



WOLVES OF EAST ANGLIA

DESIGNS ON A WARRIOR

Marisa Chenery

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Chapter One

“Are you ready to let loose and have some fun?” Cydney asked her best friend, Maggie.

“It depends on what you mean by letting loose,” Maggie replied. She shot Cydney a brief look with a smile before she turned her attention back on the road.

“Sometimes you take that to a whole new level. And remember, we’re not in Canada.”

Cydney huffed while giving her friend a fake look of shock. “Well, I never. And what is that supposed to mean? I’m a good girl, most of the time. And how could I forget we’re in Norwich, England. You’re driving on the wrong side of the road, after all. Plus sitting on this side, I keep thinking there should be a steering wheel in front of me.”

“Hey, I thought the same thing when I first arrived in Canada.”

“Then we met and I taught you all things Canadian.”

“You mean you corrupted me.”

Cydney laughed. “Maybe a little.”

Maggie and she had met when they started their first year at Toronto’s Ryerson University. They had shared a dorm room together. Cydney had taken to the quiet British girl right away. Maggie ended up being the sister she never had.

So of course when Maggie had suggested Cydney make the trip home to England with her, now that they had finished their final year of university – Cydney completing her Bachelor of Interior Design and Maggie her Bachelor of Journalism –

she'd been quick to accept. It wasn't as if she had much to go home to. There was a reason why she'd chosen to live in a dorm during the school months, even though she was from Toronto.

Cydney broke out of her thoughts when Maggie said, "Here we are."

She looked around as her friend pulled her mother's car they had borrowed for the night into a parking lot behind a large building. "So this is the nightclub your friends are meeting us at?"

"Yes. This is the place. Ali and Carol should already be inside," Maggie said as they got out of the car. "Considering we're later than I told them we would be."

Cydney ran a hand down her black, short skirt, then gave a little tug to the light blue silk, short-sleeved blouse she wore. "I had to make sure I looked good." In the black, strappy high heels she had on her feet, she walked over to Maggie.

Her friend shook her head. "I think you could wear a burlap sack and make it look good. Come on."

They headed for the front of the building and the entrance to the nightclub. Before they went inside, Cydney looked up at the bright neon sign over the doors that spelled out 'The Nightclub.'

"That's a real imaginative name," she mumbled quietly.

Maggie rolled her eyes, took hold of Cydney's wrist and yanked her through the doors. It took a few seconds for her eyes to adjust to the darker interior, and her ears to the loud, booming dance music blaring out of the club's speakers. She allowed her friend to tow her toward one of the tables not far from the entrance where two women

sat. Cydney assumed they had to be Ali and Carol. Her assumption proved correct when they reached the table and Maggie let go of her wrist to hug each woman while all three of them talked at the same time.

She hung back, watching the exchange. Maggie had told her so much about Ali and Carol she almost felt as if she already knew them. Once Maggie managed to make the introductions, Cydney found herself just as warmly greeted.

After everyone had taken a seat at the round table, Ali was the first to speak, raising her voice to be heard over the loud music. "It's lovely to finally meet you, Cydney. Carol and I have heard so much about you over the last four years."

Cydney smiled. "The same can be said about you two. I think Maggie did it on purpose with the hopes of getting us all together."

"I have to say it," Carol said, "I love your accent, Cydney."

"Thanks, but I think you're the one with the accent, not me."

A waitress arrived at their table, and Cydney and Maggie gave her their drink order. Cydney ordered a rum and Coke while her friend ordered a glass of white wine, which would be her only drink for the night, since she had to drive them home later. It wasn't going to stop Cydney from 'letting loose' a bit as she had put it to Maggie.

While they talked, she scanned the club from time to time, paying particular attention to the males in the place. So far she hadn't found what she was looking for. It wasn't until her third rum and Coke that Ali noticed what she was doing.

"Cydney, I can't help but see you keep checking out the club. I have to say you look as if you're on the hunt for something, or someone."

Maggie snorted. "She's on the hunt all right. Why don't you tell them, Cyd."

Feeling pretty good from the drinks, she figured what the hell. "All right. Since I'm going to be here in Norwich for a month, I've decided I need to find me a nice British boy toy during my stay. I also want to see if they can measure up to their Canadian counterparts. Literally, if I get that far."

Both Ali and Carol burst out laughing. Maggie, who had already known about her plan, only shook her head and chuckled. Being her best friend, she was already used to how outrageous Cydney could get when the mood struck.

"Well, you shouldn't have much trouble finding someone here," Carol said, once she'd brought herself back under control.

"We're on the same page with that one," Cydney agreed. "But so far, none of them have turned my crank, if you know what I mean."

"The night is still young," Ali said with a laugh.

"So true."

Cydney turned in her seat to look toward the club's entrance. She sucked in a breath when her gaze landed on the very tall and muscular man who stood there. He had to be no less than six foot seven. Form-fitting black jeans and t-shirt showcased a body she would love to get up close and personal with. He wore his light-blond hair on the longish side. It just brushed the tops of his wide shoulders. She didn't sit too far away, so she easily saw his face, but not the color of his eyes. And what a face it was. With his square jaw, chiseled cheekbones and firm lips, she found him more than handsome. She had a hard time pulling her gaze off of him.

“Hello, what do we have here?” Cydney asked in general. “I think I just found the first candidate.” Before the others at the table said anything, she stood. “I’m going to ‘interview’ him and see if he will be willing to fill the opening I have.”

She heard Maggie groan. “Knock off the puns already, Cyd.”

Cydney, her gaze still locked on her target, waved her friend’s comment away with a quick flick of her hand and headed for the object of her desire.

* * *

Wulfric didn’t expect to find much prey this night, since there wasn’t a full moon until the following week. Then things would pick up. The night of a full moon was when the newly turned werewolves, sired by Fenris the wolf, shifted for the first time. And with blood lust riding them, they would be compelled to seek out victims. After that, they could shift at will. It was Wulfric’s job, along with his five fellow warriors, to put down any of Fenris’ get, as charged by the Anglo-Saxon god, Tiw, the Sky Father. One bite from their kind and a mortal joined their ranks, and there wasn’t a cure. Unlike the prey he hunted, he wasn’t a werewolf who had a thirst for flesh and blood. Tiw had gifted his warriors with the ability to shift, to put them on equal footing with their prey. In their half wolf and half human form, they were much stronger and bigger.

Ever on the alert for the scent of prey, Wulfric came to a standstill and sniffed the air when he detected the faint odor of werewolf. Following the scent trail, which was relatively fresh, he found himself standing in front of a nightclub. The trail seemed to end there. He had two options to choose from—he could either go into the club and see

if his prey had gone inside, or continue in the same direction he had been going and hope to pick up the scent once again.

In the end, he decided to do both. He didn't think his prey would have gone into the nightclub, but he didn't want to take the chance the werewolf hadn't. Not really relishing the idea, Wulfric quickly stepped into the club. As he walked a little farther inside, the loud music played havoc with his sensitive hearing. Being a werewolf heightened his ability to hear and see in the dark. Given that fact, it was one of the reasons why he made a point of avoiding places like this nightclub.

Using his keen eyesight to search the dim interior, Wulfric swept the room with his gaze as he tried to filter out the myriad of scents, trying to find the one he'd followed, outside. It was almost damn near impossible. There were just too many here, which meant he'd have to walk among the mortals with the hope if he got close enough to the werewolf he'd be able to zero in on his scent once more.

Before Wulfric could take a step, his gaze landed on a woman who stood at one of the nearby tables, staring intently at him. She wore a snug-fitting skirt and a blouse that showed a fair amount of cleavage. His gaze dipped lower and he noticed—even though she couldn't be any more than five foot four—her legs were long and toned. As she walked toward him, he took in her long, chestnut brown hair that fell around her shoulders and the sapphire blue eyes that seemed to focus totally on him.

Wulfric's cock stirred, growing hard, the closer she came. He found her more than attractive. She was gorgeous, and as he stared at her lush lips, he wondered what they would taste like. He gave himself a mental shake, trying to clear his head. He had

to stay focused. He had a job to do. The night was not his own, no matter how attracted he was to the woman.

But he still found himself rooted to the spot the closer she came. Once she stood in front of him, he let out a grunt of surprise when she rubbed up against him and cupped his cock with her hand, which grew even harder at her touch.

“Well, hello there,” she said as she gave him a sexy smile. “I’m Cydney. And who might you be?”

It vaguely registered that her accent sounded Canadian. Not really able to think too clearly with her hand on his dick, and all the blood in his body surging to that part of him, he said hoarsely, “Wulfric.”

She looked him up and down, but still kept a hold of his dick. “The name suits you. How about we go somewhere to get better acquainted? A part of you seems very interested.”

Cydney squeezed his cock, making him take a deep breath as he bit back a moan. Her scent filled his lungs and swirled in his head, intoxicating him. His wolf threw back its head and howled in longing. Wulfric stiffened. No other woman had stirred his wolf until this woman, and he knew what that meant—it was one of the signs she was his mate.

He took another deep breath, unable to resist her scent. He also detected the strong smell of alcohol. Taking a closer look at her, Wulfric realized his would-be mate was a little intoxicated herself. That could explain her boldness.

Gently, he wrapped his hand around her small wrist and pulled her hand off his cock. Knowing what she could be to him, if he didn't get some space between them, he was liable to embarrass himself by making a mess in his jeans.

Wulfric took a small step back. "I would love more than anything to take you up on your offer, Cydney, but it will have to be later. I have something to do right now."

She looked from side to side. "Really? What? You don't look particularly busy at the moment."

"I'm looking for someone."

"Cydney licked her lips and pointedly looked him up and down again. "Well, you did find someone. You found me."

He groaned to himself as his cock jerked inside his pants. A vivid image of her on her knees as her tongue circled the head of his dick flashed through his mind. He had to resist the pull she had over him. Besides having to continue to hunt his prey, Cydney wasn't sober enough for him to do what he wanted to her. But then again, if she truly were his mate, and his wolf came to the surface while they made love, she wouldn't be in any condition to notice. Wulfric savagely pushed that thought away. She wasn't going to be a quick tumble in bed.

"Be that as it may, I still have to find this person. It's important." He let go of Cydney's wrist and took another step back when she swayed closer. "But we can get together tomorrow, say in the afternoon sometime? Why don't you give me your mobile number?"

She gave him a pouty look. "I don't have my cell phone with me. I left it at home in Canada, since it wouldn't work here. I'm staying with a friend and her family. I don't remember their phone number offhand."

He'd been right about the origin of her accent, after all. Wulfric looked over her head at the table where three other women watched them. He nodded in their direction. "Is your friend over there?"

Cydney took a quick glance over her shoulder before she met his gaze again. "Yeah, Maggie is over there."

"Then how about we go to the table and I'll ask for the number?"

She smiled. "Smart thinking."

Wulfric sucked in a breath of pleasure that bordered on a moan as Cydney took hold of his hand, turned a little unsteadily and towed him toward the table where her friends sat. That small contact had his wolf whimpering, wanting to be even closer to her.

At the table, she turned to a woman with long, black hair. "Maggie, I need to give Wulfric here the phone number to your parents' place. I can't remember it."

Maggie grinned. He pulled his hand free of Cydney's and took out his mobile. Maggie rattled off a string of numbers, which he entered in his address book. That done, he snapped the phone closed and stuck it back in his jeans' front pocket.

"Thanks," he said to Cydney's friend. Glancing at the women at the table he gave them each a nod. He then turned to his would-be mate. "I'll call you tomorrow."

He went to leave, but Cydney stopped him. "Not so fast. I'll walk you out."

Wulfric didn't have time to protest before she once again took hold of his hand and towed him toward the club's entrance. Outside, she led him down the sidewalk to a dark corner of the building, in the opposite direction he had to go to try to pick up the werewolf's trail again.

"What time should I—"

He never got to finish his sentence. Cydney dropped his hand, and with a hard push, shoved him so his back landed against the club's brick wall. Before he knew it, she was all over him. Standing on her tiptoes, she thrust her fingers through the sides of his hair and brought his mouth down to meet hers. Once their lips met, she kissed him hungrily, not waiting for him to respond before she ran her tongue along the seam of his mouth, begging for entrance.

Everything but the woman pressed up against him left his head. Wulfric wrapped his arms around her waist and held her even closer as he opened his mouth and sucked her tongue inside. The taste of her went straight to his head. He moaned. Cydney's grip on his hair tightened as she held his head exactly where he assumed she wanted it.

She deepened the kiss, sucking and nipping at his bottom lip. Washed away on a tide of arousal, it took Wulfric a few seconds to recognize the burning sensation on the tips of his fingers for what it was. His claws threatened to come out. He felt them just beneath the surface of his skin. Another sign Cydney was the woman meant for him. He continued to kiss her as he cracked open his eyes. His eyesight was keener, which

meant his eyes had gone wolf, the iris taking up much of the white. He had to cool things down fast before she saw the change in them.

Wulfric pulled away from her mouth, and with his eyes closed he put his forehead to hers. His chest heaved as he fought to regain his breath. Holding her still against him, he brought himself back under control. Once he opened his eyes, his eyesight had gone back to normal, and his claws had receded.

With a force of will, he set Cydney at arm's length. He looked at her lips, which were swollen from his kisses, and her cheeks were colored with her arousal. The scent of it played havoc with the control he held over himself. "I'll call you late in the morning tomorrow," he said, his voice husky.

She nodded. "I'll be waiting."

Knowing he'd better leave before he broke down and yanked her back into his arms again, Wulfric turned her toward the club's entrance and sent her on her way with a gentle swat to her backside. He watched her go until she was safely back inside the building. It was going to be a hell of a long night.

Chapter Two

After he'd sent Cydney on her way, Wulfric tried to pick up the werewolf's scent. Even though he'd planned to search the club, there was no way he could go back inside. Not with Cydney still in there. She'd be all over him again, and he didn't think he'd be able to resist her a second time.

It didn't take him long to realize the scent trail he'd followed to the club had long since been obliterated. Too many others had crisscrossed it. The only way he would have had a remote chance of picking it up again would have been if it were fresh, which it hadn't really been.

Giving that particular prey up as a lost cause, Wulfric headed to where he'd parked his Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG. The silver two-seater sports car was a recent purchase of his, and one of the many things he loved about this modern world. Having been alive since the 500s A.D. he'd seen many changes in the world around him. Some good, and some not. The World Wars had not been a joy to live through. Still a warrior of old at heart, he felt wars were better fought with swords where you could look the enemy in the eyes before you killed them. There was more honor in it, in his opinion.

Driving to the next place in the area of Norwich he hunted, Wulfric had just parked at the curb when his mobile went off. He fished it out of his pocket and smiled when he saw who called. It was Dolf, one of his fellow warriors, and his best friend. He felt as if the others were like brothers to him as well, but he'd always been closer to Dolf. Even when mortal, when they served under Raed — their leader to this day, who

had once been King of East Anglia — they'd been close. That didn't mean they didn't have their fights, coming to physical blows at times, but they were quick to get over it. To be honest, Wulfric figured pounding on each other was what kept them best of friends. They didn't keep their feelings hidden to save the other's ego.

Wulfric flipped open the phone. "What's up, you slacker?"

"You're the slacker, wanker. Where are you?"

"Why? Do you miss me already?"

"I thought we could get a head start on our little once a month competition tonight."

During the night of the full moon, Dolf and he competed to see who could take out the most werewolves. They both had a competitive streak a mile long, and had been doing this for centuries, ever since they'd learned about and hunted the creatures.

"I'm game, but it won't count for next week. Let's call it a warm-up."

"All right. Where shall we meet?"

"I'm just outside the first park in my hunting area. How about you meet me there? It might provide us with some prey."

"I'm about five minutes away. See you when I get there."

Wulfric closed his phone and put it back in his pocket. He didn't have to wait long before he saw the headlights of Dolf's car in his rearview mirror. He got out of the Mercedes and stood on the sidewalk to wait for his friend to join him.

Dolf smiled as he slammed his car door shut. He was three inches shorter than Wulfric, but he was just as muscular. Where Wulfric's light-blond hair was long, Dolf

wore his wavy reddish-brown locks short. Once he joined him, Dolf's gaze — his eyes were so dark brown they almost appeared black — shot toward the park at Wulfric's back before he focused on him once again.

"Smell or hear anything?" Dolf asked.

"Not yet, but we still have the whole park to search."

Without another word, they walked through the gate. Wulfric kept his senses alert just as he knew Dolf did. That didn't last long, though. After a couple of minutes, he found his thoughts straying to Cydney. He'd been alone for so long. Even in his mortal life he'd never found a woman he'd wanted to bind himself to through marriage. And it hadn't been from lack of trying, either. The women he'd taken to his bed over the long years, he hadn't wanted much from them except for a good fuck, then he sent them on their way after it was over. None of them had ever lingered in his thoughts afterward — as Cydney did.

Wulfric let out a grunt of pain as Dolf's fist connected with his ribs. He blocked the next punch aimed at him. "What the hell did you do that for?"

"To wake you up. I said your name and you didn't seem to hear me, but I figured you wouldn't be able to ignore my fist."

"I guess I was a bit distracted."

"I'd say more than a bit. One of Fenris' get could have stepped out in front of you and you wouldn't have noticed."

“Bullshit. I was quite capable of picking up a scent trail of one earlier...until I lost it at the nightclub...and Cyd—” Wulfric cut himself off, but he feared he might have already said too much to get away with it.

“Syd, who?” Dolf asked.

Wulfric blew out a breath. There really wasn’t much point in keeping the fact he’d found his mate from Dolf. All the warriors would find out sooner rather than later. They all lived together in a manor house and not much ended up being kept secret there.

“Cydney. As in my mate.” Realizing Dolf had stopped walking, Wulfric turned to look at him. “What?”

Dolf wore a look of incredulity. “Your mate is a man?”

“Why the hell would you think that? Have I ever given you an indication I’d be into men?”

“Sydney is a man’s name.” Dolf gave him a lopsided smile. “I don’t know, I think I’ve caught you checking me out a few times.”

With a low growl deep in his chest, Wulfric launched himself at Dolf, his fist clipping the warrior’s chin. “My Cydney is definitely a woman, and the only reason why I’d ever check out your unsightly body is if I needed a reason to throw up.”

He pulled back his fist to hit Dolf once again, but went still as the wind blew in their direction.

Dolf had frozen in place as well. “Two of them,” he said quietly.

Wulfric nodded. "I'm picking up the two scents as well." He lowered his arm. "How do you want to do this? Use our swords right away, making it a quick death, or have some fun with them first?"

Part of the abilities Tiw had gifted them with was the ability to will their swords away when they didn't need them, and the opposite as well. The silver mixed in with the steel was deadly to all of Fenris' get. A strike through the heart was enough to permanently put them down.

"I vote for a little fun," Dolf replied.

"Then let's go kick some werewolf arse."

They both willed their clothes away at the same time and shifted into their half wolf and half human forms. A woman's high, shrill scream reached Wulfric's ears as he and Dolf took off at a run, following the scent of the two werewolves. He put on a greater burst of speed, hoping they could reach the woman before she was bitten. Since there wasn't a cure, death was the only option.

Reaching their prey, it didn't take Wulfric too long to assess the situation. The two werewolves had a young woman between them as each one took their turn groping her. A quick glance showed she hadn't been bitten—yet. There didn't appear to be any bloodstains on the light pink t-shirt she wore. The two seemed more interested in feeling her up than taking a chunk out of her. That they had cornered a woman in the first place was a bit out of their normal mode of operation. They usually chose males to turn.

Dolf and he stopped a few meters from the small group. The werewolves were so intent on what they were doing they hadn't noticed them yet. Wulfric decided to remedy that.

He cleared his throat loudly. "Oi, dumbasses, wouldn't you rather pick on someone your own size?"

Speech was another thing that set their type of werewolf apart from their prey. When in their werewolf form, Fenris' get lost that ability, along with the majority of their reasoning. They became more animal than man.

The two creatures turned in their direction and growled, but one kept his hold on the woman.

Dolf shook his large, lupine head. "Now be good dogs and let the female go." When they did nothing but growl once more, he looked at Wulfric. "I guess they need a little persuasion."

"It would seem so," he replied.

With snarls of their own, Dolf and he launched themselves at the werewolves. Wulfric chose the one who held the woman. The creature, even though slightly hampered, didn't back down from the fight. The werewolf tried to claw him with his free hand while he lunged to try to sink his teeth into Wulfric's flesh. The woman ended up in the middle of them. Her screams of terror rang in Wulfric's ears. He had to finish this fast before she got hurt—or worse.

He managed to grab hold of the creature around the throat and sank his claws into the tender flesh as he squeezed. With his other hand, Wulfric tore the woman out

of the werewolf's grasp. Keeping a firm but gentle hold on her upper arm, he forced her to stay at his side. With a hard shove, he pushed the creature back, then willed his sword into his hand. He plunged it into the werewolf's furred chest, straight through the heart. The creature fell, dead before he hit the ground.

A quick glance at Dolf showed he had everything under control with the second werewolf. A loud howl was cut off as his friend plunged his sword into the heart of his opponent.

The woman struggled in his grasp, whimpering with fear. Wulfric gave her a little shake. "Calm down. The danger is past. You're safe." Still, she continued to fight him.

Dolf walked over, shifting to his human form in midstride. "It would probably be a good idea if you shifted as well. Your ugly, furry mug is what's scaring her."

Wulfric flipped him off with a clawed finger before he took on his human form. The woman's movements stilled as she watched wide-eyed. "Is that better?" he asked, once the change was complete.

Her answer was to knee him in the balls. He let go of her and cupped himself as he sank to his knees, panting through the pain. As she took off running, he yelled, "We're the good guys." Dolf, the asshole, howled with laughter.

Once the pain subsided enough for him to stand, Wulfric scowled. "I saved her life and that's the thanks I get."

"I'm just glad it was you and not me," Dolf said with a laugh.

Wulfric ignored him and looked at the two dead werewolves. They couldn't leave them there for mortals to find. He looked up at the night sky, and said, "Tiw, I call upon you. I have need of your fire."

Blue god-fire engulfed the bodies. Wulfric and Dolf took a step back as the flames burned hotter and brighter. Once they died down, the corpses were no more. An unnatural wind blew the ashes away. Not even a scorch mark marred the grass to give proof of their passing.

"I guess we're even with one apiece," Dolf said. "Let's hit the next spot and see if we can get lucky again."

Wulfric nodded. "All right. But the next prey who has a woman who needs to be saved, you get to do the saving. My poor balls don't need any more abuse. Plus, I'd like to have all my equipment working when I next see my soon-to-be mate."

* * *

Toward the close of the night, Dolf ended up going his separate way to finish hunting in his area of the city. Wulfric coming up the winner in their little warm-up, he figured he'd put down enough prey for one night and headed to the house. He also wanted to make sure he didn't sleep in too late in the morning. He'd promised Cydney he'd call to see her the following afternoon, and he had no intention of not following through.

Inside the manor, he found it dark and quiet. No one seemed about. Even if there had been, he wouldn't have found it too surprising. Raed and his mate, Lexi, had had a baby the month before. A girl they named Petra. So far the baby had everyone in the

household wrapped around her little finger. In seven months, Petra would have some competition, though. That was when Garrick and Nika's baby was due.

Wulfric crossed the open-concept foyer and headed up the stairs. He was halfway up the curved staircase when his sensitive ears picked up the quiet cries of the baby. He hurried up the rest of the stairs and gently tapped on Raed and Lexi's bedroom door. Since he was still awake, he figured he'd give Lexi a break and feed the baby.

Lexi called for him to come in. Once he did, he crossed the room to where she stood over a crib. "I'll take her," he said. "I bet this isn't the first time Petra has had you up tonight."

"No, it isn't," Lexi said. "She's up every two hours like clockwork, needing to be fed. You don't have to feed her, Wulfric. I'm sure you want to go to bed."

"Don't worry about me. You look dead on your feet. I'll change her and then take her into my room to give her the bottle. You still have some in the fridge, right?" Lexi had gotten into the habit of storing some extra breast milk, since Raed tried to spell Lexi off as often as he could during the night feedings.

Lexi nodded. "Yes, there're two downstairs."

"Then why don't you go warm one up while I change Petra's nappy."

"Thanks, Wulfric."

Once Lexi left the room, he picked up the baby, making sure he supported her head. Right after she'd been born, he'd been afraid he'd break her. Now he was becoming an old hand at this baby stuff. Even though he hadn't liked the idea of

changing dirty nappies, he didn't mind the wet ones. If it was more than that, he let Mum and Dad do those.

He carried Petra over to the change table and found to his luck she was only wet. It didn't take him long to have her all cleaned up. By the time Lexi returned with the warmed up bottle, he had Petra cradled against his chest.

With the promise he'd return the baby to her crib once she had finished feeding and had gone to sleep, Wulfric went to his room. He bent his head and breathed in her baby scent as he closed the door behind them. He loved that smell, and hoped one day he'd have one of his own to cuddle and love. Now that he'd found Cydney, there was a greater chance of that happening.

After slipping off his shoes, he climbed onto the bed and placed the nipple of the bottle against Petra's lips. She latched onto it right away and went to town on it. Wulfric smiled.

Petra had just finished her bottle and he had her up on his shoulder while he burped her when a soft knock sounded on his door. At his "Come in," it opened and Raed stepped inside.

"Trying to steal my daughter again, Wulfric?"

"What can I say? I love the little bub." At that moment, Petra let loose with a loud burp. He chuckled. "Nice one."

Raed came and sat on the edge of the bed next to him and took his daughter. As he cradled her against his chest, he said, "I hear you found your mate tonight."

Wulfric snorted. "It didn't take Dolf very long to spread the news, I see."

"I was surprised he took it so well. You two always seem to be practically joined at the hip. I would have figured Dolf would have had a hard time with a mate coming into play."

"His time will come," Wulfric said. "Then it will be four of us always together."

Raed groaned. "Let's hope your mates don't turn out to be as avid football fans as you and Dolf are. The two of you are bad enough."

Wulfric shook his head. "Nothing wrong with enjoying a bit of football on the telly. I have a feeling Cydney won't be into it, anyway. She's Canadian. And according to Kamryn, 'soccer' as they call it, isn't as popular over there as it is here."

Kamryn was Algar's mate and a Canadian as well. So far out of the three mates, she was the only one who hadn't become pregnant right away, which suited her just fine.

The baby let out a long, breathy sigh. Raed kissed the top of his daughter's head. "I'd better put Petra to bed." He stood. Before he left, he said, "Just remember, if you need any advice on explaining everything to your mate, Algar, Garrick and I have already been through it and can help."

"I'll keep that in mind."

After Raed left, Wulfric got up and stripped out of his clothes. He had a feeling he'd take Raed up on his offer. The idea of having to explain what he was to Cydney seemed like a daunting task, and there was no getting away from it.

Chapter Three

Cydney rolled onto her back and stretched. She then groaned and clutched her head as it pounded. After Wulfric had left the nightclub the night before, she'd had a few more rum and Cokes. Obviously, she'd overdone it. She mostly blamed Ali for it, though. Maggie's friend had been the one who bought her at least one of those drinks in exchange for Cydney telling them what she'd done outside with Wulfric.

A smile stretched across her lips as she thought about the kiss they had shared. Never one for holding back when it came to wanting something, Cydney hadn't been prepared to let Wulfric walk away without getting a little taste first. She'd caught him a little off guard at the start, but he'd gotten into the swing of things quickly after that. And boy, did the man know how to kiss. By the time he'd pulled away, her nipples had pebbled beneath her blouse and her pussy had ached as wetness pooled. He left her wanting more than a meeting of the lips.

She flipped back the covers and sat up in bed. A quick glance at the clock on the nightstand showed it was the middle of the morning. Considering her and Maggie hadn't gotten in the door until well after one in the morning, it wasn't surprising she'd slept in for so long. What she needed now was a shower to help clear the effects of last night from her head. Wulfric would more than likely call in a couple of hours.

Cydney slipped off the bed and poked her head out of the bedroom door, listening for the sound of the shower in the bathroom just down the hall. Not hearing

anything, she was about to pull her head back inside when Maggie appeared at the top of the stairs.

“About time you got up, Cyd. I’ve been awake for a while.”

“Blame it on the alcohol and Ali, the drink pusher.”

Maggie chuckled as she came to stand by the bedroom door. “I doubt Ali had to push very hard. At least you had a good time last night, and you did find your British boy toy. I have to say that didn’t take you very long.”

Cydney smiled and shrugged. “I just happened to be at the right place at the right time. And Wulfric more than measures up to my expectations.”

“In all aspects of his person?”

“Just about all. I felt the hint of the important one last night while he kissed me, but it needs further investigation.”

Maggie shook her head. “You really are bad.”

“No, I make life interesting. Is it okay if I take a shower, or does someone else have dibs on it?”

“You can have it. My parents went out to do some shopping, so it’s just the two of us here at the moment. Wulfric should be calling you soon, right?”

“Yes. He said he wanted to see me this afternoon. You don’t mind, do you?”

“Of course not. You deserve to have some fun. I’m happy you came to England with me. I have to admit I didn’t like the idea of you having to go home, even if it was for only until you found an apartment.”

Cydney knew what Maggie meant. It was no secret between them that Cydney's father wasn't much of a dad. He was there physically, and being well-to-do, he supported her financially, but other than that he just wasn't there for her. Though never what she would have called affectionate by any means, the distance between her and her father had increased to what it was today after the death of her mother when Cydney was fourteen.

"Yeah, I hadn't relished the idea that much, either," she said. "Well, I'd better hop in the shower and then get dressed. I'm not sure exactly what time Wulfric is going to call. He only said late in the morning."

"Sure. And since you're going out on your hot date, I'm going to meet up with Ali and Carol again. If that's okay with you?"

Cydney rolled her eyes. "Maggie, you don't need my permission. You're best friends with them as well as me. I can share. You haven't seen them for a while. Go and catch up on things. I'm sure you three didn't have much time last night to cover everything."

Maggie smiled. "No, actually, we didn't. Ali was too interested in hearing about Wulfric. I'll leave you to it. When you're finished, my mum left some breakfast for you."

"Great. I'll be down as soon as I can."

While in the shower, Cydney couldn't help but think about the differences between Maggie's family and hers. Maggie's parents were close, and had a closeness with their daughter Cydney wished she had with her father. Most of the time she

thought of him as a cold-hearted bastard. A good parent it did not make him, but it helped him become a bigwig in the corporate world.

Finished with her shower, Cydney dressed in a pair of skinny blue jeans and a not too tight lavender t-shirt. Even though the day was warm, after a quick look out the bedroom window, she'd seen heavy rainclouds in the sky. She just hoped it would hold off for a while. But being in England, she had to expect it to rain at least once while she was here.

She went downstairs and headed for the kitchen. The shower had helped with her pounding head, but food and water would take care of the rest. As promised, Cydney found a plate made up with bacon and scrambled eggs sitting on the counter, covered with plastic wrap. She lifted an edge of the covering and put it in the microwave to heat.

Cydney had just finished eating and had put her dirty plate in the sink when she heard the sound of the phone ringing. She rinsed her hands and dried them as Maggie brought her the cordless. Her friend held her hand over the microphone and mouthed Wulfric's name.

Taking the phone, she silently thanked Maggie, then asked, "Hello?"

"Hi, Cydney. It's Wulfric."

"Hi."

"Are we still on for this afternoon?"

"Sure. What time are you thinking about?"

"Say in a half hour I come pick you up?"

"That's definitely doable. I suppose I'd better give you the address."

The sound of Wulfric's deep, male chuckle sent shivers of longing through Cydney. She figured she could listen to him talk all day. His accent did delicious things to her.

"Yes, the address would help. Do you know what it is, or do you have to put Maggie back on the phone to tell me?"

"Don't be a smartass. I know it." She told him the house number and street. "Do you know where it is, or do I have to put Maggie on the phone to give you directions?"

"Now who's being the smartass? I'll see you in a half an hour."

"See you then."

Cydney hit the 'off' button on the phone and handed it back to Maggie who had stayed in the kitchen to listen. "I guess he'll be here soon."

"At least you gave him the right address."

"Hey, my memory isn't that bad. The way the phone numbers are here, I find it harder to memorize them."

"It's all in what you're used to. Since you're all set, I'm going to give Ali a call and arrange to meet her and Carol. Oh, and don't do anything I wouldn't do while you're out with Wulfric."

"If I did that, I'd never get to see what he has in his pants before the vacation is over."

"You make me sound like a prude."

"No. I know you aren't one. You're just a little overcautious compared to me. I'm into the 'seize the moment' kind of thing."

"I've hung around you long enough to know that. Anyway, you'd better finish getting ready. You probably want to do some primping before Wulfric gets here."

Cydney smiled. "You know me so well. And if I forget later, tell Ali and Carol I said hi."

She then left Maggie in the kitchen as she raced up the stairs to do said primping.

* * *

Wulfric sat in his car, parked at the side of the street in front of the house Cydney had given the address to. It was a modest home in one of Norwich's modest areas. He got out of the car and headed for the front door. Once he stood before it, he rang the doorbell. It was answered a few seconds later by a woman who looked to be in her late forties, an older version of Maggie.

She stepped back and waved him inside. "You must be Wulfric, Cydney's date."

He walked through. "Yes."

Maggie's mother looked at him. "She never told me you were quite so...large."

"Mum," Maggie said as she came down the flight of stairs close to the door, "you're going to make Wulfric uncomfortable."

"I didn't mean anything by it, dear. It's just I don't think I've ever been around a man so tall or muscular. He makes your father look like a wimp."

"That's because Dad is a bit of a wimp."

Maggie's mother smiled. "True, but he's my wimp." She then looked at Wulfric.

"It was nice to meet you."

After her mum left, Maggie said, "I'll just run up and tell Cydney you're here."

Wulfric watched her go up the stairs. Once she reached the top and disappeared from sight, he heard Cydney and Maggie's voices. A minute later, his mate came downstairs. Seeing her again sent a rush of longing through him. She was dressed in a pair of jeans that left nothing to the imagination. They were tight all the way down to her slim ankles. Finding his gaze had lifted and now lingered on her pert, more than a handful breasts, he pulled his wits about him and looked her in the face.

"Hello, Cydney. Are you ready to go?"

She nodded. "Ready as I'll ever be."

Outside, he walked her to his car. At the passenger door, she ran her hand along the roof. "Nice car, Wulfric. A Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG. I've had my eye on one of these babies for a little while now. Once I get back home, I plan to ask my dad to buy me one."

From the serious look on her face, Wulfric could tell Cydney was indeed serious. If her dad could afford to buy her a car like this, she had to come from money. For a rich girl, she didn't flaunt it like some.

He opened the car door and held it open for her. "Well, hop in and I'll take you for a drive."

She smiled. "I'd ask you if I could give her a spin, but I don't want to test my ability to stay on the left hand side of the street with a car this expensive."

He chuckled. "Since I haven't had this car for very long, I appreciate that."

Once Cydney was inside, he shut the door and walked around to the driver's side and got in. He pushed the engine start button on the dash and the car roared to life. "So what would you like to do? Since you're here on vacation, would you like to go see some of the sights?"

"Sure, but I have no idea what I want to see. I really haven't looked into any of the tourist-type spots yet. Maggie and I only arrived in Norwich a couple of days ago."

"All right. Since it's Sunday, I know just the place. Do you feel like doing some wandering?"

"Sure."

"Then I'll take you to the Bishop's garden. It's a four-acre, twelfth-century walled garden. There is plenty of space to walk around and things to see."

"That sounds nice as long as it doesn't start to rain. Some of those clouds look kind of dark."

"We should be fine. And if it does, a little rain won't hurt you."

Cydney chuckled. "Spoken like a true Brit. Okay, let's go see this garden."

Once they arrived, Wulfric paid the admission for both of them to get in. He took her hand, linking their fingers together as they strolled through the ornate garden. He made sure to shorten his strides to match hers. Since he had a good foot and three inches on her, her legs weren't as long as his.

"So how are you enjoying your visit to Norwich?" Wulfric asked.

She looked at him. "It's been good so far. It was nice of Maggie's parents to invite me along when she came home."

"She lives in Canada as well?"

Cydney nodded. "She and I shared a dorm at Ryerson University in Toronto. We just finished our final year. I'm not sure if Maggie has decided if she wants to go back or not."

"What did you study at university?"

"Interior design."

"Really? Maybe I should take you to my place and see what you can do with my bedroom. I've been told when it comes to home décor I have absolutely no taste."

She smiled. "You know, you don't have to use my design abilities as an excuse to get me to see your bedroom."

Wulfric felt his cock jerk in his pants as she gave him a look that had him thinking of all the wicked things he wanted to do to her.

He cleared his throat. "Actually, that wasn't my intent. I *really* would love your help, but since you put it that way, will you come take a look at my bedroom?"

"Sure. I'd love to, once we finish here." Cydney brushed up against his side. "I'm sure I can give you some ideas about your room, and other things."

With his strides lengthening to get them there faster, Wulfric guided her to the small woodland walk. It was the perfect place where they could have some privacy, and to get his lips on hers as he was dying to do.

Once they were deeper into the trees, and after a quick look to make sure no one was around, he tugged Cydney up against his chest as he lowered his head. She met his lips halfway, eagerly opening her mouth for his tongue. Her taste had him wrapping his arms around her and lifting her off her feet. Her legs came up and wrapped around his waist, the crotch of her jeans landing perfectly over the front of his. Wulfric bit back a growl of approval.

Cydney's fingers sank into his hair at his nape as she ground herself against him. His cock went rock hard. He angled his mouth for a tighter fit, his tongue twining with hers, tasting and stroking. Arousal pounded through him, making him forget exactly where they were. Thoughts of putting her against the nearest tree, ripping her jeans off and sinking his aching cock into her pussy over and over again played through his head.

The first splash of rain hitting his cheek broke through the sexual haze that had descended over him. Wulfric pulled his mouth off Cydney's and looked up at the sky. Through the tops of the trees, darker clouds had gathered. More drops followed, increasing in number.

"So much for wandering through the garden," Cydney said. "I'm getting wet."

In more ways than one, he thought. Wulfric could still smell the scent of her arousal in the air around them. He let her slide down his body until her feet touched the ground. "Let's go before it gets worse."

Taking her hand once more, he ran with Cydney through the woodland walk, not stopping until they reached his car. By the time they were inside, both of them were

more than a little soaked. He looked over at her to see her hair was wet and dripping onto her t-shirt, which he couldn't help but notice had become a trifle see through, giving him a glimpse of the lacy bra she had on underneath.

Wulfric tore his gaze away from that tempting sight and started the car. For once, he welcomed the rain. It just meant he'd have Cydney in his bedroom that much sooner.

Chapter Four

Cydney's body still thrummed with arousal as she alternated her gaze from the scenery outside the car's window and Wulfric. Each time he kissed her, it was better than the last. His mouth moving over hers while the hard bulge in his jeans pressed against her pussy had had her not caring they were outside in a place where anyone could have seen them. If not for the rain interrupting them, she was sure she would have let Wulfric do whatever he wanted to her right then and there.

After a while, she noticed the area Wulfric drove through was decidedly on the ritzy side. The houses were a lot bigger than the ones where Maggie lived. On one road, Wulfric turned onto a long, graveled drive that led to a large manor house. Given the professionally landscaped lawns and gardens, it seemed Wulfric's supposedly bad design taste didn't run to the outside of his home.

As he drove to the large, detached garage, Cydney looked at Wulfric. "I thought my dad's place in Toronto was huge, but yours puts his to shame. Don't you get lost living in there by yourself?"

He turned off the car and removed his seatbelt. "I guess now would be a good time to tell you I don't live by myself."

"You have roommates?"

"Not exactly. They're more like family members."

They got out of the car and Cydney walked around to stand at Wulfric's side. They then ran to the front door to stand on the sheltered step. "Just how many people are you talking about here?"

"In total, nine. The youngest is only a month old, and number ten will be along in seven months."

Cydney blinked in shock. She couldn't imagine living in a house with that many people residing in it, no matter how large it was. "You all must get along really well, or you would have started to kill each other by now."

Wulfric chuckled. "We do, except Dolf and I tend to come to blows from time to time, but it never is very serious. That's just how we deal with each other. I consider him the closest friend I have."

She eyed him. "Okay. That must be a guy thing. I could never see myself hauling back and bitch slapping Maggie."

"Come on in. I'll introduce you to whoever is home, then you can take a look at my bedroom."

The mention of his room sent a shiver of desire through her. The more time she spent with Wulfric the more she liked him. And the more she wanted him. Before she left here today she intended to have sex with him at least once. Hopefully a lot more than one time.

Wulfric ushered her through the front door and Cydney caught her breath at the stated elegance of the large open-concept foyer. The floors were a blonde hardwood,

and matched the oak of the curving staircase to the upstairs. A large crystal chandelier hung from the high ceiling.

She turned to look at Wulfric. "Are you sure you need my help? Just seeing this much of your house, I would say it doesn't need any fixing, design wise."

He grinned. "We hired a decorator to do the main rooms of the manor. Our bedrooms, we basically did ourselves. You'll see what I mean. But first, the introductions. I can hear at least three members of my family are here."

Cydney strained her ears, trying to hear what Wulfric must have, but she couldn't make out a sound. Taking his word for it, she walked by his side as he guided her with his hand on the small of her back toward the back of the house. It wasn't until they were closer to an unopened door at the end did she hear voices coming through it.

Wulfric opened the door, letting her go through first. There were two women and a man just as large as Wulfric, standing by a counter close to the stove. One of the women held a small baby in her arms.

He guided her closer to the small group before he made the introductions. "Cydney, this is Dolf, Lexi and Nika. And the baby in Lexi's arms is her daughter, Petra."

She said 'hi' to each one as they were introduced.

Wulfric looked at Lexi. "Where are the others?"

"Brand is off doing whatever it is he does when he goes out. Raed, Algar and Garrick, we sent out to do some grocery shopping. Kamryn went along to make sure they got everything we needed instead of buying whatever catches their eye." Lexi

turned to her. "I have to say I'm really happy to meet you, Cydney. And from the accent you sound either American or Canadian."

Cydney nodded. "Thanks. I'm Canadian. From Toronto, Ontario to be exact. Wulfric just finished telling me how he lives with a large, extended family."

Nika smiled. "And it keeps increasing." She placed her hand on her flat stomach. "I'll be having a rug rat of my own soon. By the way, Lexi and I are American. She's originally from Florida and I'm from California. Kamryn is Canadian, from Niagara Falls."

"I've been there many times to see the falls," Cydney said.

Lexi shifted her baby up against her shoulder and patted her back when Petra squirmed in her arms. "I'm sure you'll meet the others at some point today if you're here long enough," she said. "I'm married to Raed, and Nika is Garrick's wife. Kamryn is married to Algar."

The baby let out a small cry, causing Dolf and Wulfric to react by taking a step closer to her mother.

"I'll take her, Lexi," Wulfric said.

"No, I'll take Petra," Dolf quickly added.

Wulfric scowled at his friend. "Back off. She wants her Uncle Wulfric."

"Sod off. She wants Uncle Dolf."

Much to Cydney's amusement, a small shoving match broke out between the two men. Taking a look at Lexi and Nika, and seeing them shake their heads at Wulfric and Dolf's antics, she had to guess this kind of behavior was nothing new to them.

Lexi finally put a stop to it when it appeared the shoving match would escalate into something a little rougher. "If you two don't stop, neither one of you will get to hold Petra. Wulfric, since you have a guest, I think it would be better if Dolf takes Petra. You can hold her later. Besides, you fed her last night after you came home."

"Fine," Wulfric said.

Dolf shoved Wulfric out of the way and gently took the baby from her mother. He gathered her close against his chest, making her look even smaller compared to how large he was. He kissed Petra's downy head and cooed to her.

Wulfric snorted. "All right. I'm taking Cydney upstairs to take a look at my bedroom."

Nika giggled. "That's a different way of saying it."

"For your information, Cydney is an interior designer. She just finished going to university for it. She's going to see what she can do to fix up my room."

Lexi smiled. "That sounds nice. And believe me when I say Wulfric needs your expertise."

"He told me," Cydney said with a laugh.

Wulfric took her hand and set them both in motion. Before they left the kitchen, he looked over his shoulder at the other people in the room, and said, "You know where we'll be, not that I expect any of you to come knocking on the door."

Cydney had to take longer than normal strides to keep up with Wulfric as he ushered her through the house and up the long, curving flight of stairs. At the top, he

guided her down the hallway to a closed door three-quarters of the way down. He opened it and held back for her to walk in ahead of him.

The first thing that hit her was the ugly, green carpet. She turned to Wulfric as he walked in and shut the door. "Shag carpeting? You have *shag* carpeting?"

He gave her a sheepish look. She quickly took in the rest of the room. The large dresser was shiny, light green melamine and the color of puke. The walls were no better, painted a bland off-white. The only thing that wasn't half bad was the king-sized bed, mostly because it sported no headboard of any kind. The head of it was pushed up against one of the walls.

Cydney met Wulfric's gaze again. "This room screams the 70s."

He blew out a breath and said quietly, "That sounds about right."

Guessing him to be at the most close to thirty years old, she figured he hadn't done a thing to the room after moving into the manor with his family. "And what's with all the green? Is it your favorite color?"

"No. I hate green."

"Then why did you keep the color scheme for the carpet and dresser? You could have changed them."

He shrugged. "I told you I needed help."

"I don't even think they sell shag carpet anymore."

Wulfric shifted to stand in front of her. "So will you take on the job?"

"God, yes. Someone needs to save you from this disaster of a room."

“Good.” He stepped even closer until they were toe-to-toe, forcing Cydney to crane her neck to look at him. “Then I want you to decorate it as if it was yours. Spare no expense.”

Wulfric was so close the heat from his body soaked into hers. Remembering they were alone and inside his bedroom, the bed a short step away, desire had her heart beating faster. In a husky voice, she said, “What if I do it all in girly pinks and pastel colors?”

“Maybe not all, but I can handle a little.”

“Okay. I think the only furniture I’ll save is the bed, but I probably need to try it out just to make sure it isn’t too worn out.”

“I’ll join you, of course. But I haven’t shown you the en suite yet. Considering we got soaked in the rain, I think you need to try out that room first before the bed.”

“I am kind of wet, aren’t I? I really should take my damp clothes off. I don’t need to be getting sick.”

Keeping her gaze locked with Wulfric’s, she took hold of the bottom of her t-shirt and pulled it over her head. He stared at her hungrily. His heated gaze dropped to her breasts, which caused her nipples to become taut, begging for him to suck on them.

With a noise that sounded like a real animalistic growl, Wulfric tugged off his shirt and pulled her into his arms. His lips took hers in a heated kiss. While he nipped and sucked, she ran her hands across his wide chest. She loved the feel of his hard body and knew she’d learn every inch of it with her tongue and lips before too long.

When Wulfric left her mouth and trailed his down to the side of her neck, she turned her head to give him better access. The pounding ache in her pussy increased, causing wetness to leak into her panties. She moaned when one of his hands came up and thumbed her nipple through her bra.

Feeling impatient for the man who held her, Cydney reached behind her back and undid her bra. She dropped her arms and allowed it to slide down them, to fall at their feet. She kicked it away.

Wulfric's hand closed over her bare breast, rolling the taut nipple between his thumb and index finger. Cydney moaned, pressing herself closer. But she moaned even louder when he bent his head and flicked his tongue where his fingers had been. He opened his mouth and sucked her nipple inside. She buried her fingers in his hair to hold him to her as each pull of his mouth caused her pussy to clench with need. After paying equal attention to her other breast, Wulfric lifted his head. She saw his eyes were heavy with arousal, open to mere slits.

"I thought we could enjoy the shower first, but I can't wait," he said huskily.

"Then don't. I need you to touch me, Wulfric. I want you to make me come." She took a step back as her hands fell to the top of her jeans. She toed off her shoes, then shimmied out of her pants before shoving them aside. Leaving on her panties, Cydney reached for the button on Wulfric's jeans. "But before you do that, I get to do some exploring."

She undid the button and pulled down the zipper. Reaching inside, she found Wulfric had gone commando. She wrapped her hand around his hard, thick cock, her

pussy growing wetter as she thought of how good it would be to have it buried deep inside her.

After a quick pump, Cydney pushed his jeans down past his hips. They fell to the floor, and Wulfric kicked them aside along with his shoes. She ran her gaze over every inch of him before she placed her palms on his defined pecs and skimmed them down his washboard abs.

Becoming more aroused, she made a trail of wet kisses down the center of his chest, following where her hands had gone. Lower she went until she was on her knees in front of him. His cock bobbed in front of her face. The sound of Wulfric's harsh breathing filled the room. He let out a loud groan as she took hold of his shaft and circled the head with the tip of her tongue. The bead of pre-cum that leaked out, she quickly lapped up, loving the taste of him on her tongue.

Encouraged by the deep, sexy noises Wulfric made, Cydney opened her mouth and sucked the tip of his cock between her lips. After a couple of shallow passes, she took more of him deeper until she reached the limit of what she could handle. Using her hand to stroke the very base of him, she moved her head up and down, paying extra attention with her tongue to the sensitive spot just under the flared head of his cock.

Wulfric made another one of those animalistic growls and buried a hand in her hair as he rocked his hips into her. Cydney felt something sharp graze her skull, but with his cock hardening even more, she paid it no heed. Her pussy throbbed and clenched the more aroused she became.

"Enough," Wulfric panted and pulled away. "Not this way."

Cydney stood and gloried in the sight of him. His whole body was clenched, his hands fisted, as he fought for breath. His eyes were still mere slits. Giving him a sexy grin, she hooked the top of her panties with her fingers and slowly pushed them down past her hips. Once she'd taken them all the way off, she dragged her hand across Wulfric's chest as she walked past him and climbed up on the bed. In the center, she laid back, lifted one leg and placed her foot flat on the mattress, giving him a good view of her wet pussy.

"Then come and show me how you want it," she said.

Chapter Five

The sight of Cydney stretched out on his bed, her luscious body open to his gaze, Wulfric had to fight from spilling right then and there. She'd already aroused him to the point where his wolf had surfaced. He kept his hands in fists to hide the claws that had burst through the tips of his fingers. As he stared at her nakedness, he kept his eyes open to mere slits to stop her from seeing they had gone wolf as well. And they had, since his eyesight had grown keener. He also hadn't wanted to come in her mouth, even though it had felt so damn good. Her being his mate would cause another change in him besides bringing out his claws and causing his eyes to change. During climax, his cock would swell, locking him deep inside her as he continued to come every few seconds until the swelling went down.

He climbed onto the bed and crawled up her body until he reached her lips. He took them in a passionate kiss as he settled on top of her. Cydney spread her legs farther apart, allowing more room for his hips. His cock brushed up against her slick opening, causing them both to moan.

Wulfric wanted to thrust home, but he held back. Instead, he left her mouth, shifting lower on her body to suck on one of her breasts. He trailed a hand down her stomach between them until he reached her pussy. After gathering some of her wetness on his finger, he circled it around her clit. He wanted her good and ready for him when he took her, drowning in her desire. That way, he hoped she wouldn't notice too much

of what would happen while he came. He wasn't ready to tell her what he was, or the reason why he didn't react like a normal man would.

"More, Wulfric," she gasped. "I want your cock inside me."

He lifted his head and laved her other nipple with the flat of his tongue. "Not yet."

Latching onto her nipple, he sucked it inside his mouth as he pushed a finger into her pussy, careful not to scratch her with his claw. Her inner walls closed around it. He could almost imagine them clutching at his shaft. It throbbed in time with his rapidly beating heart. After a few strokes, he added a second finger. Cydney's cries and moans pushed him ever closer to the edge.

Unable to wait any longer, he let go of her nipple and pulled his fingers out of her. He rose to claim her mouth once more as he aligned his aching cock with her pussy and sheathed himself to the hilt with one thrust. He held himself still, fighting back the climax that threatened to rise to the surface.

Once he was back under control, he pulled back until he was almost out, then pushed inside. Cydney put her legs around his waist, her inner muscles clutching at his shaft as he stroked in and out. She moved her hips in time with his, taking him even deeper when she angled them just so. Wulfric released her mouth and buried his face in the crook of her neck, setting a faster pace. Pistoning his hips, he rode her harder. He wasn't going to last much longer. Already he felt his orgasm building, his balls coming closer to his body.

Faster he stroked as Cydney's moans increased in volume. She reached down and dug her fingernails into his arse, urging him on. Then with a whimpered cry, her pussy rhythmically clutched at his cock, squeezing it in a tight fist as she came.

Wulfric groaned, fighting back the wolf's howl that threatened to rise. He grew harder, and just before he climaxed, his dick swelled to lock him inside her. No longer able to move in her pussy, he held her hips to his as he filled her with his cum.

They both fought for breath as he kept his hold on Cydney, to make sure she didn't try to shift out from under him. A few seconds later, he felt himself come again. She stiffened beneath him, but didn't say anything.

After a few minutes, the swelling went down and he stopped coming. Wulfric pulled out of her and rolled to his back, bringing Cydney up against his side. His claws receded and his eyes returned to normal, so he did nothing to hide them. He braced himself for what inevitably would come. She had to have noticed.

But after another minute and Cydney hadn't moved, Wulfric peered down at her where she had her head pillowed on his chest. She was fast asleep, her breaths deep and even. A sense of relief washed through him. He seemed to have dodged that bullet, at least for now.

And with that thought came another, one that had a broad smile forming on his lips. There was no question about Cydney being his mate. Everything that had happened while they had made love claimed her as such. All he had to do now was wait for Tiw's mark to appear high up on the right side of her back near her shoulder. The mark would be the same one he had on the cap of his left shoulder — Anglo-Saxon

in design, the black mark depicted a figure of a stylized man, Tiw, flanked on either side by two stylized wolves standing on their hind legs. Only Cydney's would be slightly smaller.

Wulfric closed his eyes, content just to hold his mate while she slept. The day was still young. He'd have more than enough time to make love to her again before he had to hunt prey that night.

* * *

Cydney took a deep breath as she slowly awoke. At first she had no idea where she was until she realized she lay pillowed on a strong chest and saw a puke-green dresser in her field of vision. She was at Wulfric's place inside his bedroom.

She smiled and shifted her head to look at him. He appeared to be asleep. She had no idea how long she'd slept. After the best bout of sex she'd ever had, feeling sated and lethargic, she'd drifted off. The late night and excessive drinking from her evening out with Maggie hadn't helped to keep her awake, either. Obviously, Wulfric hadn't minded.

Not wanting to disturb him just yet, she kept herself still. Sex with Wulfric had more than lived up to her expectations. He had the body of a god, and knew how to use it. He'd given her one hell of an orgasm. That thought had her thinking about his release. She'd never been with a guy who could have back-to-back multiple orgasms. And that was the only explanation as to what Wulfric had done once he'd come the first time. It was a little on the unexpected side, but she by no means found it a turn-off. She actually wanted to see if he could do it again.

Thinking it was about time Wulfric woke up, Cydney propped herself on her bent arm and looked down at him. She stroked her hand across his well-defined chest. His breathing hitched when she used the tip of her finger to circle his flat nipple. With soft caresses, she continued downward, her gaze following her movements. His cock lay against his thigh, but when she trailed a finger down it, it twitched.

Cydney lifted her gaze back to Wulfric's face to find his eyes open and watching her. "Did I wake you?" she asked.

"Yes, but you can wake me up like that any time you wish."

"If you liked that, you'll like this even better."

She wrapped her hand around his semi-hard cock and pumped it up and down. It got the desired response—his shaft quickly hardened even more. Cydney continued to stroke him until he thrust his hips, pressing closer. Once he was fully erect, she released his shaft and climbed on top of him to straddle his thighs.

Wulfric smiled up at her. "I hope you intend to use what you brought back to life."

"Of course I do. It would be a shame to waste it."

She shifted to straddle his hips and rubbed her pussy along the length of his cock, bathing it in her wetness. Wulfric moaned and closed his eyes. His hands fisted at his sides. Taking that to mean he gave her full control this time, Cydney decided to take advantage of it.

While she stimulated herself against his hard cock, she put her hands on the mattress on either side of him and bent her head to drag the flat of her tongue against

one of his nipples. A low growl burst out of him when she took the small bud between her teeth and gave it a gentle tug. She gave the other nipple the same attention.

“Cydney,” he said in a hoarse voice, “you’re driving me crazy.”

“My, my, someone is impatient. Lucky for you I’m not in the mood to wait, either.”

Still wet from their earlier lovemaking, she reached down to take hold of Wulfric’s cock. She lifted on her knees, positioned him and slowly impaled herself on his shaft. He was big, stretching her just the way she liked. And when he’d come, he seemed to fill her up even more.

She set a slow and steady pace, lifting until he was almost out of her before she sank back onto him. Angling her hips just right, his hard shaft rubbed her clit with each stroke in. She moaned as she increased the sensation by grinding herself against his pubic bone at the end of the motion.

Up and down she rode him, squeezing his cock with her inner muscles to give them both greater pleasure. Wulfric lifted his hips to surge up into her, matching the pace she set.

She felt her orgasm build. It wouldn’t take much to send her over the edge. Moving on him faster, harder, Cydney pushed herself ever closer to completion. She sucked in a sharp breath, then let it out on a moan as wave after wave of pleasure washed through her with her climax.

Wulfric sat up, and with a loud groan, put his arms around her to hold her close. He surged up into her, striving for his own orgasm. Just as he came, his cock swelled

inside her, seeming to lock them together. He pressed his forehead to her chest as he shuddered.

Still breathing rapidly, Cydney stroked Wulfric's back. It was then she noticed the black tattoo of two stylized wolves and a man in between them on the cap of his left shoulder. She was about to ask him about it when she felt another splash of cum hit her cervix. He was doing it again. It also caused an aftershock deep inside her pussy.

"Mmm, Wulfric," she said, "I have to say I love this neat trick of yours."

He kept his forehead against her chest. "What trick?"

She softly moaned when he did it again. "That. You just keep coming."

"It doesn't bother you?"

"God, no. It keeps you hard inside me." She tried to move, but Wulfric pushed down on her hips, stopping her.

"Don't," he said on a gasp. "Just stay still."

Considering his cock hadn't shifted when she'd tried to move on him, Cydney did as he said. She wondered if the swelling was a byproduct of his ability to have back-to-back orgasms.

After what seemed like a full minute, Wulfric lifted his head and looked at her. He'd stopped coming and his cock had gone down enough for her to feel it have some give. "Are you all right?" he asked.

She nodded, feeling a little confused by the worried expression he wore. "Yeah. Why wouldn't I be? That was the best sex I ever had."

One corner of his mouth lifted as he gave her a crooked grin. "So you liked it?"

"I'll put it bluntly. If I hadn't, you wouldn't have gotten a second round out of me. I don't know how you learned to come the way you do, and I really don't care. All I do care about is it makes for some great sex."

A look of relief washed over Wulfric's face. "I have to say you're making this a lot easier than I thought it would be."

"I'll take that as a good thing."

"Definitely," he said as he shifted her off his lap and onto the mattress. "So do you think you've tested out the bed enough?"

"For now."

"Good. You still have to look at the en suite."

Wulfric slid off the bed. He turned, scooped her up in his arms and carried her to the bathroom. Once inside, they put the shower to good use, not leaving any hot water for anyone else in the house.

* * *

"So you were serious about giving me free rein to do whatever I want to your bedroom?" Cydney asked.

"Yes. Do you really think I can make the right choices? After all, I don't mind the look of the room the way it is right now."

They sat on Wulfric's bed — dressed again — eating the Indian food he'd called to have delivered. Cydney put another bite of buttered chicken in her mouth and chewed as she gave the room another look over.

Once she swallowed, she said, "You're right. You'd make it worse, not better. When do you want me to get started?"

"Tomorrow."

"Depending on how late it is when you drop me off at Maggie's place tonight, I guess I can come up with something by then."

Wulfric wiped his mouth with a paper napkin that had come with the take-out. "I forgot to tell you, I have to work tonight. Actually, I work most nights. So I have to drop you off fairly early this evening."

She eyed him. "You couldn't have been working last night if you were at the nightclub."

"I was. Remember how I told you I looked for someone? That's part of my job."

"And what exactly is your job?"

"I hunt down what you would call undesirables and make sure they get what they deserve."

"What? You mean like a bounty hunter or something?"

Wulfric chuckled. "Or something. And Raed, Algar, Garrick, Dolf and Brand all do the same job I do."

Even though she hadn't met the other men except for Dolf, Cydney had a feeling she'd find the others were just as built as Wulfric and his best friend. If they were all bounty hunter types, they would have to be to chase down bad guys.

"Are there really that many undesirables in Norwich that all of you need to be out there?" she asked.

“You’d be surprised,” Wulfric said. “Let me put it to you this way, we never seem to run out of prey to hunt.”

Now he sounded like a big game hunter. “I’ll take your word for it. Since you will be dropping me off early, I should be able to come up with a design plan to show you tomorrow.”

“Good. I’ll pick you up in the late morning and you can start working your magic on the room.”

Cydney shook her head. “You have a lot of trust in me, considering you’ve never seen any of my work before. For all you know I could be into the real far off, eclectic styles.”

Wulfric leaned across the bed and gave her a hard kiss before sitting back down. “Like I said, design it as if you were doing it for your own self. Pretend you have decided to move in with me. Think of how you would like it if you had to live in this room day after day.”

“All right,” she slowly said. “That’s a different approach to doing a room design, picturing it as a place I’m going to live in. But I’ll go for it.”

“I can’t wait to see what you come up with.”

Right then, the sound of a baby’s cries could be heard through the closed bedroom door. Wulfric put aside his plate and slid off the bed. Cydney watched him open the door and step out into the hallway. He reappeared a few seconds later with Petra in his arms. Something about seeing him handle such a small infant had her insides fluttering in a good way. The way he cradled the baby against his chest while he

smiled at her, Cydney knew Wulfric would be a good dad someday. Nothing like her own who didn't really care if she lived or died.

Wulfric lifted his head and looked at her. "Would you like to hold her?"

"Ah, I don't know," she said hesitantly.

"Not into babies?"

She shook her head. "No, it's not that. I just haven't been around any. I'm an only child and I really don't have many relatives I'm close with."

Petra grunted in Wulfric's arms, causing him to sit cross-legged on the bed. He shifted the baby, so she sat up on his thigh and he supported her chin on one of his hands while he used the other to tap her back.

"So your parents didn't have any other kids?" he asked.

"No. My mom passed away when I was fourteen. And my dad never remarried."

"Sorry to hear about your mother. Are you close with your father?"

She snorted. "Not really. The only close relationship I have with him is with his money. Other than that, he isn't there for me. My dad would never be what you would call a nurturer, by any means, and it only got worse after Mom died. I think he gives me whatever I ask just to get rid of me. I've been left to my own devices since I was fourteen."

Wulfric met her gaze and something lurked in his eyes she wasn't sure she wanted to see. "I'm here now. You don't have to feel as if you're alone."

Petra's loud burp broke the moment that had descended over them, which Cydney was thankful for. They both laughed.

“Wow. That was a whopper,” she said.

Wulfric bent and kissed Petra’s pouty, little lips. “She really can let them rip.” He picked the baby up and put her bottom on his crossed legs while he cradled her upper body with his arms. He smiled at her. “And I bet your little tummy feels better.”

As Wulfric continued to talk nonsense to Petra, Cyndey watched him. What she’d seen in his eyes earlier, she could have sworn it looked like something close to...love? She really didn’t have much experience when it came to that particular emotion. There was no question her mother had loved her, and had shown it often, as if she had tried to make up for her father’s lack of it. But feeling it for a man she dated, it hadn’t ever happened.

What she felt for Wulfric was different, though. She really liked him, and it wasn’t all to do with the great sex. Did she want something more meaningful than regarding him as her British boy toy? She didn’t know. But if he wanted things to be more serious, she’d have to watch herself. She had a return ticket to Toronto and she had every intention of using it.

Chapter Six

Later, after Wulfric had dropped her off at Maggie's parents' place, Cydney sat in their guest room on the bed with a sketchpad and colored pencils in front of her. She'd already roughly sketched out the dimensions of Wulfric's bedroom. With a color palette in mind – nothing in pink as she'd threatened – she'd drawn where she wanted the furniture to go, coloring in the walls and each piece.

First thing tomorrow, she'd get rid of that god awful dresser, and rip up the disgusting shag carpeting shortly after. As for the furniture, she'd have to get Wulfric to take her shopping. She had a vague idea of what she wanted, but not familiar with the stores around there, she wasn't sure she'd find anything.

A tap at her door pulled her out of her design plans. "Come in," she called.

Maggie opened it and step inside. "Hey. Wulfric dropped you off early."

"Yeah. He has to work tonight."

"I see." Maggie came closer and sat on the edge of the bed next to Cydney.

"What are you working on?"

She smiled as she turned the sketchpad for her friend to see. "I have my first design job. Wulfric wants me to totally redo his bedroom."

"Are you serious? It could just be a ploy to get you into bed."

Cydney rolled her eyes. "No such ploy is needed. I've already been in his bedroom and his bed."

Maggie giggled. "I guess that was dumb of me. Of course you would have already slept with Wulfric. You've always been a fast worker."

"Especially when it's something I want. But really, he is getting me to redesign his room. You should see it now. It has green shag carpet and a puke-green dresser that I swear has to have come from the 70s. And what is worse is the man doesn't think it's all that bad. His family has told him otherwise, numerous times."

Maggie's brow furrowed. "Wulfric still lives at home with his parents?"

"No. He has roommates he calls his extended family. They all live together like a family would."

"Oh. He must live in a big place, especially since the room you've sketched looks pretty large."

"It's one of those manor homes." She told Maggie the name of the street Wulfric lived on.

Her friend's eyes widened. "Crap, he must be loaded, Cyd. Those manors are exceedingly expensive."

"Apparently, Wulfric and his family are all loaded. There are nine of them living together, married couples and all."

"So you met his family then?"

"Not all. I didn't get to meet one of them. They were all nice, though."

Before Wulfric and she had left the manor, he'd introduced her to the others who had returned. The only one she hadn't gotten to see was Brand. Apparently he liked to spend his days and early evenings in and out, but lately he was mostly out.

"I guess if you have your design project you're going to be kept busy," Maggie said.

"I hope you don't mind."

"Of course not. Wulfric is your first real client. Besides, it's better you start off doing a job for someone you're fairly close to. That way if you mess things up it won't be so bad."

"Gee, thanks for the vote of confidence. I'm not going to mess things up. Believe me when I say even if I did, Wulfric wouldn't notice. His taste is that atrocious."

"You'll still have your work cut out for you, if you're doing all of it yourself."

Cydney gave her a pleading smile. "Or you could find it in the goodness of your heart to help out a bit."

Maggie held up her hands. "Stop right there. Don't even bother asking. You're my best friend, but that does not mean I'll be willing to pick up a paintbrush anytime soon."

"What if I were to tell you Wulfric has a single friend, one he lives with, whom I think would be a perfect match for you. Dolf is built like Wulfric and just about as tall. I'm sure Dolf could be convinced to help out alongside you. Would that get you to change your mind?"

Maggie put her finger to her chin as if she thought about it, then dropped her hand. "Tempting, but no. Decorating is your thing, not mine. But feel free to introduce me to Dolf any other time."

"I don't know if I should now."

Her friend stood. "Whatever," Maggie said with a laugh. "I'll leave you to your work. Oh, will Wulfric be working tomorrow night?"

"I think so. Why?"

"Ali, Carol and I are going back to the nightclub again and I thought maybe you'd like to tag along."

"I'll see. Since someone," Cyndey gave Maggie a pointed look, "won't lend a hand, I might stay longer at the manor to work, if Wulfric allows it. The three wives will be there, so it wouldn't be as if I were alone there."

"Well, suit yourself. The offer still stands."

"Thanks. I'll let you know one way or the other sometime tomorrow."

After Maggie left, Cydney focused back on her sketchpad. It really would be ideal if she could work on Wulfric's bedroom while he was out at his job. She didn't want to spend the majority of her holiday working on it. And the faster she got it done the longer she'd have to focus on Wulfric. That decided, she made a mental note to talk to him about it after he picked her up the next day.

* * *

Stephen, the newest pack leader of the werewolves sired by Fenris the wolf, watched two members of his pack manhandling the mortal woman between them. Her screams of fear were music to his ears. They escalated in volume once the two males shifted to their werewolf forms. He didn't worry about anyone overhearing her. They were underground inside their den.

He looked around the central cavern they were in. Others of the pack stood on the sidelines watching the show. This was new to them, the same with his leadership. He'd taken it over by killing the former pack leader, Nathan. His bringing Nathan's severed head back to the den had been all the proof the others had needed to follow him.

One of the first things he'd changed within the pack was the lack of females. No longer were only males allowed in the den. Nathan's rule about not changing any of the opposite sex into werewolves, Stephen kept in place, but he had nothing against his pack having some fun with them. Just so long as they did it here where no one could see them. All he needed was for the Anglo-Saxon god's warriors to catch wind of it and the games would come to an end.

Not that Stephen really gave a fuck about the warriors. Nathan had been too obsessed with them for his own good. As far as Stephen was concerned, the less interaction the better. From his days of being a mortal criminal on the streets, he'd learned not to draw attention to himself so long as he wanted to continue doing what others thought was wrong.

After Nathan's last failed attempt at capturing one of the warriors a month before, Stephen realized there was no way he could completely rid himself of them. They were too strong and their god protected them too well. Just so long as they didn't come after him directly, he couldn't give a fuck what they did. So what if they killed off some of his pack members during their nightly hunts. It wasn't as if more mortals couldn't be turned.

And he had bigger fish to fry. Now that he was a werewolf, and immortal to boot, Stephen intended to continue the lawless activities he'd enjoyed as a mortal. Only this time, he wanted to be the man on top running the show. With his whole pack at his disposal, it wouldn't be hard to set himself up as head of a crime ring.

Turning away from the entertainment, Stephen went to the smaller cavern that was now his. The sight of the woman, and her screams, made him hungry for some playtime of his own, but he didn't want anyone's leavings. Tomorrow night he'd go out and look for a mortal woman to enjoy.

* * *

The next day, Cydney dressed in her oldest pair of jeans and t-shirt she'd brought with her from Canada. She was prepared just in case Wulfric wanted her to get started on his room right away. Though she hoped they'd be able to indulge in each other for a little bit first. She found she now craved his touch. After she'd gone to bed, she'd played through her time spent with Wulfric in her head. It couldn't have been a more perfect day. Actually, there was a lot about him she thought was perfect.

Having already prearranged the time for Wulfric to pick her up that morning, Cydney went downstairs to search for some breakfast. Maggie was in the kitchen with her parents. They sat at the table and looked her way when she stepped into the room.

Maggie's mom motioned to the counter. "There are some fresh baked blueberry muffins, or I can whip up some eggs for you."

"The muffin is fine," she quickly assured her. Cydney took one off the cooling rack and put it on a plate she'd taken out of the cupboard. She sat in the empty chair next to Maggie.

"So," Maggie's dad said, "I hear you have your first designing job, Cydney."

She nodded and swallowed the bite she'd taken of the muffin. "Yes. I'm actually pretty excited about it."

"And she's excited about who hired her too," Maggie added with a giggle.

Maggie's mother sighed. "Well, could you blame her? I've met Wulfric and he's definitely something to get excited about."

"What does that make me?" Maggie's dad asked. "Chop liver?"

"Oh no, dear," his wife said. "You know you're all I'll ever want. But I can still appreciate a man as good-looking as Wulfric."

Cydney wasn't used to this type of banter between husband and wife. Even while her mother had been alive, her parents hadn't acted this way. She didn't think her father could ever loosen up enough to have allowed it.

"Anyway," she said, "Wulfric will be picking me up soon. Since I have a lot of work to do mostly by myself, I might not come back until very, very late tonight."

Maggie's mother stood. "In that case, I should give you the spare key. That way you don't have to wake any of us to let you in."

As Maggie's mom went to get the key, Maggie turned to Cydney. "What about the nightclub tonight?"

"I don't know, Mags. I got to thinking after you asked me. If I don't want to spend most of the holiday working, I should get as much work done in a day as I can."

"All right. I understand. Just don't work yourself into the ground trying to get it all done."

"I promise, Mom," Cydney said with a laugh.

After taking the spare key from Maggie's mother when she returned, Cydney finished her muffin, then went upstairs to get her sketchpad. As she came down the stairs, the doorbell rang. The closest one to the door, she answered it to find Wulfric standing on the other side.

He pulled her into his arms and gave her a thorough kiss until her toes curled inside her shoes. Her heart thundered in her ears and her legs went like jelly. Wulfric lifted his head and gave her a smile that said he knew exactly what he did to her.

"Hello," he said in his deep, accented voice.

"Hi, yourself."

"Are you all set?"

"Yes. I just need to let them know I'm leaving."

"No need," Maggie said behind her.

Cydney turned to her friend. "Then I'm off."

"Have fun."

"I will."

That said, Cydney walked through the door and followed Wulfric to his car. Once they were inside and on the road, she turned her head to watch him. God, he was

gorgeous. She didn't think she'd ever get sick of looking at him. And seeing him again made her realize how much she'd missed him.

"Are you going to keep staring at me like that the entire ride to my place?"

Wulfric asked with a grin.

"Maybe."

He shook his head, then jerked it toward the sketchpad on her lap. "Is that the plans you have for my room?"

"Yes. And don't worry, there isn't any pink. I'm not that cruel."

"I thought I told you to design it as if it were your bedroom."

"I did. I'm not a big fan of pink bedrooms, anyway. It reminds me too much of the one I had when I was small. Everything was pink, right down to the carpeting. I'm into darker colors these days."

"Will you be able to get started today?"

"If you like what I've come up with, then yes. You'll have to take me out furniture shopping at some point. But I want to start with the painting, and getting a look under that shag carpet. If there's a hardwood floor under it, depending on the condition of it, I'm throwing around the idea of refinishing it and not putting any new carpet down."

"There's hardwood under it. Most of the floors in the manor were originally just hardwood before carpet was put on top of it."

"Perfect. In that case, I'll want to rip up the carpet after I paint."

“Sounds as if you have it all planned out.” Wulfric put his hand on her knee and squeezed. “But before you start any work, I get to say hello to you properly.”

“I thought you did just fine when you came to the door.”

“That was just a taste to tie me over until I could get you to the manor.”

Cydney swallowed. “Then I suggest you hurry up and get us there. I’m definitely in the mood for a proper greeting.”

The rest of the ride to Wulfric’s place seemed to not take very long at all. Considering he drove over the speed limit, it wasn’t much of a surprise. By the time they made it upstairs to Wulfric’s bedroom, Cydney was well on her way to being aroused. Just the idea of making love to him again was a huge turn-on.

He took the sketchpad from her and put it on the dresser before he wrapped her in his embrace. Cydney leaned against him, pushing as close as she could get. The hard ridge of his cock pressed against her stomach, showing her he was as turned-on as she.

While he kissed her hungrily, she put her arms around Wulfric’s waist, then dropped her hands to his muscled ass. He moaned against her mouth as she squeezed the firm flesh in her grasp and rubbed herself against him. An ache built deep inside her pussy and wetness pooled between her legs. God, how she wanted him. Her need for him heated her blood and caused her heart to thud against her ribs.

Wulfric tore his mouth from hers. “I have to be inside you, Cydney. All night I could do nothing but think of having you again. You make me ache.”

“I couldn’t stop thinking about you, either. I’m more than ready for you, Wulfric.”

With their gazes on each other, they both hurriedly stripped out of their clothes. Once they stood naked, Wulfric pulled her to him again. His cock trapped between their bodies, he ground against her, making wetness leak from her pussy and onto her thighs. His hands lifted and covered her breasts, kneading them. Cydney felt the sharp brush of his fingernails against her skin when she arched her back.

In a sudden move, Wulfric lifted her off her feet and placed her on the edge of the bed. He gave her a gentle push, so she laid flat on her back with her legs hanging over the mattress. He then knelt between her spread thighs.

“I have to taste you,” he said, his voice rough with passion.

He didn’t wait for her to answer. Wulfric lifted her legs and hooked them over his broad shoulders. The first brush of his tongue along her pussy had Cydney moaning with pleasure. She spread her legs wider and lifted her hips as he licked her, stiffening his tongue to push it inside her. A finger stroked her clit while he fucked her with his tongue. She whimpered, wanting more.

“Wulfric,” she panted. “Enough. I want you inside me. Now.”

He gave her one last lick, then stood. “Get on your hands and knees and I’ll give you what you want.”

Cydney quickly complied. She rolled over, crawled to the center of the bed and lifted herself on her hands and knees. She let her head fall forward when Wulfric climbed up behind her and put his hands on her hips. The tip of his cock brushed against her wet opening as he bent over her. She felt his lips brush a spot high up on her

back near her right shoulder. He did it a second time, the sensation almost reverent feeling, the way he did it.

Straightening, Wulfric sheathed himself balls-deep and held himself there. His grip on her hips didn't allow her to move. "You're mine, Cydney," he said in a strained voice. "Mine."

Before she could respond, he pulled back only to slam into her. She moaned. With him taking her from behind, she seemed able to take more of his cock. His thrusts were so powerful he rocked the bed into the wall. In and out he moved. Her body coiled tighter as an orgasm built. She clamped her inner muscles around his shaft, loving the feel of his cock plunging into her pussy.

Wulfric increased his pace, his thrusts coming faster and harder. "Fuck," he groaned. "I can't hold back much longer. Come for me, Cydney."

He wrapped an arm around her waist and lifted her, so she leaned back against his chest. Her head rested on his shoulder. He continued to piston inside her, his cock swelling. With his last thrust, Wulfric reached around her and used a finger to stimulate her clit. It was all she needed to follow him into release.

Their cries of passion filled the room. Wulfric kept his arm around her, easily supporting her. His cock had swelled to the point where they were locked together. He lowered them to their sides on the mattress and tucked her head under his chin. Cydney felt his shaft pulse as another splash of cum filled her.

She relaxed against him, in no hurry to move away. It was then she remembered what Wulfric has said right after he'd entered her, that she was his. Not wanting to

spoil the mood, Cydney decided not bring that particular subject up. Even though a thrill had gone through her at his declaration, the fun-loving-not-needing-a-man part of her wanted to turn tail and run very far away. But the rest of her wondered if Wulfric and she could work out. Then she thought about what her parents' marriage had been like. She didn't think she'd ever be able to trust a man that much to allow him permanently in her life.

Chapter Seven

Wulfric and Cyndey were now dressed and beside each other on the bed as she showed him the design plan she'd done for his bedroom. While she talked, he found himself watching her rather than paying attention to what she said. He couldn't seem to get enough of her, especially after he'd seen her back.

High up by her right shoulder there was the faint beginnings of Tiw's mark. It only looked like a bruise, barely marring her skin, but it was there all the same. Cyndey was his. It was just the last bit of proof he needed. Now he just had the hard part of trying to explain what he was without sending her running. He couldn't lose her. He'd already fallen for her and couldn't picture his life without her in it.

"You're not paying attention to a single word I'm saying," Cydney said, bringing him out of his thoughts.

He gave her a crooked grin. "Can I help it if I can't stop thinking about all the ways I want to make love to you?"

She shook her head. "Stop that right now. If you keep it up I'll never get started on your room."

"Oh, I can keep it up for you. That won't be a problem at all."

Cyndey gave him a stern look, but it soon slipped and she laughed. "You're worse than I am with the innuendos. But seriously, we have to get down to business. I promised Maggie I wouldn't spend our entire holiday working. I'm only here for a month."

Wulfric didn't need the reminder that she had no plans to stay in Norwich. It also meant he didn't have the luxury of taking his time with her. And once Tiw's mark fully showed, there would be no getting around explaining how that just suddenly appeared on her skin.

She elbowed him in the ribs. "You're doing it again."

"Sorry."

"Do you like it or not?" she asked and shoved her sketchpad onto his lap.

Wulfric looked down at it. As Cydney had said earlier, there wasn't any pink. The walls were a tan color that wasn't too light or too dark. The headboard and dresser appeared to be dark, heavy pieces. She'd made a notation next to each saying they could change depending on what she found in the furniture stores. The floors, as she'd said, were drawn to look like hardwood. The curtains on the window were black, and she'd made another notation about finding them in faux suede.

"Now I know the furniture and curtains are just rudimentary representations of what I'm thinking of, but until I can get into the stores this is the best I can do," she said. "I guess the main thing is, do you like the color scheme? I picked the heavy, dark curtains, since you work late at night and sleep longer in the mornings."

"I like it all. And since you want to get started, I'll even go out and buy the paint today. You just have to tell me how many cans you think you'll need."

"All right. And while we're on the subject, I've been meaning to run something by you."

"What's on your mind?"

“To make the work go faster, I think it would be better if I worked in the evening as well when you’re at work. That is if you don’t mind me being here without you.”

He brushed a kiss across her lips. “If I had my way, you’d be staying here instead of your friend’s place.”

And he truly did. Tiw had put a form of protection around the manor, almost like an invisible shield. It kept all of Fenris’ get from being able to set foot on the property. After the run-in they’d had with some of the werewolves – right here – shortly after Raed had met Lexi – Tiw had made sure nothing like that would ever happen again. Their home was supposed to be a safe haven for all his warriors and their mates.

Cydney blinked. “You’re serious? You’d really want me to stay here for the rest of my holiday?”

“Yes. That way you can work whenever you want and you don’t have to wait for me to pick you up. Plus I like the idea of you being in my bed, waiting for me when I come home each night.”

Her face grew serious as she appeared to think it over. After almost a minute, she said, “I don’t know, Wulfric. I’m not sure how Maggie will take to that idea. And you are moving a little fast here. I am going back to Toronto. Besides, I’m practically gutting your room. Even you aren’t going to be able to sleep here until I get the painting and the floor done.”

He stopped himself from grinding his teeth at the mention of her going back to Canada. Now that she was his, the thought of her leaving had his wolf’s hackles rising.

“Talk it over with Maggie first then. And there is a spare bedroom. That’s where I planned to sleep. As for you going back to Toronto, I’m going to do my damndest to get you to change your mind.”

Much to his surprise, Cydney paled. She shook her head. He swore he saw what looked like extreme uneasiness flash across her face. Did she dislike the thought of staying with him that much?

“Don’t push, Wulfric. I want to enjoy what time I have with you. Please don’t ruin it. What we have now is nice, really nice, but I’m not looking for a long-term commitment. I’m not wired that way.”

Wulfric bit his tongue to stop himself from saying that last statement was utter bullshit. She *was* wired that way. If she wasn’t Tiw would never have marked her as his mate.

He took a deep breath in through his nose, her scent calming him with its presence. “Fine, I’ll let it go for now.” He changed the subject. “I’ll go get the paint, and I’ll take your design plan with me to match the color you want with the paint chips at the store.”

Cydney seemed to relax with relief. “Just make sure you get latex, not oil. While you’re gone I want to haul this butt-ugly dresser out of the room. Will one of the guys help me with it?”

“You’ll have to take out my clothes first. Before I go I’ll grab some bin bags for you to put them in. As for moving the dresser, since you hate it so much, you can take an axe to it.”

She smiled. "Really? You'd let me chop it up into bits with an axe?"

He grinned back. "It'll make it easier to move and dispose of. When you're ready, the axe is outside in the garage, and I think there's a pair of safety glasses somewhere in there as well."

Cydney hugged him. Seeing how happy it made her to be able to destroy his dresser, Wulfric wished he had more than one for her to go at. After giving her the bin bags and finding out how many cans of paint she wanted, he left her to get started.

* * *

Once Wulfric went to buy the paint, Cydeny got to work emptying his dresser. The two garbage bags he'd given her would be more than enough, considering he didn't have a ton of clothes. The drawers were filled with t-shirts and long-sleeved t-shirts, along with a few shorts and sweaters. In the top drawer, she found his socks. What was glaringly absent was any kind of underwear. The lack of such garments meant Wulfric went commando every day. And there also appeared to be no pajamas at all. The man must sleep nude. Just the idea made her shiver as a wave of arousal shot through her.

The drawers now empty, she pulled them out and tugged the rest of the dresser to the middle of the room. As a second thought, Cydney also pushed the bed farther away. Luckily, Wulfric didn't have anything stored underneath it. She put the bags of clothes inside the large walk-in closet.

Ready for the axe, she walked out of the room and down the stairs. She didn't hear anyone else around, but given how large the manor was, it didn't surprise her. She

headed out the front door and went to the detached garage next to the house. Using the regular door set in the side of the building, she stepped through it.

Cydney found a light switch on the wall and flipped it on. The light flashed off the three expensive cars that sat inside. After a quick glance at them, she turned her attention to the back wall where a number of tools hung. She spotted the axe and crossed over to it. She lifted it off the pegs that held it, then used her gaze to search for the safety glasses on the shelf just under the tools. They ended up being under a couple of clean rags.

As she turned to leave, the garage door slowly lifted. Thinking it could be Wulfric already returning, Cydney stayed where she was. It wasn't his Mercedes that pulled inside. A silver Lexus drove in and parked. The man who got out was a couple of inches shorter than Wulfric, but he more than made up for it in having a larger muscle mass. He flipped his long, black hair over his shoulder. This had to be Brand, the only resident of the manor she hadn't met. His dark blue-eyed gaze took her in as he walked toward her.

Once he stood in front of her, she stuck out her hand. "Hi, I'm Cydney. You must be Brand."

He gave her hand a quick shake, then nodded. "Yes."

Wulfric had warned her Brand was a man of very little words. He only spoke when he had something to say, and kept it as short and to the point as he could make it. He definitely came across as the strong, silent type.

Feeling a bit uncomfortable with the silence that stretched between them, she hoisted the axe higher, and said, "I just came to get this."

His brows furrowed. "Why?"

"Wulfric said I could use it on his puke-green dresser. The damn thing is just way too ugly to foist off onto someone else. That would be cruel and unusual punishment to inflict on a stranger."

Brand grinned and let out a short chuckle. Cydney blinked at the change it made in his appearance. He no longer looked quite so stern and forbidding. And he was actually really good-looking. If Maggie didn't like Dolf, there was always Brand.

"That thing is ugly," he said. "If you're going to use the axe, I'll supervise."

"It isn't necessary."

"I'll watch."

"I don't want to keep you from anything. And Wulfric should be back soon from the paint store."

"You're not doing it alone."

He turned and stepped out of the garage, then faced in her direction with an impatient look. Cydney had a feeling he'd wait there until she followed him out. With a sigh, she stepped outside with the axe and safety glasses.

She waited for him to punch in the code on the keypad on the brick wall to close the door, then walked beside him back to the manor. Inside, he stayed with her as she went up the stairs. Lexi, holding Petra, was at the top. So was Nika. Both women's eyes widened when they saw the axe she carried.

“What’s that for?” Lexi asked.

“She’s going to use it on Wulfric’s dresser,” Brand said as he answered for her.

On his way by, he placed his large hand on top of the baby’s head and kissed her cheek. He continued down the hallway until he reached Wulfric’s bedroom door. He turned toward her. “Coming?”

Cyndey gave Lexi and Nika a sheepish look. “Brand has decided I’m not to use the axe without having supervision. And since Wulfric isn’t here, he’s taken on the job.”

Lexi’s lips twitched as if she held back a smile. “There’s no point in fighting it. Trying to get Brand to change his mind about anything is like trying to push over a brick wall with only your hands. It isn’t going to happen.”

“And I know from personal experience, believe me,” Kamryn said as she walked past Brand, gave him a wink and then joined them. “It’s nice to see you again, Cydney.”

“And you too, Kamryn.” Cyndey gave each woman a smile. “I better not keep him waiting. Brand already looks impatient enough as is.”

She left the other women and walked down the hall toward Brand. He moved aside, so she could walk past him and into the room. Cydney didn’t bother to turn to see if he followed her. While she slipped on the safety glasses, she felt his gaze watching everything she did.

Cyndey stepped closer to the dresser and lifted the axe. She then swung it down, the sharp blade skidding across the top of it and taking a small chunk out of the corner. She lifted it for another try, but found it held in place by a strong hand before she could follow through.

She met Brand's sharp gaze. "What?"

"Not that way. You'll hurt yourself."

He shifted to stand behind her and reached around to put his hands on top of hers around the axe handle. He raised both their arms higher, then allowed them to drop. This time the axe made a sizable cut in the dresser. They made the next strike together as well.

Brand had just lifted the axe for a third time when a loud, animalistic growl sounded behind them. Cydney turned her head to see what had made the sound, but the man at her back blocked her line of sight.

"Relax," Brand said as he let go of her hands and stepped away. Now she was able to see Wulfric who stood just inside the bedroom. Brand continued. "Your woman was going to hurt herself. Now she knows how to use an axe the right way."

Without another word, Brand walked out of the room. Cydney went to Wulfric and gave him a kiss. "When you told me about Brand you neglected to say how he doesn't take no for an answer. And what's with this 'your woman' crap? Does he think he's from the Dark Ages?"

The tension in Wulfric's shoulders seemed to loosen as he cracked a smile. "More than you know. In some ways we're all like that, but Brand has always done his own thing regardless what people think or say."

"Well, he was quite insistent he supervise."

Wulfric placed the cans of paint he carried on the floor and crossed over to her. He cupped her face and gave her a lingering kiss. His mouth moved over hers as his

tongue stroked inside. After he lifted his head, he said, "But Brand is right, you are my woman."

Not wanting to get on the topic of her not going home again, Cydney smiled, and said, "You'd better watch the 'your woman' thing, buster. I have an axe, and thanks to Brand, I know how to use it. I would hate to suddenly confuse you for your dresser."

Wulfric dropped his hands from her face, then reached around and gave her a swat on the ass. "Be nice. At one time a woman liked it when a man claimed her as his, to protect her and take care of all her needs."

Cydney snorted. "Like I said, Dark Ages. As a modern woman, the only need I want you to take care of in the near future is the one for sex." She took a step away. "Now if you don't want to get hurt, I suggest you give me some room. I have to put this dresser out of its misery."

Once Wulfric was no longer in range of getting hurt, Cydney lifted the axe as Brand had showed her and brought it crashing down on the dresser. She let out a whoop as it split in half and fell to the floor. Giving Wulfric a look of delight, she attacked the fallen pieces until they were chunks littered around her.

Chapter Eight

Stephen slowly worked his way around the large, open room. The loud music blaring out of the speakers played havoc with his sharp hearing, but he did his best to ignore it. His gaze shifting from left to right, he searched among the mortals for exactly what he looked for. The males, he didn't pay much attention to. The females, they were what interested him. Not finding what he sought, Stephen circled back to the bar and ordered a beer. It was still relatively early. He had all night if needs be.

He'd just taken a swig from the bottle of beer when three women walked past him. One of them had him trailing her with his gaze. She definitely could be the one he wanted. Leaning with his back against the bar, he watched her sit at one of the tables not too far from where he stood. She talked and laughed with her friends, all the while not knowing he, one of mortals' predators, had her in his sights.

The longer he watched the woman the more she appealed to him. She would be the one. There was an innocence about her, a goodness, that he would enjoy stripping from her. And a woman like her was always the type to scream and cry. He was more than looking forward to breaking her, teaching her not everything was bright and cheery in the world. That bad men like him did exist.

All night he kept his gaze on her, and when she got up to leave the nightclub with her friends, he followed at a discreet distance behind them. As if he'd planned it himself, the two other women walked off down the sidewalk while his prey went to the parking lot.

He took a quick look around to make sure no one watched him as he increased his pace. She'd just reached her car when he came up directly behind her. His hand on the door stopped her from opening it. With a gasp, she turned toward him. Stephen gave her an evil grin.

"Hello, beautiful. You and I are going to have some fun."

She opened her mouth as if to scream. He clamped his hand over the lower half of her face and shook his head. Pulling back his other hand, he slammed his fist into the side of her head. She crumpled against him.

He gathered his prize in his arms and forcibly put her in his own car. He'd take her to his pack's den and really see how loud she could scream.

* * *

Cydney came awake slowly after Wulfric gently shook her. She was stretched out on her side on top of his bed, which had been covered in an old sheet to protect it. Rolling onto her back, she blinked up at him and looked around. As if she suddenly remembered where she was, she sat up.

"Sorry," she said. "I didn't mean to fall asleep. After I cleaned up the brushes and paint tray I only thought to sit and relax until you came back."

The room smelled of paint and the walls already had the first coat on them.

"No need to apologize. It's late, or should I say very early in the morning."

"What time is it?"

"Almost four o'clock."

"I guess I really did fall asleep. I've been out for three hours. So what do you think of the color?"

Wulfric glanced around the room. "I love it. The room is looking better already."

"I just need to do one more coat of paint and then the day after that I can rip up the carpet." Her last word ended on a large yawn, which she covered with her hand.

He leaned over and kissed her forehead. "I think I should take you back to Maggie's place. You don't want to wear yourself into the ground. Or better yet, you can just stay with me in the spare bedroom."

Wulfric felt a flutter of hope that she would agree when she looked as if she seriously considered his offer. But in the end, she shook her head.

"I'd better not," she said sleepily. "I told Maggie's parents I would come home late. And since they are more than likely still asleep, I don't want to call them to say I'm staying here overnight. And if I don't call, they might worry if they wake up and find I'm not there."

He nodded. "All right. I understand, but I do want you to seriously think about staying here on the nights you work on the room late. You're not going to get much sleep if I have to wake you up just to take you back to Maggie's place."

Cydney yawned again. "You're right. Interrupted sleep isn't going to do me any favors. When I come tomorrow, I'll make sure I bring some extra clothes with me, and I'll let Maggie's parents know ahead of time."

"Good. Now let's go before you end up falling asleep again."

He ushered Cydney out to his car and they were on the road in a matter of minutes. Halfway through the trip, Wulfric glanced over and saw she'd rested her head against the seat and had shut her eyes. She sighed softly in her sleep. He smiled at the small sound.

As he turned onto the street where Maggie's parents lived, he gently shook Cydney awake. "We're just about there," he said once she opened her eyes.

She sat straighter as he pulled his car over to the curb in front of the house. "Something is up."

"Why do you say that?"

"Both of Maggie's parents are standing outside."

He leaned forward and looked out the passenger window. Sure enough, Maggie's mum and a slender man stood at the front of the house. Even from this distance, he saw the concerned expressions each of them wore. "Let's go talk to them."

After they got out of the car and walked toward the house, Maggie's mum rushed over to them. "Is Maggie with you?"

"No," Cydney said. "What's going on?"

"She hasn't come home yet. She never stays out this late. For some reason I woke up and decided to see if she was home. Seeing her bed not slept in, I went downstairs to wait. That was an hour ago."

"Maybe she's still with Ali and Carol."

"She's not. I called them already. I woke them up and they both said they left the nightclub with Maggie two hours ago. We were about to drive there and see if we can find her."

Anytime Wulfric heard of someone missing in the middle of the night, the first thought that came to mind was one of Fenris' get. Their preying on mortals accounted for a fair amount of unexplained disappearances.

"I'll go look for Maggie," he said to her mother. "It's best if you and your husband stay at home in case she calls. If she does, Cydney has my mobile number."

Cydney shook her head. "I'm coming with you."

"I think it would work out better if you stayed here."

While they spoke, Maggie's father had joined them. He cleared his throat. "I would prefer if Cydney did go with you, Wulfric. Two sets of eyes are better than one."

Seeing the determined look on Cydney's face, he knew she wasn't going to take no for an answer. He nodded. "Okay, I'll take Cydney with me. I'll give you my mobile number in case Maggie shows up on her own. And I'll be sure to call if we find her."

They only waited long enough for Maggie's mother to go inside for a piece of paper and pen to take his number before Cydney and he were back on the road headed for the nightclub.

"I hope nothing bad happened," Cydney said as she stared out the passenger window.

"There's no point thinking anything negative just yet."

He sure as hell hoped one of the werewolves hadn't gotten to Maggie. Even though female mortals could be turned with one bite just as males could, Fenris' get hadn't been targeting women to bring into the pack for some time. It had gone all male. But that didn't mean they didn't prey upon them with their thirst for flesh and blood.

The streets were pretty well empty at this time of night. Wulfric sped down them, wanting to get to the nightclub as fast as possible. If two hours had gone by since Maggie had last been seen just about anything could have happened, especially if she ended up falling prey to a werewolf.

At the nightclub, he pulled into the parking lot, and Cydney stiffened. She leaned forward and looked out the windscreen as she put her hands on the dash. "The white car, Wulfric. It's Maggie's mother's--the one she drove tonight."

Seeing the lone, white car in the parking lot did not bode well for Maggie. He parked two spots away from it, not wanting to contaminate the area any more than it already had. If he were lucky, there was an off chance he could pick up the scent of a werewolf if one had been involved.

Wulfric got out of the car first, and using his preternatural speed, while Cydney was busy getting out of her side, circled the white vehicle. His heart dropped when he spotted a set of keys lying on the ground by the driver's side. He leaned in closer to the door and took a sniff, detecting the one scent he'd hoped wouldn't be there — a werewolf's stench.

He straightened and said, "Cydney, I found something."

She gave him a bit of a double take seeing where he stood, but she didn't mention him being over by the car already as she walked toward him. "What? What did you find?"

Once she reached his side, he pointed to the keys at his feet. She went to bend to pick them up, but he stopped her. "Don't touch them yet."

"Why?"

"I'm going to call the others. They're more than likely on their way home. I don't want our scents mixed with the ones on the keys until they've had a chance to smell them."

Cydney gave him a confused look. "You mean you're going to call Raed, Algar, Garrick, Dolf and Brand? And what the hell do you mean about them smelling the keys?"

He sighed. Her accompanying him had definitely put a wrench in the works. He needed the other warriors to see if they could pick up the werewolf's trail. Since time was of the essence, they all needed to work together. And to better help them, a few of them would have to go wolf, since in their werewolf or wolf forms their sense of smell was even greater. Wulfric had to tell Cydney what he was at some point, and it looked as if that moment had arrived. With her friend missing, and the car being the only lead, he couldn't see her letting him take her back to Maggie's parent's place.

"I'll explain after they get here," he said. Before she said anything else, he pulled out his mobile phone and dialed Raed. Once the warrior picked up, he said, "Raed, we

have a bit of a situation going down. I need all of you to meet me in the parking lot at the nightclub called 'The Nightclub.'"

"Trouble with one of Fenris' get?" Raed asked.

"Yes, I'm afraid."

"Are you still with Cydney? I thought you returned to the manor to take her home."

"Yes, I'm still with her. I had taken her. It seems her friend, Maggie, has disappeared from the nightclub."

"Shit. I'll round everyone up and we'll be there as soon as we can."

Wulfric snapped his phone shut and put it back in his pocket. He looked at Cydney. "They're on their way."

"Why do I have the sudden feeling you're keeping something from me?"

He pulled her into his arms and hugged her, not answering her question. He had no idea what Cydney's reaction would be once the truth came out, but the fate of her friend weighed heavier on him at that moment. The chances of finding Maggie living decreased with every minute that went by.

*

After a little while, Cydney pushed away from Wulfric and paced, not too far away from him. The feeling he hid something from her wouldn't go away. Even the look on his face said he was resigned about something. And the whole thing about not touching the keys until his friends arrived to smell them was just plain strange.

On one pass, she looked toward the entrance to the parking lot. The not doing anything, when deep down inside she knew something bad had happened to Maggie, did not sit well with her.

"They'll be here very soon," Wulfric said as she paced in his direction. "Try to stay calm."

She stopped in front of him. "It's a little hard to do that when my best friend is missing and all we're doing is standing next to a car, waiting for your friends to arrive. Are smelling scents part of what you do for your job?"

"Partly."

"What? That's it?"

"For now."

"You're just a fount of information, aren't you?"

Wulfric didn't have a chance to say anything when another Mercedes and Brand's Lexus pulled into the parking lot. Five large men piled out of the cars and walked over to where she and Wulfric stood.

Raed took charge of the situation. From their previous meeting, Cydney had noticed he came across as the 'head of the family.' The others seemed to defer to him.

"What happened, Wulfric?" Raed asked in a brisk tone.

"When I went to drop off Cydney, her friend's parents were outside. Maggie hadn't arrived home, and the two girls she'd been with said the last time they'd seen her was a couple of hours ago when they'd left the nightclub together." He motioned to

the white car with a jerk of his head. "This is the car Maggie drove. It's her mother's. We found her keys on the ground. They haven't been disturbed."

Raed looked at her and then back to Wulfric. "And you're sure about the other thing I said on the phone?"

"Yes, you definitely can smell werewolf."

"A what?" Cydney asked, thinking she had to have misheard him.

Wulfric met her gaze. "A werewolf."

She stuck her finger in her ear and gave it a little wiggle before pulling it out. "I really couldn't have heard that right. Did you just say a werewolf?"

Raed didn't give Wulfric a chance to answer. "Are you sure this is the way you want Cydney to find out, Wulfric?"

He pulled his gaze away from her, and with his face devoid of all emotion, he jerked his head in a short nod. "Cydney isn't going to want to leave. And we need to use every edge we have to see if we can find a trail."

Not liking how the two men spoke as if she weren't there, and feeling anxious about what she'd soon find out, she said, "Damn right I'm not going anywhere. Would someone explain what all this werewolf crap is about?"

Wulfric blew out a loud breath. "It's probably better if I go first and show you."

"Before you do," Algar cut in, "I suggest you go wolf, and save the other until she has gotten over the first. I made that mistake with Kamryn, remember? And since we have to start the search for her friend, we really don't have the time to calm Cydney down."

The sound of her heart pounding with unease filled her ears. The way Wulfric and the others looked at her, as if they were prepared for her to react badly, had her a little scared about what Wulfric was going to do. *Go wolf?* What did Algar mean by telling Wulfric to go wolf?

Cydney soon found her gaze locked on Wulfric, and she was unable to move or say anything. In the bright lights of the parking lot, she watched as his eyes seemed to change, the iris taking up most of the white. His body blurred, and from one blink to the next, he'd shifted from a man to a wolf who stood staring up at her. His fur was a very light brown verging on a blond shade, a bit darker than the color of his hair.

"Holy fucking shit," she all but yelled.

She backed away only to slam against a hard body. Looking over her shoulder, she saw Brand behind her. He wrapped his hands around her upper arms, preventing her from going anywhere.

"It's okay," he said. "It's still Wulfric. Touch him."

Not giving her a chance to protest, Brand slid one hand down her arm to her wrist and forced her to place her palm on top of Wulfric's lupine head. His fur felt soft against her skin. He turned his head and rubbed it against her hand. She looked into his wolf's eyes and saw intelligence and understanding. This was all so surreal. If she hadn't seen Wulfric change, she wouldn't have believed him if he'd just straight out told her.

Brand let go of her wrist. Cydney kept her hand on Wulfric's head, stroking his fur. She didn't feel as if she wanted to run screaming in terror. But that didn't mean she felt any less unsure about what he could do.

But then his body blurred again, he grew bigger, taller and took on another completely different form. This one had her heart trying to beat out of her chest, and a trickle of fear ran down her spine. Wulfric stood seven feet tall. His body was completely covered in the same fur as the wolf had. He looked to be a cross between a wolf and a man with his large lupine head, pointed ears on top of his head, bushy tail and clawed fingers and toes.

"It's still me," Wulfric said, his voice deeper and gravelly sounding compared to his normal one.

Her breath sawed in and out of her lungs as if she were about to hyperventilate. Hearing Wulfric's voice come out of a wolf-looking mouth had her about ready to balk. As if he sensed she was about to run, he reached out and pulled her to his furred chest. She heard the wild thud of his heart under her ear, almost matching the rate of hers.

"It's all right, Cydney. You don't have to be afraid. I won't hurt you. Just relax. You'll get used to seeing me like this."

She closed her eyes and took a deep breath. The scent that filled her nose was the one she'd come to associate with Wulfric — masculine with a hint of the aftershave he always seemed to wear. His hands stroked her back and he rested his chin on top of her head. When all he did was just hold her, by slow degrees, her fear abated enough for her to calm down slightly and slow her breathing, so she wouldn't pass out.

Putting her hands on Wulfric's chest, she pushed back in his embrace and looked at him. It was hard to think of this half man and half wolf as being the man she'd slept with. But looking into his wolf's eyes, she saw something that let her see into the soul of the man inside.

"What are you?" she asked shakily. "Are you a werewolf?"

"For now that's the best explanation. We don't have time to get into it. We need to see if we can pick up the trail of the werewolf that was here with Maggie."

"You think one of your kind has her?"

Wulfric let out a low growl. "This one isn't like us. This werewolf was sired by Fenris the wolf, one of the creatures me and my fellow warriors have been charged to put down. They're bloodthirsty and prey upon mortals for sport."

Cydney felt her heart race again. "Oh god. Are you telling me one of those things has Maggie?"

"We're going to do everything we can to find her, Cydney," Raed said. He then turned all business as he addressed the men around her. "Dolf, you'll search with Wulfric. Garrick and Brand you team up while Algar and I will as well. One from each pairing will stay wolf while the other stays in human form."

Cydney stepped out of Wulfric's arms and watched as Raed shifted to his wolf form and sniffed the keys on the ground. Once he changed back, he said, "There are too many scents on it to pinpoint Maggie's." He stooped to look inside the car. "Cydney, can you tell me if the jacket on the backseat is your friend's?"

She walked over to where Raed stood and peered into the back-side window.

“Yeah, that is Maggie’s.”

He picked up the keys, used one to unlock the driver’s door and reached inside to pull out the jacket. Raed held it to his face and took a deep breath. “I’ve got it.” He held it out. “Everyone take a sniff.”

“And be sure to check out the werewolf scent high up on the car door,” Wulfric added.

One by one, the others went wolf, checking out the two scents. As each one shifted, Cydney found it less jarring, and that she could accept it better. Dolf went last. He buried his wolf’s nose into the jacket and his whole body visibly stiffened. A low growl rumbled out of his throat as he snatched the garment out of Raed’s hand with his teeth. He dropped it at his paws, threw back his head and let out a loud howl. In a blink of an eye, he shifted to his human form, picked up the jacket and held it to his face.

Cydney couldn’t help but notice how Dolf desperately clutched at what he held. “Are those claws I see on the tips of his fingers?” she asked uncertainly.

“Aw, fuck,” Garrick said in a loud voice. “She’s his mate. It figures Wulfric and Dolf would find theirs practically at the same time.”

Wulfric punched Garrick in the arm. “Shut the fuck up, big mouth.”

Garrick rubbed where he’d been hit as he shot her a glance before looking back at Wulfric. “Sorry, I wasn’t thinking.”

What Garrick had said about Wulfric and Dolf slowly sank in. She gasped. “I’m your mate?” she asked Wulfric.

“Yes, just as Lexi is Raed’s, Kamryn is Algar’s and Nika is Garrick’s. But again, this is something we’ll discuss later.” He turned toward Dolf. “You have to pull it together, my man. If you go all wolf you’re not going to keep yourself thinking straight enough to find your mate.”

Dolf lowered Maggie’s jacket and clutched it in a tight fist. “He’s mine. No one takes him down but me. I haven’t waited a thousand years to find my mate to have one of Fenris’ werewolves take her from me before we’ve even met.”

Cydney swallowed. *A thousand years?* She turned a gaze that had to be filled with the shock she felt toward Wulfric. He didn’t notice as his full attention was centered on his best friend.

“He’s yours,” Wulfric reassured Dolf. “We’ll get her back. Just keep it together. I’ll be the one to go wolf.”

“No,” Dolf snarled. “I’ll be the one who does that.”

“No, you won’t,” Raed said sternly. “You’ll stay in human form, Dolf. You go wolf and you won’t be able to control yourself. Wulfric will be the one to shift while you stay at his mate’s side to keep watch over her.”

Dolf let out a loud wolf growl that Cydney had heard Wulfric make before. “Is that an order from my leader?”

“Yes, that’s an order. Now pair off and look for that scent trail.”

Algar and Garrick shifted to wolves, then they, along with Raed and Brand, began their search, leaving Dolf and Wulfric with her in the parking lot.

Cydney stayed where she was as Wulfric came to her and lightly kissed her. She shivered at his touch. Her mind was too jumbled with all that had been revealed to think straight.

“I’m going to go wolf now. You and Dolf will follow me. Stay with him.”

At her nod, his body blurred and he was once again a wolf. Walking at Dolf’s side, she followed Wulfric as instructed. He had his nose to the ground as he searched for Maggie’s scent.

After they’d walked for a bit, Dolf asked, “What’s she like?”

“You mean Maggie?” At his nod, she continued. “She’s smart, funny, a bit on the shy side at times. I’ve known her for four years now, ever since we shared our first dorm room at university in Toronto. She just finished her BA in journalism.”

“What does she look like?”

“She’s a little taller than I am. Has long, black hair, green eyes. She’s cute, but doesn’t think she is.” Not knowing how else to describe her friend, Cydney added, “When it comes to men, Maggie can be overcautious, at least I think so. She’s only dated a few guys since I’ve known her. She also isn’t seeing anyone right now.”

Dolf grunted. “Good. Then I won’t have to steal her away from another man.”

Seeing how grim he looked, his anxiousness practically rolling off him in waves, Cydney asked, “You want to know something funny? After I met you, I told Maggie about you. I told her I thought you’d be perfect for her.”

His gaze shot to her face. “You did? What did she say?”

“That I could introduce you to her at any time. I actually tried to use you as a bribe to get her to come help me with Wulfric’s room today. She hates painting or anything that entails decorating. I should have pushed harder to get her to come with me.” Her voice caught on the last sentence.

“You didn’t know this would happen,” Dolf said through gritted teeth. “Don’t blame yourself.”

Before she could say any more, a loud wolf’s howl sounded off in the distance. Dolf came to a standstill as did Wulfric. “What was that?” she asked.

“Garrick has found something.”

Dolf turned and headed back in the direction they’d come. Wulfric came to her side and licked her hand. He then maneuvered himself so it rested on his neck. A little more comfortable with him in this form than the other, she threaded her fingers through his fur and allowed him to walk her in Dolf’s wake.

Chapter Nine

Once they met up with the others, minus Garrick, Wulfric shifted to his human form, willing his clothes back on at the same time. He shot Cydney a quick look to find her watching him. He had no idea what she thought of what he'd revealed to her. She kept her face guarded. At least she wasn't looking at him in absolute horror. It was a start, though he thought most of her not appearing so fearful of him stemmed from the worry she must feel for her friend.

Wulfric brought his attention to the matter at hand when Brand said, "Garrick picked up the scent of another werewolf. Not the one we hunted. He has him cornered behind this building in a dead end alley."

As a group, they all rushed to where Garrick had the werewolf contained. His fellow warrior was in his werewolf form, using his sharp claws and teeth to keep the creature he'd cornered right where he wanted him.

Without taking his gaze off his prey, Garrick said, "I've tried to convince him to shift, so he can tell us where to find his den, but so far he isn't cooperating."

"Let me have a go," Dolf said with a growl.

Dolf passed Maggie's jacket to Cydney, then as he walked toward Garrick and Fenri's get, he shifted into his werewolf form. Brushing Garrick aside, he snatched the creature around the throat and slammed him against the brick wall, his head hitting it with a loud thump.

“Shift,” Dolf said menacingly, “or I’ll call Tiw to force the change on you. You do know who Tiw is, right?”

Wulfric knew Tiw couldn’t do any such thing, but the creature Dolf held didn’t. The werewolf’s response to the demand was to snarl and growl as he tried to break Dolf’s hold on his neck with his claws. Dolf just slammed his head harder against the wall until the creature gave up.

“All right, since you aren’t going to play nice, maybe it’s time you got a taste of Tiw’s god-fire.” Dolf looked up into the night sky. “Tiw, I have a need of your fire, but just a little. Only enough to show this piece of shit what will happen to him if he doesn’t do as we ask.”

The werewolf howled in pain as a streak of Tiw’s blue god-fire licked across his upper arm. It took one more kiss of flame to have him shifting into his human form. As soon as he did, Dolf yanked him up into his face and curled his upper lip in a snarl.

“Now, asshole, tell me where we can find your den.”

“Why the hell should I tell you? I know all about Tiw’s immortal warriors who hunt my kind. You’ll kill me anyway.”

Still in werewolf form, Dolf’s sword appeared in his hand. “But there are many ways to die. It can be easy or hard. Your choice. I’ve heard silver poisoning is a slow and painful way to go.” To back up his threat, Dolf brought the tip of his sword to rest between the werewolf’s eyes. The silver in the steel flashed in the bright light of the almost full moon that hung in the sky.

He swallowed. "Okay, I'll show you where it is. I'll do even better and lead you right into it."

"And why should we believe you would do that?" Raed asked.

"Because now that I think about it we can scratch each other's backs."

"What could we possibly do for you?"

The werewolf smiled. "Recently we've had a change in pack leaders. Stephen, who took Nathan's place, thinks nothing of us who are under him. He's making changes not all of us agree on. One of them is bringing mortal women into the den to play with. Nathan had it right when he decreed no females should be involved in the pack. They're too distracting. You promise to do away with Stephen, and I'll lead you right to him. And in exchange, you let me live to see another day. I'll promise to lay low."

Dolf withdrew his sword just before he willed it away and shifted to his human form. "Deal, but if you fuck us over, I'll make you wish you never existed."

Wulfric took Cydney's hand and pulled her to his side as Dolf grabbed the werewolf by the back of the neck and force-marched him out of the alley. The look on his best friend's face as he passed him said Dolf would do anything and everything he needed to get his mate back. The werewolves had no idea what was about to sweep down on them.

* * *

"Cydney, would you just listen to reason," Wulfric pleaded. "The werewolf den is no place for a mortal."

“Tough,” she said. “I’m going. Maggie will need someone she knows. Unlike me, she probably hasn’t gotten the nonviolent introduction to your world. She’ll see you guys shift and think you’re one of the ones who have taken her.”

“Cydney is right,” Raed interjected. “We don’t know,” he paused to glance in Dolf’s direction who stood in the werewolf’s face, pumping him for information, “what condition we’ll find Maggie in.”

Wulfric sighed. “All right, but you won’t leave my side for anything, Cydney. Even if I’m in my wolf or werewolf form, you don’t go anywhere. Got it?”

“Does she have the mark yet?” Algar asked. “Because if she does, that will be one less thing you have to worry about.”

Cydney’s brow furrowed. “What mark?”

He said to Algar, “Yes, at least she had the start of it. It’s very faint.” To Cydney he added, “Tiw, who is an Anglo-Saxon god, is the one who granted us immortality and the ability to shift and to hunt what you would call the ‘bad werewolves.’ All of his warriors carry his mark on the cap of our left shoulders.”

“You mean that isn’t a tattoo?”

“Correct, it isn’t. When each of us finds our mates, Tiw also places his mark on the woman, high up on her back near her right shoulder. It’s the same but only smaller. When a mate is found, the mark first shows as a dark bruise. Once she’s grown to accept the warrior who is the one for her, it fully appears.”

Cydney shook her head. "Slow down a bit. I feel as if I'm drowning in information overload. This mark, besides being from an Anglo-Saxon god, does it mean something else? The way Algar asked about it, I'm assuming it does."

"Correct again. Once you carry Tiw's mark, you are no longer susceptible to a bite from a werewolf sired by Fenris the wolf. One bite from their kind turns a mortal into a werewolf who thirsts for flesh and blood."

Wulfric heard Cydney audibly swallow. "What about Maggie? She's Dolf's mate? Would she have the start of the mark?"

"More than likely not. She and Dolf haven't met yet. The mark doesn't begin to appear until after two mates have done so."

"Oh god. What if she ends up being bitten?"

His voice grim, Wulfric said, "She'll have to be put down like others of Fenris' get."

Cydney's face went white. "Then what the fuck are we waiting for? We need to get her out of that den before that can happen."

Raed turned toward Dolf and asked loudly, "Are you ready to go, Dolf?"

The warrior eased away from the werewolf. "Yes. Let's do this."

Their leader nodded. "We're ready as well. Dolf, you, Garrick and our captive over there will go with Brand in his car. The rest of us will follow in mine."

Once they all piled into the cars, Wulfric shifted closer to Cydney in the backseat. He smelled her fear. He didn't think it was because of what he and his fellow warriors

were, but he had to make sure. "Cyd, talk to me. Please tell me you're able to handle the truth of what I am."

She turned her head to look at him. "I'm not going to lie and say I'm thrilled to hear you're a werewolf."

"We don't think of ourselves as that. We're immortal warriors."

"Whatever. To be honest, I don't know how I feel about all of it, and me being your mate. Right now, all I can think about is Maggie and what she must be going through."

"Fair enough," he said. "But once this is all over, promise me you'll give me a chance to better explain everything." He cupped the side of her face with his hand and ran his thumb along her plump bottom lip. "Like Dolf, I've waited over a thousand years to find you. You fill a space inside me that has been long empty. I don't want to lose you."

Cydney pulled away from his touch. "I promise I'll give you a chance to explain, but I'm not going to give you anything beyond that."

He dropped his hand into his lap. "That's all I can ask."

* * *

Cydney got out of the car as the others with her did. Theirs, along with Brand's, was parked on the shoulder of a long stretch of road surrounded by fields and farmhouses. She looked up at the sky and saw it had just barely started to lighten. Dawn was almost upon them. For being up all night, she didn't feel tired, her nerves were just strung too tight.

She followed the men as they met up with the others from the car in front. Once they drew even with them, Dolf said, "The den is beneath an old farmhouse on the other side of this field. There's an entrance to the underground den inside the house."

Raed pointed to the werewolf. "You lead, but don't even think of pulling any shit."

The werewolf shook his head. "I won't. You'll do me a big favor by putting Stephen down. I would do it myself if I stood a chance, but I don't. I'm not going to do anything to mess this up. Follow me."

They all jumped the fence into the field. Seeing how fast the men ran—faster than she'd ever seen a person move before—she knew there was no way she'd ever be able to keep up. But she soon realized that wouldn't be a problem when Wulfric scooped her up in his arms and took off running with her just as fast. She put her arms around his neck and held on for dear life.

As the farmhouse came into view, their group slowed. Wulfric put her down on her feet and held onto her hand as they stealthily made their way to the front door of the house with the werewolf still leading them.

Inside, the dwelling smelled of neglect. Wallpaper peeled off the walls and all kinds of debris littered the floors. The werewolf led them to what at one time would have been a homey kitchen. He walked down into the root cellar, then led them through a door that connected to a long tunnel.

Cydney held tighter to Wulfric's hand as the dark earth walls and ceiling closed around them the deeper they went underground. Just before they reached the end, the werewolf brought them to a stop.

"The central cavern of the den opens up at the end of this tunnel," he whispered. "Stephen, as pack leader, has a smaller one that offshoots from it. Since it's almost dawn, most of the pack, if not all, will be inside the larger cavern. I suggest you shift now and come in fighting."

Cydney's heart galloped inside her chest as all the men around her shifted into their werewolf forms. They were all huge, standing at least seven feet tall, even the bad one. If it weren't for Maggie, Cydney would have run out of the tunnel.

As if he sensed the fear that had crept back on her, Wulfric brushed her cheek with the back of his furred fingers. Low and soft, he said, "Nothing is going to happen to you. Just stay with me."

She nodded, unable to speak past the whimper that threatened to break free. She could do this. She had to for Maggie's sake. The thought of what her best friend could be suffering through had her taking a deep, cleansing breath.

Then it all seemed to happen so fast. The men rushed into the central cavern, attacking the first werewolf they reached. Their growls and howls that bounced off the rock walls sounded loud in her ears, making Cydney want to cringe.

During the fights that broke out, she stuck to Wulfric like glue. She gave him enough room to slash out with his sharp claws and not much else. She stared wide-eyed

all around her, unable to tell which werewolves were which. Who was the good and who the bad.

A loud snarl came from behind her. Cydney turned and let out a shriek as she narrowly escaped the jaws of the werewolf who lunged toward her. Wulfric spun around, and roughly shoving her to stand at his back, he slashed out at the creature.

Needing to hold onto something, Cydney grabbed Wulfric's tail, clinging to it for dear life. A sword appeared in his hand, and with one thrust to the chest, he put an end to the werewolf he fought.

The sound of a howl accompanied by Dolf's shout of denial had Cydney's gaze focusing on the center of the cavern. He stalked a man who held Maggie in front of him as a shield. Cydney bit back a cry at seeing how traumatized her friend looked. Her eyes were round with fear. Dirt streaked her face and her lip bled from where it had split.

The man who held Maggie said, "I'm walking out of here, mate."

Dolf stalked closer, his sword held menacingly. "Give me the woman."

"It seems I got lucky and picked the right one," the man said with a sneer. "You want her, that sword of yours disappears, or I sink my teeth into her. Then she'll be mine, not yours."

The man shifted to his werewolf form and dragged Maggie in front of him as he continued to back toward the tunnel that led to the farmhouse above. All the warriors closed in on the three in the center, Wulfric pulling Cydney along with him, since she'd yet to let go of his tail.

One of the warriors, she couldn't tell which one, tried to sneak up behind the werewolf. Dolf yelled at him to stop when a sharp-clawed hand yanked Maggie's head to the side, and equally sharp teeth hovered mere inches over the vulnerable side of her neck. Once the warrior shifted out of the way, the werewolf continued his backward steps, never moving his teeth away from his human shield.

At the entrance to the cavern, the werewolf shoved Maggie into Dolf who caught her against him. As Maggie's screams filled the chamber, her captor swung around and took off in a run, almost too fast for Cydney to track, into the tunnel.

Letting go of Wulfric's tail, Cydney rushed over to Dolf and Maggie as her friend continued to scream and fight his hold. "Maggie! Maggie, it's all right. You're safe now."

Her friend stopped her struggles, and when she turned her gaze toward her, she asked warily, "Cydney? Is that really you?"

"It's me."

"How?"

"I came with the good guys to rescue you."

As Wulfric came to stand at Cydney's side and put his arm around her shoulders, her friend's eyes widened even more. "You know about these...things?" Maggie sucked in a sharp breath as if she would scream once more.

"It's all right, Maggie." She stepped out from under the heavy arm around her. When Wulfric tried to pull her back, she turned and snapped, "Wulfric, back off."

"That's Wulfric?" Maggie asked, a tremor in her voice.

Cydney nodded. "Remember how I mentioned his best friend to you, Dolf? Well, he's the one holding you."

Maggie turned to look up at Dolf as if she just remembered who held her in his arms. She whimpered and violently shoved at Dolf's chest. "Let me go! Let me go!"

Dolf only seemed to hold onto Maggie tighter, which upset her friend even more. Before Cydney could do something, Wulfric shifted to his human form and smacked Dolf on his muzzle. "Shift, you wanker. You're scaring Maggie. Let her go to Cydney."

Dolf shifted, but still hadn't released Maggie. "She's mine. I have to protect her."

Wulfric nodded. "I know, but she's terrified. Look at her."

Cydney watched Dolf try to calm himself down as he looked at Maggie. He reluctantly dropped his arms, and Cydney clutched a trembling Maggie to her.

"I'm sorry," Dolf said in a gruff voice. "I didn't mean to scare her."

"It's all right," Cydney reassured him. "Let's get out of here."

As she slowly walked Maggie, who clung to her, toward the entrance to the tunnel, Cydney tried not to look at the werewolf bodies that littered the cavern's floor. Once they were out of the farmhouse and out in the early morning light, Cydney breathed a sigh of relief. Wulfric and Dolf hovered nearby.

She had no idea what the other warriors did in the den, but it was a few minutes before they joined them outside. Once they did, their group backtracked across the field to where the cars were parked.

Settled into the backseat of Raed's car with Maggie clinging to her still, Cydney stared out the window, feeling the last of her energy drain away. Seeing the manor

house come into view, she didn't complain as Wulfric ushered her and Maggie inside once they pulled out front. Shown to the spare room, Cydney urged Maggie into the bed and climbed in next to her. Too exhausted to keep her eyes open any longer, she fell into a dreamless sleep.

Chapter Ten

Cydney came awake with a start. She sat up and looked around the room, her gaze latching onto the man who sat on the floor with his back against the wall a short distance from the bed. She then looked at the spot next to her and found it empty.

"Where's Maggie?" she asked.

Wulfric stood, crossed over to her and sat on the bed. "She's with Lexi, Kamryn and Nika. She's fine. They've gotten her calmed down finally, though they had to send Dolf away to manage it. They're also explaining everything to Maggie."

"Oh, good. What about her parents? Did anyone call them to let them know we found her?"

"Raed did, shortly after we arrived at the manor. I think he gave them some excuse about car trouble and Maggie running into an old friend she hadn't seen in a while, or something like that. Whatever he told them, they accepted, and that you and Maggie would be sleeping here."

"I'm glad. Other than a split lip, is Maggie physically fine?"

Wulfric nodded. "Apparently, Stephen—it was the pack leader who'd taken her—had wanted to wait until the rest of the pack had returned before he had his 'fun' with her. He told her if she didn't cooperate he'd throw her to the wolves, literally. If we'd shown up later, I don't know what we would have found."

Cydney didn't want to think about it. "Does Maggie know about her being Dolf's mate?"

“That’s one of the things the women are explaining to her. I have a feeling she’s not going to take the news well. After what she went through, she’s still terrified of him, of us. Every time Dolf tries to go near her, she almost has a panic attack. Only with the women does she settle.”

“I should go to her.” Cydney shifted as if to get off the bed, but Wulfric stopped her by placing his hand on her arm.

“She’s fine. You and I have things to work out ourselves.”

“Then talk.”

“You’re not going to make this easy on me, are you?” Wulfric let go of her arm and ran his fingers through his hair. “You now know what I am.”

“But I don’t know how you got to be that.”

“Okay, I’ll start from the beginning. I was born in 583 A.D., here in East Anglia. I was a warrior who served under my king, Raedwald – Raed. After Tiw, the Sky Father, came to him and chose him to protect mortals from those werewolves sired by Fenris the wolf, we, his highest ranking warriors, agreed to take up the cause with him.

“Who is Fenris?”

“I’ll give you the short version. Fenris is the eldest child of the god Loki and a giantess. Even though he had been born as a wolf, unable to shift to human form, he’s no ordinary wolf. He had grown so large, the other gods of Asgard had worried he would turn on them. To protect themselves, they bound Fenris. The one time he managed to free himself, he’d escaped to the mortal realm, to East Anglia, where the very first werewolf was sired. Tiw had managed to capture Fenris, but the damage had

already been done. A single bite from one of Fenris' get is all it takes to turn a mortal into a werewolf. So this is where we come in. We're charged to bring down the beasts to stop the spread. It's an on-going battle we've fought for centuries."

"Okay," Cydney said a little shakily. "I slept with an immortal warrior who can shape shift and has lived for over a thousand years. And you think I'm your mate."

"I don't think. You are. While you slept, I checked your back. Tiw's mark has fully appeared."

Cydney shot off the bed and rushed to the en suite bathroom. After flipping on the light, she turned her back to the mirror and pulled off her shirt. Looking over her shoulder, she saw in the reflection a black tattoo-like mark on her skin, the design of a stylized man between two wolves, the same as what Wulfric had on his shoulder.

She turned to look at Wulfric who had followed her in. "So what does this mean? That we're mated now?"

"It means I've claimed you, and that you've accepted. We won't be true mates until Tiw grants you immortality."

"And if I don't want it—or you?"

Wulfric's eyes turned bleak. "I'll let you go. It'll hurt like hell, since I already love you. But I would never bind you to me if that weren't what you wished."

Hearing Wulfric tell her he loved her sent a wave of panic through her. She could admit to herself she had strong feelings for him, but being tied to him for all eternity, she just didn't know. She didn't want a marriage like what her parents had had. And

Wulfric asked to have forever with her. What would happen if her feelings changed, or his?

“You have to give me some time,” she said.

Wulfric nodded. “All right, but I’m not going to let you return to Canada without getting an answer from you.” He came closer and cupped her chin in his hand as he kissed her lightly. “I don’t want to lose you, Cydney.”

She nodded. A part of her wanted to throw herself into his strong arms and never let go, but the scared part held her in place. “I promise to give you my answer before I’m scheduled to leave.”

Wulfric stepped back. “I’ll hold you to it. And all things considered, I think it best Kamryn drives you and Maggie back to her parents’ place.”

“Thanks. I’m sure Maggie will appreciate that.”

He ran his gaze over her face one last time, then walked out of the room.

* * *

It was the night of the full moon and Wulfric’s heart wasn’t into the hunt as it usually was during this time. For one thing, Dolf wasn’t into it, either. The first time in over a thousand years they weren’t competing to see who could take down the most werewolves. The thrill just wasn’t there.

Almost a week had gone by since Wulfric had last seen Cydney. And it was hell being apart from her. He thought about her constantly. Only to himself did he admit he was more than a little scared he’d lose her. That she’d turn him down, get on a plane to Canada and never come back. Every time he thought about it, he broke into a cold

sweat. He loved her with all of his heart, and no one would ever take her place. If she rejected him, he had an eternity of being alone to look forward to.

The only one who was in worse shape than Wulfric was Dolf. The warrior moped around the manor much as he did. Wulfric felt sorry for his friend. Dolf's situation was even worse than his. His fellow warrior had attempted to see Maggie again, but she still wouldn't have anything to do with him. She'd taken one look at him standing in her doorway and had slammed the door in his face. But not before Dolf had seen the absolute terror on her face first.

Finally, when the night drew to a close, Wulfric returned to the manor. He dreaded the thought of having to get into his cold, empty bed. The one night he'd spent with Cydney had him craving her presence. It had felt more than right to fall asleep with her in his arms and wake up with her still there.

Dragging his feet, Wulfric slowly walked up the steps to the upper floor. Reaching the top, a scent tickled his nose. He took a deep breath, detecting the strong scent of drying paint. That couldn't be right. Cydney had finished the first coat on his room a week ago, and nothing else had been done since.

The closer he got to his bedroom he was able to pick up another scent, one he thought he might never get to smell again. Seeing a light under his door, he pushed it open and quickly scanned the room with his gaze. It froze on the figure of Cydney standing by one wall, a paint roller in her hand as she stared at him.

"About damn time you got back," she said. "Since I started so late I thought maybe I could hit you up to help me. But you can't. I just finished."

All he could do was stand there and stare at her. He found it hard to believe she was actually there.

Cydney put the roller on the paint tray at her feet and crossed to where he stood. She put her hand on the left side of his chest. "Your heart is beating so fast." She lifted her gaze to his, and said softly, "I decided, Wulfric. I want you." He opened his mouth to talk, but she stopped him by placing a finger against his lips. "Don't say anything. I need to get this out first. I've given us, and the feelings I have for you, a lot of thought these past days. And I found I can't just walk away. The time away from you has shown me that I do love you, which I'm going to say scares the ever-living-hell out of me. Seeing the kind of marriage my parents had – my mom showing my dad all the love she had for him, and him never being able to reciprocate the way she wanted – I promised myself I wouldn't end up in that kind of relationship. I didn't think I was made to make that strong of a commitment to anyone. You proved me wrong."

Wulfric pulled her finger away and kissed the tip. "I'm not your father, Cydney. I cherish what is mine, and you *are* mine. I promise to do everything in my power to show you each and every day that I'll always love you, and that you own my heart."

Cydney blinked and a sheen of tears appeared in her eyes. "And I'll do my best to do the same."

Unable to keep his hands off her any longer, Wulfric pulled her against him and held her tight. Cydney clung to him just as tightly. After a few seconds more, he tipped her head up and lowered his mouth to hers. He kissed her slowly, putting all the love he felt for her into it. As it became more demanding, a familiar voice filled his head.

Before you two go any further, I'm going to ask Cydney if she's ready to become your true mate, Tiw said.

Cydney jerked away from his mouth, and said, "Who was that?"

"That was Tiw."

"The Anglo-Saxon god?"

The one and the same, Tiw said with a laugh. What will your answer be, Cydney?

She locked gazes with Wulfric when she answered. "My answer is yes. I want to make sure Wulfric will be stuck with me forever.

The god's laughter filled Wulfric's head. *Then so it shall be.*

Cydney stiffened in his arms, then relaxed after a few seconds had passed. "Holy crap. That felt as if I just got shot with a huge surge of energy."

You're now as immortal as Wulfric. Now I'll leave the two of you alone to celebrate in your own way.

Wulfric felt Tiw's presence fade. He took hold of the collar of Cydney's t-shirt, and using a clawed finger, cut the material completely down the front. He pushed it off her shoulders to drop on the floor.

"Impatient, are we? What am I supposed to wear tomorrow?"

"You can wear one of mine." He went to slice through the front of her bra, but Cydney batted his hand away.

"Your bedroom door is wide open. I'm not putting on a peep show for the others. Plus I need a shower. I'm sure I have paint all over me."

Wulfric let her go, shut the door and returned to stand before her. He scooped her up in his arms and carried her to the bathroom. "A shower it is."

Once inside the en suite, they were quick to strip out of their clothes. Wulfric started the shower, and when he had it the right temperature, he carried Cydney inside. He angled her under the spray of water. As it cascaded down her chest, drops of it collecting on the ends of her nipples, he bent and licked it off. Cydney moaned.

They washed each other, sharing the single bar of soap. Wulfric thought he'd lose it there and then as Cydney's soapy hand closed around his cock, sliding up and down its full length.

When it became almost too much, he pulled her hand away. "No more. I have to be inside you. Now."

The bar of soap dropped to the bottom of the bathtub as Cydney pulled his head down to hers and kissed him hungrily. She didn't pull away until they were both panting. She looked into his eyes. "I can see your wolf."

"Then put us both out of our misery."

He lifted her, positioned his cock as she wrapped her legs around his waist and surged deep inside her with one stroke. Locking her ankles at his back, Cydney used her leg muscles to help him as he held onto her ass and stroked in and out of her pussy. Her cries of pleasure had his cock growing even harder. He'd thought he'd never be with her like this again. Unable to go slow, he took her fast and hard, quickly sending her into her release.

With a growl, he lifted her on and off his cock faster until his shaft swelled, locking them together. He let loose with a howl as his orgasm overtook him and filled her with his cum.

He lowered himself to sit on the bottom of the tub with Cydney cradled against his chest while he continued to come. Shaking with the love he felt for her, he kissed the top of her head. "I love you, Cydney."

She sat up on his lap, moaning as his cock pulsed inside her. "I love you, Wulfric."

Clutching her close once again, Wulfric felt a contentment he hadn't felt in a week wash over him. Everything was as it should be. He sat there holding his mate until the water turned cold, then bundled them both up in towels before he carried her to the guest room. Dawn's light filtered through the only window, marking the first day of the new eternal life he'd share with the woman who would forever hold his heart.

About the Author:

Marisa Chenery was always a lover of books, but after reading her first historical romance novel she found herself hooked. Having inherited a love for the written word, she soon started writing her own novels.

After trying her hand at writing historicals, she now writes paranormals.

Marisa lives in Ontario, Canada with her husband and four children.

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