

# TO COVET THE FAE

THE KINCAID WEREWOLVES #1



L.E. WILSON



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## DEDICATION

*To my readers.  
You are awesome.  
Thank you.*

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## CHAPTER 1



**T**he hunt was on.

Brock lifted his face to the cool evening breeze and took a deep breath through his nose. The faint, musky scent of Scottish heather blossoms lingered in the air and tickled his senses.

A strange thing to be smelling in the middle of downtown Seattle, he had to admit.

His sapphire blue eyes sparkled with anticipation. He was getting close now. Another few minutes and he'd be watching the seductive sway of Heather's full hips as she sashayed down the city street.

The thought made his mouth water and the blood pulse heavy within his veins.

Another waft of scented air hit him straight in the groin. In response, a feral growl rumbled up from his chest and he picked up his pace. Head and shoulders taller than any of the human stragglers that were still out this late, he received more than a few sideways looks as he plowed down the sidewalk.

Taking another deep breath, he moaned aloud. He could practically taste her. Heather Knight: The human female with eyes the color of a fine cognac, warm chestnut hair, and thick, womanly curves he couldn't wait to get his paws on.

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He'd met her only a few hours ago, after following her friend to her apartment. She'd opened her door dressed in nothing but yoga pants and a tank top, and he'd been wrapped up in knots over the woman ever since.

And now she was running from him. Running from a *werewolf*.

A predatory smile lit his eyes.

Silly girl.

## CHAPTER 2



*S*hit, shit, shit.

Heather looked back over her shoulder as she hurried to get across the street before the light turned green. Not that there was much traffic this time of the night, but with her luck, she'd manage to walk right in front of the one and only car that *was* on the road.

By some miracle, she made it safely to the other side, and then promptly tripped up over the curb and onto the sidewalk, barely catching herself before she face planted on the dirty concrete.

*Seriously?*

Pulling her blue, borrowed running jacket back into place, she kept going as if nothing had happened, grateful that there wasn't anyone around at the moment to witness her near fall. It's not like she was one of those tiny little girls that could get away with being klutzy and people (guys) just thought it was cute. Nooo. She was twenty-eight, not quite five foot nine, and...well, let's not go there. Suffice it to say, she was definitely not in any danger of ever being accused of starving herself.

She jerked at a loud bang behind her, her heart leaping within her chest, but it was just a construction truck finishing up some roadwork before the early morning rush hour. She admonished herself for being



so jumpy, but she had the strangest feeling that she was being followed.

A certain tall, dark, and handsome picture of manly yumminess flitted through her mind, and she glanced behind her again, managing *not* to trip this time.

He wouldn't.

Would he?

She shook her head and pushed down the tiny piece of hope that was trying to float to the surface of her despair. Brock Hume would not be following her. Why would he?

Yeah, yeah, so they'd exchanged some flirty looks and maybe, possibly, she had made an innuendo or two (or four) on the flight here from their home in China. That didn't mean he'd go through all the trouble of following her when she left. That man was...

He was...nice? Tall? Brave?

Nope, there was no other way to put it. He was hot, sticky sex on a stick was what he was. He could get any woman he wanted.

A prettier woman.

A skinnier woman.

A woman who didn't know, or didn't care, that he wasn't a man at all, but a freaking werewolf.

Remembering her shock when she'd found out upon their arrival in Seattle that he howls at the full moon once a month, she wondered how she hadn't figured it out earlier. No mortal human was that hot. The guy had to be at least six foot seven of pure muscle. Long brown hair, shot through with gold highlights, hung down past his shoulders. Bright blue eyes had smiled at her from underneath heavy, dark brows and a wide forehead. A close cut beard did nothing to hide his strong jaw and perfect lips.

She sighed wistfully.

But it was more than that. She, of all people, should have sensed it right away. And she hadn't. Not in the slightest. And that was what worried her more than anything.

Turning the corner, she saw the stop ahead where she could catch the light rail back to the airport. She checked her phone for the time.

It was almost four in the morning, and the next train didn't come for another forty minutes. She could try to call a cab, or she could just wait.

Glancing around, she saw the usual suspects hanging around on the street: A group of late night partiers stumbling home from the bar, shouting obscene words every few steps at no one in particular, a middle-aged couple waiting at the stop with their suitcases, shaking their heads and tsk'ing at the young people, and a couple of homeless guys talking quietly on the corner. Safe enough.

As she passed the two guys, she fished out a couple of twenties and pressed one into each of their hands. "Get something to eat with this, ok?"

"Yes, ma'am. Thank you. Thank you. God bless you," the older one told her after a pause. His hair was white as snow against his dark coffee-brown skin, and his black eyes were tired, but kind. They crinkled at the corners when his face lit up in a grateful smile.

She smiled back at him and started walking again. "Food. I mean it."

"Yes, ma'am," he called after her.

She arrived at her stop and smiled at the middle-aged couple, then pulled out her cell to call her parents back in Dalian. As she listened to their phone ring on the other end of the line, she mentally figured out the time difference. It was the evening of the following day at her parent's house, and they were probably getting ready for bed.

"Hello? Heather?" her mom answered right before voice mail picked up.

"Hi, Mom."

"Where are you, honey? I thought you were coming over for dinner tonight? Did you have to work late at the hospital again?"

"No. I've got a couple of days off, believe it or not. I'm actually in Seattle right now."

"Seattle? As in Seattle, Washington?"

"That would be the one. Long story, Mom. I'll catch you up when I get home."

The silence on the other end of the phone was deafening.

"Mom?" she asked. "Are you there?"

"Heather, get out of that city right now."

Heather frowned. She'd never experienced that particular tone in her mom's voice before. Granted, she'd never been a problem child, but she'd heard her fair share of tones from her mother's mouth all the same. And *that* was not one of them.

She heard her father asking what was going on and her mom answering him, speaking fast and quiet. He didn't sound happy either. Confused but not wanting them to worry, she hurried to reassure them. "Well, I'm actually at a stop right now waiting for the light rail to take me to the airport so I can fly home."

"Heather," her mom said. "Listen to me very carefully. Do not wait for the light rail. You need to get into a cab. Right now. Do you hear me? Find a cab, and get to the airport."

She looked up and down the street. Yeah, not many cabs cruising around at 4AM. "Mom, it's after four in the morning here..."

"Go, Heather! Now! Steal a damn car if you have to! Get on a plane, and take the first flight out of there to anywhere else. Then call me and let me know where you are and we'll get you home."

"All right, all right." She looked around again. Still no cabs, or cars to hijack for that matter. "Are you going to tell me what this is all about, Mom?"

"I'll tell you when you get home. Just get the *hell* out of there. And hurry! Before they find you."

The shock of actually hearing her mother curse had her agreeing without any more questions or arguments. She hung up the call.

What in the world was that all about? Who was going to find her? She thought about calling her friend Grace (after all, she was the whole reason Heather was in Seattle to begin with), but then remembered Gracie had lost her cell phone and hadn't gotten a new one yet. Besides, the chances were good that her best friend was busy with her sexy British boyfriend. At least she hoped she was. They'd flown all the way here from China to get to his friends hoping they could help him. Hopefully he'd shown up here by now too. Gracie deserved some good stuff in her life.

She glanced around the interior of the rain cover she was under, looking for taxi advertisements, as she wasn't familiar with this city. When she didn't see any, she thought about asking the middle-aged couple if they knew the names of any so she could look it up, however they were huddled together in the corner, arguing about whether they should have taken a shuttle or not.

Pulling up her browser on her phone, she tried to Google it, but her signal was low and it was taking f-o-r-e-v-e-r. So she finally decided to just start walking back towards the apartments she'd just left. If she didn't see a taxi on the way, she'd see if Grace or someone else there could give her a ride. Hopefully she could get in and out without running into the reason she was leaving to begin with, as he was staying there too.

As she passed the homeless guys again, the younger one said calmly, "Where are you going?"

Still worried about how her mom had acted on the phone, she glanced over and said distractedly, "Oh, change of plans. You guys take care."

He reached out and grabbed her arm before she could walk away. "I don't think you understand. Where are you going? Heather? Is that what it is now?"

Well. That got her attention.

She took a closer look at him. He didn't look familiar. Frowning, she was about to tell him he must have mistaken her for someone else when the wind picked up and his dirty blonde hair blew away from his eyes. As she watched in disbelief, the irises swelled and contracted and changed until she was looking into a kaleidoscope of colors radiating out from the pupils.

Tearing her eyes from the hypnotizing display, she looked at his ears. His skullcap covered them, but she could see the distinct outline of a pointy tip on the one side.

No, it couldn't be.

Mind-number fear began to slide its icy fingers through her veins as it all suddenly became perfectly clear. She wanted to run away but

she couldn't move, couldn't speak, as her eyes were pulled back to his without her control.

"Hey, man," the older man came to her rescue. "Leave the nice lady be now. She's been nothing but kind to us." When the other man ignored him and refused to release her, he pulled the twenty she'd given him out of his pocket. "Here, man. Here. You can have my part of the money that she gave us."

Not taking his strange eyes from her, he responded, "I don't want your money, old man."

She took a fortifying breath and forced herself to smile at the old man's concern. "It's okay. We know each other. This is my long, lost... cousin. Uh, Frank. Yeah. I just didn't recognize him before. We haven't seen each other in a long time."

Her rescuer glanced back and forth between them, seemingly unconvinced.

"Really," she assured him. "It's okay. We just have some family stuff to hash out. You know how that is. I'll be perfectly fine. I promise."

As she watched, the younger guy's eyes glimmered once with approval, and then faded to a muddy brown again. Still not releasing her arm, he turned to grin at his friend. "It's all good, Ed. Thank you for helping me out last night. I didn't realize Heather lived here. I'm just surprised to see her is all. Go on and get yourself a good breakfast, and maybe I'll catch up with you in a bit."

The old man still didn't look completely convinced, but as they were both standing there smiling their assurances at him, he muttered, "Sure, ok. I'm just gonna head right over to the convenient store there. Get a few things. I'll be back in a few minutes." With one last wary look, he ambled off to spend his money.

Heather ripped her arm from his grasp. "Who the hell are you?" she demanded, her voice sharp. Now that her fear was fading, her natural feistiness was making a comeback.

"Don't be coy," he told her. "You know who I am. Or at least *what* I am."

He was right. She did. "What do you want with me, Frank?" she asked.

He gritted his teeth at the made-up name, but only said, "We'll let the prince decide that."

"The prince?" The freaking prince was here in Washington? No wonder her mom had nearly lost it when she'd found out where she was. Of course, they could've warned her not to come here. You know, any time during the last twenty-eight years or so.

He ran his eyes up and down her body. "Look at you! All grown up now. I almost didn't recognize you. How are the folks? You know, the ones that have been hiding you from your own people."

Taking her by the arm again without waiting for her to respond, he pulled her towards the tracks. "Come on, I hear our ride coming."

Heather dug in her heels, attempting to stay where she was without making too much of a scene. She didn't want to endanger the few humans in the area. "Just hold on. Where are we going?"

"I told you. To the prince." He tugged her along easily in spite of her best efforts to keep them where they were, in plain sight of witnesses. His slight form easily disguised how strong he really was.

Heather started to panic. This was bad. This was really bad. Her parents had spent the past twenty years of their lives hiding her from their kind. What were the odds that one would find her here, in Seattle? And at this particular stop? At four o'clock in the morning?

The only reason she was in this city at all was because Gracie and her boyfriend had gotten themselves into some trouble with some thugs back home in China. They'd gotten separated, and Grace had given her captors the slip and shown up at Heather's apartment. She'd needed to get out of the city, and Heather had invited herself along.

Grace hadn't known that she'd been followed there.

Brock knocking on her door out of the blue and joining their party was not why she'd come with them. It wasn't. For real. She would've kept her friend company anyway. Having that hunk of a man to look at (and to keep her warm on the plane) was just a bonus. The fact that he had saved them both from a certain grisly death helped also. Those thugs had found their way to her apartment. And if she had stayed, it would not have been pretty.

And yeah yeah, she had promised Gracie she'd stay away from him,

and she had kept her promise...sort of...even though she hadn't understood what her friend was all in a tizzy about at the time. Now she knew it was because Grace had found out, somehow, that he's a werewolf. And when Heather was told that little piece of information? Yeah, she'd agreed with Grace. She needed to stay away from him. Hence the reason she was on the street in the wee hours of the morning trying to catch a plane home, and as far away from him as possible.

However, she'd give just about anything to see him come barreling around the corner right now.

## CHAPTER 3



Rock strode around the corner onto 6th Ave and stopped short. He took in the scene unfolding before him with one quick glance and then ducked back around the corner before he was spotted.

He could be mistaken, it was still pretty dark after all, but he could swear that he'd finally caught up to the woman of his dreams, only to find her about to get on the train with some scrawny, homeless-looking guy hanging on her arm.

Leaning his head back against the wall, he couldn't believe his luck. Had she been playing with him all this time? Messing with his feelings? What about all of those smiles on the plane ride over? And the touching? And the looking?

And the touching?

His chest heaved on a heavy sigh. Somehow he wasn't surprised. What the hell was wrong with people these days? Everyone was so damn selfish. No one cared about other people anymore. About their feelings. Or about how their decisions may affect another person, and the plans they'd made.

Naked plans.

*Respectful*, but naked, plans.



He thumped the back of his head against the wall and looked towards the heavens for some answers. None were forthcoming.

He sighed again. It didn't matter. He didn't deserve a sweet female like that, anyway. Sooner or later she'd find out the kind of male he really was. Or at least the kind of male everyone thought he was. The circumstances didn't matter. Not in his world. She wouldn't be so keen on him then.

Shoving his hands deep into the front pockets of his jeans, he dropped his head forward and scowled at the pavement through the curtain of his long hair. Then he shook his head slightly in response to his own self-doubt. No. He wasn't going to give up that easily. He wasn't a bad guy. He wasn't. There were reasons he'd done what he'd done.

Honorable reasons.

And he had plans. Plans that included running his hands and mouth over every single inch of soft skin that covered all of those luscious curves of hers. He'd never be able to get her out of his head until he did. The need to fuck her had obsessed him since he'd first laid eyes on her.

An uplifting thought occurred to him: Maybe he was jumping to conclusions. Misreading the situation. He could at least try to have a conversation with her. Find out what was going on. He hadn't come all of this way for nothing.

Besides, he'd saved her life. And her best friend's life. That had to count for something.

His head snapped up, his musings scattering away on the gusty breeze. He thought he'd heard his name. Leaning around the corner, he saw they were just about to get on the light rail.

Heather hesitated in the doorway and looked around, shooting her companion a dirty look when he rudely shoved her and ordered her to get inside.

Had she looked scared? Was she looking for him?

Brock scoffed at himself as soon as the thought crossed his mind, yet somehow, he felt that he wasn't far off the mark. Straightening up off the wall, he rushed towards the train, hopping through the back

door right before it closed. Lowering his large frame into the first empty seat he saw, he slouched down and decided to watch and wait. He didn't want to make a fool out of himself. He wanted to know what was going on between them before he'd let his presence there be known.

His eyes narrowed and a possessive growl rumbled in his chest as the homeless guy put his arm around Heather. The only thing that saved the degenerate from a certain immediate death right then and there was the way she stiffened at his touch.

"Is that really necessary?" Heather hissed.

Even though they were sitting more towards the front, Brock had no trouble hearing their conversation. Supernatural canine hearing and all that. Plus, they were the only ones on the train other than a middle-aged couple who still looked half asleep.

The homeless guy chuckled. "Just wanna make sure you don't go anywhere."

Heather grabbed his hand, bent his wrist back, and ducked out from under his arm, shoving it back towards him.

*That's my girl.*

"Where would I freaking go? I'm not going to jump out of a moving train, even if I could get the doors open."

"It's not like it would permanently hurt you," the homeless guy said.

*Huh? Of course it would hurt her.*

"Be that as it may," she answered, "I still don't like pain. Not even the temporary kind. I wouldn't purposely inflict it on myself."

The guy leaned in closer to her and lowered his voice until even Brock had to strain to hear him. "Then I strongly suggest you don't give me any trouble. Now that we know you're still alive, there won't be any more hiding from us."

"I realize this, Frank. I'm not stupid." After a pause, she asked, "So, what does this mean? For me? What's going to happen now?"

"You're going to come back to us. The prince will tell you anything else you need to know."

*Go back where? Prince of what? What the fuck is this guy talking about?*

"What if I don't want to come back?"

"That's not an option."

Heather narrowed her eyes at him. "Oh, there's always another option."

The man stared at her, but she glared right back until he gave her a tight smile and looked away.

They were quiet the rest of the trip, but Brock could tell that Heather was extremely nervous. Scared even. He fought the overwhelming need to follow his heart and swoop in there and rescue her. His head was telling him to bide his time. He would continue to follow them instead, and find out what they were talking about before he saved the girl.

The light rail pulled up to SEA-TAC. Brock slid down lower in his seat until they walked up to the front door and got off, and then he waited until the last second before he jumped off. He quickly spotted Heather and her friend and set off after them, staying far enough away enough that he wouldn't be easily noticed.

Surprisingly, they didn't enter the airport, but veered off towards the parking garage instead. The homeless guy, Frank, steered Heather towards a rusted out, green Buick parked about halfway down one of the rows of vehicles. Brock watched as she stood passively while he opened the door for her, but as soon as he let go of her arm, she tried to make a run for it. However he must've been expecting it, for he caught her easily and lifted her into the car like her superior height was nothing to him. Shutting the door, he shook his head at her and waved his hand through the air in front of him. The locks clicked.

Brock heard the locks go down and ducked behind a nearby car. He watched through the windows as she struggled to open her door while Frank casually strolled around the front of the car and got into the driver's side.

As soon as he heard the engine rev, he flagged down some people that had just parked their truck near him. "I need to borrow your vehicle," he told the man and his young wife.

"What? No! Get the hell out of here. Asshole."

The human had a lot of balls seeing as to how he was a good foot

or more shorter than Brock with nowhere near the muscle mass. He had to respect a guy that stood up for himself, even if he was obviously lacking in intelligence, but he didn't have time to play right now.

Letting his wolf out just a bit, his blue eyes became brighter and brighter until they glowed from his face like burning hot flames. He pulled his lips back from his elongated canines, and growled ominously at the human, "Give me your fucking keys."

The man's eyes widened and his mouth dropped open. Sweat popped out on his upper lip. Dropping the keys on the pavement, he turned and ran, leaving his suitcases and his wife behind to fend for herself.

Brock picked the keys up off of the pavement and looked over to see Heather and her companion just pulling out of the garage. "Ma'am," he said politely to the terrified woman standing there next to the luggage. "I'll need you to get out of the way."

She jumped to the side as he hopped in and started the truck, backed it up, and pulled away with a squeal of the tires.

He didn't have to follow them far, just across the highway and into a residential neighborhood. They pulled into the driveway of an ordinary, one-story house with tan siding and flaky white trim. Brock hung back just down the street, pulling over to the side of the small road. Turning his lights off, he waited to make sure they were going to stay there before he turned off the truck and got out.

This early in the morning, none of the other residents were up and around yet, so there was no need for the vagrant to continue the ruse of being any kind of a nice guy. He kept a firm grip on Heather's upper arm as he yanked her towards the house, forcing her along with him even when she stumbled.

Brock jogged up the street as soon as they disappeared inside, and after a quick scan of the area to make sure no one was watching, he slid around to the side of the house. The back yard was fenced in, so he reached over the gate and felt for the latch. He found it easily and let himself into the backyard.

Leaving it unlatched behind him, he dropped into a crouch and waited, listening for dogs, but none came running to see who was

invading their territory. Staying low, he snuck around to the back of the house where he could see in the windows.

Heather was there, standing in the middle of a large kitchen devoid of any furniture. She stood tall with her arms at her sides and her chin lifted as she faced the one in front of her. But he saw her eyes skitter around the room, belying her calm outward demeanor. Behind her were three men, including Frank, the homeless guy that had brought her here.

Brock crept closer until he was right outside the window closest to where she stood and pressed his back against the outside wall, out of sight.

*One, two, three!*

Twisting around, he took a quick look inside before slamming his back up against the outer wall again.

Other than a block of kitchen knives on the counter, there weren't any weapons in there that he had seen. That would certainly make his rescue a hell of a lot easier. Of course, even if there were, they wouldn't hurt him enough to stop him. But getting stabbed or shot did tend to make him wolf out, and he'd rather not do that in front of her just yet if he could avoid it.

Besides, it ruined his clothes, and he'd just bought these jeans.

His musings were interrupted by the sound of a silvery voice speaking perfect non-accented English.

"An unexpected guest! I'm so glad you could come!"

Brock froze, thinking for a moment that he was speaking to him until he heard Heather mutter, "This was unexpected all right." Squatting down until only his eyes were above the bottom windowpane, he peered through the window again. The guy in front of her was speaking. A tall man with long, white hair and an aquiline nose. He was wearing a black, button down shirt and dress pants, and was quite elegant in his mannerisms. Brock guessed him to be about fifty-ish, more or less. It was hard to tell. Narrowing his eyes in thought, he looked the male up and down again. There was something strangely familiar about him...

The homeless guy with the dirty-blonde hair gave Heather a shove from behind.

"You will kneel before your prince," he spit out.

She gave him a look over her shoulder. "Stop being such a bully, Frank." But doing as he'd ordered, she lowered herself rather gracefully to one knee and tilted her head towards the man's silver-tipped boots.

The "prince" tsk'ed at Frank and smiled down at Heather. "There is no need for that, daughter. Forgive him. You may rise."

*Daughter?*

She rose to her feet but kept her head down.

Lines of worry were etched on Brock's forehead. Even in the short time he'd known her, he knew that being so well behaved wasn't like her at all. He could see her chest rising and falling with each rapid breath and knew she was frightened. But other than the rude one who'd brought her here, he couldn't see what was so scary about these guys. They looked perfectly pleasant to him.

It was really a shame that he was going to have to pound them all through that pretty hardwood floor.

## CHAPTER 4



Heather looked up through her lashes at the prince of her people. He wasn't what she had expected at all from her parent's stories. As a matter of fact, he appeared almost...kind. But if she paid attention, she could sense the undercurrent of supremacy he carried within him simmering just beneath the surface, and she saw no mercy in his dark eyes.

Her chest felt tight as she tried to breathe, and she wondered for the upteenth time what the hell had possessed her to leave the safety of the apartments she'd been staying in to go wandering off on her own like an idiot.

"Where are your mother and father?" the prince asked her.

Yeah, like there was any chance in hell she was going to tell him that. She licked her dry lips as she thought about how best to answer his question without angering him.

Deciding that honesty would probably be the best policy in this situation, she lifted her chin and looked him square in the eyes. "I respectfully decline to answer that question, sir. Prince. Sir Prince." She cleared her throat. "I love my parents dearly, and there is nothing you can do or say that will make me give them up to you."

One side of his mouth couldn't seem to decide if he wanted to smile or not. Either he was mildly amused, or he was so appalled at her lack of regard for his royal godness that he had acquired an uncontrollable tick.

"Strangely enough, I don't believe you would," he murmured after a long moment, saying more loudly, "And I do appreciate your honesty." He linked his hands together and did smile then. His teeth were straight and white and perfect. Too perfect. "I'm only inquiring as to how they are. I mean them no harm." He looked at her expectantly.

All the little hairs stood up on the back of her neck. She took a fortifying gulp of air and steeled herself. "Still ain't happening," she told him firmly. Closing her eyes tight, she braced herself for the repercussions that were sure to follow such a blatant show of defiance.

When long seconds passed and all of her limbs were still attached, she cracked open one eye and peaked out at him.

He arched an eyebrow in question. Coldly amused this time.

"Aren't you going to smite me or something?" she asked.

That bone-chilling smile widened until it almost reached his eyes. "Smite you?" He chuckled. "No, Heather. I'm not going to smite you. I need you."

It was her turn to arch a delicate brow. "Need me? Need me for what?"

"I need you to help our people."

She frowned. "I'm not sure I'm the best person to come to about something like that. I've been gone for a long time. What could I possibly do to help any of you?"

The prince continued to smile as he clasped his hands behind his back and began to pace, glancing at her every now and then out of the corner of his eye. "Well, I did have some grand plans involving a lovely wedding to a very handsome, if albeit a bit violent, lad to help unite our tribes, however, another option has just made itself known to me. A much more desirable option than making nice with those miscreants."



The smile abruptly fell from his face and he turned his head toward the window.

"You may come in now, wolf," he called out in a singsong voice.

Heather's head snapped around. She couldn't see anything at first with the light from the kitchen reflecting on the glass. Not until he stood up to his full height and Brock's impressive form filled the entire frame.

His blue eyes found hers, and his were narrowed with concern. Or was that suspicion? He let himself in through the open back door and strode confidently into the room to stand next to her with his shoulders back and his hands at his sides.

Her memory hadn't done justice as to just how good-looking and charismatic he was. With his long hair and close-cut beard, he looked like a sexy lumberjack, or a biker (more like Sons of Anarchy than Hell's Angels). She'd also forgotten how large he was. Or maybe he just seemed taller standing in this room with all of these average height males. He even stood a good five inches taller than the prince, and was at least twice his girth. As she watched, the muscles in his arms and chest twitched under his tee shirt, like he was having a hard time standing still.

"Welcome to our little get together," the prince said. "What is your name, canine?"

Brock's narrowed eyes shifted from her to the prince at the demeaning classification. He seemed to ignore the other three men in the room. "Brock."

"Brock...of course. A fine name for a strong male." The prince strolled in a circle around him, his eyes roaming over every inch of Brock's muscular body. Eventually, he came to a stop directly in front of him, but stayed just out of arms reach. "Why are you here? What is this female to you?"

Heather felt her face flame as Brock blinked in surprise. She'd only known him for a few days. She wasn't anything to him.

"I'm sorry?" Brock asked, glancing her way.

The prince waited until he had Brock's full attention. Catching his

eyes and holding them with his own, he said in a low voice, "I think you heard me. Now kindly answer the question."

As if he couldn't help himself, Brock's eyes wandered back to her and travelled hungrily from the top of her head to the tips of her sneakers and back. "I want to fuck her," he announced to the room. "More than any other woman I've ever met."

Heather swallowed loudly, taken aback by his bluntness even as an answering ache blossomed low in her belly. Her blood began to pound as her body responded to the hunger in his eyes. Her breasts swelled under his gaze, the nipples straining towards him, and a surge of moisture wet her panties.

His eyes on her breasts, he growled deep in his throat. She had to bite the inside of her cheek to keep from moaning in response. Then he blinked, and shook his head slightly, looking chagrined as he apologized to her. "I'm sorry, I don't know why I said that." His eyes swept over of their own accord one last time, and his nostrils flared before he tore his gaze away and turned his attention back to the prince.

The prince nodded, his expression thoughtful as he muttered, "You said it because it is the honest truth, and the only kind of answer I allowed you to give. Now, the question is, how badly do you want her?"

"Why do you need to know?" Brock asked. "What is this about?"

The prince moved closer and the wolf lifted his face as he neared, scenting the air. His heavy brows came together. "Who are you?" he asked. "*What* are you?"

The room fell silent as the prince searched Brock's features, and then turned to pace the floor without answering him, one hand rubbing his chin thoughtfully.

Frank spoke up from his post behind Heather. "Your majesty, I don't think this is a good idea. We don't need him, or any of his kind. Let's dispose of him now and be on our way."

One of the others, a handsome, balding man in a suit, spoke up. "I disagree. We could use all of the help we can get. If this male can get other shifters on our side, we may actually have a chance."

The prince nodded as they spoke, appearing to consider what they

were saying. He continued to pace for another few minutes while they all waited in silence. Then he came to an abrupt halt and faced the group. His eyes were lit from within and gleaming like a madman as he studied them, colors swirling off and on in the dark irises like those hypnotic spirals that never ended.

This couldn't be good.

With a maniacal smile he said, "We will let fate decide." Reaching into his pocket, he pulled out a gold coin. "Call it, wolf."

Brock looked around the room. "What the fook is going on?!" he bellowed with rising anxiety, a slight Scottish brogue suddenly appearing in his dialect.

Heather cringed. It appeared his patience was at an end. She wanted to reassure him, but it was kind of hard when she had no idea what was happening herself.

"It's quite simple," the prince told him. "Heads, you win. Tails, you die. Now, CALL IT." He threw the coin in the air.

"Heads!" Brock called, looking as if all of the world had gone mad. Which it kind of had.

Heather held her breath as the prince caught the coin and flipped it over onto the back of his opposite hand.

He seemed a tiny bit surprised as he said, "Today is your lucky day, wolf. You won."

A deep rumble filled the room before he'd even finished speaking. Brock's chest was heaving, his muscles were twitching, and his chin was lowered as he caught the prince in his hunter's stare. "You will tell me who you are, and whit th' fook is going on. Right now. 'Afore I lose my shit."

Ignoring him completely, the prince smiled fondly at Heather. "Are you ready, my dear?"

She turned frantic eyes to him, "Ready for what?"

The prince raised his hands in front of him, palms facing each other. "And...go!" He clapped his hands together twice in quick succession.

The room began to spin around her and the floor shifted under her feet. Throwing her arms out to the sides, she frantically reached

out towards the only one in the room that seemed somewhat sane.  
"Brock!"

"Heather!" he roared.

His long hair whipped around his face as he dove towards her. But just as he was about to grab her hand, she felt herself get grabbed from behind and she was yanked off the floor and sucked backwards.

She screamed as she was surrounded by darkness.

## CHAPTER 5



**B**rock threw himself towards Heather as the room and everything in it spun around them with rapidly increasing speed, but just as he made a grab for her, she screamed as she was sucked back into a black void that had opened up behind her.

"Noooooooo!" he yelled as her fingertips brushed his. She was gone before he could get a grip on her. He threw his hands out in front of him to catch himself as he hit the floor, but his body paused, hovering in midair as the world around him changed direction. Something grabbed him from behind, the force of it bending his body at the waist as he was sucked back the opposite way.

His hair blew around his head, obstructing his view. Not that there was much to see. Tumbling head over heels, he careened through the abyss, trying to catch his breath as the cold air whipped around him. It was like he'd gotten sucked into the middle of a black hole.

After what seemed like hours but was more likely only seconds, he felt gravity take hold, pulling him in the opposite direction as he sped through the blackness. He panicked and his wolf howled, responding to the adrenalin flooding through him. Throwing his arms and legs straight out, he settled into a free-fall and allowed the change to take

him without fighting it. If anything had a chance of surviving this, it was his wolf.

He roared as his bones shifted inside of him in mid-air, reforming and resetting. His skin stretched and his muscles tore and healed as they grew into his new shape. Sun-tipped fur sprang out in sparse tufts until it covered his entire body.

The change complete, he opened his eyes just in time to see the ground rushing up at him. He hit hard, unprepared, the earth cracking beneath him with the force of his landing. Tumbling over and over until he slowed enough to come up on all fours, he dropped back down into a defensive crouch and bared his dagger-like teeth in a snarl, prepared for anything. His eyes skittered this way and that, but he couldn't see much through the thick fog that rolled over the ground.

Still keeping a wary eye, he lowered his head and sniffed. He smelled pine and dirt and decaying insects. Around him, all he saw were the ghostly silhouettes of evergreens. It was eerily quiet. He heard no birds, no animals, no rustling of the trees. Nothing.

What the hell was he supposed to do here? And where was Heather?

As if in answer to his unspoken question, a scrap of paper floated to the ground in front of him.

Brock snarled and reared up onto his hind legs. He spun around in a tight circle, looking for the one who'd dropped the note, but he could perceive no immediate threat. With one last cautious sniff at the air, he began to change back to his human form. He didn't make a sound, more in control of the process this time in spite of the pain. When it was finished, he caught his breath and bent down and picked up the paper. Pushing his hair back off his face, he read the elegant script on the page.

*"Find the girl and return to where you started. You have five days."*

He looked around again, and then glanced down at himself. His clothes had been ripped to shreds on his way down. He could see a few pieces of material hanging from the tree branches, while the rest lay strewn across the ground like the remnants of a plane crash. What

was he supposed to do? Just run around naked? Personally, he could really care less about his nudity, but it may disturb anyone else he happened to run into.

He heard a small thud behind him and he turned to find a golden coin lying on the ground, identical to the one the prince had thrown.

"You have got to be fucking kidding me."

He stared at it for long seconds, took a step towards it, and then changed his mind. Leaning his head back, he yelled to the sky, "Can't I just have some clothes?"

The coin gleamed with an odd light from its spot in the grass, even with no sun. Brock stared at it some more, paced back and forth a few times without taking his eyes from it, and then stopped in front of it again.

Well, might as well see what the fuck this was all about. Somehow, he had a feeling that he wouldn't be able to get away with *not* tossing the stupid coin. Picking it up, he tossed it high. As it began to fall back towards him, he shouted, "Tails!" Catching the coin, he flipped it over onto the back of his opposite hand.

An etching of a pine tree stared back at him. It was tails.

Something landed behind him and he spun around to find a pair of camouflage cargo pants, a black tee shirt, thick-soled combat boots, and some heavy socks all wrapped in a sheet of plastic.

Tearing it open, he got dressed. He waited a few minutes to see if anything else was going to fall, but apparently, this was all he was going to get. He tucked the note and the coin into his pocket.

This was like a bad game of the Alice in Wonderland sort. He didn't have a fucking clue where to start searching for Heather, or how to find his way back here once he found her. And this fog was so thick, he couldn't see more than ten or fifteen feet in front of him.

But he did know that he would be no good to anyone if he didn't cover the basics. So first, he needed to find water, and food.

Picking up a few pieces of his destroyed shirt, he tore off a small strip and tied a marker to one of the tree branches to his right. Then he repeated the process on a tree on his left to mark the spot where he'd landed. The crack in the ground would be his third clue.

He shoved the rest in his pocket and set off in no particular direction.

He'd been walking for a few hours when he heard what he'd been hoping for: The sound of trickling water. Veering off to the right, he topped a small rise and saw a small stream dead ahead. It wasn't much, but it would do.

Like any animal, he knew that if there were one place he would run into trouble, it would be approaching a water source without checking for others who were doing the same thing. So he tied a strip of material to a branch to mark the spot where he'd veered from his trail, but stuck to the trees for a few minutes, watching and listening. When he was sure the coast was clear, he cautiously left his cover.

He looked around carefully one more time before dropping to his knees and cupping his hands in the icy water. Taking a small sip, he let it run over his tongue and then spit it out, waiting for any possible ill effects. After a minute or two, he still felt fine, so he drank in earnest this time, then splashed some cold water on his face.

Deciding to stay near the water source as he had nothing to carry it in, he followed it downstream until it started to get dark. He found a clump of trees that would provide some shelter, stripped off his clothes, and left them folded neatly against one of the trunks.

He needed to hunt and find some food.

Even in wolf form, it took him another few hours to find a small animal. He wasn't even sure what it was, but it appeared to be edible. Taking it back to his shelter, he hunkered down for the night with his meal. The temperature had dropped, and he debated turning back and putting his clothes back on, but decided against it. He'd be better able to defend himself in his current form if any type of danger stumbled upon him during the night.

Not for the first time that day, a familiar feeling of loneliness swept over him. He had no idea how he was supposed to find Heather. He'd been tromping through this God-forsaken place all day. All he'd seen were pine trees, fog, and the stream. This animal he'd caught was the first warm-blooded creature he'd come across, and he'd had to dig it out of a burrow.



Hell, he didn't even know if he was going the right way. Or if Heather was even really here, wherever the fuck "here" was. Or if she was the "girl" he was supposed to find. He assumed so, but who knew with all the shit that was going on?

He wondered, again, who this guy was that had sent him here. One thing was for sure: The dude had to be some kind of powerful witch to pull off something like this, and Brock hated witches. They gave him the creeps, and he tried like hell to avoid them. It was no wonder he'd made his skin crawl.

But that prince...that prince had seemed vaguely familiar to him, like he'd met him somewhere before, but he didn't see how that could've happened. He shook his head, ruffling his fur. Nah, there was no way he could know him. Yet, for some reason, he was positive that he did.

Tired and frustrated, he laid his head on his pile of clothing and tried to get some sleep.

\* \* \*

AFTER A LONG, lonely night, morning crept up on him along with that fucking, never-ending fog. Brock stood up and shook the pine needles out of his fur, then trotted over to the stream for a drink. He finished the meat he'd saved for breakfast, changed back to human form, and pulled his clothes on. Kicking at the ground, he covered up any trace of his having crashed there. He even buried the remains of his dinner/breakfast.

This place appeared to be all peaceful and surreal, but he didn't trust it for a minute. His instincts were telling him it was a shit storm waiting to happen. The only thing he didn't know was when or where.

Without any better options presenting themselves, he continued to follow the stream.

\* \* \*

A FEW HOURS LATER, he found her.