

Alpha Paranormal Romance

Lust made him a shifter
Love gave him a mate

Logan's Calling

Abbey Polidori

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CHAPTER ONE

Hope

Logan James sat on his bed, hand on his cock and eyes locked on Sarah's luscious ass.

He had been living next door to Sarah Cooper for almost a year now and damn if spying on her through her bedroom window hadn't become the greatest pleasure of his life.

Since returning from Afghanistan three years ago, it seemed like all his friends were either moving on and trying to forget their military buddies or they were still serving overseas. Some of his old buddies seemed dead inside, as if a piece of their soul was lost forever among the swirling sands of the Middle Eastern deserts.

War is hell and the aftermath is torture.

He had come here to the small town of Hope, Ontario to hide away

from the world. For a while he had been happy enough rattling around in the large house and yard but then Sarah had moved in next door and since then he had an aching in his gut that was built of pure desire. He had no idea why he felt like he would go crazy if he didn't at least see her through his window every day but whatever the reason, just the thought of her could send him into a libido overdrive. Was he crazy? Perverted? A Crazy pervert?

No point thinking about that now. Not when Sarah Cooper was sashaying her incredible ass around her bedroom, dressed in just a flimsy piece of black lingerie. Thank God for hot summer nights. Sarah always had her windows

open and she always wore just enough to cover her sweet body and little enough to give Logan a show that fuelled his masturbatory fantasies. Her bed sheets and carpet were white and that made her shapely figure and black lingerie stand out even more in contrast. The mirrored doors on her closet also gave him multiple angle views of her body.

His cock was rock hard in his hand and he stroked it with a firm grip, his eyes watching the pert smooth globes of his neighbor's delectable ass while his mind imagined scenarios in which he would be in that room with her and she would want this cock that he held in his hand, want it inside her sweet tightness. She would get on her knees on the bed

like a female animal waiting to be mounted by him, the male, needing his thick length to slip inside her.

Logan grunted. Damn she turned him on. And he hadn't actually seen her naked so his mind was filling in the missing details. The reality would surely match his fantasy and then some.

But the reality was not going to happen. He had to face that.

Sure, I'll face that fact. I face it every day of my goddamn life but I don't want to think about it now while she's over there in that pretty black lingerie and I have my cock in my hand and I'm so fucking hard. Let me have this dream.

In her bedroom, Sarah had opened her closet and stood in front of

it, pondering the clothes inside. Probably choosing an outfit for tomorrow. Logan's own room was sparsely furnished with just a double bed that felt too big at times and a simple wooden bookcase packed with action novels. His own closet was in the spare room next door but it didn't contain much in the way of clothes. He never went out anyway except into the yard so jeans and a few t-shirts served all his needs. And his neighbor unknowingly served his sexual needs.

The lingerie barely covered the swell of her bottom. Her long sleek legs were bare and Logan imagined them locked around his back as he drove himself into Sarah Cooper's sweet

pussy. His eyes roamed up to the most gorgeous rack he had seen in a long time, thrusting proudly against the confines of the flimsy material and dipping into a deep cleavage. She had a fucking amazing set of tits and he wanted to feel them in his hands, squeeze their softness and put his mouth to the puckered nipples.

As he pumped himself harder and faster, his eyes wandered down past Sarah's flat stomach to the place where he longed to be . He could only imagine what delights lay there, nestled between the soft flesh of her thighs.

It was all too much. He gritted his teeth and pistoned his cock furiously, his breath hissing and his eyes narrowed

as he felt the familiar tingle in his ball sac. Oh fuck he was going to shoot and it was all for her, all for Sarah. She bent over to grab some shoes from the floor of her closet and that momentary glimpse of her ass, of the lingerie riding up to reveal two perfectly shaped ass cheeks bisected with a crack that promised hidden treasures, was the image that exploded into Logan's mind as he erupted all over himself. His seed flew from the tip of his cock and he gasped, 'Sarah!' as he came.

He closed his eyes and imagined her kneeling in front of him, looking at him over her shoulder and smiling as she lifted the lingerie to reveal her ass. 'Give it to me, Logan' she whispered.

'Yes!' he cried out as he continued to explode over his hand and over the wooden floor of his bedroom.

By the time he was done, he sat there in the dark breathing in great gulps of the night air and waiting for the shudders of pleasure to subside. How long was he going to go on like this? It had been almost a year now and all of this spying on Sarah was driving him crazy. Hell, maybe he had already gone crazy. He spent his entire military career watching people from afar as a sniper and now he was doing the same thing back on civilian street. Except this time he wasn't going to go in for the kill. He wasn't even going to speak to her.

Logan James and Sarah Cooper

had shared exactly one interaction the whole time she had been living on Arroyo Street. On the morning she moved in, she was standing on the sidewalk in front of her house in tight blue jeans and a pretty little pink t-shirt that had a picture of a cute skull with a pink bow on its head. The design had been distorted by the swell of Sarah's chest. Logan had been returning in his truck from grocery shopping and had seen her there on the sidewalk and whispered, 'Whoa,' to himself as he parked on his driveway.

As he slid out of the truck she looked over and waved. Fuck she had a cute face as well as a drop-dead fantastic body. Pale blue eyes like the

sea and blond hair cut into a shoulder-length sexy style with straight bangs.

Logan put on his best smile and waved back.

Then he got the grocery sacks out of the back seat and went into his house.

And in the year she had lived just next door, he never spoke to her again. Fucking idiot.

Their entire neighborly interaction amounted to just that one time a year ago.

Unless he counted all the times he had jacked off while he watched her through his window.

Fucking asshole.

He didn't even go shopping for groceries anymore, he had them

delivered. This house was a prison of his own making.

He got up off the bed and padded naked to the white-tiled bathroom. Turning the shower on full blast and very hot, he shook his head at what he had done, what he had become. A fucking peeping tom. He stepped into the scalding spray and gritted his teeth as the hot needles of water sent his nerves tingling.

In some places on his body he could feel nothing. The nerves across his left pec and down the left side of his stomach were shot. Literally. He traced the ugly gnarly scars there, amazed as always at the contrast between the tough lines of healed flesh and the smoothness

of the muscles they bisected. He worked out in the homemade gym in the basement and he was in good shape, almost as good as when he was serving in Afghanistan. But no matter how strong his chest, how broad his shoulders and how defined his abs, the scars remained...running across his body like ugly snaking rivers.

No doubt about it, bullets were bad for you.

He had never hesitated to pull the trigger during his tour of duty. It was his job. It was war.

But when his team had been ambushed in a desert village and the tables had been turned, Logan experienced first hand the damage that

metal does to flesh at high velocity. He barely remembered that day except in flashes. His most vivid memory was of waking up the next day in a military hospital and being told the rest of his team were dead. He had cried then for the first time since he had been over there. And as he put his hands to his face, he felt the thick wad of bandages there.

He turned off the shower and stepped out onto the tiled bathroom floor. After the stinging hot spray, the tiles felt cool on the soles of his feet. Steam filled the room and condensation hung heavy on the mirrors.

In the hospital, the nurses had removed all mirrors from his room. He

had first caught his reflection in the hospital kitchen, in the chrome surface of a kettle. The concave design distorted his features beyond recognition but he could clearly see the reason why he wasn't allowed mirrors until he had 'come to terms with his injuries' as the army psychologist said in their numerous sessions recounting the ambush and the loss of Logan's fire team.

Wiping a streak of condensation from the bathroom mirror, he turned his face so that he could only see the reflection of the right side. Black hair, gray eyes, maybe too much stubble on his cheeks and chin. All normal. He turned to show his left side to the glass and grimaced. The ugly scar ran from

above his eyebrow, over his eye socket and down the length of his cheek to his jawline. He was lucky the bullet had missed his eye, the doctors said. Yeah, very fucking lucky.

This was why he could never talk to the goddamned gorgeous Sarah Cooper.

He was a freak.

An ugly fucking freak.

He returned to his bedroom and switched on the overhead fan. It was too fucking hot. Even tough he had AC, he usually opened his windows and used the fan at night. He slept better that way than in the house's recycled air.

Sitting on the edge of the bed, he glanced over at Sarah's bedroom.

Her lights were out and the room was shrouded in blackness.

Logan lay back naked on the bed and stared up at the blades of the fan spinning relentlessly like the wheel of fucking fortune. Wasn't there a saying that fortune smiled on the brave? He had been brave once. He had served in the pits of hell and he had done his job efficiently and well. What had Fortune done for him? She had made him into an ugly beast that no one should have to look upon.

And then, just to create a great punch line, She had moved Sarah Cooper in next door.

Have a great life, asshole. You can look but you aren't ever going to

touch. How many ways can you say 'torture'?

He wished Fortune were here right now smiling at him because he wanted nothing more than to punch out Her teeth.

Grinning a little at that thought, he closed his eyes. What dreams would come tonight? It wasn't like he had a whole menu to choose from; up until a year ago he had experienced nightmares of the war every night. Nightmares in which his team were being shot up around him and crying out for help and he wanted to help them but his left side...oh God his left side...it hurt, it burned. He couldn't reach them before he collapsed to to the hard sand.

Now at least he had two types of
dreams that visited him in the night.

Nightmares of the war.

And dreams of Sarah.

CHAPTER TWO

React

A knock at the door woke Logan.

He rolled over to check the clock on the nightstand and groaned. Seven

thirty? Who the fuck was knocking at seven thirty?

Grabbing his robe, he tied it around him as he descended the stairs. The figure on the front porch was visible through the frosted glass on the front door. Brown uniform. Logan checked out the window before opening the door. A brown delivery van parked a little way down the street. What the fuck? He wasn't expecting anything.

Making sure his robe was belted tightly, he opened the door and felt the heat of the summer morning enter the house.

The young man on the porch looked maybe twenty and when he saw Logan he smiled and said a cheery,

'Good morning,' before he really saw Logan and his eyes went to the nasty scar and wouldn't pull away from there.

'Good morning,' he repeated more somberly.

Not the pity. Logan hated the pity the most. It made him feel like the delivery guy saw him as someone who wasn't quite a member of the human race and should be pitied by the people who were fully paid up card-carrying members. The normal people. Maybe the kid was right; Logan didn't feel like he was fully a part of the human race anymore. Sure he lived on this street of three and four bed houses with their manicured lawns and mid-sized families but his own house was a prison. He

rattled around in here like a creature that didn't belong in the world outside.

'What do you want?' May as well make the kid feel even more uncomfortable. This will be a great start to his day - faced with a disfigured monster at seven thirty in the morning and having that monster be rude too. Well he shouldn't have woken me up so goddamn early.

'I...err...I have a delivery.' He held up a brown package about the size of a deck of cards. 'But it isn't for you. So I'll just...' He edged away to the porch steps.

'If it isn't for me then why are you knocking at my door so fucking early?'

'It...it's for your neighbor. She

isn't home...probably gone to work. Miss Sarah Cooper. I thought maybe you would take it in for her. It has to be signed for or I'd just leave it in her mailbox. I'm sorry, Sir.' He backed away across the lawn, almost reaching the sidewalk before Logan's voice halted him.

'I'll take it for her.'

The young delivery man paused. 'You will?'

What the fuck was he thinking? If he did this, he would have to speak with her. She would get to see the freak next door close up and personal and realize what a hideous beast he was. No, this was crazy. He should just send the delivery guy on his way and make him

come back later when Sarah was home.

The boy was on the porch now, pressing buttons on his palm device. He handed it to Logan. A plastic pen dangled from a cord attached to the device. 'If you could just sign here, that would be great.'

Logan scribbled over the screen with the plastic pen and handed it back. In return, he got handed the small package for Sarah.

'Thanks.' The delivery guy almost ran to his van and was roaring off down Arroyo Street even before he had closed his driver's door.

Logan closed the front door against the heat and went into the living room, placing the package on his

wooden coffee table next to a pile of old action paperbacks. The room was furnished with an EZ chair in front of the TV and a sofa Logan never used. A couple of paintings hung on the walls - both of a woman dressed in fifties clothes sitting outside a jazz cafe in New Orleans (Logan presumed). He had never been to New Orleans and the paintings had no connection to him at all. They just added some color to the otherwise bare walls. A stack of DVDs and Blu Rays towered next to the TV. Action movies and Westerns mostly.

Sitting in the EZ chair, he stared at the innocuous-looking box. A white sticker had Sarah's name and address typed neatly onto it and in the top right

hand corner stamped in green ink was an address that read, 'J Frazier, 229 Lakeside Road, Great Bear Lake, Ontario.'

Who was this? A new man in Sarah's life? Logan knew that she had never brought a man home in the year she had lived next door but that didn't mean she didn't have a boyfriend. He had to face it, a woman looking like her was bound to have at least one man in her life. He had often wondered about her seemingly solitary existence. It seemed like a waste of a damn good woman. If 'J Frazier' was her man then it made sense.

But it didn't stop Logan from feeling a twisting ache in his gut.

Like he ever had a chance with her anyway.

So the question remained what should he do with this little package? Deliver it in person? He sighed, imagining how that would go. The delivery guy's pitiful expression was not one he wanted to see on Sarah Cooper's face. He couldn't handle that. No, just put it in her fucking mailbox and forget about it. It must have been the early hour affecting his brain when he had ideas about using this to meet his sexy neighbor. Early morning craziness.

He swept up the little parcel and headed for the front door with it. Might as well do it now and get it over with. Then he could forget about the whole

thing and go back to bed. And maybe when he woke up he could shake Sarah out of his mind for good.

With a hand on the front door handle, he checked himself. Was he really going to go out wearing only his robe? Fuck that. He got enough stares in the street without exposing himself. They all knew about the scar running down his face but there was no need to show them the rest of the ugly collection.

There was plenty of time to get this package into the next door mailbox. He had no idea what Sarah did for a living but she usually left her house at seven and returned around three. She wore pant suits usually or business-blouses and black skirts and she looked

incredible in every outfit she wore. Probably an executive in the city, even though she often wore casual clothes when she left the house. It wasn't too far from Hope to Toronto and she could easily commute in her silver Buick. Maybe she knew J Frazier from work. Maybe he visited from another branch of the company. He was probably an executive like her, leering at her during high-powered meetings and taking her back to his hotel afterward for some high-level fucking. Or maybe they couldn't wait to get to his place and they fucked over her desk, in a corner office overlooking the city.

Just the thought of that made Logan's blood boil. He had to get a hold

of himself or he was going to go crazy obsessing over Sarah. Nothing good could come of it. He needed to stop watching his neighbor's window and turn on the porn channel instead.

Sighing, he set the package back on the coffee table and went upstairs and back to bed.

As he told himself for the thousandth time that he was going to forget about Sarah, he felt sleep creeping up on him and he closed his eyes.

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When he opened them again the sun was bright on the wall. He rolled over to check the clock. It was almost two. Fuck, what had happened to the

time? Sliding out of bed, he grabbed a pair of jeans and a Harley Davidson t-shirt and put them on quickly. If he hurried he could get rid of the little parcel before Sarah came home. He had been an idiot to take it in the first place. If he hadn't been so damn stupid he wouldn't be having to worry about getting rid of it now.

He took the stairs two at a time and picked up the package from the living room. This shouldn't take too long. Just a quick stealth mission to put this in the mailbox by her door then back onto his own property and a few hours by the pool reading Mack Bolan novels and drinking a six pack or two. Today was a good day to get drunk.

He opened the door and stepped out onto the porch and froze.

Her silver Buick was in her driveway.

She was home already.

Fuck.

Logan stepped back into the house and closed the door. His heart hammered in his chest and he felt queasy. He needed to calm down. Just because she was home didn't mean he had to go over there and talk to her. Hell, he could wait until she went to work tomorrow morning if he had to.

No...no he couldn't. What if she was expecting the delivery today and she called the delivery company to find out where it was? What if they told her that

her neighbor had signed for it? She would come around here. He had no choice. He was trapped.

He felt like just tossing the damn thing over the eight foot high fence that separated their back yards. Yeah, right...she'd have no doubt who had done that and would probably come over to ask him why he was throwing her mail into her yard.

The cosmic joke was on him and the joke was that he had brought this upon himself. Was he subconsciously trying to sabotage himself, to force his own hand? No, he'd have to be seven kinds of crazy to do that to himself.

Yet here he was.

'Fuck,' he muttered, pacing back

into the living room and running his hand through his hair. This was not good. Not good at all. He strode back to the door, determined to just go next door and get this over with before stopping himself, hand on the door handle, and turning back.

He sat down again, turning the parcel over and over in his hands. How could one small package be causing him so much distress? He never used to be like this and he hated what he had become more keenly than ever.

Maybe if he waited until dark. He could sneak over there and leave it by her front door. A knock to get her attention and he could be back safe in here before she opened the door and

found the parcel.

Was this what he had been reduced to? Sneaking around in the dark to deliver a package to his neighbor? He never left these four walls or his yard anymore, shopping online and having everything delivered. He even paid a young man from down the street to mow the front lawn, unwilling to go out there himself and face the occupants of Arroyo Street.

Was that it, though? Was it his general agoraphobia that kept him from taking the parcel around to Sarah's house or was it the fact that it was Sarah he would have to face? What if this package was for Fred Jenkins, Logan's neighbor on the other side, or for the

MacDonald family across the street? He had to admit that he would steel himself and deliver the package. He would feel damned uncomfortable doing it but he would go next door or across the street and explain that he had taken the delivery and he would pass the package to its rightful owner and do his duty.

The problem was that the rightful owner of this package was Sarah Cooper.

And he had more feelings for that woman than he dared think about.

Sure they were only sexual feelings, what more could they be? Noting more than sexual desire but it still paralyzed him whenever he thought about going around there and meeting

her.

Logan, get a hold of yourself. You did your duty in Afghanistan and even when you were shit scared, you didn't let that stop you. That was life and death, this is just the woman next door.

Before he could think any further on it, he was out of the door and striding across his lawn then past her silver Buick to her porch steps. He took them two at a time and knocked rapidly on the front door. His hands were shaking. If his army buddies could see him now, standing frightened on this woman's porch, they would laugh their asses off.

Movement from inside the house, as if Sarah was in the kitchen cooking and set a plate down before coming to

the front door. Her heels clicked off the wooden floor as she approached. He could see her through the frosted glass set into the door but the thick glass distorted her image into something like a ghost, getting larger as it came nearer. She turned the bolt on the door and it made a heavy click.

Logan angled his body so she would see his right side. He suddenly wished he'd worn a hooded sweatshirt and pulled the hood up. It was a trick he used to pull a lot when he still did his own grocery shopping. And it wouldn't seem so strange to Sarah; it was damn hot out here and he might be protecting his skin from the UV rays. Too late for that now. The door was opening.

She peered cautiously at him as the door opened and Logan immediately felt shame for every dirty thought he had ever had about her. She wasn't some picture in a magazine for him to leer at while he pleased himself, she was a real woman standing in front of him. She looked beautiful close up. Her blue eyes were large and there was a softness in them as if she were frightened of something or she'd been hurt in the past. Her flawless skin had freckled slightly at the bridge of her nose and that was a cute detail Logan had never noticed about her through the window. She wore gray slacks and a white blouse and Logan wondered guiltily if she was wearing white lingerie beneath it. The

blouse was open at the top, displaying a silver locket in the shape of a heart with filigree designs at Sarah's throat. Her feet were bare as if she had come home and kicked her shoes off the moment she got through the door. She probably unbuttoned her blouse at the same time, glad to be back in the rural community of Hope and away from the city.

The cautious look on her face vanished and she smiled as if she recognized him. 'Logan,' she said. Her pupils dilated and she took a rapid intake of breath after saying his name.

That made him forget the speech he had prepared while waiting for her to answer the door, the speech where he explained about the package and why he

had it. 'You know who I am?' He realized he had moved his face and was looking at her dead on but her eyes never wavered from his.

'Of course, you're my neighbor.'

'We've never met.' Then he realized why she knew about him. The other residents on the street probably told her about the scarred war vet living next door. His heart sank.

'I saw you on the day I moved here. And I've seen you in your yard from my upstairs window sometimes.'

'Oh...of course.' If he could see her from his window, she could see him from hers. He had never felt her watching him while he was out by the pool reading and his senses usually

alerted him to things like that. He really was losing it if his neighbor could spy on him and he was unaware of it. The only person who has been spying is you, Logan, and you know it. His gut twisted at that thought.

She looked expectantly at him, her eyes never going to the scars on his face. 'Is this just a neighborly visit or can I help you with something?' Her smile was so pretty.

He had almost forgotten about the package. He held it up and her eyes flickered to it. Her face seemed to change when she saw it and the softness in her eyes seemed to become fear as if she was dreading what was inside that neat little parcel.

'They delivered this earlier today. It's for you.' He handed her the package.

She took it and looked down at it and swallowed. 'Thanks.'

'Is everything OK?' Now his senses were kicking in. Something was wrong here.

She looked up and he saw tears welling in her eyes. She tried to blink them away but they escaped and streamed down her cheeks. 'Oh God,' she whispered, collapsing against the wall and leaning heavily on it.

Logan's instincts pushed him through the doorway and before he even knew what he was doing, he had her in his arms and she was crying against his

chest. 'Please close the door,' she whispered through the tears, 'I don't want the whole street to see me like this.'

He reached back and closed the front door. Sarah grabbed handfuls of his Harley Davison t-shirt and wept. The package was on the floor and Logan couldn't remember when she had dropped it. The feel of her against him and the peachy smell of her shampoo mixed with the subtle fragrance of her perfume were taking all his concentration. He had his arms around her, protecting her from this unseen thing that had made her cry, and he felt like crying himself because this was the most human contact he had experienced in a long long time. He had missed this, the

touch of another person and the sense that he was giving them something even if it was just comforting them from something he knew nothing about. He closed his eyes and held her close and tried to store every detail of this moment in his memory like a hoarder who had stumbled upon the most valuable treasure. The weight of her against him as she trusted him to hold her up, the feel of her face buried in his chest and her warm tears soaking through his t-shirt. The sound of her crying as she let him experience her in this vulnerable moment.

She pulled away from him, wiping her eyes. 'I'm sorry, you must think I'm crazy. Way to make a first

impression on my neighbor.'

'No, not at all.' He already missed the feel of her, the need to be comforted that she had shown him. 'I'm sorry that this,' he scooped up the package from the floor, 'upset you so much. If I'd known, I would have got my gun and run the delivery boy off my porch and told him never to come back.'

She smiled but she didn't take the package from him. 'Would you like a drink, Logan? I have iced tea or soda or something stronger.'

'Iced tea would be fine.'

She turned and walked down the hallway to the kitchen at the back of the house and Logan followed. Her house was laid out exactly the same as his but

the decor was entirely different. Where he had bare walls she had framed photographs of people he assumed were her family. There were photos of Sarah and a younger girl he presumed to be her sister and their parents at a lake, at the Grand Canyon, in a house that wasn't this one and was probably the place she grew up.

The kitchen was much the same as his except that Sarah had painted her walls light green and hung cute rustic pictures of pigs and chickens. On the window sill sat a row of potted cacti. She also had a large wooden table to eat at where Logan ate all his food in front of the TV. Even though he sometimes liked to cook to while away the hours,

his kitchen was bare except for a simple clock hanging on one wall.

A chopping board sat on the counter by the sink and arranged around it sat peppers, mushrooms and onions. The smells made Logan's mouth water. He hadn't eaten all day.

'I was just prepping an omelette for later,' Sarah said. She fished in the refrigerator and came out with iced tea, pouring a glass for herself and Logan.

'Shall I just leave this on here?' he asked, setting the parcel on the kitchen table.

She looked at it and took a deep breath as if psyching herself up for something. 'Would you do me a really big favor?'

'Sure, what is it?'

'Would you open that for me?'

He shrugged. 'Okay.' He picked up the package again. 'It's from a J Frazier at Lakeside Road...'

'I know who it's from.' She stood against the counter, both hands gripping the edge tightly as if bracing herself for something.

Logan tore at the brown paper wrapping and let the ripped paper fall to the table. Inside was a black box. 'You want me to open this?'

She nodded slowly, her beautiful blue eyes wide.

Logan lifted the top half of the box away and frowned. Inside was a locket exactly the same as the one

dangling from Sarah's neck. A silver filigree heart on a long silver chain. He lifted it to show her but as soon as she saw it she let out a heartfelt sob and leaned against the counter as if she were going to collapse.

Logan threw the locket onto the table and went to Sarah, holding her again.

And this time as she pressed her face against his chest and fisted handfuls of his t-shirt desperately, she sobbed, 'My sister. They have my sister.'

CHAPTER THREE

Help

'Oh God, I'm so sorry, Logan,' she said when the tears had subsided, 'you don't need to be involved in this.'

She had been crying for thirty minutes and after saying, 'They have my sister,' she had simply sobbed against Logan's chest saying nothing more. He had let her cry and had simply held her, unquestioning and supportive while she let out her grief. He had no idea what was going on except that she was hurting and he was here to hold her. He wasn't going to push her to tell him what she meant about her sister or why the locket had upset her so much and he knew that she would tell him in her own time.

'Do you want to talk about it?' he offered.

She wiped the tears from her face and nodded. 'Sure but I could use a stiffer drink than iced tea if I'm going to

talk about this. How about you?'

He nodded. 'I'll take a Jack on the rocks if you have it.'

'Let's go sit in the living room.' She led him into her living room which had much more plush furnishings than his own. Two sofas and a leather armchair in front of a glass coffee table, bookshelves lining one wall with a selection of Romance novels along with ornaments and more family pictures. Her TV was in the same spot as Logan's although she didn't have a stack of DVDs alongside it. On the wall where Logan had his New Orleans paintings, Sarah had blown up black and white photos of the forests and lakes in Algonquin Park.

'Very nice,' he said, admiring the

photography.

'I took them myself.'

One picture showed a large wolf padding out of the pines toward the edge of a lake. It was a night shot, a silvery half moon illuminating the scene, and Logan wondered how dedicated someone would have to be to go into the woods at night to snap a photo like that.

'Wow, a wolf. I'm impressed.'

'That's a Canis Lycaon, an Eastern Canadian Wolf. The camera is the tool of my trade so I'm used to waiting patiently for just the right shot.' She opened a dark wood cabinet, revealing a mini bar inside and poured two shot glasses of Jack. 'I'll go get the ice. Back in a second.'

As she left the room, Logan asked, 'Are you a professional photographer?'

'No,' she shouted back from the kitchen, 'I'm a private detective.'

He didn't know how to answer that so he stood looking at the wolf photo in silence, letting this information sink in. He had been totally wrong about her, assuming she worked in an office job for some big company. She was a private eye? He never would have guessed that in a million years. The soft vulnerability he sensed around her didn't lend itself to a hard profession like that.

She returned and handed him a glass, the ice chinking as it floated in the dark amber liquid. Sarah took a seat on

the sofa and placed the box with the locket inside on the glass table. Logan took the armchair. He wanted to sit next to her but he had made more progress with her than he had with another human being in the past few years and he didn't want to ruin it by going too fast too soon. Sarah probably didn't even realize what a big thing this was for him, to be here outside of his own house and talking with another person. He didn't even feel uncomfortable and she hadn't mentioned his scars even once or offered him that pity stare he couldn't stand.

'A private detective,' Logan said, 'I never would have guessed.'

'I kind of fell into it, really. You won't have heard of the Cooper

Detective Agency.'

'Here in Hope?'

She shook her head. 'It's in Toronto. My dad owns the business. He was a cop but he had to retire early after he fell off a building while he was chasing a drug dealer. His leg got busted up and he had to walk with a stick ever since. He started the detective agency when I was still in high school and I worked there after classes and on weekends.'

'That sounds very Veronica Mars.'

She smiled. 'It was. I got a feel for the cases and I started helping him more and more. I became a full detective in the firm, handling the cases my dad

couldn't deal with because of his injury. When my younger sister Amy graduated, she came to work for us too.'

Logan nodded. Not only was Sarah gorgeous, she was smart too. It made him wish even more that he was the person he used to be. If he was the old Logan - strong, alert, unscarred - he might be the type of man a woman like Sarah Cooper would want in her bed at night. She was a perfect match for the man he once was, the Logan who served in Afghanistan as an Army Ranger sniper and seemed fearless in the face of danger. Now he was just a pale shadow of that man. Living in a different country, a different life.

'A couple of years ago, Amy had

a relationship with a man named Jensen Frazier. He owned a rival detective firm called JF Investigations. My dad didn't like him at all and at first I thought that was because of the business competition thing but when I met Jensen I took a dislike to him too. I couldn't put my finger on what it was but I really couldn't stand to be around the guy.

'Amy was smitten. Frazier was her first serious boyfriend and she obviously couldn't detect the same thing Dad and I felt about him.'

Logan watched Sarah closely as she spoke. She was so fucking gorgeous. The familiar lust for her knotted his gut like a clenched fist. He took a sip of Jack to distract himself but the liquor

burned at his throat, making him feel like his insides were on fire and the only way he could douse the flames was to move over to the sofa, take Sarah in his arms and lay her down on her back while he clambered on top of her. Fucking hell, stop thinking these thoughts. I can't. No one has ever affected me in the way Sarah does.

He felt hot, giddy.

'Are you okay, Logan?'

He closed his eyes and nodded. 'Just hot is all.' He needed to get back home, to safety. But even if he made a move for the front door right now, he doubted his legs would carry him all the way before giving up and making him collapse to the floor. He couldn't tear

himself away from Sarah. He let out a long exhale and held the cool shot glass to his forehead, rolling it over his flesh and letting the tiny beads of condensation cool him a little.

'It is hot,' Sarah said, getting up. 'I'll adjust the AC.' She breezed past him and he felt like his sense were heightened for a moment. The swish of her slacks sounded incredibly loud in his ears and the smell of her peach shampoo and perfume sent the receptors in his nose into overdrive. Beneath those fragrances he could detect something else, something subtle but undeniably present. The scent of arousal. Sarah's arousal. It hit his nose like a ten ton truck and drove him wild with longing.

She reached up to the thermostat on the wall and adjusted the dial. Logan watched the curve of her buttocks beneath the gray slacks. The way her rounded flesh pressed against the fabric, the indent between her cheeks visible, it was like an invitation. Like an invitation to mount her.

Fucking hell he had to stop this. He was so hard right now that he felt like his cock would rip through the denim of his jeans.

She lingered a little too long at the AC controller and he was sure she pushed her hips out a little, almost imperceptibly, displaying her ass to him.

He wanted to go up there behind

here and place his hands on her hips, pulling him back so her ass touched the hard bulge in his jeans. She would groan at the feel of his hardness and grind herself against him, her softness driving him crazy. He would pull the slacks down, along with her panties and unbuckle his belt with excited, trembling hands...

She returned to the sofa, this time going around the other side of the coffee table and not coming so close to him. Did she know what was going through his mind? Had she sensed the pervert within? The man who watched her through her window while he jacked himself off? No, she couldn't know. He had always been careful to avoid being

seen. Besides, the things he was thinking about doing with her didn't seem perverted. They seemed...natural. Like it was meant to happen.

Yeah, right. Wishful fucking thinking.

'You were telling me about Jensen Frazier and your sister,' he prompted her to avoid the awkward thoughts running through his head.

Sarah took a sip of Jack and nodded. 'Logan, are you sure you want to hear all of this? Seeing the locket upset me and I'm sorry I cried on your shoulder.'

'Hey, there's no need to apologize for that. Ever.'

'I just don't think it would be

right to drag you into my problems. They're my problems and I need to deal with them. Thank you for bringing the package round but your work here is done.' She smiled but he could see in her eyes that she needed help. Damn if he was going to leave her to deal with this on her own.

'Sarah, you're not dragging me into anything. I'm here of my own free will and you probably don't know how much courage it took for me to come around here in the first place. I don't... I don't get out much. But now I'm here and I can see you have a problem and if I can, I want to help you.'

She took another sip of her drink. 'But you barely know me. Why would

you want to help me?'

'Isn't that the neighborly thing to do?' He grinned at her. It felt good to communicate with another person like this. It had been too long, Too damn long. The self-imposed prison he had built for himself next door might be there for self-protection but the life he lived there was barely a life at all. Just being in a different environment made all his senses come alive.

Sarah nodded slowly and smiled. That smile melted his heart. There was no way he wasn't going to protect this woman. No way.

'I'll tell you the rest of what happened,' she said, 'but I'm not asking for your help. I understand that this is

nothing to do with you.'

She was wrong there. If she was in trouble, it was plenty to do with him. No rhyme or reason, that was just the way it was. He knew from the moment that he saw Sarah standing on the sidewalk outside her house the day she arrived in Hope that if she was ever in any kind of trouble, he would be there. It went way beyond sexual attraction and was a knowledge deep inside himself that he would do anything for her.

'Frazier and Amy saw a lot of each other and eventually moved in together. I warned her against it. There were things Amy needed to keep from Jensen. She couldn't do that if she lived with him. I begged her to leave him

because she was putting herself and me in danger. She didn't listen. She left our firm and went to work with JF Investigations. We didn't hear from her at all. Even on special occasions like our parents' birthdays, or my birthday, or Christmas we wouldn't hear anything at all from her.'

'Back up a little,' Logan said, 'how could her living with this guy put you in danger?'

She looked down into her glass and bit her lip. 'I can't explain that right now.'

He shrugged. 'Okay, tell it at your own pace.'

'There's something about Amy... and me... that makes us,,, different. I

don't know if Frazier knew that or suspected it but I think that's why he started a relationship with Amy in the first place. He wanted more information. He wanted to confirm his suspicions. The fact that he sent me Amy's silver locket is a clear signal that he knows all about her.'

'Okay, you're losing me a little now. What is this thing? What does it have to do with a locket?'

She stood up and ran her hand through her hair, pacing back and forth as if struggling with herself. 'I can't Logan... I can't even though I know I should. I know I can trust you. I know I can.'

He went to her and placed his

hands on her shoulders. 'You can trust me, Sarah. Tell me anything.'

She took a deep breath and exhaled it slowly, her eyes flickering to the wolf photo on the wall as if to calm herself.

'I don't think you'll believe me unless I show you.'

'So show me.'

She turned to face him and her hand went to his left cheek. Logan flinched automatically but she said, 'Sssh,' and traced the scar down along his face. 'Watch me tonight. Through the window. Like you do every night.'

His eyes went wide and he felt his heart hammer loudly in his chest. 'You...'

'Yes, I know you watch me. I sense you there in your room. You feel drawn to me, don't you?'

He swallowed and nodded. No one but the doctors had ever touched the line of knotted flesh running down his face. He didn't even touch it himself. But Sarah traced her fingers along it like she was deciphering a secret held in the pattern.

'I know why that is, Logan. I know why you want me and why you feel an irresistible pull to watch me. If I told you now, you wouldn't believe me no matter how much you wanted to. So watch me tonight and you'll know everything.'

He started to speak but she

placed her finger on his lips. 'I can't explain any more. Once you've seen... tonight... I'll explain everything you want to know.'

He didn't know what to say. The shock that she knew he had been watching all this time overwhelmed his senses, making him feel like he might throw up. She had known he was watching... sensed him according to her own words... and she had still paraded around her room in skimpy lingerie. Was that for his benefit? Had she been putting on a show just for him? His world was suddenly turned upside-down. His beautiful neighbor had known. He had spent days feeling guilty about spying on her through her window and she had

known all along and by her actions given her assent to being watched.

'You should go now, Logan,' she whispered. 'I promise I'll explain everything later.'

He nodded and let her lead him to the front door.

Once he was back within the four walls of his own living room, he collapsed into his EZ chair and tried to calm the adrenaline surging through his body.

He had always known the power of his attraction to Sarah Cooper but he had never guessed that she herself had known about it too.

Could she possibly be attracted to him too? Had he spent a year locked

away from the world in this house, shunning human communication, while all the time the woman next door, a woman he felt an instant attraction to, was the key to unlocking the door of his prison?

He needed to see what it was she couldn't tell him.

He needed to see her again.

He needed the night.

CHAPTER FOUR

Change

By the time the world beyond the window went dark, it was almost ten. Logan had been sitting in his chair for

hours. He had tried to read but his mind wouldn't focus on the words on the pages of his book, slipping instead to Sarah and her secret. He had then tried to figure out what it was he would not believe if she just told him but he couldn't come up with any answers. He would believe anything she told him. They had a connection, that was undeniable, and he trusted her.

He left the lights off so the house became shrouded in darkness and he went upstairs to his bedroom, turning on the overhead fan. The moon was three-quarters full and cast a spectral silvery glow over the row of back yards. It also shone through Sarah's open window, illuminating her bedroom in ghostly light

and deep shadows.

Logan waited, sitting in his usual place at the end of the bed. He had no need to position himself so he couldn't be seen; she knew he was watching and had known all along anyway. He felt both embarrassed and excited at the same time. Even now, waiting for her to appear in her room, he felt turned on. His mind was trained to associate this action, sitting on the edge of the bed and watching Sarah's window, with sexual gratification. That she knew he was watching added to that feeling somehow. She wanted him to be here.

Sarah's face appeared in the shadows, the moonlight casting a pale glow over her skin. She stepped

forward, her eyes locked on Logan. He wanted to wave and acknowledge that he was here but there was no need; her eyes looked directly into his. As she stepped into the moonlight, Logan gasped. Apart from the silver locket around her neck, she was naked. Totally fucking naked. The sight of her made his cock press against his jeans almost painfully.

She reached for the silver chain around her neck and tugged it, tossing it and the locket onto the bed. Now she was completely nude and she looked totally fucking incredible. Was this what she wanted to show him? Her amazing body?

Turning her face to the moonlight, Sarah closed her eyes. Logan

studied the way the lunar glow played over her face and the sweet contours of her body, accenting her womanly shape. Her nipples stood erect in the moonlight. The area between her thighs lay in mysteriously-enticing dark shadow.

Just as Sarah had said that she sensed Logan watching her, he could now senses that something was about to happen . He felt it raise the hairs on the back of his neck and along his arms. His gut twisted as if he was on a roller coaster at the top of a slope about to go plummeting down the other side.

She bared her teeth at the moon. There was something wrong with her mouth. It looked as if her teeth had suddenly grown and were too big for her

mouth. She dropped to all fours, partly hidden in shadow, and let out a deep guttural groan that didn't sound like it came from a human woman at all. Logan got closer to his window pane to see what was happening next. Sarah writhed on her bedroom carpet and he couldn't be sure if she was in pain or if the writhing was a product of pleasure.

Then he stepped back from the window, his eyes wide with shock. He almost fell over the corner of the bed. He closed his eyes tightly, sure they were playing tricks on him. He opened them again and stared into Sarah's bedroom again, certain that he hadn't seen what he thought he had seen. It was a trick of the light. It had to be.

But when he looked again, he couldn't deny what he saw with his own eyes.

Sarah was gone. In her place, standing motionless on all fours half in moonlight and half in shadow, was a creature that looked like a hybrid of woman and animal. Sleek reddish brown fur covered the body and the face was wolf-like with a canine muzzle and ears. The face turned toward Logan and although the eyes were now green and wolfish, he could tell it was Sarah. She jumped up onto the bed prowled around on the sheets. She still had the curves of a woman - full breasts and womanly hips - but the fur covered everything. She had a wolf's tail but her buttocks

were still shaped like the tempting buttocks he had watched through the window many times before.

Sarah was right; he never would have believed this if she had told him. He had to see it with his own eyes and even now he wasn't sure what he was looking at. It was unmistakably Sarah but it was also unmistakably a she-wolf.

She looked at him with those green wild eyes and Logan felt something wild within himself rise in response. He was looking directly into Sarah's soul through those wolfish eyes and his own soul responded to her calling. She stretched her human-animal body out on the bed, pushing her hips back slightly as he thought she had done

at the AC controller earlier. Now, there was no mistaking her intent. She raised her buttocks and let out a low longing needful sound that was part wolfish howl and part womanly moan. The calling spoke to the most primitive part of Logan's mind. He felt like he was going to explode with lust. His breathing was fast, his chest rising and falling rapidly with each inhale and exhale. He felt hot and giddy and desperate. Tearing himself away from the window and the sight of Sarah, he ran down the stairs and out of the front door and across the moonlit lawn to her house.

She flung the door open as soon as he arrived. She had become human again and tossed on a silk robe but it

was unbelted and she was naked beneath. Logan took her in his arms and they kissed hotly and passionately, their tongues finding each other and wrestling like two animals competing for dominance.

Logan's hands opened the robe, sliding it off her. It slipped to the hallway floor with a silky whisper.

'Take me upstairs,' she whispered urgently.

Logan picked her up and she wrapped her legs around his waist as he carried her up to the bedroom and lay her on the bed. Standing above her, he pulled off his t-shirt while she unbuckled his belt and opened his jeans. By the time he got his t-shirt off, he was in her

hands, hard and thick. She stroked him, her now-blue eyes taking in every inch of him.

He groaned as she bent her head forward and licked around the head of his cock as her fingers sent incredible sensations through him as they stroked his shaft. The sweet scent of her arousal, which he had detected earlier in the living room, was strong now. It pervaded the room and drove Logan wild with lust. Although he couldn't become part animal as Sarah had done, he felt the animal part of his nature rise up and overtake his being. He grabbed Sarah's hair and pulled her down to the bed, needing more than anything to be inside, to mate with her.

'Yes,' she groaned, 'take me, Logan.'

He had never felt so hard, so desperate to fuck someone. He felt like no matter how hard he fucked her, no matter how deep he got inside, her, it could never satiate the powerful lust burning inside him.

'Change for me,' he told her.

She shook her head. 'I can't. I might bite you. I'm too wound up to control myself fully.'

'So bite me.' He laid hard kisses down her throat and over her soft breasts, taking her pouty nipples into his mouth and playing his hot tongue over them. She gasped and arched her back, pushing herself against his face.

'Change for me.' He trailed his tongue down over her flat belly to the dark blonde hairs between her thighs.

'If I bite you there are consequences,' she gasped, arching her hips to press her sex against his face. He flicked out his tongue between her lips, finding her clitoral hood and licking at it in slow lazy circles.

'Oh my God!' Sarah groaned, grinding herself against his exploring tongue. 'Yes, oh God, yes!'

Logan delved deeper, his hands supporting Sarah's sleek thighs while he pressed his mouth against her sex and stimulated her with flicks of his tongue. She writhed and moaned and grabbed fistfuls of his hair as she cried out and

came. Her body trembled against him and she closed her eyes and let out a scream which became a howl and Logan realized she had changed into the she-wolf at the point of orgasm. He climbed on top of her and she looked at him with her wild green eyes and growled deep in her throat.

She smelled strongly of musky arousal and that signalled Logan's brain that she wanted to mate. But before she did that, she obviously had another need because she lashed her wolfish head forward and sunk her teeth deep into his shoulder. He cried out in pain and tore her head away from him, seeing in her green eyes a wildness that looked so primitive it could have come from the

dawn of time.

She writhed beneath him so that she was on her belly, he backside pressed against his rock hard cock. He squatted back on his knees for a moment and she adjusted her position so that her hips were thrust into the air, tail raised, her glistening lips displayed to him. The fusion of woman and wolf formed a creature that was more erotic and sensual than anything Logan had ever seen in his life. He moved forward and pressed himself against her sex and felt himself sliding inside. So hot. So fucking tight. He mounted her and pushed himself all the way into her incredible body. The throbbing pain in his shoulder was forgotten as they mated and the

amazing sensation of her tightness around him filled his senses along with the feel of her fur beneath his fingers as he held her buttocks. Her scent drove him into an urgent rhythm of deep thrusts that slid his manhood all the way inside her and slicked up his cock with her musky juices. He was totally lost to the act of mating with Sarah and the sensation of it consumed his entire being.

She thrashed about wildly beneath him, letting out little guttural moans and yelps of pleasure, her claws ripping at the bedsheets, her hips pushing back to meet Logan's thrusts and allowing him deeper access to her hot tight sex.

Logan gritted his teeth and grunted with every pleasurable thrust into her body. Sweat sheened his body in the moonlight, making his tightened muscles glisten powerfully as he fucked the she-wolf with his big thick cock. It felt so fucking good he couldn't hold out much longer before he exploded with pure pleasure. The way she wriggled and writhed beneath him and the feeling of her tight sheath sliding tightly around his cock was too much for him to resist the primitive urge rising inside that compelled him to explode inside her. As the tingling in his balls began, one thought dominated his mind, 'Oh fuck, I'm coming, oh fuck I'm coming, oh fuck...'

He roared out and buried himself deep inside her as he erupted within her sweet tight slick sheath. A year of watching her, of lusting after her, became focused into this single moment as he released his hot seed into her body.

She arched her back and panted as she received his explosion of cum. Logan held her hips tightly and twitched and erupted deep within her.

When it was over, he fell panting to the bed and closed his eyes as he tried to regain his breath. He was totally drained and incredibly happy. He had never felt such a connection with anyone while having sex and it left him on a natural high. He opened his eyes and

looked over at the woman he had just made love to.

And she was a woman again. Sarah sat on her haunches looking at the bite mark on his shoulder. 'Oh, Logan. I'm so sorry.'

The throbbing came back again. He gritted his teeth against the pain. 'Don't worry about it. I kinda told you to bite me.'

She leaned across him and kissed his shoulder, her breasts brushing against his chest. 'And I told you there would be consequences.'

'So what happens now? Do I become a werewolf? You have a lot of explaining to do.' He smiled at her, trying to lighten the mood.

Sarah searched among the bed covers for her silver locket and fastened it around her neck.

'I thought you guys were allergic to silver.'

'If I had touched this after I had shifted, it would have felt very uncomfortable. When I'm in human form, it doesn't affect me. In fact it helps me. As a shifter, I can control when I shift except during the full moon. If I don't wear a silver locket over my heart during the full moon, I will shift uncontrollably. Wearing the locket gives me a choice.'

'And Frazier sent you Amy's locket because he knows she is... like you.'

'A shifter.'

'A shifter. And he's telling you he knows.'

She nodded. 'At the next full moon, she will shift and won't be able to control it. Frazier will know for sure that she is what he suspects she is.'

'And then what? What does he want with her? Is he going to reveal her to the media?'

'No, something much worse. There are underground groups who will pay very highly for an unmated female shifter.'

'He wants to sell her?'

'Not just her. He sent me the locket because he wants me to go looking for Amy and be captured too. A

pair of unmated shifters is worth much more to him than only one.'

'What do these groups want with you? I only just got to know that shifters exist and you're telling me that other people not only know about your existence but buy you? What for?'

She turned her face toward the shadows. 'These are occult groups, Logan. They would use us in experiments, rituals. Dark things. I can't let that happen to my sister. I can't.' Her eyes filled with tears.

He sat up and took her in his arms, stroking her hair while she cried against his bare chest. 'Sshhh, nothing's going to happen while I'm around, Sarah.'

He didn't think twice about what he was getting himself into. It was his job to protect Sarah. Maybe it always had been and he just hadn't realized it. But now it was an unwritten sacred law seated deep within him. Protect Sarah.

She stopped crying and wiped tears from her face. 'Well at least I'm worth a lot less to them now.'

'How do you mean?'

'A shifter is valuable to their rituals but an unmated shifter is worth much more. As of five minutes ago, I lost my street value.'

'But you said Amy had a relationship with Frazier.'

'Yes.'

'So isn't she no longer unmated?'

She smiled and pressed her head against his chest muscles. 'Having a relationship, having sex... that isn't mating. Only when a shifter feels the calling and acts on it is the act true mating. I felt your calling, Logan, from the moment I first saw you. And you felt it too except you didn't know what it was and just thought you fancied the panties off me.'

'Well excuse me for not being all read up on my shifter lore.'

She nestled her body against his and stroked the bite mark on his shoulder.

'You and I recognized a deep connection with each other and we consummated that connection with

physical action. What we just did,
Logan... that was mating.'

CHAPTER FIVE

Bite

They stood in the bathroom and Sarah applied a bandage to Logan's wound. He had put his jeans back on and

she had retrieved her silk robe from the hallway and slipped it on, belting it loosely. The stark white light above the bathroom mirror made Logan feel uncomfortable. He had replaced the bulb in his own bathroom with a less powerful one to soften the light. Standing here now beneath this glaring bulb, he felt exposed, as if his scars were on show and looked even uglier than usual.

'You hate the scars don't you?' Sarah asked him as she wound the bandage around his upper arm.

'Don't you?'

She looked at him and shook her head. 'They're part of who you are, what you've done. We all pick up war wounds during our lives, it's just that some aren't

so visible.'

'They're ugly.'

'I don't think so. I don't find anything about you ugly. Just as you're attracted to me, I feel exactly the same way about you. It's the Calling. I felt your Calling even though you weren't a shifter, and you felt mine and we each responded. It binds us, Logan.'

He had to admit that the connection he felt with Sarah was stronger than anything he had ever felt with any of the women in his life before he went to war. It was crazy but it was also undeniable. 'How could I do this Calling thing if I wasn't...like you?'

'It's rare for a shifter to sense a Calling from a non-shifter. Usually the

overwhelming desire to mate and bond is only present in shifters. Sure that emotion can be felt by everyone but wanting it so much that I sensed it and responded? That's special. You must be very in touch with your inner animal senses.'

'And it sounds like soon I'll be a hell of a lot more in touch. So what happens to me now I've been bitten?'

'In three nights, at the full moon, you'll shift. There is nothing you can do to prevent yourself from shifting during the first full moon after you're bitten. Even wearing a silver locket or amulet won't let you control the first shift.'

'Is it going to hurt?'

'Maybe. I've been a shifter all my

adult life so it's hard for me to remember.'

'When did you get bitten?'

'I didn't. My grandfather was a shifter. So is my father. Amy and I inherited the genetic code. When I first shifted at the age of sixteen, I was prepared. My dad taught me what to expect. Same with Amy.'

Logan tried to get his head around the fact that he would soon change the same way Sarah had. In just three nights he would be half-wolf. He didn't fear the change. His life had been so restrictive and lacking freedom that anything different would be welcome. Maybe he would be able to leave the house when he was a wolf. Yeah, and

when the neighbors saw a half-man half-wolf heading down Arroyo Street, they wouldn't be terrified and call the police at all. Maybe this wouldn't be the game changer he had thought, maybe it would be just same shit different day. Or different form.

'When you change, do you go out into the woods or something?' he asked Sarah.

'Of course. But I would usually go to the woods first and shift there. When you shift, you won't want to be trapped in a house...you'll experience a need for the wild. We can go out to the woods in Algonquin when you're going to shift. You'll find it much easier.'

'We can't do that. Sarah.'

'Why not?'

'Because we have to get your sister back.'

'We need to get her back before the full moon. She'll shift without her locket and Frazier will know how valuable she is to the Temple of Thul. We'll get her back before then, won't we?'

Seeing the worry in her eyes, he nodded. 'Temple of Thul? I assume that's the occult group you mentioned and not a division of the Mennonites?'

'It is. There are other groups but the Temple of Thul is the most active when it comes to using shifters and other creatures in their rituals. They're rumored to have an ancient book of

spells that use paranormal creatures in their casting. If Amy falls into their hands...' She broke down, trying to hold back the tears but unable to stop the swell of emotion. Logan took her in his arms and held her tightly.

'Don't worry, Sarah, we'll get her back.'

'The Temple of Thul is dangerous. They have members everywhere, in all walks of life but mainly in positions of power. As I said before, you don't have to...'

'Don't even say that. You know I'm in this just as deeply as you are. I'm going to be there for you. I need to protect you. If I didn't do that, a part of me would die inside. So don't think I'm

going to abandon you and make you deal with this alone, that isn't even an option.'

'Thank you, Logan.' She kissed his shoulder lightly and said, 'You're all patched up.'

'Thanks. So what is our plan for rescuing Amy?'

'We don't have one yet.'

'Yeah, we do. Frazier wants you as well as your sister so we use you as bait. He doesn't know I'm in the picture at all so we have an advantage. I have skills from my time in the Rangers and I have weapons. I'm the ace in the hole. Frazier put his return address on that package because he thinks you're going to go there looking for your sister. You are. But what Frazier doesn't know is

that I'm going to be there too.'

She nodded slowly. 'But what do we do when we get there?'

'First we need to establish if Amy is there. The address sounds like a cabin or cottage. Lakeside Road, Great Bear Lake. There should be plenty of cover for me to sneak around. If I find her there, I get her out. Simple as that. If she isn't there, we need to make Frazier think that you're going there alone. If he's holding Amy at another location, he'll take you there so he has both of you. Then I rescue you. Tell me more about Frazier.'

'He's just a nasty man, not big time or anything. It isn't him I'm worried about, it's the Temple. They're a whole

world ahead of Frazier in terms of power and evil.'

'We have to assume he hasn't contacted them yet. He needs to confirm his suspicions about Amy being a shifter and he can't do that until the full moon. I don't think he'll contact them until he knows for sure what he has to offer them. Besides, he wants you too and he doesn't have you yet.'

'I don't understand why he hasn't come here and tried to kidnap me.'

'Sarah, you're a private detective right?'

'Yes.'

'You own a gun?'

'Yes.'

'You know self defence? A

martial art?'

She nodded.

'You're a pretty tough cookie. Frazier is probably working alone. The way he's engineered this... sending you Amy's locket... you come to him. It's much less risky for him than abducting you from your home or car.'

She looked at him and when he saw her beautiful blue eyes he wasn't looking into the eyes of his sexy neighbor anymore; they were the eyes of his mate.

'Logan, I may be a tough cookie but I need you to stay with me tonight,'

He nodded. 'You couldn't keep me away.'

*

He took her into the bedroom and they stood in the shaft of silver moonlight shining through the window as they undressed each other.

Logan took her into his arms, her toughened nipples brushing against his pecs as he picked her up gently and lay her on the bed. Straddling her, his rock hard cock pressing against her thigh, he supported himself on all fours above her and looked down at her moonlit face.

'You're so beautiful,' he whispered.

In response, she raised her mouth to his and kissed him hotly and deeply. One of her hands went to the back of his

head and her fingers lightly stroked down over his shoulder blades. Her other hand slid down over his stomach, her fingertips playing over the excited flesh of his shaft.

Logan groaned and took his weight on one elbow, allowing one of his hands freedom to explore the soft swells of Sarah's breasts. He found her erect nipples with his fingers and stroked them teasingly, playing with the distended nubs and surrounding puckered flesh. Sarah's breathing became quicker and she kissed him with a more fervent urgency driven by the sensations of his fingers brushing against her nipples. She encircled his shaft with her hand and pumped him gently, making

him groan again as he broke from her mouth and kissed a hot trail down her neck to her breasts. He twitched excitedly in her hand and she ran her nails down the underside of his thick shaft to his tight balls, caressing him there and making his cock twitch more as her fingernails stimulated the sensitive nerves at the base of his penis.

He wanted to be inside her so bad it was almost a physical painful longing but he also wanted to experience as much of her as possible before the inevitable release and the dulling of these hypersensitive sensations burning through his body like wildfire.

He found a nipple and took it between his teeth gently. Sarah arched

her back and pulled his head to her breast as if trying to get as much of her sensitive flesh into his mouth as possible. Logan sucked the nipple into his mouth, opening his jaw as wide as he could so he could suck on the areola and the surrounding flesh. Sarah moaned as his tongue went to work on the engorged bud of excited flesh, flicking against it and tracing hot circles around it until he had explored every part of her sensitive nipple.

She didn't shift form this time. They had already mated as man and she-wolf and now they would mate as man and woman. When Logan shifted under the next full moon, they would mate as wolf and she-wolf, experiencing each

other in every way possible.

Moving his body down along hers, he trailed kisses over the underside of her full breasts and down over her taut stomach, seeking her pleasure center, the intimate part of her that sent irresistible pheromonal signals to his brain that drove him crazy to mate fully with her.

Gripping her inner thighs, he parted her legs, displaying her wanton sex before his gaze. She was ready for him, wet and glistening in the moonlight. Logan pressed his mouth to her sex and ran his tongue up and down her wet slit. She tasted so fucking sweet and good. His tongue found the little bud of her clitoris and he licked at it gently, teasing

it out from beneath its hood. Sarah moaned and pushed herself against him, needing more of the stimulation he was giving her.

He sucked the bundle of excited nerve endings between his lips and caressed it with his tongue, sending Sarah into a shuddering build up to her climax.

'Yes, just there!' she moaned, grabbing his head with both hands and holding him against her sweet pussy as she writhed and ground herself against his face.

Logan lapped at her little pleasure bud and sent her over the edge. She screamed out and threw her head back, eyes closed and mouth parted as

she experienced her orgasm. Logan pressed his tongue against her clit but didn't move it, knowing it would be too much for her as her climax made her too sensitive. She came against his face and the taste of her sweet arousal made him want to plunge himself deep inside her right now but he waited as she rode the wave of pleasure and came down from it gasping and panting and moaning his name over and over.

It was too much. Her taste, the sound of her pleasurable moans, the sight of her full breasts rising and falling in the moonlight as she breathed, each rounded swell topped with a hard excited nipple, at all made him need to bury himself deep inside her now. Right

now.

Sliding up against her body, he found her entrance with the head of his cock and pushed inside. The hot tightness that enclosed his manhood made him groan and push his hips forward so he sank deeper into Sarah's willing sex. She pressed her hips up to meet his and draw him deeper into her body. They kissed passionately as if they couldn't get enough of each other. Their bond was beyond that of a man and woman. They had Called to each other and now they were mates, a bonded pair. This act simply symbolized that bond, strengthened it.

Logan felt himself losing control and his thrusts became more erratic as

he tried to get himself as deep inside Sarah as possible for the moment he reached his inevitable climax. He broke the kiss and arched his back, closing his eyes and moaning with the pleasure he felt rising from his balls along the length of his sensitive shaft.

Sarah raked her fingernails lightly over his chest and that sent him into an explosion of pure bliss as he erupted deep inside her. The Calling and the mating led them to this act of absolute unity where they gave each other pleasure and shared a moment of ecstasy that made their bond even stronger.

Logan gave himself fully to Sarah and remained inside her after the

sensations subsided within him and they kissed tenderly, both of them hot and breathless and satisfied.

When he finally pulled out of her it was with regret and he felt an emptiness that he didn't feel when he was physically one with her.

They lay together in the moonlight and Sarah looked at him, her blue eyes seemingly flecked with silver, and smiled. 'This feels good, lying here together.'

'Yes, it does. It feels right.'

'How is your shoulder feeling?'

He hadn't thought about it since she had bandaged it but now he gave it his attention, he felt a dull ache there. It throbbed.

'It's a little painful.'

She lifted herself up on one arm and looked intently at his face. 'You don't look so good.'

'I thought we had a discussion already about my scars.'

'I don't mean that. Do you feel hot? Feverish?' She placed the back of her hand on his forehead, testing his temperature. 'It's hard to know if you're hot because you're ill or because you just had sex.'

'I don't feel too bad. Hot, yeah, but like you say that could be because of the sex.'

'Do you want a cold drink?'

'I could use a glass of iced water right now.'

She slid off the bed and walked naked to the door, looking back at him over her shoulder and saying, 'I'll go get it. Back in a minute.' He watched her ass as she left the room. Damned gorgeous.

He wasn't cooling down, despite the fact that Sarah's overhead fan was revolving above the bed. He shouldn't feel this hot. And his shoulder ached like a son of a bitch. He needed that drink. His mouth felt dry. And he was suddenly tired. So tired.

Maybe if he just closed his eyes for a few seconds, he would feel better.

He rested his head on the pillow and closed his eyes and...

CHAPTER SIX

Cage

He woke up feeling disoriented and dazed. It was light outside and the brilliant sunshine made him squint

against the brightness of the day. What the hell time was it? The digital clock on Sarah's nightstand said it was 17:48. Jesus, how had he slept for so long? Why hadn't Sarah woken him? They had plans to make, things to do. Sitting up groggily, he called her.

'Sarah?'

Nothing. No reply.

Maybe she had gone to work at her father's detective agency.

Unlikely. She was usually home by three. It was almost six now.

Logan found his clothes and put them on while he woke up fully. At least the throbbing in his shoulder had gone. In fact, he felt absolutely fine. The fever and tiredness had soon passed. Now he

felt ready to help rescue Sarah's sister. He felt more than ready, he felt strong and fit and pleased about the challenge ahead. He needed to stretch, to move, to get out in the fresh air. He could hardly believe he had spent so long in self-exile from the world. What had he been thinking? There was no need to hide away like a haunted beast, afraid of society. Sarah had no problem with his scars so he really didn't care what anyone else thought about him.

As he slipped the Harley Davidson t-shirt over his head, he left the room and went down to see if Sarah had left him a note or some other indication of where she had gone.

There was no note but there was

an indication of where she was and when Logan saw it, his heart thumped wildly in his chest and his legs felt shaky. He held tightly onto the stair rail for support and looked into the living room. It looked like a hurricane had hit the inside of the house. The glass coffee table was smashed and lying on its side. The sofa was overturned.

It became all too apparent what had happened here. Logan had been wrong about Frazier not coming after Sarah. He had been fucking wrong. Unwilling to wait for Sarah to go to him, Frazier had come to her. He had taken her. He had fucking taken her.

Logan stormed into the living room and drove his fist against the

overturned sofa, wishing it was Frazier's face.

How long ago had it happened? How could he get her back? The only lead he had was the address on the packet Frazier had used to send the locket. 229 Lakeside Road, Great Bear Lake. He knew roughly where the lake was in relation to Hope and he had maps of the area at home. He could find it. He had to find it.

He couldn't believe he had slept upstairs while Frazier had come in and abducted Sarah. There had obviously been a struggle. Why hadn't Sarah just shifted and fought Frazier off? Because she would have revealed her secret and he would have contacted the Temple of

Thul immediately, sure of what he had to offer them.

So she had not shifted. But how had Frazier managed to take her? She was no pushover. Maybe Frazier had help. They had taken her and not bothered to check upstairs because they thought she lived alone. They also thought she was an unmated shifter. And that was wrong. She was Logan's mate now and he already felt a biting despair at her disappearance. He had to get her back, along with her sister Amy. Just because they were shifters didn't mean they could be treated like animals.

He left the house and walked across the lawn to his own front door. Once inside, he flicked on the News

Channel to see if there was anything about a kidnapping in Hope. Maybe someone had seen something and called the police. But if the police had entered the house, they wouldn't have left him sleeping upstairs.

Logan checked the time in the corner of the TV screen and did a double take. The day and date were displayed above the time and there was no way they could be right. Could they? He collapsed onto the EZ chair and stared at the TV as reality hit him.

He had been asleep for two days.

That was why his shoulder felt fine. It had healed. He had fallen into some sort of fever coma while his immune system healed the bite. Or

assimilated whatever it was that meant he was a shifter now.

Oh fuck.

He was a shifter.

And he had been asleep for two days.

The full moon was tonight.

He got up and turned off the TV, heading for the basement door and feeling a growing dread in the pit of his stomach. If he had been asleep for two days, how long ago was Sarah taken? He might already be too late. No. He couldn't let his thoughts go down that road. He flicked on the overhead bulb and descended the wooden stairs into the basement. Fixed to the wall was a locked steel cabinet he hadn't opened in

a long time. He opened a small combination safe that was cemented to the basement floor and dug past various legal documents and forms for the cabinet key.

He opened it and looked at the guns inside. A hunting rifle with a scope and a Desert Eagle handgun. Unopened boxes of ammo were arranged in neat rows on the floor of the cabinet. Logan grabbed everything including the cleaning cloths and set about making preparations to rescue a woman he had never met and a woman who had become his mate.

Outside, the sun began to sink toward the horizon.

*

Leaving the house hadn't been as bad as he had thought it might be. He had simply thrown the guns into the passenger side of the truck, got in, and driven off the driveway and onto Arroyo Street. He almost had a panic attack when he got far enough up the road that he was out of sight of the house but he reminded himself that Sarah and Amy needed him and he managed to calm himself down and steer the truck toward the outskirts of Hope.

Now he was on the narrow road that led around Great Bear Lake, driving past the summer cottages on the lakeside of the road and a dense pine forest on the

other. Full moonlight reflected off the lake like molten silver. He checked the map on passenger seat with a flashlight every now and then and checked the numbers on the mailboxes. If he was right, he should be approaching Frazier's place.

Pulling over by the woods, he looked at the low full moon in the cloudless night sky. It had no effect on him. In a way he felt disappointed that he wasn't changing into a werewolf. It would have made his bond with Sarah even closer if they were both shifters. But the bite on his shoulder had obviously not been enough to change him; it had just given him a fever and made him sleep for two days.

And now he had to find Frazier's cottage fast and get the girls out of there. He grabbed the guns from the passenger seat and stuffed the Desert Eagle into the waistband of his jeans. With the rifle in hand, he set off along the road, keeping to the shadows of the trees. Up ahead the dark shape of a cottage sat by the lake, a single lit window breaking the darkness around the place.

Logan stayed low and crossed the road and crept across the undergrowth behind the cottage. Crouching beneath the window, he listened for any sounds coming from inside. A loon called from somewhere out on the lake and he heard voices speaking far away but the cottage was

silent. He risked a quick glance through the window but all he saw was an empty kitchen and a doorway leading to an empty room beyond. No sign of life.

If he was too late... if Frazier had already...

A sound from within the cottage reached Logan's ears. A small sound. A whimpering sound. He risked another peek through the window and this time he saw movement in the room beyond the kitchen. A man in a dark blue suit walked past the doorway. Logan barely got a glimpse of him but assumed it must be Jensen Frazier. The angle from this window was crap so he edged his way around the side of the building slowly, staying low to the ground. The loon

called out across the lake again.

There was a large window that looked into the room beyond the kitchen. Slowly, carefully, Logan peeked around the edge and when he saw Sarah, his heart hammered crazily in his chest.

The wood-panelled room was furnished with a sofa and a chair. These had been pushed aside and two iron cages had been placed on the floor. In one of those cages sat Sarah, dressed in jeans and a black t-shirt and looking like she was fighting an almighty internal struggle. Her eyes were cast down to the floor of the cage and she seemed to be focusing on one spot of the floor to aid her concentration. In the second cage sat a dark-haired pretty young woman who

looked a year or two younger than Sarah. She was dressed in a floral print summer dress but her position mirrored Sarah's exactly. Eyes down, almost trembling with concentration. They were trying not to shift and give their secret away to the two men in the room.

The man in the dark blue suit was tall and probably in his fifties. Distinguished flecks of silver ran through his hair at the temples. He had the look of a gameshow host or second-hand car salesman but even through the window, Logan could feel power radiating from the man. It was as if a dangerous current ran beneath his skin and radiated outward to make the hairs on the back of Logan's neck prick up.

The second man was dressed more casually, in dress pants and a shirt open at the neck. He was in his mid-twenties, about the same age as Amy, and was almost certainly Jensen Frazier.

'It's going to happen anytime now,' he told the man in the suit. 'Look how much they're trying not to change.'

That proves nothing,' said Blue Suit, 'Unless I see them in wolf form, I'm not interested in the slightest. The Temple doesn't pay handsomely for hearsay and empty promises, Mr Frazier.'

Frazier grabbed the edges of Amy's cage with both hands and rattled it. 'Come on, Amy, you know you can't

resist. It's a full moon out there and you aren't wearing silver. You have to change.' He rattled the cage again and turned away in frustration.

'That's only going to happen if she is indeed a shifter,' Blue Suit said, 'and from what I've seen so far, I am distinctly unimpressed.'

'I'm telling you, Mr DeRosier,' Frazier said almost pleadingly, 'I know they're shifters. Isn't there some test you can do?'

DeRosier sighed and flicked an imaginary speck of dust from the shoulder of his suit. 'There is but not here. I would have to take them to one of our Lodges. The test is here, tonight, Frazier. As you say, if they are shifters

they have no choice but to shift during a full moon as long as they aren't wearing silver. Those conditions have been met but I'm yet to see any fur or fangs.'

Logan had heard enough. It was time to act. He pulled the Desert Eagle from the waistband of his jeans, checked it, and flicked off the safety. He stood up and used the butt of the rifle to smash the window, drawing the attention of everyone in the room.

Frazier whirled around to face Logan, his face a mask of surprise. DeRosier took a couple of steps back but looked unfazed. Sarah and Amy jerked their heads up and Sarah shouted, 'Logan!' but the commotion had broken her concentration and she began to

writhe on the floor of the cage, the shift that she had fought so long finally taking hold of her. Amy also began to shift, her eyes turning wild and green and a low growl issuing from deep within her.

Logan leapt through the broken window, the Eagle swinging in an arc between the two men, keeping both of them in his sights. 'Let them go,' he told Frazier.

Frazier put up his hands but he made no move to free the girls. 'Look, I told you. They're shifters!'

DeRosier appeared to be the calmest person in the room and the air of danger radiating from him was not lessened at gunpoint. In fact, now he was closer to the man, Logan sensed a wave

of evil hanging around DeRosier like an ice cold black aura. It seemed to creep up Logan's spine like a questing spider.

'You don't want to do that. Put the gun down,' DeRosier said calmly.

'Fuck your Jedi mind tricks,' Logan said. But the creepy sensation crawling up his spine felt like it had lodged itself in his brain, letting DeRosier in. The Desert Eagle wavered in his hand. Fight it. Fight him. Got to stay in control.

'Put the gun down,' DeRosier repeated more firmly. It felt to Logan as if the man was speaking to the coldness that had crept into his mind and that coldness could control him. He lowered the gun even though he didn't want to.

His arm felt too tired and the gun felt like it was made of lead.

In the cages, Sarah and Amy had shifted into she-wolves and they pulled at the steel bars, growling and snarling at Frazier and DeRosier.

Logan felt totally at the mercy of DeRosier. His feet were rooted to the floor and his arm was so heavy he couldn't move it.

DeRosier looked at him as if he were regarding a bug in a jar. 'Shoot yourself in the head.'

Logan's arm, working of its own accord, lifted the Desert Eagle slowly toward his temple. He tried to resist the movement but his limbs were controlled by DeRosier's powerful will. The she-

wolves started to go crazy in their cages, howling and gnashing their fangs.

The gun lifted up past Logan's shoulder and up along his neck.

The cold steel brushed through the hair above his ear and pressed to his skull.

Don't pull the trigger. Don't pull the fucking trigger.

Was this it? Had his life come to an end now? After all the scrapes he had survived in the war, was his destiny to just shoot himself in this cottage by the lake at the whim of an occultist? His biggest regret was that he had only just found his mate and now he was going to lose her.

Don't pull the trigger. He tried to

control his fingers but they felt disconnected.

Don't pull the fucking trigger.

'Pull the trigger,' DeRosier commanded.

Logan felt his finger inch toward the cold metal trigger. He couldn't stop it. And as he wrapped his finger around the little deadly crescent of metal, he wondered why the moonlight flooding in through the broken window behind him had suddenly become so intense that he had to close his eyes against it. A sudden heat ran up along his spine, burning away the cold spider hold that DeRosier had on his mind. And as the heat flooded his brain he saw a wave of silver light behind his eyelids and he heard a howl

and realized that it came from his own throat. Sharp pain stabbed at his face and neck and upper arms, travelling down through the rest of his body. His skull felt like it was stretching and remolding itself. He dimly heard the gun clatter to the floor as he fell forward onto all fours.

Then a voice cut into his mind. A voice that calmed him and soothed the panic that ran through him. Sarah's voice.

'Logan, open the cages. There's a latch on the outside of the doors.'

He opened his eyes and leapt forward, reaching Sarah's cage in a single bound. Whatever control DeRosier had over him in his human

form was gone now that he was a werewolf. He swiped at the lock on the cage and it clicked open. Sarah burst out of the prison and stood on all fours in the center of the room, snarling and growling, the fur on her back bristling.

Frazier backed up against the wall so quickly he slammed into it and knocked a painted landscape onto the floor. Even faced by two werewolves, DeRosier looked calm. He reached into his jacket and pulled out a revolver.

Sarah's voice sounded in Logan's mind again. 'He has silver bullets.'

Logan propelled himself at DeRosier and the two of them went crashing through the window in a crash of splintered glass. As they hit the

ground outside, the revolver discharged with a loud bang. Logan waited to feel pain as a silver bullet pierced his skin but he felt nothing. DeRosier had squeezed the trigger reflexively and had missed.

Logan shook himself, glass shards flying from his fur. DeRosier scrambled to his feet, still wielding the gun.

Logan prepared himself to leap at the occultist again then froze as three sets of headlights cut through the darkness, blinding him with their glare. His vision adjusted and felt a sudden fear. Three black SUVs were parked on this side of the cottage. DeRosier hadn't come alone. The doors of the vehicles

opened and black-clad men with guns climbed out.

'Sarah, where are you?' Logan thought.

'We're right behind you.'

He turned to see Sarah and Amy standing by the front of the cottage.

'Run!' he told them.

They ran for the trees as the men from the SUVs opened fire. Bullets ripped into the ground and trees around the three werewolves as they reached the pines and fled into the forest, leaving Frazier, DeRosier and the agents from the mysterious Temple of Thul behind them.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Wild

They padded among the trees in the moonlit woods, following scents they picked up on the night breeze and

listening and smelling for signs of the men from the cottage. By midnight they were deep in the woods, in places where the only tracks were those made by animals.

Logan had become used to the telepathic communication and he felt more free roaming the woods in this new wolf form than he had ever felt in his life. He felt connected with everything around him, as if he were a part of the world again but in a more profound way than he had ever been a part of the world before.

The telepathic conversation ranged from Amy's feeling guilty over allowing herself to be fooled by Jensen Frazier to Logan telling the girls how he

had slept for two days and missed Sarah's abduction from her house. It seemed Frazier had gone to the Temple of Thul before he was sure about Amy and Sarah and they had taken Sarah from the house. So Logan's theory about Frazier not kidnapping Sarah had been correct but he hadn't counted on the Temple members being involved before Frazier had proof about his suspicions. He mentally chastised himself for not being more careful at the cottage and thinking DeRosier had been there alone with Frazier. That had been a stupid notion. Once the girls had turned out to be shifters, how was DeRosier going to transport them to his Lodge if he was alone? And Logan should have realized

he hadn't seen any vehicles at the cottage. If he had noticed that fact at the time, he might have checked the other side of the building and seen just how many vehicles there were. Stupid.

They found a place to sleep and Amy curled up in the undergrowth, telling them how tired felt.

'How about you?' Sarah asked Logan. 'Feeling tired?'

He looked at her and detected from her scent and body language what she wanted. 'No,' he thought, 'I feel like discovering new things now I'm a werewolf.'

She set off through the trees and he followed, his senses alive. He lost sight of Sarah for a moment and

followed her by scent alone. When he caught up with her, she was waiting for him in a moonlit clearing. On her belly. Ass and tail raised.

He mounted her immediately, pushing inside her and finding her already wet and willing. She growled with pleasure and he pushed all the way in, servicing her with quick deep thrusts of his cock. The night breeze ruffled his fur and his heightened sense of smell made Sarah's pheromone signals even more powerful as he thrust rapidly into her. He nipped at her neck and she let out little yelps of pleasure.

They came together, both of them howling at the moon as they enjoyed each other's wolf-like bodies and the

unity they shared. The telepathic communication made Logan's orgasm even more powerful as he could sense some of what Sarah was feeling as her own climax ripped through her body.

They lay together in the moonlight afterward and nuzzled each other.

'Logan,' she said, 'we can never go back to our old lives. Not now the Temple know who we are... what we are. They won't stop until they have us. They're too powerful for us to fight.'

'So what do we do? Flee?'

She thought for a moment then replied, 'We do the best that we can.'

*

After Sarah was asleep, Logan explored the surrounding woods. He wanted to experience his new form as much as he could, acutely aware that soon the sunrise would arrive and wash away the moonlight and he would shift back to his human form.

He found the ruins of an old house someone had built out here miles away from civilization and he stepped among the crumbling stone walls and looked up at the full moon. The house reminded him of his old life, life before Sarah. He hadn't physically removed himself from the world as the owner of this house had but he might as well have. He had been just as remote. And now,

like this house, his old life was simply ruins.

Now he had need to hide away but it was because he was hunted, not because he was afraid.

And now he had Sarah, his mate.

She had turned his old life upside down and she was a huge part of his new life.

He left the old ruined house and returned to where his mate lay sleeping in the moonlight. Settling down beside her, he pressed himself against her fur, feeling her body heat.

And for the first time in a long while, Logan James slept deeply with no dreams or nightmares.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Promise

Otis Pike, the owner of the "Luckee Stop" Gas Station just outside the small town of Promise, Montana

didn't see many strangers so when the cherry red Jeep pulled up by the pumps, he looked out of the window with some interest. When he saw the pretty blonde who got out and started filling the vehicle with gas, his interest became more lecherous than curious. Damn she was a fine woman.

But then her boyfriend got out of the Jeep and came into the store, nodding to Otis and heading for the snacks aisle. Well boyfriend or not, Otis intended to get as much of an eyeful as he could before they drove away. The way the blonde's ass filled her jeans was mighty fine.

Then the guy had to spoil it again by coming up to the checkout and with a

half dozen candy bars and bags of chips. Otis sighed. He didn't get many pleasant distractions driving into the gas station and this feller was ruining his concentration.

Then he got a good look at the feller and his eyes widened. 'Afternoon,' he said, trying not to stare at the scar that ran down the left side of the man's face. The guy must have been in some terrible accident to get a scar like that.

'Afternoon,' the guy replied.

'You just passing through?' Otis asked. Damn stupid question. Everyone who came to Promise was just passing through.

'Maybe. What's the town like?'

'Quiet. Damn quiet. We're too far

away from any highways or large towns for anyone to be interested in us.'

The feller nodded. 'Sounds ideal. We like it quiet.'

'Yeah? You don't look to me like the kind of feller who would want life to be all that quiet. I reckon you'd get bored soon enough.' The woman replaced the gas nozzle. Otis rang up the gas along with the chips and candy. 'You paying cash or card?'

'I always pay in cash,' the scarred man said, counting out bills from his wallet. He handed them over and as he leaned forward, Otis noticed a silver amulet in the shape of a wolf's tooth hanging from a leather cord around the man's neck.

'What brings you all the way out here?' he asked, 'Road don't go nowhere except into nothing. You're a long way from civilization.'

'We like it that way.'

'Fair enough. But if I were you, I'd keep on moving. The sheriff doesn't like strangers.'

'Thanks for the warning. Keep the change.' The feller left the store and got back into the Jeep. As the vehicle pulled out of the gas station, Otis reached beneath the counter and picked up two sketches Sheriff Ronson had given him weeks ago. Yep, that was the feller alright. That scar was too unique, there was no mistake. And the other sketch was definitely the blonde. Ronson

had also given him a sketch of a dark-haired woman but she hadn't been with the other two. 'Let me know immediately if you see these people,' Ronson had said. Well he could go fuck himself. The man was creepy and he had creepy visitors from out of town. Fuck him. The feller in the Jeep had been pleasant enough. Probably got that scar in the war, serving the country. Ronson could take a flying leap.

*

'What do you think?' Sarah asked as they approached the town of Promise, 'shall we stay a couple of nights?'

Logan thought for a moment then shook his head. 'The guy in the gas

station said the sheriff doesn't like strangers. We don't want to draw attention to ourselves. Let's keep on going through town. We'll find somewhere to sleep tonight. We could always rough it.'

'Rough it?' Sarah declared with mock shock, 'Why Mr James, I do believe you are trying to get out of paying for a hotel room. Whatever are we going to do?'

Logan watched the small town of Promise pass by his window. When they were past the main street and past the outskirts and past the town limits and back on the open road, he said, 'We're going to do the best that we can.'

If you enjoyed 'Logan's Calling', please leave a review! :)

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