licked at her skin. Only then did it settle and she relaxed into his embrace, though a strange tension continued to buzz within her.

She snuggled her face into his neck with a smile. “Mmmm, good,” she breathed as she licked at a drop of sweat on his skin.

Evan cuddled her for a few minutes then she felt Frank’s hands rubbing up and down her back as well.

“Don’t fall asleep yet, ladybug,” Frank said, sounding tense.

Though all she wanted to do was curl up and take a nap, she knew there was more to come. The deep timbre of Frank’s voice seemed to reignite the fire of passion in her. When Frank eased her from Evan’s lap, she didn’t fight the transition. She didn’t even open her eyes. She just snuggled into the warmth of Frank’s chest as he picked her up and carried her a few steps and then laid her down on her back.

Opening her eyes, she found herself lying on the blankets Evan had laid on the table earlier. Frank positioned her so her ass was barely on the table. He pushed her knees up to her chest as he stepped in close.

“I’m sorry, ladybug, but I can’t wait any longer,” he said just before forcefully sliding his cock into her full length on the first thrust.

Immediately, the hunger, that only seconds before had eased, returned full force. She could see it was costing him to hold still and give her time to adjust, but she didn’t need it. She needed him. All of him. Right this second.

“Fuck me, Frank,” she moaned.

The words had barely hit the air when he pulled out and began to fuck her fast and hard. The fact that her body responded with an

instantaneous spiraling of her own need did not surprise her. She had a feeling this was how it would be with these men from now on. She only hoped they wouldn't do this in front of the rest of the family. It might get embarrassing.

Her orgasm balled up so fast and so tight that the muscles down the front of her body clenched, pulling her head off the table. Needing something to hold onto to keep her from flying away like an overfilled balloon, Autumn grabbed Frank's arms and pulled on them until he lay hunched over her.

"Claim me as your mate, Frank," she said.

Turning her head so he had access to the left side, she waited. It only took a few seconds for him to begin fucking her so hard and fast she couldn't track his movements. Then he slid one arm under her back and lifted her head and shoulders from the table.

Again, she screamed and came as teeth sunk into her shoulder. And, as with Evan, her orgasm seemed to set Frank off as well. He howled as he thrust his cock in her as deep as it would go. She felt it pulse in the same rhythm that he sucked from her skin.

When he pulled his teeth free, she felt herself go completely limp. She couldn't even lift her arms to hug Frank as he lay over her. For the first time in her adult life, Autumn Ryan felt relaxed, happy, and without a care in the world.

"God, ladybug, what you do to me," Frank said as he licked at the place where he'd bit her. "I can't feel my feet."

"Hmmm," was the only response Autumn could make.

She whined when Frank moved away. She tried to squirm but couldn't when Evan gently cleaned her up. After that, she faded into a pink cloud of hazy happiness unlike anything she'd ever felt before.

## Chapter Seven

The pink cloud slowly faded away, leaving her feeling like a new person. When she thought she'd regained enough strength she pushed herself into a sitting position and looked around. The men were already dressed and sitting on a bench just in front of her. They looked relaxed and happy, yet also fearful.

"What's wrong?" she asked, knowing she sounded as naïve as a kindergartner.

"You don't regret it, do you?" Evan asked.

"Regret what?"

"Regret us claiming you. There's no going back now. You are ours," Frank said.

"And you're both mine," Autumn pointed out. "I think I got the better end of that deal."

When she pushed off the table, her legs refused to hold her. Frank caught her and held her while her legs quivered beneath her. Once she was able to stand on her own, Frank helped her get dressed while Evan disappeared somewhere.

As Frank tied her shoes, Evan rejoined them and handed her a large steel travel mug.

"Drink."

Though he'd spoken the word gently, one look at his expression told her it was a command, not a request. Lifting the cup to her mouth, she took a sip and was surprised to find not water or coffee, but some kind of fruit juice. Suddenly, she felt parched and quickly drank the contents down without pausing for breath.

"Feel better?" Frank asked when she finished drinking.

She nodded, embarrassed that she had not even offered to share. Just as she opened her mouth to apologize, they heard someone banging on the closed workshop door.

“Frank? Evan? Are you in there? Is Autumn with you?”

The men exchanged a look then sighed. Autumn could tell they were not yet ready to share her with anyone else.

“Hang on,” Evan called as he jogged out of the storage room.

Frank and Autumn followed a couple of steps behind so that by the time they reached the front of the doorway, the door had been opened far enough open they could easily walk through.

Spring stood just outside with her arms crossed over an enormously pregnant belly. Looking from one man to the other, she then looked at her sister with one eyebrow and the smartass grin she always wore when she was right.

“So, it happened again,” she said cryptically before walking up to Autumn and hugging her tight. “It’s about time you came to visit. We’ve been so worried about you, and Dad refused to tell us anything. Kept saying something about attorney-client privilege.”

Autumn returned her sister’s embrace with a happy sigh. “I told him not to. I didn’t want anyone worrying,” she said after swallowing the lump that filled her throat.

“Girl, you are nothing but skin and bones. Didn’t they feed you in the Army? Come on, we’ll go up to the Wash House and talk while Evan and Frank fix dinner,” Spring said as she looped their arms and began walking.

Autumn had no choice but to go with her. From the sounds the men who followed made, they were not happy about it either.

“Stop grumbling, you two,” Spring said over her shoulder. “You know Bridget won’t let anyone mess up her schedule, even if you did find your mate.”

“That doesn’t mean we have to like it,” one of the brothers snarked.

Spring giggled. “I want to be in the room when you tell her that.”

Autumn felt like she'd walked into the last act of a play and decided the best thing to do was to keep her mouth shut and her eyes and ears open. There was so much she had yet to learn about so many things. Maybe by keeping her mouth shut, she wouldn't fuck things up too badly.

"So, where is everybody?" Autumn asked when they reached the Wash House.

"Everybody who?" Spring asked as if there was no one else in the world but the four of them.

Autumn chuckled as she looked her very pregnant sister over.

Spring was the oldest and had always been called the pretty one. She had the pretty face and petite, curvy figure though now her curves were more maternal than sexy. Even so she remained soft, dainty, and always the lady. Even dressed in sneakers, sweatpants, and an oversized T-shirt that must belong to one of her husbands, she looked elegant.

Summer was the smart one whose creative thinking and ingenuity helped to solve problems for people all over the world. She was beautiful as well in a natural, earth mother sort of way.

Winter was the baby, the boy, and had never been compared to his sisters. Autumn knew he was profoundly grateful for that.

Autumn had always been considered the strong one. She'd been the one who went after what she wanted no matter what those around her thought. But for the past year, she'd felt anything but strong, though she'd kept that a secret from everyone, including their father.

"Well, dear sister, you have two husbands. Then there's Summer and Winter who each have two husbands. And I understand from Dad that the Sullivan twins' mother and two fathers live in Sanctuary as well, or have I been misinformed?"

"Oh, them. Winter and his mates, Garrett and Hawk, are at a writer's conference in California. Summer and her husbands, Cole and Dawson, had to go to Virginia to deal with some crisis her boss swears she can only take care of in person. My husbands, Adam and

Brock, and the parents, Bridget, Michael, and Thomas, are around here somewhere. You'll meet them at dinner," Spring said as easily as if reading from a cue card.

"Good God." Autumn looked over her shoulder at the brothers, her eyes wide with shock. "How many of you are there?"

"Three parents, four sets of twins, and now four mates," Spring answered for them as they reached the Wash House's front door. "With two pups on the way." She patted her stomach in the proud mama way all pregnant women seemed to grow into.

"When are you due?"

"Christmas by human terms. Before next week by Bridget's prediction."

"Huh?"

"It's a shape-shifter thing, ladybug," Frank said before kissing her temple and walking away.

"Mom can explain it better," Evan said as he stroked a hand up her back. "We'll be back in a few minutes then maybe we'll go upstairs and take a nap."

Anticipation shot through Autumn as she watched the brothers cross the room. Before she could follow them, her sister grabbed her hand and dragged her to what appeared to be a bar in the center of the room. After pushing her onto a stool, Spring stepped behind the bar.

"Do you still drink your coffee hot, black, and thick as tar?"

Autumn shook her head. "Gave it up. Do you have chai latte?"

"Hot or cold?"

"Whatever is easiest for you," Autumn said before turning the seat of the stool around to look around.

The corner by the front door held what appeared to be a library. Bookcases lined two walls and were filled to capacity with books. Several comfortable-looking chairs in burgundy and navy waited for someone to curl up on them and spend the afternoon reading. Each chair had a small table next to it with a reading lamp. Behind that, along the side wall, was an area that was curtained off with deep

burgundy curtains. In the back corner and along half the back wall were two closed-off rooms with a small hallway in between. The sign on one wall announced that to be the locker room area.

Across the back of the room was a line of stainless steel washers and dryers with several tables to fold laundry on.

In the far back corner of the room was what looked like a lounge area. The floor was carpeted with dark gray carpet with several couches, recliners, and overstuffed chairs in gray and blue denims. All the furniture angled to face a large flat-screen television that covered the wall over a huge stone fireplace. In the corner were a pile of large pillows that looked like they would be comfortable for lying on the floor with.

The kitchen sat in the left front corner of the building. It looked much like any of the diners she'd frequented as she traveled with the military. It was separated from the dining area by a counter with a half dozen stools. Between the kitchen and the bar area was a dining room that was tiled with black-and-white tile. In addition to a long table in the center, there were a half dozen tables around the edge of the area, each with four chairs. The main dining table was painted black while the smaller ones were painted deep barn red.

Looking up, Autumn found the ceiling in the center of the room rose two stories over their heads. Balconies ran around three sides of the room for the second and third floors. She counted ten doors on each floor.

"It's like a civilian USO," she said, turning back to face her sister. "It looks like it's got everything anyone would need.

"The Wash House. Yes, this is the center of town. During hiking season, we've kept busy with visitors. They usually don't bother us too much. Just point them to a hot meal, a hot shower, and a warm bed, and they're happy," Spring said before setting a mug on the bar. "There you go, one chai latte. Whoa," she gasped as she bent forward. She grabbed her belly with one hand and the counter with the other.

"What's wrong?" Autumn jumped from her chair and hurried around the bar. "Guys!"



## Chapter Eight

“What’s going on?” Evan asked as he stepped out of the kitchen.

Autumn ignored him as she wrapped one arm around her sister and helped her from the bar and to the closest chair in the dining area. Both men joined them as Spring settled onto the chair and rubbed her belly.

“What happened?” Frank asked as both men looked from one sister to the other.

“What kind of a pain was it?” Autumn asked, kneeling before her sister and laying her hands on the pregnant woman’s belly.

“Everything just tightened up,” Spring said. “All the muscles across my back and belly just clenched.”

Autumn nodded in understanding. She glanced at her watch then looked to her mates. “I need to talk to Bridget now. And you might want to call her husbands.”

Evan headed to the front door as she turned back to her sister. “Sit here and relax. It might just be a random spasm, but until I talk to Bridget, I want you to stay still.” Taking off her watch, she handed it to Frank. “Keep an eye on the time. If she has another one, make a note.”

“Do you know about babies?” Frank asked as he glanced from his sister-in-law to the watch.

“I’m an Army-trained and certified midwife. Delivered a lot of babies in all kinds of settings, but never this early. But—”

Before she could finish, a bell outside rang continuously for nearly half a minute.

Autumn checked her sister’s pulse and respiration then felt her

hands and feet for swelling. Spring sat relaxed, rubbing both hands over her belly as she continued to ask questions about what Autumn had been up to the past months. She was able to ignore them as she fought with the anxiety that had her own heart pounding as she thought of having to deliver these babies.

When Evan returned, he checked to make sure things were under control before heading back to the kitchen.

“How long, Frank?” Autumn asked once she’d done the subtle exam and found everything to be fine.

Before he could answer, the front door slammed open, and the room filled up with mostly very large, very male people. Two of the men rushed straight to Spring and knelt down on either side of her, asking questions a mile a minute as they thoroughly checked her over. The others gathered behind Autumn who still sat on the floor in front of her sister.

They weren’t too close, but it was enough that Autumn began to feel trapped. Patting her sister’s knee with a smile and a murmured “you’ll be fine,” she stood and slipped out from the center of the crowd.

Once she could breathe again, Autumn turned and took stock of the new arrivals. The two men beside Autumn were Adam and Brock, but she couldn’t tell which was which. Both had black hair and a goofy, over-the-moon expression as they both, somehow, cuddled Spring at the same time.

Turning her attention to the others, she found the two men had the same rugged looks as Evan and Frank, but with silver strands liberally laced through the dark brown strands. They were tall as their sons and built as solid as their offspring, though, maybe a little thicker through the middle.

The woman standing between them held one man’s hand while the other had an arm wrapped around her back. She was tiny, petite, and delicate with a thick braid of reddish-brown hair that ended at her waist. This must be the amazing Bridget, mother of four sets of

identical twins, who just happened to be shape-shifting Irish wolfhounds.

All at once, the five went silent and turned to look at her. Though tempted, she did not give into an urge to run and hide. Instead, she sidled closer to Frank. He wrapped one arm around her in a welcomed gesture and pulled her to fit perfectly against his side. When a growl emanated from deep in his chest, she looked up at him in surprise.

“Calm down, Frank, we’re not going to hurt the girl,” one of the men said, causing his brother to chuckle.

“Yeah, we’ve got our hands full with your mother,” the other commented, earning himself a poke in the belly from the woman’s elbow.

Then the older woman stepped forward. “Hello, you must be Autumn.”

“Yes, ma’am,” Autumn answered automatically even as she tried to burrow deeper into Frank’s side.

“And you are mate to Evan and Frank?”

Autumn looked to Frank to answer. “Yes, Mom. Autumn is our mate just like you predicted she would be.”

“Bridget, she’s also a trained midwife who needs to talk to you about Sullivan babies,” Spring threw in.

“Well, Autumn Ryan, welcome to Sanctuary. I hope you find the same happiness here that your brother and sisters have,” Bridget said. “I’m Bridget Sullivan, and these are my husbands, Michael and Thomas.”

Autumn nodded to the two men and noticed that they had the same eyes as their sons, one blue and one green, though they weren’t quite as brilliant as Evan and Frank’s eye color. They smiled and nodded back but otherwise remained silent. Obviously, Bridget was in charge.

Bridget then stepped forward and laid her hands on Autumn’s shoulders as she looked deep into her eyes. “If you ever want to talk about anything or need advice about how to handle a Sullivan man,

I'm here for you."

"Mom, she won't need any help handling us. We're perfect," Frank said, sending his fathers and brothers into gales of laughter.

Bridget patted his belly and smiled at him. "I'm glad you think so, baby boy."

"Can I get up now?" Spring asked before Frank could start arguing with his mother.

"How long has it been, Frank?" Autumn asked with a smirk, figuring he had forgotten his responsibility.

He surprised her when he glanced at the clock and said, "Twelve minutes."

"Yes, you can get up," Bridget said. "She's fine. It's just one of those Braxton-Hickey things. I had them for nearly a week with all my pregnancies. But no hiking up to the gazebo or the waterfall. In fact, you don't need to be leaving Sanctuary proper until after the babes are born.

"Yes, ma'am," the two men at her side answered before they helped her to stand and walk outside.

"I'd really like to talk to you about shape-shifter births and what I'll need to do and expect, if that would be all right," Autumn said as Bridget stepped behind the coffee bar and began to expertly blend and mix something which she poured into three mugs.

"Certainly, but not today," Bridget said as she handed two of the mugs to her husbands who took it and walked over to the living room area and turned on an old movie. "Knowing my sons and the patterns set by their brothers, probably not tomorrow either, but we will talk before Spring gives birth."

"Thank you, ma'am."

"Please, I'm Bridget, not ma'am."

"Sorry." Autumn shrugged as she blushed. "Military training runs deep."

"Hmmm, maybe we should have you drill some into the boys," Bridget said with a sneaky grin.

"Don't think so, Mom," Evan and Frank called from the kitchen.

## Chapter Nine

Dinner consisted of soup, salad, and sandwiches that earned Evan and Frank teasing from the rest of the family about their lack of cooking skills. Though she followed the conversation and contributed she continued to adeptly dodge her sister's questions. She also remained highly aware of the men who sat on either side of her.

Not that they gave her a chance to forget them. One or the other touched her at all times, whether it was an arm around the back of her chair or a large, hot hand resting on her thigh, they remained connected throughout the meal.

By the time dinner was over, the tension she carried with her like a cloak eased without her realizing when it had slipped away. She relaxed, and, feeling warm and content, she ended up leaning against Frank to keep from laying her head on the table as her eyelids grew too heavy to hold up.

Finally, she could fight it no more. She needed to move around and stay awake or find a bed and sleep. With a deep sigh, she gave up and allowed herself to drift.

She didn't know how much time passed before she jerked awake. Evan had just picked her up from her chair. She tensed and tried to fight for her freedom, but nothing seemed to work.

"Shhh, sweetness, relax and rest. We'll take it from here," Evan said softly as he carried her away from the table.

"What about the dishes?" she asked as she forced her eyes open to find Frank holding the door open for them.

"Mom and the dads will take care of them. It's their turn," Frank answered easily as he followed them out.

“Where are we going?” Autumn mumbled as she relaxed back against Evan’s broad chest.

“We’re taking you home.”

“You have a house?”

“No, sweetness,” Evan answered easily as they started down the path that led to the log cabins. “We have a home. Sanctuary is your home now, too.”

All at once, Autumn understood, and something in her spirit shifted.

Though she came from a family of four children, she’d always felt different and alone. Even in the Army, as a medic dealing with people constantly, she’d felt alone. Even in the treatment center, living with three roommates, she’d felt separate and alone. But here and now, with these two men she knew next to nothing about, Autumn Ryan felt like she belonged.

She remained silent as Evan carried her down the path away from the Wash House. It was a short walk to the first log cabin. The men stopped, and Evan turned so she could see their house. The front porch was empty except for a scattering of colorful dried leaves on the floor.

“Adam, Brock, and Spring lived here until last week. We moved them down to the third log cabin so they have more room for the babies. Summer, Cole, and Dawson live next door. Winter, Garrett, and Hawk live at the end in the fortress,” Evan explained, turning so she could see the houses where her siblings lived. When our babies come, maybe we can talk the parents into trading houses with us,” Evan said, turning to face the Victorian. “If not, we’ll just add on here or build another house.”

“We haven’t had time to do much inside. If you don’t like something, we can change it. You can decorate any way you want. We’re easy,” Frank said.

“I doubt that,” Autumn giggled as she looked up at Evan.

Suddenly, her exhaustion eased. All she wanted was to be inside

and naked with her men. That urge stopped her for a moment. She hadn't been horny since months before "The Incident." Now all she could think about was cuddling with her men and fucking either or both of them until the need clenching at her clit and pussy eased.

"What?"

"Never mind. Put me down, please," Autumn said. She squirmed in Evan's arms until he set her on her feet. Taking Evan's hand in her right hand and Frank's in her left, she started up the short walk between the path and the front porch. "Can I want to see inside?"

"Of course, ladybug. This is your home now."

All at once, she was wide-awake and filled with the same excitement she felt every Christmas as a kid.

The brothers held back and allowed her to enter first. Frank flipped on a light while Evan closed and locked the front door. She stood still and looked around. The living room's main feature was the huge fireplace that made up a majority of the far wall of the house. Otherwise, the room was empty.

Turning, she looked at the brothers. "There's no furniture."

The brothers looked guilty. "We honestly didn't expect you to be our mate. Three out of four was too good to be true. Four out of four was beyond imagination," Evan said.

"Don't worry, ladybug. We'll go through the furniture in the storeroom tomorrow. If you don't like anything there, we'll build you whatever you want," Frank said.

She nodded silently and continued exploring. The right half of the building was divided into two floors. Walking into the kitchen area, she saw it seemed to have all the modern conveniences along with splashes of color she knew Spring had added. Across the kitchen was a walled-off area. Through the open door in the center, she saw it contained a bathroom. Circling the center island with a built-in cook-top stove and wide counters, she entered the little room and closed the door.

Even here, she could see Spring's touch in the bright yellow walls

and equally colorful towels hanging on the racks. There was a basket with sample sizes of lotions, shampoos, and soaps on the counter along with three brand new toothbrushes and a tube of toothpaste. Someone had dropped by in the hours since her arrival. She wondered if it had been Spring or Bridget then decided it didn't matter. Returning to the kitchen, she saw a set of steps that led up to what had to be the sleeping loft. Looking around, she didn't see the men, but heard them upstairs so headed up the half-hidden staircase.

Stepping into the room she instantly fell in love with the loft.

To her left, a knee-high railing ran across the space that looked over the main floor of the house. Along one wall were three sets of dressers built into the sloping wall. The walls and ceiling were painted white which contrasted sharply with the wide pine plank flooring. At the far end of the room there was a small square window about halfway up the wall. About shoulder high was a series of empty pegs for clothes. On the floor beneath the window sat an intricately carved wooden trunk with several blankets and pillows piled neatly on top of it.

Turning to the bed, she found it was the biggest thing she'd ever seen. On one side stood a small nightstand with an oil lamp, which provided a golden glow of light.

The headboard had been constructed of rough logs peeled out of their bark, then stained and finished and somehow bent to form a beautiful, naturally arched headboard. Someone had come and made the bed with clean white sheets.

Her men lay on the bed looking sexy and drool-worthy. They wore only the clean blue jeans they'd changed into just before dinner. Their broad, muscular shoulders and chests pulled at her to come closer, snuggle between them, and let them protect her from the world.

All at once, she was torn. Her cunt wanted the satisfaction of fucking them again, and the rest of her body demanded she curl up and sleep.



“Autumn?” Evan asked when she didn’t move.

“Yes?”

“Are you okay?”

“No,” she answered, taking a step toward the bed. “I’m horny.”

\* \* \* \*

Her breathy announcement caused Evan’s already hard and aching cock to jerk in response. Though he’d love nothing better than to give his mate exactly what she wanted, he could see she was exhausted as well as aroused.

Looking across the bed, he met Frank’s eyes. His brother was as turned on as he was, but they’d already talked about not fucking their mate into oblivion tonight. Right now, she needed their care more than she needed their cocks.

Turning his attention back to the woman standing at the end of the bed, he moved so he sat leaning against the headboard. Frank did the same on the other half of the bed.

“What are you doing?” she asked, her voice laced with a heavy thread of whine.

“Getting ready for the show,” he answered gently as his thoughts turned to a game they could play. “Why don’t you dance for us? Strip off those clothes and show us what you like, how you like it.”

“What?” She planted her hands on her hips as she frowned at him. “You want me to do a striptease for you?”

“Yep,” Frank said with a vigorous nod. “That would be so hot!”

Evan wanted to slap his brother, but instead smiled at their woman. “Think of it as a game. We’re going to lay here and fight our overwhelming need to throw you down and fuck you until you can’t walk. You, on the other hand, will be trying to break our restraint. If you get off before we touch you, you win.”

“And if you break and touch me first?”

“You win then, too,” Frank said.

“But...I don’t understand,” she said as she paced from the wall to the railing and back again. “Don’t you want to touch me? Fuck me? I thought that’s what mates did.”

Evan growled and shifted on the bed as his cock twitched again, pressing even harder against the fly of his jeans. “We want you more than you’ll ever know, sweetness. But after our playtime this afternoon, you still need some time to recover. We don’t want to hurt you.”

Autumn thought that over and nodded with a sexy smile. “So instead, I’m going to play with myself and try to break through the wall of composure you seem to have built since then?”

“Something like that,” Evan said.

Autumn nodded as she continued to pace, though he wasn’t sure he liked the devilish smile that crossed her face. Stopping at the end of the bed in the center, she began to hum to herself.

When she closed her eyes and her hips began to sway, Evan had to grit his teeth. She moved with the fluid grace of a dancer. Glancing at his brother, he wasn’t sure how long either of them would hold out, especially once she started discarding her clothes.

\* \* \* \*

Frank wondered how long it would be before either his balls or his head exploded with his lust or his dog pushed forth to demand he tackle satisfaction. He knew there was a good reason behind Evan’s instigating this game, but he wasn’t sure he wanted to know what it was. Sure, their mate was tired and tense and hiding something, but why was his brother determined to cripple him?

Watching Autumn sway to the song as she hummed softly was a thing of beauty. Even wearing clothes that were sizes too big, she looked like an angel dancing to the music of the heavens. As she toed off her sneakers and flipped them into the corner, he reached for his jeans. If he didn’t loosen the stranglehold the material had on his cock

and balls, he might suffer permanent damage.

He sighed once the pressure over his groin eased and he wasn't in danger of imminent insanity. Then he turned his full attention to his mate.

## Chapter Ten

Without a thought as to her actions, Autumn kicked her sneakers into the corner next to the trunk. Along with being the strong one, she'd also been known as somewhat of a neat freak. As she continued to sway, she pulled off one sock then the other and sent them flying as well.

She fought down a grin as she watched her mates through half-closed eyes. Their gazes were glued to her hips as she slipped into one of the dance routines she'd learned. Her mates didn't realize it, but this little game of theirs was about to backfire.

She'd been taking dance classes since she was old enough to follow her sisters to the dance school four blocks from their house. Though not an expert at anything, over the years she'd taken classes in every form offered from ballet to jazz to hip-hop. After joining the Army, she widened her horizons even further by taking classes in ballroom dancing, belly dancing, and how to strip and pole dance.

Nope, her men didn't stand a chance.

She watched Frank open his pants and free his cock and balls and wasn't surprised when a few seconds later Evan did the same thing. Putting a little more swing into her hips, she turned a circle and showed them her back. Reaching for her belt, she opened it and pulled the leather from the loops holding it. After slowly sliding it back and forth across her back from shoulder blades to waist, she tossed the belt away.

Turning back to face her men, she planted her feet and shimmied her shoulders, which brought their attention up her body. Evan's jaw dropped when she leaned back ever so slight and began to swing her

hips in figure eights as she dealt with the button and zipper holding her pants on.

She couldn't help but smile as she danced her way around one side of the bed until she stood behind Evan. She met Frank's eyes as she took hold of the waistband of her pants then dropped them as far down as her arms would go. She wiggled and shook until Frank began to pant, and his hand wrapped around his cock.

He groaned when she pulled them back up then danced her way around the bed. When she moved behind him, Frank flipped onto his back to maintain eye contact. She giggled as he nearly fell out of the bed. Only quick reflexes kept his ass from landing on the hard wood floor.

This time she turned her back to the bed as she lowered the pants. She released them as she bent down and laid her palms on the floor in front of her. Twin growls of hunger sounded behind her as her hips continued to move back and forth. Reaching up under the T-shirt that still covered her ass, she pulled down her panties. That earned another tortured sound from the men. Glancing between her legs, she saw both men had begun to stroke themselves, though she wasn't sure either of them realized what they were doing.

She slowly slid her hands up the back of her legs. When she reached the hem of her shirt, she took hold of it in both hands. Lifting it up, she gave them a glimpse of her ass and then pulled it down again as she slowly straightened.

Someone muttered a curse, but she couldn't be sure which one it was. Once she was standing upright again, she began to sway again, then slowly turned.

Both men were panting and stroking as they watched her dance. "Had enough yet?" she asked.

Neither man answered, though they exchanged a quick look between them before returning their full attention to her.

Raising her right hand to her lips, she took two fingers into her mouth and sucked on them for several seconds as her hips continued

moving. Then she used those fingers to slowly draw a line down the center of her body until she reached her pussy.

“Mmmm,” she moaned.

She closed her eyes as her fingers cupped around her pussy over the fabric of her shirt. In seconds, the material that touched her puffy lips, clit, and opening to her cunt soaked through with her juices.

She couldn’t take any more.

“So what happens if I touch you first?” she whispered as her hand shifted over her pussy, driving her closer to the edge of orgasmic insanity.

“We win,” Frank said, his tone deep and growly.

“And what do you win?” she asked, edging closer until the front of her legs brushed against the mattress.

Her fingers never stopped moving, and as her men continued watching and stroking themselves, an orgasm bubbled up out of her clit and overwhelmed her. She cried out softly as she came then collapsed forward onto the bed. Her hand remained pressed between her legs, prolonging the shivers of ecstasy that rolled through her.

“Oh, fuck, that was beautiful,” Frank said then growled deep in his chest as his cock sent jets of release to cover his chest.

Evan didn’t say a word. He just roared his completion as his cock exploded.

Once her orgasm settled, Autumn melted into a puddle of goo. As she caught her breath, the soul-deep weariness she’d been trying to keep at bay since returning to “the world” swept over her, joined by the exhaustion of the busy and eventful day.

When one of her twins picked her up and moved her to the middle of the bed, all she could do was sigh and roll onto her side. A moment later someone lifted her head and slid a pillow beneath it. Then a soft blanket settled over her, and she slept.

\* \* \* \*

Once they'd tucked their sleeping mate under a blanket, Evan followed his brother down the stairs.

"Damn, that was the hottest thing I'd ever seen," Evan said softly, his knees still a bit shaky.

His cock twitched at just the memory of Autumn dancing and driving herself and them to an orgasm he would not soon forget.

"You got that right, brother," Frank replied as they entered the kitchen. "Where do you think she learned to move like that?"

Crossing to the refrigerator, Evan got out a pitcher of juice while Frank retrieved two glasses. He chuckled as he poured them each a glass. "I have a feeling that there is a lot more to our little mate than even her family suspects."

"I, for one, can't wait to uncover all her secrets," Frank said before draining his glass.

Evan nodded his agreement then finished his juice. "I'm going to jump in the shower."

"Okay," Frank said, rinsing the glasses while Evan put the pitcher away. "While you do that, I'll run up to the Wash House and get some clothes for the morning."

"Bring me some, too. Tomorrow we'll move our stuff down here and unload Autumn's truck," Evan said as he headed for the bathroom.

Yes, their little mate had secrets, but given time and patience, she would reveal all to her mates. Of that he had no doubt.

## **Chapter Eleven**

Autumn woke up feeling strange. For the first time in ages, she felt well rested, relaxed, and the horrors of the past seemed very, very far away. Opening her eyes, she was shocked to see daylight streaming in the window. When was the last time she'd slept through the night without waking up screaming? Or slept through sunrise? Was this new, relaxed change because of this place or the men who'd come into her life?

While she usually woke up alone in a twin bed, she was surprised to find herself alone in the oversized bed. Then she remembered her arrival to Sanctuary and mating Evan and Frank. But where were her men? She figured that at least one of her men would be lying with her.

All at once, doubts began to creep in. Were they upset because they hadn't had sex the night before? They couldn't be. After all, it was their idea to play the pleasure yourself game. She'd just done what they'd asked of her. How could that upset them?

Now, nervous and worried, Autumn climbed from the bed. Looking around, she realized all of her things were still packed in her truck. She pulled on the clothes she'd worn the day before, leaving off the underwear. Shoving bare feet into her sneakers, she descended the stairs and wondered where to search for her mates first.

She smelled coffee and followed the trail to a coffeemaker on the counter in the corner. It took a moment to find the mugs, but when she did, she grabbed the biggest one on the shelf. Pouring it half full, she lifted the steaming brew to her face and breathed deep. Just the dark, smoky aroma was enough to wake her up these days, so she took several more deep breaths before setting the mug on the counter



by the coffeemaker.

After using the bathroom, she walked into the living room and stopped to look around again. It really was a beautiful room with windows that looked out onto the garden that was nearly finished for the season and the bookcases that were built into the opposite wall.

This room deserved to be decorated by someone who knew what they were doing, not a woman who had lived in dorm rooms or barracks for the last six years. Her idea of redecorating was to rearrange the books on the shelf or buy new sheets for her bed.

Opening the door, Autumn stepped out onto the porch and took another deep breath. The air smelled clean and fall-like and cold. Someone muttering to her right drew her attention, and she found her men without even looking for them. They were walking down the path from the Wash House. Each carried several boxes piled in their arms while large plastic bags hung from their shoulders.

“You’re supposed to be sleeping,” Evan said as they reached the bottom of the steps.

Autumn couldn’t fight the excited feeling that bubbled in her causing her to grin widely. When he smiled back, his green eyes glowing, her insides melted and liquid heat filled her pussy.

“I haven’t slept this late since I joined the Army unless I’d pulled an all-night shift. And even then I would have seen the sunrise,” she said as she moved to open the door. “When I woke up, I was all alone and cold.”

“But ladybug, we’ve only been gone twenty minutes,” Frank said as he dropped his bags and boxes in the middle of the living room then crossed to her.

She immediately stepped into his open arms and snuggled into his solid body. Pulling in one more deep breath, she sighed as Frank’s scent filled her lungs. He smelled so good. Lifting her head, she pursed her lips and waited until he dropped his head and kissed her.

When he finally lifted his head, they were both breathing hard, and Frank had run his hands down her back to cup her ass cheeks.

“Good morning,” she said with a smile.

“Mmmm, yeah,” was all Frank could say in response.

When she pulled out of his arms and turned to Evan, he reluctantly released her. Stepping up to Evan, she looked up and winked. “Good morning.”

“And good morning to you,” he replied.

He pulled her body tight to his so she could feel his long, hard cock press into her belly. Then he bent his head and kissed her as well. By the time Evan lifted his head, all she could think of was stripping down and fucking them. Her pussy clenched as she turned and walked away.

“Where are you going?” Evan asked.

“I think it’s time for a nap,” she said without looking back.

“You want to sleep now?” Frank asked as the two brothers followed her up the narrow staircase.

She half turned and looked down at her men. Lifting one eyebrow, she grinned. “I didn’t say anything about sleeping.”

That comment earned her low-throated growls from both men. She turned and ran up the last few stairs, pulling her shirt from her pants. By the time she reached the bed, her shirt was off, and she was struggling to open her pants while at the same time getting her sneakers off.

Once she was naked, she turned and found both men had somehow shed their clothes even faster and were standing side by side, holding their erections and slowly stroking them.

“Mmmm, yum,” she said, climbing onto the bed and sitting on her knees. “I want.”

“You want what?” the men asked in unison as they stepped closer to the bed.

“I want it all,” she replied.

Sitting back on her heels, she spread her legs enough that the brothers dropped their eyes below her hips. She smiled as they climbed on the bed, one on either side of her.

Frank helped her turn so she was on her hands and knees. “Damn, I can’t wait to feel your hot, wet pussy around me.”

“I want to be in that hot, wet mouth,” Evan said as he moved to sit in front of her.

Autumn’s belly was already contracting with arousal, and her men had yet to touch her intimately. She sucked a breath when Frank brushed the head of his cock over her wet, open entrance before sliding it down between her pussy lips until he reached her clit.

She moaned softly as he drew circles around the knotted up bundle of nerves. She stopped breathing all together when he brushed the velvet-soft skin of the crown directly over her clit, sending shock waves racing through her. Then he slowly dragged his cock back up to push just the head into her cunt before pulling out and brushing his way down to her clit again.

Autumn was so focused on what was going on between her legs she’d forgotten about Evan until he brushed his cock across her lower lip. With a hungry moan, she parted her lips and took hold of the head of his cock. As she swirled her tongue around the bulbous head, she moaned. Frank had just pushed a little deeper into her cunt as his hands began to massage her ass cheeks.

She tried to move back to take more of his cock while at the same time moving forward to take Evan’s deeper into her mouth. When she couldn’t do both at once, she whined with exasperation.

“Easy, sweetness,” Evan said as his hands came up to stroke across her shoulders and down her back. “Relax and let us take care of you.”

She moaned and nodded in agreement then took him deeper, licking at the thick vein that ran up the underside of his cock. Then she pulled back until only the head was in her mouth and sucked out the pre-cum, smiling and sighing at the delicious taste of her mate.

She froze when a fingertip slid down the valley between the globes of her ass.

“Has anyone ever taken you here, ladybug?” Frank asked as his

finger circled and then tapped at her back hole.

She shook her head quickly, her entire body tensing in response.

Evan continued making soothing sounds and rubbing his hands over her back and sides, working his way underneath her body to cup and play with her tits.

“Just think how good you’ll feel with me in your ass and Evan filling your pretty pussy.” Frank leaned down and brushed his face against the back of her neck as he pushed his cock in her to the hilt. “What do you think, ladybug? Would you like to try that sometime?”

Autumn whined as her entire body began to shiver with reaction. Then she moaned her need as Evan pulled his cock from her mouth.

“Lift her up, Frank,” he said through gritted teeth. “Our baby is thinking too hard again.”

Autumn went willingly when Frank wrapped an arm around her middle and lifted her. His cock went fully into her and she sighed as he lifted her so her back brushed against his front. She started panting as Evan turned around to lie on his back. Then Frank lowered her until she rested over Evan’s body, her forearms resting across the tops of his thighs so she could play with the base of his cock and balls.

She took his cock in her mouth just as his tongue swiped across her clit, causing her to suck another breath. Frank began to fuck her in earnest as Evan took her clit between his lips and began to nibble on it.

“Let go, ladybug,” Frank ordered. His voice sounded deep and harsh as he began to move faster and faster in her.

As he stroked her, she then slid up and down Evan’s body, his cock fucking in and out of her mouth in counterpoint to his brother. It wasn’t long before she gave up trying to control anything and just let herself go.

She screamed when Evan bit her clit and Frank slammed into her even faster and harder. Every muscle contracted in response to the release, and her mouth clamped down on Evan’s cock. The tiny part of her brain that still functioned worried that she’d hurt him even as

he roared and came, filling her mouth with his salty, tangy seed.

At the same time, Frank thrust a single finger past her puckered star as he howled with his own completion. That penetration felt strange, yet so right that it immediately caused Autumn to come again just before she lost all ties to consciousness.

When she came around, her men were lying on either side of her. They cuddled her and stroked her, brushing kisses over whatever skin they could reach as they begged her to wake up.

“Wow,” she murmured, opening her eyes and looking around.

“How are you feeling?” Frank asked as he brushed a strand of hair out of her face.

“I can’t feel my legs,” she answered honestly with a grin.

“That’s okay, I can’t feel my eyebrows,” Evan said as he kissed her shoulder. “But we need to get up and get you some breakfast before we unpack your truck and then go furniture shopping.”

Autumn groaned and pulled her pillow over her head. “Nope, I think I’ll go back to sleep. I’ll see you for lunch.”

“Sorry, ladybug, but that’s not going to work,” Frank said as the men climbed from the bed.

Lifting the pillow from her face, Autumn frowned at them. “Why not?”

Before he could answer, a heavy pounding sounded from downstairs.

“What the hell?” The brothers shot out of bed and pulled on their jeans before racing downstairs.

Autumn moved slower, redressing and making sure she didn’t look like she’d just had sex. When she arrived downstairs, Adam stood at the door, looking frantic. He pushed past her mates and grabbed her hand. In response, Evan and Frank growled, and she saw their faces change. It was a subtle change, and when they changed back, she couldn’t really figure out what had shifted, she just knew it had.

“Come on,” he said, pulling on her arm.

“What’s happened?”

“Spring’s water broke,” Adam said as he pulled her out the front door, “and she demanded you come and help her.”

That announcement shocked Autumn so much that she lost her footing on the steps. She jerked her hand from Adam’s as she fell forward, not thinking that she might injure herself. All at once, she flashed back to the last birth she’d attended. The one that would remain with her until her dying day.

Suddenly, she wished she’d gone against her father’s wishes and driven to Wyoming instead.

Before her knees touched the ground, an arm wrapped around her middle and pulled her back to her feet.

“Frank,” she murmured after a quick breath.

“You okay, ladybug?” he whispered as he held her steady until she found her balance again.

She shrugged in response. No, she wasn’t okay, but there was nothing she could do about it now. Her sister was having a baby and expected her to help.

## Chapter Twelve

Instead of turning in the direction of their house, Adam turned the other way and headed toward the Wash House.

“Where is she?” Autumn asked as she jogged to keep up with three men as they race-walked along the path.

“The parents’ house,” Adam said. He continued around the circular path until he reached the three-story Victorian.

“Why?” she asked, looking from Adam to Evan and Frank as they followed his brother up the stairs to the wide porch.

“Because every generation of Sullivans has been born in the original Mrs. Sullivan’s brass bed,” Bridget explained, rising from one of the rocking chairs on the porch.

“What are you doing out here?” Adam asked.

“Spring is fine. Brock is with her. I came down because I need to talk to Autumn,” his mother said as she wrapped an arm around Autumn and stared her sons down. “Go join your wife while Evan and Frank unload Autumn’s things.”

Frank opened his mouth to argue. Before he could say a word, Evan grabbed his arm and pulled him away.

“You know you won’t win,” she heard Evan say as they headed down the steps.

As her men walked toward the parking lot, Autumn allowed Bridget to guide her to the two rocking chairs. Suddenly nervous, she hesitated when Bridget released her arm and sat in one of them. Instead of pacing, which was what she really wanted to do, she followed the other woman’s example and took a seat.

“Relax, Autumn, I’m not here to interrogate you or threaten you,”

Bridget said, her voice soft and soothing.

Autumn didn't say anything. She couldn't. She had not talked about her failure to anyone except the soldiers who'd debriefed her after her rescue and the psychiatrist at the hospital. She did give the doctor permission to tell her father, once again with the caveat that he would tell no one else unless absolutely necessary.

Autumn tensed when Bridget reached over and took her hand. It took several minutes to calm herself, but the other woman waited as she took several deep breaths and slowly relaxed again.

"Your father called me the other day and told me," Bridget said softly as Evan and Frank carried bags and boxes up the path.

As her men passed where they sat, each looked over and met her gaze, giving her a reassuring smile.

Autumn swallowed hard and grabbed hold of the arms of her chair to keep from jumping up and running away. "He wasn't supposed to tell anyone."

"He didn't tell anyone. He told me. And I don't share other peoples' secrets. When you're ready to talk about it, you will. I just wanted to remind you that Spring is young and healthy, and there will be no complications. In ten generations, there has never been a problem."

"That's what I figured the last time. The girl was young and seemed healthy, and there should not have been a problem. Only there was. She was too young, only thirteen. She was just a baby herself. She should never have been married, much less gotten pregnant," Autumn whispered intently as her eyes filled with tears and her mind flashed back.

Without meaning to, Autumn began to tell the story that had ended her Army career and thrust her into a life of nightmares and pain.

\* \* \* \*



She'd been off duty when a boy came from the village just outside their base, begging for someone to come and help his sister during her birth. Her husband was one of the locals hired as an interpreter. He was out on patrol with the Army and his young bride had gone into labor early.

Autumn agreed to go and after getting permission, found herself being dragged across the village to what could only be termed loosely as a house. Two rooms, no bathroom, no running water, but with a woman in the later stage of pregnancy whose bone-chilling screams Autumn heard from a block away.

She did what she could, but the mother was too small, the baby too big, and there was no time to send for an ambulance and more help. Autumn did what she could, but by morning, both mother and child were dead.

That's when the real trouble began. The woman's brother-in-law decided to take it upon himself to punish Autumn. He tied her to a post behind the house and beat her with a stick off and on for two days.

Though he never broke the skin, he had broken numerous bones. By the time his brother, the husband of the dead woman, arrived home, Autumn was one large, swollen bruise from neckline to the bottoms of her feet. He'd done even more damage to her spirit, causing her to question her right to live when she had not been able to save the young mother and her baby.

She'd spent one day in the hospital's emergency room waiting for transport out of the country then a month in the hospital in Germany. Only then did the doctors feel confident that her bones had healed properly and the bruising that covered her entire body would have no long lasting ill effects. Finally, they released her back to full duty, and she returned to the desert.

Problem was that when she returned to work, she froze when faced with a pregnant woman or any blood-related injury.

Then the nightmares began. She spent her nights sitting in a chair

staring out a window instead of resting and skipped more meals than she ate. When she collapsed while on duty one day, it was decided to transfer her back to the States. Only, the change of location didn't matter. She still dreamed of the girl and her baby. She still had nightmares of the unending pain she'd suffered as a result of failing that family.

\* \* \* \*

"Oh, my God," a deep voice brought her back from the painful memories.

A moment later, she was plucked out her chair and pulled into a strong chest. Arms of steel wrapped around her back and held her tight, containing her easily despite her wiggling to get free.

When a second hard body pressed against her back, she tensed for a heartbeat until she realized who it was. Her fear of being trapped in a crowd did not seem to kick in when securely sandwiched between her men's hard bodies.

"Oh, sweet Autumn, it's going to be all right. You are not alone. We're here for you. No one will ever again lay a hand on you, not even our brothers. We love you too much and will never let you be hurt again," Evan said. He hugged her from behind as Frank rubbed a hand up and down her side.

"You love me?" she asked, trying to look into their faces.

Though she'd known them less than twenty-four hours, she recognized the love that flowed through her. She was surprised that they felt the same way. After all, weren't men supposed to be the ones who balked at commitment and saying the L-word?

"Of course we do. Shape-shifters have one mate, and the challenge of their lifetime is to find the person that Fate has destined them to spend their lives with. We would rather cut off our own arms before hurting our mate. We will protect you from anything and anyone who tries to harm you, even if that person is yourself."

“I think I love you two, too,” she admitted softly.

Her words caused her men to shift even closer together. Their arms wrapped even tighter around her. She enjoyed it for a minute until she realized she couldn’t breathe.

“Can’t breathe,” she gasped.

They immediately eased their hold. Feeling brave since they hadn’t run at her confession, she voiced the fears that had silently nagged at her since seeing her sister’s pregnant belly.

“What if I freeze again? What if there are complications? What if I kill Spring and her babies?” Autumn began to sob, burying her face into Frank’s shirt.

She felt a soft hand touch her cheek. Opening her eyes, she turned her head and met Bridget’s serious, though loving, gaze. “I’ll be right there beside you. And if need be, Thomas and Michael can step in and take over. They had to deliver all of our boys. But that won’t be necessary because you’re going to do just fine,” Bridget assured her.

Just then, a door squeaked, and someone stepped out onto the porch. “Spring says she needs to see Autumn.”

The men reluctantly dropped their arms, allowing Autumn her freedom. Then they each kissed a cheek before they stepped back, releasing her completely.

“You two need to finish then you can come and join the party,” Bridget said to her sons. She then took Autumn’s hand and led her into the house.

“You’ve got them well-trained,” Autumn said as they walked through the living room.

As they did, she made a quick note of the beautiful antique furnishings and decorations. Though a bit fussy than she liked, she wondered if she should consult Bridget when it came time to decorate her new home.

“It’s taken a lifetime. Before the wedding, we’ll sit down, and I’ll share the secrets of how to handle Sullivan men,” Bridget said with a wink and a smile.

Bridget led her to an open doorway just off the kitchen. Autumn paused in the doorway and found the small room was painted a soft peach. The only furniture was a large brass bed in the center of the room and a table in one corner.

Spring was in the middle of the bed, propped up on pillows with a sheet covering her from waist down. Brock and Adam reclined on either side of her murmuring softly. Each man had a hand on her belly, rubbing circles as they panted with her, breathing through a contraction.

Before approaching the bed, Autumn stopped at the table and checked the supplies piled there. A stack of towels and an empty basin. Turning to Bridget, she said, "I need the large red bag from my truck. It has everything else I'll need."

"I'll get it," one of the fathers said before leaving the room.

"What can I do?" the other asked, looking uncomfortable.

"Could you boil some water, please?"

"Sure, no problem," he said, heading for the door. At the last moment, he turned back. "How much water do you need?"

Autumn smiled gently. "A quart or so should be enough."

"Okay," the man said before disappearing.

"Coffee?" Bridget asked with a raised eyebrow.

Autumn shook her head with a grin. "Tea. I gave coffee up after...you know."

Just then, her mates hustled into the room. Evan carried her red medical bag in one hand. "Dad said you need this?"

Autumn nodded with a smile. "Thanks," she said, taking the bag and setting it on the table. "Now go help your father boil the water."

## **Chapter Thirteen**

As Spring's contractions quickly grew stronger and closer, Autumn found herself growing more and more nervous. Having to deal with her two mates who were more anxious than their brothers didn't help any.

Though Adam and Brock never left her sister's side, she kept finding reasons to send Evan and Frank away. She didn't want them to witness things if she failed to deliver Spring's babies successfully. And after sharing her story, she felt fully exposed and wasn't sure she could face them.

Had the story of her failure changed their minds? Did they not want to be mated to her anymore? What would happen to her then? Would they run her out of Sanctuary? Or do something more drastic to end the mating?

It was just after noon when Spring began pushing. Autumn found herself forcing away negative thoughts to maintain her professionalism as the first twin made his appearance. Adam cut the cord and Autumn handed the squalling infant to Michael, who stood at the ready with a towel.

Almost as soon as she'd handed him off, the second baby slipped free from his mother's body. Brock cut the cord, and she then handed the baby to Thomas. For the first time all day, she was glad for their help. That way she could focus on taking care of her sister.

After the grandfathers cleaned them up in accordance with yet another ancient Sullivan family tradition, the husbands carried the still-crying babies out of the room. The rest of the men followed, allowing Bridget and Autumn to get Spring and the birthing bed

cleaned up.

All too soon the men returned en masse. Adam and Brock laid the babies in Spring's arms then settled on either side of her, just as they had been during her labor. Michael and Thomas took Bridget's hands and led her out of the room without a word, but with expressions that said they would be spending the afternoon behind locked doors.

When Evan and Frank took her hands to follow their parents out of the room, she planted her feet and held firm. "I can't. I need to be here. What if something happens?"

Evan wrapped his arms around her and kissed the top of her head. "Shhh, you'll wake the babies. Nothing's going to happen. You did it. You brought two new souls into the world, and everything went perfectly."

The awe in his tone went a long way to healing her shattered spirit. He was right. She had done her job and done it well. She deserved a little playtime.

"Besides," Frank said softly, leaning in to kiss her cheek, "Mom and the dads are upstairs. We won't be far away. If something happens, they'll ring the bell and get us back here. Right now, your mates need you."

She looked into his eyes and saw the heated glow of hunger and immediately her clit puffed up and her nipples stiffened in response. All at once, all she could think about was having her mates together. She pulled out of Evan's arms and headed through the house as fast as she could without running.

Once they were outside and alone, she turned to look at her men. They were so good-looking and had been so patient with her this morning, doing everything she asked without a single grumble of complaint. Her face burning, she asked, "Will you take me together? Like you talked about this morning? And bite my neck again?"

The brothers blinked and their expressions went totally blank. "Is that what you really want?" Evan asked, sounding hesitantly.

Autumn nodded. "I want us all to be together. I love you both and

need to show you. Please?”

“Of course, ladybug. Anything you want,” Frank said.

Before she could move, Evan bent and put a shoulder into her middle before standing again. Before she could complain about being carried like a sack of grain, he took off running and all she could do was grab his belt and hang on.

Instead of heading to their cabin, they took off in the other direction into the forest that surrounded Sanctuary. They moved faster than a normal human, but Autumn’s body did not appreciate hanging upside down.

“Evan, you’ve got to put me down,” she begged.

“Hang on, sweetness, we’re almost there,” he said.

Autumn closed her eyes, but that only made the disorientation worse, so instead, she opened them and stared at Evan’s denim-covered ass. Releasing his belt, she slid her hands down and began to fondle the muscles as he walked. That elicited a growl from the man holding her. When she slid one hand down between his legs, cupped his cock and balls, and slowly tightened her grip, he stopped.

“All right, all right, I get it,” he said as he bent and set her on her feet. “Besides, we’re here. I told you it was just a few minutes more.”

When he straightened and stepped away, Autumn gasped. They were on a small outcropping of rocks. Turning a circle, one side of the small space looked out over a valley and the shorter mountain peaks beyond. On the other side of the cliff, the mountain went straight up and out of sight overhead. There was a wide, shallow cave where she saw a pile of blankets and a picnic basket.

Turning to her men, she asked, “It’s beautiful. Where are we?” Autumn turned and threw herself at Frank, who caught her and hugged her.

“This is our special place. All the brothers have staked out their own places around here. We come up here to think or get away and be alone,” Frank explained.

“I love it. Thank you for sharing it with me.” Autumn turned and

hugged Evan.

“Of course we’d share it with you. You are our mate,” he said, embracing her solidly before she stepped back.

“You know, there’s one thing you haven’t shown me,” she said, planting her hands on her hips.

“And what’s that?” they asked in unison.

“You’ve never shown me what you look like in your other form. Will you do that for me?”

“After you eat some lunch,” Evan promised with a grin.

“Yeah,” Frank added, “because once we get naked, our minds won’t be on anything but pleasing you.”

At that promise, a shiver of heat and awareness raced down Autumn’s spine then out until she felt feverish. “Then let’s eat ‘cause I’m starving...and for more than just food.”

She winked at her mates then turned toward the cave. Before she could do anything to set out their picnic, her men were already there, spreading blankets, opening the basket, and laying out the food. All she had to do was sit down and enjoy.

After the previous evening’s dinner, she wasn’t expecting much more than a peanut butter sandwich and would have been happy to have it. When Evan handed her a fork and a plate with chicken salad, pasta salad, and a colorful coleslaw on it, she was shocked.

“When did you have time to cook?” she asked as she started eating, suddenly ravenous.

Her men looked sheepish. “We didn’t. The dads did. As you saw last night, we’re not really much on cooking,” Evan said as he and Frank filled their plates as well. “Mom tried, but we’d rather be making furniture.”

That led Autumn to ask a few of the “get to know you” questions she had been collecting since meeting the two men. She also answered questions, finding that she felt more comfortable with them than she had ever felt with anyone before. By the time they’d finished, she felt more happy and relaxed than she had in her entire



life. Though tempted to take a nap, she also found herself horny and needing to be with her mates in the most intimate way three people could be together.

Once the food was gone, the brothers quickly packed everything away then began undressing. There in the sunlight, out in the open, Autumn marveled again at the perfection of her men's bodies as they came into view.

Before she could touch either of them, the air around them shimmered. She gasped when they disappeared and in their places were two of the biggest, hairiest dogs she'd ever seen. They stood across the blanket not moving, waiting for her to react.

"Oh, wow," she said as she stood and slowly took the few steps that separated them.

As she did whenever meeting a new animal, she held out her hands, palms down, for them to smell. She'd always loved dogs—the bigger the better. Instead of sniffing at her hands, the two dogs stepped forward and nudged them until she began petting them.

"That's amazing," she said as she began to scratch behind their ears. Every dog she'd ever met had loved that sort of attention, so she figured they would as well.

She giggled as the dogs made happy sounds in response to her touch. Knowing these beasts belonged to her turned her on, even though she'd never have sex with them in this form. Everything in her tied to sex pulsed, and all she wanted was to fuck her men.

"Change back," she requested, lifting her hands from their necks to tweak her nipples.

The air shimmered again and the dogs were gone. Her men were on all fours looking up at her like they wanted nothing more than to eat her alive.

"Get those clothes off, ladybug, or you'll be going back to Sanctuary naked," Frank said as he pushed to his feet.

Autumn nodded and stripped out of her clothes, her need making her clumsy. When she overbalanced as she tried to kick off her

sneakers at the same time she pushed down her pants, Evan caught her.

“Slow down, sweetness. We have all afternoon and all night. Hell, we have the rest of our lives.” He leaned in and kissed her before helping her get out of the rest of her clothes.

“Maybe so, but I’m about to implode from wanting you,” she admitted with a wide grin.

“Mmmm, sounds like someone needs some serious relaxation therapy,” Frank said, moving in behind her.

Autumn sighed as he held her hips still so he could rub his body all over her back and ass.

The brothers helped her back down onto the blanket before joining her. When four hands and two mouths began licking, kissing and rubbing all over her skin, Autumn could do nothing. With a moan that started at her toes, she gave herself over to their care, knowing they would never hurt her.

As if they felt her capitulation, Evan pulled her over so she lay sprawled across his chest. He continued kissing her even as she shifted and squirmed until she felt the head of his cock brush against her open, wet pussy. As she did, he traced random patterns down her spine.

Though she’d momentarily lost track of Frank, she knew he would not be far away. Evan cupped his hands over her ass cheeks and began to massage them as he shifted her down until just the head of his cock entered her pussy. Then he halted and continued kneading the globes of her ass, easing them farther apart. Knowing what was coming, she fought the instinct to move away.

A moment later, she felt a cold, wet finger trace down the crease until it circled her puckered star. Then she felt Frank’s other hand rub up her spine, then back down again in a gesture that soothed even as it added fuel to her arousal. Suddenly, all she wanted was both of her men in her filling her with everything they had.

“Try to relax, ladybug,” Frank murmured as his finger began to

push for entrance into her ass.

Autumn took a deep breath and released it as the finger eased into her. Once he'd breached her, he slid deep and twisted, sending waves of pleasure pulsing out from that tiny hole. A long minute later, he pulled nearly all the way out then eased a second one in as well. A pleasure-pain rippled through Autumn, adding to the need to fuck something.

Fighting the need to move, Autumn looked at Evan with wide eyes. "I need more," she panted.

"I know, sweetness. Let Frank get one more finger in your sweet, sweet ass so he doesn't hurt you when he fucks you," Evan said, lifting his head.

Autumn sucked a breath and whined when Frank added more icy-cold lube to her ass before sliding in a third finger. He eased the trio in and out, twisting from side to side, sending her even higher into arousal.

She began to rock back and forth, forcing more of Evan's cock into her pussy while moving back to meet Frank's gentle thrusts. As she moved, her pebble-hard nipples dragged through the hair on Evan's chest, adding more fuel to the blaze that was burning her from the inside out.

"More," she begged. She pushed down on Evan's cock until he was fully seated inside her. "Need. More."

"Frank, you'd better hurry your ass up, or we're going to blow without you," Evan ordered gruffly as his hands slid from her ass around to wrap around her hips.

"Yeah, okay, I'm there," Frank said.

Autumn lifted her head when he pulled his fingers from her ass, but before she had time to whine a complaint, he'd replaced them with the blunted head of his cock.

"Okay, ladybug, take a deep breath, relax this sexy ass, and let me in," he growled as he steadily pushed past the newly stretched ring of muscle.

Autumn did as he said but still gasped at the pleasure-pain his cock caused as it stretched her muscles. Then she moaned at the overfull feeling from having both pussy and ass filled with cock.

“Oh, fuck, she’s tight. I’m not going to last long,” Frank said as he settled fully into her and then froze to give her time to adjust.

But she didn’t want to adjust. She wanted them to fuck her. “Move, dammit,” she growled, trying to shift her body between theirs.

The brothers did not respond to her demand.

“Oh, fuck, please move,” she begged several heartbeats later.

She met Evan’s inquisitive glance with a pleading one of her own. He looked over her shoulder and nodded. “Do it, brother,” he said, his voice deep as a cellar and rough as pine bark.

Autumn sighed with pleasure as the brothers began to move. First one and then the other slid out and then back in again. Their actions were slow at first, then gained momentum and strength as her hips began to move in counterpoint to theirs. She climbed higher and higher, moving faster and faster, needing more and more. Then she reached it. She touched ecstasy and screamed with the pleasure of it.

A pair of deep growling howls followed as both men’s cocks slammed home, filling pussy and ass completely. Their cries had barely died away when her men leaned in and she felt sharp pains at both sides of her neck where it joined her shoulders as they claimed her again. Her body reacted by flipping into another, even more intense orgasm. She lay on Evan’s chest completely limp and boneless as the brothers pulled their teeth from her skin and licked the wounds closed.

Frank rested heavily on her for a moment then lifted off and eased his cock from her ass. She made a sound of protest, then another when Evan left her as well. She felt Frank clean her up but didn’t have the energy to complain. She felt too good, too relaxed, too at peace with herself and the universe to bitch about being taken care of by her mates.

“Autumn? You okay?”

“Mmmm.” She tried to lift her head, but her muscles didn’t respond.

“I’d say that’s a yes,” Evan snarked.

She didn’t fight as he rolled them so they lay side by side on the blanket. She sighed when Frank lay down on her other side. Knowing her men were close by, Autumn closed her eyes and dozed. Her dreams were filled, not with the horrors of her past, but with hopes for the future and a set of her own little shape-shifter twin babies.

When she woke again, she sat up and stared out at the mountains softened by the haze that gave the Smoky Mountains their name. As her men slumbered on either side of her, she realized that her father had been right. She had found what she’d been looking for in Sanctuary. She’d found healing and love and a reason to get up in the morning.

When the two sleeping men shifted and reached out as if searching for her, she laid back down and, with a contented smile, went back to dreaming of the glorious life she would have with her mates.

# **THE END**

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## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Cooper McKenzie always thought she had been born a hundred years too late, but appreciates air conditioning, computers and other conveniences of modern day living. She enjoys the slower pace of New Bern, North Carolina as well as the history and small town community found there. In addition to dreaming up her next story, Cooper enjoys reading everything except scary books, singing in her church choir and needle-weaving.

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