



# TWO MARKS

## *Tempted*

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHORS

RENEE ROSE  
VANESSA VALE

**TEMPTED**

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TWO MARKS - 2

VANESSA VALE  
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Two Marks: Tempted

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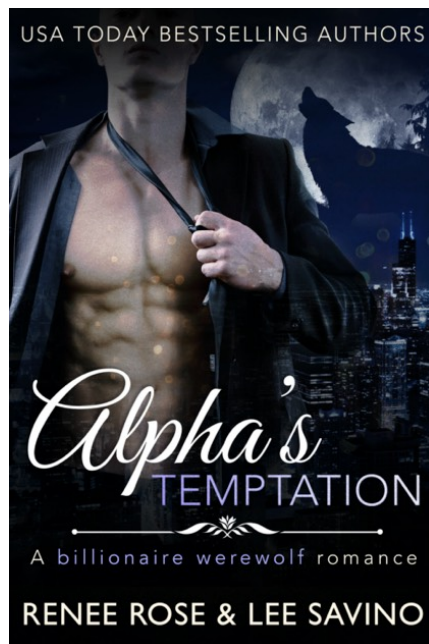
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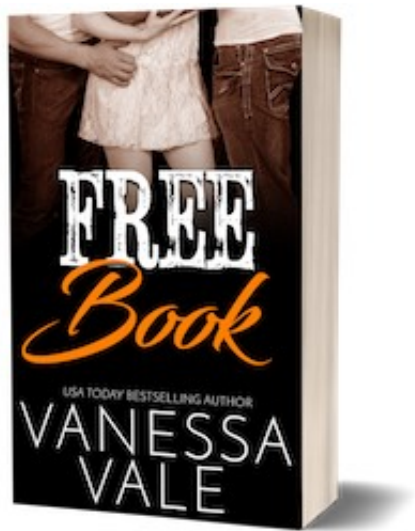


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# C

AITLYN

## A HUMAN TRACKING WOLVES.

There was something backward about this scenario, as my mother frequently pointed out when she was on one of her ‘your job is too dangerous’ rants. It wasn’t wolves I was afraid of when I was out here alone, though.

The sun was just breaking across the tips of the east-facing mountains. While it was July, the patches of snow glinted against the rocky terrain. It was beautiful here. Breathtaking. I’d already hiked a mile over public land, ditching my car at the trailhead lot. All I could hear was the sound of my breathing and the wind through the evergreens. The air was cool and I was wearing a sweatshirt, but I’d be ditching it soon enough. The day was going to be a warm one, even at this altitude.

Excitement spurred me and my hiking boots on as much as the coffee I’d picked up at the all-night gas station. Not to mention the need to keep my grant. I wouldn’t just lose the funding for my research, but I’d be out of a job, and most likely out of Wyoming.

I had the tracking chips in my backpack, and months of data that showed the wolves—*my* wolves—were often on a big stretch of land owned by the West family. I’d find them, tranq them, and get the chips embedded



so I could study the animals' movements from my office. Keep my boss happy and again, keep that grant.

I walked around a puddle in the trail, then stepped over a large rock. A raptor cried out and I looked up into the canopy of trees. The light was muted, but I saw it swoop by, searching for breakfast.

I preferred it here in the backcountry to anywhere else. Even though Granger, where I lived, was a small town, it still had *people*. I wasn't a curmudgeon, but people could be annoying.

I walked and frowned, because at the top of my annoying people list was Gibson West. The guy who owned the land I was approaching. I'd searched online and got his details, written him a thorough email about my wolf research, how it was being compiled for a paper—hopefully to be published with distinction—and asked if I could go on his land to track wolves.

He'd replied and said no.

I kicked a pebble on the path as I thought of the one sentence reply. I knew it by heart.

*West land is a pristine wilderness not open to outsiders for research that might impact the delicate ecosystem.*

I knew all about the delicate ecosystem. I had my doctorate in the decimation and reintroduction of wolves into the American West. The reintroduction *returned* the ecosystem to a perfect balance, putting the apex predator that had been gone for so long back in place.

Gibson West had offered nothing to indicate he might be persuaded otherwise. Which was why I hadn't asked a second time.

Nope. Instead, I was trespassing on his property illegally.

Hopefully, I wouldn't get myself shot.

"I'm helping," I said to a squirrel that froze when it saw me, then skittered off into the underbrush. "I wouldn't do anything to hurt the wolves. What an asshole."

An image of Gibson West popped into my head. Sixties, fat, old. He sat on his porch and took out rabbits with a rifle like he was at a shooting gallery because he was ornery. He'd spit tobacco juice into the dirt. Now, *he* didn't like people.

I actually had no idea what the guy looked like, but it made me feel better when I thought of him missing a few teeth and being unable to see his dick in a decade because of a huge beer gut.

Then a vision of another guy, a guy I'd actually met, flashed in my mind. My nipples went hard and my pussy ached at what he'd done. What *we'd* done together. Wade. The one-night stand I had two weeks ago. Fourteen days. Not that I was counting.

Hell, *I'd* picked *him* up, and I'd fucked up. Meaning, I hadn't actually *fucked* him.

Somehow, I'd gotten him to come home with me. Me. Miss Introvert, who knew more about four-legged animals than men. Although, the way we'd gone at each other... we'd been wild. *Like animals*. I wasn't a virgin, but I'd never felt like that before with any other guy. And we hadn't even had actual sex!

And that was why I'd been non-stop thinking about it. About him. Because he was skilled with his fingers and mouth.

I stopped on the trail, grabbed my water bottle, and took a deep swig because my pussy and I needed it. Wade, the epitome of tall, dark and handsome. And mysterious. And intense. And very talented... ahem, orally.

He'd gotten on his knees and made me come. Then he'd left.

No orgasm for him. Hell, I hadn't even seen his dick except for the thick outline of it that went down his thigh beneath his jeans. Yeah, it had been that big that it went down. His. Thigh.

Using the back of my hand, I wiped my mouth, not sure if it was wet from drool thinking about how insanely sexy Wade was, or from the water.

I hadn't seen him since that night. He'd said he'd see me again, but who was I kidding? It had been two weeks, and I hadn't laid eyes on the guy.

He was the first one-night stand I'd ever had, but I knew the deal. He hadn't meant it. It was called a one-night stand for a reason. *One night*. But why hadn't he fucked me? Why hadn't he gotten off? It wasn't like he hadn't been into me. He'd been *very* into me. As if I was a perfectly cooked steak after he'd been two weeks lost in the wilderness.

Yet he hadn't wanted a blow job.

It was me. I didn't ask any of my girlfriends, but I was pretty confident that no guy *ever* turned down a BJ.

Until Caitlyn Shriver.

I'd thought about all of it every hour since. Dwelled on it like a teenager. Why should I be upset he'd fingered me and forgotten? That he'd gotten his mouth on my pussy and made me see angels and rainbows... A unicorn or two?

“Admit it, Caity. You’re horny,” I said to myself. I *was* horny. The guy was like crack, and I’d had my first hit and needed more. He’d win a gold medal in the Women’s Orgasm competition.

So he hadn’t wanted to see me again. It wasn’t like he didn’t know where I lived. He was *very* familiar with my front door. *Whatever.*

I had my vibrator, although it was a sorry second to Wade. That made me cranky. My battery-operated boyfriend was no longer doing it for me. I’d had the most amazing not-sex of my life and wanted more, but didn’t know where the guy was to give it to me.

I wasn’t given access to the land I needed for my data.

Dr. Andrews, my difficult boss at the university, was looming and asking for updates on my data, threatening my funding if I didn’t deliver.

My parents called frequently enough to tell me how my work was silly and a waste of time and my PhD was wasted—not only in the field I’d done it in but also in research. They were waiting for me to fail so I could return east, and to teaching. As if.

I was so cranky!

I took a deep breath and stomped across the trail, using my frustration to fuel a little righteous defiance. Who was Gibson West to keep me out of the wilderness? Sure, he and his family *owned* the land I wanted to work on, but the wolves didn’t know about property lines. Neither did my research.

I adjusted the canister of bear spray hooked to my belt as I came out of the woods and into a clearing. Using spray was better than a rifle, and I had no intention of killing any animal out here. The pretty swath of grassland offered a view down into the valley. From up here, West Springs was only a few lights in the distance. The path I was on went to the south but a hundred yards away there was a wire fence, the delineation between public land and private West property.

I might not get more orgasms, but I was going to get on that land. My pussy would be denied, but not my data. I veered off the trail. I was over a mile from the main West house with rugged terrain between, based on my research of the satellite map. This section of their land was remote, but this public trail gave me easiest access to the back side. I’d get onto the property, search for tracks, and find my wolves. Get the chips embedded and head back to Granger. The Wests would never know the difference.

Wolves roamed.

So did I.

I found the nearest fence post, set my hand at the top, and carefully climbed over the split rail fence. My feet landed with a thud, and I brushed off my hands. I turned, and started toward the patch of woods, my eyes cast down, scanning the soft ground for tracks. I stopped abruptly when two pairs of boots came into view.

Then I saw the rest of the men they were on. One of them, I'd never seen before. Big, thickly muscled. Dark eyes boring into me. The other... I gasped. My pussy recognized him because it wept for joy.

"You."

The men weren't the least bit identical, but they crossed their arms over their massive chests in the same way.

"Me." It was Mr. One-Night Stand Wade.

"What are you doing here?"

"I told you I live near West Springs."

I glanced from him to his... friend?

"I think we can ask that same question of you, sugar." It was the other guy who spoke, then took a deep breath. His eyes flared wide before he looked to Wade. Nodded. "This is a fucking problem," he murmured, but I picked it up nonetheless.

"Told you," Wade said.

"I'm here to—"

"Trespass?" he finished for me. His dark eyes met mine and I shivered at the searing intensity.

I swallowed hard. They didn't seem threatening, although from the way they were looking at me, my underwear might be in danger. Yikes, they were intense.

"The wolves don't know public land from private land," I replied, tipping up my chin. This was the defense I had built up in my head. Part of the spiel I had planned if anyone caught me out here.

"Neither do you, Dr. Shriver."

My mouth fell open as I connected the dots. "You know about the email."

"I'm Landry West. You sent my brother an email. And he wrote you back." His voice was a partial snarl as he took off his hat, ran a hand through his hair, then set it back down. Clearly I was a burden here, otherwise he had bad gas or something, based on the look on his face. "I believe my brother replied to your request, denying you access."

Unless Landry was a much younger brother, Gibson was probably not sixty or paunchy. If he looked like his brother—this gorgeous guy—he was insanely good looking. Rugged. Built. Potent.

Where was Gibson West if he was so hell bent on keeping me out? Why did he send these two instead? I wasn't that much of a threat, was I? It didn't matter. I wasn't getting to the wolves. I could hear Dr. Andrews complaining in my head. I could hear my parents clapping for joy that I had a one-way ticket back to New York City. My crankiness grew.

"Fine," I said on a huff. Turning around, I headed back to the fence, to leave where I clearly wasn't welcome.

When I looked up again, they were in front of me once more. "Wha—"

"I told you I'd see you again." Wade wore a little smirk. He wasn't looking at my eyes, but my lips, with eager intensity. I licked them and I swore I heard him growl. Landry West, too.

I processed his words. "You knew."

He nodded. "You told me you were going to defy the email. I just had to wait."

"Because you live here." Oh shit. That meant... "You're a West?"

He shrugged those big broad shoulders I remembered clinging to as he ate me out. "Close enough," he replied. "You've been a bad girl, Caitlyn." His sexy smirk was growing.

A shiver slid down my spine. "I'll go. I'll... I'll stay off your land."

"Too late for that." The glint in his eye was predatory.

I gulped. The bear spray would work on them, right?

Wade tipped his head. "I told Landry about you, and our time together."

"Okaaaay," I said, drawing the word out into several syllables.

"He said your pussy tastes so sweet," Landry told me. "Like sugar."

My eyes widened and my mouth fell open.

Oh. My. God. This stranger was talking about how I *taste*? Wade told him about our time together? Landry was licking his lips, like he wanted to tug down my jeans and find out for himself. Right here. Right now.

I held up a hand. "Wait. You're mad at me for being here and yet you want to... what? Have sex with me?"

Wade and Landry gave each other a look I didn't understand.

"Wade told me how *special* you were and I didn't believe him. I had to wait two weeks to find out. Turns out, he's right."

It was creepy and... hot. Because that meant *both* of them wanted me. Two guys. Two. I'd rarely ever had one guy interested because I'd always had my nose in a book. Or my mind on wolves.

Why did the idea of Wade *and* Landry desiring me make my panties damp? Was I crazy? Had I fallen down and hit my head? Was I actually into two guys, which was something I'd never even considered before? Why did the idea not have me hopping over the fence faster than an Olympic hurdler?

A slow smile crept across Landry's face as he looked over every inch of me. Yeah, he wanted me. And I kinda liked it.

Yet I looked to Wade. "But you didn't want me... to... to..." I blushed, not able to finish the sentence. I'd been mortified for two weeks, thinking that I was a bad lay. Or had tasted bad. Or something.

"Oh, I wanted that blowjob, sugar," Wade clarified as he adjusted himself in his jeans. "But we do things a little differently up here."

I frowned. "Okay." I glanced between them, then caught on. "Oh. *Ohhh*. You're into each other."

Wade looked to Landry, then they both turned their heated gazes on me. "We're into you. Together."

I tried to get my head around what he was saying. "You mean..."

"We share."

*We share.*

I gasped, set my hand on my chest. "Me? You want to share *me*? I thought you wanted me to leave."

I took a step back.

"We didn't want you to *sneak* onto the land," Landry said.

They took a step closer.

"That's right," Wade added.

"What are you going to do to me?" I whispered, afraid of the answer. Going out into the wilderness alone had dangers. Falling off a cliff. Being dragged off by a mountain lion. Getting mauled by a bear. I'd never imagined two hot guys. I wasn't sure if I was afraid they'd hurt me, or if I'd like his answer.

"Oh, the list is long. And pleasurable. But first, I think you deserve a little punishment for what you've done," Wade said.

My gaze flicked to him as I took a step back once more.

He held up his hand. "Don't be afraid, sugar. We're not going to hurt you."

"We'd never hurt you," Landry repeated. "All right? You've got to feel the attraction between us."

I licked my lips and nodded. Somehow I knew they wouldn't hurt me. They might not want me on their land, and were mad that I'd snuck on, but they were here specifically because they wanted me. Knew where I'd be and, generally, when. They'd been waiting for *me*.

"That punishment? It's the kind you'll enjoy receiving as much as we enjoy giving it."

I stilled. Frowned. "Huh?"

"Eventually," Landry added with a sexy flick of his brows. "Since we do things in pairs around here."

All I could do was gulp as my panties went up in flames.



WADE

*TWO WEEKS Earlier*

I SAT in my parked pickup, trying to formulate a plan. Searching online records—some public, some private—I'd located the human my alpha ordered me to investigate. The one who requested access to our pack land. Caitlyn Shriver, the post-doc wolf biologist at Granger State, my alma mater. Age twenty-seven. Cute, judging by her college and motor vehicle IDs.

I was parked across the street from her apartment, deciding my next move.

On paper, Dr. Shriver didn't look dangerous. Hell, she was a tiny thing. No threat to me or mine. Physically. But her request to chip and track wolves on Two Marks pack land raised all kinds of red flags. Gibson, the alpha, was in Montana with Ben to track down their mate. Before Gib left, he'd read Caitlyn's email and responded. He'd told her no way to her request, then asked me to investigate her and ensure she wasn't going to be



a problem. Because a wolf researcher interested in tagging and tracking wolves was *bad*.

My phone rang. It was Ben, the pack enforcer. He normally would have handled this task, not me. But since he and Gib were scent-matches, he was in Montana too.

“Hey, Wade,” he said when I answered.

“How’s it going?” I asked.

“Good. We found our mate.” His voice was so upbeat, it sounded like he won the lottery. Maybe he had.

“So I heard,” I replied. “Congratulations.”

“Well, she’s going to take a little convincing, but we’re working on it,” he said. “I’m calling to check on that wolf biologist situation.”

I quietly sighed. He didn’t need to know that I wasn’t thrilled about my upcoming task. “Yeah. I’m on it. I’m actually down in Granger right now, figuring out my next move.”

“Good. See if you can find out what her research is about. The last thing we need is something that will fuel the rancher’s quest to put wolves on the trophy game list in these parts.”

That meant anyone in the Two Marks pack would be in danger if they were in wolf form.

“Yeah.” My chest constricted painfully. “You don’t have to tell me that.”

“Of course not.” Ben’s voice softened as he probably realized that I, of all people, probably had the biggest stake in making sure wolves were never hunted in our county. “Sorry. I spoke without thinking.”

“It’s fine,” I said quickly. The last thing I fucking needed was people feeling sorry for me. Fate knew I’d had enough of that since the shooting eight years ago. I’d lost my mother; my dad had lost his mate. The pain of it still caught me off guard at times. The pack, too.

Because of that, the alpha was adamant about our safety, meaning: no outsiders, and monitoring the ranchers or anyone else who might endanger our way of life.

Including Dr. Caitlyn Shriver.

She might not be a danger, but she was a *threat*. Her research could impact us. Our way of life—the shifter life—had been a secret since the West family settled and founded West Springs, Wyoming, in the late 1800s. Making wolves trophy game as a result of some population study she was

working on could be disastrous. We could die for what some considered sport shooting.

In her email, she'd mentioned that the mountains around West Springs were known wolf territory, with multiple sightings of a pack reported in the past ten years. If her research showed the reintroduction of grey wolves into the area had created over-population and the packs need to be thinned, the Fish and Game Department could change their designation. That would be disastrous for the lesser wolves but, more importantly, dangerous for shifters.

Something I unfortunately knew all too well.

"Well, what I've dug up on her so far hasn't put me at ease," I admitted to Ben. "She's been microchipping wolves across Wyoming, and at least two of the wolves she's chipped have been killed. It could be a coincidence. Wolf biologists generally have the good of the wolf population at the heart of their studies, but you never know."

"You think she's tagging them, then going back and shooting them?" he asked.

I sighed, and was sure he could hear it through the phone. "If she's a good enough shot to tranq the animals, she could just kill them with a rifle then and there. Why go to all the trouble? It makes no sense."

"Well, get close to her. Maybe sit down to have a conversation, if you can do it without alerting her about our particular interest in her studies."

That had been my thinking. "Yeah, that's my plan. I'm watching her place now, looking for an opportunity."

"Okay, report back after you've made contact," Ben said.

"Will do. Have fun with your mate. What's her name, by the way?"

"Shelby." The word came out almost reverently. "She's incredible. Yeah. We're having fun. We probably won't make it back for a couple weeks."

"Landry has things under control," I assured him before I disconnected. Landry was our alpha's younger brother, and my scent-match. He was in charge while Gib was away.

Despite my assurances, I didn't know what I was doing there. My job was head of IT for the distillery. I handled any computer related issues for the pack, as well. My research usually consisted of online stalking, and light hacking when necessary. In person confrontations or investigations weren't my forte.

Was I just going to knock on Caitlyn's door and demand she leave the wolves in West Springs alone? I sat behind a computer. I wasn't an enforcer, like Ben. I hoped they didn't expect me to intimidate this little slip of a scientist. To threaten her. I didn't have it in me, even if she could be a problem. Although, if she had any involvement in killing wolves, then...

The front door of the small housing unit opened, and my gaze snapped to the slim figure coming out. I sighed in relief, because this made things easier. I recognized Caitlyn immediately. She tugged the lapels of her jean jacket closed against the evening chill—a cool night for this late in June—as she stepped outside.

I waited a few beats, then slid out of the truck and shut the door, following her at a distance. When she stepped inside the neighborhood microbrewery a half a block down, I adjusted my cowboy hat, waited for a car to pass, then crossed the street. I figured I could use a drink, anyway. As long as Caitlyn wasn't meeting someone here, this might be the perfect opportunity to have that casual chat without getting her guard up. Learn her intentions for her research. Steer her far away from our wolves.

Send her somewhere other than Two Marks pack land.

The place was crowded, the twang of country music filled the air. I wasn't the only one wearing a Stetson. Most men, and a few women, wore them. At least I fit in with my cowboy look. It took a few seconds of scanning to find her. Caitlyn sat at the bar, chatting with the bartender like she was a regular. I left one barstool between us when I sat down and caught the server's eye. "What's on tap?"

"I've got a lager, a pilsner, and a pale ale," the tattooed young man said, sliding a cocktail napkin in front of me.

"I'll take the lager." I stole a glance at Caitlyn's profile. In her photos, she looked cute. Friendly and approachable. But I saw now she wasn't just cute—she was drop-dead gorgeous.

*Holy shit.*

Her long bronze hair was burnished with red and gold, and her skin was smooth and flawless. She was a lithe, slender thing, but that made her no less feminine. She was soft in all the right places.

But I wasn't here to admire the human. I was here to handle her as Gib and Ben wanted.

I took a deep breath. Over the tang of spilled beer and greasy French fries, I caught her scent.

It taunted and tempted me, making me want to lean in from where I sat. To move closer and fill my nostrils with it. When the bartender slid the beer in front of me, I took a swallow, then set it back down so it wouldn't interfere with my olfactory senses.

"Steak salad, please," Caitlyn murmured to the bartender, pushing the one-page menu across the bar at him although she didn't seem to have even looked at it.

"Is it good?" I asked. Not my best opening, but picking up women in bars wasn't really my thing. Shifters didn't *need* to have a strategy. With female shifters, it was easy. She wanted a fuck, and we gave it to her. It took the edge off of the full moon high. Nothing more. There was no attachment, no heart involvement, because we knew up front we weren't mates. Sex was just that. Sex.

Landry—my scent-match—and I had pleased women after those full-moon runs, but I'd never screwed around on my own. Especially not with a human.

Not that I was trying to pick up Caitlyn. I was here on business. I'd been entrusted with a serious pack problem, and I needed to act accordingly.

*Focus. Find out her plans, steer her away from our land.*

Damn, the idea of picking her up appealed to me, though. Watching as her pupils dilated with need. Noticing when her delectable scent changed to be laced with her dripping arousal.

I took another breath. *Fuck*. My dick went hard, and I shifted on my stool. She hadn't even looked at me yet.

Then she did, and I was in more trouble than I'd been in getting my paw caught in that old bear trap when I was nineteen.

She offered a dazzling smile that I sure as hell didn't deserve. "I love it. It's what I always get." A teasing brow quirked as she looked me over. I shifted again, hoping she didn't see how my dick was outlined beneath my jeans. "You don't strike me as the salad type, though."

I grinned back. It was impossible not to. "I eat my vegetables," I bragged, tipping my hat back. "But you're right. I'd rather have the whole steak. Do they serve that?"

She reached across the bar and grabbed the menu, pushing it my way. "They do, and it's delicious. It comes with the best gourmet mashed potatoes you've ever tasted—and broccoli."

I didn't bother reading the offerings. "Sounds like a winner." I lifted my chin at the bartender who still hovered nearby. "I'll have the steak. Rare."

A man moved between us to talk to the bartender and I gritted my teeth, wishing I'd chosen the seat beside Caitlyn. I stifled the growl that wanted to escape my chest, to tell the guy that he needed to fuck off, even if he was only closing out his tab.

I didn't like another male getting close to her. Or between us.

Caitlyn shifted her purse away, and her keys dropped to the floor.

I moved before she could, stooping to pick them up. "You like wolves?" I asked, running my thumb over the metal wolf on her keychain.

The guy turned, and I moved back so he could leave. Then I tugged my barstool closer so no one else could get in my way.

"Caitlyn studies wolves," the bartender offered.

Shit, that hadn't worked. I wanted to punch his teeth in. Didn't he have other customers to help?

*Please tell me she was not involved with this fucker.*

I shook my head to clear it. What in the hell was wrong with me? I wasn't actually here to pick up Caitlyn. To keep her safe, and away from other males. To keep their scent off her. To put *mine* on her.

No.

I was here on pack business. To assess how big a problem she was going to be.

Not to get in her pants.

I definitely didn't want to get in her pants.

Oh, fuck. Yes, I did. I really wanted to peel those tight jeans down her slender hips and see everything inside them. To push her over the barstool so that tight ass was upturned. Spank it. Then get down on my knees behind her, and taste every drop of her sweet honey. Because I knew she was sweet. Everywhere. I could smell it.

"You study wolves, eh?" I tried to sound casual, to keep the wolf out of my voice.

She nodded, tucking her long hair behind her ear. I wondered if it was as silky as it looked. Whether she'd cream if I wrapped it around my fingers and held on as I fucked her from behind.

"Yep. Wolf biologist."

I blinked... and took a sip of my beer.

“Are you in graduate school?” I asked, even though I already knew the answer. She’d gotten her PhD from Montana State, and moved here to do her post doc.

She wasn’t just a pretty face. She was fucking smart too.

“I’m a research scientist,” she answered, gripping the stem of her wine glass and swirling the burgundy liquid inside. “I’m studying wolf mating patterns.”

*I could show you a thing or two about wolf mating...*

Fuck. I took another deep swig from my pint glass and digested what she’d said. Mating patterns. That might be okay. It wasn’t population growth.

“Really? So, how do you study them? Out in the wild?”

She took a sip of wine, angling her knees in my direction for the conversation. It was obvious this was something she was passionate about, that lit her up. “Yes. I chip them so we can track their territorial and mating habits. We’re looking at pack growth since the reintroduction of the grey wolf in the nineties.”

Fuck. That was definitely not what I wanted to hear.

“We?” I asked.

She offered a small eye roll. “Well, me. But my boss is closely monitoring my work.”

“You chip wolves.” I tried to keep the insult out of my voice. It went against my DNA to have an animal tracked and studied. To be nothing but a four-legged piece of data.

Didn’t she know how her research could affect said population? She might be the cause of it thinning back down. Rapidly.

I thought of my mother and I got heartburn, my steak losing its appeal.

She nodded, rewarding our overly friendly bartender with a smile when he brought her steak salad.

“Yours will be right out,” he told me.

It was all I could do not to growl at him to stay the fuck away from her. It had been years since my mother had been killed, but the wound would never heal. The anger was always there. But my inner wolf was still interested in this woman. Wanted her. I was... possessive, and that pissed me off. I was mad at myself.

I couldn’t help it.

At the bartender for being... nice. And a guy. The fucker. I somehow managed a nod before he went off to help someone else.

"How do you chip them?" I prodded, when Caitlyn didn't elaborate.

She picked up her fork and speared a piece of lettuce. "You know, I just bring doggie treats out—"

My eyebrows shot to my hairline.

"Just kidding." This time I was treated to her smile, which I swore to Fate could light the night sky. She was damn lucky she was so cute, or I'd have taken offense to her joke. "I tranq them, and then inject a chip to track."

"You tranq them," I repeated, blinking. Memories of my mother's blood staining the earth crowded my mind. Realizing my fists were clenched, I slowly forced myself to relax. But that had me deep breathing, which filled me with her fucking sweet scent. Which agitated me in an entirely different way.

*Focus, Wade.*

"Yes." She took a bite of her salad, chewed.

"How many people on your team? How many wolves do you chip at a time?"

She scooted her barstool closer to speak over the growing din, her expression bright. Obviously, she loved to talk about her work. "My team? It's just me. It can take weeks for me to find even one wolf, but I'm headed into the mountains above the town of West Springs, where I hope to find several. Ever heard of the place?"

I nodded. "Actually, I live in that area."

Her eyes flared in surprise, but it was only about sixty miles from here, so not a huge coincidence. "I'm going in two weeks because I heard there's a whole pack. I'm hoping to get as many as possible. I've got to wait until the twelfth, though, when I will have all my supplies." She didn't sound keen on waiting, but she was a scientist and, I was sure, wanted everything just so.

My brain struggled, registering two things at once. One was the danger to my pack, and Caitlyn's plans to head to Two Marks land above West Springs despite Gibson's denial of her request. That should be my only concern as temporary pack enforcer. Instead, what was pushed to the forefront of my mind was a blinding need to throw this woman over my shoulder and carry her somewhere private.

Somewhere I could get my hands on her bare skin. Taste her. Make her come. As a shifter male who found a female who called to his inner wolf.

Fates, her strawberry-spice scent wrapped around me like an intoxicating noose, tempting me in ways I'd never before experienced. I was in big trouble here.

Ben would be pissed.

"There's a pack of wolves in West Springs?" I hoped I was keeping my face blank enough.

"Well, not in town," she said, rolling her eyes once more. "The mountains above there. I believe so, at least. My data and reports from locals support it. Unfortunately, I think they're on private land up there, and I couldn't get permission from the owner." She looked left and right, then leaned in. "But I'm going anyway."

My brows furrowed.

"I have to," she explained. "My boss, the lead research scientist, said the grant funding is at risk if I don't get more chipped by the end of the summer."

I didn't like anything about what she'd just said. I also had to find out who the hell her boss was. "So you're going to trespass on private land?"

She shrugged with a smile. "I know. Naughty me."

Naughty? Yeah, if she was planning to go onto Two Marks land even though Gib told her no, then she was a bad girl.

I couldn't just open my mouth and tell her off. That she sure as shit couldn't go against the alpha's command. I had no reason for doing so. I'd give away who I was and why I was in town, because without telling her we didn't want to have shifters—or any wolves, for that matter—chipped and monitored, all I'd appear was creepy.

So I kept quiet about the truth. It would come out when I caught her on pack land. On July twelfth, as she'd said. Hopefully, Gib and Ben would still be away then, and Landry and I could handle her. Because they'd tasked us both with taking care of the pack, and we had to resolve this. In the meantime, I had my inner wolf to satisfy. I couldn't walk away from her now. No fucking way.

I needed to touch her. Breathe her in. Hear her moan in pleasure. Cry out my name as she came. Know she was dripping with need—for me. I longed for Landry to be here too, to agree with me that there was something



about this human that appealed to my wolf. If we were mates, that meant she'd appeal to his as well.

But he wasn't here. Yet the need to please her was strong. Too strong to deny.

I leaned in, and spoke quietly, as she had. "That is naughty. But that's in two weeks. How about tonight? Are you naughty tonight?"

Her eyes widened as she stared at me. I watched, and knew the second she caught on. Her pupils narrowed and her mouth fell open.

Then she looked me over as if I was on the menu and she was deciding if she'd eat me up.



## C AITLYN

“I’M WADE, BY THE WAY.” The broad-shouldered cowboy offered his hand.

“Caitlyn.” I clasped his fingers. The moment we touched, I nearly fell off my barstool. It was like the floor tilted. Damn, that wine had really gone to my head.

Suddenly, I was breathless and hot. Completely off-kilter.

Maybe it wasn’t the wine. Maybe it was the attention from the very interested, very hot stranger beside me. And I felt all that from just a handshake.

Well, he wasn’t a stranger anymore. Now, I knew his name. That made it okay, right? To feel something way more than I should for someone I’d just met. For his touch to be practically electrified.

I held onto his hand—his big, dinner plate-sized one—taking him in. He was a jumble of contradictions. He was rugged but clean-shaven. His forearms were pure, corded muscle. However, his hands weren’t calloused. They were warm, gentle, and somehow just that simple hold made me feel... safe. Yet he was definitely a danger to my panties because they were wet, making me want to squirm.

Dave, the bartender, showed up with Wade’s food, and I forced myself to pull my hand away. Wade shook his head at Dave. “I’ll take it to go.” He

dropped two fifties on the bar, then looked to me. “Right, sugar?”

I swallowed hard. Blinked. Couldn’t say anything.

“For her tab, too,” he added.

His voice was a deep growl that reverberated right through me. It made my nipples go hard.

“Oh. Um. Wow. Thank you,” I finally said. Wait, did that—very blatantly—mean he assumed we were leaving together? That he would eat his dinner... later?

I should be stunned he assumed so much. That I was, what? An easy lay? Or could he sense that I felt something, more than I would if I just picked up some random guy... some random *other* guy.

Why did Wade seem different? Why was I not worried? Why did I *want* him to eat that steak later, but me first?

“Are you picking me up?” I blurted, tucking my hair back. God, had I even combed it since this morning?

“Hmm. Let me see.” He stood and moved behind me, making me turn and laugh because I didn’t know what he was doing. He gripped the sides of my barstool and lifted it into the air. “Now I’m picking you up.”

I laughed, and a slow smile slid across his face. “Show off.”

Dear *gawd*. He had every reason to show off. Not every guy could dead-lift a barstool with a hundred-pound woman perched on it.

He put me down and rested a casual hand on the back of the stool, leaning close and grinning down at me.

Dave delivered a to-go box and set Wade’s change on the bar. Wade picked up the box, leaving the money as a tip. “Want to get out of here?”

“Oh. Um. Yes. Okay.” If I was nervous, it wasn’t because I thought Wade was sketchy. It was more that I had no game. I usually ignored men’s attempts to flirt when I was here or on campus. Dating just wasn’t worth the hassle. All guys wanted was to get laid, especially in a university environment. Maybe this guy did too. No, *obviously* he did, but *I* was the one who felt different.

I didn’t know what made this guy special, but I sensed something new in every cell of my body. For once, my logical mind wasn’t in charge.

My body said yes. My nipples were poking against my bra as if trying to reach him. My pussy ached for some action—from an actual man, not a battery-operated boyfriend. I didn’t care to entertain any arguments otherwise.

He stepped back so I could hop off my stool and grab my purse. “Um... where do you want to go?” I looked up at him... way up, and realized how much bigger he was. At least a foot taller. I had to tip my chin back, otherwise I was staring at the snap on his shirt. I should have felt intimidated, but I felt feminine. The differences between us were striking. He was hard and muscled. I was toned, but had stopped growing in seventh grade. Two of me probably still didn’t equal one of him.

“Your place,” he murmured, sliding a knuckle down my cheek. “It’s a hell of a lot closer than mine.”

Our gazes tangled and held. My breath stalled in my chest as I took in the golden glint to his brown eyes. “Why are you here in Granger?”

He shook his head. “On business.” Taking my hand, he led me to the door, holding it open for me until we were out on the sidewalk. The evening air was cooler. People were out enjoying themselves in the pretty summer night. With the university only having a few summer programs going on, there were fewer students around.

Wade looked at me, and I took in the dark flecks in his eyes. The way they pierced into me, roving, studying, as if searching for something.

Then I realized I was being an idiot. He didn’t know where to go. He was waiting for me.

“This way.” I turned toward my apartment, and he kept his pace to my slower one as we went down the block.

He didn’t live in Granger. Being here for business meant that he didn’t come here often for other reasons.

*It’s a one-night stand, dummy.*

I shouldn’t have been disappointed that he wasn’t a local, but strangely, I was. Then a terrible thought occurred to me, and I stopped. “Oh God, you’re not married, are you?” I craned my head to try to check for a ring.

He turned to face me. When he saw we were blocking the way of another couple coming down the sidewalk, he tugged me toward the nearest shop entrance. “What? No!” The answer exploded out of him with a laugh like it was an outrageous suggestion, so I relaxed.

I sighed, setting a hand on my heart. “Okay, good. Just checking. So do you, um... do this often?” Gah. My nerves were getting on top of me. I definitely had no game. This probably wasn’t the sort of thing I should ask right before I was about to hook up with a hot cowboy.

“Never, sugar. But it seems I have a real weakness for wolf biologists.” He winked, then stroked my cheek again. His gaze roved over my features, then settled on my mouth. He groaned right before he lowered his head and kissed me.

Oh, shit. The guy could kiss. It went from a gentle brush to more from one second to the next. His hand cupped the back of my neck and held me in place, tipping my head to the side so he could take it deeper.

I gasped, then whimpered when his tongue found mine.

He lifted his head. I blinked, and stared up at him. Licked my now swollen lips.

“Caitlyn...”

He didn’t need to say more than my name because he had me at those two growled syllables.

My panties dampened, and all my nerves melted away. “My apartment’s right there.” I pointed to the next building down. He was still holding my hand, and tugged me along. This time, he was rushing, and I had to practically run to keep up. I didn’t mind. He was eager, and so was I. If that kiss was any indication...

Pulling out my keys, I tried to get them in the lock, but my hand was shaking too much. Wade took over, and got the door opened. His hand settled on my lower back as he held it open for me to enter first. He was taking deep breaths, as if the kiss had been a workout. The electricity between us grew as we took the stairs up to my apartment.

The moment I got the door open, Wade launched into motion, divesting me of my purse and keys as his lips slammed down on mine once more, as if the few minutes our mouths had been apart was too much.

I gasped, responding to the kiss with more pent-up passion than I knew was in me. God, I was attracted to Wade. Hot for him. Like zero to sixty from one kiss to the next. What was it about this guy?

His size? His hard muscles? His gentle hands? His skilled mouth?

I even liked his taste.

Wade flung off his hat, then stripped me of my jean jacket. My top was pulled off next, and he barely broke our kiss to do it. “You smell so good,” he rumbled against my neck as he backed me against a wall. His hands cupped and kneaded my breasts through my bra.

I let my head fall back, savoring the feel of his touch. My nipples pebbled even further, and it was as if there was some kind of current

between them and my clit. I ached. Throbbled. Needed more.

“I-I do?” I laughed. I wasn’t wearing perfume or anything. I was pretty basic when it came to cosmetics, which made it even crazier that he was feeling me up instead of one of the pretty coeds at the bar.

“So good.” He nipped my neck as his fingers worked behind me to undo the clasp on my bra. “Good enough to eat.”

“Oh God,” I moaned, looping my arms around his neck as he lowered his head to flick his tongue over my right nipple.

I couldn’t believe this was happening. It was straight out of a fantasy reel. This was lady-porn right here. Hot cowboy with muscles for miles, who wanted to fuck a the nerdy scientist.

I tugged at the opening of his shirt, satisfied when I popped one of the snaps. Tugging harder, I opened it to his waist, and feasted my eyes on the sight of his sculpted chest. He was the definition of brawny, with a barrel chest tanned bronze and dusted with golden hair. I wanted to taste him, too.

He sucked a nipple into his mouth at the same time as he unbuttoned my jeans.

I helped him, kicking off my ballet flats and shoving my pants down over my hips.

Wade let out an animal-like growl as he dropped to his knees and ripped my panties down my legs.

“Oh my God.” Tremors of excitement ran through me. I’d never done anything like this. Not the random hook-up from a bar—that was new, too—but the level of passion between us was off the charts. I was close to coming, and we’d barely done anything.

I kicked off my pants right before Wade got my panties to my ankles and slipped them off, too. Then he lifted one of my knees and tossed it over his shoulder before he parted me with his tongue.

“Oh!” I wrapped my fingers in his hair as he pressed his mouth against my sex. He licked into me, swirling his tongue over all my sensitive bits, making me moan continuously. I threw my head back.

“Even better than I imagined,” he declared, and I felt the hot fan of his breath... *there*.

“Don’t stop.” I didn’t even sound like myself. My tone was desperate. Needy. And he’d only just licked me. He hadn’t—

“Oh, I don’t plan to stop, sugar. Not until you’re screaming my name.”

I'd been on the brink of doing just that since the first moment he flicked his tongue over my clit. Now he alternated the movement with firm licks, sucking my labia and penetrating me with his tongue.

"More," I sobbed, my head heavy against the wall, my hips pinned by his firm hold.

"You need more, Caitlyn? You want my tongue here?"

"Yes," I panted. "Please."

"Fingers, too?"

"Mmmhmm."

He slid a finger inside me, then two, caressing my inner wall with the tips. The sensation drove me wild. My hips jerked against his mouth, my juices leaking to an embarrassing degree.

"Wade!"

"That's right, sugar. Say my name." He pumped his fingers in and out with ruthless precision. He knew what he was doing, as if he'd had a manual to my pussy and he'd memorized it.

"Wade, oh please. Wade." I was going to die if I didn't come this second. "Please, *oh!*" The tightly wound coil sprang, and my muscles seized around his fingers, pulsing and squeezing as pleasure exploded from my core to every tingling nerve ending in my body. My fingers yanked at his hair, my hips bucked, my toes curled. "Oh my God, yes."

I was pretty sure the earth shook. Definitely the floor of my apartment. My neighbors also knew how talented he was, and I didn't care.

"Wade," I moaned as the aftershocks eased. He was still sucking my clit, his fingers gently stroking inside me. I would have slid down the wall, but he was holding me up. "That was amazing. You're... God, very good at that." I laughed in my delirium.

He sat back and licked his lips, the gloss of my juices coating them. "You are amazing," he said with a slow smile. He adjusted his cock in his jeans.

I flicked my brows at his obvious erection. "Let's take care of you now," I said with my most suggestive smile.

Instead of the *Fuck, yeah!* I was expecting, a pained expression came over Wade's face. "I, uh... I need to take a raincheck on that, sugar."

"What?" My brain couldn't compute. He didn't want me to give him a BJ?

He looked disappointed, but it made no sense. I was right here, ready to unzip those jeans and get busy. To give him the same pleasure he'd just given me.

"I'm sorry," he said, glancing around. It was as if he'd just realized what he'd done, like maybe it had been a bad decision to begin with. "I definitely want to stay, but I... can't. Not tonight. Don't worry, I'll get those gorgeous lips around me soon."

"Um... yeah. Sure. Okay." I seriously didn't understand what was happening. I knew he was into me. Why wouldn't he stay, especially after he'd taken care of my needs?

I tried not to let the disappointment and hurt threatening the edges of my bliss seep in. I'd had the best man-made orgasm of my life. Heck, probably even solo, too.

He lowered my leg from his shoulder, ensured I was stable on my feet, then stood. I watched as he adjusted his cock.

He wasn't unaffected. In fact, based on the thick bulge, he had to be seriously uncomfortable. Then why?

Oh God. It was my pussy. He hadn't liked it. His hard dick was an automatic response. Was that it, or was I insane? When he kissed my forehead and let himself out of my apartment, I didn't know what the hell had happened.





L ANDRY

PRESENT DAY

WHOA.

Just, whoa. Caitlyn Shriver, the pain-in-our-ass scientist, was hot as hell.

Fuck, she was even prettier than Wade had described. Prettier than the pictures I'd seen of her online. A tiny thing, she didn't even reach our shoulders. I caught the strawberry-spice scent of her Wade had described on the soft breeze. One inhale, and that was it.

We were so fucked.

Wade had been right. One hint of her scent, and I knew she was the one. Our mate.

I'd known pairs to find their mate. It happened often enough—my parents included. Still, it hadn't seemed possible for me. But Wade had found her in Granger. Or, better yet, she had found us. Which meant Fate had intervened. If one believed in shit like that. Which, after today, I was inclined to.

And what an ironic bitch she was, too. Fate, that is.

What were the chances that our one true mate would be the very same wolf biologist who was going to put our entire pack at risk with her research? Who'd refused our alpha's orders to stay away?

Gib had left me in charge of the pack while he was gone, a job that shouldn't have been too difficult to manage. Ben had tasked Wade with looking into our sexy scientist. That, too, shouldn't have been too hard to handle.

But Fate sent us a curve-ball.

Just like that—one look, one whiff, and our lives changed. At least I wasn't in this alone. Wade and I stood shoulder to shoulder in the clearing, and had a stare-down with this defiant little firecracker of a woman. The one who could wreak havoc on our peace and safety.

Our female.

She wasn't meek. She was brave, and clearly passionate about her work. Which was all about wolves.

Gib was going to lose his shit when he found out. I was only filling in as alpha, and based on the fact that I'd already let Caitlyn onto our land with a tranq gun and microchips, I was doing a shitty job.

She stared at me with a mixture of arousal and wariness—the perfect combination, in my book. It meant she knew who was in charge. We were. And her mates would give her exactly what she needed.

We'd stated plainly to her that we took a woman together. That we had a mutual desire for her.

"What... what kind of punishment?" she asked, her voice soft. Her cheeks were flushed from her hike, but also from interest. Wade had said we would never harm her. I'd agreed immediately because I'd do anything to keep her safe.

"Oh, I don't know." I sauntered closer to her, taking in the way her nipples poked through her bra and t-shirt, the way her breath rose and fell rapidly in her chest. "I'm thinking something like leaning you against that fence post and smacking your ass... until you're good and ready."

"R-ready for what?"

I glanced at Wade. "Us."

Her pupils dilated, and my dick hardened. She liked the idea. Whether she was a masochist or just liked someone taking control, I didn't know. Yet.

We'd find out before we left this field. She'd know who was in charge. Me.

I watched as her tongue flicked out and licked her lower lip. I stifled a growl. Wade had had a taste of her, and my mouth watered for one of my own.

When he'd returned from Granger two weeks ago, I'd expected him to tell me his mission had been accomplished. Since he was filling in for Ben, he'd been tasked with making sure the nosy scientist was going to leave us alone—not getting on his knees and pleasuring our supposed mate's pussy.

I'd been equally jealous and frustrated because I'd had to wait until she showed up to know if Wade's scenting was accurate. She had to come here, threatening our pack, before I'd discover the truth.

I knew it now.

But what did I do with her? I wasn't the real alpha. Gib was. In his absence, I needed to ensure the pack's safety, and he was relying on me. I had enough dominance in my genes to feel the strength of the role myself. My father had been alpha, and I would take over from Gib if something ever befell him.

But I was now as sure as Wade that Caitlyn was our mate. Which meant sending her away wasn't an option, either. Neither of our wolves would allow her to distance herself.

Gib was going to be pissed when he heard my mate was a huge threat to the entire pack and our way of life. I wanted to run a hand over my face; to sigh. Being an alpha was a pain in the ass.

Instantly, I knew how to play this. We needed to keep her close. Know every move she made out here. Get our eyes on that research, and prevent it from being published.

"You ignored my brother's refusal, and showed up here to trespass," I said, my voice deep with all the frustration I felt.

She lifted her chin in defiance, but her gaze shifted from me to Wade, like I made her nervous. My wolf didn't like her nervousness. Not one bit. I tried to soften my tone.

"After we address your... disobedience," I flicked my brows so she remembered it would involve pleasure, "you may conduct your research on West land."

Wade's head whipped around and he stared at me, wide eyed. He didn't say anything.

A smile spread across Caitlyn's face and she opened her mouth to speak, then thought better of it.

"But there will be rules," I added.

The smile dipped.

I lifted a finger. "Rule one. You will have Wade or myself with you at all times while you are on West land."

She set her hands on her slim hips. "But what if you interfere? What if you scare off a wolf?"

"I assure you," Wade drawled with a smirk, "we know how to be quiet in the wilderness."

He didn't say it, but he didn't trust outsiders. Not after what had happened with his mom. Neither did I. I had to keep my pack safe, no matter how sweet the pussy.

I raised a second finger. "Rule two. You will remain here as our guest while you work. No putting up a tent to camp, no popping onto the land at random locations and times."

I glanced at Wade, who was catching on to my plan. If she wanted her research data, she'd get it while one of us was with her. We could ensure she only tagged true wolves, not shifters. We could get her to stay here with us. At Wade's house. Make sure she wasn't a danger or threat. Know what her research was proving before she published it. In the meantime, we'd win her over and get her used to the idea of being claimed by two wolf shifters. Once she was ours, she'd see she couldn't publish any paper that endangered our kind or our animal cousins.

We'd take care of the problem.

Gib and I lived in the old West homestead our great-great-great-grandparents had built, but he'd be returning soon with his mate and Ben. It was his place to raise a family. It was time for me to move out, especially since I'd be relocating right into a bed with Caitlyn in it.

These rules would also satisfy pack members. They wouldn't be pleased to know a wolf researcher was on our land, but having her monitored at all times by both the temporary alpha and fill-in enforcer should keep them calm. For now. The saying *keep your friends close and your enemies closer* was apt.

She frowned. "I'll stay with you? Every time I'm up here?"

"Every time?" My lips twitched. "How often did you plan on sneaking onto our land?"

She flushed and glanced at the ground. "I'm teaching an undergrad summer school class to... well, pay my rent. My plan was to camp here every weekend until I used up my trackers, or couldn't find any more wolves," she admitted. "All summer, if that's what it takes. During the week, I'd be in Granger, teaching and monitoring."

Wade took his hat off, ran a hand over his dark hair, then set it back on his head. The sun was over the mountains now, and the air was heating fast. "How many trackers do you have?"

"Ten."

"I see. Well, you heard me," I warned. "No camping. It's neither safe nor welcome. You'll stay with us."

Camping in the wilderness held dangers to humans. Bears, even with bear spray, could easily kill, especially if it was a mom with some cubs. People in sleeping bags weren't called *bear burritos* for nothing.

Caitlyn could fall down a ravine and no one would know where she was. Lightning. Mud slides. With every possible scenario I thought of where she could get hurt, I got more and more angry. Yeah, she was staying with us, where she would stay safe.

She looked at me skeptically.

"We said we'd never hurt you, and it's the truth." I offered Wade a glance and he nodded. "We protect what's ours with our lives." To Wade and me, this wasn't a one-off thing. She'd be between us always. Starting right away.

Her dark brows winged up. "What's *yours*?"

*Fuck. Probably too soon for that.* She wasn't a shifter. She had no idea what I meant.

Wade picked up on my mistake, and chuckled to lighten the mood. "He just means if you're with us, you're under our protection. No harm will ever come to you."

It was quite a declaration, but words were empty. She needed action. Starting now.

"Rule number three. You will follow our rules, Caitlyn, or there will be punishment."

Her lips curved into a sultry smile that nearly had me busting out of my pants. "You're into this punishment thing."

Wade and I nodded.

“The way your pupils dilate every time we mention it shows you’re into it too,” I added.

Wade pointed. “Your nipples give you away.”

She glanced down, and crossed her arms over her chest.

“Do you agree?” I asked. Then I waited.

A flush crept up her cheeks once again as she considered. I’d given her more to consider than just access to the wolves. She was also consenting to a spanking. She could say no, and we’d respect that. She was our mate, and we’d figure out what she *did* like. There were lots of ways to get her obedience, in and out of bed.

“I just found out about the rules.” Her brow knit in thought. “Shouldn’t the rules be enforced starting now?”

I couldn’t help but laugh. She wasn’t just smart and cute, but funny too.

“Yes. Starting now. But we’re not leaving this spot until you agree to these terms... and the punishment you earned for trespassing.”

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## CAITLYN

I SERIOUSLY COULDN’T DECIDE if I should turn and run for my life, or rip my clothes off and let these two ravish me.

I was heavily leaning toward the latter.

Especially because Landry had said the magic words. He was going to let me conduct my research.

Or were the magic words, *punishment you’ll enjoy receiving as much as we enjoy giving it?* Because that sure rang my bell.

I never knew it, but that sentence was like catnip to my kinky inner self.

I’d never been spanked by a guy before. It hadn’t been offered and I hadn’t considered asking. The fact that I was eager for it all of a sudden, and from a stranger, from *two* strangers, made it surprisingly more enticing.

Did that make me insane? Or was I so into my research, I’d do something sexual in trade?

I frowned as I considered that. No, I had too much self-respect to *sell* myself for career gain. Sure, I did what egotistical Dr. Andrews said

because he was my boss, and I didn't like how pushy and annoying he was. I didn't get that vibe off of Landry and Wade. In fact, it was the complete opposite. These guys weren't assholes. They weren't making these rules just to be petty, or to show a false sense of dominance. Dr. Andrews used his power to build himself up at others' expense. Like taking the credit for all my research. I was doing the work. Putting in the miles, literally, for the benefit of the wolves. There were days when I didn't think he even cared about the animals.

I wasn't into these guys because of their land ownership. I was into these guys because of their broad shoulders, their big hands, and even bigger...

Yeah, I was just horny, and I had the opportunity to have some fun with two men. Two men who were bossy, but... safe.

I'd remember this when I was eighty.

"Um... okay. I'm in." I rubbed my lips together. I still had no idea what the exact situation was, here, other than that two extremely large and sexy cowboys seemed to want to share me. Enough that they'd been waiting for me.

Landry closed the distance between us, settling his hands on my waist. "Good girl," he murmured, making my pussy clench.

Okay, he wasn't all gruff and stern rules.

"So... are you two a couple?" I looked from Landry to Wade.

Wade shook his head, moving in close as well. "Nope. We just like to share. Meaning we give you all the attention. Double the hands. Double the mouths. Double the dicks. Are you down with that, Caitlyn? Twice the attention you got last time?"

Maybe I wasn't nervous because I'd been with Wade before. I'd trusted my body to him once, and I wanted to do it again. "Always?"

"Always," they confirmed at the same time.

I gripped Landry's forearms because my knees suddenly turned weak. I worked to swallow. "Yep. I'm down." I looked at Wade. "But I'm trying to understand. You didn't, um, let me reciprocate at my apartment. I thought you didn't want me. That..." I blushed and looked away. "That you didn't like my pussy."

At the sound of a rumbling growl, I looked up. Wade moved in closer. "Didn't like? Woman, you need a spanking for even thinking badly about yourself. You have the sweetest, wettest, most perfect pussy."

I flushed again for a completely different reason. “Oh. Then why?” I glanced between them. “Because you were waiting for Landry?”

“That’s right. I gave you pleasure, but I wasn’t taking any until we had you between us. Enough questions.” Wade’s grin was feral. “Time for your punishment.”

They walked me backward several feet, then Landry turned me around and carefully removed my backpack. “Hands on the fence, sugar,” he ordered.

Wade stepped forward. “Wait. It might have splinters.” He tugged his shirt off over his head and draped it over the weathered wood. I tried not to whimper at the sight of his bare chest. There was a smattering of dark hair between his flat nipples. It tapered down to his chiseled abs, and formed a line that disappeared beneath his jeans.

“Um... okay.” I placed my hands on top of the shirt, my fingers wrapping around the post.

“Ass out, sugar.” Landry’s rumble held warmth and satisfaction, like he couldn’t wait to punish me.

For a moment, I didn’t move, my brain and my desire not in sync. But these men had had the opportunity to hurt me if they’d wanted to. They wouldn’t do it now.

I relaxed into the pose, giving over to what I truly wanted to try, hollowing my lower back and pushing my butt out in their direction. Landry’s hand slid down my spine, wrapped around my waist, and unclipped the bear spray, setting in at my feet. His palm cupped my left ass cheek through my jeans, stroked it, then left it. His hand slapped down with a muffled crack.

I startled, but it wasn’t all that hard of a swat. I felt the sting, but it quickly morphed into heat.

Wade then smacked my right.

“Ow!” I laughed because his strike hurt. It was also ridiculous and hot. They were right: double the hands.

“She likes it,” Wade said to Landry, who only made a sound deep in his chest as response.

Landry landed another spank. Wade followed suit.

Damn. I never thought getting spanked could be so sexy, but I was wetter than a running faucet, and my excitement grew with each slap that



landed. As my skin began to tingle with heat, my core turned molten. I wiggled my hips, trying to seek relief.

With some silent agreement, they picked up speed, and I started to shift as the burn grew hotter.

I panted as my temperature rose everywhere. We were alone out in the Wyoming wilderness. I could only imagine what we looked like, which only made me hotter.

Two big alpha hotties spanking me. In the wild. We were wild. And that was... scary.

"Ow," I said, meaning it now that they'd ensured I was with them. "Jeez, are you done? Wasn't there supposed to be a pleasure part?"

Both men immediately stopped at my protest, relieving the niggling worry I had that I'd made a mistake. Landry stepped into my side and massaged the cheek he'd been smacking, while slipping his other hand between my legs from the front. "This kind of pleasure?" he rumbled against my ear.

I couldn't help the wanton moan that slipped from my lips. "Th-that's a start," I managed, liking the feel of his palm through my jeans.

"Wait until you taste her," Wade said. Landry pressed the seam of my jeans against my clit, which only set me off because until this point, they'd only made contact with my butt.

Oh. My. God. How did I get so lucky? How did I like this? How was I so close to coming?

"Yes, please," I begged. I'd come this far. They hadn't hurt me. My butt stung, but they'd spanked me because they knew somehow I'd like it. That it would morph into needy pleasure.

Now I saw why having two men focus on me was better than one.

Landry shifted to stand directly behind me, and reached around to unbutton my jeans. Things went in slow motion as he hooked his thumbs in my waistband and dragged them down my hips. Was I really doing this? Getting naked? It was one thing to have my jean-clad butt spanked out in the wild with two strangers, but taking my pants off? Did they truly want to do dirty, unspeakable things to me? Had I been wrong about my attractiveness for the past two weeks? Had Wade truly been waiting for me?

Um, yes. Yes, I was. And, it seemed, yes, they had.

No one was around. We were on private land. Landry's private land. I could scream my pleasure and it would only catch on the wind. It sounded

so primitive that I gushed even more. I was so wet. So ready for whatever they had planned.

We were in new territory for me, and I was content to let them lead. Not that I had much choice if I thought otherwise. Not with these two.

Landry turned me to face him, picked me up by the waist, grabbed Wade's t-shirt, tossed it on a nearby boulder, and draped me over the hard surface. Wade gracefully vaulted over the large rock to stand behind me as Landry tugged my jeans and panties off my legs while I toed off my hiking boots.

"I've got you, sugar," Wade murmured in my ear, his large chest providing a backrest for me to lean against. He slid his hands under my shirt, coasting up my bare sides. I squirmed on this granite altar, excitement warring with nerves. Wade's mouth found my neck and he sucked a little, then flicked his tongue over my earlobe. I picked up his scent, recognized the feel of his hands.

He was a familiar comfort while we were doing all these new things.

I let out a breathy laugh. Landry hooked his hands behind my knees and tipped me back, more into Wade's arms. Wade wrapped one snugly around my waist to hold me secure while his other hand dipped inside my bra. I lost track of the sensations he created by cupping and squeezing my breast because Landry dropped to his knees in the tall grass, flicked off his Stetson, leaned forward, and licked into me.

"Oh!" One of my legs kicked out in the shock of pleasure. I stared up at the clear sky, a bird catching an updraft above me.

Wade somehow understood his touch had to match the intensity of Landry's because he pinched my nipple, hard. I writhed and squirmed. The sting in my butt mixed with the sharp bite of pain and the wet slide of Landry's tongue.

"Oh!" I repeated. It seemed to be the only syllable I was capable of uttering. I could hardly track all the pleasure being given to me. Landry was just as capable with his tongue as Wade was, making me jerk and squirm and shiver with every flick, every suck, every lap against all my most sensitive bits.

Wade's treatment of my breast grew rough, each squeeze harder. His breath was hot against my neck as he nipped it.

"You were so right," Landry said to Wade, lifting his head. His mouth glistened with my arousal. I could have sworn his eyes were brown before,

but now they had a green glint to them, the way an animal's eyes looked in the night. "I could eat this pussy all day."

"Right?" Wade replied. "Pure heaven."

This couldn't be real. This scene was straight out of a fantasy. I was sure it was a porno. Lost scientist meets two ravenous mountain men, and gets herself punished and pleased.

This was real. It wasn't make believe. It was hot as hell, and these men had me at their mercy, and were giving me all their attention. Besides Wade's shirt being used as protection against the rough surface, they were fully clothed.

My inner thighs quivered as I gulped the fresh mountain air. Wade kept working my nipples as Landry sucked my clit. My pussy clenched on air.

"She takes her punishment well." Wade's voice held laughter.

"I do," I agreed breathlessly. If *this* was punishment, I never wanted it to stop. And I was going to be bad all the time. "I really do."

Wade's chuckle made his chest rumble beneath my head.

And then I couldn't take any more. The pleasure was too much, the sensations too overwhelming. My toes curled as I wrapped my legs around Landry's shoulders. I cried out, making a flock of birds take off from the pine trees. My internal muscles squeezed, my belly tightened, and I came with another cry loud enough to echo off the stand of boulders to our right.

"That's it, sugar," Wade encouraged, his touch gentling on my breast, his lips nuzzling my neck.

Landry lifted his head and licked his lips with satisfaction. His eyes were the most beautiful shade of green. "*Ours*," he declared, looking at Wade.

"Uh huh," Wade agreed.

A tingle ran up my spine. I had no idea what they were talking about, but it seemed to mean something to my body. As if on some level, I understood I'd just been claimed. If that meant I got orgasms like that, I didn't think it would be too bad. Right?



## W ADE

I MET Landry's wolf-eyed gaze, and nodded.

Caitlyn was definitely ours. I had no doubt. I kept my nose at her neck and breathed her sweet scent in deeply. My dick was so hard... had been since I first saw her.

Fuck, she was more beautiful than I remembered. I'd waited two weeks—two *long* weeks—for her to show up. I'd barely thought of anything but her in all that time. I was the worst enforcer ever. I'd gone to Granger, taken one look at Caitlyn, and completely forgotten the mission.

I'd been tasked to stop Caitlyn from coming onto pack land, but I'd done absolutely nothing to discourage her. In fact, she'd confessed her plan to come despite Gib's refusal. All I'd done was pay for her meal and make her scream on my tongue.

Then, I'd told myself it had just been for fun. I'd been screwing around—something I hadn't done without Landry before. Her scent had taunted me. My wolf had stirred and pushed me to satisfy her. Once I'd tasted her, I understood why I'd succumbed to temptation.

*She tasted like she was mine.*

And by mine, I meant mine and Landry's. Because our pack's species mated in pairs, and Landry was my scent-match. His scent almost exactly

matched mine, meaning we would smell identical to our mate. Two males for every female. A quirk of our DNA—evolution's rapid solution to a dwindling female population who could still shift. Or a quirk of Fate, if one chose to believe in that fickle mistress. Neither science nor Fate could explain why our mate would be a human, though.

Or why it would be a pint-sized wolf biologist hell-bent on tagging the wolves on our pack land. Which meant I was a shit enforcer, an asshole to the entire pack, and yeah, a mate dying to claim what was ours.

Back in her apartment, as she'd come all over my face and fingers, I'd had to get out of there before I claimed her all on my own. The need had been so strong. That wouldn't have been cool, because Landry had to be in on it. I'd needed his confirmation that I was right.

Caitlyn Shriver was ours.

In the fourteen days since, I'd been confident that she was our mate. But waiting had been near impossible. I'd told Landry all about her. Every detail I had etched in my brain. The short time with her had changed me. The monthly full moon pack run had been different. I hadn't wanted to fuck a female shifter, to take the edge off. None held any interest to me or my wolf. Or my dick. Because of that, Landry hadn't taken a female either. So I'd spent the time before the twelfth and Caitlyn's arrival stuck with a cranky temporary alpha. I hadn't kept her away, and was impatient because I'd ensured when she'd show up. When he'd find out I'd been right.

And fuck, I'd been right.

Now she was in my arms, where she belonged. Between me and Landry. She'd agreed to stay at my cabin. With us.

Landry was in trouble with her too. He'd done the same as me, allowed her to come to pack land instead of pushing her away. He'd even gone as far as forcing her to stay. My wolf was thrilled, but it was a danger having her on Two Marks land. Her research was a danger to shifters and our animal cousins alike. We had to make her ours, in all ways, and soon. Keep that research from getting published.

She had to be all in or all out. Right now, she might be in our arms, but she was neither of those things.

Even with my thoughts warring, the sense of perfection rang through my bones like a bell. She was here, she was ours. She was satisfied by her men.

Except, judging by the way she was adjusting her bra, she was suddenly turning self-conscious.

“Let’s get your clothes back on, sugar.”

“Don’t you want to fuck me... or um, something else?”

Ah, this was a repeat of what had happened at her apartment, but with two men.

“We can make sure we all get our happy ending somewhere a little more comfortable.” We’d gone down on her and gotten nothing in return. Neither of us had taken our pants off. Her insecurities were man-made. Literally.

They were unfounded, but we would prove her wrong. Just not in a meadow over a boulder.

“Trust me, what we have planned takes time... and a big bed,” I added, and Landry nodded, adjusting himself. I knew how he felt. I’d have a zipper print in my dick.

I straightened her bra and t-shirt as Landry picked up her panties and jeans.

Now that it was over, Caitlyn seemed a little nervous. Of course she was unsure. She was a human. She couldn’t scent us. Couldn’t be drawn to us like a compass to north. She couldn’t be content in her submission that it was forever.

She had no idea what Landry had meant when he said she was ours. It probably freaked her out. Or maybe she was embarrassed about what we’d just done. She didn’t strike me as the most hedonistic of women. I had a feeling our sexy scientist was up in her head most of the time.

Oh, we’d gotten her out of it, if her screams were any indication, but only for a short time.

Knowing I needed to distract her, to get her back in her comfort zone, I brought the conversation back to wolves. And talking about how we planned to fuck her wasn’t going to help either of our cases of blue balls.

“So you want to get trackers in the area wolves, huh?” I asked.

“Um, yeah.” She attempted to hop down from the boulder, making Landry lunge to catch her waist and lower her gently down. She was still in her socks—her hiking boots kicked off during our encounter.

“And you have reason to believe you’ll find them up here?”

A little frown showed up between her brows, like she suspected I was about to claim she was wrong. “There have been documented sightings of

the grey wolf in these parts,” she said, a note of defensiveness to her voice. She sat on the soft pine needles to put on her boots.

“There’s a pack up here, for sure,” I agreed. *Two packs, actually—one animal, one shifter.* “Several of the females just had pups. Feels like a bit of a violation to lead you to them, though.”

Caitlyn’s eyes lit up. “So you’ve seen them? You know there are pups?”

Landry was watching Caitlyn with open fascination—the same feeling soaking through me. “We know where to find them,” he offered. “But can you tell us a little more about your plans with them?”

Caitlyn stood, and dusted the pine needles off her butt. She put her hands on her hips. “I am a *wolf biologist*,” she said, as if that explained everything. “My sole purpose is to protect the natural ecosystem and the wolves’ place in it. All I’m doing is shooting them with a tranquilizer so I can get close enough to inject a chip into the scruff of their neck that will allow me to track them from my office back in Granger. It doesn’t hurt or harm the wolves.”

When neither of us responded, she dropped her defensive stance. “I wouldn’t disturb a mother and her pups,” she conceded. “But I would give anything to see them.”

Landry’s lips curved. “*Anything*, sugar?”

She flushed, glancing at the bulge of his cock in his jeans. When she licked her lips, both of us growled. “I mean, I do want to reciprocate... with both of you.” She stole a glance at me, too.

“Oh, we’re counting on it.” Landry’s grin was wicked. “I would’ve put you on your knees out here, but I wasn’t sure if the pine needles were soft enough to cushion them.”

Her cheeks turned a deeper shade of pink.

“Like I said, big plans, big bed.” I picked up her backpack and slung it over one shoulder. “Come on, Caitlyn. We’ll make your dreams come true.”

“Um... you already have,” she mumbled.

I wanted to think it was because she now belonged to us, but I had a feeling she meant that we were giving her access to the wolves. I respected her passion in her work, but I would get her to be just as passionate about us. More passionate. Passionate enough to leave her research unpublished.

Landry and I flanked Caitlyn as we headed toward my cabin. We’d need my truck to get out to the area where the wolves—the *canis lupus* variety, not *hominum lupus*, or shifters—roamed. Wolves were territorial, and the

wolf dogs respected our territory, staying to the outskirts. Nowhere near here. If we hadn't met her, she'd have had to walk miles from our current location.

In the old days, wolves lived among shifter packs, much the way dogs live with humans. But since their return from near extinction, the shifter communities have not allowed wolf dogs to mingle, as it changes their natural migration and hunting practices.

I wanted to tell Caitlyn all of this now because I knew it would make her little wolf biologist heart race, but it was too soon.

Somehow, we'd have to prepare her for the shock of what we were. But she wasn't ready yet.

"So," she said, looking from me to Landry as we cut through the open field. While she'd been on a trail before, we weren't on one now. "You told me you lived in the area, but do you both live on this land?"

"Yes," I said. "All my life. The Wests own this entire swath of land, but there are houses all up in here. A small community."

She gazed at Landry speculatively. "So your family are land developers?"

Landry chuckled and adjusted his cowboy hat. "Nope. Silver miners, originally. That's how they came to own almost the entire mountain. Mining's long past. These days, the main business for the family and the entire community is the West Springs Distillery."

"Is that where you work?" she asked me.

"Yes. I'm their IT specialist."

She stopped then, when we turned to check on her, she started up again. "You are?"

I frowned. "Does that surprise you?"

"Well, yes," she admitted, then pointed to my Stetson. "You look more like a rancher or a cowboy."

"Don't say rancher," Landry advised. "That's an insult. We are not friendly with those around here. Mainly because they want to take out our wolves."

Caitlyn peered up at Landry. "You're protective of them."

"Yes, ma'am." Landry shot her one of his charming West smiles. "We're custodians of this land. We protect everything and everyone on it. Including the wolves."

"So when you turned me down, you were sheltering them?"



Landry shrugged. "I know your studies are important to you. But we don't like anyone messing with our wildlife. Also, from what I heard, a couple wolves with trackers were found killed last fall."

A growl rumbled in my chest as I thought of my mother. Caitlyn looked up at me, and I took a deep breath to relax. She hadn't pulled the trigger.

But would keeping her here and helping her do her job lead to other wolves dying?

Caitlyn frowned and stopped again. "Killed how?"

"Shot," I offered bluntly. "Likely by ranchers. They are notorious for wanting to thin the packs while saying they were doing it to save their livestock."

She gave me a wide-eyed stare, then her gaze narrowed. "You can't think there's any relationship between the trackers and ranchers shooting the wolves. No one has access to my tracking data but my research team." She sounded insulted.

I glanced at Landry. I wanted to believe her. She was our mate, after all, which made my inner wolf snarl. But we had to protect our pack, and all the wolves. I knew the consequences of not doing so all too painfully.

Which was why we needed to stick to Caitlyn like glue.



## C AITLYN

WADE'S CABIN was the kind of 'little cabin in the woods' that made me sigh dreamily.

Although it wasn't all that little.

We'd walked there to get his truck, but he invited me in to get a drink before we headed out to hunt wolves.

"My grandfathers built this cabin for their mate—I mean, wife—back in the 1950's," Wade explained.

"Grandfathers? As in plural?" I asked.

The men glanced at each other.

"Yep. There's a history of sharing women up here in West Springs, dating back to the first settlers." Landry flashed me a bad-boy grin and adjusted his hat like he was proud of this heritage. "Probably had something to do with women being outnumbered by men, ten to one. As a result, threesomes became oddly normalized here. Wade had two grandfathers and one grandmother."

"Just two parents, though." Wade winked at me.

"That is crazy." I remembered how they'd taken me over that boulder. I wasn't opposed to the concept. I definitely hadn't considered it before now, but I didn't see anything wrong with it. "I'm not naive enough to think there

aren't such things as ménage, but it's always in the context of sex. Only sex."

Landry shook his head. "Sex, yes, but these are solid relationships, spending a lifetime together. Raising a family. It somehow works." He shrugged. "Are your parents in Granger?"

"No, they live in Connecticut."

"You are far from home," Wade added.

"My parents have plans for me that don't include wolves. They think I'm wasting my time, and have made it very well known."

Maybe it was the shift in my voice, but they caught on to my bitterness.

I sighed and tried to make them understand. "They love me, but they want what they think is best for me. I don't think they are intentionally mean, but they hurt my feelings by not valuing my dreams."

"They are disrespectful."

I shrugged at Landry's observation.

"I like your concept. Close family ties, a common good to protect your land and community."

"When we said we wanted you between us, we meant it," Wade said.

I believed him. I wondered why it didn't bother me, their alternate lifestyle. Oh yeah, because I'd been between them and it had been amazing. And the idea of forever with these two wasn't as scary as it perhaps should be.

Forever? Now I was the one who was crazy. Right? Were they looking for something long term, or was this a *keep the scientist satisfied while she's here* scenario? They'd done a good job of doing that so far. Knowing their beliefs in being with a woman, it felt... better. I didn't question as much.

I blinked and steered my mind away from the outdoor sexy times. Made of rough-hewn logs, the place wasn't a mansion, but it was large for one man. A pellet stove sat in one corner of the large living room, and the huge picture windows looked out over the pine trees and a well-established vegetable garden.

To complete the idyllic scene, a babbling brook ran along one side, with the sweetest little footbridge spanning it.

I stood at the window, imagining what it would be like to have this as my view every day. To live surrounded by nature. No other people. No traffic or street noise. Nothing but the wind through the trees. "Are those

raspberry bushes?” I asked, pointing to a row of prickly plants at the edge of the clearing.

“Yep. And blackberry. Those were my grandmother’s. She baked the best pies,” Wade said.

I turned, leaned against the sink. “This is an incredible property. But I’m totally confused about why your grandfathers would build a house on property that didn’t belong to him? I mean... them. The Wests own this land, right?”

Wade flicked a glance at Landry, and scrubbed a hand across his face. “Well, back then, it was a tiny mountain town where everyone was related in one way or another,” he said. “Property was pretty much considered communal. It may say on paper that Gibson West owns all of this, but there is no scenario where he’d ever try to take possession of someone else’s house.”

Huh. I didn’t get it, but whatever. Absently, I moved out of the kitchen, which was a little outdated, but quaint with the butcher block island and farmer’s sink. I ran my hand along the back of his leather couch, peeked in the bathroom and couldn’t miss the huge shower, then stood in the bedroom doorway.

“You said Gibson’s your brother?” I asked Landry.

“That’s right,” he confirmed.

I heard his answer, but was distracted. The room had a vaulted ceiling, wood plank floors with a soft area rug, but it was the oversized bed which took up most of the space. I heated, thinking of the three of us in it. We would all fit. Better than the boulder.

I bit my lip, knowing the guys must have blue balls after earlier up in the meadow.

They were quiet, and I startled when Wade put his hand on my shoulder. “Debating?”

“What?” I asked breathlessly. I’d seen his bare chest. It was spectacular. I was eager to see more. But—

“You’re debating whether to fuck us or find those wolves, aren’t you?”

Landry moved to stand next to him. They were so big, I had to tip my chin back. My butt tingled still from the spanking, and my clit pulsed, eager for more.

“I-I...”

Landry laughed. “It either shows how into your research you are, or you doubt our abilities as lovers.”

I shook my head, afraid I’d insulted him. “No, it’s not—”

Landry stroked my hair back. “I’m kidding. Let’s go find your wolves. Then we can play.” He looked to Wade, who nodded.

“Yeah, when we get you in my bed, we don’t want you thinking about anything but us.”

*Oh my.*

Landry stepped back, then went to grab my backpack. “Ready?”

I took a deep breath, let it out. Was I making the right choice? Was leaving a cabin in the woods with two virile men who wanted to fuck me a stupid move?

My pussy said yes, but my mind said no.

Gah! My mind won, since they had said we’d do both. Wolves first, sex second. I brushed my hands over the front of my jeans. “Yes.”

Landry nodded. “Good. We’ll drive up to the ridge, then get out and hike for a while to see if we can spot any signs of wolves.”

We climbed into the cab of Wade’s truck. “It’s a Caitlyn sandwich.” Wade winked as he slid behind the wheel. His thigh pressed against mine on one side, Landry’s on the other.

My cheeks grew warm as my imagination took flight, picturing the other kinds of sandwiches we might make. An Eiffel Tower, maybe? When I was student teaching in Montana, I overheard a couple of very rude undergraduate boys saying they’d like to get me in an Eiffel Tower. I’d had to Google it to figure out what they’d meant. I hadn’t liked the idea with them, but with these two?

A low rumble sounded from Landry’s chest. “Whatever you’re thinking about, you’d better stop, or we’re going to cut this wolf-hunting expedition short and take you back to Wade’s bedroom.”

I choked on my breath. “How did you know what I was thinking?” I demanded.

Both men chuckled, but didn’t answer.

As we drove along the back road, I steered my mind away from sexy times and over to what Landry had said about wolves with trackers being killed. It was true, I had lost a couple of the wolves I’d been tracking last year, but I didn’t know why or how. Trackers could go dead. Animals could die of natural causes. There were areas of Wyoming where wolves were

considered trophy game animals and could be hunted with a license, but the area Landry had mentioned wasn't one of them.

It bothered me that any wolves had been killed. The fact that they had trackers was probably a coincidence, but I didn't like it. Especially if their deaths were the result of ranchers who didn't want to learn about the animals' beauty and value to the American West.

Maybe that was why there were all the frequent calls about wolves to the various wildlife agencies. The ranchers were trying to entice the scientific community into proving there were too many by calling in every single sighting. Then again, Landry and Wade agreed that there were wolves in the area—even taking me now to go find some—so the sightings were probably real.

Tracking wolves wasn't easy. It took a lot of patience, and the ability to put oneself in the predator's shoes... er, paws. Plus, I had to learn to shoot a gun—just a tranq gun, of course—which was not a skill I'd ever thought I'd need back when I was getting that undergraduate biology degree. I had to admit, I was glad the guys were with me. The direction we were headed was nowhere near where they'd found me. I'd have spent my entire day searching in the wrong place.

And, if there were crazy people out shooting, my tranq gun wasn't going to offer any protection. The rifle on the rack in the back window behind our heads was a better option. So were two big, brawny guys.

Wade pulled the truck off the side of the road. I looked around. There was no parking lot, not even a hint that someone had ever stopped here before. Thick pines blocked the view on both sides.

"We're... here?" I asked.

Wade shut off the engine and opened his door. After he climbed out, he turned back and undid my seatbelt. Landry got out of the passenger side and held out his hand to me.

Wade pointed down the road. "There's a stream there. We'll follow it north, and there's a big clearing about a quarter mile away. I expect we might find them up there."

A quarter mile? Eagerness coursed through me and I went to the back of his pickup, but Landry beat me to my backpack. After he slung it over a shoulder, he took my hand again, and we followed Wade to the stream. We moved in single file after that. I kept my eyes on the ground in front of me since we were meandering along the water, not any real path.

After a few minutes, I was sweating, even shaded beneath the thick canopy. Just when I was about to ask them to stop to grab a drink from our water bottles, Wade put his hand out. Landry and I stilled beside him, and looked where he pointed.

I couldn't help but gasp at the sight. The clearing he'd mentioned was in front of us, but we were tucked back in the trees still. There, sunning themselves, were two wolves. Thick gray fur, perked up ears. I tore my gaze away from them and took in the environment. A sunny day. Mid-eighties. We were at around seven thousand feet. The clearing was about two acres in size, surrounded by a forest of lodgepole and ponderosa pines. There was fresh water and access to food such as squirrels, voles, rabbits, and other smaller creatures. I estimated we were four miles from West Springs, but still on West land.

These animals were protected here, not only by laws, but by Wade and Landry. No one bothered them... except me.

Landry held my tranq gun and I reached for it, but he shook his head and aimed himself. He frowned as he fired. The feminist in me wanted to protest but then he quickly and efficiently aimed and tranqed one, then the other.

"All right, then," I said as both wolves went limp.

Landry held up a hand, like this was his operation and he was in charge, which I supposed he was. After a moment of watching the wolves, he nodded. "Let's go."

I didn't love the grim expression on his face, like it pained him to have shot the animals.

"It's a fast-acting tranquilizer but it only lasts an hour or so," I assured him. "They won't even know what happened."

"I'm not sure that's true," he countered as he stalked forward on long legs. He didn't seem happy about what he'd just done, or the fact that I was going to chip them, even though they'd been the one to guide me there.

I ran past him and dropped to my knees beside the two drugged wolves. I pulled out my phone to record the details.

"Male, grey wolf. Approximately eighty-five pounds." I inspected him, gently moving his limbs to check for disease or wounds or identifying marks. "Subject appears healthy, no visible scars. White markings on the forehead and the right front paw."

Wade dropped my pack by my side and I immediately got to work, pulling out the bag of tracking chips and reading the number off one of them into my phone recorder. I inserted the microchip, which was about the size of a grain of rice, into the end of a syringe, then injected it between the beautiful male's shoulder blades. Then I drew a vial of blood for genetic testing.

I repeated the entire procedure with the second wolf, which was the biggest I'd ever tagged. "Male, grey wolf, approximately one hundred and five pounds." Once the necessary business was complete, I stroked the second wolf's fur. "Look at you," I crooned. "Aren't you gorgeous? I'll bet you're the alpha."

"He is," Landry said softly.

I twisted my neck to peer up at him. He stood a few feet off, a troubled look still on his face. "How do you know?"

Landry shrugged.

Wade answered. "We've seen him before."

I simply stared. There was something terribly appealing about men who respected wolves as much as I did. I'd never met guys like this before—mountain men who seemed to coexist with nature rather than dominate it. Even if the whole punishment-pleasure thing hadn't happened earlier, these two would have me swooning.

I stroked the first wolf. "You're beautiful, too," I told him. "Thank you for participating in my study. I'm just going to be tracking your whereabouts from now on, so I can learn more about your territorial habits."

"Do you always thank them?" Wade asked.

"Yes." I ducked my head. "You know they say people can still hear things on a subconscious level when they're under anesthesia. Some people ask their doctors to give them hypnotic suggestions while they're under. So I figure thanking them and explaining how they're contributing to science can't hurt." I flushed because I knew it might sound a little looney. "I name them, too. Not for the study, but for me. White Paw, and Comet." Yes, I liked those names for these two.

"That's... very sweet," Wade observed. "Isn't it, Landry?"

Landry's jaw was clenched and his muscles were taut. Ever since he'd fired the tranq gun, he'd been upset. Angry. I just didn't understand why.





## L ANDRY

“THIS IS A BIG FUCKING PROBLEM,” I muttered, keeping my voice to a whisper. Wade could hear me loud and clear, but I had to ensure Caitlyn didn’t.

We’d finished with the two wolves, then moved on, taking Caitlyn to stand in a grove of trees near the cliffs which the she-wolves used as dens to birth their pups. Once again, we’d parked and walked in, but stayed far away so we didn’t disturb this group. I’d given Caitlyn binoculars which Wade kept stored in his glove box. She was sprawled over a boulder, her arms propped, and watching the animals.

“We’ve got to keep her from publishing,” he replied. “We just put trackers in two wolves. What the fuck is wrong with us?”

I glanced at him, then back at our mate, thinking of how she’d been sprawled over a different boulder earlier. My mouth watered, remembering her taste.

Fuck. This was a nightmare.

“I know. But my wolf is snarling at me to not only bite and claim her, but to make her happy. That’s why I did the two. *Only* two.”

I had no idea yet how we were going to keep her from doing the others, besides leading her through the woods everywhere *but* where the wolves were.

“Which means she publishes,” he finished.

I nodded. The sounds of the pups’ playful yips carried on the wind, even from a hundred yards away. She’d already tagged a few wolves before we’d met her and now two more. She was going to publish no matter what. It sounded as if she had a pushy boss and had to prove herself to disapproving parents. I thought of my own—all three valued my dreams and desires, didn’t push their own expectations onto Gib or myself. I had to wonder if this was why she was so driven.

Which meant she was going to publish her findings.

And that meant we had to keep her from doing it, just like Wade had said.

I turned away from Caitlyn, not able to look at her beauty as we spoke about how we had to fuck with her hard work.

“Can you believe we’re mated to a female whose sole goal is to spotlight wolves?” Wade asked.

I laughed, but it was far from funny. I took off my hat, ran my hand through my hair. “The pack’s going to lose their shit when they find out their acting alpha tranqed and tagged two of our own.”

When I’d made the rules with Caitlyn, I’d thought it would solve all our problems. Get her what she wanted from a few wolves, then somehow later figure out how to keep her from publishing her findings. But when I’d had to shoot, then subdue a wolf because of my fucking mate, I’d been pissed. It was in my nature to fight everything that I’d done. But it was also in my nature to satisfy my mate.

Even now, with her safely watching the wolf pups, I was at odds.

“I want to rip my hair out,” Wade admitted, clearly as unsettled as I.

My cell vibrated in my pocket. I pulled it out, read the display.

Fuck. It was Gib.

I didn’t even know how I had cell service out here. I showed the screen to Wade, who gave a small growl in response.

“Hey, bro,” I answered softly, guilt creeping up the back of my neck. Gib had left me in charge of the pack and I’d already fucked up the job. Let a wolf biologist onto the land. Tranqed two wolves for her. Led her directly to pups.

“John Randolph said there’s a strange car parked at the Black Pass lookout.” Gib wasted no time with pleasantries.

Fuck. He meant Caitlyn’s car. How he recognized her car as ‘strange’ when there were hikers from all over accessing that trailhead, I had no idea. Randolph was one of the shifters who also worked for the forest service. It was his job to monitor the federal land surrounding the Two Marks territory. It was a great arrangement, except for right now.

Maybe he’d taken the trail and followed her scent when it veered off. In all other times, I’d call him diligent in his job. In this instance, it was downright nosy.

“I am well aware.” I tried to keep the defensiveness out of my tone.

“Well, who does it belong to?” he asked.

Dammit. I’d had no intention of telling Gib any of this saga until he got back and I had it well resolved. Now he was asking me about it point-blank, and I couldn’t even explain with Caitlyn nearby. Hell, I couldn’t explain without Gib losing his shit. I didn’t doubt he’d drive back from Montana right away and put an end to all of this.

That made my wolf snap and snarl, because no one fucked with my mate.

“I can’t talk now,” I said, even though I knew it would piss him off.

“What? Where the fuck are you?”

As if I was going to tell him we were observing a wolf biologist studying pups in the wild. Oh, and yeah, she was our mate.

Not happening.

“Dealing with it. I’ll call you back.” I ended the call without waiting for a response. Even after we got things all worked out and our marks on Caitlyn’s neck, Gib would probably punch me in the nose when he got back, but I could take it.

“Everything okay?”

I spun on my heel, not even realizing Caitlyn had approached. So much for wolf-fucking hearing. I’d been so in my head, so involved in what Gib was going to do, I hadn’t even noticed.

“That was my brother,” I explained. Sticking as close to the truth as possible was probably my best option. “One of our neighbors reported your car at the trailhead near our property, and wanted to make sure there weren’t any trespassers.”

Caitlyn’s brows dipped.

“But we already found you.” I attempted a grin and a wink, but she continued frowning. My wolf didn’t like that.

“And you’re *dealing* with me?” She made air quotes with her fingers around the word *dealing*.

Shit, how much had she overheard? I glanced at Wade, who shrugged.

“Well, I thought we *had* dealt with you,” I wagged my brows, “but I’d be happy to have a second go-round if you’re into it.”

She still didn’t relax.

“This is my brother’s land. Well, it’s mine, too, but since he’s older, he feels... in charge.”

That sounded fucking awful, but it was the truth.

“I just didn’t feel like explaining that we’d invited a wolf biologist onto the property. I told you how touchy we are about people messing with the wildlife.”

She bit her lip and looked up at us through her lashes.

“Is there... is there something you guys are hiding up here?” Caitlyn’s voice shook a little as she asked the question.

Fuck! I shot a glance past her at Wade. Should we tell her? Right now?

His eyes were wide and he gave a quick, alarmed shake of his head.

Double-fuck.

“No, sugar.” I hated lying to her. With all my heart. My wolf snarled at me for keeping the truth from her. The sooner she knew about us, the sooner we’d claim her. The sooner my wolf would bite and mark her. But she’d hate us for the truth. Not because we were shifters, but because she’d learn that we were going to shut down her work.

She started chewing on her thumbnail. “Are you guys... religious? Like a cult or something?”

I snorted, never even considering that as something she’d even imagine. “Definitely not a cult. Nope. We’re just a close-knit community. You might call us backwoods, but there’s nothing sinister here. I promise, sugar.”

Wade pulled her hand from her mouth and held it, sending me a worried glance over the top of her chestnut head. “Have you ever seen wolf pups like this before?” Wade was the master of distraction.

It seemed to work. “Only in captivity at a wolf sanctuary back in undergrad. Never in the wild.” Her face lit up with pleasure, as if she was remembering back.

I had to say, Caitlyn's reverence for the wolves softened some of my misgivings about her research. Still, we had to figure out a way to keep her from publishing her data if it showed a healthy wolf population, because while she was seemingly pro-wolves, her data could be used by others in harmful ways. Gib would rip my throat out. The pack would be pissed. I would do nothing to harm my fellow shifters—but at the expense of my mate?

Fuck, I was in big trouble here. Because while Gib and the pack would be upset, I had to assume Caitlyn would be devastated, and I couldn't think of a way to avoid that. Yet. Hopefully we had enough time to come up with an idea before my brother returned and he handled it his way.



WADE

“YOU’VE GOT to be kidding me,” I muttered as Landry pulled my truck onto the dirt road leading back to my cabin. He’d gotten to the truck first and climbed behind the wheel, and I hadn’t argued. He outranked me in the pack. If he wanted to drive, I had no beef with that.

John Randolph’s Fish and Game vehicle was bouncing down the one-lane road toward us.

I knew Landry was feeling the weight of acting alpha like he’d never felt it before, and in this instance, it was heavily at odds with our need to claim our mate.

It seemed we couldn’t catch a break.

Landry drove off on the side of the road to make room for John to pass.

Of course, he didn’t. John pulled up alongside and rolled down his window, gaping at Caitlyn sitting between the two of us like a driver taking in a car accident on the side of the road.

Landry tipped his hat but didn’t roll down his window, indicating he had no wish to start a conversation, but John didn’t pull forward.

Of course he didn’t.

“Fuck,” Landry muttered and gave in, rolling down his window, too.

“That’s the guy who reported your car to my brother,” I murmured to Caitlyn, because this could get awkward, fast.

John leaned his arm on the car door and craned his neck out, making no secret of his perusal of our female.

A low growl started up in my throat, which wasn’t like me. I wasn’t alpha. I wasn’t anywhere near alpha of the pack. But it seemed I was willing to tussle with any male looking at my unmarked mate.

Landry shot me a warning look and I managed to stifle the sound, but not before Caitlyn turned to me, wide-eyed.

“Sorry.” I cleared my throat. “Allergies.”

“How’s it going?” John started the conversation in the slow, small-town way of many conversations with old-timers in the pack.

I could sense Landry’s impatience.

“What’s up?” he snapped.

“I saw a strange car parked—”

Landry nodded. “Yep. I already talked to Gib about it. It belongs to Caitlyn, here. She’s our guest.”

Caitlyn lifted a hand in a friendly wave, leaning forward to send John a smile.

I had to clear the growl from my throat again.

“Oh?” John wouldn’t take the hint and move the fuck on. Another drawback of small-town pack life. Everyone’s business was everyone’s business. Or so they thought.

“Yeah. She’s a wolf biologist,” Landry admitted.

Fuck. I was hoping we could avoid that little fact, at least for now. But I supposed we’d have to tell the pack sooner or later. Caitlyn was our mate. Our human mate, who knew nothing about shifters, much less the Two Marks species that mated in pairs. We had our hands full just figuring out how to make a human fall in love and want to stay and mate two males. But when her somewhat unfortunate profession was added, it doubled our difficulties. We had to balance a responsibility to our pack and species with the singular urge to claim, keep, and protect our mate.

And it was starting right now. John might not be a busybody, but he certainly spent time flapping his gums. His bushy salt and pepper brows slammed down. “Gibson already told her there’d be no wolf tagging on this property.”

Ugh. Of course Gib had talked to John about it. As a Fish and Game employee, he'd have told John to keep a look out for her at the same time he assigned me to go and sniff around in Granger.

Landry's back stiffened because while it was smart for Gib to ensure everyone was looking out for the pack, it made it seem as if Landry couldn't do his job as alpha.

"I know that," Landry said, his words slow and even. "But *Wade and I* made a different decision."

It took John a moment. He had his mouth open like he was about to continue his argument, when the particular emphasis on the words *Wade and I* must have set in. John should have remembered we were scent-matches.

He looked at the three of us differently now. "You and Wade. Together?"

Good. He was figuring it out.

"That's right."

I couldn't see anything but the back of Landry's head, but John's gaze was locked onto Landry's face, and whatever he read there made him sit back in his truck.

He sighed and looked more resigned than happy for us. "Well, all right. If she's with you, I guess it's safe enough."

"That's right," Landry repeated.

John rolled up his window and pressed the gas, rolling his truck slowly past us. Still, a spray of dirt kicked up.

"Jeez," Caitlyn muttered as Landry pulled back onto the bumpy road. "You guys weren't kidding about people being protective around here."

"Sorry about that," I offered, setting my hand on her thigh and giving it a gentle squeeze. Then I left it there because it felt right. I silently made a vow to make sure the next time she met someone from our community, they would be warm and welcoming. Of course, I had no idea how I was going to ensure that, but it needed to happen.

Having Caitlyn think West Springs was a weird religious cult wasn't going to help our cause.

Not one bit.

Or that we were a cranky bunch, because she'd met us cranky when she'd shown up on the land this morning.



I sat back against the seat, trying to think what would help. I knew what would help me... and my balls. I was sure Landry felt the same way. We'd satisfied Caitlyn on that boulder, still had her taste on our tongues. I'd be able to scent her anywhere, anytime.

Even now, my dick lengthened with eagerness for her.

We had to make our female happy in bed and out, but we'd yet to take her fully. Yet to show her what being between two lovers who cherished and craved her was like. She'd even said she doubted her desirability because we'd denied ourselves of her body.

No longer. It was time to change that. For her to know that she pleased us in all ways. That her profession wasn't going to keep us from her, even though it *was* a big fucking problem. It wasn't hers, though, but ours. Something we had to solve.

Until then, we'd show her how it would be. She was willing, that was for fucking sure. I took a deep breath. My wolf recognized her scent, but I also picked up on her arousal. She desired us.

Being with her was a challenge, because why would finding and claiming a mate be easy?

Yet it wasn't a hardship, by any means. I had to stop another growl of desire from rising in my throat as I thought about all the ways we'd show her she belonged to us. With us. My dick pressed painfully against my jeans now. The jostling of the truck only added to my discomfort.

No, pleasuring Caitlyn wasn't a hardship at all. More like a life purpose.



C AITLYN

I'D DEDICATED SO many years of my life to wolf study. To these two, it was another day showing a guest the sights in the area. To me, it was... proof that those animals were worth saving and protecting, studying and helping, because while they might be at the top of their ecosystem, humans were their real threat.

It wasn't just the wolf sightings that were amazing. It was sexy times on a huge boulder. Yeah, I'd be thinking of *that* when I was eighty. I'd gotten naked for two men, and eaten out.

Hello? That had been insane. And hot.

Then it was being with Landry and Wade. Hot. Attentive. Hot. Smart. Hot. Thoughtful. Hot. They cared about wolves as much as I did. Perhaps even more so, because they were protective of them. It seemed like everyone up here was, including the friend we met in passing.

I should be happy for that, but it felt as if while they liked me, the woman, they had a hard time with me, the wolf biologist.

But apparently not too much of a hard time because we were back at Wade's cabin, not my car at the trailhead. We'd returned, and I'd gone to take a shower. I had no fresh clothes in my small bag—I'd only intended to do rustic camping—but Wade had given me one of his shirts. Now I wore

that, and only that. The panties and bra I'd washed in the bathroom sink were slung over the shower door to dry.

Coming out of the bathroom, I found Landry washing his hands at the kitchen sink. Wade was pulling food from the fridge to start dinner. I leaned against the doorway, studying them.

I'd been instantly attracted to Wade at the brewery in Granger. One look, and I'd... well, I'd taken him home. He'd satisfied me sexually then, and done so again with Landry this morning. God, had they ever. I clenched my pussy at the memory.

They must have sensed my presence somehow because they turned to face me.

God, they were handsome. Maybe it was pheromones, but I was drawn to them like a magnet.

They wanted me, but had asked for nothing in return. For two weeks, I'd thought I'd been defective. A terrible lover. I had an ugly pussy. *Something*. Anything to justify why Wade hadn't wanted me to reciprocate. Why he'd practically fled my apartment. I wouldn't have believed the reason if he'd told me: That he shared a woman with someone else.

Heck, if I hadn't noticed the heated looks in their gazes as they turned to look at me, I still wouldn't have believed it. That it wasn't just a kink for them. It was a way of life.

The way they were eyeing me, I felt like *I* was tonight's meal.

"Thank you for showing me the wolves. God, it was amazing." I sighed, feeling like I'd got the VIP treatment at an amusement park, heading straight to the attraction with none of the waiting. "Even if I lose my grant, I'll always remember today."

"Why would you lose your grant, sugar?" Wade asked, moving in close and stroking a wet tendril of hair behind my ear.

I shrugged, and his shirt, which was huge on me, slipped down one shoulder. It was a blatant sign of how big he was. "Not enough data. Not fast enough. No quantifiable outcomes. Or if my data negates my theories. The school won't approve money for where there aren't results."

"You have the two from today to track, right?" Landry asked, coming to stand at my side.

I felt surrounded. Small. Protected. Sheltered. So many warring feelings when it came to these two. Should I be attracted to two men? Was it weird

or wrong? All I knew was I felt things for them, things I'd never felt for any other man.

I nodded. "Following your rules, I'd like you to *escort* me like you did today to try to find more wolves. Then, after that, tomorrow I'll go back to Granger and start analyzing the data."

Landry's chest rumbled and I whipped my head up. His dark eyes were almost golden. I frowned. "What's the matter?" I whispered.

"You're leaving."

I laughed because he sounded like a kid whose toy was being taken away.

"Tomorrow. I have to teach, and work on my research during the week." I reached up, set my palm on his chest. "I'm here now," I said, in my sultriest of voices. Or at least, I hoped it sounded that way. I'd never tried to seduce one man, let alone two, before.

Wade's finger slid along the length of my shoulder that was exposed, pushing the flannel over. I shivered at the caress. "My shirt looks better on you."

"It'd look even better on the floor," Landry commented.

"Are you going to let me reciprocate this time?" I asked. My fingers were now on the top button of my shirt, but I wasn't going to take it off if they refused to get naked.

All of us.

"What did you have in mind?" Wade wondered.

I licked my lip and it was Wade's turn to... growl?

"You've... on me, and I haven't seen... done... you." My cheeks could heat an oven.

"Sugar, you were sprawled on a boulder as I ate you out, screaming your pleasure. Now you're shy?"

I looked down at my bare feet, but Landry tucked a finger under my chin and I was forced to meet his eyes with mine. "I just... need to know you're as into this as I am."

Their eyes narrowed and I could have sworn they looked angry, but I only had a second to process that because I was over Wade's shoulder and he was carrying me to the bedroom before I could even blink.

He dropped me on the bed with a bounce and I watched as they stripped themselves bare. Boots thudded on the wood floor. Shirts went flying. Pants dropped. Yet they stared at me the whole time, as if ensuring I didn't run off

while they were busy. When the last article of clothing was shed, they stood at the foot of the bed. Naked. Letting me look at them.

And look I did. Holy hell.

I glanced from one to the next and back like I was following a tennis match. Landry was about an inch shorter than Wade, but he was more densely muscled. They both had dark hair.

They were perfect specimens of male perfection. Broad shoulders, sturdy pecs, tapered waists, chiseled abs. That V thingy that pointed directly to their upturned, eager dicks. They were both huge, erect, and thick. The velvety flesh was darker than the rest of them, a bulging vein surging up the full lengths to broad crowns.

I pushed up to my knees, licked my lips, then crawled closer across the big bed. They weren't moving, but Wade's dick pulsed and bobbed by his navel.

"So, um, how does this work? You guys have done this before, right?" I pulled Wade's shirt off over my head and tossed it to the floor.

Both men rumbled their approval but didn't admit to any past experiences, which was probably a good thing. I was feeling a little possessive.

"It works." Wade's voice sounded gravelly. I took hold of his cock at the base and it lengthened in my fist. "It works in—*oh Fates, yes!*"

Wade shuddered as I bent down and took him into my mouth as deeply as I could. "It works any way you want it to," he panted when I slid back off and looked up.

"You keep sucking Wade, sugar," Landry directed. "And let me take care of you." He sauntered around the side of the bed, climbing up behind me.

I shot a glance over my shoulder, my pulse racing just having him closer to me. I was in between them again, but this time, things were different. I was getting my mouth on Wade as I'd wanted that first night, and with my bottom out like it was, I had a good idea of what he intended, and I was okay with that. Eager, in fact.

This was the most irrational, crazy thing I'd ever done—being with two men—and yet nothing had ever felt so right. If I stopped thinking, stopped analyzing, and just let myself go, I could trust.

This was happening, and it wasn't wrong.

I licked around the head of Wade's cock. I'd never had an uncircumcised partner before so I took my time investigating the hood, pulling it back, putting my tongue inside and rolling it around.

"Caitlyn," he choked, gripping the back of my head. His fingers burrowed into my hair, but then I lost track of what he was doing because Landry pushed my knees wider and gripped my buttcheeks.

I sucked in a surprised breath when Landry parted my ass and rimmed me with his tongue. It was a shocking sensation—naughty but pleasurable. Who knew?

I let out a little whimper, then deep-throated Wade in my enthusiasm to receive more.

It was a strange sensation to be giving and receiving at the same time. I'd only sixty-nined once before, but this was different. Two men. *Two!*

I marshalled my focus so I would give Wade a decent blowjob, but it was so difficult. Landry licked me from clit to anus, driving me wild with each expert swipe of his tongue.

"I'm sorry," I panted, popping off Wade to look up at him. "It-it's hard to concentrate when..." Wade just chuckled and put his cock back in my mouth.

"Don't worry, sugar. It all feels good to me. But I'll help you." He held the back of my head still and pumped in and out of my mouth, filling and emptying it. All I had to do was suck and swirl my tongue.

"Mmm," I hummed around his length.

"Damn. I love it when you purr, sugar," Wade praised.

Landry moved away and vaguely I heard the snap of a wrapper. Landry ran the head of his cock through my juices.

"I'm wearing a condom, sugar," he told me. Another reason to trust him. These guys were considerate to my safety in all things.

I was glad he'd taken the initiative because the moment he pushed into me, I lost my mind. It was hard to think of protection when I was so worked up. Landry was big, and after two weeks of teasing with fingers and tongues, I was literally dying to be fucked.

I whimpered around Wade's cock and started bobbing over it with enthusiasm, as if sucking his cock faster would make Landry pump behind me in the way I was desperate for.

"Greedy little thing, isn't she?" Landry observed, gripping my hips and pumping faster.

Wade gathered my hair into a ponytail at my nape. "Oh, she wants it," he reported, studying my face with obvious satisfaction. "Fuck her hard, and show her how to take it. She's got two cocks to satisfy tonight."

It could have sounded disrespectful, but I didn't take it that way. There was something ridiculously hot about being talked about in third person. Between Wade and Landry, I became a sex object, and they wielded me the way they wished. At the same time, I was between them, being satisfied. I somehow held the power, even though their dicks were cramming me full.

I knew they'd take care of me. I trusted them.

I moaned my agreement, my satisfaction. Landry's fingers tightened around my hips. While he took me hard, his hips slapping against my ass each time he thrust deep, he was careful I didn't rock forward and take too much of Wade.

"Fuck," he muttered to Wade. "I want her so badly."

I didn't understand that, because he had me, but maybe he meant he needed to come.

*I needed to come. Desperately.*

I moaned again, a needy sound as I licked and sucked with total abandon. I was sure I lacked horribly as far as technique went, but at least I was enthusiastic. I wanted Wade to feel as good as he'd made me feel. Twice.

But then Landry reached around the front of my hips and found my clit with the pad of his finger. He gave it a little rub as he continued to fill me.

"Don't make her come, yet," Wade warned when I screamed around his cock. "I'm not done fucking her pretty little mouth, and I want to see her face when you send her over the edge."

I whined my protest, because Landry stopped rubbing my clit and I was so. *Close.*

Wade took control again, gripping my head, guiding me over his cock to use my mouth for his pleasure. I surrendered completely, letting the two men drive, manipulate my body in the ways they wanted to. Wade's breath grew ragged, his fingers in my hair tightened.

I started humming around his cock again and he shouted, balls drawing up tight. "I'm going to come, sugar."

I stayed on his cock, humming as streams of Wade's salty essence spurted into my mouth.

“Aw, what a *good girl*,” Landry praised, obviously watching, remaining still deep inside me. “She’s going to swallow.”

Honestly, I had never had before, but these men seemed to hit my kinky button and had turned on a side of me I didn’t even know myself. Wade pulled out, and I did swallow and licked my lips, then smiled up at him.

“Beautiful, sugar.” Wade caught my chin and held my face up to his. “You are so beautiful.” To Landry, he said, “Now let me watch you make her come.”

“Not until I tell you, all right, Caitlyn?” Landry said, but I barely heard him because he reached around and started rubbing my clit again.

“Oh,” I moaned at the added sensation.

“I want to come with you, sugar,” he added. “Can you wait for permission?”

Wade still cupped my face, stroking one cheek with his thumb. I stared up at him, trying to process what Landry was saying. Wade appeared amused. “Be a good girl.”

Too late. My muscles were already spasming around Landry’s cock as he continued to play with my clit. It was too much. Being with them. Wanting Wade for two weeks. Wanting both of them all day. The taste of Wade on my tongue, the feel of Landry filling me and hitting spots inside I didn’t even know I had...

I gasped, then cried out as the most powerful orgasm I’d ever experienced ripped through me. I was lost to it. Wild. Frantic. Hot.

“Uh oh.” Wade was smiling. “Looks like someone just earned herself another punishment.”

I came again at his words. Knowing he was watching as another man fucked me. As my inner walls clenched and milked Landry. Needing more. Wanting it all.

Or maybe I never stopped coming. All the while, Landry was pounding into me, harder now that my mouth wasn’t around Wade’s cock.

I moaned. Let my eyes fall closed, gave over to the feel

Landry let out a growl as his strokes grew rougher. “Again, sugar,” he growled, then pulled me up so I sat on his thighs, my sweaty back to his front. In this position, I couldn’t help, couldn’t do anything but let Landry use me to satisfy his craving. He still worked my clit while his palm gently circled my throat. I knew who was in charge, and it wasn’t me.



I opened my eyes when I felt hands on my breasts, fingers playing with my nipples.

Two men. Two sets of hands touching me.

Landry thrust deep one last time, kissed my neck, then turned his head away on a growl. I felt him growing thicker and longer inside me, then he came with another deep growl that I felt against my back. He pinched my clit, and I came with him. Screaming, becoming boneless. Done in.

The cry of pleasure turned into a moan. I had no idea it could be like this. That it could feel this good. This... intense. This deep, and I didn't mean Landry's dick. This was... God, life altering.

They were ruining me for all other men. For being with only one man.

I couldn't go back from this. I didn't think I wanted to.

And that was a big problem, because I was only here for the weekend.



## L ANDRY

“WHAT THE FUCK are we going to do?” I whispered. Even though we were on the porch with the front and bedroom doors closed, I didn’t want Caitlyn hearing a word of our conversation. We’d pretty much fucked her into unconsciousness, and my wolf was proud of that. So was I.

I ran a hand through my hair. My wolf was agitated, so I began to pace. We’d taken her not once, but twice during the night. Our balls had been emptied and our wolves pleased to make our mate come multiple times.

But we hadn’t marked her.

She expected us to take her out into the woods to find and tag more wolves this morning.

She was going to use the data from the wolves we’d helped her tag the day before, possibly in ways that were a danger to our entire pack.

She was leaving.

Wade leaned against the rail, looking out across the field. The sun was coming up over the mountain. In the distance stood a deer, nibbling on the dew-covered grass. “I want to wake her up with my head between her thighs.”

He'd climbed from bed and put on jeans, zipped but not buttoned. Nothing else.

I wore the same, but had slipped on a flannel shirt.

"I like that idea, but it doesn't solve our problem." I faced him, waited for him to look my way. "I can't lead her to more wolves today. Not only would it seem strange that we could find them so easily three times in a row, but I don't want any others tagged."

Wade nodded. "The two from yesterday were, what, a compromise?"

I shrugged, growled, because that was exactly what it was. "Fuck. She's our mate," I snapped.

"We take her out this morning, steer her clear of any wolves," he said. "She doesn't get any more tagged. Between her motivation to see her work through and that boss of hers, she'll be back next weekend. Your rules will still apply."

"Meaning she'll be between us once more." My dick and my wolf liked that idea.

"Exactly."

"That only moves this conversation to next weekend. I don't want to offer up more for her to tag then."

He closed his eyes, took a deep breath. "I don't know what the fuck to do. I'm trying to keep my wolf calm about her leaving later to go back to Granger."

Fuck me. The idea of our mate being fifty miles away where we couldn't be with her made my body actually ache. It was in our nature to mark our mate, then keep her close. Fuck her. Protect her. Cherish her.

We couldn't do any of those things if she wasn't here.

"I don't know when Gib and Ben will return with their mate, but I can only stall my brother on this long enough. He's going to lose his shit when he hears what I've done, how I've helped a human tag wolves. He won't care if she's our mate."

"I'm the worst enforcer substitute ever," Wade grumbled, then sighed. "What can we do today—right now?"

I leaned against a pillar, crossed my arms. "We can't tell her what we are."

He gave me a look. "I asked what we *can* do, not *can't*." Wade shook his head. "Still, you're right. Now's definitely not the right time."

I had no idea when that would be, but it wasn't now. We had to figure out how to tell her what we were, and not drive her away at the same time. I was going crazy thinking of her returning to Granger.

I didn't want to go moon mad, which could be a consequence of meeting your mate and not marking her, especially for a wolf of alpha lineage.

"We'll go back in there and fuck our mate, satisfy our wolves. And her." I pointed inside the house. "Then attempt to find more wolves for her to tranq and tag, but without success. We'll take her back to her car at the trailhead, then..." I growled again. "Fuck."

"I liked the fucking part. The rest sucks."

At the sound of Caitlyn's voice, we went quiet and turned toward the house. Even through two closed doors, we could hear her clearly with our wolf abilities. She was on the phone, or talking to herself.

"...two tagged yesterday. I'm hoping for more today and—"

She was quiet for a moment.

"I'm aware my funding is tied to the depth of my data. I'll tag as many wolves as needed."

Wade looked to me, jaw clenched.

She wasn't talking to herself. Most likely that boss of hers. Calling her at dawn on Sunday? Definitely overbearing.

We were in big trouble, because it didn't seem like there was anything that was going to keep our mate from exposing wolves to the world. Even if her mates *were* wolves.

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## CAITLYN

DR. ANDREWS ANNOYED the shit out of me. I was the one up in the wilderness. I was the one approaching wild animals with a tranq gun. I was the one spending my weekends searching.

I hung up on him after yet another call going over the same thing. He wanted as many wolves tagged as possible to have the broadest data points. Like I didn't know that. Two in one day was pretty amazing. I could spend

this week in the lab following them, taking notes. It was a successful weekend, thanks to Landry and Wade.

And that was only from a professional standpoint.

I set my cell back on the dresser then gasped when they appeared in the open doorway. "God, you scared me."

"You seem upset." Landry came into the room.

The room with the huge bed where we'd done all kinds of naughty things. I was in Wade's shirt, which I'd found on the floor. I hadn't wanted to talk to Dr. Andrews naked, even though he couldn't see me.

I pointed to my cell. "My boss. Checking in."

Wade came over to me, tugged me to him, and dropped onto the bed so I stood between his parted knees. "He's micromanaging the hell out of this project."

I rolled my eyes as I absently played with the smattering of hair on his bare chest. His broad, well-muscled chest. "No kidding."

"He bothering you?" Landry asked. The darker tone of the question had me looking up at him.

"Bothering? No. Annoying? Definitely."

Wade's fingers went to the buttons of his shirt that I was wearing, slowly opening each one. *Oh, my.* "We've got ways to make you forget about him."

"When we're done with you, the last thing you'll be is annoyed," Landry added.

He went to the bedside table, opened the drawer. He pulled out a shiny object and a small plastic bottle.

When he held them up, I frowned in confusion, then realized what they were.

"Oh no," I said, although I was more apprehensive about the bejeweled butt plug and lube than afraid.

Wade slipped the flannel off my shoulders so I was bare to both of them. "Oh yes. And you like the idea." He ran his knuckles over my nipples. "These hardened as you were checking them out."

"Being between two men means we take you. Everywhere."

Everywhere meant... yeah, wow. I'd never thought about butt stuff before, but it seemed I was going to now.

"But you're not ready for me to fuck that gorgeous ass yet," Landry said, dropping the lube onto the bed. "This will help. Get on your hands and

knees, and we'll work this in nice and slow."

I licked my lips, staring at the flared section of the small toy. I'd never had anything in my butt before, and I clenched even thinking about it. But that squeeze made my clit pulse and my pussy feel empty. Why did the idea of having a butt plug in me make me hot?

"Once that pretty gem's between those lush ass cheeks, we'll take you to find more wolves," Wade added. He kissed me, then, as if he had to.

"As a reward?" I asked.

He winked. "You can call it whatever you want."

They were kinky and dirty, filthy and yet gentle and cautious. Protective and sweet.

As I kissed Wade, Landry came around behind and cupped my pussy from behind. I gasped against Wade's mouth as Landry quickly learned I was aroused by what they wanted.

"She's dripping," he confirmed.

Wade pulled away, and I looked into his eyes. Heat, need. I couldn't miss it.

"Be a good girl and do as Landry said. He's going to train your back hole for us to take you. Eventually, I'll be in your pussy, Landry in your ass. You're going to love it."

I wasn't so sure, but they hadn't done anything yet I hadn't liked.

I swallowed, then crawled up onto the bed because I wanted to try this with them. I was aroused by this. I couldn't help it.

"Knees further apart." Landry grabbed the lube.

I was on my hands and knees, facing the headboard, watching over my shoulder as he drizzled the slick liquid onto the plug. Wade sat on the side of the bed still, but turned and began to play with my breasts, running a hand over my pussy, slipping a finger into me, then back out. Circling my clit. Pretty much, he was getting me hot.

I shifted and arched my back at his carnal touch. Then Landry set a hand on my butt and opened me up. I tensed.

"Easy," he murmured.

Wade didn't stop his caressing and fondling as Landry began to work the plug into me. He took his time, pushing, then retreating.

I took deep breaths, but the combination of what Wade was doing and Landry's insistence was really intense. Landry had had his mouth on my

back entrance and that had been sizzling, but him penetrating me there with the smooth metal was something else altogether.

Naughty, definitely. Submissive, completely. I felt as if Landry was in charge and I was bending to his will. I had no doubt if I told him no, he'd stop, but if they were serious about having me together—which they were—this was part of it.

And I loved it.

I tipped my head back, my long hair sliding over my bare back as the plug settled deep.

“Wow,” I said, squeezing my butt. It was... there.

Landry went into the bathroom and washed his hands as Wade pulled me up to kneeling and began kissing me again as his hands still roamed.

When Landry returned, I felt the bed dip behind me. “You’ll come now, then we’ll take you to look for those wolves.”

Wade shifted all his attention to my pussy, fucking me with two fingers as his palm worked my clit. It was so snug with the plug in.

“Right. The plug can come out—”

“The plug stays in,” he said, as I writhed against Wade’s hand.

I frowned, and clenched my butt again, which made me moan. I was close to coming... and arguing with Landry.

“But—”

“You can take it out when you get home tonight. When you call us.”

My mouth fell open. I was desperate for one pinch, one rough tug on my clit.

“Tonight? You can’t... I can’t... I mean, driving, riding in the truck? Oh, God...”

Landry grinned wickedly. “You’re going to love it. If you need to come from all those bumps and vibrations of the truck, we’ll pull over and take care of you,” he promised.

I moaned, thinking of being so needy, Wade would stop the truck to satisfy me. I came then, dripping all over his fingers. The plug in my bottom only made it even more intense.

Three hours later, by the time Wade parked in front of my car at the trailhead, I’d come three more times. As Landry said, they’d happily stopped the truck and given me orgasms, the need too great because of that dang plug.

We hadn’t found any more wolves, but I hadn’t minded.

As I drove down the bumpy road back to Granger, all I could think about was how I craved two men, loved a plug in my ass and came hard because of it.

After spending the night with Landry and Wade, I didn't recognize myself any longer.





W ADE

“THE BIOLOGY BUILDING IS THIS WAY.” I led Landry across the grass at Granger State, toward the sprawling grey sciences building. He’d taken time away from the distillery—time he couldn’t afford, especially with Gib gone—because the two of us couldn’t stand to be away from our mate. Our wolves had made us agitated and fucking miserable since we watched her taillights disappear on Sunday.

I’d cyber-stalked her enough to know that she taught an undergrad biology course this afternoon, and we’d decided to drive down and watch her work.

That was our excuse to see her again.

“What was it like, living with all these humans when you went here?” Wade asked, looking around. “Was it hard to be away from the pack?”

I’d spent four years in Granger and I’d enjoyed it, but my wolf always pulled me back to the mountains above West Springs whenever it could.

“I felt like a fish out of water, for sure. I was always worried about hiding what I was—your dad put a heavy dose of alpha fear into me over fucking that up.” I chuckled, shooting a glance at Landry to make sure it landed right.

He'd lost his father, our pack alpha, five years ago in a tragic accident. A strong storm had kicked up during a full moon run and a tree had fallen, crushing him. Losing an alpha was devastating to not only the family, but the entire pack. Gib had taken over immediately, but the transition of trust took some time. Now, with Gib still in Montana, Landry could see how being a new alpha was not only difficult, but came with a burden of trust and commitment to so many. He was being torn between protecting those he temporarily led, but also me and Caitlyn. The man and his wolf.

"I liked being down here," I continued. "My parents were so proud that I was getting an education to help the pack. That made it all worth it."

"Were you, like, big man on campus?" he asked with a sly grin. The campus was busy with summer students, those walking to class or lounging on the grass, or even playing frisbee.

I snorted. "Nope. I'm not you. I kept to myself, mostly. Like I said, your dad scared the shit out of me about making sure I never revealed what I am."

I was four years younger than Landry, so while we knew we were scent-matches, we hadn't hung out together much before I left for college. It wasn't until a full moon run during my junior year that we pleased a female wolf together afterwards, and formed a bond.

I pulled open the door to the building and lifted my chin toward the stairs. "Lecture Hall 305. Third floor."

Landry lifted his nose, inconspicuously taking in the scents. His gaze slid to mine as we both caught the faint aroma of our female. Even in a space that was as well used as this one, we could pick up our mate's scent and track her.

My wolf started quivering in anticipation. Fates, the last two days had been a goddamn trial. When a wolf met his mate—or, in our sub-species' case, *their* mate—the need to claim her with his mark was instantaneous and compelling as hell. If the female was a wolf, she'd understand. She'd want it as badly as we did. And right away.

Our sexy scientist wasn't a wolf though. She was human, so we had to operate within the confines of human behavior. Court her. Win her over. Prove our love—not that love was a concept wolves usually used. Quickly.

It was a balancing act between putting our mate at ease, and keeping our wolves happy.

Now that I'd met Caitlyn, I could believe in love. If it was the innate sense of well-being when I was near her, when I was providing for, pleasing and protecting her, then I totally got it.

Yeah, I was madly in love.

And slowly going insane with the need for her.

We found the lecture hall, and slipped in with the other students entering. The moment I was inside, my wolf calmed a bit. Circled and preened.

There she was.

Our mate.

She was looking hotter than hell in a pair of jeans and a wide-necked blouse. Was it crazy that the sight of her exposed collarbone drove me mad?

We took seats in the back row, not wanting to disturb Caitlyn. We also removed our cowboy hats, and sank down in our seats so we wouldn't draw attention. Being in Wyoming, many of the students probably had Stetsons of their own, but none were wearing them now.

I'd taken biology when I was a student. I didn't remember much of it, but I was damn sure it wasn't nearly as interesting as Caitlyn's class.

She launched into an extremely coherent lecture on genetics, with slides and entertaining tidbits to help students remember important facts that would be on the quiz she was giving Friday. Caitlyn was truly in her element—comfortable at the lectern, enthusiastic yet authoritative with her material. I got a hard-on just listening to her. She was in charge here and that was arousing, especially when we'd turn her into the submissive once we got her back between us.

The best part, though, was when she peppered her lecture with stories of her own research interest—wolves.

Landry leaned forward in his chair.

"Recovery of the grey wolf—who can tell me the Latin name?"

"*Canis Lupus*!" someone shouted out.

"—*Canis Lupus*, very good Mr. Ingram—in North America has depended on several factors. One, minimizing human-caused mortality. Two, assisting wolves in migrating to suitable habitat presently unoccupied by wolves. What has artificially transplanting wolves to new areas done to the genetic variation of the wolves, though? This is why we're examining the genetic variation of naturally colonized wolves versus transplanted wolves, to determine the effects on reintroduction projects."

Caitlyn went back to her material, then wrapped things up by asking for questions.

“Anything unclear? You understand what you need to study for the quiz?” She scanned the lecture hall, then froze. “*Oh.*” She caught sight of us. She was speaking into a headset so she could be heard easily in the large lecture hall, so her little expression of surprise was picked up by everyone.

Landry lifted his hand in a small wave.

I just grinned.

“Um...” She stared for a moment as her cheeks went pink. “Ah, that’s it for today, everyone. Quiz Friday, ten percent of your grade.”

The students collected their things and began to leave.

She removed her headset and jogged up the terraced aisle to reach us, weaving around departing students. If I’d had any doubt about how happy she’d be to see us, it was erased.

“Auditing my class?” Her smile was so brilliant, it hurt my chest. And it was aimed at us.

“Yep.” Landry settled a hand on her hip, as if to show every horny college boy in the lecture hall that she belonged to him—to us. The thing about scent-matches was that we didn’t get jealous of each other. It was why I hadn’t wanted to claim her on my own that night I met her at the bar. It hadn’t felt complete without Landry. We were programmed to mate in pairs—some quirk of evolution to preserve the survival of our time during more difficult times, I supposed.

Maybe Caitlyn could figure it out.

That thought landed in my head and took hold.

Yes. That was exactly what we needed to do. Redirect Caitlyn’s passion for wolf science to the study of shifter genes. The Two Marks pack’s very particular genes. Only Cord McCaffrey, the shifter doctor, had done any study on why we were different, but she was an expert, had a doctorate on the subject.

Maybe it would be as fulfilling to her as the research she’d have to abandon. It would ease the blow of giving up on the research that meant so much to her.

Because that’s what we needed her to do—abandon her research. Stop tagging wolves, studying the data. Sharing it with the world.

Let sleeping wolves lie.

We didn't want real numbers of any kind of wolf—*canis lupus* or our variety—getting out into the world. We couldn't let that happen.

"We wanted to know more about what you do here," Landry said as the last of the students left.

"And we missed you," I added, reaching up to stroke my knuckles down her cheek. I couldn't help myself. And neither could my wolf.

Caitlyn's nipples protruded with arousal, visible even through her bra and blouse.

"I can't believe you're here." Her laugh was breathy. Sexy. "How did you even find me?"

"I'm pretty good with a computer," I admitted. I didn't need to tell her I hacked into the college's records last week when I was researching her to get her schedule. "You were great up there. I wish I'd had professors like you when I went here."

"Yeah, but how would you concentrate on the subject material?" Landry's hand started roaming up and down Caitlyn's side now that we were alone.

Caitlyn's smile was knowing, like she already understood she had us both wrapped around her little finger. My wolf loved that.

"So how much do you teach? I thought you were a researcher?" Landry asked, glancing around the empty room.

"Usually just one class per semester. I am primarily a researcher, with funding for my job provided by a grant, like I said. But the teaching is supplemental income, which is what I need right now. Do you guys want to see what I'm doing with the trackers you helped me place?"

"Sure," I answered. More like, *definitely*. We needed to know exactly what her research looked like, in case—and I hated thinking this—we needed to thwart it.

Landry and I had led her on a wild goose chase on Sunday after we agreed we shouldn't allow her to put any more trackers in wolves on our land. Instead of leading her directly to a group of wolves, we'd gone for a hike in the woods. The only animals around had been small forest creatures.

It had felt dastardly, but until we'd won our mate over and explained what we were, we couldn't risk any more exposure for the pack. Once she knew, hopefully she'd understand our position. Hopefully, she'd back off.

But considering how enthusiastic she'd appeared talking about her research to her class, these were very tricky waters.

Which meant we were still in fucking trouble. We hadn't heard from Gib since the weekend—I was going to thank their mate for keeping him well occupied—so Landry hadn't had to tell him the truth. We'd been given a reprieve to handle this issue our way.

Caitlyn led us up another flight of stairs to her office, a very small space in the corner of a laboratory. There were a few students in the lab doing their own thing, and they gave us curious stares as we came in, but Caitlyn didn't introduce us.

"This is my office. The quarters are a bit tight, especially with you two in here." She laughed, her gaze sweeping across Landry's broad shoulders to mine.

My thoughts immediately turned dirty, and apparently, so did hers, because the scent of her arousal made Landry growl. He cleared his throat when Caitlyn startled at the sound. "Allergies," he said gruffly.

Her eyes flared, and pink tinged her cheeks.

Yeah, she was thinking dirty things. Like the fact that she'd called us when she returned to her apartment on Sunday, and we'd talked her through removing the butt plug then touching herself to completion. Phone sex wasn't anything like the real thing, but fuck... I'd get her to come any which way. That was my—our—fucking job now. Literally.

Our. Fucking. Job.

Caitlyn started up her computer, leaning over her desk. It reminded me of the position we'd put her in to spank her by the property-dividing fence. The urge to repeat that delectable activity made my cock go rock hard.

"This is my GPS tracking system on all the wolves we've tagged in Wyoming." She opened a screen that showed over a dozen dots moving on a map. She located the two in West Springs, and pointed. "You see? That's White Paw and Comet."

"What now?" Landry asked.

"The two wolves you helped me tag last weekend."

"It's so cute that you name them." I was unable to resist a smile.

She lifted her chin. "Of course I name them! They're part of my life now. Your help in getting these two was huge. We've been wanting to get samples from wolves in your area for a long time, but it's been difficult. Now, I'll be able to study not only the genetic makeup of wolves that haven't been transplanted, but how far their territory extends, and whether they mate with wolves of other packs and species."

“And your paper?” Landry asked. “You translate this data into findings.”

She nodded. “It’s on my computer as well. I’ve written the outline and have been adding data as it comes in, but I will have to finalize it soon. Publishing is the only way to get ahead in my field.”

“Publish or perish?” I asked, remembering the saying.

“Definitely publish.”

Landry and I turned at the voice. And found a short, balding man staring at Caitlyn’s ass.

Only when she turned to face him did he look away. When he realized we’d caught him, he didn’t look the least bit contrite. In fact, the corner of his mouth tipped up as if it was Caitlyn’s fault she was too hot for him to ignore.

Landry growled, and that got the guy’s attention.

“Dr. Andrews,” Caitlyn said.

This guy was her boss? He wore jeans and a T-shirt that had some ridiculous math joke on it, as well as a coffee stain. The sneakers on his feet were broken in but, based on his gut, it wasn’t from running.

“The data from the wolves you tagged last weekend is remarkable.”

“These are the men who helped me find them.”

Landry’s back practically snapped with the tension in it. The results of what he’d agreed to do, the *compromise*, was this. Satisfying a man who enjoyed staring at our mate’s ass.

Andrews had to tip his chin back to look us in the eye.

“You all eat your vegetables in West Springs,” he said, making us sound like bumbling hicks instead of the half-shifter guys who could crush him with the squeeze of a hand around his tiny neck.

Caitlyn must have picked up on the fact that her boss was close to being squashed like a bug because she cleared her throat. “I’ll be returning this weekend, with the rest of the trackers.”

That was to appease Andrews, not us.

We just wanted her returning... without the fucking trackers.

He smiled. “Good, good. The more wolves in the study, the better.”

I didn’t like the sound of it. In fact, neither did my wolf, who snapped and snarled.

“Why’s that?” Landry asked, pretending to be an idiot.

The guy shifted his patronizing gaze to him. "Science is based on factual data. If Caity doesn't have enough wolves in her study, the findings will be thin. Her observations could be easily shot down."

"Shot down," Landry repeated.

"Caity?" I asked at the same time, our tones much colder than moments ago.

He glanced back and forth between us. "Dr. Shriver," he corrected. "As for shot down, it's just a figure of speech. One or two wolves doesn't set a pattern or precedent for her research."

"I have sixteen," she said. "Fourteen, after..." She cleared her throat, not saying anything about the two wolves who'd been *shot down*.

I wasn't the alpha here, but this fucker had to go.

I stepped toward him, and Andrews backed up. I took another step, putting myself between him and Caitlyn. He couldn't even see her now, but tried, by leaning around me.

"Yes, well. I'm sure your friends, Dr. Shriver, will be leaving soon so you can return to your work."

I crossed my arms over my chest. "Actually, I'm staying. I'll be here the rest of the week, and escorting *Dr. Shriver* to West Springs."

"You are?" Caitlyn asked and I turned to face her, all but snubbing the weasley boss.

Her face lit up with happiness, and my wolf preened.

I only knew Andrews left because the office door shut behind him. While his scent lingered, it wasn't strong now. Thank fuck.

I stroked my fingers down her cheek. "I've been hard for you all week," I admitted.

Her gaze dropped to the front of my jeans, and she couldn't miss the truth of my words.

"Me, too." Landry moved to stand beside me.

"You're both staying?"

Landry shook his head. "I have to head back. Wade will take care of you."

She glanced at his dick, which I guessed was as hard as mine. We were alone with our mate.

A little frown formed in her brow. "How... how does this work? I mean, with two guys and only Wade staying. Before, you didn't—"



“We won’t always take you together. Sometimes, like the next few days, it’ll be you and me.”

“Friday night, I’ll be waiting,” Landry said, full of promise.

My nostrils flared when I scented her arousal.

“You’re not j-jealous of each other?”

I ran my thumb over her lower lip. “Of each other? No. But we don’t share with anyone else.”

She licked her lips as she took in this part of being in a triad. She had two men to please, sometimes apart, sometimes together. But we’d always satisfy her.

Caitlyn turned to face Landry, and she boldly cupped him through his jeans. “You can make it until Friday?” she asked, her voice a sultry purr that made my dick jump and my wolf lick his lips.

Landry growled, tangled his fingers in her hair. “You want to get on your knees for me, sugar?”

She looked up at him through her lashes, and nodded.

As Landry undid his belt and Caitlyn sank to the floor in front of him, I leaned against the closed door and watched. To keep from coming in my pants at the sight of our mate sucking so well, I thought of Andrews. I didn’t like him, and not just because he was paying attention to Caitlyn in more than just a professional manner. I was going to spend some time looking into him, because I was going to protect our mate from everything. Including her boss.



## C AITLYN

WADE PULLED off the highway onto the road that led to West Springs. Out here in the dark, it was hard to see more than a few feet in front of the car, but thankfully, I didn't have to worry about it.

"Text Landry and tell him we're almost there." Wade was behind the wheel of my car because... alpha male. Honestly, I didn't mind. He wasn't controlling about it, he just offered to drive to West Springs, and when I asked if it was because he needed to be in the driver's seat, he flashed that devastating grin and said he liked to take care of me.

Swoon.

Having him at my place for the past few days had been... amazing. Intense. But also easy. I'd felt comfortable with Wade even as turned on as he made me. Or maybe it was just all the orgasms that had me so relaxed. Each morning, I'd gone off to the university, and he'd worked from his laptop at my small kitchen table. At night, in bed, he'd taken me so many different ways. While I'd loved every second of being with Wade, I had missed Landry. Wished he was in bed with us too.

This was the most interesting my love life had ever been, and as out-of-the-box and confusing as it was, I wouldn't change a thing. It felt... right.

Now, late Friday night, as we bounced down the dirt road toward Wade's cabin to stay the weekend, my belly was fluttering over seeing Landry. Over having these guys take me... together. As they'd promised to do.

I texted Landry and he replied immediately. *Already here waiting for you, sugar.*

I smiled. "He says he's already there." I stole a glance at Wade's handsome profile. "You guys really don't get jealous? I mean, he's not going to punch you in the nose or something for being with me solo?"

"No, sugar. I'm sure he'll be eager for your attentions that he's missed since Tuesday, but there's no jealousy."

"You prefer to share?" I asked, flipping the visor down to block the sun. "I... I'm just confused about how this all started."

Wade looked over and winked. "What's wrong? Two men too much for you to handle?"

My pussy clenched in anticipation of our reunion. Of being with both of them again. "Nope."

Wade slowed, then turned down his dirt drive, parked beside his truck, and climbed out. He picked up my bag before I could even reach for it, lifting his chin toward something behind me.

I turned, and ran straight into the rock hard abs of my other lover.

I heard Wade's laugh as Landry's hands gripped my upper arms.

"Hey there." Landry backed me up to the car, pressing his body against mine. "I missed you." His lips were at my temple, his hand stroking my nape. He took a moment to hold me and breathe me in. I lifted my mouth for a kiss and he claimed it, his tongue sweeping authoritatively between my lips, turning my legs to Jello.

He kissed differently than Wade. More... dominant, instantly taking control. Strangely, they smelled the same. Woods and wilderness, soap and sexy man. Did they use the same shampoo?

"Landry," I panted, looping an arm around his neck and hanging on.

"Have you been a good girl?"

I nodded, not exactly sure what I could have done to be bad.

He stroked my hair back and studied me. "Worn your plug to get ready for us?"

Another clench of my pelvic floor, and a flash of heat. I knew my cheeks were bright red. He could talk about something so naughty as if he

were asking if I'd picked up my dry cleaning.

"Yes." There was a little warble to my voice that made Landry chuckle.

Wade had made me wear the plug every time I left my apartment without him to remind me that I belonged to them. Seriously, every time. I'd discovered the original plug Landry had put in wasn't all that huge because Wade had brought others. Bigger ones, ones he said still weren't as large as either of their dicks.

Landry palmed my ass and lifted my hips up to rub my crotch over his obvious erection. I straddled his waist to make it easier. "That's right, sugar. Spread your legs for your mate."

"Mate?" I asked, laughing, then rocking into him. My clit pulsed even though Wade had gone down on me in the shower a few hours ago.

"Man," he corrected, carrying me into the cabin after Wade. In his strong arms, I felt tiny and light. "I started up the grill, but I think dinner may have to wait. Fuck, you smell good."

"Agreed." Wade stood in the doorway of the master bedroom with heat blazing in his eyes. "We should definitely start with dessert."

"Am I dessert?" It was funny how confident I was starting to feel around these guys. Their unwavering interest made me feel powerful in a way I'd never felt before. While they were the two who were in charge, I was the one they craved.

"Yep. I'm going to eat that sweet pussy right now." Landry tossed me on the bed and unbuttoned my jeans.

"No arguments here." I lifted my hips so he could shimmy my jeans and panties down at the same time I toed off my sneakers.

Wade tossed his hat on the dresser, stripped off his shirt, and kicked off his boots, his brown eyes glowing green in the sunlight filtering through the window. I watched as he shucked his jeans and boxers, his erection jutting out in my direction.

Landry settled between my parted thighs, then inhaled deeply, like he was breathing in my scent. He licked a long line up my inner thigh. I shivered in response, every nerve ending tingling in anticipation.

Time with Wade had been incredible, but being with both of them felt right. Like a completion. I'd missed Landry's bold touch. I still didn't understand what they got out of sharing me, but for me, it seemed like this triad was what had been missing from my life all along.

When Wade got bossy and possessive about me going out without him and made ridiculous claims about me belonging to the two of them, it felt right. I laughed, but I loved it.

Landry hooked his hands underneath my knees and pushed them up to my shoulders, lifting my hips to his mouth. He tongued around my clit with light strokes, driving me mad.

Wade crawled on the bed behind me and tugged my shirt over my head, then unhooked my bra. The moment he started pinching my nipples, I felt an orgasm looming.

"She's so wet," Landry observed, doing that talking-about-me-in-third-person thing that made everything seem hotter.

"Don't let her come," Wade told Landry.

"No?" Landry asked.

"No?" I wondered at the same time. "I want to come!"

I did. I so did. Landry was so skilled with his tongue.

"No. I want her to come on both our dicks tonight. I fucking need it." Wade did sound desperate. As desperate as I felt.

"Please," I begged. "I need to come now."

Landry slid a finger inside me and stroked my inner wall, adeptly finding my G-spot. I arched my back. "No. You heard Wade. You don't get to come until we're both inside you. Understand?"

I clenched down on his finger, liking his commanding tone.

"Y-yes," I moaned, but I was already so close.

He removed his finger and sat back with a smirk. "I think she's going to have a hard time obeying."

I squirmed, but Wade held me in place.

"No more foreplay, then," Wade asked.

"The past few days have been foreplay!" I cried.

Wade grinned.

"No fucking kidding, sugar," Landry replied. He was the one who hadn't had sex the past few days.

"Do you want her pussy or her ass?" Wade asked.

"Ass," Landry said immediately, like it was something he'd given forethought to. Wade may have played with it and worked the various plugs in, but it was clearly Landry's turn now.

He picked me up like I weighed nothing and arranged me on my hands and knees, facing away from him. "Get Wade's cock wet, sugar," he

instructed, giving my ass a light slap. The sting morphed to heat. I wiggled my hips and opened my mouth as Wade guided his length between my lips. Wade dipped in and out of my mouth while Landry stripped off his clothes—at least I thought that was what he was doing, based on the rustle of sound behind me.

“That’s good, sugar. Now cowgirl up on him.”

Wade pulled out of my mouth and Landry tugged my waist backward to make room for Wade to lie down. Wade sprawled on his back—all six feet something of him—his rigid cock curling toward his belly. He fisted his cock and put on the condom Landry handed him. “One more lick, and then I want you to sink all that wet heat right here, sugar.”

I obeyed, crawling over him and taking his dick into my mouth a few times before I raised my hips up over his and guided him in.

“Fuuuuuck,” he cursed, his eyes seeming completely green now. He gripped my hips, dragging my clit over his pubis, helping me grind on him in the most perfect way.

I whimpered, loving the feel of him cramming me full.

“Show me how you ride your cowboy,” Landry encouraged, cupping my breasts from behind.

I straightened up, bouncing over Wade to take him deeper. He helped me with his hands at my waist. I closed my eyes, letting the sensations wash over me, reveling in having two pairs of eyes watching me as I shamelessly took my pleasure on Wade’s cock.

“Fuck, that’s beautiful,” Landry said. “I need to be a part of it.”

He gently tipped my torso forward over Wade’s chest, lifting my ass up.

I braced my palms on Wade’s shoulders.

I was breathless, brain scrambled. Very excited. A little nervous. I clenched down and made Wade growl.

“I’m going to use a lot of lube,” Landry said as he put on a condom.

I heard the snap of a cap and then he rubbed a cool gel around my anus. I went still over Wade, my pulse racing. Wade had done this as part of putting the plugs in, but it wasn’t a plug this time. Landry was so much bigger than anything we’d played with before.

“You’re going to love it,” Wade promised, reading a little of my apprehension. His jaw was clenched, but I saw reassurance in his eyes. He’d been gentle with me with the plug, teased me when he discovered how

hot it got me. Got me off every time I came back to the apartment all worked up.

I nodded my agreement, holding my breath a little as Landry pressed the head of his lubed cock against my back hole.

“Deep breath, sugar,” he ordered.

I inhaled.

“Blow it out.”

As I exhaled, he gently pressed forward. I pushed back against him and my muscles opened to let him in. I winced at the discomfort. The initial stretch took my breath away, but he went slowly, and Wade brought his thumb to my clit and rubbed.

“Oh my God,” I gasped when the head of Landry’s cock passed through the tight ring of muscles. It got easier, then, but the sensation of fullness overwhelmed me. I was already stuffed full of Wade’s cock, and now Landry filled me from behind.

I mewled a little protest, nervous. Trapped. I couldn’t lift off if I wanted to.

“You’re okay, sugar. We won’t hurt you,” Wade promised, running his hands lightly up and down my sides. His touch was gentle, caressing.

“I know.” And I did. I totally trusted these guys. They’d shown me nothing but consideration from the moment I met them. I barely knew them, but I definitely felt safe. Even in this, something so intimate. Intense.

There was nothing between us now. This was more than play. Both of them wanted me. Desired me. It was one thing to be with Wade all week. Another if Landry wanted some alone time with me. But they were with me together. *In me* together.

I’d never felt closer to two people before.

They began to move, alternating their motions, one stuffing me full, the other pulling back. Hands were on me, cupping my breasts, pinching my nipples. Fingers made a V around my clit and worked it. Another hand cupped my bottom, and a fingertip circled where Landry was filling me.

Too many sensations. They were just too much. My body couldn’t resist, and I came with a feral sound. Wild and untamed, as if they’d unleashed something inside me. I never knew my body could handle this. I never knew what it would feel like. Using my vibrator was nothing compared to this. Nor was just having sex with Wade. Or Landry.

Two dicks. Four hands. Two mouths.

“Resist,” Landry growled.

“I know,” Wade said at the same time I shouted, “I can’t!”

I blacked out, losing myself to them.





## L ANDRY

FATES, the urge to mark Caitlyn was so strong. The lights in the room winked and spun as I came inside our sweet mate. Wade’s eyes glowed pure green, his wolf right on the surface, dying to claim our mate. I was sure mine were yellow. I’d felt the instant my canines had descended, ready to sink into her shoulder and permanently embed my scent—our shared scent—into her flesh.

She lay sprawled over Wade’s chest now, panting, eyes closed, lips parted, looking like a goddess.

I stroked her hair back from her shoulder and leaned forward to trail kisses along her back. “Are you okay, sugar?”

“Yes,” she murmured, the corners of her lips turning up, even though her lids remained closed.

“That was incredible,” I said.

“Yes, it was.” Now her lids fluttered open.

I eased out of her and went to ditch the condom and get a washcloth to clean her up. I waited until my eyes had changed back to brown before I returned. Wade had rolled them both to their sides and was holding her. I handed him the washcloth and lay down on her other side. I loved that she

was between us. It had been a long three days without her. But her scent mixed with the musky tang of sex soothed me and my wolf—only a little bit because I longed to see my mark on her shoulder.

“Are you hungry, beautiful?” I asked.

“Mmm. Not yet.” She snuggled back against me, which only made me hard again, ready to take her once more.

Her phone rang from her purse in the living room and she sighed. “That’s the ringtone I have set for my parents,” she said.

“Do you need to get it?” She didn’t sound thrilled that they were calling.

Another sigh. “I should. I’ve been dodging them all week, and they get antsy about me going out in the field alone.”

Wade cleared his throat. “Alone?”

She ran her fingertips across the hair on Wade’s chest. “I haven’t talked to them since I was leaving for West Springs last weekend. They probably think I fell off a cliff or something at this point.”

The phone stopped ringing, then instantly started again. “Gah. I’d better answer that.”

I rolled off the bed so she could get up, and found her phone in her purse in the living room. “Catch.” I tossed it to her.

She caught it easily—our mate had excellent reflexes for a human—and answered it. “Hi, Mom.”

“Caitlyn! Where are you? We’ve been worried sick.” With my shifter hearing, it was easy to make out her mother’s voice on the other end. Not that our mate knew that.

“I’m up in West Springs, tagging wolves.”

I winced at the words *tagging wolves*. Just hearing it made my stomach roil. We had to get this thing sorted out right away. I couldn’t take another weekend of leading Caitlyn on a wild goose chase to *not* find wolves, nor could I allow her to find and tag any more.

“Well, I don’t like it. You shouldn’t be alone.”

“Actually...” Caitlyn shot a glance at me. She looked so beautiful standing naked in Wade’s bedroom, her skin still flushed from sex, her chestnut hair wild. “I made some, um, friends up here.”

“Friends?” I mouthed indignantly, which made her smile.

Her mother didn’t like that either. “Well, be careful. How do you know they’re safe?”

Caitlyn gave a long-suffering sigh, and now I understood why she'd been avoiding calling her mom back. "They're safe, Mom. I'm safe. Everything's fine."

"I ran into Dale Dickman the other day. You know, the principal of Oakview? The private school?"

"Uh huh." Caitlyn rolled her eyes and I smirked.

"Caitlyn, he's looking for a science teacher for this fall! He had to fire the last one, I guess the guy did something improper, I don't know."

Another eye roll. "And?"

"And?" her mother snapped, clearly offended. "You should apply! It has great benefits. It pays more than what you're making there as a post-doc—I already found out."

"Mom, teaching high school science is the last thing I'd ever do! I have a PhD!" Caitlyn paced away from me, giving me a view of that gorgeous little ass of hers. "My research is my life. Even if I had to do it for half the salary I'm making now, I would."

"But we hate you being clear across the country. The things you do for those wolves are risky. Camping alone. What if you got attacked by one of them? Maybe you should carry a gun."

I followed Caitlyn back into the bedroom, shamelessly listening in on her conversation.

"I do carry a gun, Mom. A tranq gun." She stopped, her shoulders dropping. "Listen, I need to get going, my friends are waiting for me."

This time it was Wade who spread his hands and mouthed, "Friends?" with a WTF look.

"Well, *be careful*. Seriously. Call me when you're back at your apartment this time. Do you promise?"

"Yes, I promise. Love you, Mom. Tell Dad I love him, too."

"I will. Love you, sweetie. Bye."

"Bye, Mom."

Caitlyn ended the call and tossed her phone on the bed. "I'm sorry about that. My parents haven't realized I'm a grown-up. Only child." She shrugged. "And they really hate that I study wolves. That I'm all the way out here in Wyoming when I could be safe in Connecticut. They just don't understand why I'm so obsessed."

She glanced from Wade to me. We didn't say anything. It seemed Wade also wanted to hear her reasoning behind her obsession.

“I love that you guys get it. Those wolf pups we saw last weekend had me high all week.”

“We may understand even more than you think, sugar.” I shot a look at Wade. We needed to tell Caitlyn what we were, and I figured we’d won her trust and affection enough to lay it on her. We may not have marked her, but we’d claimed her as ours.

It would be a lot to digest, and the timing was still way too fast by human standards, but fuck, Wade and I had nearly marked her when we were having sex. We wouldn’t be able to hold off much longer. Besides, I couldn’t stand keeping up the farce about the wolves any longer.

Wade nodded, reading my mind.

Caitlyn started pulling on her clothes. “Really? What do you mean?”

“You know when you asked if West Springs was a weird religious cult?”

Caitlyn went still, one leg in her jeans. “Oh, no.”

I smiled and held a hand out. Laughed. “We’re not. Hell, no. But we are different.” I swallowed, said the words that would change everything. That gave away our very secret to a female who wasn’t marked, who wasn’t truly ours. Who was tracking and studying our species. “We’re wolf shifters.”

“I’m sorry?” She tilted her head like she had misunderstood. A frown marred her brow.

“Shapeshifters. Men who turn into wolves.”

She smiled and twisted to look over her shoulder at Wade, like it was some kind of joke. Like he’d say *just kidding* and laugh. When she turned, she found a huge black wolf on the bed, instead.

She screamed, flying backward. Since her foot was caught in her jeans, she tipped, right into my arms. I steadied her. “It’s okay, sugar.” She worked her feet to push the jeans off her leg, as if she needed to be free of them to run away. “That’s Wade. He’d never hurt you. It’s Wade,” I repeated, feeling her panic, hearing the franticness of her breathing.

“W-Wade?”

Her body trembled beneath my hands, and she was leaning toward the door like she wanted to escape.

“Please don’t run,” I said, trying to keep my voice low and soothing. “It’s just biology. Genetics, not some crazy disease you get from being bitten by a rabid wolf during the full moon. We’re a different species from you.”

She turned in my arms to look up at me, the shaking in her slight body growing stronger.

“Shift back,” I told Wade. “She’s freaking out.”

Wade shifted, and I turned her back around. “See? It’s Wade.” Fortunately, he was naked before he shifted, and we didn’t have to worry about tattered clothing. “You’re safe, sugar. We won’t shift again until you ask.”

She swallowed, staring at Wade with wide eyes. I saw the thrum of her heartbeat at her neck, like a hummingbird. “This is nuts,” she muttered. “Totally crazy.”

She blinked her eyes as if she’d been seeing things, or they didn’t work right.

“Nope, it’s just science,” Wade said, going with the same defense I’d used. “Not magic. Not supernatural. Our kind has hidden our existence from outsiders as a means of protection. But there’s nothing menacing about us. Nothing dangerous.”

She started to settle beneath my touch, and I could tell her brain was working overtime to assimilate it all.

Wade spread his hands. “You want to study wolf genetics? Study ours.”

She gasped, covering her mouth. “Those wolves I tagged last weekend —”

“Normal wolves,” I interrupted. “Not shapeshifters.”

“Oh.” She turned to me. “And you’re a wolf, too? May I see?”

I smiled. Her fear was already wearing off and interest was taking hold. “Sure. You won’t run off?”

She shook her head, although I didn’t take that as a guarantee. Still, I had to prove to her what we were. That I was telling the truth. I closed my eyes and willed the shift, dropping to four paws.

She took a few quick steps backward, then stopped. “Silver wolf.” Wonder echoed in her voice.

I lowered to my belly to appear less intimidating.

It worked. She immediately dropped to a crouch and reached the back of her hand toward me as if to let me sniff it. Like I didn’t already have her scent memorized and categorized as the best smell on Earth. I licked her fingers.

Wade chuckled from the bed. “Touch him. Don’t be afraid. He wants you to.”

She lowered to her knees and reached for my head. “My God,” she said with awe. “You’re huge. This is incredible. I can’t believe it. You’re really wolves? Both of you? This whole town?”

“Not the whole town. But the majority of us are,” Wade explained. “Our families were early settlers here. They got rich through silver mining back in the nineteenth century, and bought all this land for the pack. Room to roam. To have space to live our lives without suspicion. Free.”

“That’s why your cabin is on Landry’s land,” she said, putting it together.

Wade nodded. “Right. It’s not really Landry’s, except that his bloodline is alpha. His brother rules the pack.”

Caitlyn’s eyes lit with excitement now. She stood and turned. “May I see your wolf again? Now that I’m not so freaked out?”

Wade shifted to wolf form, and to ensure one of us was in human form with her while she assimilated, I changed back to answer questions.

Caitlyn walked to the bed and stroked Wade’s ears and neck. When he rolled to his back, she laughed and rubbed his belly. “Incredible. You’re so beautiful. This... it’s just amazing. I still can’t believe it.”

I wrapped my arm around her from behind. “It’s real, sugar.”

“So...” She leaned back against me and tipped her head to see my face. “Is the two-on-one thing related to being wolves? I mean, I don’t know any *canis lupus* variety that mates in pairs, but—”

“Yes,” I interrupted. “Most wolf shifter species mate singly—one male for one female for life. But our particular family line mates in pairs. Probably some evolutionary advantage when there weren’t enough females around, we surmise.”

“But you don’t still need to, right? I mean... is it a biological urge? To, um, mate two to one?”

“Yes,” I said simply. We were getting close to the part we needed her to hear. That she was our mate. The only female we’d ever touch, now that we’d scented her. The one we needed to mark with our teeth to claim as ours forever.

But I didn’t want to go too fast. Better to let her ask questions and arrive on her own time.

“That’s why you share? Because... um,” she bit her lower lip, considering, “is it better when you’re together? Even though you don’t get each other off? Or...”

“Exactly,” I replied. “It’s better when we’re together. And with you.” So much for letting her arrive there on her own.

Her eyes rounded. She blinked at me. “Me? As in a woman, or me as in *me*?”

“You,” I said. “You’re our mate—we know by your scent. You smell incredible to us. That’s why Wade waited to have sex with you until I could meet you, too. He knew you were the one.”

“The one?” she cocked her head. “That doesn’t sound like science.”

“It is,” I insisted. “Biology. There’s a perfect match for every pair. You’re ours. Meaning we want to mark you as our female, with our wolf teeth, and our dicks.”



C AITLYN

OKAY, I'd freaked. Not run away screaming naked into the wilderness, but I'd had a little meltdown. After Landry said *wolf teeth*, I grabbed my clothes and scrambled into them, minus my panties. They'd been tossed somewhere in our haste to get naked earlier, and I hadn't wanted to go scrounge for them.

It wasn't the fact that the two men I'd been falling for had switched from huge, naked men to wolves and then back. It had been that it hadn't bothered me all that much. Or that they wanted to mark me with wolf teeth. Then he'd tossed in being marked by their dicks, too, and that had made me hot. Made me wet and eager for them all over again.

*That* was why I had a little panic attack. Because I still wanted two men who switched from sexy men to furry wolves.

They'd given me room, let me take time to process as the sun set. I'd returned inside after dark and they hadn't said a word, only led me to bed and tucked me between them. They were gentle. Quiet. Cautious, even. As if they were afraid I truly might run away.

It had been a consideration, because was I really safe? Would they hurt me? I knew they *could* but as their hands ran over me, not in a sexual way as much as one to perhaps soothe me, I knew they wouldn't. They were



keeping me where they knew I was safe. Where they could protect me from all things. If I needed them, they'd be right there.

No, I was safe. And that had been my last thought before I'd fallen asleep.

Now, I sat on the front porch steps and stared out into the wilderness that surrounded Wade's house. The morning sun was warm on my face. It had rained overnight, and everything was bright and clean. A bird chirped in the distance.

I felt their eyes on me. Even with the new day, they allowed me room, feeding me coffee and eggs without speaking of anything more than the weather.

I wasn't sure if it was because they worried I'd bolt, or just plain worried. Perhaps they were waiting to see if I had questions. I had *too* many to voice.

They'd admitted to a lot, and I had to absorb it all.

I'd always been drawn to wolves. It was why I'd studied biology in college then moved specifically into research of the species in grad school and for my dissertation. And now, as my job. I'd left Connecticut for Wyoming to be closer to them. To see them in the wild.

Was that why I'd been drawn to Wade from the start? Why I'd taken him home with me after knowing him only a few minutes? Why I'd let both him and Landry touch me? Why I was falling for them?

God, was I part wolf?

I popped up from the wood step, and paced the grass in front of his house. I thought of my parents. *They* were so not wolves. They didn't understand anything about me. My drive. My desires. My dreams. Why my work was what had me eager to get up in the morning. It fulfilled me, unlike the prep school job they were hoping I'd consider. I felt like they were matchmakers, putting me into a relationship that just wouldn't work.

Somehow, being with Landry and Wade did.

Two men. God, two!

I put my hand over my lips. Two *wolves*.

The screen door slammed, and I turned. "Time to head into town," Wade said, setting his Stetson on his head.

Landry came down the steps, kissed the top of my head. They were dressed and were acting as if they hadn't shifted into wild animals in Wade's bedroom. "We've got someone for you to meet."

As Wade closed up the house, Landry took my hand and led me to the truck.

“Dr. Cord McCaffrey is a friend of ours.”

“Doctor? Like me?” I asked after I climbed up onto the bucket seat and Landry slid in beside me.

“Seatbelt,” Landry said. I picked up the strap as he kept talking. “Medical doctor. His practice is in West Springs. He’s also a shifter.”

After my belt clicked into place, I looked up at Landry. At the dark stubble on his jaw, the crinkles around his eyes. How was he a wolf?

Wade climbed in behind the wheel and started the engine. “Doing okay, sugar?” His eyes raked over my face.

I nodded. Okay was all I could be in this moment.

“Is he a vet?” I asked. They laughed, and my cheeks went hot. “Sorry.”

Wade took my hand and used the other to steer us down the mountain. “No worries. For someone who just learned about shifters, it’s a good question. He’s a medical doctor. He treats shifters and humans both. Mostly humans, because shifters don’t get sick, but he’s also interested in wolf shifter genetics.”

“Why are you bringing me to him? I thought you said being a shifter wasn’t an infection. I’m not going to turn into a wolf, am I?”

Landry set his hand on my thigh. “Easy, sugar. Breathe. When we first met, we told you we’d never hurt you, never let anyone harm you. Remember that?”

I nodded, trying to keep calm.

“That hasn’t changed. You won’t turn into a wolf. You can’t. You’re human. That’s not going to change. Our kind normally doesn’t pick a human to mate, but we’re certain you’re ours. Our noses don’t lie.”

God, I felt so slow. I was still trying to catch up with all this. “So there’s some kind of pheromone that tells you who to mate? And you two are attracted to my scent?”

“Yes.”

“And why are we going to the doctor?”

“Well, Wade mentioned something earlier that got me thinking. You’re a wolf biologist. Fate—biology—chose you to be our mate. Maybe because you’re supposed to be studying *our* genes. Shifter genes.”

I stared at him. Wow. Shifter genes. I’d love to get some blood samples and take a look.

“Cord is studying all the shifters in the Two Marks pack—”

“Two Marks pack?” I asked.

Landry gave my thigh a squeeze. “Right. Sorry. Shifters live in packs, just like ordinary wolves. As we said, the West land is for everyone in our group. Our pack. Our pack name is Two Marks.”

“Because you mate in pairs,” I added, finally seeing.

“Exactly.” Wade lifted our joined hands to his mouth so he could kiss my knuckles.

“He’s studying our blood, our DNA, and comparing it to the shifter species that mate singly. Our particular species has a very limited population. Anyway, it’s not unlike what you’re doing in your studies,” Landry added. “I thought you might hit it off.”

“And answer all those questions that are filling your head,” Wade added.

Oh. I slumped back in the seat and decided to be quiet for the rest of the ride into town. My head was going to explode if I got any more overwhelmed.

“I know you came here to get those trackers on more wolves,” Landry said. “I think you can understand now why we aren’t doing that.”

I tipped my head to look at him. His dark eyes met mine. “I let you tag two, but no more. It went against everything in me to do it.”

I saw the frown take over his face.

“You did it for me?” I whispered.

He nodded. “We couldn’t tell you about us, not then. It was a—”

“Compromise,” Wade finished.

“But now, you won’t have me tag more.” I wasn’t sure if I was upset or understanding. Maybe both. I’d fallen for two cowboy shifters. Two guys who had a direct impact on my paper. On my job. On my staying in Wyoming.

“That’s why we’re meeting Cord. Maybe you can talk to him about your research. No pressure, it’s just an idea.”

Ten minutes later, we parked on the Main Street of West Springs, the quaint town nestled in the mountains. A river ran through the valley that was partially fed by a deep spring. This was the reason the town was named as it was, and after Landry’s family for the rest.

Hanging flower pots graced lamp posts at every block. Storefronts were welcoming to tourists and locals alike. It had a calm feel. Life here was

simple, friendly.

I liked it, even more so than Granger, which was only an hour away.

Landry pointed through the windshield. "That's his office, there. Next to the bakery."

Wade undid my seatbelt and climbed out. I followed Landry out the passenger side and he took my hand. A bell above the door chimed when we entered the small waiting area. It was empty, even the spot behind the desk.

A man came down the hallway, which I assumed was where the exam rooms were.

"Hi, Caitlyn, I'm Cord. Landry gave me a call and told me about you."

I wiped my sweaty palms on my jeans. "I admit, I don't know all that much about you."

He cocked his head to the side, gave me an understanding smile. "Want a lollipop?"

His question was a surprise and made me laugh. "Sure."

He went to the receptionist's desk and picked up a glass jar and held it out for me. I reached in, picking out a wrapped red one. Landry's cell chimed. He pulled it from his pocket, read the display, an incoming text.

He sighed, swore under his breath. "The ordering system at the distillery is down."

Wade swore too. "Text them back and say we'll be there in a few minutes."

Then they looked to me. "Want to see the distillery?" Landry asked.

"Caitlyn, you're welcome to stay with me," Cord offered. "I know your mates wanted me to share some of my research. These two can go save the world, and come back for you."

I could tell by the way Landry and Wade stood that they had to get to their jobs. They'd taken enough time off for me. Even though it was a Saturday, I had a feeling their roles kept them occupied no matter if it was the weekend.

"It's fine. Go," I said.

They stepped close, kissed me, then looked to Cord. Their gazes shifted to dark and broody, and I could have sworn I heard Landry growl. "Touch our mate, and you die," Landry said, not quite light enough for it to sound like he was kidding.

Cord raised his hands as if in a stick-up, but his smile remained. “She’s not mine,” he said, taking a deep breath. “I know it. My wolf knows it. She’s safe with me.” He lifted his nose in the air. “Even if she’s not marked.”

They glanced between me and Cord, then nodded, although when they left me behind, they didn’t seem all that happy about it.

“Wolves are possessive,” Cord said as we watched through the front window as they climbed into Wade’s truck. “I’m thrilled they found their mate. I mean, a human mate is unexpected, but any true mating is welcome.” He looked at me. “They’re good men, Caitlyn. I hope you’ll stick around.”

I was struggling to keep up again. “True mating?”

“Right.” He leaned back against the reception desk and folded his arms across his white lab coat. “Our species can mate and produce offspring with anyone—shifter or human, but only a true mate will instigate the biological urge to mark a female. That’s what we call a ‘true mate’.

He tipped his head. “Let’s head back to my office. Bring your lollipop, and we can talk. I’ll answer any questions you have.”

It was hard not to like Cord when he took that affable family doctor tone. I’d bet children loved coming to see him. Especially with the bowl of lollipops at the front desk.

“I want to know what *being marked* means.” I made air quotes with my fingers as I followed him.

He went around his desk in a small, tidy office. He pointed to a seat across from him and I sat. The room wasn’t any different than any other doctor’s office, not that I had any idea what it would look like otherwise. Pictures of wolves on the walls? Wolf print paintings from little kids? Little... pups?

Yeah, I had a lot of questions. To busy myself, I pulled the wrapper off the lollipop and dropped it in the trash.

“Marked is when a male—or, in our species’ case, two males—claim their female. The urge is only triggered when a wolf finds his true mate, which causes his canines to descend, coated with a special serum. He then bites his mate during lovemaking, embedding the serum, which carries his scent, permanently into her flesh.”

I winced. That didn’t sound particularly appealing.

“A female shifter would instantly heal from such a marking.” He tipped his head to the side and considered me. “A human female is another story. It could be dangerous if they hit a major artery, or if it got infected while healing.”

“Wait, so the purpose is to mark her? Why? To keep other males away?”

Cord grinned. “Yes. Other shifters can smell that she belongs to someone. Is claimed.”

“So you knew Wade and Landry hadn’t marked me yet—by my scent?”

His gaze dropped to my neck again for a moment. “Right.”

“Is it like the shifter equivalent of getting married?”

He set his hands on his desk, shrugged. He was a handsome man. Rugged and big, as if it was in the DNA of the Two Marks pack for the males to be supersized. There was an intelligence behind his eyes too. He wasn’t as... wild as Landry or Wade, maybe because he’d had to go somewhere for college and medical school. Residency.

If I wasn’t already into Landry and Wade, I’d have set my sights on Cord. But now, he didn’t do anything for me.

“Marriages can end,” he said. “Divorce happens all the time. Wolves mate for life. Especially the Two Marks variety. Wade and Landry knew you by your scent. Their wolves recognized that you were the one, and they had the urge to mark you as their mate. They didn’t need to date you, to get to know you like humans do. One deep breath, and you belonged to them. You just didn’t know it.”

I blushed, remembering how easily I’d taken Wade back to my apartment.

“Could I have been drawn to them as well? Maybe not by scent, but... attraction?”

He gave me a reassuring smile, then leaned back in his chair. “Sure. As a human, it probably scared you, the intensity between the three of you?”

I glanced away. “Definitely. And the fact that I was drawn to two men. I’m not... I’ve never—”

“There is no shame in a Two Marks triad. You have human values attached to what is considered an appropriate relationship. If you let those go, you can see that what you share with Landry and Wade is real.”

It certainly felt real. More real than anything in my life had ever felt. “I almost wonder... if this is why I’ve always been obsessed with wolves.”

Cord tilted his head and shrugged. His white shirt didn't hide the way his muscles flexed when he did that. I wondered if he had a mate, because I had no doubt she was a happy woman. "Could be. I'm a man of science, but most shifters would call a true match the intervention of Fate."

I could only nod. "So they want to bite me?"

"Oh yes," he said right away. "Since they first caught your scent. They've held off so far, but their wolves will be getting frantic. Especially if they've touched you sexually."

I blushed so red, he laughed. "I'm here to answer questions if you have them, but your mates can and will ease your mind. The reason why they brought you here wasn't for a doctor's consult about a mating bite, but—besides being shocked by the existence of shifters and maybe wanting answers from someone with a scientific background like yours—because of our shared research interest."

"Oh?"

"They said you're a wolf biologist? I understand you're comparing the genes of native and transplanted wolves."

"Yes." I was surprised to hear that he knew the particulars of my research. A surge of gratitude shot through me. Landry or Wade had to have told him what I'm studying. Which meant they'd actually paid attention. They understood what I was working on, unlike most people in my life, including my parents. Even if what I was studying was... them.

"Yes. I'm tracking population and territory of wolf packs, as well as their genetic makeup to determine whether transplanted wolves have mixed with uncolonized packs. We're trying to determine whether to treat the North American grey wolf as one species."

He seemed truly curious. "And what have you found so far?"

"I'm still sequencing the genes from the samples I took from the two West Springs wolves last weekend. I'm anxious to compare them."

Cord stiffened. "West Springs wolves?"

Oh, shoot. Belatedly, I remembered how protective Landry and Wade were of the wolf population here. How Landry had seemed pissed, even as he'd helped me tranq the wolves I took samples from and tagged. Now that I knew what they were, it made sense. My research must offend them. Were Wade and Landry actually supportive? They'd said they compromised.

But Cord was a doctor. He surely understood studies had to be conducted to gather data to analyze.

“Erm, yes,” I said finally, squirming a bit under his less-casual stare. “I came out here to gather samples and tag wolves from the pack in this area—*canis lupus*, not shifter, of course.”

“And Wade and Landry allowed that?” He looked surprised.

I swallowed, remembering the Forest Ranger’s suspicion over finding my car last weekend. The whole pack was protective of their wolves, which was now completely understandable. “They, ah, set some ground rules. I’m not allowed to tag wolves without them present.”

Cord blinked a few times, then nodded. “Now I see why they wanted us to talk.”

“Oh?” I was starting to get irritated about constantly being one step behind in these conversations. What hadn’t they shared with me?

“I imagine they hope to spark your interest in researching shifter DNA rather than studying the wolf-dogs.”

“Again... why?”

“Well, if you’re studying the wolf-dogs in this area, your research could be dangerous to our shifter pack. We’re not the variety of wolves you’re studying, of course, but we’re protective of the wolf-dog packs in these parts. If your research showed population growth enough to warrant changing the grey wolf’s designation from predator to trophy game, it would open them up to hunting, which would endanger all of us.”

I opened my mouth to defend my research, but then sat back again. “I understand the concerns but my research isn’t for the Fish and Game department’s use, it’s for science. They generally conduct their own studies.”

“Oh, I know.” He held up a hand. “It’s just that it puts Landry and Wade in a tough position with the pack. It must be especially hard for Wade, after his mother.”

I frowned. “What about his mother?”

Cord winced. “Sorry, I thought you already knew. Not my story to tell. But listen, pack politics aside, I would love your professional input on my shifter gene research project.”

I tucked the lollipop into my cheek. “What is it?” The scientist in me was curious about his study, especially since it involved wolves.

He spun his chair around to face a computer behind him. “I’m trying to sequence the genes between scent-matches—that’s what we call the paired males who bond together to mate a female, like Landry and Wade with you



—as well as the genes of the Two Marks wolves in general to find the markers for triad mating.”

I stood and moved around the desk, leaning against the corner so I could see his computer monitor. “Wait... do you call them scent-matches because they smell the same?”

He turned and looked up at me. “Precisely.”

Now I understood why I thought Wade and Landry used the same shampoo. They actually had the same scent!

“And what have you discovered?” I asked.

Cord looked rueful. “I’m just getting the genome maps down. I haven’t even begun sequencing. It’s a huge project, and I have a full-time job being the only doctor in the area, but it’s a passion project for me.”

It was hard not to get swept up into his project. The temptation was strong. But I had my own research. Sequencing DNA—human or otherwise—wasn’t my specialty. I didn’t go that in-depth with my wolf testing.

Then again, I’d love to see what he was doing. “May I look at the maps you have now?”

Cord flashed me a smile, then looked at his computer. “I’d appreciate that. I’ll print it out.” He hit a few buttons, and papers began to emerge from the printer.

I leaned forward to take them from him. This would be fun.



W ADE

IT TOOK me over an hour to get the server at the distillery back online, which nearly killed me. I couldn't wait to collect Caitlyn from Cord's office.

Even though connecting the two of them was a genius idea, my wolf hated leaving her alone with him. Not just him, but any male. Not that I didn't trust Cord. I totally did. But our mate wasn't marked yet, which meant I couldn't stand leaving her at all, much less with Cord, who was young, good-looking, and accomplished. I wanted to throttle the guy just for doing us this favor. The way Landry had paced while I'd worked showed he felt the same way.

Thankfully, when Landry had called Cord to connect him with Caitlyn, he'd explained the situation. Who she was, *what* she was. And what she wasn't: marked. How we'd hoped to divert our mate's focus from her research to his. I sure as hell hoped he could spark her interest in a different way, to study wolves where the findings wouldn't be shared with the world. Claiming Caitlyn was priority one, but that required us to somehow convince her we could make this work, because it was more than taking her together. It was both of us marking her skin with our teeth.

Even if she had our marks, the pack would never accept her if she kept up with her current research. She couldn't do both: accept us and expose us.

Besides, neither Landry nor I were too keen on her living and working fifty miles away. Keen? Wrong word. It wasn't happening. Our mate was going to sleep between us every night.

We had to get her to move to West Springs, and work out how to keep that brilliant mind of hers busy so she still felt fulfilled with her career. We didn't just need our mate. We needed to ensure her happiness.

We pulled in front of Cord's practice and jumped out as if my truck was on fire. What we found definitely put my mind at ease and hastened our step. Caitlyn's face was lit up and animated as she pointed at a paper on Cord's desk that the two of them were both looking at.

"Glad to see you two found something to discuss," Landry said.

Their heads popped up at his voice.

Caitlyn looked between us and smiled. Yeah, that made my wolf fucking happy.

"Cord's research is really interesting," she said, rising from her chair. "Did you solve your crisis at the distillery? I *would* like to see it sometime, by the way."

"Wade solved the crisis," Landry said, looping an arm around Caitlyn's back and pulling her up against him. He leaned down and brushed his lips over hers. "And yes, we'll show you the distillery. Later."

"Give me some of that," I complained, and Caitlyn laughed as Landry released her and gave her a little nudge in my direction.

Fuck, she felt good in my arms. Her scent was like a drug, and I was instantly soothed. I took my time with the kiss. Angled my lips over hers and tasted her once. Twice. On the third time, I used a little tongue. I settled in long enough that Cord cleared his throat to let me know it was getting awkward for him.

I released her reluctantly. "Hungry, sugar? We could hit the West Springs Diner. They make a mean buffalo burger."

"It is delicious," Landry agreed.

"Sounds great." She looked to Cord. "Want to join us?"

Cord glanced between me and Landry. "I think your mates want you all to themselves. Another time."

I was relieved to hear him decline. The doctor was right. I was territorial and possessive of my mate. I gave him a nod as thanks.

No matter my unfounded jealousy, it seemed Caitlyn was far more relaxed than when we'd left her. Time with Cord had done her good. Talking science had put her back in her element. Or Cord had fielded her questions more effectively than Landry and I had last night. If there was anyone who could speak about marking and mating and scent-matches, it was Cord. The icing on the cake would be if Caitlyn could get interested enough in Cord's research to want to join him, and leave her wolf-dog research behind.

Landry took one of Caitlyn's hands and I took the other, and we led her down the street toward the diner, which was owned by a shifter family and was sort of the hub of all social activity in West Springs—human and shifter alike.

"Um, what are people going to say if they see the three of us all holding hands?" she asked.

"They'll think we're in a weird religious cult," I joked, and her steps faltered. "Don't worry, I'll drop your hand like a hot potato if we see another human. Does that make you feel better?"

"Um... sort of?" She peered up at me. "I'm not sure. Why you? I mean, I like both of you. This is all so weird."

Landry pushed the door to the diner open and I dropped my hold and followed them in. Landry was alpha in our triad. He could play her boyfriend in public. I'd be happy to pretend to be the third-wheel friend always tagging along.

For a moment, my mind wandered into a fantasy that involved Caitlyn bearing our pups and the three of us attending school functions this way. The thought of it sent tingles skittering across my forearms, raising the hair there.

Once we were inside, though, my mood plummeted.

Bob Jenkins and Tim Hollaroy were there, along with their crew, seated around one of the long tables.

Ranchers.

I couldn't stand the sight of any of them. I didn't know specifically which one fired the rifle that took away everything I had loved at the time, but one of them had. I knew that for sure.

"You okay with sitting outside, Caitlyn?" Landry asked, his voice calm for our mate's sake, but I heard the words threaded with anger. Thankfully, he knew how I felt. He led Caitlyn through the interior of the diner and

directly out to the covered patio. A creek meandered down a rocky embankment, and the sound of it carried.

I followed them out to the pretty spot, my appetite suddenly gone.

Landry picked a four-top and we sat down beneath a sun umbrella. A harried waitress dropped off three menus before scurrying away with a promise to return with glasses of water.

Caitlyn must have noted the change in my mood because she touched my hand. She turned toward me, eyes full of concern. "Are you okay? What's going on?"

Landry cast a dark look toward the inside of the diner, his jaw clenched, eyes narrowed. "I'm sorry I suggested this place. We can go."

I held up my hand. "Don't be," I said. "I'm fine."

I wasn't, but the ranchers weren't going to ruin my time with our mate.

Caitlyn split a look between the two of us. "What's going on?" she asked again.

"Nothing." I scrubbed a hand over my face. "I just hate running into those ranchers."

She looked through the big window. "That group in there? Why? What's going on?"

I didn't want to tell her the story. It was a shitty one, and talking about it did no one any good. Especially not when I had to be in the same restaurant as the assholes. But she was our mate, and she ought to know my story. Even the bad part.

I took a deep breath, let it out. "The one in the blue shirt is Tim Hollaroy. He's the leader of their little *gang*. One of the reasons our pack is so sensitive about outsiders coming on the land is because..." Fuck. I couldn't even say it. I'd actually never had to tell this story before. Everyone in the pack knew what had happened, and I didn't keep many human friends. Even then, they wouldn't understand. Caitlyn would, since she knew we were shifters.

"The ranchers believe wolves hunt their cattle," Landry supplied, coming to my aid.

Caitlyn grimaced, but nodded. "Yes, human-caused fatalities in the wolf population are—" She slapped a hand over her mouth with a gasp. Her eyes went wide. "Tell me that's not what we're talking about here."

I ground my molars.

"Wade's mother was shot in wolf form," Landry supplied quietly.

Caitlyn's big, beautiful eyes swam with tears. "Oh Wade, oh my God. I'm so sorry." She grabbed my hand and pulled it to her chest, kissing the back of it. "I'm so sorry."

"Fuck," I cursed, feeling like shit. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to ruin our lunch."

Caitlyn tipped forward out of her chair and wrapped her arms around my neck, dropping a few kisses along my temple. "I'm so sorry," she whispered. "That's awful. Really awful."

"Sugar," I murmured, touching her hip despite the farce I'd been trying to enact that we weren't lovers.

The waitress came by but Landry shooed her away, saying we weren't ready, even for water.

I gently guided Caitlyn's hips back into her chair. Her pain for me, her open sorrow for a female she didn't even know, opened all my old wounds. But at the same time, it also bathed them in... I don't know—love. I could feel her caring wrap around me like a blanket, and it soothed me in a way I hadn't let myself be soothed.

Maybe she was the only one who could do so.

"Thank you, sugar. You're so fucking sweet." My own eyes smarted for a moment and I had to look down at the table. Not a day went by that I still didn't miss both my parents.

"Was it one of them?" Caitlyn demanded, suddenly full of indignation. Her hands formed fists, and a flush crept up her cheeks.

"We don't know," Landry said quickly. "It seems likely. They're open about their hatred of wolves. My brother organized a group to look into it, but there are no eyewitnesses, no proof. Nothing to tie anyone specifically to the... murder."

Caitlyn threaded her fingers through mine at the table. "I'm so sorry."

I squeezed her fingers back before letting go. I didn't want those assholes to see her being passed between Landry and me. I'd seen the way they talked about and treated women, and they wouldn't take kindly to one they believed was being passed between two men. I wouldn't put it past any of them to say something to or about Caitlyn that would make us have to tear out their throats.

And of course, that couldn't happen. But it would, if they disrespected our mate. Now it was my fists that were clenched tight.

"Where's... is your dad still alive? How is he doing with this?"

My throat worked but I couldn't answer.

"His father went moon mad as a result of her death."

"Moon mad?" she echoed in a shocked whisper. A little frown formed in her brow, and I wanted to reach up and smooth it away. I looked to Landry, who grabbed her chair and pulled her closer to him so he could wrap his arm around her back.

"It's when a wolf goes feral," I explained. "He can't turn back to human form and becomes a danger to humans. When that happens... well, he has to be put down."

For a second time, Caitlyn gasped and covered her mouth. "Wade."

When I didn't answer, she dropped her head and stared at the table. A salty tear dropped to the wood.

My wolf caught the scent of it, and whined. "Sugar, please. Don't cry for me. It is what it is."

When she lifted her head, her expression was twisted in misery. "Now I understand what Cord said about my research. He told me the pack wouldn't like it because they thought it would change the wolves' hunting designation. No wonder everyone's so nervous. God, I had no idea what I was stirring up when I decided to come up here and barge onto your land uninvited. I'm so sorry."

"No," I said firmly. "I'm not sorry, Caitlyn. Not for a minute. We never would have met you if you hadn't been determined to study our wolves. It was Fate, for sure."



C AITLYN

I'D RETURNED to West Springs for the weekend with the intention of tagging more wolves. Plus, spending more time with Wade and Landry. In bed and out. But I'd learned that the two guys I was falling for were shifters, men who turned into wolves.

Yeah, completely crazy, yet for some reason, I wasn't losing my shit over it. I had no idea why, and that was something I'd have to figure out. Maybe it was because I'd spent all my time since undergrad studying the animals. It was my *job* to know everything about them.

Not shifters, of course. That had been fiction. Until this weekend.

Now they were two very big, very virile, very into-me guys in the other room.

I wasn't tagging any more wolves. I could leave West land and go elsewhere in Wyoming for my research, but I wouldn't know if any animal I aimed my tranq gun at was a shifter. While I had always been respectful of the species, my entire perspective had changed. I couldn't do it anymore. I didn't *want* to.

Not that I imagined either Landry or Wade being okay with me going off on my own to do so. They'd punished me for disobeying. Sure, it had been a very *pleasurable* punishment, but I'd sensed their disappointment,



and I didn't like that. I wanted to please them, to make them happy. Like any woman would in a relationship. Which meant they were definitely more than just a fling.

They certainly thought so, since they'd brought me into their confidence as well as their bed. This was why they weren't going to take me to find more wolves either. Landry had intentionally kept me from the animals last Sunday, and would do so again. He wouldn't lead me on a three mile hike, but toss me over his legs and spank me.

After Wade shared about what happened to his mother, I hadn't been all that eager to remain at the diner. I was sad and tried really hard not to cry, not to fling myself into his arms and comfort him with hugs and kisses. *That* wouldn't have kept our three-person relationship on the down low, that was for sure.

Since the waitress had been so busy with other guests, we'd dropped a tip on the table and decided to eat back at the house.

While Wade and Landry pulled together burgers like we would have ordered, I got out my laptop and sat at a table in the living room in front of a large picture window. The view was impressive, encompassing the entire valley. I could see why Wade's great-grandparents had settled in this exact spot. I imagined the scenery hadn't changed in the hundred years since.

I pictured myself living here and it felt... right. As if this was where I belonged.

"You're quiet in here," Wade said, coming in from the kitchen, wiping his hands on a dishtowel.

With the windows open, the scent of grilling burgers filled the air. My stomach rumbled.

"Except for that noise," he grinned, pointing to my belly. "What are you working on?"

I'd turned to face him, but shifted back to look at my laptop screen. "Tracking the wolves and updating spreadsheets."

He flung the towel over his shoulder. "You're going to keep going with it?"

I looked at him over my shoulder and frowned. "With what? My research?"

"Yeah."

"Why wouldn't I?"

Landry stuck his head around the corner. "Burgers are up." He looked between us, then asked, "What's going on?"

"Caitlyn's continuing with her research," Wade said. I didn't miss the unhappiness in his voice, or his stance.

"I've spent years on it," I countered. "Why would I stop now?"

"Because you aren't tagging more wolves," Wade snapped. I couldn't miss that he was riled. There was a little vein in his forehead that throbbed when he was frustrated or angry.

"And in those *years*, I've got plenty of tracking data. I don't need more. I can finish it without them." I could. I hadn't really considered it, always being driven to get more and more wolves in the study. But things had changed. I'd finish it with the animals I'd been tracking.

"Then why did you come here last weekend?" Wade went on. "Why do you have... eight more trackers in your bag?"

I turned to face them head on. "Because my boss believes our paper will be best received if it's as thorough as possible."

Landry stepped fully into the room and decided to join the conversation. "You only tagged the two wolves last weekend. They won't provide you with much data, or at least only short-term data. When will you stop, and finalize your work? It could go on forever."

I stared up at him. He had a good point. Data on a wolf was best if studied over a long period of time. Fewer wolves with longer study was better than many wolves with short review times. When was I ever going to finish?

"My grant money is tied to collecting as much data as possible," I replied, even though I knew the answer sounded thin.

"I thought the grant money was to *publish* the research, not collect data," Wade said.

I opened my mouth to speak, then shut it. Considered. "You're right. I need to use what I've got, finalize the data, and publish my findings."

A muscle tightened in Wade's jaw. "Now? Even after what you've learned? About us, I mean." He waved his hand between himself and Landry. "You're going to expose us, our way of life? You're going to put our entire pack, all shifters, in danger!"

I shook my head. "No. I would never do that."

Wade crossed his arms over his chest. "If wolf status is changed from predator to trophy game because of your findings, what's going to keep

other wolves, shifters and non-shifters, from being carelessly shot by ranchers or game hunters, like my mother was?”

Landry didn't say anything because I could tell he agreed with Wade.

He thought I would hurt shifters? Or wolves? “My paper isn't going to do that.”

“How do you know?”

“Do you trust me to keep your secret?”

Landry's cell rang, my question hanging heavy in the air between us. Wade was all but vibrating with frustration. I felt for him, but his anger was misdirected. I'd never hurt these animals.

Landry looked at the screen, then gave Wade a glance. “Time's up,” he said, before he put the cell to his ear.

Wade blew out his breath.

I didn't know what he meant, but Wade did.

“Gib. I'm guessing you're home,” Landry said into the phone.

Ah. His brother was back in town.

“Right. Yes.” He looked my way, and I knew whatever Gibson was saying was about me. “Thirty minutes.” Finished, he slipped the cell back in his pocket.

“He wants to see us,” Wade assumed.

Landry nodded, then looked to me. “I told you, Gibson's my older brother. He's also alpha of the Two Marks pack. The leader. What an alpha says, goes. On all things. He wants to meet you.”

I swallowed hard. He wanted to see... me?

“After lunch,” Wade added. “Caitlyn's hungry, and we don't want to waste the burgers.”

Even though he was upset, Wade remembered that my stomach had rumbled. He would see to my well-being before anything else.

Except, I was going to meet a shifter pack's alpha. I wasn't sure about my well-being at that meeting. I wasn't so hungry after all.



## L ANDRY

I DIDN'T LIKE BRINGING Caitlyn over to the West family house. The home was now for Gib and Ben and their newly marked mate, Shelby, whom we were going to meet for the first time.

Except there was more to this visit than meeting the pack's new alpha female.

Things were so unresolved with Caitlyn, and I knew how Gib would see things. I'd allowed a wolf biologist to tranquilize and install trackers in wolves *on our pack land*. What's more, she still planned to publish her research, which could seriously damage any kind of relationship she might hope to form with our pack. And she was our fucking mate! Wade and I needed—hell, our lives depended on—claiming her. Bringing Caitlyn into the pack and making her want to stay.

I didn't know how in the fuck we were going to do that, but I did know meeting with Gib was only going to make things worse.

But it wasn't like I had any choice. He was my alpha. I didn't get special favors for being his brother. In fact, it was the opposite. He held me to a higher standard, especially since I was the one he left in charge of the pack while he was away.

The best I could hope for was that he was still in a honeymoon phase with their new mate, and she'd smoothed his rough edges.

I parked my SUV in front of our house and climbed out.

I hadn't moved out yet, but it already felt like Gib's house. He'd returned with a mate. He and Ben would be living together with Shelby. It was time for me to move into Wade's. Especially since we'd found our mate. Yet, without the certainty of Caitlyn being there permanently, that didn't feel right, either.

I was in limbo right now, and it certainly was a special kind of hell.

Even though it was my house, I tapped on the back door before entering, showing deference to the change in our situation.

A beautiful young shifter female with long, whiskey-colored hair and tattooed, muscular arms stepped out of the kitchen with a wide smile on her face. She wore jeans and cowgirl boots, and a tight crop-top that showed off a flat, tan belly. Intellectually, I knew she was stunning, but with my own gorgeous mate's hand in mine, I experienced zero physical response. Which was a good thing, because no male would want to tangle with Gib or Ben if they got possessive of their female. Their *marked* female.

"You must be Landry." Shelby threw her arms wide.

I accepted the hug, hesitating before I wrapped an arm around her in return.

"Meet the pack's new matriarch." Gib sauntered in behind her, his gaze both warm and possessive at the same time. He sported a fresh tattoo across his right biceps—Shelby's name in bold letters. I guessed she wanted their bodies marked, too.

"I don't know about matriarch." Shelby laughed. "That makes me sound like an old lady."

"Yeah, I'm the old lady around here," another voice called from the kitchen, taking me by surprise. A shifter female in her fifties stood there beside Ben.

Shelby had already released me from the hug and was offering her hand to Caitlyn. "That's my mom, Marne," she said.

"We talked her into changing packs for Shelby," Ben explained. For an enforcer, he didn't look as deadly as usual. In fact, he appeared relaxed and content. Happy.

Shelby and Caitlyn shook hands warmly, and then Shelby introduced herself to Wade.

I grabbed Caitlyn's hand and tugged her forward to introduce her to Gib and Ben, and to meet Shelby's mom. "This is Caitlyn, our mate," I said firmly.

Gib and Ben were both polite to her—thank fuck. Otherwise, I would not have hesitated to throw down with my brother, alpha or not.

"The wolf biologist, yes," Gib said. His nostrils flared as he scented her, then shot an inquisitive look in my direction.

*No, she isn't marked yet, fucker.* My thoughts were more than a little defensive when it came to my mate.

Shelby's mom was as friendly as Shelby. She touched Caitlyn's shoulder, her gaze warm. "I'm still getting used to my daughter having two mates—it must be especially shocking for you, as a hum—I mean..." She broke off, sending a worried glance in my direction like she'd said something wrong.

"She knows she's a human, yes," Wade said to lighten the mood.

Marne laughed. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to be awkward. We have a half-dozen or so human mates in the Wolf Ranch pack, so I'm not shocked or anything. I just didn't know what stage you were at. Courting a human is different than claiming a shifter, isn't it?" Marne split a bemused glance between Wade and me, and a little of my defensiveness slipped away.

"Yes," I admitted, almost relieved to hear it voiced out loud.

"Don't worry. I know all the human ladies at Wolf Ranch. I've got this down." Shelby slipped her arm through Caitlyn's. "We'll give her the full scoop on your kind." She tugged Caitlyn toward the kitchen and out to the large deck beyond, Marne following. "Come sit outside with us, we have some iced tea and brownies."

"What do you mean, *your kind*?" I called after them. "You're a shifter, too!"

"I mean *male* wolves," Shelby tossed over her shoulder with a smile and a flounce of her dark hair. "I'm going to clue her in to all your secrets."

"I like her." Wade shoved his hands in his pockets, grinning.

I couldn't help but nod my agreement. Shelby's warmth and welcoming nature eased some of my tension. She might be just what Caitlyn needed. Especially after that awkward exchange we'd just had over her research before we left.

"Yeah, she's incredible," Ben agreed, his normally stoic expression soft.

“You two, in the living room.” Gib jerked his head in that direction, all business now. My hair was as dark as my brother’s but I’d yet to gain any of the silver that threaded through his and his beard. Maybe it was being alpha that had him going gray a little early. Sure, it made him look distinguished, but the responsibility of leadership had its price. I’d only been filling in, and I felt the weight of it.

Still, I had to stifle the growl that wanted to creep up my throat. I wasn’t here to challenge him or his authority. My wolf just couldn’t take any threat to our mate, especially because she was unmarked.

The four of us filed into the living room and took seats in opposite corners. Our mother had replaced the couch when we were kids, after we’d set the corner of it on fire... accidentally. Otherwise, the furniture dated to our grandparents, and some items, like the painting over the cold fireplace, even older.

“So, last I heard, you’d allowed a wolf biologist—who also happens to be your mate—onto pack land to tag two wolves. You want to update me on the situation?”

Gib’s voice was calm, like usual, but that didn’t mean he was happy.

A growl did escape my throat this time, and Wade quickly cleared his and interjected, “We had to take our time with her because she’s human. She knows what we are now, and the dangers her research poses to our community.”

“And?” Gib said.

I drew in a breath. “And, we introduced her to Cord to discuss his shifter gene research project. We’re hoping to get her to redirect her focus to something that would benefit the pack rather than harm it.”

“You’re *hoping*.” Gib’s voice dripped with doubt as he leaned forward and set his forearms on his knees.

“She’s *human*.” I repeated Wade’s defense. “As Shelby mentioned, courting a human is not the same process or on the same timeline as claiming a shifter female.”

Gib’s dark gaze met mine. “No, but I left you in charge of the pack. You are the alpha if anything happens to me. I’m not seeing a lot of concern for the pack as a whole here.”

I flew to my feet and Wade launched his body in front of mine, blocking me. “With all due respect, Gib, Landry’s done everything he can to minimize pack exposure.”

Gib also rose and pointed a finger at Wade, his eyes narrowed. “Listen to me, both of you. You need to stop her research—at all costs. No more tagged wolves. No studies of wolves in this area. *And mark her.*”

“Claiming Caitlyn is not necessarily going to change anything,” I pointed out. “It may mean something to a shifter female, but for a human, it’s a ritual she doesn’t relate to. To her, it only means we’re going to leave her with puncture wounds and scars. Hardly something we should pressure her into before she’s ready.”

“I understand about not wanting to push.” Gib shot a glance toward the door to the back deck. “We had to wait a few days to mark Shelby because she wasn’t ready. But I’ll tell you this—in that time, my wolf was going nuts. It’s hard for me to believe either one of you has your full wits while you’re trying to manage an unclaimed mate *and* this wolf research situation. So that’s why I am ordering you to *claim your female*. Get your heads on straight. For her sake. If the pack rejects her over her research, she won’t be comfortable here, and you’ll be living the rest of your lives among humans. I don’t want to lose either of you. You’re far too important to this pack.”

The wisdom of Gib’s words sank in, and some of my defensiveness fell away.

“All right,” I agreed. “We’ll get there.”

“Take some time off from the distillery if you need to. We’re back, we can manage things without you, barring some IT emergency.” He glanced at Ben and Wade, who both nodded.

Gib spread his arms, opening himself for attack. “You still want to knock my teeth out?”

“Sort of,” I grumbled.

He grinned. “It will be better after she’s marked. I promise.”

“You’re an asshole,” I muttered, but accepted the bro-hug, slapping his back in return.

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## CAITLYN

“ARE YOU FREAKING OUT?” Shelby demanded the moment we were outside.



I instantly liked her—she was that type who obviously made friends quickly, and seemed warm and perceptive.

“Kind of,” I admitted, dropping into the patio chair she directed me to. While we were about a mile down the road from Wade’s house, the view was very much the same: beautiful.

The table and chair set could seat twelve, which meant it was probably often used by large groups. A huge grill was in the corner, and there was even an outdoor fireplace.

I realized while Shelby might have been a shifter, she was new to West Springs and to this house. She’d only just arrived with her mates and her mother.

“Which is crazier, the two mates thing, or the wolf part?” she asked.

“The wolf part, definitely,” I said. “But at least that explains the two mates thing a little more. Before I knew, I just couldn’t figure out *why* they wanted to share me. But it’s some kind of biological compulsion, right?”

“It seems so,” Marne agreed. She had on a cute pair of black capri pants and a deep orange sleeveless blouse. “But it’s particular to this pack. Maybe a few other packs across the globe, but it’s pretty rare. Probably an evolutionary advantage in times when female shifters were in short supply.”

“Yes, that’s what Wade guessed,” I said. “And for the sake of creating stability in the population, their biology has shifted to include human females as mating partners.”

Shelby’s eyes widened. “That makes sense! Because it used to be forbidden. We weren’t allowed to mix with humans, for safety and privacy reasons. But as my mom mentioned, in the Wolf Ranch pack, *six* of the young men recently mated humans, breaking all the pack rules. Well, one of the women turned out to be part-shifter, but the point is—they were all fated mates. Not just human love-matches, but true, biological mates. Marked mates, I mean.”

I nodded, understanding, thanks to Cord’s Shifter Biology 101 lesson.

Studying the shifter genome *would* be a fascinating project...

Only, where would I present that paper? Somehow, I doubted there were any shifter universities or science journals. If I abandoned my current studies in favor of shifter science, I’d be totally isolated. I’d give up the chance of getting tenure at a university, gaining recognition for my studies.

Then again, it hadn’t ever been about recognition. Tenure was something I had to pursue because it was necessary for employment, but my

real love had always been pure science.

*Wolf science.*

“So what are these secrets you’re going to share with me?” I asked with a smile.

Shelby leaned forward in her chair, her eyes lighting up with eagerness. “Here’s what you need to know. Shifter males are over-the-top possessive. They’re definitely dominant. Even spending my whole life with them didn’t prepare me for how overwhelming it is to have *two* of them fixated on me. But don’t ever be scared. You hold all the power, sister.”

Marne looked a little wistful. “That’s true. A fated mate will do anything to keep his female safe and happy. You just became their number one job in life. So whatever you need, just demand it. They’ll figure out how to make it work.”

“Did you have a fated mate?” Something made me ask her.

Marne shook her head. “No. Shelby’s dad and I weren’t true mates, and he walked out on me when Shelby was a girl, like a coward. But my story is very rare. Wolves generally mate for life—fated or not.”

She didn’t seem heartbroken at being left, but it had been a long time. Perhaps he wasn’t a nice man, or perhaps... well, it wasn’t any of my business.

“I don’t mean to be intrusive, but I can tell they haven’t marked you yet.” Shelby held out her hands. “I’m not judging. Believe me—I wasn’t ready to be marked right away either, and I’m a wolf.”

“They haven’t pushed it,” I admitted. “Actually, they haven’t even asked me. God, is it something you ask? I mean, do they just say, *I want to bite you and mark you as mine forever?*”

Both women laughed, and I gave a small smile.

“But then, I just learned about it this morning,” I added, so they knew the time frame.

“Well, don’t make them wait too long,” Shelly advised. “Their wolves will be agitated and restless, and they will be overprotective and possessive as hell until they do.”

“They aren’t overprotective and possessive now?” I asked, and they laughed again. “What if... what if I say no?”

Shelby and her mom exchanged a glance. “They could go moon mad. It’s when—”

“I know,” I interrupted grimly, remembering that was how Wade’s dad died. “I know that one.”

“They won’t ever stop pursuing you,” Shelby said. “They can’t. It’s literally *ride or die*, if you know what I mean.”

I smiled at the urban culture reference.

“So... I basically have no choice? These guys are mine, whether I want them or not?”

Shelby tipped her head. “Or you condemn them to death.”

I was shocked, but no part of me wanted to refuse Wade or Landry. I never had. And the idea that I couldn’t... well, it actually sent something warm and gooey floating through my chest.

“So that’s why you need to know you’re in the driver’s seat. You own them. Make them work for it, if you want. Make it work for you.” She glanced toward the house. “My two just showed up at my work one day, wanting to carry me off here to Wyoming. It was a tough thing for me to swallow. I didn’t want to leave my pack, and I was especially upset about leaving my mom behind. As soon as they figured that out...” She spread her hands.

I smiled. “They brought your mom, too.”

“Yep. So give them a chance to work out whatever roadblocks you have. I’m sure they’ll move mountains to be with you.”

Landry opened the door and stepped out onto the deck with us, the sun picking up the dark glints in his hair. “Any mountain, sugar,” he said, obviously overhearing. “Which one do you want moved?”

I laughed and stood, stepping into the circle of his arms. “I don’t know yet,” I admitted. “I’m still assimilating.” I lifted my face to his. “Am I really your true mate? Forever?”

He brushed his lips across mine. “We’re both yours. Forever.”



WADE

CAITLYN SEEMED excited on the drive back to my place. *Sexually excited.* Even without the sweet perfume of her arousal—which I couldn’t miss—I would have known by the way she kept shifting in her seat, or by the slight flush to her skin. The way she kept touching both of us as she squirmed between us.

Something Shelby had shared had our mate turned on, which made my jeans way too fucking tight in the crotch area. A perpetual problem.

“What secrets of ours did Shelby spill?” I asked, my heart stuttering when she stroked a hand up and down my thigh. Fuck me, even that was hot. Pre-cum was probably staining my pants.

Caitlyn went still, and I tried to figure out why that had been the wrong question. “She told me if you don’t mark me, you could go moon mad.” Her voice was rusty, like fear was choking her, and her fingers dug into my thighs, as if that would keep me from shifting.

“Oh sugar, you don’t need to worry about us,” Landry said immediately, setting a hand on *her* leg. “We aren’t anywhere near that. There’s time for you to get used to the idea. You know only a little about what moon mad means.”

She nodded, looked up between us. It was when she was wedged between us like this that I realized how tiny she was. "Yes, some. Cord explained this morning." Another wiggle of her hips had my cock punching against the zipper of my jeans.

"So you understand why we do it?" Landry asked.

"Yes," she breathed.

"Are you... willing?" I asked. If Cord had told her, then that made this conversation a lot easier. Of course, I didn't think we'd be doing it in my truck. "We'd be gentle with you, Caitlyn. We'd never hurt you."

She nodded again. "I know. I... I want you to mark me," she said in a rush.

"You sure?" Landry asked, his voice dropping an octave.

"Not marking me will only endanger you both," she countered.

She was the one pushing for it, and we were the ones resisting. The tables had been turned.

"Why delay what's inevitable?" She looked up at me with those dark eyes.

Yeah, it was inevitable we'd mark her and make her ours. I'd considered her to be mine forever since the bar in Granger, and for Landry, it was when he got his first hit of her scent at the fence.

But she was human, and we hadn't gotten around to working through all the complexities of her being two shifters' mate. We'd been slow. Patient. But thank fuck for Cord.

I wouldn't have to strangle him for even looking at Caitlyn any longer. I owed him a thanks and a beer.

"I'm ready."

I sucked in a sharp breath at her words. My vision sharpened like I was on a hunt and my teeth punched through my gums, ready to mark her right here, in the truck.

Caitlyn gasped. "Your eyes... they change color! I don't know why I didn't realize that before." She twisted to look at Landry. "Yours change to... gold."

Clearly, Landry was having a hard time holding his wolf back too. His fingers gripped the steering wheel so hard his knuckles were white as he drove the rest of the way.

He skidded the truck as he pulled up in front of my place. Threw it into park. I was out the door, gripping Caitlyn by the waist before the engine

was off.

She wrapped those slender legs around my back, her husky laugh a sound I could drown in. She couldn't miss our eagerness. No, not eagerness. Fucking necessity.

I took the porch stairs two at a time and threw the unlocked door open with a bang.

"Right behind you," Landry said, his footsteps pounding behind us.

I carried Caitlyn into my bedroom, where I laid her gently in the middle of the bed with total reverence. Our mate was about to be marked.

We were going to mark Caitlyn and make her ours forever. This was a once in a lifetime moment.

Landry moved in to untie her shoes and pull them off as I removed her shirt. We kept stripping her until we had her naked on the bed, her long dark hair fanned out around her, her pretty nipples beaded up without a single touch.

I remedied that situation, climbing over her to flick my tongue over one nipple, then suck it into my mouth. Caitlyn moaned and arched, thrusting her small breast against my lips. I sucked harder as I fondled the other nipple, then I moved up to claim her mouth.

I wouldn't hurt her, but I couldn't be gentle. Not now. Not when she was going to satisfy me fully, man and wolf.

Landry stripped while I saw to our mate's breasts, a duty I took damn seriously.

"Where do you want your marks, sugar?" Landry asked, gripping her calves and sliding her closer to where he stood at the foot of the bed. I took the change in position as an opportunity to strip out of my own clothes.

"Um... I don't know? Is there a certain place?" Her lips were swollen from my kiss, her eyes glassy and dilated. The scent of her arousal was stronger now.

"Traditionally it's in the shoulder and neck region, but on you, it may scar, so... we could get a little more creative with where we place them." I flicked my brows, then raked my gaze down her body.

"Somewhere far from a major artery," Landry warned. "Where it won't bother you while you heal."

Caitlyn flushed like the question was embarrassing. It wasn't something she'd been asked before. Or would be ever again.

“You pick,” she whispered, and fuck if that trust in us didn’t make my cock stand out even straighter. Our mate was willing to surrender to us, to give her body over to our care, and it made me feel as tall as a mountain. This was forever, and sure, we had shit to work out, but we’d work it all out together.

Landry wasted no time in pushing Caitlyn’s knees up and spreading them wide. She moaned when he licked into her. The ripple of satisfaction I felt of having our mate pleased was just as incredible as if I were tasting her myself. My mouth watered for my own turn at that dripping fountain.

“Damn, she tastes good,” Landry said when he lifted his head, his lips and chin glistening. Caitlyn had been right—his eyes glowed pure amber now, and I could see the tips of his teeth extended, ready to mark her. We’d been friends for a long time, but I’d never seen him like this.

“Make her come with your tongue first,” I suggested, even though holding out on our own pleasure would be torture. I needed to know she was well satisfied before we inflicted any pain on her.

“Oh, I intend to,” Landry said as he lowered his head once more.

I returned to her mouth, kissing her until the pleasure Landry was inflicting made it too hard for her to kiss me back, then I returned to her breasts.

Landry had two fingers inside her, using the come-hither motion on her inner wall that tickled her G-spot as he continued using his tongue around her clit.

I sucked and licked, kneaded and squeezed her breasts. Perfectly in tune with my mate, I knew the moment she was going to peak in orgasm. I had to fist my own cock and pump as I continued sucking her thickened nipple because my own climax was just a few strokes away.

Caitlyn screamed, arching up. My balls drew up tight, my thighs shook. I didn’t plan it, but my top two canines sank into her breast, claiming it—and her—as my own. My cum spurted in a hot spray into my own fist.

She screamed again, a shudder of pleasure-pain rippling through her. I heard the wet sound of the pumping of Landry’s fingers. Caitlyn jerked, crying out a third time. Landry had marked the curve of her ass to the right of her pussy while he continued to coax her orgasm with his fingers.

“Sugar,” I murmured softly, carefully disengaging my teeth and quickly licking away the blood, hoping the serum in my saliva would aid in healing her wounds. “Tell me you’re okay.” My heart pounded, my need to protect

and soothe my mate outweighing the pleasure of my orgasm and marking her.

My wolf was preening and replete. Sated and satisfied. But still worried that she might not have found the marking as satisfying as it could have been if she were a shifter herself.

“Is she okay?” Landry asked tersely.

Her eyes blinked open, but they were unseeing. “Th-that was amazing,” she moaned to the ceiling.

I let out a chuff of relieved laughter and Landry added his, slipping his fingers from her and licking them clean. “Thank fuck.”

She brought one hand to cup her marked breast, the other to the claiming bite on her ass. “Oh my God, that was so sexy. I think I’m going to come again just remembering it.”

“Let me help you with that.” Landry flipped her to her belly and put on a condom, then easily entered her from behind. He rocked his hips against her marked ass with slow, steady strokes.

“Landry!” she cried, arching her back. I moved so I could see the red marks his teeth had left behind, but it was nothing more than a scratch. She was not in pain, not the way she moaned and clutched at the covers. Or the way she begged him for more. Harder. Deeper.

Now, watching my mate receive pleasure from my scent-match, the languor of my orgasm washed through me. Warmth and contentedness replaced all worry, love for both of them coursing through me. I sank onto the bed to watch them come to a second climax, experiencing as much pleasure as if I were a direct part of it.

It was done. We were a family now. Sure, we still had a lot to work out, but our mate was marked. Claimed. She belonged to us in every shifter way, and every wolf would know it.

That satisfaction couldn’t be bought. Not at any price.

The rest, we would figure out.

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CAITLYN



I SPREAD my legs wide as Landry arced in and out of me from behind. I'd never been more wet in my life. Never felt more sexual. Worshipped.

The pain of the bites had been fleeting. Neither of my mates—I was thinking of them in those terms now—had bitten deep. More just punctured the surface a little. In fact, the resulting sensation of pain only heightened the pleasure I experienced now. Every time Landry rocked into me, my breasts pressed against the bed and his loins hit my ass, reminding me of the erotic locations they each had chosen to leave their marks.

*Two marks.*

I was now part of the pack. At least, I hoped I was. I hoped my role as a wolf biologist—and my human status—wasn't hard for some to accept.

Landry's breath grew rough at my nape, his movements jerky as he plunged in harder and faster.

"You gonna come for me again, little female?" he asked, nipping at my ear.

"Yes," I gasped. I knew I would. I'd been on the edge of another orgasm from the moment the sensation of their marks set in. The pinch and tingle of pain mingled with some heady endorphins. I wondered if anyone had studied the secretion from their teeth that left their scent. That might be another interesting... "Oh!" I cried out as Landry found the perfect angle. "Please," I begged, suddenly desperate and forgetting anything but the feel of my mate in me, over me. His dick. How he worked my body to excruciating pleasure.

"Oh, I aim to please," Landry said, riding me hard and fast on that perfect angle.

I sucked in a breath, my belly quaking as I held it, and then I came. The moment my muscles started squeezing, Landry shouted and slammed in a couple more times before finding his own epic release. His roar shook the cabin walls—and the cabin walls were made of log.

I forgot who or where I was, spinning out into the atmosphere, visiting the moon, the stars, the planets. When I returned, Wade was stroking my hair, massaging my scalp.

Landry eased out, then brought a washcloth to clean me up before dropping down beside me.

"You, too," I murmured, reaching for Wade. He stretched out on my other side, sandwiching me tightly between them. Two big, brawny, very virile men surrounding me.

“This,” I sighed, drifting into an orgasmic stupor.

“What about this?” Landry murmured, his hand stroking idly up and down my thigh, even cupping my butt where he’d bit me.

“This is what life is all about.”

“Damn straight,” Wade agreed, kissing my neck and shoulder. “Until I met you, I had no idea.”

“Me neither,” Landry agreed. “But now we have a mate, and it all makes sense.” He lightly traced a fingertip around the puncture marks Wade left on my breast.

They didn’t say anything else. It was as if they couldn’t stop touching me, so I reveled in the feel of their hands. And I fell asleep, content in my world. At least for now.



## C AITLYN

THE REST of Saturday had been spent between Landry and Wade. They'd been gentle with me. Cautious. Studiously checking my skin where they'd bitten me. They'd been intense during the actual act of marking me, where they'd been wild and almost... rough. As if they couldn't control themselves. After that, they'd been perhaps too controlled. Keeping me in bed, feeding me there. They still hadn't been able to keep their hands off me, but now it was as if they were making love. I'd been on top with Wade, setting the pace. Landry had gone all basic and missionary.

Nothing crazy. But the orgasms. God, it didn't matter if they were frenzied or tame. They ensured I came not once, not twice, but sometimes three times before they finished.

It was because of all this attention that I slept late Sunday morning. It wasn't two burly, horny guys who woke me, but my cell and an annoying, bossy boss.

After I grabbed my phone from the bedside table and saw Dr. Andrews flashing on the screen, I knew this wasn't going to be a fun call.

I sat up, tugged the sheet over me. The room smelled like sex. *I* smelled like sex. My muscles felt like I'd had it all night long. Which I had.

That didn't mean I wanted to have a conversation with my boss in the middle of all that.

I grabbed the blanket off the bed, wrapped it around myself as I answered.

"Dr. Andrews," I said.

"Good morning."

I dropped into Wade's reading chair in the corner, and looked out the window. Anywhere except the unmade bed where I'd been thoroughly fucked. And marked. By shifters.

"I don't see any new targets on the monitoring program," he said.

His words meant he was in the office. On a Sunday morning.

"That's right. I wasn't able to tag any yesterday."

*Or ever again.* The idea of tranquilizing a friend of Landry and Wade's, or possibly even them, made me panic a little.

"Your data will—"

"I was reminded that it's better to have ample data on fewer sources than nominal data on many."

Dr. Andrews was silent, so I pushed on.

"If I'm going to write this paper and publish it, then I need solid, long-term research. Continuing to tag and track new wolves is only going to... well, kick the can down the road, so to speak."

"Are you saying you're done with your wolf study?"

I didn't like the tone of his words.

"I'm done with my tagging. I will write the paper from what I've collected."

"My name is on your paper, Dr. Shriver."

While I'd done all the work, he was my boss, and sponsoring the work through the grant. He'd be the paper's headliner, that was how academia worked.

"I'm aware of that."

"Your grant money, your time at Granger State, is dependent upon the reception this publication receives."

I sighed, and rubbed my forehead. I was sure my hair was a wild tangle. "I haven't thought of anything else. My dedication to the wolves is unmatched."

Especially since I'd spent the night in bed with two of them. Even allowing them to bite and mark me. I wanted to go to see Dr. McCaffrey—

Cord—and get my bloodwork done. To analyze the sample compared to before-marking. I wondered if—

“We will see, won’t we?” Dr. Andrews snapped.

“Is there a problem?” I asked. “I’ve done everything by the book. The research is thorough. Extensive.”

“And yet you are in West Springs instead of here at your office, working.”

Landry came into the room. He wore only his jeans, and they weren’t even zipped or buttoned. With bare feet, he was quiet like a cat, not the growly wolf I knew was within him.

He gave me a wink and a sly smile.

I melted. “It’s Sunday morning, Doctor,” I said into the phone, trying to stay focused on my boss and not the deep Adonis V of Landry’s that made me drool.

Landry perked up at my words, leaned against the wall, and crossed his arms over his chest.

“I shall work remotely today and be back on campus tomorrow morning. I assure you, the paper will be finished and published as soon as possible.”

It was the way Landry’s jaw clenched that let me know something was wrong. He wasn’t filling in as alpha for the pack any longer, but he was definitely the dominant one in our relationship.

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## LANDRY

WADE and I heard her phone ring from the kitchen. We’d been quiet to let our mate sleep after keeping her up most of the night. We didn’t need wolf hearing to know she’d gotten a call, but it had been in our favor to pick up her half of the conversation.

Caitlyn wasn’t planning to tag any more wolves. That was good, because she’d have to go out on her own to do it. I wasn’t taking her. Neither was Wade, or anyone else from the pack. But if she went, she’d be punished for breaking one of our rules.

She knew it. Thankfully. I didn't mind spanking her ass. Fuck, my dick got hard just thinking about how my handprint bloomed on that fair skin. Or the way her soft flesh jiggled from the impact.

"Your boss?" I asked when she'd disconnected the call.

She nodded, looked up at me from Wade's chair. The blanket was wrapped around her like a cocoon. She was covered up to her bare shoulders.

"He's a workaholic," she explained.

"He's an asshole," I countered, not mincing words.

Her mouth fell open, then she laughed. "Yeah, he is. But he's the one who's sponsoring the paper. It's his name on the top, so he wants to—"

"What do you mean, his name is on the paper? I don't see him out here with a bag full of trackers."

She shook her head. "It's his name above mine. That's how these things work."

I frowned. "That makes no fucking sense."

"It does if you're in academia."

I sighed, ran a hand down my face. What I wanted was for her to toss up her hands—and toss off that blanket—and say she was quitting her research and her job at Granger State. All of it. But we weren't there yet. She may have let us mark her, but she still hadn't promised to leave the human world to do her scientific research for the pack instead.

It was probably still too soon for us to even suggest that, but we had Gib breathing down our necks about her research paper. The one she still planned to write.

Dammit.

She stood, but didn't ditch the blanket. I glared at the damned thing. "I'm not going to tag any more wolves," she said. "You know that. So I'm going to finish my work. Get it out there."

I stilled. This was bad. Really bad. Gib was going to lose his shit.

"You sure, sugar?" I asked.

She cocked her head to the side, her dark hair sliding over her bare shoulder. "Of course I'm sure. Why wouldn't I be?"

"Your research... it's going to be a problem for the pack." I didn't say *for us*, because I didn't want to fight with her over this.

"I've been working on it for two years." She frowned, studied me. "Are you saying you don't want me to publish?"

I dropped my arms, moved closer to her, set my hands on her biceps over the blanket. "I've already told you. Any population studies could change their status for hunting. We don't want attention brought to the wolves."

"I'm helping," she snapped.

"You sure about that?" I countered.

"Do you trust me?" she asked, narrowing her eyes.

It was as if she'd hit me with a two by four. I dropped my hands, stepped back. "Of course."

Did I? I'd been worried all this time about her paper putting us in danger. Would I be attracted to a woman who would do that? Would my wolf want to mark someone who was a threat? Would I defend her to Gib if I didn't trust her?

Fuck, I hadn't. I'd wanted everything from her. Demanded it, practically. Emotionally, physically. Yet why didn't I trust her in this? She knew what we were. She knew how we felt. How we'd all be impacted. She'd met others in the pack.

"You don't," she said, her voice filled with hurt.

"I—"

Wade ran in. "Gib's pulled up. Something's wrong."

I heard the wheels of his truck, the slide of the tires across the dirt as he hastily stopped.

I'd been too focused on Caitlyn to notice.

Wade was gone, cutting through the house before I turned and chased after him.

Gib hopped from his truck, every line in his body full of fury. Ben flew out the other side. They stalked to the back of his pickup, where Gib dropped the tailgate.

"Another wolf's been shot," Gibson snarled.

I ran over, saw the grey wolf with one white paw I'd tranqed last week for Caitlyn. The bloody fur. The lifeless body.

*Fuck.*

"Oh my God," Caitlyn said, her hand over her mouth. The blanket was still around her, tears pooling in her eyes. "White Paw."

Gib turned to her. Glared. "This is the third wolf that's been shot in the past few months. They've all been fucking tagged with your trackers. Every one of them has one thing in common. You."



## C AITLYN

BILE ROSE from my stomach up my throat, making me choke. I shook my head, blinked back the tears as I stared at White Paw. Dead. “No. That can’t be. The trackers are for my eyes only.”

“Wolves are dying. Every one of them has had one of your chips in them,” Gibson snarled. “Explain that.”

I wiped away a tear from my cheek. “I-I can’t. But I had nothing to do with this. You have to believe me.”

I turned to look at Landry and Wade for their support but they avoided eye contact, staring at the dead wolf instead.

Gibson glanced at Wade, then pointed at him. “I sent you to Granger to resolve this problem three weeks ago. I understand she’s your mate, but obviously you lost sight of the objective here.”

A windstorm whipped up inside my head.

*He sent Wade to Granger?*

That meant... Wade hadn’t met me by accident at the bar that night. He’d been there to resolve a problem: *me*.

“Now, hold on.” Wade held up a hand. “I haven’t lost sight. We’ve been keeping tabs on the research and the paper.” His tone was angry, as if he was defending me, but he was guilty of doing just as Gibson had said.



My brain stuttered. Oh god.

*“Keeping tabs on my research?”* I echoed, stumbling back. *What the actual fuck?* “Here I thought we were falling in love but instead you were *handling me*. Dealing with a problem. Keeping tabs on it. Like Tab A in Slot B?”

I lashed out, hurt. Turning what we’d done together to be tawdry and dirty. Well, they’d made it that way.

“Sugar—” Wade stretched a cautionary hand to me.

“Don’t.” I shook my head and stepped further away.

“This has gone way too far,” Gibson added, but he was addressing Landry, not me. “You get that research project shut down immediately, and the trackers out of the remaining wolves. No more tagging. Definitely no publication.”

My stomach twisted into a tight knot. They couldn’t shut down my research. It wasn’t up to Gibson or Landry or anyone in West Springs whether I published or not. Had that been their whole purpose in seducing me? To put an end to my work? Or to sabotage it?

I drew myself up, which took a lot, considering I was wearing nothing but a blanket and was staring down four very large men. Ben hadn’t said a word. He didn’t have to. The way he was looking at me, full of disdain, said everything.

“Now, you listen to me—I had nothing to do with those wolves being shot. I’m as horrified as you are, but it has nothing to do with my research. You don’t get to decide how or when or what I publish.”

Gibson and Ben scowled. Wade and Landry looked regretful, but neither of them said a word in my defense. Neither one had my back right now. They were choosing the pack over me.

That was the part that gutted me. I glared at them. “My research would never harm wolves, and if you believe I could do such a thing, then you don’t know me at all.”

“Caitlyn...” Landry said, stepping toward me.

“No.” I held up a hand to keep him back. “Tell me something—was the story about me being your mate even true, or was that just a ploy to halt my research?”

“You’re our mate,” Landry growled, coming toward me again. The look in his gaze changed. So did the color. Still...

Remembering what Shelby said about me actually being in control, I snapped, “Stay back.”

Landry halted.

Well, at least that much was true.

I licked my lips, glanced between Landry and Wade. “We’re done.” The moment I said the words, I felt my heart rip out of my chest.

Not just mine.

Landry turned pale. Wade shook his head, coming toward me.

Three broken hearts.

I believed that much about my supposed mates. Their pain appeared as genuine and gutting as mine. But it changed nothing. They didn’t believe in me or my research. They’d hidden their true agenda from me, which had been to take me offline. I could never forgive them for that.

I turned and marched into the house, letting the screen door bang behind me. Fueled by righteous anger, I went to the bedroom, threw the blanket off, and pulled on my clothes.

I heard the sound of Gibson’s truck start up and drive away, the screen door open, and the heavy footsteps of my mates coming into the cabin.

With shaky hands, I shoved my laptop, power cord, and research notes in my backpack, then did a quick scan of the place to make sure I hadn’t left anything behind. I could do without the awkward exchange of personal items post-breakup.

“Caitlyn,” Landry said as I swept out of the bedroom and through the living room, giving them lots of space.

“We’re done,” I repeated, avoiding their eyes. “I have nothing to say, nor do I want to hear anything from you.” I couldn’t bear to look at them because the pain in my chest was too great. My body ached from their eager and thorough attentions, a reminder of what they’d done that would linger after I left. I marched up to Wade and held my palm out. “Keys.”

He pulled them from his pocket but held them above my open palm, not releasing them. “Listen, can we just talk?” he asked. “It wasn’t like what Gib said. Let me explain. Please, sugar.”

“Keys,” I repeated, tapping my toe on the floor.

“Let her go,” Landry murmured in a defeated tone.

“What?” Wade’s head swung in Landry’s direction incredulously.

“She’s upset and she wants to leave. We can’t stop her.”

“But—”

I took Wade's distraction as the opportunity to snatch my keys from his fingers. Then I ran.

I ran out of the cabin and straight to my car. Tossed everything in haphazardly, afraid they'd stop me. As I started it up, all the awful images from the last few minutes bombarded my mind in a horrible loop. The bloody wolf—White Paw—dead in the back of Gibson's truck. The guilt on Wade's face when he realized he'd been caught. The pain in Landry's eyes when he'd told Wade to let me go.

I stepped on the gas, as if I could leave it all behind if I just drove fast enough. If I just left West Springs. Of course, I knew it wasn't true.

The pain in my chest was unbearable. The more distance I put between me and the two males I'd been falling in love with, the worse it got.

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## WADE

"WHAT HAVE WE DONE?" I tunneled my hands through my hair and turned a slow circle in the cabin. I was lost. Confused. My wolf was snarling and snapping, not understanding what the fuck had just happened.

Landry punched the log wall, smashing his knuckles with the impact and then staring at his hand as if it belonged to someone else.

"This couldn't be any worse. She thinks we... *fuck!*" I shouted the last part when I realized that what she thought—that we'd manipulated her to get control of her research—was sort of true. I'd gone to Granger and followed her to the bar to meet her and talk her out of her research. Sure, that had fucking gone sideways. But that had been the original plan. And we hadn't changed it since.

Landry had taken us on a three-mile hike through the woods just so Caitlyn could think we were helping her look for wolves. We were liars, plain and simple.

"There's no way she had anything to do with that wolf getting killed," I said firmly. Maybe I was still shouting, it was hard to be sure with the din in my ears. I was crazed. Wild. "You don't believe that, do you?"

Landry punched the wall again. The crunch of his bones breaking turned my stomach. They would heal quickly, the pain probably already gone.

“*Landry*,” I snapped, narrowing my gaze. “You don’t believe it, do you?”

He seemed lost in a stupor, unable to answer.

Our mate was gone. Our *marked* mate.

She said we were done.

It was all our fault. My fault. I hadn’t been up front about the circumstances of our meeting, and now she believed the whole thing was a manipulation. She questioned whether we were even her true mates! After what we’d done last night, she shouldn’t have had any doubts, but she did.

Fuck.

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

How were we going to fix this? What could we possibly do to sort out the horrific situation? *Could* our mate be responsible for wolves getting shot? No, I’d just said she hadn’t done it. Yet it *had* happened.

Obviously she hadn’t been the one to pull the trigger. The latest wolf had been killed while we’d been marking our mate, or while she’d been between us in bed all night.

Still, it didn’t look good. In fact, it looked damn bad. But she wasn’t the only one working on the project. She’d told us herself that little fucker Dr. Andrews was part of it, as well. And he’d been the one hounding her about putting more trackers in the wolves. Even just a little while ago, when we’d overheard her phone call.

Gah, I couldn’t think. My wolf was going nuts over Caitlyn’s departure. I stripped off my clothes.

All I could do right now was shift. Shift, and run.

I’d probably have to run all day and night to burn off this much anguish.

Maybe tomorrow I could figure out how we could get our mate back.

---

LANDRY

I DIDN'T KNOW how long I spent staring at Wade's wall. My knuckles bled and healed, the bones shattered and reformed at least four times as I stood there abusing the great sturdy log that formed the wall of the cabin.

Our mate was gone.

Our sweet, beautiful, caring mate. The one we'd just claimed. Who'd laid her trust at our feet, and we'd... shit all over it.

Damn it all to hell!

How could we have let things get so fucked up? Fate would not have mated us to a wolf-killer. I simply couldn't believe that. Unless... it was all just biology, and there was no Fate. In which case, it was a pure coincidence that the female our bodies were attracted to was hunting—

No.

Caitlyn Shriver didn't kill wolves.

Wade was right. She couldn't have had any part of this. I hadn't missed those tears shining in her eyes when she saw the dead wolf. What had she called him—White Paw? I couldn't miss the reverence with which she'd handled the wolves she'd tagged. She wasn't marking them for death. I knew she wasn't.

Which meant... we'd just thrown our sweet mate under the bus. We'd just allowed Gib to condemn her without saying one word in her defense.

Worse, she believed our entire relationship was a manipulation. That we'd only been with her to thwart her research. She thought we'd used sex and even the double marking as a weapon.

Our idiocy may have just cost us our mate. We may have lost her for good.

No.

I couldn't accept that.

Wade and I would figure out a way to get her back. We'd have to.

Somewhere in the distance, I heard a wolf howl, an eerie sound at this time of day. A forbidden sound. Because it was against pack rules to shift and run during the day when the chances of being seen were greater. When the chances of being hunted were too dangerous.

It was Wade, sending his mournful cry after Caitlyn.

Without hesitation, I stripped off my clothes and shifted to join him. He was my scent-match.

We ran, and mourned together.



## C AITLYN

I DROVE straight to my apartment, barely remembering the drive. I climbed into bed and stayed there the rest of Sunday. Slept and cried, and slept some more. The place smelled like Wade, which meant it smelled like Landry, since they had the same fucking scent. So I cried some more.

It was a call from my mother the next morning that pulled me out of my funk. I grabbed my cell when it rang, my heart thinking it would be either of the guys. But I'd been the one to walk away, to tell them it was over, so I'd been stupid. I sighed, and answered, knowing she'd call back if I didn't.

"Hi, Mom," I said.

"What's wrong? Are you sick?"

I sat up, brushing my snarled hair back from my face. "No, just tired."

"I didn't hear from you yesterday and I was worried."

I sighed. "I'm fine."

I wasn't, but the last thing I was going to tell my mother was the truth. Not that she'd believe it. *I broke up with two men after having a heated and tawdry fling for the past three weeks. Oh, did I mention that they shift into wolves, and bit me to mark me? I think you could've had half-shifter grandchildren by either one of the guys, although I wouldn't know which since I fuck both of them, but that's not happening now.*

“Well, Dad talked to Dale Dickman again at Oakview. He said the job is yours, but you’d have to be back by August fifteenth for teacher meetings, as school starts after Labor Day.”

I popped from bed, suddenly wide awake and full of... anger.

My parents were constantly pushing me to return to Connecticut and be a prep school science teacher. A *safe* job. A worthy one they could tell their friends at the country club about. Not that their daughter roamed the Wyoming wilderness tracking wolves.

Then there were Landry and Wade, who were deciding for me that my research and all the time I’d put into it had to be abandoned. Then there was Dr. Andrews, who was pushing me on the paper when he did jack-shit, just to take all the credit.

Then there was Gibson, the alpha of a wolf shifter pack, who accused me of horrible things all because of... what? Greed?

“Mom, I love you.”

“I love you, too, honey.”

“But I’m not coming back to Connecticut. I’m not. I’m not sure what’s going to happen with my research and paper, or my teaching position at Granger State for that matter, but I do not want the job at Oakview. If you like it so much, you take it. Or Dad. It hurts my feelings that you can’t see that it won’t make me happy, that it’s what *you* want for me.”

“Honey—”

“I’m tired of people telling me what I should be doing. Until you can accept me and my work as-is, then we need to take a little break.”

“Oh, Caity,” she said on a sigh. “I’m sorry.”

I sighed, swallowing back tears. “I am, too. I have to go to work. Here, in Wyoming. Studying wolves.”

I ended the call and strangely felt better. I’d stood up for myself with my mother. I wasn’t going to work at Oakview no matter what happened.

But I was tired of being pushed into what others wanted me to do. I couldn’t figure out Landry and Wade right now, but I could get my paper published. That was tangible. What I’d been working on. It was me. My goal, my dream.

---

WADE

FOR FUCK'S SAKE. I woke up in my bed full of pine needles and dirt. I hardly remembered making it home last night after running until my paws bled.

Landry had been with me, I remembered that much. We'd howled at the moon until we'd gone hoarse. I didn't know how we even found our way home.

I rolled out of the bed, cursing myself under my breath. Now I had to wash the sheets, which meant I'd wash away the scent of our mate. I stripped the bed with a snarl and padded out to the laundry room.

"Hey." Landry was on my couch, just as filthy and naked as I was. He sat up, scrubbing a hand over his stubble and groaning.

I grunted in response, passing him and throwing the sheets in the washing machine.

"Are you okay?" Landry asked when I returned. I must have looked as shitty as I felt.

"No. Are you?"

"Fuck, no." Landry swung his legs off the couch to sit, his face buried in his hands.

It was as if we'd drunk a bottle of whiskey and were hungover. Which didn't ever happen with shifters since our metabolisms were too swift. We were worn out from our run. We'd been frenzied. Crazy. And we were feeling it now.

"Yeah." I walked back toward the bedroom, stopping at the doorway. "I'm going to take a shower and eat something." My voice sounded like rusty nails. "Then let's figure out how we're going to fucking fix this."

"Okay—good. I'll make coffee," he offered, standing.

Fifteen minutes later, we were both showered and had devoured a couple packages of breakfast sausages. I drank two cups of coffee before my brain finally started to organize. "We agree Caitlyn couldn't have knowingly killed any wolves, right?"

"Right," Landry said. His eyes were clear and focused. "But the wolves that were shot had her trackers in them, which means someone else is using them as locators. It's too big of a coincidence otherwise. Could they be hacked? Like, could anyone pick them up like a radio frequency?"



I frowned as I considered. “I didn’t get a chance to examine the technology, but I doubt it. Not unless she shared some kind of activation code or serial number.”

He frowned, took a swallow of his black coffee. “Well, let’s think. Who else has access to that information?”

“Her advisor—Dr. Andrews. But the guy didn’t strike me as a hunter.” I remembered the little annoying man when we’d met him in Caitlyn’s office at the university.

Landry nodded. “Yeah, it’s hard to imagine he would even know how to load a rifle, much less be able to aim and shoot. Although, appearances can be deceiving.”

I ran a hand over my jaw. My whiskers were in. While I’d showered, I hadn’t shaved. “What if... I’m just spit-balling here... what if Andrews or someone else on their research team *sold* the information? If I were a hunter and knew that a bunch of scientists could give me the exact coordinates on my game, I might consider paying for that information.”

Landry snorted. “If you were a very unsportsmanlike hunter, sure.”

I grumbled, because what was the point? We were far from vegetarians, but we were thankful for the lives of the animals we ate. We didn’t kill for sport.

“We already know anyone who hunts wolves where they’re not designated as trophy game isn’t worried about playing fair.” He looked my way, and I nodded.

“Very true. Hang on a sec.” I got up and retrieved my laptop. “I’m just curious about something.” I knew Caitlyn’s research was paid for by a grant. What I hadn’t looked into was the source of that grant funding. I called it up on a web search. “Her position is funded by the Western Wildlife Foundation—ever heard of them?”

“No.” Landry frowned, leaned closer to look at the screen.

“Me neither. Let’s pull up their annual report.” I typed away, moving the cursor around, finally finding the official record and skimming through it. Landry waited patiently. “Son of a bitch!”

He stilled. “What?”

“Guess who’s listed on the Board of Directors?” I looked from the screen to Landry. His eyes were narrowed. Jaw clenched. “I’m going to kill that bastard. Please stop me, or I swear to Fate, I’ll do it.”

Landry's expression turned deadly and he didn't even know who I was talking about. "Is it Bob Jenkins or Tim Hollaroy?" Or maybe he did.

I nodded. "Both of them."

Landry's fist came down on the table so hard, our coffee mugs overturned. I lifted my laptop out of the way of the spilled liquid as Landry cursed a long diatribe thoroughly aimed at Jenkins and Hollaroy. He hopped up and grabbed a kitchen towel, mopped up the coffee, then threw the towel over his shoulder and paced the kitchen. "So those asshole ranchers formed a fake foundation just to get to our wolves?"

I stared at the screen, but it offered up no new information.

"Probably not just for the trackers," I replied. "I bet they intend to influence the actual research published as well. To get wolves designated as trophy game in this part of the state. Fuck, you'd think they'd have better things to do with their money than go after wolves. Do the animals really take down that many of their cattle?"

"It seems like it goes deeper than that, doesn't it?" Landry mused. "Almost like it's personal."

I made a mental note to follow up on that thought later because I had a feeling there was a lot to this. Right now, we had more pressing matters. Like our mate.

"Well, we have our answer now. It wasn't Caitlyn. She was only a pawn. We can show Gib."

"We need to prove Caitlyn didn't know about this connection," Landry said.

I shook my head and glared. "Fuck that. We both know she didn't. I mean, we believe in our mate, don't we? And Gib needs to trust our judgment on this."

Landry nodded, looking energized for the first time since we woke up. "So, let's go get her."

I held up my hand. "Hang on. As much as I want her back, she's not ours to go and collect." I hated saying those words, and they tasted like acid on my tongue.

"Right. Fuck." Landry sank back into his chair.

"We owe her a major apology, and I wouldn't be surprised if she made us grovel. The wound we made was deep, and I'm not talking about our marks. It won't heal just because we've cleared her guilt from our own minds."

Landry cursed again. “What should we do?”

I was way out of my depth. Relationships with females was not my specialty, and obviously not Landry’s. We needed advice. I stalked to the door, grabbed my keys off the hook beside it. “Let’s go talk to Shelby.”



C AITLYN

EVEN THOUGH I told Andrews I'd be in, I hadn't gone into the office on Monday—fortunately, the class I taught didn't meet at the beginning of the week—choosing to work on my paper from home so I wasn't disturbed. I had my laptop and the latest draft. The focused time had worked because I'd made a big dent. In fact, the paper was pretty much finished. Maybe it was my motivation that had pushed me through. Maybe it was the fact that the more I worked, the less I thought of Landry and Wade. But as I'd typed and tweaked the draft, I thought of nothing but them. How my work impacted their lives. How it could expose them. My goal was to *protect* the wolves, but I hadn't understood the why of it fully until they showed me. These weren't just numbered animals. They weren't just silly names like White Paw.

I was going to make an impact on the current ecosystem of the Rocky Mountains. I just had to ensure the effect I had was truly my goal all along, regardless of Dr. Andrews or Gibson West.

I got a text from Landry that afternoon. When I saw his name, my heart leapt into my throat. I put the phone away several times before I gave in and read what he sent.

*Caitlyn, we know you had nothing to do with the wolf getting shot. Please let us apologize for everything in person. Call or text one of us to let us know it's okay to come and see you.*

Hot tears rolled down my face. I was glad they at least believed I was innocent, but it was too little, too late. I definitely didn't want to see them. Okay, I did. Desperately. But I wasn't ready to talk. I turned my phone off and didn't reply. Instead, I put my nose in my laptop and got back to work.

Tuesday, I showered and put on fresh clothes—clothes that weren't sweats and didn't have food stains on them. I still felt as if someone had cracked open my chest and ripped out my heart with a spoon, but I had to teach my class. I went into the science building early, hoping to avoid Dr. Andrews for as long as possible. I knew he was angry about my decision to stop tagging, and he constantly threatened my funding, holding it over my head like a black cloud. A guillotine that would chop off my funding and my ability to study wolves further—at least at Granger State.

I'd told off my mom the day before, but I couldn't do the same for my boss, and I wasn't in the mood for another round of threats or a lecture.

As I approached his office, voices carried down the hallway.

"...shooting fish in a barrel."

"I'm glad I made it easy for you."

"Worth every penny."

I stood in the corridor and listened. It was Dr. Andrews and another man.

"Except she's not tagging any more."

My ears perked up like a wolf's, instantly knowing my boss was talking about me.

"Get her back on it. Using those trackers makes it much easier to finish those fuckers."

Did he mean—

"I don't think I can. She's got enough to publish."

I tiptoed closer to the open door, knowing if they came out of the office, I'd be found. There was no place to hide in the long corridor. Except, I had to know who Dr. Andrews was speaking with. Two students came down the hall from the other direction, talking and not paying me any attention. When they walked past, I followed behind them, going down the hall to the first open door. The break room. There, I waited. It didn't take long. The man who'd been with Dr. Andrews walked by, not even noticing me.

I noticed him. That was for sure. I recognized him from the diner in West Springs. He was one of the ranchers whom Wade wanted to avoid. Wade had even called him the leader of the gang. Tom... Tim... Tim Hollaroy. He and his friends were the guys Wade thought had murdered his mother. Based on what I'd overheard, perhaps other wolves too.

This guy was shooting the animals with trackers? There had been three so far, including White Paw. He was getting their locations from my tracking software from Dr. Andrews? For money?

Oh God. Andrews was selling the location of the wolves to the ranchers so they could find them easily and kill them.

*Shooting fish in a barrel.* More like a wolf with a tracker.

And it was because of me. If I hadn't tagged them, they'd be alive. Dizzy, I dropped into a chair and drew deep breaths.

Knowing I'd been a part of this evil arrangement made me sick! I stared at nothing, and tried to figure out what I was going to do.

This wasn't about Wade or Landry. Or the Two Marks pack. I touched the spot on my breast where Wade had marked me.

As if my thoughts conjured it, a text message came through on my phone. This time, it was from Wade.

*Caitlyn, we are so fucking sorry. We should have trusted you and your research. We DO trust you and your research. We will have your back with Gibson and anyone else who questions your loyalty to wolves. Please let us make it up to you. You're our mate. We can't live without you. Can we just meet in person to talk?*

I closed my eyes against the heat and moisture there. Scratch that, it was about Wade and Landry. I loved them. I might still be angry, but they were my mates. I was loyal to their pack, whether their pack accepted me or not. I wouldn't let the ranchers kill any more animals. Or another shifter.

I just had to figure out how to put a stop to it.

---

ONCE I FIGURED out my plan, I grabbed my computer from my office, lugging it down to my car, returning for every other document I had, leaving my office empty. I carried it all into my apartment and got to work, wrapping up well after midnight. Then, I barely slept. I tossed and turned

and thought of Landry and Wade. Of what they were doing. How they felt. About me. About *us*. There was no *us*, thanks to me. I'd ended it. Because they thought I had something to do with the wolf murders. Because they didn't trust me. Because they'd manipulated me in an attempt to block my research.

Except their texts said otherwise.

But after taking two days—two *miserable* days—I could see their perspective, why they'd been so upset. I didn't blame Gibson for being so angry. A wolf had been shot. He was protecting his pack, and all wolves. While I hadn't pulled the trigger, I had been responsible. No matter how well intentioned I was, I'd let my boss use my data for his own personal gain. He didn't care about the wolves. Neither did the ranchers. They wanted them dead.

I did. I cared about every animal in my study. My updated paper showed it. But it would mean nothing if I didn't get it past Dr. Andrews, and to the dean. I had to also catch the fucker in his illegal and unethical actions. Until I did that, it was his word against mine. At this point, I didn't care about my job. I cared about making things right.

I had to protect the members of the Two Marks pack, even if I was nothing to them now.

And so, on Wednesday morning, I finally stopped tweaking my final product and took action.

In an email to the dean, I attached my paper, bypassing Dr. Andrews. It was done. My plan was in motion. She had it in her inbox before I walked into the science building. This time, instead of being stealthy, I walked right up to Dr. Andrews's door, and knocked. I didn't wait for him to invite me in, just pushed it open.

"Morning," I said.

He looked away from his computer monitor. "Caitlyn."

I dropped into the guest chair with my usual slump. I was crazy nervous, but I wasn't going to let it show. "Wanted to stop in before my class."

"Oh?" He finally looked my way.

"I headed out of West Springs on Sunday, but stopped at a diner to grab a coffee. Ran into a friend of yours. Tim Hollaroy."

A flush crept up his neck, but he didn't say anything. Yeah, I was right about them knowing each other. Okay, my bluff was working. So far.

“Anyway, I guess that’s where the ranchers hang. Their meeting spot. He approached me with a very tempting offer.”

His eyes narrowed and he swiveled in his chair so I had his full attention. Yeah, he was interested in this. If he took a second, he’d wonder how Hollaroy would know who I was, but I pushed on.

“Said he’d pay me to put trackers in wolves.”

He swallowed hard, his Adam’s apple bobbing. Yeah, that got even more of his attention. “I don’t know why you’re telling me this.”

I shrugged. “At the time, I didn’t know either, but he said that since I was the one out in the field *actually* tagging the animals, he’d cut out the middleman.” I leaned forward. “I’m assuming that’s you.”

“What you’re suggesting is—”

“I know. Unethical. But you have to admit... the money’s pretty good. I mean, I have to teach summer classes just to pay my rent. What he’s going to pay me is way better.” I waved my hands in the air in a rainbow motion.

His eyes narrowed, and I could tell his brain was working. Yeah, he was guilty as hell. I just had to get the proof needed to nail his ass. So I kept going.

“I’m sure you told him no,” he said.

I gave him a thin smile. “Actually, I told *you* no.”

He frowned, and I filled in the blanks for him. All lies, of course.

“I ran into him bright and early, before our little chat. Remember, you called Sunday morning? I told you I wasn’t tagging any more wolves? Yeah, well, that’s true.” I put air quotes around the last word. “I finished my paper and submitted it. I’m sure it will be well received, so I can keep my grant and keep my study open.”

“You finished it?”

I nodded.

“You turned it in?” He looked at his computer, as if it was in his inbox.

“To the dean.”

“You were supposed to have me review it,” he snapped.

I shrugged again, then pulled off a fake piece of lint from my jeans. “I was, but I was *very* motivated to finish it. I mean, now I can grow the field and get back out there and tag those wolves.” I winked, then stood. Turned toward the door. “I love those wolves... and the new perks that go with tagging them.”

“Wait,” he said.



Slowly, I turned, crossed my arms over my chest, appearing bored. My heart was practically beating out of my chest, and sweat dripped down my back.

“Tell Hollaroy he can’t cut me out of this. Five thousand a kill was the deal.”

“Only five thousand?” I asked, pretending I’d been offered more.

He bought it. His mouth fell open, then snapped shut. He stalked over to me, and I was suddenly afraid. But we were in a busy building on campus. There were people right out in the hall. All I had to do was scream.

“I’ve given him all the tracking data of every wolf you’ve tagged. It’s not my fault he’s only been able to get the three. You will not take this from me. I will tell the dean. Your job will be done. Your paper will be covered in blood. Your reputation destroyed. I’ll finish you.”

I let my hands fall to my sides. “You want to keep getting paid by Hollaroy, a West Springs rancher, for stealing my tracking data on wolves I’ve tagged for research.”

He sneered. “I hope your paper’s synopsis was as good as that one.”

I nodded, then fled his office.

Once in the stairwell, I pulled out my cell and turned off the recording. I’d had to get him to admit to what he’d done, to name the rancher involved. The guy who pulled the trigger. No wolves would be safe until they were taken down.

I hit a few buttons to get a link for the audio—although it was hard with shaky fingers, the adrenaline pouring through my veins—then shared it in an email to the dean. For the first time in three days, I felt something. Not elation. Not even vindication. I felt... like I’d made things right. I wanted to be part of the Two Marks pack but couldn’t do that until I protected them. Until I did what I could to see them protected, to put those who wanted them harmed brought to justice.

I’d saved the wolves. I ran out of the building and to my car, headed to West Springs. I had to hope I could also save my relationship with Landry and Wade.



## L ANDRY

“ARE you sure this is the right move, showing up at her work?” I asked Wade as we walked into the biology building at Granger State once again. I wasn’t one to feel so unsure of myself, but fuck, our mate had *left* us. I was lost. Angry. Freaked. My wolf was driving me, and I had no idea how to make this shit right. “What if she’s upset and it embarrasses her to be dealing with us with people around?”

He glanced at me, but didn’t slow down. “I’m not sure about anything,” Wade admitted. He’d worn a furrow between his brows over the last three days, and I hadn’t seen him this distraught since his parents died.

Especially since our wolves were pushing us to get her back.

Shelby had counseled us to reach out but give Caitlyn space, so we’d sent only one text each, one on Monday and one yesterday, offering our apologies and begging to talk to her. We didn’t call her, and we’d originally decided that showing up at her place would be too intrusive. But now that we were at her office, I was second-guessing our choice.

“Well, I guess we’ll find out.” We rounded the bend in the hallway and headed toward her lab. When we got there, though, the outer doors were locked. I peered through the glass window, but the lights in her office were

also off. My wolf hearing didn't detect any sound from inside. I picked up a hint of her scent, but only because she'd spent time in this space, not because she was present. It would have been much more potent.

Already on edge, something about finding her lab and office empty felt ominous to me. Like our mate had made some significant change or, fuck—what if she was too upset to come into work? Considering how much she loved her job, that would be awful.

And it was all our fault.

"Well, I guess that answers that," Wade said with a sigh. "Let's go to her place."

We returned the way we came, passing a group of students who'd just gathered outside a classroom.

"Did you hear about Andrews?" one of them asked.

I slowed my pace, glancing at Wade to see if he'd heard as well. He gave me a nod. We paused and studied a bulletin board, although I had no idea what the posters were about. With our wolf hearing, it was easy for us to listen in.

"I heard he got fired, but I didn't hear why," a young woman answered.

"He's not fired yet—it has to go up before the ethics committee, but I heard they're having an emergency meeting to discuss it. Dr. Johanssen told me the whole scoop."

"Tell me! I couldn't get the whole story," the gossiping young woman exclaimed.

We headed into the stairwell but paused, listening to the rest of the conversation, just as riveted.

"Johanssen said he's on the ethics committee and if the story's true, Andrews will certainly lose his position."

"*What story?*"

"You know how Dr. Shriver has been collecting data on wolves?"

I went still, even holding my breath.

"No, but okay," the student answered.

"Well, I guess she somehow found out that Andrews was using her trackers to sell the locations of wolves to hunters. It's totally illegal to hunt them in this part of Wyoming!"

"Holy shit, that's... *evil*," someone replied.

"I know, right? I guess she's headed out to find the wolves and remove the tags."

*What the fuck?*

I met Wade's gaze, both vindicated and anguished over this information. We'd heard enough.

We jogged down the steps and burst out of the building to talk.

"She did it," Wade said. "She figured it out."

I took my Stetson off, stabbed my fingers through my hair. "I know. I'm so damn proud of her, but it kills me that she had to do it alone. That we weren't here to back her up, standing behind her all the way. And now she's going to go out there and untag every wolf?"

Wade shrugged. "They're all over this corner of the state. It'll take her weeks, even using the trackers to lead her to the animals."

"Alone," I snapped. "She's going to get her ass spanked for that."

"When we find her," Wade added. "But why would she come to any of us? Gib made her feel like she had to prove her innocence. Our mate is desperately trying to clear her name right now."

Then an even more unsettling thought dropped into my head. "Or worse," I said. "Maybe she's not doing this for *us* at all. Like you said, what if she's already written us off, and is doing what's right by the wolves by getting Andrews fired? Saving the rest of the wolves she tagged?" Both scenarios gutted me, since she felt so alone not to come to us or get our help, but to do something dangerous like head back out into the wilderness solo. I started jogging toward my truck. "We've got to find her."

"But where do we even fucking start?"

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## CAITLYN

MY PHONE RANG as I drove into West Springs. Seeing Landry's name brought on a fresh stab of pain. I hit *decline* and turned the ringer off. Yes, they'd apologized, but I was still licking my wounds from our break-up. I knew I needed to talk to him and Wade, but first I needed to do right by their wolf-dog population.

I might not have known my trackers were leading to the death of wolves, but I was still responsible. I'd reported Dr. Andrews. Now, I needed

to deal with the animals that still had trackers in them. Then there was Tim Hollaroy, the rancher who'd killed White Paw.

Unfortunately, repercussions for violations of Fish and Game regulations weren't that severe, but Hollaroy could face a fine of up to four thousand dollars and the suspension of his hunting license for up to five years. I didn't think that would actually stop him, or keep him from getting someone else to do his dirty work for him. It didn't feel like real justice, but it was something.

I slowed my car and pulled up in front of the small Fish and Game shack on the edge of National Forest land. Taking a deep breath, I climbed out of my car and headed to the door. I wasn't sure whether to hope I found John Randolph, the shifter who'd chased us down the day I was planting trackers in wolves with Landry and Wade, or not. While I did want to see him specifically, I didn't expect a warm welcome. He might even be outright hostile. I had no doubt he'd heard about White Paw, and my involvement. One thing I'd learned about the Two Marks pack was that they were tight.

Still, he might at least be equipped to help me, and I'd learned from my time with Wade and Landry that I needed all the help I could get.

I knocked on the wooden screen door and pushed it open.

It was the shifter John Randolph who swiveled on a stool and peered at me. His bushy brows slammed down in disapproval. From that one look, I knew everything I'd anticipated was true.

Rather than try to defend myself, I launched into my purpose. "I need your help. My colleague sold the signal trackers to all the wolves I tagged to Tim Hollaroy."

It only took him a moment to comprehend, and he surged to his feet. His nostrils flared, eyes searching my neck. "Where are your mates?"

I now knew he was breathing in my scent. Wade's and Landry's, if what they'd said about the marking was true. John could smell them on me, know I was marked.

"We're not speaking right now." I didn't elaborate. He didn't need to know the details other than for the business at hand. "I have proof it was Tim Hollaroy who paid for the data, and I can track the wolves' locations with my phone the same way he did to find and shoot those three wolves. He might kill others unless we get to them first."

John blinked at me, processing everything I'd said. "All right. I can help you with that. But show me your evidence first."

I went over to the counter that had trail and topographical maps under glass, and set my cell down. I played the recording of Dr. Andrews's confession and he nodded, his jaw clenching more the longer he listened. "This is good. Can you email me the digital file?"

I exhaled, relieved I had an ally. He might not like me, but we now had a common purpose. "Yes. Give me your email and I'll send it right now."

He shared it with me and I forwarded the link on to him.

"Now, what about those wolves with trackers? They're not all in this area, are they?"

I sighed, knowing my task was huge. "No." I pulled out my cell and opened the app that showed the trackers. With two fingers, I zoomed into West Springs and the surrounding area.

He stared blankly down at the topographical map, and thought for a moment. "How many are here in West Springs?"

"Just one. Here." I pointed at the display. "This is the wolf we need to get to. It's the closest to us, but also to the cattle ranches of Hollaroy and his cronies."

John picked up his Stetson from a peg on the wall behind him and dropped it on his head. He wasn't in a ranger uniform, but instead looked more the cowboy. Snug jeans, sturdy leather boots, and even a huge belt buckle he must have won at some kind of rodeo or other Western-themed competition. "Let's go get it."

My mouth hung open at how quickly he was ready to assist. My stomach was still twisted in knots—its constant state since I drove away from West Springs three days ago—but a small measure of relief went through me. I could do this much. John knew the area better, knew wolves better—a PhD couldn't compare to being a shifter—and was motivated.

I got my backpack out of my car, which held water and snacks, a raincoat, and other outdoor gear, but most importantly, the tranq gun. As I approached John's truck, he was thumbing over his phone. We climbed into the cab and I pulled up the location of Comet—the name I'd given the second wolf—on my cell. John's phone beeped, and he read the display of his phone without comment.

He stopped the truck and looked at me over the hood. "I know where that animal is," he said grimly. "It will take a while to get there."

“This is my priority,” I said, looking him in the eye. “I’ll stay as long as it takes.”

John grunted and drove down a dirt road. After almost an hour of driving in silence, he said, “Your mates... you said you’re not speaking? Was it over these trackers?”

“I don’t want to talk about it.” I shut him down. We might be allies in saving Comet and the other wolves, but we weren’t BFFs.

“No, no, of course you don’t,” he replied. “It’s none of my business. I’m grateful to you for coming to me with the information on Hollaroy and the trackers.”

My fingers tangled in my lap; the pain of the falling out I’d had with my mates was still raw. Focusing on saving Comet would keep my mind off of them, if John didn’t bring it up. I really didn’t want to discuss any of this with a total stranger, even if he was a shifter and understood marking and mating better than I.

He cleared his throat. “Your mates must be frantic to be apart from you. I’m not sure if you understand how much a wolf requires his mate.”

Ugh, couldn’t he just stop?

I licked my lips, turned on the bench seat, and faced him. “*Please*. I’m not going to discuss this with you.”

“Okay, okay.” He lifted his fingers from the steering wheel so his hand made the stop gesture. “I just hope you’ll give them a chance to repair things between you three. For their sake, and for the good of the pack. I can see how much you care about wolves. You’ll be an enormous asset to West Springs.”

I blinked away the burning behind my eyelids. I had no plans to live in West Springs. I had a job I loved in Granger. But even as those defensive thoughts attacked the idea, I knew they weren’t true.

I loved wolves, not Granger State. My paper would get my name out there, but all the research was tainted now. Knowing what Dr. Andrews had done, how the wolves had been killed, there was no sense of accomplishment. Sure, I’d tweaked what I’d planned to write, but still... nothing seemed the same now. Even worse, I was able to look back and clearly see I’d never quite felt like I fit anywhere until I met Wade and Landry. Until I came here.

My parents’ teaching job offer had been presented from a place of love. The position itself would have been worthy, getting kids into science and

hopefully loving it as much as I did. But it wasn't me. Now I knew why.

John parked his truck on the side of the dirt road. We were in the middle of a thick pine forest, the land sloping steeply. He got out, looked around as if he was taking stock of his surroundings. "From here, we'll have to hike."

I looked about, and tried to see it from his perspective, which I couldn't. It was just woods to me. "Okay." Even though I knew they were in there, I double-checked my backpack for the tranq gun and equipment required to remove the tracker, then followed John along an unmarked path.

Twenty minutes later, I was starting to fear he was leading me in circles when he went still, listening. The crackle of twigs and soft footfalls running quickly reached my ears. I drew in a breath to scream at what appeared from the forest.

Two giant wolves leaped right toward us.

"It's all right." John gripped my shoulder, and the truth hit me.

These were *my* wolves.

My mates.

My heart had been pounding out of fear, but that slipped away. Now, my heart was pounding because Wade and Landry were here. Before my eyes, they shifted, then stood.

Naked.

My ovaries jumped for joy at the sight of them. Big, brawny, virile. And very hard. Their dicks were thick and long and bobbing toward me.

Their gazes were dark and eating me up. They clenched their fingers into fists as if keeping from grabbing me.

*Grab me! Grab me!*

"Randolph, thanks for cluing us in on how to find our mate."

John tipped his hat to Landry and Wade.

"Sugar, we fucked up," Wade began, taking a step toward me.

John held up his hand. "If you're going to make up while your junk's hanging out, tell me now."

Wade stopped, and looked to John. I couldn't help but laugh. Wade and Landry didn't seem to care that they were naked. They didn't have a modest bone in either of their bodies. They shouldn't because they were... incredible.

John turned to me, seemingly trying to look anywhere but at his pack mates. "Give me the supplies. I'll find the wolf and remove the tag." He



tipped his chin down, and gave me a pointed look. “Your job now is to put these two out of their misery.”

I flicked a gaze at Landry and Wade, and understood what he was saying. We had a lot to talk through, and John didn’t need to be around to hear it. Especially since the guys were naked, and them being naked led to —

I slipped the backpack from my shoulders and handed it to John. “I put the tag between his shoulder blades. It’s not deep. You should feel it.”

John nodded, gave Landry and Wade another glance, then took off.

“Randolph’s right. We need to talk, but while I don’t mind doing it naked, I want our woman naked too,” Landry said.

My cheeks heated at the thought of the three of us as we had been that first morning. But a mosquito tickled my neck, and I swatted it. Yeah, it might be fine, except I didn’t need bug bites on my ass. I had two wolf bites. That was enough.

“Follow us back to our truck?” Wade asked.

He wasn’t telling. He was giving me the option to tell them no, although I doubted they’d let me walk away. I didn’t want to. I wanted to be with them but, God, there was so much between us. I had to hope it was surmountable.

I nodded, and they shifted back. I stared and blinked, once, and then again, still surprised at what they could do. At what they were. This wasn’t a *Twilight* film, this was real life. Landry led the way back down the hill. Wade waited, watched, and I realized he was expecting me to follow. I did and he kept close behind, cutting between the pines. Sunlight dappled on their glossy fur. Me and my two wolves, with me in the center.

Right where I wanted to be.



## WADE

I FINISHED DRESSING, and walked over to Caitlyn by the back of the truck. No one came down this road—at least, not anyone outside of the Two Marks pack who wasn’t lost. I wasn’t worried about being caught out naked. It was more of a concern being in wolf form during daylight. But if Hollaroy had the tracking data, it was the remaining wolf Caitlyn had tagged that was in danger, not us.

We hadn’t tried to touch her yet. It was close to fucking impossible not to pull her into my arms and kiss the hell out of her. But my wolf and I would have to be content just having her close. Considering she hadn’t returned any of our texts or answered her phone, it was a blessing that she’d followed us back to the truck without protest.

Landry walked around and opened the tailgate of the truck, then sat on it. He hadn’t put his Stetson back on. His hair was uncombed and he hadn’t shaved this morning. He looked as rough as I felt.

“Caitlyn, I’m so sorry we didn’t have your back when Gib came by with that wolf,” he began. “It just... it took us by surprise. I felt responsible because I’m the guy who pulled the trigger on your tranq gun, and I was the one my brother left in charge while he was away. A wolf got killed on my watch. If that had been another shifter—”

“I know,” she cut in sharply. “How do you think *I* felt?” She wrapped her arms around her middle, and looked down at the ground, where she kicked a pebble with the toe of her hiking boot.

I couldn’t stop myself from reaching for her because she looked so fucking sad. And it had been all our fault. “Sugar, we’re so sorry. Can I hold you? Please?” I wrapped my arms around her from behind, not waiting for an answer. My wolf was instantly soothed at the feel of her, the way her scent filled my nose.

She stiffened at first, but then I realized it was because she was holding in a sob. Landry instantly hopped down and sandwiched her from the front. She pressed her face into his shoulder and let it go.

My wolf howled right along with her crying. No shifter liked to see his mate in tears. It ripped at our need to be the protector, but I had a feeling these tears were as much cathartic as anything else.

I stroked her sides and kissed along her neck as I murmured my apologies over and over. “I’m sorry, beautiful. We never meant to hurt you. That’s the last thing we’d ever want. We were just trying to balance our duty to the pack with our loyalty to you, and we made a mistake. We should have trusted you one hundred percent.”

Caitlyn gathered herself and lifted her head. Her face was red and splotchy, and a tear slid down her cheek. “Do you trust me now?”

Fuck, I hated hearing that waver in her voice.

“Yes,” Landry answered without hesitation, and at the same time, I answered, “Absolutely.”

She licked her lips and Landry swiped at her wet cheek with his thumb. “What about my research? Do you trust me to publish?”

Landry drew a breath, then nodded, glancing my way for confirmation. “We trust you.”

I dropped another kiss on her neck. “Yes.”

“You’re not going to try to convince me not to submit it?” I could hear the hurt in her voice.

Damn, we’d really done a number on her, and it killed me. All she knew now was that she had been on a mission for me to complete. My goal had nothing to do with her other than to end her research. The fact that that had only lasted about ten seconds after I first spoke to her was irrelevant.

“Never again,” I swore, and Landry echoed my words.

“Sugar.” I grasped her hips and gently rotated her to face me. It took a moment, but she lifted her head so her watery dark eyes met mine. “It’s true that I came to Granger originally on Gibbs’s orders. He wanted me to look into your research to make sure it wasn’t the cause of the two dead wolves with trackers.”

She winced and I cupped her face, stroking my thumb over her cheek to soothe away her guilt. “Hey, the moment I met you at the bar, I knew you couldn’t be doing anything intentional to harm wolves. Even if you hadn’t turned out to be our mate, even if your scent hadn’t grabbed me by the balls the moment I caught it, I would’ve known by your passion and enthusiasm for your research subjects that you meant no harm.”

Vulnerability flickered across her face.

“I need you to know that seducing you was never part of my plan.”

She arched a brow.

“Not *that* plan,” I corrected. “It was never meant to manipulate you, or stop your research. I caught your scent, and I knew instantly you were ours. Not pleasuring you would’ve been an impossibility. That’s how it is for us.”

She searched my face, like she was trying to be sure of my words.

“I swear to you, Caitlyn Shriver,” I vowed. “Seeing to your pleasure, your protection, and your happiness is my sole purpose in life. Same with Landry. We fucked it up badly, but we’re going to make it up to you.”

Fresh tears glistened in her eyes.

I leaned forward, my lips almost brushing hers. “May I kiss you?”

She lifted her mouth to mine and I slanted my lips, just allowing myself a taste. “I’m sorry we hurt you. Will you please let us make it up to you?”

She pressed her hands against my chest, and I instantly gave her more space.

Fuck, had I messed it up some more?

“What does that mean, exactly?” She turned to look over her shoulder at Landry, her voice full of continued wariness. “What do you want from me?”

“We just need you, sugar.” Landry picked Caitlyn up by the waist and sat her on the tailgate. Her feet dangled well above the ground. He lifted her hand, and held it as if it was the most precious thing in the world. “We need to be close to you. If that means we have to take turns with one of us staying with you in Granger while the other works here for the rest of our lives, we’ll do it.”

I nodded my agreement, moving closer to take her other hand.

“You’d do that for me?” she asked. The surprise in her question cut deep.

“We’d do anything for you.”

A tear slipped down her cheek again. Fuck. We were so bad at this.

“You should be mad at me after what happened to White Paw,” she said.

“Caitlyn, it’s—”

She held up her hand. “You guys aren’t the only ones who messed up here. Dr. Andrews took my research and used it... God, it’s so awful. I didn’t know. I didn’t. But, I’ve been trying to make it right.”

I nodded. “We got Randolph’s text, that you intend to remove all the trackers.”

“Yes, it’s the only way to guarantee Hollaroy won’t use the data.”

I looked to Landry. “Hollaroy,” I said. I stalked over to a tree, punched it. My knuckles broke, then began to immediately heal. All Randolph had texted was that he was with our mate, they were heading to take a tracker out of the local wolf, and where to meet up with them. We knew from the college students that Andrews had sold the data to ranchers, but not that it was Hollaroy. The fucker.

Caitlyn gasped, but didn’t say anything for a moment. Then, “It’s going to take some time, but I’ll get the trackers out of the wolves.”

Landry shook his head. “Randolph will head that up. He’ll get shifters on it. You don’t have to worry about it any longer.”

Her eyes widened and she shook her head. “It was because of me. I need to see it through.”

“It wasn’t because of you. It was because of your asshole boss and Hollaroy. They’ll get what’s coming,” I vowed. Gib would take care of it by getting the pack to spread out and remove the trackers. It would happen faster when done by shifters.

“I sent my paper to the dean.” There was a note of challenge in her voice, like she was testing the vow we’d just made to her.

I froze, and looked to Landry. It was this moment where our bond was tested. She would never do anything to hurt the pack, and that meant including what she’d written. We had to trust that.

“I changed it. This week. I know you won’t believe me until you read it.” She glanced up at the canopy of pines over our heads. “When we get back to your place.”

I whipped my head up, and met her eyes.

“You want... you’ll stay with us?”

She licked her lips again, and I groaned. “If you’ll have me.”

Landry and I stepped closer, touching her. I set a hand on her thigh, gave it a squeeze. Landry stroked her hair back.

“We all messed up, didn’t we?” she asked.

I laughed, for the first time in days.

“We did. And we will again, I’m sure. Mates stick together, even if that means living apart during the week.”

She shook her head. “I’m done with Granger State. I mean... I have to finish teaching my summer class, and I’ll have to make changes for the dean on the paper, but I... well, my life isn’t there. It never was. I just didn’t know it until I met you two.”

Landry ran his fingers through his hair. “Say you’ll move to West Springs.”

“I *am* interested in Cord’s research,” she admitted, almost reluctantly, looking up at us through her dark lashes.

Landry’s face lit up with a grin, and I exhaled a breath I hadn’t realized I’d been holding. “That’s great. I’m sure a salaried position could be arranged. There’s pack money that could be put toward it. No pressure, of course.”

“That sounds... wonderful, actually.” Her face shone with eagerness. “I belong here. Like you guys can scent your mate, I *feel* like this is where I’m supposed to be. With you.”

“That’s right, sugar,” Landry said.

“Fuck yes,” I replied at the same time.

She laughed.

My wolf practically leapt for joy.

Caitlyn’s smile grew wider. “Well, what are you waiting for?” She blinked back tears. “Take me home.”



## CAITLYN

FROM THE LOOKS in their eyes, I didn't think Wade and Landry would actually take me back to Wade's house—*our house*—before they stripped me bare and had their way with me.

Landry had tossed me over his shoulder, carried me around to the passenger door and set me inside, forcing me into the middle as he slid in beside me. Wade climbed behind the wheel and took off without a word. The tires skidded on the dirt road, showing his eagerness.

They didn't say anything during the ride, but Wade's hand was on my thigh the entire time, and Landry took hold of my hand and didn't let it go.

By the time Wade skidded to a stop in his driveway, the sexual tension in the cab was palpable. I wanted to climb them, strip them, kiss them, lick them, suck them. Whatever the verb was, I wanted to do it to and with Wade and Landry.

Landry tossed me over his shoulder again. It was possessive and bossy, but this time, I laughed. Because his legs were long, he ate up the distance to the porch and into the bedroom.

He dropped me on the big bed in the master. I bounced, and came up onto my knees.

“Clothes off,” Landry said as he stripped down, his gaze never leaving me.

I didn’t argue, only got to work. Wade came in right behind us and followed suit.

They were bare before I was and they climbed onto the mattress and helped me with what I had left. Socks, undies. Fabric ripped, seams tore.

I didn’t care.

“Three days apart,” Landry breathed as he ran his hands over my body. “Never again.”

“No.” I touched him in return.

“Mates can’t be apart like that, sugar.” Wade cupped my breasts from behind. “Our wolves can’t take it.”

I shook my head, angled it to the side for Landry to have more room as he kissed along my shoulder.

“I don’t have a wolf in me, but I can’t take it either. Is this real?” I breathed.

Landry grabbed me by the butt and lifted me up so I straddled his thighs. His dick nudged my belly, and I felt the smear of pre-cum from the tip.

“Yes. You’re ours,” he breathed.

“You’re mine,” I replied.

With shaky fingers, he tipped my chin up and I met his dark gaze. “We never talked about birth control. We want pups, but I’m not ready to share you, sugar, not even with a pup.”

“I’m on the pill, but yeah, I’m not ready for kids... pups, yet.”

“Someday,” Wade vowed.

God, they wanted it all with me. It was real.

“Bare, then,” Landry said, rolling my hips into him.

I nodded, squirming. “Yes. Bare. Nothing between us.”

He lifted me up and notched the broad crown at my entrance, then lowered me down. I was wet. They didn’t test me to see, but I knew they could smell my arousal. I was dripping with it, which meant I slid right down onto him.

“Yes!” I cried, feeling full.

Wade’s hands came from behind and he tugged at my nipples, sucked at my neck.



I was right where I wanted to be. Between my men. With them. We were together. Nothing would tear us apart now.

---

## LANDRY

FUCK, she felt incredible. I'd been aching to get in her again. Felt like I was dying without her. But it wasn't just her pussy my wolf and I had craved. It had been the smart, gorgeous, sassy woman who'd captured our hearts.

She was driven to wolves somehow. It had been her goal and the focus of her life. She hadn't understood it before, but now she did. Perhaps she'd been fated to be here in West Springs, but she was ours.

I thrust up, filling her again, feeling her walls ripple around me. She felt so good, her scent swirling around us. Consuming us.

It would always be like this. Too much. Too intense.

I wasn't going to last. My cum had made my balls ache for days, and now that I was in her, there was nothing that could stop me from filling her up, getting my scent not only beneath her skin with my bite, but in her pussy, marking her as mine.

I reached between us and brushed her clit, which was hard and swollen. "Come with me, sugar," I breathed.

Perhaps she was just as needy as I was, or she needed the command in my words to be set free.

She clamped down on me and screamed my name.

"Fuck yes," I breathed, watching her come for as long as I could, then thrust deep and went blind with my own pleasure.

Spurts of cum shot from me, coated her, filled her. Overflowed.

Like my heart. It would always be too much. And I wouldn't have it any other way.

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## WADE

I WATCHED our mate come as Landry fucked her. It was the most beautiful sight, something I'd never tire of seeing. Our female being satisfied between us.

I knew, though, that Landry couldn't support her any longer. I scooped her up, and laid her out on the bed, her hair fanning out around her on the pillow. Fuck, she was beautiful. And all ours.

"Sugar." I settled down on top of her. I was propped up on my forearms so as not to give her too much of my weight.

She blinked her eyes open and gave me a soft smile.

"More," she murmured.

I grinned, then kissed her. She opened her thighs, allowed me to nestle my hips between them. I gave her what she wanted. More.

Between Landry's cum and her juices, she was slippery as hell, and I filled her in one easy thrust.

Her back arched. Before I took her the way my wolf and I wanted, I stroked her hair, got her to meet my gaze. Hers was lust-filled and sated.

"We haven't said the words, but we love you."

Landry had recovered enough to settle beside us, his back propped up against the headboard to watch. "We sure as fuck do."

She looked from him to me. "I... I love you, too." She licked her lips, and I groaned. "Please," she whimpered, rolling her hips into me.

"You're everything," I said, then thrust deep.

Fuck. *Fuck*. She was incredible. As I gave her the pleasure she craved, satisfying her with not one but two orgasms, I knew we were home.

I'd lived in this house my entire life. My parents and grandparents and generations before had lived and loved here. But I'd never understood truly what it could be like until now.

Until Caitlyn.

Until she tempted us, body and soul.

## EPILOGUE



C AITLYN

A WEEK LATER, Shelby threw her arms around me and gave me a squeeze. “Hey, girl!” We’d just arrived at Gibson’s place for my welcome-to-the-pack barbecue. Gibson, Ben and Shelby’s place, I should say. I was still getting used to the threesome thing in West Springs, including my own.

Which had been incredible to say the least. Days of being pampered with orgasms, constant attention, home-cooked food, and dominant men.

“Caitlyn, thank you for your help in getting the trackers out of the wolves.” Gibson came forward to greet me, too.

I flushed, still devastated over my role in that. This was the first time I’d seen Gibson since he’d driven up with the dead wolf. “Thank you—you’re the ones who removed them all. I would’ve gone out myself, and—”

“The hell you would,” Landry rumbled, giving my ass a warning squeeze from behind and nibbling my ear. I’d learned just how protective my mates were this week. And how much they enjoyed punishing my little transgressions when they felt I’d strayed.

Gibson and Landry exchanged a glance, and Gibson cleared his throat. “I’m very sorry about blaming you for any part of that. I’m sure I upset and scared you the last time we met and, well, I’ve felt terrible about it.”

I swallowed hard. I knew it must be hard for a dominant alpha like him to admit any kind of failing or shortcoming, but his apology showed how strong a leader he was.

“Thank you, but it turned out I *was* to blame.” I threw my hands in the air. “I just didn’t know it.”

I blinked back tears, thinking of how I’d played a part in the wolves’ deaths.

“Well, of course you didn’t, and I should’ve given you the benefit of the doubt. We all should have. I want you to feel comfortable in our pack. I know you mean everything to Landry and Wade.”

“She does.” Wade stood behind me on my other side. My mates had flanked me, very clearly showing they had my back this time. I was grateful, because despite my mates’ reassurances, I was a little nervous about meeting the whole pack. Fortunately, I’d met Landry’s parents—his mom and dad, and he’d told me he’d lost his other dad in a storm a few years ago—the other day, but they’d since gone off on an Alaskan cruise, and weren’t here.

“Well, I’m thrilled that you decided to take up a research position with Cord in the fall,” Gibson said, as the doctor walked up to greet us. Cord had made me a formal offer last night at roughly double the salary I was making at Granger State, and I’d accepted.

It wasn’t about the money—I’d hardly needed it now that I had no living expenses and two mates to dote on me. But I wasn’t going to be beholden to them. I had to stand on my own two feet, even financially. It was important to me, and they understood. But, the research also excited me, and I couldn’t wait to live in West Springs full time when my teaching obligations were complete. It couldn’t have worked out better.

“So am I,” Cord said. “Your mates and I are working on getting your lab set up this week so everything will be ready when you start.”

“You are?” I twisted to look at my mates, who were full of surprises.

“We’ll make everything perfect for you, sugar.” Landry winked. “Come on, we have a whole horde of shifters who want to meet you.”

We made the rounds. The whole pack wasn’t there, but at least fifty or so people milled around, and all of them welcomed me with kindness.

“Ah, there’s our wolf-protector.” John Randolph walked up.

“Me?” I laughed. “I don’t know about that.”

“No, it’s you,” he replied. When I’d first met him, he’d seemed angry and gruff. I’d been wrong. We all had. “You’re the human hell-bent on protecting our wildlife. It means a lot to this pack what you were willing to do to keep the wolf-dogs safe.”

I swallowed, touched by his thanks when I was still wracked with guilt.

“It’s true,” Wade said, brushing my hair back from my shoulder. “You should read the research paper she had accepted for publication. It presents the need for protection of the wolf populations in this area due to the genetic uniqueness of the native pack.” I felt Wade’s warm gaze lighting me up from the inside.

At first my mates had refused to even read my research paper, trying to prove how much they trusted me, but when they finally had, they’d been thrilled. They’d made a point of telling almost every shifter they’d introduced me to this week.

“Listen, I wanted to update all three of you,” John said. “I gave Hollaroy the maximum fine for violating Fish and Game laws, and revoked his hunting license. I’ve also contacted a lawyer in Montana—she’s a shifter—to see if there’s any possibility of filing a civil suit against him. Shelby and Marne speak highly of her, since she’s helped their pack in the past. That evidence Caitlyn provided may give us more options than I have through the Fish and Game department.”

He delivered this to Wade, and I stepped in close to squeeze my mate, knowing how important this was to him.

“Good thinking. Please let me know what she says,” Wade said, shaking John’s hand.

“I hate the idea of that man still walking around town,” Landry grumbled. “If he comes near our mate, it would give me a good excuse to give him what he deserves.”

“We’ll get him,” I promised them both. “I like the civil suit idea.”

Shelby appeared at my side again. “Do I get to steal you away yet? I’m dying to hear how it’s going now that you’re mated.” She flashed an impish grin at my mates, who reluctantly stepped back.

“It’s wonderful,” I said, looking from one to the other. “The best ever.”

Landry smiled and dragged his thumb across his lower lip, silently promising me I’d be getting another round of wonderful as soon as we got home. My pussy clenched in anticipation.

Wade growled.

“Allergies?” I teased, joking about how he’d tried to hide that growl from me before I knew his true nature.

“Yep. I’m allergic to you leaving my side. But in the name of girl-talk, we’ll let you go.” He winked and I blushed, walking backward as Shelby tugged me away, not wanting to miss even a second of the way my two mates devoured me with their gazes.

“Two mates is the best,” I murmured when I finally turned around.

“It’s unbelievable,” Shelby agreed. “Now, tell me everything.”

---

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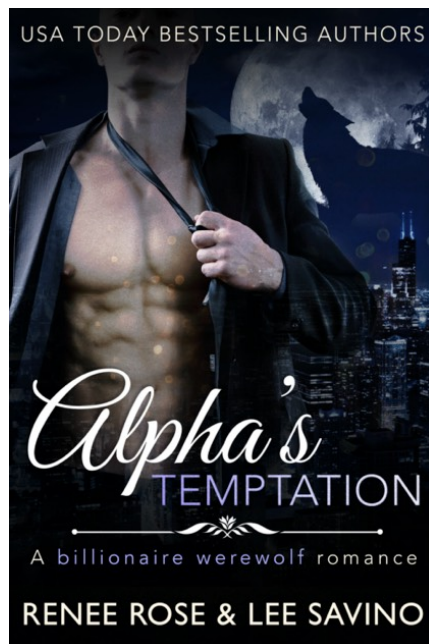
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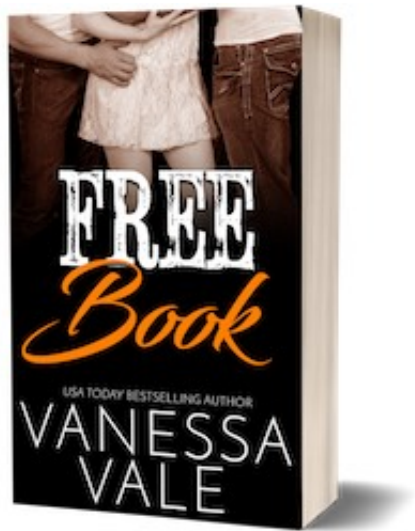
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**USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR RENEE ROSE** loves a dominant, dirty-talking alpha hero! She's sold over a million copies of steamy romance with varying levels of kink. Her books have been featured in USA Today's *Happily Ever After* and *Popsugar*. Named Eroticon USA's Next Top Erotic Author in 2013, she has also won *Spunky and Sassy's* Favorite Sci-Fi and Anthology author, *The Romance Reviews* Best Historical Romance, and *has* hit the *USA Today* list eight times with her Bad Boy Alpha and Wolf Ranch series, as well as various anthologies.

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## ABOUT VANESSA VALE

Vanessa Vale is the *USA Today* bestselling author of sexy romance novels, including her popular Bridgewater historical series and hot contemporary romances. With over one million books sold, Vanessa writes about unapologetic bad boys who don't just fall in love, they fall hard. Her books are available worldwide in multiple languages in e-book, print, audio and even as an online game. When she's not writing, Vanessa savors the insanity of raising two boys and figuring out how many meals she can make with a pressure cooker. While she's not as skilled at social media as her kids, she loves to interact with readers.

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