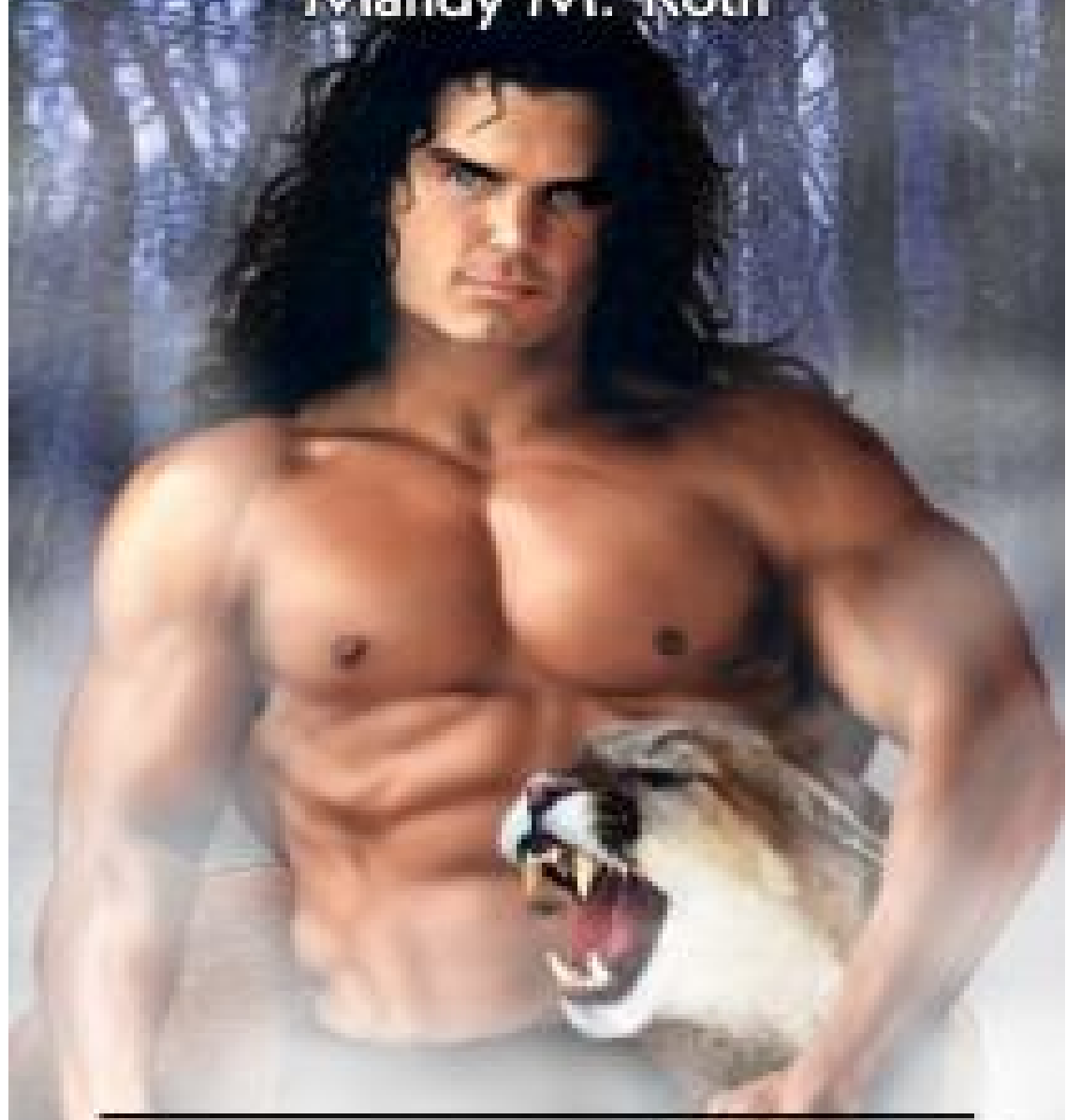


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GHOST CATS

BEST INTENTIONS

By

Mandy M. Roth



Chapter One

Lillian pulled up outside the Thioshpaye Cabins and waited for the courage to get out of the vehicle. The thought of what she'd come to do still made her slightly nauseous. She wasn't the type of girl who slept around, and she certainly wasn't the type that cheated, but she knew what had to be done. Besides, Jack had been the one to file for a divorce, not her. He'd been the one that had decided he couldn't do it anymore. Sure, he begged her to forgive his error in judgment and take him back, but there was something she needed to attend to first.

Lily glanced over at the bar, Igmú, adjacent to the cabins. Renee had told her that she could find plenty of sexy men willing to shack up for a night or two at the bar, no questions asked, and that's exactly what she needed. No muss, no fuss. It didn't appear to be a dive and that surprised her. She'd expected the entire place to be flea bitten and crawling with lowlifes. The place not only looked like it was well kept, it looked like it turned a decent profit as well. The Native American theme seemed a bit much, but other than that, it was perfect. She was a bit disappointed that her grandmother wasn't alive to see the place. She would have loved it. She'd been part Native American and had tried to instill some of the ways of old into Lily.

She pushed the door to the office open and stepped inside, her attention still on the bar next door.

"Can I help you?" A deep voice asked.

Lily looked at the man behind the counter and drew in a deep breath. He was stunning. From what she could see, he looked to be made of pure muscle, and the white t-shirt he wore showed off his sun kissed skin. Sandy blonde locks fell just below his shoulders and whips of sun-bleached white strands ran through it. It was clear to see that he enjoyed the outdoors.

"You all right?" he asked, cocking a light brown eyebrow at her. Stark blue eyes looked out at her from under his thick lashes.

Her pulse sped as she inched towards the counter. "Yes, I'm fine. I need a cabin for the weekend."

"You by yourself?" he asked, standing up, taking her breath away. His six foot one inch body was pure perfection.

Oh Gawd, he's even more gorgeous than I thought.

* * * *

Brayen's heart raced as he watched the tiny brunette walk into the office. He rarely got excited over a woman upon first glance, but she did it for him. Her curves were where they needed to be and she actually had

enough meat on her bones to not look fifteen. He hated the way women starved themselves trying to be a size zero. This one was perfect, not too big, and not too small.

Her green eyes locked on him and he wondered if his face was as red as it felt. He'd never been prone to getting embarrassed--this was a first. The way she stared at him, made him both nervous and excited all at the same time. He hated to interrupt her, but she didn't appear to be making any headway in the introducing herself department.

The scent of her arousal filled his nostrils and he had to close his eyes a moment to prevent her from seeing them shift. She wasn't a lycan, he could tell by her scent, yet here she stood in his establishment. The Shaman had said that normal humans could not see the hotel or bar, they'd see it as abandoned and continue down the highway. He'd paid good money for the old man to work his magic on the place and wasn't happy to find out that this little one found her way past it.

"You want a cabin for the weekend, huh?"

"Yes ... yes, please, if there's one available," she added softly.

Bray nodded his head and eyed her up. "Sure, I've got room, but wouldn't you be more comfortable in the city? It's only another fifteen-twenty minutes from here."

Her head snapped up and something flashed in her green eyes, anger perhaps. She moved her jaw around and Bray could smell her body changing. Yep, she was pissed. He smiled at her feistiness and looked out into the parking lot. "Need any help with your bags?"

"I can manage on my own. Thank you very much." She said sternly. Her strong will only made him want to touch her more.

"Tell ya what. I'll give you a cabin for the weekend for half price if you let me carry your bags to your room."

She balked at him. "Money's not an issue for me. I can pay your fee, and I can carry my own bags ... Mr...?"

"Name is Brayen, but Bray will do Miss...?"

"Lily will do for me," she said, still glaring at him.

"Lily it is then." He moved from behind the counter and came to a stop before her. She was so much smaller than he was that she only came to his chest. He wanted to pick her up and see how well she fit against his body, but he didn't. She reeked with desire for him, but his bet was on her being cold as ice if he tried anything. It was a shame too. He hadn't been this attracted to anyone in his life. His 'condition' prevented him from getting close to too many people.

He took a deep breath in and savored the sweet scent of peaches. He wasn't sure if she'd just eaten one or if it was some sort of lotion, but it drove him mad with desire. He stretched his shoulders and started for the door. The need to put some distance between them was great. "Let's get you settled in. It's getting late and tomorrow's the full moon."

He brushed past Lily and she tensed up. The smell of her arousal hit him again, causing him to stagger backwards. She grabbed his arm and it took everything in him not to throw her to the floor and fuck her then and there.

"Are you okay?"

He glanced down at her tiny hand on his arm and let a smile creep over his face. "I'm better now, thanks."

She rolled her eyes and pulled away from him. "Can I just get the key to my cabin now?"

"Oh, in a hurry?"

"As a matter of fact, yes I am. I want to get a bite to eat at the bar. They serve food, right?"

Bray's gut clenched. They'd serve her there if she wasn't careful. "They sure do. Can I buy you dinner?"

Her eyes narrowed on him. "Why?"

"Why not?" He bent down and put his face dangerously close to hers. Her full, rose red lips were so close that it took all his strength not to clamp his mouth down on hers.

* * * *

Lily stood there, gazing into the handsome stranger's crisp blue eyes and had to fight to concentrate on what he'd said to her. She caught buy dinner and that was it. She tried to look away from him, but she couldn't. All she could do was shake her head slightly.

She hadn't intended to find anyone that she was this attracted to. The most she'd hoped for was to find a man that at least caught her eye, spend the weekend fucking his brains out, and leave--no strings, no phone numbers, no contact again.

The attraction she felt for this man, Bray, was more than she'd hoped for and more than she felt comfortable with.

Use your head, Lily, you need to be able to walk away from this man and not look back! Jack is who you love, he's the only man you've ever loved. She scolded herself as she stared at Bray's lips.

He stayed locked in one spot for what seemed like an eternity. The door to the office opened and a strong gust of icy cold wind blew in. Lily cried out and moved forward and the wind seemed to encircle her, thrusting her forward. She ran right into Bray's lips with her own, her mouth parted slightly from the yelp. She went to close her mouth and felt his warm tongue invade her. Her insides flared to life and her inner thighs pulsed with need. She put her hands on his chest and pushed back from him.

"Do you ... do you mind?" She panted.

Bray looked at her a moment and then around the office. Lily looked too. She felt something, someone touching her back, before it pushed her into Bray again. She looked up at him and shook her head. "Something's here ... behind me."

He put his hand out to her and she took a step back, afraid that if his skin touched hers that she'd take him to her bed instead of a man for whom she felt little. He laughed softly. "Don't mind them. They rarely do more than kick up a wind. They must have thought we needed to get a bit closer. If I were you, I'd follow the advice of the spirits. They don't mislead anyone."

Lily glanced out at her car and back at Bray. He closed his eyes slowly and shook his head. "Listen, Lily. You don't have to be afraid of me."

"Who the hell would be afraid of you, Cougar?" A husky voice bellowed from behind her. Lily jumped and spun around to find a tall man standing in the doorway. His dark hair reminded her of Jack a bit and guilt for why she was here swept through her. His dark brown eyes fell on her as he stopped in his tracks. "Well, what do we have here?"

Bray stepped in front of her quickly. "Mason, this is Lily. She's just here for the weekend."

Mason peered around Bray and smiled widely at her. She was still trying to get over how gorgeous Bray was. Adding another hunk to the mix was almost too much. Lily smiled and extended her hand. Bray stiffened and for a minute, she thought he might slap her hand away from Mason. He didn't. "Hi, I'm Lillian. My friends all call me Lily."

Mason took her hand in his and brought it to his lips slowly. "Then I hope I get to call you Lily."

He was a fine specimen of a man and the fact that she felt little when he kissed her hand proved that he should be the one she spent the weekend with.

No attachments! she reminded herself.

"You here by yourself?" Mason asked.

Bray growled and Mason just grinned at him. Lily nodded and took her hand back slowly. "Yes, I'm here for the weekend. Needed to get away for a bit."

"Everyone eventually does," Mason said knowingly.

Lily pushed past Bray and stood between the two men. Each was over six foot and dwarfed her. Thoughts of an erotic sandwich filled her head and she had to shake them off. An affair with two men was definitely not something she was up for. "Do you think you could give me a hand with my bags?" she asked Mason.

"It would be my pleasure."

* * * *

Bray's jaw twitched from the rage in him. How could she stand there and flirt with Mason right in front of him? She wasn't attracted to Mason, at least not in the way she'd been with him. His heightened senses made him very aware of her body's chemical reactions and there was no way she wanted Mason as much as she wanted him.

I sound like I'm in junior high.

Lily walked out to her car and Mason turned to look at him. "You all right? You're not thinking anything serious can happen with her, are you? She's so human that I almost choked on it. How the hell did she find this place? My grandfather said that he put a veil on it. She shouldn't have been able to wander in here. I'll put a call in to him in the morning and get him out here to repeat the ritual."

"No," Bray said, putting his hand up. "She felt the spirits of the land rush through. She's human, but some powerful blood runs through her veins, that's how she found us. Leave Running Elk alone, he's not as young as he used to be."

Mason laughed. "The man will outlive us. He's got to be pushing a hundred now."

"With as slow as we age, I'm betting over that." Bray said, peeking over Mason's shoulder at Lily. Mason smiled at him and followed his gaze.

"Cougs, if you like her, just tell me and I'll keep my distance. Wouldn't want to piss the kitty off." Mason growled as he wrinkled his nose.

Brayen rolled his eyes and laughed at his old friend. "I think I'm in love."

"You just met her, and she's human."

"I know, and I know. Doesn't change the fact that I'm in love."

Chapter Two

Lily applied a thin layer of lip-gloss and double-checked her outfit as she fluffed her towel-dried hair. She hoped that the tiny black dress didn't scream sleazy, but in truth, she was desperate to find a man to sleep with her tonight, so the hooker get-up was completely in order.

She turned slightly and nodded in approval at the low cut back of the dress. It just missed showing her butt. She slipped her thigh highs and heels on and headed out the door. The cool night air smacked her bare skin and she cursed herself for wearing something so skimpy.

I'll not only get laid, I'll get pneumonia too.

The night was darker than she remembered them being in the city and she glanced around nervously. The hairs on the back of her neck stood on end and she knew that someone was watching her. The unmistakable sound a wolf howling followed next and she broke into a run.

* * * *

Brayen sat in his office, finishing up the end of month books. He hated the work, but it needed to be done. He ran a legitimate business, even if it did cater to the supernatural. No one had investigated how the seemingly abandoned old hotel turned such a profit yet, and Bray guessed they never would.

His thoughts drifted back to Lily. He'd spent the last few hours thinking about her. It had taken everything in him not to take her, fuck her, and claim her as his mate. It was in his makeup to want to take a mate. It seemed that all weres had the overwhelming drive to find that one person who they could breed with. The idea that his one person could be a tiny, spitfire of a human was almost laughable.

Brayen logged his last entry and stopped when he heard the cry of a wolf. He knew that sound, it was one used before the wolf attacked its prey. He'd been charged with keeping the shifters in the area in line. He was their guardian for lack of a better term and he wasn't about to let a rogue werewolf spoil it for the bunch. If the damn thing did manage to kill anything the police would be crawling all over the area looking for clues

and Bray couldn't risk one of them being gifted enough to sense the lycan compound.

He stripped his shirt and shoes off as he ran outside. If it came down to a fight, he didn't want to ruin any more clothes than he had to. The cougar within him caught scent of the wolf and he ran in its direction. It was closer to the cabins than he would have liked to see. Normally, even the craziest of shifters would stay back from the compound grounds. This one was bold or incredibly stupid. He couldn't figure out which.

Mason ran out of his cabin and looked at Bray. "It's not one of mine."

"Rogue?" Brayen didn't want to hear the answer to his own question. If the wolf wasn't part of Mason's pack then they had trouble on their hands.

"That's my guess."

"Shit!"

"Yeah," Mason said, stripping his shirt off as well.

They ran towards the scent. Bray stopped in mid-stride and Mason came close to knocking him over. "Hey, what the hell are we stopping for?"

Bray put his hand up and motioned towards Lily. She stood near the edge of the property staring at a pack of wolves. Bray could feel her fear as if it were his own. "Don't move, baby. Don't move," he said softly. She started to turn her head in their direction, but stopped. "That a girl. Don't move. We're coming up behind you. Once we're there, run."

A large black wolf, no doubt the alpha, growled at Bray and Mason. Bray's body burned for the change. He wanted to shift into a cougar and have at the wolves. He knew he was stronger than they were. It had always been so. Mason's great-grandfather, the local shaman, had told him that he was born to be the guardian and that in that gift came great strength. He told him stories of his mother, Rose, showing up pregnant and alone. The people at the reservation had seen to her needs and when she'd died during childbirth, they'd cared for him as if he were one of their own. And in a way, he was one of them. Different as his cougar DNA was, he still was a shifter all the same. Mason was like his brother. They were both powerful and could take on any other shifter. So far, he hadn't met an opponent that could hold a candle to him--at least not yet.

A white wolf snapped at Lily and she screamed out. The wolves took her fear and ran with it. They lunged forward, leaving Mason and Bray no choice but to shift to defend her.

Bray's body transformed in mid-air as he leapt over Lily. He landed on all fours at her feet and batted out at the alpha wolf, catching its snout and ripping it wide open. Mason, in wolf form, appeared next to Bray. He looked over at his friend, all black and lethal, before setting his attentions back on the rogues.

* * * *

Lily stood frozen as she watched the events unfold before her. Her mind tried to make sense of the scene, but failed. A large tan cat, possibly a cougar, turned its amber eyes to her and snarled. She fought to get her feet to move.

"Bray?"

She looked around, but couldn't find him anywhere. There was no doubt in her mind that he'd spoken to her right before the white wolf leapt at her, but she couldn't find him.

"Brayen!" She yelled, frantic now that he may have been attacked as well.

Go into the bar NOW!

Lily turned around looking for Brayen. He sounded so close.

Go, Lily!

The command startled her and brought her back into the moment. Standing in the dark with a huge group of wild animals was insane. Brayen wasn't out there, she must have hallucinated him. She ran towards the bar, and stopped when another wolf appeared before her. It bared its teeth at her as it lunged off the ground. Lily screamed out and attempted to jump out of its path. It dove past her, and slid in the dirt.

* * * *

Lily's scream caught Brayen's attention and cost him dearly when the alpha rogue sunk its teeth into his neck. He slashed out at it and caught it across the face. It released him quickly and ran off in the other direction. Mason looked over at him and Bray knew that he would go after the wolf so that Bray could go to Lily.

Thank you, brother. Bray pushed out with his mind. He'd known how to communicate with the wolves since he was just a boy.

Go see to your woman, Mason said, running after the alpha. If she has been bitten and exchanged blood then she will turn.

The thought of Lily being turning into a lycan scared the hell out him. Few survived the change and she was already so small.

Lily screamed again and Bray shifted back into human form before jumping between the wolf and her. He caught it in midair and twisted its snout hard. He felt its jaws breaking under the weight of his grasp and he had to fight back a smile.

"Get off my property! I will kill you if you set foot on it again," he said, throwing the whimpering lycan across the yard. He whirled around to check on Lily. Her eyes were wide as she crab walked away from him, shaking her head. He'd taken every precaution to prevent her from seeing him shape shift so he didn't understand what the problem was.

He made another more towards her and she fell onto her backside. "You're bleeding and you're ... naked."

Shit, I forgot about that.

Brayen glanced down at himself and back at Lily. "I don't suppose you could overlook the fact that I'm walking around in the buff and trust me to get you to your cabin safely?"

She blinked twice before settling her gaze on his groin area. The minute her green eyes locked on him, his cock acted of its own accord and hardened instantly. Painfully. The need to bury it in her was too great. He stalked over to her and didn't ask if it was all right to pick her up, he just did. Her desire for him filled his nose. She wanted him damn near as much as he wanted her and that did little in the way of helping his throbbing problem.

"Put me down," she whispered. "You're bleeding all over the place."

"I'll buy you a new dress."

She balked. "I don't care about my dress. I'm worried about you hurting yourself more by carrying me. In case you haven't noticed, you're huge and if you should happen to pass out I'll never be able to get you to safety if the wolves come back."

"They won't come back." Brayen slowed his pace and looked down into her sweet face. No one had ever worried about him before. He was the guardian, the keeper of the lycans. He made sure they were safe. No one looked out for him. Need pulsed throughout his veins. He would have her tonight if he didn't put the brakes on.

"Lily, if I carry you into your cabin I'm staying the night with you. Tell me now if you don't want me because once my foot crosses that threshold there will be no turning back. And I think we both know what will take place if I stay with you."

"Carry me in."

His heart stopped. "Are you sure?"

"I think you've lost too much blood and it's affected your hearing. Carry me in already, would you?"

Her sass appealed to him even more than if she'd been submissive. The need to claim her drove him onward even though his neck was raw and she'd been right, he had lost too much blood. The werecougar in him made him able to stand more pain and to sustain injuries that would kill a human. It also made his lifespan close to ten times longer than a human's. He didn't want to think about out living Lily. He couldn't.

He opened the door to her cabin slowly, watching the expression on her face as he went. There was no way that he'd take her without her consent. It didn't matter that he'd die from need, he'd see to his mate's happiness first.

My mate? Why do I keep calling her that? Humans can't be our mates. It's not possible.

He set Lily down on the bed and backed away from her slowly, letting his eyelids flutter shut for a moment. The cougar in him was trying to surface and he wouldn't let it out. He wouldn't let it claim her.

"Bray?"

"I need to clean up. I'll be right back."

"You need a doctor." The worry in her face made him want her even more.

He reached out and caressed her cheek gently. "I'll be fine. I promise. I just want to wash the blood off me. You deserve better than this."

Lily looked off towards the wall and he watched closely as her expression changed. "Please don't put me on a pedestal. I don't deserve that."

Something in her tone told him that this was bigger than she was letting on. "Lily? Do you want to talk about it?"

Her gaze came back to him. "No, I don't want to talk. I just want to be with you."

Need rippled through him as he looked down at her. "I'll be right back, baby."

Chapter Three

"Hey, can I help?" Lily's sweet voice asked.

Bray stiffened as Lily opened the shower door. His hungry eyes skimmed over her naked body, soaking up its glory. His cock responded instantly. The need to pull her into the shower with him was great, and he gave into it.

"Oh," she gasped as he lifted her quickly.

"Oh," he echoed with a small grin.

With her in his arms, she was finally high enough to kiss comfortably so he took full advantage of that. Pressing her tiny body against the cool tile, he found her mouth and forced his tongue into it. She met him with a fury, her arms going around his neck, and her breasts pressing against his chest. The feel of her hard nipples against his skin made his cock throb.

"Wrap you legs around me."

Lily listened and as she wrapped them around him, he felt her hot core near the tip of his penis. "You're wet."

She let out a sultry laugh and kissed his jaw line. "We're in the shower."

Bray worked his hand down her side, running his fingers over her breast on the way down to her core. "That's not what I meant," he said, shoving his finger into her, finding her even wetter than he'd first thought. He licked her lip and bit at her tongue gently as it came out to greet his. "So, tight...."

They moaned together. She tipped her head back, thrusting her breasts up into his face and he was left with no choice, he had to enter her or burst. He positioned the head of his cock and thrust in hard and fast. Lily screamed out and clutched onto him. He stopped in mid stride.

"Did I hurt you?"

Her green gaze found his blue one as she dove at his mouth, pulling his bottom lip with her teeth. "More...."

He obliged. Pumping the length of shaft into her repeatedly, savoring every second of having her tight sheath encompassing him. "Do you feel that? You were made for me."

She answered him by planting tiny kisses on his throat. She pulled back quickly and caught his face in her hands, forcing his eyes to hers. "What are you? You're healed."

The thought of lying to her never entered his mind, and that should have scared him. The existence of his people depended on humans not knowing about them. Brayen did use his gifts to coat his voice with a bit of reassurance. It was easy to do, yet he found that he rarely used that

talent. "I'd never hurt you, Lily. I'm a shape shifter. Like the legends of old. My animal is the cougar."

Her eyes widened and he waited for her to scream. She didn't. "You were the tan cat that saved me from the wolves." She glanced away a moment. "Oh, Gawd, those weren't wolves, were they?"

"No," he answered honestly.

"They would have killed me."

"Among other things."

Lily ran her hands through his hair and traced her way over his shoulders, and down his arms. He began to move within her, slowly, unsure how to take her calmness. He expected hysterics.

"Is your condition genetic?"

Her question caught him off guard. He'd set himself up for her to scream bloody murder and demand that he exit her body immediately. "Umm, I guess, but I don't know. I can't have children until I find my mate."

She looked saddened by his news. "How many mates do you get?"

He pumped himself into her slowly, filling her, and feeling her body tighten around him, trying his best to stay focused on their conversation. It was hard to do when her breasts seemed to swell beneath his touch. "I only get one. Do you want me to stop? Are you afraid of me?"

"I'm not afraid of you for the reason you'd think. I'm afraid that I won't be able to walk away from you."

"You don't have to walk away, Lily. You could stay with me."

"Shh," she said, pulling his mouth to hers. He quickened his strokes and let out a muffled cry as she bit down gently on his tongue.

He reached down and rubbed his fingers over her swollen clit. She jerked and bit down harder on his tongue, drawing blood, and pulling the beast within him to the surface. A growl emanated from him as his body shook. Lily's tight pussy milked him and brought his own release on suddenly. Brayen almost lost his footing as the water beat down on his back and his seed spurted into her womb. His incisors lengthened and he bent his head down to sink them into her soft skin.

Lily cried out and grabbed hold of his hair as her blood flowed into his mouth. He felt her channel constrict again as the pleasure of his bite brought an orgasm. Before he knew it, he was coming again as well, spilling his seed into her, filling her womb with his power.

He pulled back from her slowly, running his rough tongue over the bite mark. The realization of what he'd just done sunk in. He'd marked her while having sex. He'd mated with her. Brayen pulled back from her quickly and let her legs slide down him.

She stood before him and ran her hands over his stomach, before wrapping her arms around him. Her embrace felt so right, so perfect. She was his other half. The one he'd searched for all his life, yet she was human. He couldn't explain it to himself, let alone to her.

"Come on. Let's get you cleaned up before the shock of what I am sinks in."

Lily tightened her hold on him. "I'm not shocked at all. My grandmother told me about you. She said that men like you existed and that I was born to walk among them. Of course, I took everything she said with a grain of salt. That will teach me," she said, with a laugh. "I mean who believes that they were destined to meet people who can turn into animals?"

"Did she also tell you that you'd end up mated to one the rest of your life?"

Lily's arms dropped away from him. Sorrow filled her voice as she spoke. "We have the weekend, Bray. That's all we'll ever have."

"No, we can have eternity. All you have to do is say the word."

She put her hand on his chest and shook her head. "I can't give you anymore than the weekend."

If she thought for one minute that he'd let her walk out of his life she was not only wrong, but crazy as well. They were married in the eyes of the were community, and that was not something that was taken lightly. She was now the guardian's wife--his mate, and hopefully, if they should happen to be blessed enough, the mother of his children.

He turned the water off and lifted her from the shower. The sweet smell of her sex permeated upwards and he found himself instantly aroused. Her tiny fingers wrapped around him causing him to moan.

"You are insatiable," she whispered.

"When I find something that makes me happy I tend to run with it."

"I see that."

"Say that you'll stay longer than the weekend," Brayen pleaded, needing to hear that she'd consider it. Though he was sure that she had no idea just what she was to him now. In her eyes, he was a one-night stand. In his world, she was his wife. He laid her damp body out on the bed and pushed her legs apart with his knee. He edged the head of his cock near her still soaked pussy and leered down at her.

She bucked beneath him, trying to get him to enter her. "Please...."

"Promise me more than the weekend, Lily."

"I can't."

He let the tip of his penis slip into her. Still tight, she seemed to seize hold of him. It took everything in him not to slam himself down to the hilt. He needed to hear her promise to stay. He wasn't sure why it was so important to him, but it was. "Lily, let me love you more than a few days."

"Bray," she sighed his name out.

Seeing that he had lost this one battle, but refusing to lose the war, he plunged into her, determined to lay claim to her in as many ways as he could. A scream tore from her throat as he sank his teeth into her breast, riding her body with his the entire time. Each thrust, each draw of her blood, put him closer to the edge of sanity.

Lily raked at his back. He felt the blood running down him, as the fiery hot feel of her sharp nails continued to dig into him. She came with a start. "Brayen, oh yes, Brayen ... yes ... fill me up, give it to me."

How could he resist such a simple request? He thrust into her again, this time holding himself down on her as his cock pumped, shooting forth his come.

Chapter Four

Brayen took a deep breath in, holding Lily's sweet scent in him. His insides churned. He'd never experienced anything like this before. Waking up with her tiny body wrapped around his after a night of unbelievable lovemaking was almost too much.

For a tiny thing, Lily was insatiable. They'd made love every way possible in the tiny cabin. So many times in fact that he'd thought for sure they'd both be unable to move for days.

He reached down and ran his hand over her lower abdomen. Afraid to say it aloud, he just let his hand rest there, hoping that the gods would see fit to give them a family someday. After the passion they'd shared, Lily couldn't just walk out. She could say that they had only the weekend until she was blue in the face, but leaving him would hurt her as much as it would hurt him. They were connected now--mated.

Cougar, Mason's voice pushed into his mind.

He stirred slightly, careful not to wake Lily. What is it?

The rogue wolves were spotted in the area again. I'm going to take a group out to hunt them at dusk. I thought you might want to come too.

Brayen looked down at Lily and exhaled slowly. I can't.

I understand. Stay with her and I will do my best to assure that she doesn't see any of us shift.

She knows what we are.

Dead silence greeted him. He knew that Mason was attempting to understand why Brayen had told an outsider about them. The laws of their kind were clear. No outsider was to know of them and live. Lily wasn't an outsider anymore. She was his mate now.

Cougar....

I took her as my mate, Brayen said quickly, not wanting Mason's wheels to spin.

She's not one of us.

I know, but that doesn't change the fact that she's my mate. Look at us. You consider me your brother, yet my mother came here, pregnant and alone, without an ounce of Sioux blood in her. Running Elk took me in. I am as different as she is, yet I am your family.

He felt the weight of Mason's thoughts. That's different, Brayen. Grandfather knew instantly that you carried the gene of a cougar in you. The human does not carry a were gene ... not unless you infect her with it. That could be the answer to all our problems.

NO!

Brayen....

He cut communication down with Mason instantly. He wouldn't entertain bringing Lily over. The change could kill her.

Brayen gathered Lily in his arms and pressed his lips to her forehead. She was his now and he'd never give her up or let harm come to her. If his people weren't willing to accept her as she was then he'd leave. It was that simple. His wife came before all else.

* * * *

Lily woke slowly, still sore from the incredible night of lovemaking she'd shared with Brayen. How a man could go that many times in one night was beyond her. They'd done so many things, things she'd never dreamt of doing with Jack, that she blushed again thinking about them.

She smiled sheepishly as she thought about Brayen holding her hair as he commanded her to 'suck him off', and oh, how had she. She taken every last inch of his abnormally large cock into her mouth until it had hit the back of her throat. She could still hear his soft moans of pleasure and feel his abs tighten under the weight of her fingertips as he spit seed down her

throat. It was one of the most erotic experiences she'd ever had with a man and it hardened her heart to think about it.

I have to walk away. I have to go home. I have a life there, waiting for me to put it back together again. I can't leave Bray, I've fallen in love with him.

She stopped dead in her tracks. Love? Where the hell had that come from? What had provoked her decision to stay? She hardly knew the man and the little she did know would have scared anyone else to death.

Lily shook the thoughts from her head and looked around the cabin for Bray. He was nowhere to be found. She sat up, slowly. The discomfort from being rode hard by Brayen left her a bit worse for the wear.

She crept over to the cabin door, tucking the sheet from the bed around her more, and opened it slowly. Shocked at first by the fact that it was dark out again, she inched her way out of the cabin.

She would have turned around and waited in the cabin for him, but the sound of his voice, raised in anger grabbed her.

"I will not turn her!" Brayen shouted.

"You'll turn her or we'll have no choice but to deal with her, or I will have to...." Mason's voice followed close behind his.

Brayen snarled. "Don't even fucking think about laying a hand on her, Mason, or I will forget that I call you brother."

"Come on, Bray. Be realistic. Turn her or kill her. If you don't, one of the others here will. Do you want them sticking their dicks in your woman for the rest of your life? Claim her fully or they will--if you're lucky. They could always just kill her. Let us pray that it's a swift death because you know how some of them like to play with their food."

"God damnit, Mason! Why does it have to be this way? Why can't I just love her as she is?" Bray asked. He sounded like he might be crying. "She's still refusing to stay with me. She says that we only have the weekend and that she'll go then."

"Did you tell her that she couldn't?"

"I asked her not to."

Mason chuckled. "Tell you what, brother. I'll hold the rest of the pack back until tomorrow night. If you haven't turned her by then, then we'll be left no choice but to protect our secret ... whatever the cost."

"NO! If it comes down to it, I'll deal with her. No one else is to touch her. Am I clear?"

Lily choked back a sob as she hurried back into their cabin, leaving them to finish their conversation. Brayen was going to force her to become what he was or kill her. Her heart sped and she had to fight to keep from screaming.

Something sharp pinched in her lower abdomen and her eyes widened in horror. "No, I can't be." Instinctively she knew that it was true.

The door to the cabin opened and Lily had no more time to think about what she'd just learned. Brayen stood there smiling at her like he had no cares in the world. "How do you feel? Not too sore I hope."

"Fine," she said sternly.

"Is everything okay?"

She couldn't tip him off that she knew what he had to do. She forced a smile onto her face and let the sheet fall away from her body slowly. There was no way that she'd stay through tomorrow and put him in the position of having to decide how to best handle her, but there was also no way she could leave without feeling his body in hers one more time. Like it or not, she was addicted to him. In love with him, and deathly afraid of him.

Lily put her hand out, summoning him to her. His golden hair caught pieces of the moonlight streaming in from the window. He looked like a god standing there, and she knew that he too held the power of life and death in his hands.

He let a wicked grin spill over his face. "Mmmm, I believe your sex drive may rival my own." He covered the distance between them and pulled her into his arms. "I love my smell all over you. Don't get me wrong, I love the way you smell, but," he drew in a deep breath, "I like knowing that you're mine. Always and forever."

She choked back the tears that threatened to fall. Oh, how she wished that what he said were true. Somewhere along the line, she lost the will to

return to the life she once knew and wanted only to be loved by him for the rest of her days, but if the rest of his 'pack' had anything to do with it, tomorrow would be her last day. Panic welled up inside her and she clutched on to Brayen's strong arms to stay grounded.

"Lily? What's wrong?"

She fought to regain her composure and leaned up to meet his lips. "Fuck me."

Brayen stiffened at her words. His nostrils flared slightly and she almost screamed when his eyes flickered from blue to amber. When he spoke, his voice sounded labored and deeper than normal. "Woman, you shouldn't talk to me like that. The beast is hard enough to control around you."

He turned her around quickly and she yelped. Material ripped behind her and it only took a moment to figure out that it was Brayen's clothing. He pushed the sheet away from her body as he forced her to her hands and knees. His fingers seemed to caress her entire body. Heat built up inside her and she screamed out as he tweaked her nipples.

"Such ripe berries ... they taste as sweet, you know."

Lily only moaned in response to him as Bray slid his hands down her body and found her swollen clit, plucking it, sending white-hot stabs of pleasure through her lower regions. Gasping for breath, she clawed at the floor, trying desperately to find her center. She failed, as an orgasm ripped through her, leaving her out of breath and falling forward.

Wrapping his arms around her waist, Brayen leaned in to her, his rigid cock pressed against her soaked entrance. "I'm not done with you, my love."

Love?

"I can't take ... anymore," she panted.

He growled near her ear, and rubbed the head of his penis in and out of her pussy. "That's it, baby." He slid the length of himself into her quickly. Unable to hold her exhausted body up, she fell onto her elbows. Brayen stroked her back tenderly. "I'll do the work, my love. Just stay there and enjoy it. You do like it?"

"Yes," she whispered. "I love it. I love you."

Her confession came just as Brayen slid a finger into her anus. She cried out and tried to crawl away from him. His other arm encircled her, pulling her back to him, forcing his cock deeper into her womb, and his finger further into her anus. She was so full. Too full. "Brayen...."

Angling her hips upward, Brayen pumped harder into her, hitting her g-spot. The orgasm blindsided her, leaving her contracting on both his cock and finger. "So fucking tight ... Lily ... so fucking perfect."

He slammed his body down hard in to hers, jerking as he came deep within her. "I love you too, Lily, with all my heart."

She froze. He'd heard her confession. She'd assumed that he hadn't, but now as he held her to his body, still spilling semen in her, she knew that he too shared her feelings.

The tears that she'd tried so desperately to hold back flowed freely. She did her best to steel herself to the reality of what she was about to do. She would wait until he fell asleep and then she would leave without so much as a goodbye. There was little choice for her. There was more than just her own safety to think about now.

Chapter Five

Brayen touched Renee's shoulder and gave her a halfhearted smile. "Thanks for inviting me. This is nice."

"Whoof, nice he says." Renee jabbed him in the rib cage and narrowed her eyes. "Nice is you finally getting out and seeing people. You stay locked away with...."

Bray's jaw tightened. "Say it ... animals."

Renee shook her head and glanced nervously at the kitchen door. "I'd never call you or others like you animals and you know that. My father

was one and I loved him with all my heart. I grew up wishing that I'd gotten the gene that causes it."

He froze as he heard Renee confess to wanting to be a shapeshifter. He wouldn't wish it upon anyone. Having normal friends was rare. Renee was one of the only humans he interacted with and that's only because he'd known her father. The only other human he'd ever gotten close to had walked in and out of his life in a matter of two days, but had left a gaping hole in his heart that would never heal.

"Bray, you all right?" Renee asked, eyeing him suspiciously.

He nodded and grabbed the plate from her hands. "Here, I'll take that out to Will, those burgers smell done enough. Anymore and we'll be chewing on charcoal."

Renee laughed as he headed towards the back door. He opened the French door and stopped when he caught scent of her. He looked around frantically and spotted her standing there. She was still as beautiful as the night she walked in needing a room for the weekend.

Lily was dressed in a pale yellow sundress that hung to her ankles. Her dark brown hair seemed a little longer than the last time he'd seen her, but other than that she hadn't changed in almost six years.

Something brushed past Bray's hand and he drew in a sharp breath as a tiny shock passed through his skin. He glanced down to find a little girl standing next to him. She looked up at him and smiled wide. A tiny dimple formed on the right side of her face and her blue eyes locked on his. "She's like an angel, isn't she?" she asked, softly.

"Who?"

The little girl pointed out towards Lily and reached up to take his hand. He stood still, reluctant to touch the tiny being next to him. She seemed so small that he feared he'd crush her with just one touch. She pressed her hand into his and looked out towards Lily. "I tell her that she looks like an angel all the time, but she doesn't believe me. I can tell you think she looks like one too."

Bray let out a chuckle. "Oh, you can? You seem awfully young to know so much."

She balked. "I'm five, and I'm very smart for my age."

"Ah, I see." Bray said, stiffening as he saw a man approaching Lily. The man looked as though he'd fallen out of the pages of GQ or at the very least was a Kennedy. Bray's muscles flexed as the man's hand ran up Lily's back like it belonged there. She settled back into his arms and it was clear to see how very happy she was. The man wrapped his body around her and swayed back and forth with her.

Blinding rage overcame Bray and he clutched hold of the doorframe to keep from growling and drawing attention to himself. A tiny cry sounded next to him and he looked down to see the tiny brown-haired girl staring at him with wide eyes. He looked at his hand and realized that he was clutching her small hand. With his lycan strength he could crush it without thought. Bray dropped to his knees next to her and inspected her for injury.

"I'm sorry, sweetie, did I hurt you?"

Her lip puckered out. "Just a little. How did you do that?"

"Do what?"

She moved up closer to him. "How did you make the same noise that I make? The sound like a mean kitty?"

Bray hadn't realized that he had made any noise. He smiled at the little girl and touched her hand gently. How he hadn't crushed all the bones in her hand was a mystery. "What's your name?"

"Rebecca-Rose, but everyone calls me Becca. What's yours?"

"Rose? That was my mother's name. You must be a very special little girl to have a name like that," Bray said, giving her a wide smile.

Becca reached up and touched his cheek softly. Her tiny finger went to his dimple and her eyes widened. "You've got the same hole when you smile. My momma says that she can see all the way through my head when I smile big."

Bray let out a throaty laugh and patted her head gently. "I think your momma sounds like she's a good mommy."

"Oh, no, she's the bestest mommy ever!"

"Rebecca-Rose, what are you doing bothering this nice man?"

Bray's nostrils flared as he looked up to see the Kennedy standing over them. The man gave Becca a sideways glance and then started to laugh. "I leave you alone for five minutes and you're harassing Renee and Will's guests." He looked at Bray and put his hand out. "Hi, I'm Jack Preston, and I see you've already met my daughter Becca."

Bray stood slowly and took the man's hands in his. He could smell Lily on him. They'd been intimate recently and the thought of that sickened him. Becca touched his arm lightly, keeping him from shifting and ripping Jack Preston's head clean off.

Jack looked down at his daughter and reached for her. She leapt into his arms, but kept her eyes on Bray. "Daddy, he can make the kitty noise like me."

Jack glanced nervously at Bray, but forced a smile to his lips. "Oh, he can, can he? Does he get into as much mischief as you too?"

Becca looked at him and shrugged her shoulders. "I don't know, Daddy, maybe. He's strong too."

"I'm sure he is, peanut," he said, setting her down gently. "Mommy's looking for you. She wants you to sit down and eat something. I told her not to bother, but you know your mom."

Becca nodded. "I told him that momma looks like an angel. I think he believed me."

Bray's gut clenched tight, and he scanned the yard for signs of Lily. She was a mother now, and a wife? That couldn't be. She was his wife, and supposed to be the mother of his children someday. He watched as Becca scattered away, leaving him standing face to face with Jack.

"She's a cute kid. You and your wife must be very proud." Bray almost choked on the words as he said them.

Jack nodded and walked over to the cooler. He grabbed a bottle of water. "You want a beer or anything?"

"No, I'm fine," Bray said, watching him carefully. "Only water for you?"

"Yeah, I'm on call at the hospital. They've got someone in the ER now, but if things get backed up I'll need to head in."

Of course, Lily would be married to a doctor. A nasty thought popped into his head. "So, if you don't mind me asking, how long have you been married?"

Jack reached out and touched Bray's shoulder. He wanted to bite the man, but stood tall. "Lillian and I have been an item since high school. I loved her from the moment I laid eyes on her and we've never been apart. I married her right out of high school and made it work through college. It was rough, but we made it. My family didn't approve. They even managed to come between us for a while there, before Becca was born. I didn't think we'd make it for a while there, divorce papers were already filed ... oh, look at me ramble on. That was more information than you wanted."

"You can say that again." An identical replica of Jack said as he approached.

Bray looked at the twins and his nausea only intensified. Of course, they'd come in pairs.

Jack smiled at him. "Ah, this is my brother Lewis. Lewis this is...?"

"JACK, your pager's going off!" Lily's voice floated over the crowd.

"Better run, wouldn't want to keep her waiting," Lewis said sardonically.

It was clear to Bray that Lewis didn't like Lily. He could smell his hate for her rolling off the man, and he found himself wanting to snap both their necks. Jack looked at Bray and ran his fingers through his short black hair. "Work needs me, sorry that I couldn't introduce you to Lily. She'd love to meet the man who charmed Becca." He smiled and turned to go. "See to it that Lily and Becca get home safe if I'm not back," he said to Lewis.

"No problem, brother," Lewis said, as he watched Jack run off. He made a gagging sound and glanced up at Bray. "Does it sicken you too?"

Bray jumped a bit startled by the question. "Does what sicken me?"

"Seeing the two of them together."

"I take it that you don't care much for your sister-in-law."

Lewis let out an icy laugh and looked Bray dead in the eye. "He could have done so much better than a little squaw half breed piece of trash. Hell, anything would have been better than that."

Brayen saw red, but did his best to stay levelheaded. "From my understanding, Jack's wife has only a tiny bit of Native American blood in her, and she is quite proud of it. I'd love to be a full blooded Lakota"

Lewis didn't ask how he knew that. "Lak ... what?" He waved his hand in the air. "Please, you don't have to pretend for my sake. Nobody wants the red man's blood in them, least of all me. It sickens me that Jack tainted the Preston name with that stain. I told him to let the half breed suck his dick, spread her legs and that was it, not put a ring on her damn finger. Our mother never approved. Right up until she died she begged him to reconsider his choice in a wife."

Bray resisted the urge to smash Lewis' head into the wall and watched as he walked away into the crowd of people. Renee walked up behind him and tapped his shoulder. "Planning on taking that plate out to Will or are you willing to eat your meat cooked for once?"

"Would you mind doing it? I've got ... umm ... I've got a bit of a problem with keeping my problem at bay." He hoped that Renee would understand that if he took one step out that door after Lewis he would shift into the cougar and rip the man's throat out.

Renee took the plate from him and walked outside. "You are so going to have to fill me in on what's going on with you when I get back. Try not to eat any of my guests."

"Renee, have you seen Lily's keys? Someone's parked behind me and the hospital needs me," Jack said, appearing behind Bray.

Renee looked back and pointed towards the countertop. "She always tosses them in the basket with mine. I swear, the woman should have been my sister, she's here enough. I'll give her a ride home later, she can't drive your stick shift."

"Thanks, doll!" Jack said, snatching the keys up. "Watch her, she's a wild one."

"Daddy, Daddy...." Becca cried out, running past Bray to Jack. "Don't go today Daddy, please."

Jack's eyebrows came together. "Peanut, you've never asked me not to go in to work before. What's wrong? You know that sick people need Daddy's help, right?"

Large tears welled up in little Becca's eyes and Bray felt his own heart break with the fall of each one. "I know, Daddy, but don't go today, please. I have a bad feeling, Daddy. The kind that pulls at my tummy and makes the kitty noise come again."

Jack kissed her forehead and wiped her tears away. "I'll be back soon, and we can have a tea party. I'll even wear one of those silly hats, okay?" He set her down and looked up at Bray. "Sorry to ask you to do this, but could see to it that she doesn't run out behind me? Lily will be in here in just a minute."

Bray nodded and moved closer to Becca. He watched Jack run out the door and had to pick Becca up to keep her from following him. "Put me down, put me down!"

"Your father asked me to keep you here until your mommy comes in." Bray tried to sound gentle, but he'd never been around small children and wasn't sure how to handle this type of situation.

Becca twisted in his arms and snarled at him. Bray's heart leapt to his throat. He knew that sound. He'd made it enough himself. He took a deep breath in and held it. Becca's scent was familiar, she smelled of Lily and, he took another breath. He staggered backwards a bit, but managed to hold her steady. Becca smelled of cougar, like him. She twisted in his arms and looked at him, her blue eyes shifted to amber before she snarled again.

He let out a throaty growl as a warning to her not to try anything and she stopped moving in his arms. Her wide eyes fell on him and tears filled them. "He won't be back."

Bray looked towards the front of Renee's large home. "Sure he will, sweetie. He just had...."

She shook her head. "No, Daddy won't ever be back, and Mommy's heart will break." She put her head on his shoulder and he smoothed her long hair down. "You'll help make it better, won't you? I know you will make it better."

Brayen wasn't sure what to say to her. He couldn't come out and tell her that he thought he was her father, no, Jack had filled those shoes all her life. It was clear that she loved the man, and he her, but Bray had to know. He turned with her in his arms and found Lily standing behind him, her mouth open.

"Brayen?" She said his name softly. She looked at Becca in his arms. Her face paled, and she grabbed hold of the countertop to steady herself. That was all the confirmation he needed. She'd left him almost six years ago in the middle of the night, pregnant with his child and never told him about her. He hugged Becca to his chest and shook his head at Lily.

"How could you not tell me?"

"Bray," she said, moving closer to him and lowering her voice. "I was, am, a married woman. I, we ... Jack and I couldn't have ... I...."

The realization of what she was saying sunk in. He'd been nothing more than a sperm donor. She was his mate, his world, his wife. He'd thought that what they had was special, now he knew that it meant nothing to her. Bray fought back the tears that tried to surface and did his best not to let Lily see the hurt in his eyes.

Someone pounded on the front door and it burst open. "LILLIAN, LEWIS!"

Lewis burst through the back door and Lily followed close behind him as he ran to the front room. "Chief Sisel?"

A tall man stood there, covered in blood. His eyes were wild as he looked at Lily. "Lillian, there's been an accident, just down the bend, near the river. Jack's...." He dropped his head down.

"NO!" Lewis cried out.

"No," Lily whispered softly, as she took a step back. "No, Adam, no ... don't do this ... don't ... no, Jack's fine. He's at the hospital now, they needed his help ... he's fine ... he's...."

Chief Sisel made a move towards her and she darted away from him. "Lillian, Jack's gone. Beth and I were on our way up here for the picnic and I watched him lose control of your car and ... I tried to save him ... I radioed in for help and the squad was there in a matter of minutes. Lillian, they said that he died instantly."

Brayen turned with Becca in his arms and ran towards the backyard. She clung to him sobbing and mumbling about how she knew her daddy wasn't coming back. He spotted Renee and ran to her. "There's been an accident ... Jack."

Renee reached for Becca, but she held tight to his neck. "Sweetie, go to Renee, I need to check on your mommy." Renee gave him a puzzled look, but didn't question him.

"I want to stay with you. You can't leave us now, he'll hurt mommy. He doesn't like her ... please!" Becca said, between sobs. Bray passed her to Renee and kissed her tiny cheek quickly.

"I won't leave you, sweetie," he said softly, wondering who he was.

Chapter Six

Brayen ran to the front yard and found Chief Sisel holding Lily in his arms as she kicked and screamed at him to let her go to Jack. She lashed out again and caught the Chief's cheek. He loosened his grip enough for her to weasel out of his grasp.

"Lillian!" Chief Sisel called out after her.

"Let her go, maybe we'll get lucky and the bitch will die too," Lewis whispered under his breath. The Chief missed the comment, but Bray's ultra-sensitive hearing let him pick up on every bit of it. He shot Lewis a nasty look and raced down the drive after Lily. She'd covered quite a bit of ground in a short period of time and Bray had to grab her around the waist to get her to stop.

She pounded on his chest as he spun her around. "Let go of me!"

"Lily, please stop. Let's go back up to Renee's and...."

"And what?" She demanded. "He's gone, Bray ... Jack is gone. He can't be dead. I didn't mean for it to happen. He should have punished me, not Jack."

Bray held her to him and shook his head. "Who should punish you, and what the hell are you talking about?"

"God, he should have punished me, not Jack. I'm the one who lied. I'm the one who lied."

"Baby, please, I don't understand. I want to help you, but you need to get a hold of yourself. What did you lie about?"

She cried out and slapped him hard across the face. He didn't flinch. He just let her hit him repeatedly. "I lied to Jack, when he found out that Becca wasn't his ... he asked if I loved her father." She took a deep breath in, "and I said no, I looked him in the eyes and I told him that I never loved you, that I only used you. I lied to him ... oh God, I lied to him."

Brayen set her down and grabbed her wrists. He pulled her body to his and let her cry as he held her. "It's okay, baby. It's okay. You weren't being punished. It's okay."

"It's not okay! I lied to him! It was bad enough that he found out that she wasn't his. I couldn't bring myself to hurt him more. I love him, Bray, I do ... did ... but not as much as I love you and now he's dead because of me! I need to go to him, right now. I need to see him." She clutched onto his shirt and clawed at his chest. "I thought that we were going to make it. Jack said that he understood, but now he's gone. He can't be gone. They're wrong. He's fine. I'm sure he's fine. Right?"

Bray did his best to hold his emotions in check. On one hand, he had his mate confessing to loving him more than her husband, yet on the other hand, he felt her pain and sorrow. "Come on, baby, let's get you back to the house, Becca needs you to be strong now."

Chapter Seven

Lily looked out at the for sale sign and pressed her forehead to the window. Renee had told her to keep the house, that it was what Jack would have wanted, but she couldn't bear to live with memory of him all around her. Every room reminded her of him, and she couldn't do it anymore. He'd been gone for six months now and she still couldn't go to his gravesite. Her shame over their last few weeks together was too great.

Becca's eyes had shifted, that was the first sign that something was different with her. Lily tried to make excuses for it, but she knew why. She knew that Brayen's 'dark gift' had been passed to her daughter and that she one day would be able to change into a cougar at will. Jack had finally cornered her with blood tests that his brother Lewis had run on Becca the last time she was in for a check-up. Being married to a twin whose other half was also a doctor had never been easy, but Lewis' deception had almost cost Lily her marriage.

The hurt in Jack's eyes was so great when she walked in and found him holding the paternity papers that she knew instantly what had happened. She just didn't know why Lewis had done it. Sure, he disliked her, he always had, but to come in five years after the fact and pull a stunt like this was too much!

They'd been happy. She'd done what she had to do to have a baby and Jack had understood. He'd forbidden her to seek medical attention because he didn't want his colleagues knowing that they were having trouble conceiving a child. She'd honored that wish and when he'd left for the conference in Chicago for the weekend, she'd seized the moment and gone to the bar she'd heard Renee mention once. Her intent had been to get pregnant, not to fall in love. She'd succeeded in one, but failed miserably in the other.

Her cell phone rang. She looked at the display screen and rolled her eyes when she saw Lewis' name. "Hello?"

"Lily, I need for you to sign a few papers for me. It has to do with Jack's share of the family practice. You'll maintain control of it, of course, but I just need to get the okay for a few things."

The last thing she wanted to deal with right now was more paperwork. "Whatever, Lewis. Becca and I will stop by before we leave town. Are you at the office or home?"

"I've got to make a quick stop tonight, Lily. Why don't you meet me...." The phone lost its reception. Normally she would have been ticked that her phone had once again popped out on her, but the fact that it cut Lewis off was a blessing, so she went with it.

* * * *

Lily listened close and heard Becca's voice coming from Jack's old office. Lily hadn't been able to set foot in there yet. Lewis had handled packing up all of Jack's belongings for her. She'd had to leave the house when he did. Seeing the exact replica of Jack wandering around the house had been too much for her.

She stopped just outside the office door and listened to Becca talking softly. "Yes, Momma is still sad. I tried to get her to smile today, but she doesn't ever smile anymore. No, I want her to leave. He's bad and he'll hurt her. You know he will."

Lily cracked the door open and found Becca sitting in the center of the empty room. "I know that you love me, Daddy, but I can't get Momma to stop missing you," Becca said to the empty room. Lily's stomach tightened. Now wasn't the time for her daughter to take up talking to thin air and pretending it was her father. She started forward to put a stop to it, but stopped when she felt a rush of cold air blow around her. Something whispered to her, but it was muffled. Lily gasped and ran towards Becca. She snatched her daughter up in her arms and ran from the room.

"Daddy!" Becca screamed, reaching over her shoulder towards the vacant room.

The gusting wind followed Lily down the hall and she thrust the front door open. Strong arms grabbed hold of her and she screamed out.

"LILY!" Brayen shouted.

"Bray?" She threw herself against him, smashing Becca between the two of them. "Something was in the room with Becca ... I heard it ... it was cold, like ice," she panted.

Bray touched Becca's head and she looked up at him. "Momma was scared of Daddy. It's just Daddy coming back to tell her to be careful and to trust you. He told me to find the man who makes the kitty noise too, that he would always love me and Mommy."

"Rebecca-Rose, you will not talk about your father like he's still here."

"But he is, Momma."

"Yes, he is." Bray said, looking directly at her. She hadn't intended to be insensitive, and yes, biologically speaking her father was here, but that wasn't what she'd meant.

A cold blast of wind blew past them and on it came the whisper of Lillian's name. She screamed out and Bray pulled them both out of the house. He hustled them towards his jeep and didn't stop shoving them until they were safely inside.

Lily buckled Becca into the backseat and waited for Bray to climb in. "You felt it too."

"Yeah, and I heard it as well," he said, starting the jeep.

Bray carried Becca into his house and took her up to the loft. He kissed her gently as he tucked her under the covers and brushed the hair from her face. He'd ached to see her tiny face again and had made the decision to just show up on her doorstep. Lily hadn't returned one of his calls and had asked him to stay away. He'd honored that until he was no longer able to bear not seeing them.

Renee had understood and given him a call to tell him that if he wanted to catch Lily and Becca he needed to act fast, they were moving away. The thought of never seeing Lily or his daughter again sickened him, and he was happy he'd decided to go to them, but he couldn't stop himself. He needed them, and they needed him no matter what Lily thought.

Becca purred softly in her sleep and Bray smiled. She was his, it didn't matter that she called another man daddy--she was totally his. It was as plain as the dimple on her face, and her ever-changing eyes--she was his.

Every night since the moment he'd learned she existed, he'd looked up at the night sky and wondered what his little girl was doing. He'd even stood on the sidelines at Jack's funeral, hidden away--just to be sure she was okay. Now, she was here, in his home, where she belonged, where they both belonged.

He turned to find Lily and stopped when Becca cried out softly in her sleep. She opened her eyes and looked directly at him. "Daddy?"

"It's just me, Bray," he whispered.

She nodded her head. "I know, but Daddy told me that you're my daddy now and that you're special like me. He said that you'll love me like he did. Will you love me like he did?"

"Yes, Rebecca-Rose, I love...." She was asleep again before he got the words out of his mouth. He still wasn't sure how to be a parent, but he knew that he'd never let anything happen to her and that he'd ached to hold her to his chest and to hear her sweet voice again. If that was part of being parent then he'd do just fine.

It saddened him that Becca still felt the need to talk like Jack was still around, but after the incident at the house, Bray wondered if he really was. He glanced around the loft and shook his head in approval. The moment he'd returned home after learning of Becca, he'd redone the upstairs area just for her. Sanding the wood for her new bed, and building

the dresser from scratch had been all he had to occupy himself with while he gave Lily her required time to grieve.

The three-story dollhouse that he'd made her caught his eye and he hoped that when she woke it would catch hers too. He kissed her lightly on the head and turned to climb down the stairs. He took a deep breath in and knew that Lily was on the porch. Come hell or high water, that woman was going to talk to him.

Bray thrust the screen door open and headed out to her. She stood there with her arms wrapped tightly around her body, holding her cell phone in one hand.

"Who did you call?" He asked.

"Lewis, I was supposed to meet with him and sign some papers tonight and I didn't want him worried about us."

Fat chance of that, Brayen thought to himself.

Lily shivered slightly. He knew she was cold, the night breeze had picked up. He wrapped his arms around her petite frame and pulled her back into his body. She stiffened.

"Damn it, Lilly. Stop! I love you."

Her head fell back against his body as she touched his arms lightly. "I wonder everyday if I wouldn't have got in my car and drove to the Igmú, would Jack still be alive?"

"You wouldn't have Becca. We wouldn't have Becca," he said, avoiding the desire to defend their love for one another.

"No, we wouldn't. Would we?" She dropped her head down and let out a deep breath. "What in the world does Igmú mean?"

Brayen smiled in spite himself. "It means cat in the Lakota native tongue."

"I should have known, Cougs."

* * * *

Lily turned in Brayen's arms and let him hold her tight to him. She'd dreamed of a moment like this for over six years, but hated the price she'd paid for it. Still, being in Bray's arms felt right and seeing him carrying Becca to bed made her guilty for keeping them apart for so long.

"Bray, I screwed up everything. Every choice I made was a bad one. I didn't mean to hurt you, Jack, Becca, anyone...." His lips crashed down on hers, barely giving her time to breathe let alone think. His tongue dove in and found hers ready and willing. She clawed at his back and he pressed his mouth down on her even harder. His hands roamed up her back and stopped when he reached her neck. He jerked her head back from him.

Bray's eyes burned amber and a gasp escaped her throat. She pressed her fingers to her swollen lips and tried to back away from him. He held tight to her neck. "No," he said, his voice raspy and deeper than normal. "You won't run anymore. This is what I am, who I am, and this is what OUR daughter is. You'll accept it now, Lillian. You've no other choice."

"Bray...?" Terror gripped her. She couldn't watch him shift again. It had been what had driven her away all those years ago and what had kept her away every night that her body ached for his touch. No it wasn't, she overheard Mason saying they were going to kill her.

He took a deep breath in and smiled, showing that his teeth were now elongated. Lily yelped and pushed on his chest. "Brayen, no ... don't do this. Please don't do this."

"I've wanted you for six years, Lily. Six damn years!" He jerked her face towards his and snarled at her. "You carried my child in there." He cupped her sex harder than was comfortable and backed her up against the railing. "I didn't get to share that with you. I didn't get to be there with you, to watch your belly grow with the life I helped create. I didn't get to hold her in my arms and tell her how much I loved her, and I didn't get to be there the first time she experienced this...." He let go of her neck and allowed claws and fur to sprout forth from his hand. Lily screamed out, but he held tight to her. "I should have been there to help her get through it."

"I'm sorry, Bray ... please...." She jerked back when his claws came near her face. Hot tears burned her cheeks as she watched the mix of hate and pain on Bray's face. "What do you want me to say? I'm sorry!"

He shook his head. "No, tell me how you could disappear after you claimed to love me? Tell me the truth, Lillian."

"I'm sorry," she panted.

Bray's clawed finger touched her cheek and he applied enough pressure to let her know that he could hurt her, if he wanted to. "THE TRUTH!"

"I heard you talking to Mason," she blurted out. Bray jerked his hand away. "I heard him tell you that humans couldn't know about lycans and that I needed to be 'dealt with', turned ... killed." She looked into his amber eyes and watched as blue pushed its way through. "I also heard you agree to 'handle the situation yourself'. I ran from you, terrified by what I'd seen, by what you are, and what you were willing to do to me to protect it. I knew I was pregnant before I left. I had a gut feeling and I wasn't about to let you or Mason harm our child. I knew the baby would be special. I knew she'd have your gifts, and I didn't care, Bray. I loved you so much that I'd do anything to hang on to a piece of you, and that meant running before you or Mason could stop me!"

Brayen's eyebrows came together, leaving a crease on his forehead. "Ohmygod, Lily, you only heard part of the conversation. I told Mason that I planned to marry you, and announce you as my mate to protect you in the lycan community. He agreed to support my decision." He reached for her and she took another step back, hitting the railing hard. "I've loved you from the moment I laid eyes on you. I'd never harm you or our child. I'd die to protect you both."

Lily shook her head in disbelief. "I thought ... I thought...." Her legs gave out from under her as the realization that she'd walked out on the love of her life sunk in.

Bray's arms wrapped around her and he lifted her in the air. "I'm sorry that you heard that. I didn't know."

"I love you, Brayen. I always have."

Bray carried Lily inside and walked her directly to his bedroom. Hearing her say that she loved him had chased away the hurt. She'd thought that he would kill her to protect his secret. He would have run as well if he were in her position. She'd done what she'd thought was right for their unborn child and he couldn't blame her for that. He wouldn't. He had a healthy daughter and Lily back. He'd want for nothing again.

"I need you tonight, Lily."

"I've needed you since the night I met you."

He dropped his head down and clutched her to him tight. "I'm so sorry."

"No, don't apologize. I made more than my fair share of mistakes. Let's just be happy that we found each other again. I don't want to think about how much time we missed out on with each other--with Becca-Rose."

"Have I told you that I love her name?" He stopped for a moment and planted a kiss on the bridge of her nose. "Have I told you that I love her, and that I love you?"

"I knew that you'd love her. I knew in my heart that you would, but I was so scared of what the rest of the lycans would force you to do ... I could risk my happiness. I couldn't risk her though, Bray. I couldn't let anything happen to our baby."

Her words ripped at him, pulling at his gut, forcing unshed tears to his eyes. "Shh, baby. Don't do this. Don't take the blame on yourself."

"But Brayen, you didn't get to be with me when I had her. You didn't get to hear her first word. See her take her first steps."

Kissing her again, lightly, he moved his hand up and under her shirt, needing to have skin to skin contact with her. "So tell me, what was her first word?"

Lily let out a half sob, half laugh. "Kitty."

Brayen's laughter spilled forth from him as he cupped his mate's breast.

My mate. The words sounded even sweeter in his mind as he replayed them.

He moved over her slowly. "Can I have more than the weekend?"

Lily looked up at him, her eyes wide. "You can have me for a lifetime, if you want me."

"Oh, I want you Lily. I want you more than life itself."

He dropped his mouth down onto hers, losing himself in the taste of her mouth. Peaches. He loved the way she tasted. He pulled at her clothes, letting a claw extend from his hand as he went. There would be no barriers between them now.

Bray moved down Lily's body, needing to taste her, see her, touch her again. It had been so long--too long. His cock throbbed with the need to be buried in her, but first he needed to taste her. Take her scent in.

Licking his way down her, she moaned when he parted her legs, exposing her quim to him. "Lilly," he said, sinking his face into her folds. He lapped up the cream that oozed from her tight channel before putting his mouth over her swollen clit. Sucking gently, he inserted two fingers into her, feeling his cock harden to the point of pain as she tightened around him.

She clawed at his head, pulling his hair as she ground her hips into his face. He let out a throaty laugh as he continued to roll her clit around in his mouth. He knew the instant that she came. Her fingers dug deep into his hair and her pussy clenched down on his fingers. Brayen was nowhere near done with his assault on her and continued to lick her and pump his fingers into her until she was left with no choice but to try to crab walk away from him.

Grabbing hold of her hips, and kneading his fingers into her ass, he pulled her back to him. "No you don't. I intend on making sure you never leave me again," Brayen said, nibbling playfully at her core.

"Oh, really? Want to tell me your plan?"

He kissed her inner thigh before moving up her body and positioning the head of his cock at her entrance. "Mmmhmm, it involves me sticking my dick into you, making you beg for more, before I deposit my seed into you."

Her eyes widened and she shook her head slightly. "Bray, you can't come in me. I'm not on any sort of birth control."

A feral grin crossed over his face. "I know."

"But...."

"But what, Lily? I have my family back now and I intend to watch it grow. You and Becca are my life. According to lycan law, you have been my wife from the moment I marked you and intend on honoring that vow to you. And...."

Putting her fingers over his lips, she smiled up at him with tears in her eyes. "All I've ever wanted was to hear you say those words to me. Now, shut up and fuck me."

A shaky laugh fell from his lips. "I believe that very phrase got you in trouble once before. Did it not?"

She smiled. "I was hoping you'd punish me."

"Oh, I will, baby. All in good time, but right now I just want to make love to you. Will that do?"

"Only if you promise to fill me with enough of your seed to give me another wonderful child."

"Baby, I'll soak you in it. And we will be blessed with another, I'm sure of it. I want to see your belly swell with the life I put in it."

"You say that now, when you want some."

He sank his cock deep within her, silencing her. She clutched onto his arms as he continued his onslaught, not wanting to ever be without the feeling of Lily beneath him again. He pressed into her again, and fought to keep claws from springing forth from his fingertips. The excitement and thrill of being in her again was almost too much.

"Yes, Brayen ... oh Gawd ... I'm coming, Bray. I'm coming."

"That's it, baby." His balls jerked up as he ejaculated in her for what felt like an eternity.

Chapter 11

Lily kissed Brayen's forehead lightly before tiptoeing out of the room. She checked on Becca before slipping her shoes on and putting on one of

Bray's thick shirts. Opening the front door slowly, she stepped out into the night.

When she'd woken to the feel of what she was sure was her ovary accepting Bray's seed, it took everything in her to keep from waking him. She wanted to share the news with him and would as soon as she was able to confirm it. Becca would love being a big sister. She'd always wanted someone else like her and now she not only had her father, but also a baby brother or sister.

The sound of a twig cracking brought Lily out of her trance. She looked out and over the large wooded lot. The cabin rentals were down the hill a bit, along with the bar. The thought of a stray drunk shifter scared the hell out of her. Turning to head back into the cabin, she froze when she heard the sound of her name.

"Jack?" She called out, unsure if she'd really heard him, or if it was just the wind.

Lillian.

"Jack?" She ran down the porch and towards the sound of the voice. She'd meet her fate head on. If he'd come back to punish her then so be it. He'd been a wonderful man and she would always love him.

Run! The sound of Jack's voice telling her to run sent her into a panic, but instead of heeding his warning, she froze.

There was a clicking sound behind her as a cold, hard object pushed against the back of her head. "If you scream, I will shoot you and whoever else comes running out of that door."

"Lewis?"

He rammed the end of the gun into her head. "Shut your fucking mouth, squaw. Now, move!" He said, pushing her towards the woods.

She bit back the scream that was on the tip of her tongue, afraid that Bray and Becca would hear her and run out to their deaths. Her feet stopped working right, and she fell two times before Lewis finally grabbed hold of her arm and began to drag her down the side of the mountain. When they were a good distance from the cabin he pushed her down to the ground.

Lewis looked down at her, his eyes wild and locked on her. "It was supposed to be you, you know?"

Lily shook her head slightly, not wanting to upset him, but unsure what it was that he was talking about.

He pointed his gun down at her. "In the car, you stupid bitch, the day that Jack died. It was supposed to be you and that mongrel abomination of an offspring, NOT my brother." His voice was wild, and high.

The realization of what he'd just confessed to sunk in and Lily had to swallow down the vomit that rose in her throat. "No, Lewis. No."

He hit her hard across the face with the back of his hand. "I had the car tampered with so that you would die and take that freak with you. Jack deserved better than you ... you stain. How could you spread your legs for a monster, give birth to one, and force my brother to raise it as his own? You sicken me."

"Becca's not a monster," she said, shutting up when she saw the hate flicker through his eyes. It mattered not what he said, she knew in her heart that her daughter was pure.

"I did the blood work, bitch. I know that she's not human and when I told Jack he confessed all her little secrets to me. The ability to sprout fangs, claws. The eyes changing and that growl." He let out a methodical laugh. "He wanted me to track down others like her and seek their help so that he could teach her how to control her 'gifts'. How the hell the man could call them gifts was beyond me. You poisoned him against me. Against our mother. And you used him. I'm sorry that he died, but at least your meal ticket went when he did."

"I loved Jack."

"NEVER speak his name! Never." He struck her again, this time with a closed fist. Lily's vision blurred and she fought to stay conscious. A metallic taste filled her mouth. Lewis said something to her, but her ears were ringing too loudly for her to make it all out. When she did not answer right away, he struck her again.

"Answer me, bitch! What did you do to him? Did you use your Indian magic to put some kind of spell on him or did you use this?" he asked, dropping down and cupping her sex quickly.

She jerked away from him, only to have him reach down and claw at her pajama bottoms. They tore away easily for him and she screamed out as he thrust a finger into her. "That's it, isn't it? You used this to lure him away from us. Tell me, if I fuck you too, will I be as hooked? Will I be willing to give up my career, my money, my pride?"

Lily kicked out at him only to have her shot deflected as if she were no more than an insect. "Do that again and I'll start shooting you in places that won't kill you. I want you alive while I take my turn with you. You've let every other man in the world in there, why not me too?"

He unfastened his pants and let the length of himself spring free. She drew in a sharp breath and tried to crawl away from him. He pinned her down quickly, positioning himself above her as he went.

* * * *

Something pushed on Brayen's shoulder. It roused him from his deep sleep with a start. He let out a snarl and jerked upright, only to find Becca-Rose's blue eyes wide and terrified.

"Daddy?"

The sound of her sweet voice calling him daddy melted his heart. He looked down, suddenly very happy that Lily had insisted that he put some pajama bottoms on. He'd been used to sleeping in the buff. He reached out to Becca and lifted her up onto the end of the bed, glancing over to see if he'd wakened Lily with his antics. She was gone.

"Lily?" He called out softly, terrified that she may have fled again. The only comfort he had was that Becca was still here, and he knew that Lily would never leave her.

Becca jerked her head around wildly. "Hurry, Daddy. He's got her."

"Did you have a bad dream, sweetie?"

She shook her head no and blonde curls fell into her face. Bray brushed them back and smiled at her. "Let's get you back into bed and I'll send mommy up to tuck you in, okay?"

Her eyes flashed to amber and she clawed out fast at his bare chest. Her cut was shallow, but still stung all the same. "REBECCA!"

"My other daddy told me to wake up and get you. He said that momma was in trouble and that she and the new baby would get hurt real bad if I didn't wake you up. So get up already!"

Becca's words sunk in and Brayen remembered his first meeting with Lily, when the spirits of the land had rushed in the door and pushed them together. She'd been able to feel them, so it stood to reason that Becca might very well be able to communicate with them as well. If that was the case then Jack had reached out from the spirit realm to help Lily.

Brayen jumped to his feet, taking Becca with him. "Did he say anything else?"

"Uhhuh, that Uncle Lewis is sick and that he was the one who made Daddy go away from us."

Uncle Lewis? Bray's stomach dropped when he realized that Lewis had been the one behind Jack's accident. He also remembered how Jack's car had been blocked in so he'd borrowed Lily's.

Oh God! Lewis wanted Becca and Lily dead.

Brother? The sound of Mason's voice pumped through his head. He was attuned to Brayen's feelings and no doubt sensed his fear.

Lily's in trouble. She can't be too far from here.

I'll get everyone out. We'll find her.

Bray looked at his daughter and set her on the bed gently. "I need for you to be a big girl and stay right here. I have to go find your mommy. I will send someone to be with you. If you smell Uncle Lewis coming, run and hide. I will find you, I promise."

"I want to come too!"

"Becca, sweetie, I don't have time to argue with you. He'll hurt mommy if I don't get to him."

"And the baby?"

Lily was pregnant again. He'd think more on that once he knew she was safe. "Yes, sweetie, and the baby."

"I'll stay here."

"Good girl. I love you." He kissed her cheek and ran for the door.

Mason, have two of our people come to my cabin immediately. My daughter needs their protection.

Daughter? Cougs, you've got some explaining to do.

All in good time, brother. I need my wife back first.

Consider it done, Mason said.

Brayen hit the front screen door with such a force that he tore it clean off its hinges. It didn't matter. All that mattered to him was his family. He'd do anything to protect them.

He drew in a sharp breath and tried to find Lily's scent. The wind seemed to close in around him, pulling him towards the left-hand side of the property. The air had a male feel to it and he knew right away that Jack was there, guiding him to Lily.

"I'll find her and bring home safe. I promise." He whispered to the wind as he ran through the forest.

He heard Lily's cries before he saw her. His heart went to his throat and it felt as though time stood still when he saw her pinned to the ground, her legs spread wide, and Lewis above her. Lily struck out at Lewis, preventing him from completely entering her.

The beast within Brayen took control, shifting him quickly into the cougar. Primal instincts took over and lunged at Lewis' body. Scoring a direct hit, he rolled with the man a small way. He bit down fast, aiming for Lewis' throat, but coming short and clamping down on his shoulder.

Something pressed against his chest and he heard the cocking of the gun before he felt the bullet tear through him. Giving little thought to the wound, assuming it would heal instantly, Brayen held tight to Lewis' shoulder. When an overwhelming pain rippled through his body, he felt himself shifting back into human form. He struck out hard and fast, afraid

that if he didn't, he'd die before Mason had a chance to get here and save Lily.

* * * *

Lily scrambled to her feet as she watched Bray, in his tan cougar form, roll with Lewis. They struggled and she heard the gun go off. Brayen's body jerked back violently. He lashed out at Lewis as he shifted back into himself. The gun flew out Lewis' hands.

Lewis laughed. "That's right," he said, clutching his bleeding neck. "I used silver bullets. Know, as you lie there dying that I WILL be putting one through that child as well. No part of your bloodline will leave here tonight."

Brayen tried to get to his feet, but collapsed on the ground with a thud. Lily stopped thinking and dove for the gun. Lewis lunged at her, but he was too late. She rolled onto her back and fired it.

Lewis' eyes widened, and she had to push the fact that he looked so much like Jack out of her head as he tumbled down onto her. Their size difference left her pinned beneath him as he let out his breath. Something knocked Lewis' body off hers and she screamed when she saw the head of dark hair, and large brown eyes looking down at her.

"It's safe now, Lily. It's me, Mason."

"Mason?" She let him help her up, unconcerned with how exposed she was to him. Her only thought was Brayen. He hadn't moved since he fell. She crawled over to him, sobbing. "Bray ... no."

Lily turned his body and pulled his head on to her lap. "Bray ... no, don't leave me. Please don't leave me ... don't leave Becca-Rose."

Mason touched her shoulder gently. "I need to take him to Running Elk. My people will escort you back to the cabin. They're with your daughter now."

"I can't leave Bray."

Mason scooped Brayen up in his arms. "He is my brother, Lily. I will give my life to save his, if that's what it takes. He needs the help of our Shaman. Please...."

Grabbing her mouth to keep from screaming, she nodded.

Epilogue

"No fair, you're cheating again, Uncle Mason," Becca-Rose said, with her tiny hands on her hips.

Mason looked shocked by her accusation. "Why you ... I never cheat. I am the world's greatest checker player, ever. Bow to me little one."

"Oh, please. It's getting deep in here, Uncle Mason."

Lily's mouth dropped open. "Rebecca-Rose! Who did you learn that from?"

Becca giggled and Mason turned red. "Lillian, I may have sort of slipped up and...."

"Mason," Lily scolded, doing her best to hide her laughter.

"Uncle Mason, wanna have another tea party?"

Mason groaned, glancing up at Lily for help. She shook her head and laughed. "Oh, no way I'm getting you out of that one, buddy. You said that kids were a breeze and that you didn't see what the big deal was."

"That's before I got a good dose of your daughter," Mason said, winking at her.

Strong arms slid around Lily's waist. "What's wrong with my little girl?" Brayen asked, running his hands over her swollen belly. "I love you," he whispered in her ear.

"I can hear that," Mason said sardonically.

"Like I care," Brayen shot back. He slid his hand lower and Lily felt the baby kick as if he knew that his daddy was touching him. "Oh, he's a feisty one."

"Can I just say that your children have the odds stacked against them?" Mason said, tousling Becca's curls.

"And why is that?" Lily asked, not sure she wanted to hear his answer.

"It's simple, they are part kitty and stubborn as hell. They come by it honestly though."

"I can't wait for you to have some of your own, brother."

"For that I need a woman."

"What do you need a woman for, Uncle Mason?" Becca asked softly.

Mason opened his mouth to answer her and Brayen ran over to cover their daughter's ears. "Oh, no you don't!"

THE END