

Alpha Wanted: Part 1

By Justine Winter

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*“By the pricking of my thumbs,
something wicked this way comes.”*

William Shakespeare

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Chapter One

Ryker

Life. It's a funny notion really. One minute you're rushing to meet maturity, desperately willing for time to hurry, and the next thing you know an infinite amount of days, months, and years pass by without an end in sight. No expiration date. Just another routine to help you exist. To make you matter.

Driving home, my decisions on life always hit me hardest after my boots touched down on British soil. Was I doing the right thing? Did my brothers need me anymore?

Touring was never easy, even when I controlled an elite team of soldiers, and service dogs. We were the best of the best, but that meant our missions were the hardest, and everyone wanted a good rescue story.

I didn't blame them. Losing someone in hostile territory was like paying a visit to the devil. You sold your soul every time you returned alive, and they didn't.

I waited at the traffic lights, whistling away to myself and my comrade as I scanned my hometown in the falling dark. Nero perked his ears, keeping his eyes on the locals as we sat idling.

Nero, a German Shepherd, was my own personal Military Working Dog, and at the end of each tour we always returned together, protected each other just as we did in the field. We had the type of connection the humans would never understand; it ran deeper than master and pet. I was his Alpha, and he, most certainly, was a part of my pack.

The eager whine that escaped his muzzle was highlighted by the pounding of his tail against the seat. Aware of our surroundings, his joy was evident in his demeanour.

We were home.

I parked in the driveway, and with a little haste that matched my companion, hurried to greet my humble abode. An extended stay in the dust and sand made this place look like a palace. Though admittedly, after a hundred years collecting pay I supposed to some it could be construed as a luxury home for a man living alone. What could I say? I liked space.

Placing the key in the door, I stared at Nero who stood poised, ready to enter. With the click of the lock, an unfamiliar scent wafted my way, straightening my spine to awareness.

“Heel,” I commanded, and watched as Nero sat on his haunches, waiting for instructions. I signalled the sign to search, and let him into the house. I canvassed the area outside, wondering where the origin of the sweet vanilla scent appeared. Just as it came, it disappeared, fading into the warm night air.

Nero barked once; it was a pre-determined indication that gave the all-clear. I shook my head free of the concern, wondering if my mind had remained in the war zone as I carried my bags into the foyer. What trouble did I expect to find here anyway?

As the night wore on, and I’d settled in, I couldn’t discard the feeling that I was being preyed upon, and as a hunter myself, the feeling didn’t sit well.

I stared out the window, dimming the lights that highlighted my presence, and searched once again for the answer to this weirdness.

I came up empty. There was nothing there besides the usual cars parked along the street.

I shrugged. “Whatever’s out there, Nero, they have no idea who they’re spying on.” I turned to catch his eye, and smiled. “We’ll give the fuckers hell, once they’re ready to play.”

Chapter Two

Kira

CODENAME: *Midnight*

Yawning. That's what I'd been succumbed to ever since I'd been handed this assignment. I'd been sitting for a week, gathering intelligence, watching him day and night, and I was bored. Bored out of my mind by his monotonous routine every damn day. Nothing changed, not even a slight deviation in his timing. He was completely regimented.

While I stretched in my car as much as I could, feeling the satisfactory pull along my back, the sound of my phone ringing cut through the silence.

"Midnight," I acknowledged, using my codename as always.

"Status update," the brash, female voice demanded.

"Shower. Dinner. Workout. Oh, and here comes his evening run that always lasts twice as long as his morning one. Nothing changes. Nothing's new. Just him and his dog." I repeated like a robot trained with only one paragraph of vocabulary. Every debrief had been the same this week.

"And he still remains unaware?"

I hesitated, thinking back to the night he'd first arrived home. That had been a close call. "Yes, ma'am. Is this really the best use of my time though? I'm feeling caged with the lack of action." I protested. The slow assignment had come as a surprise when I was so often bringing others to justice with the strength of my fist. Sitting on my backside was a new development for me.

"It sounds like you need to go for a run, too. Keep up with him, Midnight. He's pertinent to the cause."

The line silenced as the call ended, leaving me without answers once again. There were times I despised being somebody else's soldier, a pawn in the grand scheme of things. It was why I worked so hard to gain the reputation I had for being the best agent within the Division. Orders weren't always well-received; I was becoming too independent for that.

As I watched my target disappear along the pavement, I stepped out of my government-issued car and quickly stretched, knowing a marathon-style run was ahead of me. Thankfully I had the lungs of a werewolf, and a love for keeping fit outdoors. Nothing would deter me now.

I pushed my feet off of the ground, finding my rhythm as I set my pace to catch up on my surveillance. Breathing in the clear air, I welcomed the sudden rush of endorphins penetrating my system. Oh, man, it felt good to finally move my legs, to release some of the week's constraints.

I rounded the corner, watching my objective with his trusted sidekick enter the trail that led into the mountains, and followed at a safe distance knowing my scent would alert my presence. Though music wouldn't have gone amiss, I knew I couldn't afford the distraction. *Stupid priorities.*

The scenery stole my breath, winding me from moving forward. I felt like I'd been transferred to a different world as a stunningly blue lake glistened below, entirely surrounded by the mountains. Trails of greenery led to many paths, offering spectacular views in every direction. How could I have been missing this all week? It was like I'd run through a magic portal. Nature was beautiful.

The distant sound of a bark ahead reminded me of my purpose, and I quickly hurried to catch up. I breathed in the beauty, feeling the quality of the crystal clear air enrich my body, and committed the mesmerising scene to memory.

I instantly hoped I had time to return once the job was done.

When I eventually caught up once again, I casually kept my pace at an even jog, and admired the jaw-dropping view ahead. He was tall, according to my case file he was exactly 6ft 2" tall, and his eyes had been a piercing blue, staring at me from the paper with intelligence.

His short buzz-cut brown hair was no doubt a mandatory requirement, but even so it accentuated his masculinity, highlighted his structured jaw.

Though I hadn't had seen him upfront in person, I knew his paperwork had barely done him any justice. There was something about him, a presence of some kind that followed wherever he went, like an aura. Perhaps it was his confidence, his self-assuredness that I connected with, but I was sure there was more to the man than what I'd been told, what I'd been briefed on.

His build was impressive from the glances I'd caught over the course of the week. He'd developed serious muscle tone in his arms and legs, and I could only imagine the solid abs beneath his t-shirt, rippling with yummy goodness.

The sudden quiet interrupted my thoughts, drawing my attention to what was important. I was alone. I'd lost sight of my target entirely despite the fact the trail ahead was clear to see. Where had he gone?

I called on my senses, pulling my wolf to the forefront of my mind, and allowing her to take over a moment. My abilities were always strongest when we worked together.

I sniffed the air, filtering each scent until I found his. It was faint, barely recognisable until a waft of mint carried on the wind.

I quickly turned, and paused, my breath hitched in my throat. He stood with arms folded as he stared at me. A hint of a smirk gathered in the corner of his mouth, and his dog, Nero, stood to attention, waiting on orders. Oh yes, I knew all about him.

My mind momentarily collapsed while I tried to think up an excuse. How was I foolish enough to get caught? I was the best at my job for a reason.

"Can I help you?" he asked, his voice alluringly low.

I felt the quickening of my pulse as my heartbeat raised, uncontrollably affected by the sudden rush of chemicals flooding my system. Was my body attracted to him?

I smoothed my hand over my hair, regaining my control, and implemented my usual professionalism. Now wasn't the time for googly eyes and laughter.

"Just a good evening for a run," I said, folding my arms over my chest.

His gaze zeroed in on my movements, watching the rise and fall of my steady breath. I cleared my throat, trying to deter his stare.

"That's not what I mean, princess."

I bristled at the term, he had no idea who he was dealing with. I snarled. "Don't call me . . ."

"Princess? I think it suits you. Now answer my question. Why are you following me?"

I was about to argue some more when his question niggled my conscience. "What makes you think I'm following you?" I asked.

"You mean besides the fact you've been watching me all week?" He smirked again, clearly satisfied with himself. "Has my routine bored you enough yet?" He openly laughed.

“You did that on purpose?” I gasped, frustrated more than ever that I’d been played at my own game.

“The next time you scope out my house, try masking your scent before you leave.” He turned to walk away, but I instinctively reached to stop him, grabbing his arm. Electricity ran through me at the touch of his skin, his bicep flexed beneath me, imposing its generous size under my hand.

“Oh, so there *is* something you want, princess.”

I squinted once again at the term of endearment. I didn’t like it. It was far too pretty, too girly for my personality. I wasn’t anything like a princess.

“I have orders,” I began, but he interrupted immediately.

“Orders? Hmm, let me see. The army didn’t send you on account I’m on leave.” He began to circle around me, but I stayed rooted to the spot. He wasn’t going to succeed in intimidating me, when intimidation was *my* usual tactic. “And you’re obviously not affiliated with any terrorist group overseas otherwise you’d have already tried to blow me up.” His face held the deep concentration lines that proved how hard he was thinking; he was methodical and logical, I admired that.

“Which means you’re from the government. What do you want?”

I straightened my spine. “Lieutenant Colonel West, I’m Agent Knight with the Paranormal Division of the Secret Intelligence Service, or P.D.S.I.S for short. I’m expected to bring you in. It seems you have skills the Director is interested in.” I explained, keeping it short and sweet.

He laughed wildly. “Nice try, princess, but that won’t be happening, so you can pack up your car and return to Headquarters. Tell the Director I’m disappointed in her. She should’ve known better.”

I bristled. He knew the Director? Had I been played for a fool the moment the case had been assigned to me? Was this my penance for having a disagreeable opinion on the last job I’d worked?

My mind worked through a dozen scenarios, each time trying to understand how I’d misinterpreted the signs. What had I done wrong?

While the asshole ran back to his home, I sulked to my car, feeling my temper bubble with rage. The Director owed me answers.

Chapter Three

Kira

CODENAME: *Midnight*

“What the hell is going on?” I yelled as I stormed my way through Headquarters, ignoring the meerkat-like heads popping up behind the rows of computers. My mood had worsened every minute of the drive it took to get here. I didn’t care if my job was on the line, the Director had gone too far this time.

“Midnight, what seems to be the problem?” Her flowing red locks cascaded along her arm while her expression remained nonplussed. Was she really going to play the innocent card?

I slammed the door behind me, regardless of the fact the entire room was canvassed in glass where *everyone* could see through. I was too pissed to care if they were watching my show.

“You’ve propositioned Lieutenant Colonel West before. He’s declined before. Yet you made me work surveillance on him as if he was high on the agenda of requisitions. You set me up for a fail!” I shouted in frustration, pacing the length of her desk to and fro.

“That wasn’t my intention,” she replied, her face revealing she’d meant it. I wasn’t sure though. I’d gotten used to the many poker faces she was able to portray.

“Really? Because his laughing in my face makes me think otherwise.”

She pursed her lips, carefully folding her arms in slow movements. I was well aware that it was the sign she was on the cusp to losing her temper, but I was adamant this time. She’d made me feel like an idiot.

“This is ridiculous!” I threw my hands up in the air. “You blindsided me.”

“Watch it, Midnight, you’re pushing your luck. Do you feel ridiculous because I hadn’t told you I’d tried before, or because he called you out on it, and *he* made you feel foolish? Don’t blame others for your shortcomings. It’s not becoming of you,” she admonished as though she was my mother, patting my head patronisingly.

I gasped. What the fuck was she going on about?

“Sit down, shut up, and I’ll tell you what you need to know. But come here causing a scene like that again, and I’ll take your badge and put you on the street. Got it?”

Underneath my projected exterior I squirmed beneath the order, it almost pained me to nod my head and agree like a good little soldier. “Yes, ma’am.”

~

Once the Director had finished chewing on my arse for dinner I headed towards the weapons room, needing to throw something big and heavy. I almost turned around when I walked in to find my partner, Harvey Dean, working out. I just wasn't in the mood to deal with his bullshit tonight.

"Kira? What brings you down here, I thought you were on a case?" He continued on his reps, huffing and puffing as he lifted the weight.

"I was. Some developments came in that I needed to expand with Fox," I said, using the Directors last name.

"That doesn't sound good," he replied, setting the bar down.

"No, it wasn't," I murmured to myself, turning towards the stash of weapons tucked in the corner of the room.

Though we were partners in the field, it didn't always happen that we'd be assigned the same case, especially on a busy week. Agent numbers were low and, sadly, crime rose in the paranormal community every day. I never complained though, taking on a solo assignment was a gift from the gods, and I loved it every time. Harvey was nice enough, but that was the problem. He was *too* nice to me. All. The. Time.

"You need help on this one?"

I smirked at him. *Really?*

"Yeah, I know. Worth a shot though, right? It's about time you slipped up and needed help for a change. Your reputation is making the rest of us look like couch potatoes." He smiled, grabbing his towel and wiping his face.

I shrugged. "Not my style," I said absentmindedly, grabbing the series of knives that lined the back shelf of the weapons cupboard.

I stepped to the line marking the ground, and began my assault of throwing knives towards the many targets outlined far ahead. Within seconds I was done, hitting each enemy in the heart; the prime kill point.

"Wow! Someone really got under your skin today, didn't they?" said Harvey as he came to stand beside me, inspecting my efforts. He was a couple inches taller than my 5ft 6", and his

shoulder rested just above mine as he stood too close as always. And though he was as physically fit as the job demanded, and somewhat handsome, there was just something about him that didn't push my buttons. Maybe it was his persistent efforts to please me that turned me off him, or maybe it was that I knew we were better off as friends, especially when it came to being on the field. How was I supposed to trust my partner to have my back if we'd gotten into a messy break up? Thanks, but no thanks. Professionalism was the key to all my relationships. He knew my boundaries, yet he was always trying to bend them. Like now. Personal space was *personal* for a reason.

"Well, when important information is held back it's tough to bottle in the anger. Today I felt betrayed," I groaned as I pulled each knife from the dummies, ready to go again.

"Ouch." Harvey grimaced as a knife landed on the genital area of a mannequin, squeezing his junk as though he'd felt the force of the stab himself. "You see this," he pointed to the knife. "This is why we're partners and not enemies," he winced.

I threw the remaining blades, thinking how nice it would've been to have had a real target to let my frustration out on. God knew *he* deserved a dagger to the dick.

"For the sake of mankind, I'm cutting you off," said Harvey as he grabbed my hand with the final blade poised to launch. "Let's go grab a bite to eat, you must be famished after exhausting so much energy wielding those weapons like an expert marksman."

He tried to steer me away, and just this once I let him. Food sounded like a great idea after my stomach gurgled in agreement. "I *am* an expert marksman," I corrected his earlier statement.

"Trust me, I know." I watched him gulp as he shielded his area once more. Well, if it stopped him from giving me the googly eyes then I was all for it.

~

Ryker

Finally calling the girl out on her spy games had felt better than I initially thought it would. Though it had been extremely satisfying to watch her stutter, squirm and eventually get all agitated, I was suddenly feeling at a loss knowing her presence had left my street. She no longer sat in her car at her preferential spot, watching my every move.

It was liberating to feel free again, to be able to return to my actual routine and get on with my obligations before the ringing bells of tour duty returned. No matter how dedicated I was, sometimes leave just wasn't long enough once I'd gotten used to the downtime.

I thrived on activity, on controlling situations under my command, but even so, a man could get used to a comfortable bed if he'd had a reason to stay.

Thankfully, I didn't.

With the loss of my evening workout, I had more energy to spare than normal, and while I contemplated finishing my run, my body was craving something different. Even *I'd* gotten bored of the fake routine I'd pulled this week.

For months at a time I endured the taste of sand that never escaped my mouth no matter how many times I brushed my teeth, and even more so sacrificed my needs as a man. I was an adult, I could control my animalistic urges no matter how intensified they were compared to a normal human being. But when I returned home, I had time to make up for. Desires that needed satisfying.

While I finished changing, and glanced in the mirror, the memory of the flustered agent popped in my mind. She'd stirred something within me that I'd never felt before, and though I was curious to revisit that idea, I imagined she was quite the challenge.

Tonight wasn't about a *challenge*, tonight was about *easy*.

"Nero," I called, waiting for his lazy arse to come join me. I needed my wingman after all, even if he was a dog. The ladies loved it, and as far as conversation starters went, this was golden.

The enticing sounds of the busy pubs nearby already had me smiling in victory, but my steps led me and my wingman around the corner. I couldn't describe it, but something was pulling me in that direction. I decided to follow my intuition, knowing I was in no hurry. Hell, if I could last months, an extra hour or two wasn't going to kill me even if my balls disagreed.

While I allowed the night to decide my fate, I was drawn to a pub much quieter than the previous three I'd passed. And though I knew its owner, I hadn't planned on a slow pint or two. I needed something with a little extra stimulation.

"Ryker, I'd heard you'd returned again!" came the ever-upbeat voice of the seasoned landlady. She hugged me in greeting, and I quickly returned the gesture as always. Though

technically I was much older than she was, she always treated me as though I was her son. How could I leave now?

Nero yipped to announce his presence, and Mary quickly bent to give him the fusses he craved. Yep, the dog was a sucker for attention when he wasn't on duty. He was intelligent enough to know the difference between leave and work. And when we were home, he always rivalled me with his need for care. Hell yeah! I liked to be tended to for a little release.

An all-too-familiar waft of vanilla came my way, and my body reacted instantly, attributing it to something much more than it was; a scent.

I followed Mary into the bar, scanning the dimly lit rooms for the source of the smell. Nero kept Mary busy as she pulled my pint of bitter, allowing me the chance to fix my gaze upon *hers* again.

She'd caught me by surprise, and I wondered if somehow she'd returned to her case, working surveillance on me once more, but when the voice of a man interrupted my thoughts I'd realised I'd been wrong.

I turned my gaze, staring at the guy that was worth her time at night. I snorted to myself as the sounds of their conversation graced my ears.

Yeah, he wanted to get in her pants all right.

The animal in me awoke, wanting to rip the bastards head off of his shoulders for even insinuating that he was good enough for her. I tried calming myself with gulps of beer, but every intake of his stench was enough to push me over the edge.

I couldn't explain it, but he did not deserve to be sat opposite my princess as a dinner date.

Shut the fucking door. *My* princess? Where the fuck did *that* come from? I rummaged through my mind, wondering at what point I'd become fucking hysterical. Laying claim to someone wasn't something I ever did. That wasn't me.

Easy, remember?

I downed the last of my pint and hurried to leave, expressing my goodbye to Mary en-route. Nero followed like I knew he would, and together we rushed somewhere more lively.

That agent had hooked her claws in me more than I wanted to admit, and I knew the best way to get her out of my system was by fucking someone else.

Since when did I become a puppy dog with lovesick eyes? I spoke to her once, and now my dick wanted to have a party in her pants indefinitely?

I didn't think so.

I followed the scent of sex and booze, and allowed my cock to do the talking. Tonight was about release. Not finding a potential mate.

Shit.

Chapter Four

Kira

CODENAME: Midnight

Despite my nagging efforts, the Director had made it clear. I was still on assignment. Apparently *he* was still important to our team. I had no idea why, but Fox had been clear on her orders. He wasn't allowed to get away this time.

And I was the unfortunate sucker that had to negotiate with the asshole known as Lt.Colonel Ryker West. *Lucky me.*

While I sat amongst the crowd, remaining as inconspicuous as I could in my light grey pant suit, I surveyed the area for a general consensus. I detected anticipation and excitement in the air while the audience waited for the demonstration to begin. I had to agree, I was looking forward to it, too.

The Armed Forces fair was one of the biggest attractions of the year, and while I knew their aim was to gather more troops, it served its purpose in reminding the public what outstanding service they provided. *To protect thy country*, as the mantra went.

Maybe I was biased considering my job, but I believed in the system. Justice was the hammer knocking on everyone's door.

"Ladies and gentleman, in a few short moments our elite team of Military Working Dogs and their handlers will be ready to demonstrate what they're capable of. I ask that you remain silent, and leave all applause until the end. Thank you."

The crowd silenced immediately. The makeshift area had been cordoned off by metal barriers, a protection no doubt in case the canines escaped. The audience had no idea of the restraint and command the handlers actually held over their dogs. Humans weren't aware of the paranormal among them. Everything was always for show.

"Welcome, everybody, how are you doing today?" Ryker cheered as he entered the court with Nero beside him. Three other handlers followed him, all with dogs in tow. An overwhelming scent of animal triggered my nose as understanding dawned on me. This was Ryker's team, and all the men were shifters, too. No wonder his record was unbeatable. How had I missed that information in my initial background search?

“Today we’re showing a brief insight to what we do with our dogs overseas, and how they help keep us safe. You’ll see their strength, their commitment and their high level of obedience. Please remember these are highly-trained working dogs, not your average pet.”

As the demonstration went on I was finding myself peculiarly engaged in everything Ryker did. The way he commanded the crowd, captivating every set of eyes. The way his body moved, like a beckoning call drawing me in. God, I wanted to be the one captured within his arms, pinned down by his body.

I squirmed in my seat. Where the fuck did that thought come from?

I glanced at my watch, suddenly wanting this whole assignment to be finished. My results usually came in fast, I wasn’t one to beat around the bush, but Ryker was something else entirely.

Was I stalling on purpose? Finding ways to keep the case open as long as possible? Or had my confidence finally taken a hit, knocking me off my pedestal? Dammit! He’d gotten under my skin.

I stood to leave, knowing I couldn’t wait around anymore. I was done being patient.

“Miss, how good of you to volunteer. Please, this way.”

I paused as all eyes turned my way. What had I gotten myself into? I’d been so consumed by my thoughts of Ryker, I’d lost track of the demonstration as I tried to leave.

I turned towards the voice, and noticed the wide grin plastered on Ryker’s face. It was clear he’d chosen me on purpose, perhaps I hadn’t been as incognito as I’d thought. Fuck, I was losing my touch around him.

I inwardly growled though my wolf felt somewhat pleased with herself. Was this her doing? I felt her brush up against the corners of my mind, and I imagined the smirk I knew she was feeling. Bugger.

“Please, don’t be shy. I won’t hurt you,” he teased, holding his hand out to motion towards me.

I sneered. *‘Like he could hurt me anyway.’* I waited to be let into the arena, already feeling the weighted stares sending daggers into my back.

“Are you armed, princess?” He asked away from the microphone.

I smirked, letting the hideous nickname wash over my shoulders. “As an agent on duty? You bet I am,” I retorted.

“Good, that gives me the excuse to pat you down.” He winked.

“Touch me, and I’ll knock you on your back,” I warned.

“Ooh, feisty.” His eyes glowed as he held up the microphone once again, “Please, take a quick break while we set up. We’ll be back shortly.”

As the crowd dispersed, Ryker nudged me towards the rear end of the court. “Lower that hand anymore, and you’ll lose the head you’re thinking with,” I growled sweetly.

“I can’t help but notice you seem to be a little agitated with me.” He daringly lowered his palm, testing my limits.

I grabbed his hand, twisting it into a lock as I held his gaze. “I am *this* close to putting you on the floor,” I pinched my thumb and index finger together, leaving the slightest of gaps to portray my sentiment.

“Princess, as long as you’re on top that’s fine with me,” he smiled naughtily.

I let him go, groaning with frustration. “Can we just get this over with?” Damn the Director and her stupid demands. If it wasn’t for my job being on the line I’d have left ages ago.

“Now that’s a line every guy wants to hear.”

“Sounds like one hell of a volunteer you chose there, Storm.”

I looked at the guy walking my way, detecting he was lycan, too. “Storm?” I asked, trying my best to hide my smirk.

“Combat codename,” Ryker answered. “I bet you have one, too.”

“I do, but *Storm*? Are you wet and windy all the time?” I laughed at my own joke.

“No, princess. I’m *wild* and *dangerous*.” His nostrils flared, allowing part of his beast to show. I smiled in response. He wasn’t frightening me, if anything, it was turning me on.

“Are you in the forces, too?” The stranger asked, no doubt picking up on Ryker’s comment about my codename.

I shook my head. “No, I’m an agent with the Paranormal Division of the Secret Intelligence Service.”

“Wow, that’s a mouthful,” he joked. “I’m Hemley by the way, the guys call me Hunter.”

“Kira,” I offered, shaking his hand. “Or Midnight, whichever you prefer. So, what am I supposed to do?” Now that Ryker had pulled me in, I’d found the bait I needed to get him where I wanted.

“Weapons first,” Ryker demanded, crossing his arms over his imposing chest.

Between the two of them they were quite the muscular pair, and even though Hunter was strikingly handsome with his blonde hair and chiselled face, my eyes had a hard time leaving Ryker.

I sighed, and reached for the gun holstered at my back. "There."

"And the rest."

"I don't know what you're talking about," I feigned ignorance.

"How about the gun on your left ankle, and the blades attached to your arms? You can't fool me, princess. Now hand them over." He waited with his giant hand suspended in the air.

"On one condition," I smirked, knowing this was my chance to get even. "When we're done here, you come with me to Headquarters."

He seemed to be mulling it over if the silence was any indication, and while I was ready to back up my statement, he'd surprised me. "That seems like a fair trade. You have a deal."

~

Ryker

CODENAME *Storm*

The shock on her face was the reason I'd agreed so easily. I knew she was ready for a fight, I could smell it practically jumping off of her body. But what she didn't know was that I was willing to go wherever she went just so that I could be around her some more, no matter what the price was.

She was more than intriguing, and there was something utterly scrumptious about her smart mouth and attitude, not to mention the body she was hiding beneath that tailored suit. It clung to her curves deliciously, highlighting the goods she most definitely had to offer. And as for those *fuck-me* heels for work? Fuck yeah, I could get used to that.

Her intoxicating vanilla scent had been following me for days. Wherever I went, her scent was there though I'd never actually sensed her nearby. My mind had been tormenting me with hints of her since the moment she'd walked into my life. I couldn't get rid of her even when I tried finding someone else. There was no one else. I wanted her. So damned if I was going to let her get away again.

“Great, the Director will be pleased.” Kira handed me her weapons, gracing me with a sneak at her delicate skin.

“I only care about pleasing you,” I teased, testing to see her reaction.

“Perv,” she joked, flicking her blue-tinted, black hair over her shoulder. “Okay, so what have I signed myself up for?”

“Basically it’s a search and capture. We want the audience to see how MWDs use their noses in tracking down fugitives. So we’ll do a quick scene to show you running through the field, and then you’ll hide in a bunker we’ve created. I’ll bring Nero out, let him loose, and once he’s found you, game over. Got it?”

She rolled her eyes. “Are you underestimating my intelligence level?”

I smirked. “Nope, but you might want to change out of those heels. Wouldn’t want you to twist your ankle.”

“I’ll be fine,” she scoffed.

I held up my hands. “I’m just saying you can’t try suing me once this done. I gave you warning, princess.”

“Shut up. I’ve got this. Now can we get on with it? I have a busy schedule today.”

“Quite the bossy lady, aren’t you?” I jeered, and turned to check on the audience. Ruffling her feathers was becoming one of my favourite things to do. Shit she gave good comebacks. How could I not enjoy being around her?

“Ladies and gentlemen, if you would take your seats once more we’re ready to begin our next demonstration. Thank you.”

Putting on displays with Nero during my days on leave was one of those occasions I absolutely relished. Protecting my country was one thing, demonstrating to the public exactly what we were capable of was something else. And Nero loved it. With the heart of a lion he deserved to be applauded, to be recognised for all his hard work and efforts.

While I waited in the wings, watching Kira’s tempting arse run around the area leaving her scent, I was amazed by the speed and strength of her legs as she proved me wrong. She most definitely *could* run in heels, and boy was it sexy.

“Nero!” I called as Kira bunkered down. He came bounding towards me, all four paws pounded on the grass. “Find the girl,” I ordered, giving way to let him work.

The crowd marvelled as he sought her out, following every direction she'd previously taken. I smiled with pride. Nero knew exactly what to do.

"Look at them, Storm. Doesn't it solidify everything we do?"

I looked to Hunter, seeing his belief cemented on his face. "It does. It's better than payday."

"Well, I don't know about that," he joked, punching my arm in jest.

"Yeah, how could I forget you. . ." I stopped.

"What's . . .?"

I held up my hand, silencing him. "You smell that?" Every fibre of my being rose to high alert. The stench of evil, or more particularly, somebody *wanting* to do evil, cloaked the air. It was like garbage; rotten and smelly.

I scanned the area, checking on Nero as he continued his demonstration - he hadn't detected the scent yet.

"Storm, you get a visual?"

"That's a negative." I furiously searched, knowing there was danger nearby. This wasn't hostile territory, but definitely served as an ideal location for an attack when there were many friendlies around; it carried the potential for many casualties.

"Anything?" I asked, sounding desperate.

Gunshots fired in the arena.

Chaos followed.

Chapter Five

Kira

CODENAME: Midnight

Wailing screams pierced my ear drums as the demonstration turned to shit. The crowd fled from their seats, trembling as they ran from the sound of gunshots.

I called to Nero, forcing my will upon his to get him to stay with me. Though I knew it was against his training, I had a better plan for us that intended to get us out alive.

The bunker provided protection, shielding us from the gunman's view. He entered the court, keeping his gun trained on Ryker. Where had Hunter gone?

Amongst the gunman's dishevelled state, I caught a whiff of his scent along the breeze. Though it was tainted by the smell of rubbish, I recognised the animal within the human. This was no ordinary hostage situation.

"What do you want?" I heard Ryker ask as I left the bunker with Nero at my side. I kept our movements quiet, staying downwind to avoid being detected.

"Shut up!" The gunman lashed out, smacking Ryker's jaw with the butt of the gun.

Something inside me snapped, clouding my vision with shades of red. I shook Nero loose of my command, and ordered him to attack.

Nero ran straight ahead, distracting the gunman long enough for Ryker to disarm him. He took him down within seconds, training the weapon at the shabby man.

"Down on the ground, hands behind your back. Now!" Ryker shouted, and the man obliged.

"Nice to know you can handle yourself," I smirked. "I thought I was going to have to perform some heroic shit for you," I laughed, taking the cuffs from Ryker's outstretched hand.

Nero sat on his haunches, panting as he watched over the assailant. "Good job, Nero." I winked, and he replied with a single belly-rumbling bark.

"Sure, give the dog all the credit." He rolled his eyes. "I could've been puppy chow by the time you'd have gotten your arse over here."

I laughed as I lifted the scumbag off of the ground, holding onto his cuffed hands. Hunter came running towards us from the left hand side of the arena. "Report," asked Ryker.

"All clear. Seems he was acting alone. Thunder and Drive are checking over the crowd, but it looks like douchebag here doesn't know how to aim, thankfully."

“Good. Clean this mess up, and double check to make sure there aren’t any devices left around, use the dogs if you can’t shift. Call me when it’s done.”

Hunter nodded and disappeared, keeping to his orders. The gunman twisted in my arms, trying to shake free when he thought I was distracted. Ryker turned to me, his lip pulled up in a curve. “Do you want some help there, princess?”

I snorted. “Yeah, right. If this fool wriggles anymore he’ll be the one to blame for broken arms, not me.” I threatened, tightening my grip around the cuffs, and lifting his arms up.

“Okay, okay, okay! I’ll stop!”

I smirked at the fool’s whines. That’s what he got for underestimating me. I headed towards the waiting black car, knowing my partner was inside.

“Midnight, what have we got?” Harvey asked, stepping out of the car to join Ryker and me.

“Panther,” I said, knowing what I’d scented earlier. Harvey’s eyes widened in shock, and I knew why. Panthers, as few as they were, were supposed to keep to themselves.

“Lock him up, find out what he knows, update me later. There’s something else we have to do first.” I pointed between Ryker and I.

Harvey nodded, taking the prisoner, and leaving us behind.

“We aren’t following?” Ryker asked with a tilt to his head and a crease in his brow.

“Not yet. The team can deal with the questioning.”

Ryker kept at my side as I headed towards my car. “Then what the hell are we doing then? Because, princess, when a guy points a gun to my head I like to find out why, especially when said person is a supernatural, like us.”

I shrugged. “All in good time. First, we have a deal that needs fulfilling.” I unlocked the car and got in, knowing Ryker would follow, too.

“You’re kidding me? Now? After that? You’re still taking me to Headquarters?” He sounded incredulous, like what I’d suggested was ridiculous.

I turned to him. “You made a deal with me. I’m not letting a gun-crazy panther get in the way of you sticking to that deal. I want this case over with, so yeah, we’re going now. Problem?”

He paused, watching me for a moment. “You’re sexy when you’re bossy. I like it.” He smiled, baring his pearly whites. “And for the record, I’d never stand you up.”

My breath hitched in my throat, causing my thoughts to shift focus. God, he was like a waiting orgasm, one more compliment and despite my best efforts I was sure I’d be bursting out

in waves of ecstasy. Why did he affect me so much? I'd never been the type to be wooed by words before. Damn him and his hotness.

"Good," I said lamely, finding my voice at the back of my throat. "Otherwise, I'll be hunting you down and cuffing you to me until the job is done. You won't be the case that ruins my perfect reputation." I turned the key in the ignition, hearing the engine roar to life.

"Princess, if I'd have known that was on the cards, I wouldn't have given in so easily."

~

Ryker

CODENAME: *Storm*

Watching Kira's perfectly toned arse sway with the movement of her hips was sure to become my undoing. The grey fabric to her trousers clung to her, moulding her butt like the finest piece of art in the world.

I tried shifting my own combat trousers as I walked behind her, loosening the death grip my boxers held over my growing cock. Fuck, she made me big.

Though I had no intention of sticking around her building for long, I was conflicted with the idea of leaving her behind. There was something strong and protective about the way my wolf had latched onto her, that it almost pained me to think of leaving.

"So this is Headquarters, then?" I asked, unimpressed by the modern building. Everything about it seemed over the top, exactly like the Director herself. What good was it to have a secret government building entirely encased in glass for outsiders to peer in? I hadn't realised covert operations now meant 'for-all-to-see'.

"Yes," Kira answered in a tone that suggested I was stupid for relaying the obvious. Apparently she wasn't up for small talk.

I passed floor upon floor of computers and drones, wondering just how boring those people were to stare at a screen all day and call it work. No, thank you. You could pass me action every day of the week, this was no Colonel looking for a desk job.

Kira rushed ahead through what I assumed was the main command centre based on the large screens covering the entire back wall. I kept my stride at an even pace, enjoying my view of Kira once more before she opened a glass door, and pointed to the woman inside.

“Fox,” I acknowledged, trying my best to keep the stoic expression on my face. Fuck, one glance at her ugly mug, and it was enough for my dick to shrivel up into my balls. “How can I help you?” I folded my arms behind my back, watching Kira out of the corner of my eye.

The Director plastered on a fake smile, and her heavily made-up face moved with animation. “Lieutenant Colonel, I think you’re mistaken. It’s what *I* can do for *you*.”

I huffed. “Right, and what’s that?” I asked, disbelieving. She’d been pestering me for years, every time I returned from tour duty I found a voicemail waiting. Not this time. No, she’d taken it a step further, and added a tail. Granted it was a sexy, mouth-watering tail.

“A job,” she answered honestly.

I laughed loudly, but not before hearing the sudden intake of breath from Kira. So, she hadn’t known what the Director wanted? *Interesting*.

“Why would I need a job when I already love mine?” I squared my jaw, keeping my temper from rising.

“Oh, come now, Storm. You and I both know why. There’s no need to be coy.” Fox trailed her hand through her hair, twirling it around her finger. Was she trying to entice me? Kira stiffened beside me, and I sensed a sudden spike in her heartbeat. I secretly smiled, knowing she was attracted to me even if she didn’t want to acknowledge it yet.

“I’ve lasted this long, I think I have a few more years left in me yet,” I answered, not giving her what she wanted.

“You’re wrong. There’ve been whispers amongst the ranks, your brethren will soon come to understand how their Lieutenant Colonel hasn’t aged a day in the many years he’s been working. How is it a twenty-five year-old man maintains the rank of Lieutenant Colonel for as long as the humans can remember him? Talk travels fast, Storm. It’s time to move on.”

I bristled under her words. It hurt more than anything to know that what she said was true. I’d been looking like I was twenty-five for a hundred years. That was the age all werewolves reached maturity, and even though the years went by, our faces and bodies never looked a day older. I swapped forces, jumped ranks every time suspicions began to rise, but this time was different. I had my own team of werewolves, and Nero wasn’t ever leaving my side.

“And what about my team? Are you offering them jobs, too?” I was testing the boundaries, knowing she couldn’t do a damn thing to punish me. I wasn’t one of her lackeys.

“They still have more years of service left in them yet. It’s you that’s in danger of outing our secret.” Fox crossed her arms, a smug smile stretched her red-stained lips.

Did she really think I was going to be that easy? Now if it was Kira on the other hand . . .

“Then I’m sorry to disappoint you. Actually, I’m not. I’m not leaving my team, so you can take your job and shove it up your pompous arse.”

I turned to leave, catching the look of shock across Kira’s face. I quickly winked, striding out the door like a self-righteous man.

Director Nina Fox wasn’t getting her grabby hands on me.

Chapter Six

Kira

CODENAME: *Midnight*

I stood with my mouth agape, slightly flabbergasted, and incredibly turned on by the way Ryker handled himself. Now *he* was a man that knew what he wanted. His self-assuredness and control had me desperate for his prowess in the bedroom, writhing beneath his sweat and muscle.

“Agent Knight!” I jumped as my thoughts were rudely interrupted by the Director’s squeal.

“Ma’am?”

“Your assignment isn’t over. I suggest you catch up with him.”

I opened my mouth to protest, but she shut me down, no doubt taking her anger out on me.

“Unless he’s signed the contract and joined the team, you’re still on case. Whatever it takes, Midnight. He cannot put the rest of us in danger over pride for his job. We must not exist. Got it?” She hunched over her desk, glaring into my eyes.

Despite my reluctance, I nodded. “Yes, ma’am. Anything else?”

“Don’t let me down. I chose the best for a reason.” I bowed out of the office, letting the weight of the sentiment settle around my shoulders. Why did it feel like my job was on the line if I didn’t hand over the goods? Though I thrived under pressure, I was beginning to realise that not all pressure was worthy.

I took out my phone, dialling my partner’s number. “Harvey, what you got for me?” I asked, buckling up in the Range Rover.

“Not much. The panther claims he was on a suicide mission.”

I frowned. “No way, not buying that. If he’d wanted to die he’d have used a bomb. He pointed that gun at Storm for a reason, find it,” I said, using Ryker’s codename.

“I’m on it, are you on your way here?” he asked, his baritone voice filling the car via the speakers.

I shook my head. “No. According to Fox I’m not done yet. I’ll check in soon.” I hung up as I joined the motorway, rattling my brain for a new plan. Who knew what sort of mood Ryker would be in by the time I found him.

It was time to pull out the big guns.

~

Ryker

CODENAME: *Storm*

“Hey, Mary, can we get another round in, please?” I called to the landlady, lifting my empty beer glass. She nodded in return whilst Nero followed her every move. Man, he just loved that old lady’s attention.

“So, what the hell happened with you and that Midnight chick? I like her by the way, she’s got some fight in her,” said Hunter.

I groaned. Where did I fucking begin? “You guys remember that Director that keeps harassing me?”

“That’s *her*?” Hunter asked, eyebrows raised.

“I wish,” I mumbled, and three sets of eyes stared my way.

“Care to explain, Storm?” Drive asked, finishing the last of his beer as Mary came around with more.

I smirked, wondering just how much to give the curious bastards. “She’s one of the agents sent to *acquire* me.” I let the word roll off my tongue in disgust. Beautiful Kira could *acquire* me for herself as much as she wanted, but for the Director that wanted to take my job away? Well, she could go fuck herself.

“Ouch! That’s gotta sting,” Hunter expressed, leaving a moment of silence to settle around the table.

The pub was reasonably quiet with a few locals spread across the bar, entertaining Mary and Nero. And though I’d been pumped up enough to work out, the guys had insisted on beer time. Who was I to deny a man some quality time with the golden nectar?

“Why do they want you?” Thunder asked, his brisk tone evident he wasn’t pleased, but then again, he was nicknamed *Thunder* for a reason. His temper and rage always got the better of him. It was great when hostiles surrounded us, but at home, not so much.

I scoffed. “My age, apparently, is becoming an issue. They seem to think it’s time for a change. Again,” I added. I’d accepted my fate a long time ago, knowing I couldn’t always stay where I was when humans surrounded me, but the more times I had to change forces and rank,

the bigger the chip on my shoulder became. I was carving myself piece by piece as I left what I loved behind to start all over again. It fucking sucked.

How could I serve and protect efficiently when whenever I finally settled my team in, it was time to change address, change country, change career, change myself?

I hung my head down low, lips inches from drowning my sorrows in beer. When did I get so fucking sorry for myself?

“Have you noticed any whispers in the field about your age?” Drive asked, leaning back in his chair and casually crossing his arms over his chest.

I shook my head as I swallowed another mouthful of beer. “Nothing, which is why I think the Director is reaching. Who knows,” I shrugged.

“Yeah, but I bet Midnight sweetens the deal though, huh?” Hunter goaded.

I smiled devilishly. “You have no idea. There’s something about her. . .”

“Yeah, I bet there is. Sounds like we’ve got a lovesick Colonel here, fellas.”

I shoved Hunter’s arm, even though I couldn’t deny the sudden happiness that enveloped me whenever I thought of her.

“By that smile I’d say she’ll have you domesticated in no time. What happened to our fierce leader? Oh, that’s right. He grew a vagina.”

The table erupted with laughter at Hunter’s final statement. Thunder didn’t seem entirely convinced by the banter if his scrunched forehead was anything to go by.

“Did she tell you about the shooter yet?” Thunder asked, referring to the gunman earlier today.

I sobered quickly, feeling a hefty seriousness settle around me. “No. You never found anything else?” I asked, wondering myself what the gunman’s endgame had been.

“Nothing. The area was clean, which makes me wonder how the son of a bitch got in in the first place. There’s no way the guards would’ve let that piece through.”

“Something doesn’t add up, that’s for sure,” I said, staring into the distance. “Still, we’re on holidays now so let’s leave it up to the *professionals*,” I mocked.

~

Kira

CODENAME: *Midnight*

I didn't know what possessed me to stand on the porch with pizza in one hand and beer in the other, but I figured if I was ever going to close this goddamn case then it was time I played dirty. And wasn't beer and pizza the guys equivalent to a woman's chocolate?

I stood waiting for a response longer than my pride wanted, but the thought of turning around and walking away like I'd been stood up was the reason I persisted in knocking on the door. His car was here so he *had* to be home. Right?

The smell of melted cheese, spicy pepperoni and barbeque sauce wrapped itself around me, enticing me with the urge to eat. I tried ignoring my hunger, but the more I stood waiting, the worse my patience became.

Well, if he wasn't home, then I figured I would wait inside. I settled the beer and pizza on the floor, took out my trusted lock pick from my pocket, and quickly unlocked the front door.

I let myself inside, noticing how completely quiet it was. He really wasn't here, and neither was his sidekick.

I ventured towards the kitchen, knowing my way around after scanning the place the day before he returned from duty, back when this awful case began.

I sat at his modest kitchen table, popped the lid on a beer bottle, and took to eating the delicious, doughy goodness one slice at a time. I switched the wall-mounted television on, and took to scrolling through the channels until something stood out from all the mundane programmes.

The sudden noise of movement had my ears perking up within seconds. I remained calm, knowing he was finally home, and took a swig of my third beer, resting my feet on the empty chair opposite.

Nero came rushing in ahead of Ryker, and I remained seated, bringing my wolf to the forefront of my mind and allowing her to flash her eyes. Nero instantly changed, coming to my side for a fuss as I knew he would once he realised I was no threat.

"Come in to my house, princess. Make yourself comfortable," Ryker mocked, leaning against the doorframe with his hands tucked into his jeans.

"Well I came with beer and pizza, but you took too long getting here, so I ate it." I smirked, finishing the last of bottle three. "If you ask nicely, I might order another one."

Ryker huffed, moving into the room, and rested his arms against the back of a chair, bending towards me. I breathed in a sigh, captivated by the strength of his highly impressive muscles. Christ they bulged with sexiness as he gripped the seat, and then I was lost to my imagination of him gripping me that way.

“Why are you here, Kira?” he sighed wearily.

“Because I’m not done persuading you to join the agency,” I answered honestly. I wasn’t the type to outright bullshit, but I was also taken aback by the easiness it took in telling him the truth.

“Fox didn’t get the message then?” he smiled a charmingly buoyant grin, reminding me again of the unusual attraction I felt towards him.

“She wasn’t even fazed. So why don’t we stop with the games and just get down to business.” I stood, putting my hand into my back pocket to grab the wedge of paper, and tossed it at him.

“What’s this?”

“Your contract,” I answered, opening another beer.

“That’s it? You just expect me to sign on the dotted line, no questions asked? I thought I made myself clear earlier. I don’t want to join the agency. I’m a soldier in the *real* army, not some pretend paranormal investigative service.”

My temper bubbled at his insinuation. My job was *real*, too. I immediately stood, storming to stand in front him. “For some stupid reason the Director is set on getting you into the team, I don’t care enough to ask why. But you know what? It’s become *my* job to make sure you sign that fucking contract because until then, I’m following your every move, never leaving your side because *you’re* the case I’ve been assigned. And I *always* close my cases.” I prodded his chest with my index finger several times, hoping to drill the importance of the assignment into his thick skull.

Heat rose between us, cloaking the air with sexual tension. Even when I was raging at him my body wanted to hump his leg like a bitch in heat.

He grabbed my arms with his big paws, squeezing me with gentle pressure that sent tingles all the way down to my precious vagina.

“Some cases aren’t meant to be closed,” he said, and pressed his lips against mine. He pulled me in tight to his body, wrapping his arms around me. I gasped, giving him entry to my mouth.

I lost myself inside his kiss, roaming my hands in his short hair, feeling his hardened body pressed up against me. A small moan escaped me as he nibbled on my lip, drawing out my hunger. I wanted him badly.

As our tongues entwined, my body ached for more of his touch. I *needed* to feel more of him.

The sound of my ringtone cut through the lust, and I was suddenly aware of my actions. I pulled away quickly, reaching for my phone and checked the screen. I cleared my throat.

“Midnight,” I responded.

“You’ve caught another case. Files will be sent tonight, get on it first thing tomorrow,” the usual stony voice of the Director said.

“What about my current task?” I asked, staring into Ryker’s eyes, willing him to keep quiet.

“Take him with you. Treat it as a day in the life. Get him all warmed up into joining us.”

I went to reply when the line cut off. Fuck, I hated when she did that. I pocketed my phone and squared my shoulders, remembering I was here for business. Nothing else.

“You better get a good night’s sleep, sunshine. We’ve got work to do in the morning,” I smirked, hoping that was enough to deter his thoughts. I was wrong for breaking professionalism.

“Nope, I’m on leave. Sounds like *you* have work to do,” he antagonised. God he was infuriating!

I picked up my keys, and trotted to the door all nonchalant. “Apparently not. I’ll be back in the morning, make sure you’re ready.” I closed the door behind me, secretly grateful for the interruption because God knows I was ready to rip his clothes and devour him.

Once I started, I knew I wouldn’t be able to stop. And that was an addiction I wasn’t ready for in my life.

Chapter Seven

Kira

CODENAME: Midnight

The silence in the car reflected my current mood. I'd barely slept a wink, too busy tossing and turning with the day's events on my mind, and seeing *him* again. Lord almighty I was becoming a teen with an all-consuming crush, and that was enough to make me gag.

Why the hell did he have to come into my life and rattle my very solid foundations?

"So, are we going to talk about what happened yesterday or are you going to continue ignoring me all day?"

I grunted, doing my best to keep my emotions in check when my body was compelled to pull the car over and assault Ryker's face with my lips, especially when he smelled so bloody delicious this morning.

"It was a mistake," I forced out of my mouth. Even hearing the words out loud turned my stomach against me.

"Sure didn't feel like a mistake when you were moaning into my mouth."

I turned to Ryker, fixing my glare on his rugged face. I hated how easy it was for me to lose control around him, to lose all my inhibitions inside the pools of his blue eyes. I tightened my lips together. "It won't be happening again," I promised, keeping my grip firm on the steering wheel.

"Princess, that was the best mistake I've ever made. So you can trust me when I say I intend to do it again. I'll make sure I'll never learn my lesson."

My breath caught in my lungs at the determination so clear in his voice. My body tingled with anticipation, betraying my mind with excitement at the possibility of his hands on me once more.

I remained quiet, keeping my attention on the road ahead. Ryker was a dangerous distraction.

"What happened to all your snappy comebacks?" Ryker grinned.

I groaned, already feeling a strain on the day. "Look, we have a job to do so I suggest you shut up and pay attention."

"And why am I being dragged into this again?"

I huffed, ready for the same argument we'd had this morning on his porch. How was it his cockiness was both exasperating *and* charming?

"Can't you just trust me that this is something you'll want to be a part of?"

"I'll stop complaining if you give me another one of your kisses," he winked, turning in his seat towards me.

"Oh, would you look at that. We're here now." I quickly parked the car, and jumped out, unwilling to give Ryker a moment to negate.

Ryker breathed in and out noisily. "I can smell the lively dead bodies from here," he joked, following me into the morgue.

An overpowering scent of chemicals assaulted my nose as I burst through the door, acknowledging the stout receptionist with a nod. I followed the tiled hallway, knowing the doc was waiting for me.

"Next time, princess, I get to choose the location of our date," Ryker whispered beside me. Heat radiated from his body, comforting me like a snuggly blanket.

"Sure, because dead bodies really get me going." I plastered a fake smile on my face, and entered the doc's autopsy room.

"Morning, Midnight," said the doc, using his lame greeting as always. Oh, he thought he was a right joker.

"Mike, this is Storm. He'll be *assisting* me on this case," I announced, introducing the two to each other.

"Nice to meet you. I hope you're not squeamish, but if you feel the urge, duck your head in that sink over there."

I folded my arms over my chest, secretly smiling at Mike's usual introduction. Somehow I couldn't imagine Ryker fainting over a corpse.

"Did you find cause of death?" I asked, wanting to jump right in. After reading all the preliminary reports last night I was ready to solve this mystery.

"I did." Mike removed the cover hiding the body, and dived right in to his findings. "Despite all the cuts and trauma to the body, death was due to asphyxiation. You'll notice the petechiae on the eyes," he lifted the lids, showing the small red spots on the whites of the victim's eyes. "And here you'll see bruising consistent with a strangulation. Judging by the thickness and pattern of the bruise, I'd suggest the weapon was a belt or something similar."

Though I'd expected Ryker to speak up, he remained quiet. However, his frown was loud enough.

"Thanks, doc. Anything else? What about the cuts?"

He shook his head. "Well, he obviously endured some kind of torture. They all occurred ante-mortem. I also found some trace, and sent it upstairs. The lab should have your results soon."

"Excellent. Thank you, Mike. If you find anything else, let me know."

I left the building, letting Ryker's silence follow me into the car. I buckled up, started the engine, and waited until he was ready to talk.

"You didn't think about telling me who the victim was beforehand?" he finally asked, scrunching his fists in his lap.

I shrugged. "I told you you'd be interested in this case, and that was enough. You're a big boy, Storm. I thought you could handle it."

"I *can* handle myself, princess. But didn't you think I'd want to know that the panther that attacked me yesterday, is now dead?"

"Well, now you know," I replied.

"Wasn't your team supposed to be questioning him? How the hell did he escape?" Anger cloaked the car with bitterness as Ryker's temper rose.

"He didn't *escape*. He was let go," I said with disdain, remembering the surprise I'd had when I'd read the file last night.

"What? Why?"

I stared absently out of the window, waiting on the traffic lights to turn green. "I don't know. There's some bullshit excuse about no charges, but I don't buy it. We had sufficient reasoning, and plenty of witnesses to hold him on a whole load of legal jargon, but someone played with the system, and I intend to find out why."

I leaned into the back of the car, reaching for the file I'd printed off. "Here, this is all I know. Where the body was found, statements, initial findings. . . Knock yourself out." I offered, and continued the drive to our next location.

Now that I knew I'd grabbed his attention I was certain I would wrap both cases soon. I was back on form once again.

~

Ryker

CODENAME: *Storm*

Though I was known for my ruthless behaviour, I despised how furious I truly was. How did the woman I'd become to admire fuck up so badly?

Logic told me I was being ridiculous, and my heart prayed she really hadn't been a part of it. But what if she was? What if this was all a ruse to get me on board?

Trust was one of the biggest hurdles when it came to my job, I didn't trust openly until someone had proved themselves. But, Midnight?

Why did everything good always find a way to become complicated?

Fuck! My blood raged inside me, bubbling with fierce intensity. Was I mad at Midnight because the panther had been let go? Or was I mad because the panther was dead before I'd had a chance to question him myself?

Why did my mind keep attaching her into the equation when she hadn't even been there in the first place? She'd been with me, right? That was when she got the call. Right?

Was I blowing everything out of proportion because *I* didn't have control over the situation? Because it wasn't *my* team in charge?

I kept my mouth shut for the remainder of the journey, unwilling to reveal any fears I had over Midnight while I buried my head in the file. I wanted to believe her. More than anything I wanted her to be innocent of the truly awful situations I had running through my mind. She couldn't be a part of it. I knew I couldn't condone it if she had.

"This is it," she said, stopping outside an unsuspecting bungalow. She pulled out her gun, checking the chamber before leaving.

"Weapons? Are we expecting a dead panther to be walking around his house?"

She rolled her eyes. "No. We're making sure there aren't any assailants in there. You got my back?" she asked seriously, her eyes pinning me to my chair.

I smirked. "You got a gun that isn't going to send me to jail if I use it?"

She reached between my legs.

"I don't think that weapon will help us much in there, princess."

She slapped my leg, and opened the glove box, taking out her back up. "It probably wouldn't be big enough for the job anyway," she retorted, leaving the car before I could reply.

I laughed to myself, impressed by her smart mouth once more.

Following Midnight to the house, I clicked the safety off of the Sig she'd given me, and quickly scoped the surrounding area.

A neatly manicured lawn sat at the front, surrounded by colourfully blooming plants. Bringing my wolf forward, I scented the area, filtering the smells into their categories, and detected no hint that someone else waited inside: it was all very quiet.

Midnight lowered to the door handle, making quick work of the lock. I snorted, unsurprised by that particular set of skills. She'd entered my home much the same way already. Twice.

Quietly, she opened the door, and I entered, noticing the empty hallway. Using my tactical hand signals, we separated into opposite directions. I checked each room on my side, leading with the gun firmly in hands.

"Clear," I called, finishing my initial perimeter search.

"Clear," she replied, and I holstered the gun behind my back.

"Well, it's safe to say this guy was a serious neat freak. Everything is lined up perfectly on his desk, there isn't an ounce of clutter here," I said, amazed by my own amazement. I was tidy and clean myself after several years of being an army man. But this? This was OCD at a whole new level.

"You get anything?" I called, opening a perfectly organised wardrobe of colour co-ordinated outfits. Who the hell was this guy?

"Nothing." I followed the sound of Midnight's voice and found her in the kitchen. "There's no sign of forced entry, there's no sign of a fight. And everything seems to be tucked away in its perfect little place. Doesn't that seem odd to you?"

I nodded, watching the crease in her brow. "Maybe the panther knew his attacker. Let him in, and then bam! Game over," I speculated.

"Possible, but I think this isn't our primary scene. Whatever happened to the panther didn't happen here. Also, don't you think it's odd there's no one here? Where's the women?"

Instantly understanding, I answered. "Right, because a male panther wouldn't leave his women behind unless there was a threat. And panthers are already a dying breed. Everything

seems too clean, too tidy, like it's all wrapped up in a bow and handed to us. Maybe this isn't his real home. Did you get another address?"

Midnight paused, concentration lines marred her forehead. "No, there wasn't anything else listed. Look, there's something suspicious here, if I put a bet on anything I'd say he's given us an alias. I say it's time we dig deeper."

"Wouldn't his fingerprints have triggered the database into relaying his true identity?" I asked, wondering how an alias could be used effectively.

Her face turned pensive. "Right, of course it would, unless he found a way to hack into the system. Listen, this guy came blazing into an army demonstration with a gun. He must've known he wouldn't get away with it, so what if it was all planned?"

"And if it was planned, then what was the goal? Because I don't think strangulation was his target," I offered.

"I'll get forensics down here, see if they can get anything, but if it's as clean as it looks then our only lead will shut us down."

"I didn't peg you for a defeatist," I jeered, hoping to rile some reaction in her.

"I'm just stating the facts," she answered honestly. "But what happens next is why my reputation is so reputable," she winked.

Chapter Eight

Kira

CODENAME: *Midnight*

Bunkering down inside Ryker's house hadn't been my idea. I wanted to be out there, searching for the next clue, but the stubborn bastard insisted on eating at home. And who was I to turn down free food?

Powering up my laptop, I listened to the sizzle of the steak frying in the pan, smelling the glorious juices wafting around the room. Logging in to the agency's network, I began my search into the mysterious panther.

By the hundredth site I was ready to crack some skulls. Every page that held any potential into revealing who the panther was came up empty. Every loop hole, every random search revealed nothing. It was as if he'd never existed.

I slammed the laptop closed, and stood to stretch. The deep-seated ache in my bones pulled with delight, cracking slightly as I twisted and turned.

"What?" I asked, catching Ryker's stare over the kitchen island.

"Just enjoying the view, princess." He raised his brows suggestively, and despite my better judgement his words meant more to me than I could've imagined. He seemed so intent, so appreciative of what I had to offer. I quickly stowed those thoughts away, ignoring the want screaming inside my mind. Nothing would end well if I encouraged them.

"Are you going to help me work this case today, or are you going to keep pretending you're the next top chef, tossing that pan like a smug git?" I crossed my arms, turning my back to look out of the window.

"When you want to work as hard as an army, you have to eat like one. Besides, *my* efforts will be turning up any minute."

I turned. "What do you mean? What have you done apart from being an absolute pain in my arse since the moment we met?"

"You'll see." He smiled widely. "At least being a pain in your arse makes you think of me."

I went to rebuff when a positively shiny, black mustang parked in Ryker's driveway, and three strikingly handsome guys stepped out. I smirked, realising Ryker had called on his team to help him out. '*Cheater*,' my wolf whispered at the back of my mind.

I recognised Hunter, his blonde hair and perfectly defined features was enough to rival an airbrushed model. They entered without knocking, a habit I imagined that was well-worn. Then again, if they were brothers in the army, I figured there were few secrets between them anyway.

“You need reinforcements, huh?” I joked, turning to lean against the kitchen side opposite Ryker.

“Not really, but tonight is guys night, and I didn’t want to cancel.” He shrugged.

Anger rose within me suddenly and engulfed me in flames so easily. “Then I’ll leave. Clearly this case isn’t important enough to you.” I tried to move, but Ryker gripped my arm, holding me in place.

“You’re wrong, princess. I want to know what happened to that panther more than you think, it’s why I didn’t change my plans. And though it may be *guys* night, I *want* you to stay.”

My flames of anger metamorphosed into burning desire, and aching heat consumed the room. I wanted Ryker more than I realised, it was fierce, intense, like if I didn’t have him touching me soon, I would combust, explode into a million unfixable pieces.

“Besides, you pretty much talk like a guy anyway. You’ll fit right in.”

My body immediately turned cold as if I’d been drenched in a bucket of rain water. There was nothing sexy about a guy telling you you were practically one of them. Unless he was gay. Oh, good lord almighty, please tell me Ryker wasn’t gay because that was one drool-worthy wasted opportunity otherwise. There was nothing more devastating than lusting over a gay man, because no matter what I could do, I’d never have the same twig and berries he was looking for.

“Excellent.” I grunted, and ignored the confusion etched in Ryker’s face.

The men bounded into the room, relaxed and casual, completely unaware of the heated, and cooled tension in the air between Ryker and I. What just happened between us, anyway?

Hunter greeted me with a wave, settling down at the table with a cooled beer in his hand. “Kira, this is Drive and Thunder,” Ryker pointed out.

I took Drive’s hand, shaking it as I studied the man behind the name. He was tall like the others, he had black hair, and the tip of a tattoo peeked from the bared skin under his top. “Well, my name is Denton, but Drive is cool with me.”

I smiled, and offered my hand to the other. “And you must be Thunder then.”

“Thompson, ma’am. Thunder just enriches my ego.” He bared his perfect teeth, shaking my hand with a firm grip. His skin was a deeply delicious mocha tone with a dusting of stubble trimmed into a goatee.

“Nice to meet you both. I’m Kira, or Midnight. Whichever tickles your pickle is fine and dandy with me.” I chuckled to myself, suddenly realising the phrase wasn’t as innocent as I imagined.

“Sorry for crashing guys night too, *someone* didn’t tell me,” I emphasised, not wanting to be the pooper on the party.

“It’s good you’re here. We found something for the case,” Hunter began.

I turned to Ryker. “Oh, so you *did* cheat then,” I smirked. “What you got?” I asked, knowing my curiosity wouldn’t hold out for much longer, especially if it helped move the assignment along.

“Security footage of the demo the other day. Some interesting stuff on here.” Drive tossed a USB flash drive at me. I caught it, and sat at the table beside Hunter, plugging the stick into my laptop.

Powering up the doc, I concentrated on the feeds, watching with intent for anything suspicious. Ryker moved from the oven, coming to stand behind my chair, and leaned over me. I was momentarily distracted by the closeness of his body, his breath, his scent. I wanted to lean into his arm, and slot myself into the gap where he could cradle me.

I slowed my rapidly thumping heart, hoping that Ryker hadn’t picked up on it as I became aroused by him once more. I moved in my seat, inching closer to the table to create a bigger space between us. Damn that was too much electricity to maintain.

Running my hand over my eyes, I focused on the feed again. God, it was hard enough trying to control myself around Ryker without the embarrassment of three extra sets of highly perceptive eyes, and strong noses in the room. Any one of them would sure notice the rise of my temperature any second now.

“What are we looking for?” I asked, wondering how much I had to scan through before we got to the part that mattered.

“Hold on,” Hunter took the laptop, forwarding the recording at a rate humans wouldn’t have been able to adjust to. “Here, watch this.”

He set the computer in front of me, and instinctively Ryker and I leaned forward as we spotted the target.

“We wondered from the beginning how he got in with that weapon, guess it was easy.”

I nodded to Hunter, amazed at what I’d just witnessed. “I’d had my badge checked, and a call to the Director before they trusted me through the gates,” I answered, remembering the day at the demo. “But he just walks through?” I asked, unbelieving.

The panther strolled up to the gates, his weapon hidden under his jacket. “They didn’t search him?” Ryker asked, commenting on the recording.

“Nope. Not even a little.”

“Who’s the guard on duty?” I asked, knowing I needed to interrogate him.

“Forks. Evan Forks,” Drive answered. “But I’m not so sure he’s even aware of what he did. Look at this.”

Drive highlighted the view from another camera, zooming in on the guard’s face. “Watch him when the panther gets close.”

I did as I was told, noticing how stern the guard had been to every entrant until the panther came by. In an instant his eyes glossed over, and his demeanour relaxed, letting the panther go without a care in the world. The second he was gone, the guard returned to normal.

“Do panthers have some kind of mojo?” Thunder asked when I stopped the feed, seeing all there was.

I shook my head. “Not that I know of, but that was weird, right? It’s like the guard completely forgot what he was doing for a few seconds.” I realised that interrogating the guard would most likely prove to be useless. He probably didn’t have any recollection of it.

Ryker moved from behind me, the weight of his arm on my chair left as he returned to the oven. “Well, if it isn’t natural for panther shifters to have magic, then someone gave it to him. Which adds up to our theory that this was all pre-meditated.”

I agreed, realising with each new piece of information that everything led back to the fact the panther had known what he was doing. What we didn’t know was why, and that was most important.

I tried wrangling my mind over the facts, wondering what a panther had to offer to get magic like that. Was this a black market deal gone wrong?

“As puzzling as this may be, I say we are officially off the clock for today because it’s chow time. We’ll pick it back up tomorrow.”

I let my mouth hang low at Ryker, unable to switch off from the case. This was my job, my life. I couldn’t stop just because he said so. I didn’t have time or the luxury for guys night.

“Don’t even think about turning down my food, princess. You can stop for one night. The world won’t crumble if you take a night off.”

I huffed, but with four guys staring me down it left little room to argue. I quickly weighed up the consequences, wondering just how productive I’d be with Ryker on my mind anyway. Maybe one night couldn’t hurt after all.

I powered off the laptop, set it aside in my bag, and agreed, taking the beer from Ryker’s outstretched hand. I laughed to myself as I thought of the situation. Had it been Harvey telling me what to do, I’d have done the complete opposite, just to piss him off. But when Ryker held the reigns, it was different, like my body wanted to be commanded by him, taken care of by him.

As food appeared before me, any doubt that remained over work disappeared like a click of a finger. I didn’t care. In fact, I was beginning to realise that any allegiance, any care to the job was slowly fading as I became more and more invested in Ryker.

I listened to the light-hearted conversation floating around the room all night, noticing the happy, settled vibe they had around each other. It was like sitting at a family reunion, and I was the guest, glimpsing into their lives. This was Ryker’s family. It didn’t matter that he was their boss out on the field, they were brothers.

I felt at a loss, realising for the first time how truly empty my life was. I didn’t have family. I had colleagues, people I interacted with because I had to. Not like Ryker, who invited his brothers around because he enjoyed their company and wellbeing.

How had I been so blind to the kind of love family gave one another? How had I become so warped, so guarded to what caring for someone besides myself meant?

I excused myself to the bathroom, needing a moment to get over the sudden rush of unfamiliar emotions. I’d been alone for so long, I’d forgotten what it felt like to be cared about. Wasn’t that why I had an answer for everything? To hide the hurt?

I splashed my face with cold water, gathering myself together once more before heading out. Maybe it was the alcohol that highlighted my despair, or maybe it was the ease and fun of the

night that suddenly had me hoping for more, to be around everyone and not because of the job, because they wanted to *know me*.

I plastered on a smile, hoping I could return to deceiving myself that I was happy. Hell, tonight I *was* happy.

Ryker ambushed me at the door, his sexy build framing the doorway. I stopped, and looked into his eyes. He was watching me intently, his eyes burning into the very depths of my soul. Was he seeing beneath my façade?

“What’s the matter, princess? You’ve changed,” he stated.

“No I haven’t, I’m still the same,” I replied, hoping he would drop the subject as I gazed at him, my thoughts turning to a naked Ryker tangled up in the bed sheets.

“You can’t fool me, but if you keep staring at me with that hunger burning in your eyes, I won’t be valiant enough to listen.”

My aching want spiked, and I lunged at him, capturing his mouth as he caught me in his arms, pulling me in tight against him. I left all inhibitions, and devoured him, biting his lip as I loosened my restraint.

I arched into him, feeling his hands grip my arse with possession as he pressed me against him. I felt his rigid excitement, extremely pleased that I affected him so much.

His tongue swirled in my mouth, exploring me until he was satisfied. Though I was rough and ready, he wanted to take his time, trailing his lips languorously along my neck at the vein pulsing with my heightened blood pressure.

I desperately wanted him, needed him to let me escape in him. The doorbell rang, cutting through the heated excitement. He pulled away, kissing me gently, and turned to answer the door.

I stepped back into the bathroom, needing to see my own reflection before I joined the guys again. I sucked in a breath, surprised by the feral look in my eyes. My desire for Ryker sizzled greater than I’d imagined.

“Yes?” I heard Ryker greet as the sound of the door opened.

“Harvey Dean. We met the other day at the demo? I’m Midnight’s partner. I heard she was here.”

“And what of it?” Ryker seemed pissed if the impatient tone of his voice was anything to go by.

What the fuck was Harvey doing here?

“You’re working on our case. I deserve to be here, too. I’m her *partner*.”

I cringed at the claim Harvey laced on that one word. God knew he wanted that to mean more than it was. I sighed to myself, realising that the night was over.

I stepped out of the bathroom, and headed towards the door. “We’re done for tonight,” I said, letting Harvey take that in. “I’m going home. You can catch up tomorrow,” I said, giving him no room to rebuttal. I wasn’t in the mood to deal with him again. Not when I’d been so close to giving Ryker everything I’d sworn I wouldn’t do. Professionalism had left the building long ago.

Ryker glared at me like a wounded animal, but I was done with this macho showmanship before it had even begun. I quickly said my goodbyes, and escaped while I could, before I reneged on my own deal.

Why did I have to be so complicated? I huffed, before getting into my car, and realised I was in no fit state to drive.

I leaned against the steering wheel, waiting for Harvey to disappear before I called a cab. Oh, how foolish I was to get drunk.

Chapter Nine

Ryker

CODENAME: *Storm*

I was just about ready to bust some balls when Harvey-fucking-Dean started waffling on about how he was entitled to be in my home. What impression had I given him that he'd had the right to be here?

I was pissed, absolutely fucking furious that just as things started to make sense between Kira and I, there was an interruption to pull her away from me again.

I watched with disdain as the bitter aftertaste drove away, and then the sight of my beautiful Kira hunched over the steering wheel of her car caught my attention. What was she doing?

I ventured towards her, closing the door to keep the warmth in the house. I lightly tapped her window, doing my best not to scare her away. She looked up, and rolled the window down.

"I can't drive," she said. "I drank too much."

I instantly berated myself, of course she couldn't drive! What had I been thinking to let her go? "Me too," I admitted. "Well, I'm over the legal limit that's for sure. Come back inside. I have a spare bed going," I offered, secretly hoping she would agree.

Though I'd imagined that when she'd stay it would've been in *my* bed, I didn't want to press my luck. She was like a deer in headlights when it came to me. Half the time I didn't know if she wanted to run *to* me, or *away* from me.

I could see the cogs ticking in her mind, and I knew if I gave her time to think she'd leave, so I pounced again, doing my best to persuade her.

"I'd feel a lot better knowing you were safe," I urged.

A small smile lifted at the corner of her mouth, and I knew I'd won her over for now. "Come on, I'm positively catching a cold out here," I joked, knowing she could handle the jibe.

"As if. This is balmy weather for a wolf," she retorted, getting out of the car, and locking it behind her.

I wrapped my arm around her shoulders, pulling her closer to me as we returned to the house.

"Do I look meek and feeble to you?"

I stopped, caught unawares. "No, why?"

She shrugged my arm from her shoulder, and I laughed. "Then why are you holding me?"

“Because I like you, princess,” I said, and returned my arm once more.

She huffed with irritation, sprinting ahead to loosen my hold. “You know, I could just call a cab instead of putting you out.”

I smiled, knowing she was going to have to try harder than that to dissuade me. “It’s not a problem. The guys are staying anyway, and I have more than enough room.” I fanned my arms out in a grand gesture, all too aware of the size of my home. As I said before, I liked my space.

“Thank you,” she said, catching me off guard again.

“You’re welcome, princess. But next time, it’ll be *my* bed you’ll be sleeping in, and you won’t be alone,” I promised.

I took the stairs, leading the way as I left my last sentence hang in the air. I chose the nicest room available; it had a luxurious giant double bed that I found too soft for my likeness, and pointed to the en-suite. “Let me know if you need anything.”

She smiled. “Thank you. Goodnight, Ryker.”

I took that as my cue to leave, and fought the urge to embrace her, to lay a kiss upon her delicate mouth, but I didn’t want to overstep my boundaries. Not now. Not when she seemed so close. “Goodnight, princess.”

I closed the door behind me, and leaned against the woodwork for a moment or two, catching my breath. Every fibre of my being protested that I was walking away, leaving my mate alone.

I shook my head, hoping the thoughts of claiming would flee from my mind. Knowing sleep would evade me for hours, I returned to the living room, and mindlessly watched whatever the guys had rolling.

I was in for a long night.

~

Waking to the smell of bacon drifting to my room was like waking up to heaven. I dragged my sore limbs out of bed, feeling the restlessness of the night catch up to me. “Good morning,” I mumbled as I entered the room, seeing Hunter working his way around my kitchen.

Guys night was simple enough. Beer, food, fun. It didn’t matter what we ended up doing, as long as we enjoyed, but come the next day there was one rule. If I’d cooked dinner, then they

cooked breakfast, and I relished it every time. There was nothing better than waking to breakfast already made for you.

“You look like shit, Storm. What happened?” Hunter smirked, a knowing grin adorned his face.

I was about to retort with some ugly pleasantries when Kira came into the room with a spring in her step. Well, she definitely seemed better than she had last night. And hell was she even more beautiful first thing in the morning.

“Good morning, gentlemen.”

I smiled in acknowledgement, noticing a change in her again. Had she decided to warm up to me?

“Did you sleep well?” I asked, envious that I hadn’t been the one to snuggle against her body all night.

Wait. What the fuck was that girly talk invading my thoughts? The guys had been right in the pub the other day. I *had* grown a vagina.

“Mmmhmmm,” she mumbled as she took a sip of water. “That bed is better than mine.”

“You’re welcome to stay any time,” I said, secretly thinking *all* the time.

“Thanks, but, I should get. . .” Her voice trailed off at the sound of her phone ringing. She glared at the screen before answering, checking the time on her watch. It was seven a.m.

“Midnight,” she said, silencing as she listened.

I watched her face, seeing her eyebrows rise. “Really? I’m surprised. I thought our leads had gone cold.”

That caught my interest. There’d obviously been some developments on the panther. I looked to Hunter who continued busying himself with the makings of breakfast, and I left him to it, too caught up in Kira’s call.

“Get the lab to send it to me, and I’ll track them down. Thanks, Mike!” She hung up, and turned to me, a smile on her face.

“Good news?” I asked.

She nodded. “You remember Mike, the coroner, said he’d found some trace and stuff?”

I nodded, letting her go on. “Turns out the lab managed to get a partial fingerprint off of the victim’s wallet.”

“And I’m guessing they got a match?” I asked, knowing it was the reason for her infectiously happy mood.

Her phone signalled a text. “Let’s see who our suspect is,” she said, pressing down on the screen.

She remained quiet, her forehead creased with her frown. She looked up at me, eyes wide with worry. What was wrong?

I moved to join her, taking the phone from her hand to stare at the info highlighting her screen.

I balked, my mind raced as fast as it could with explanations for understanding what I saw. How was this so?

I touched the screen again, needing to see the face staring back at me, making sure I hadn’t imagined what I’d just seen.

I hadn’t. It was still him. His face was still there.

The number one suspect to the crime of murdering the panther stood in my kitchen, cooking breakfast.

It was Hunter.

To be continued in **Alpha Wanted: Part 2** out in one week! Sign up to my newsletter to be notified of future releases, cover reveals etc. here: <http://bit.ly/XgVyAg>

If you enjoyed the first part to this serial, please consider leaving a review to let other readers know. They help me to continue my passion, and bring the stories keeping me awake at night to life. It's thanks to your support that I'm able to do what I love. Thank you!

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Guardians Dynasty (Book 3, Nature's Destiny series)

Serials:

Alpha Wanted: Part 1

Alpha Wanted: Part 2 (coming soon)

Alpha Wanted: Part 3 (coming soon)

About the Author

I've always lived a life based on my imagination, from hopeless dreams of romance to concocting alternate realities involving supernaturals. I'm completely fascinated with anything hero-related, and often speculate which superpower I'd possess. I haven't settled on one yet.

I was born in England, and currently reside in Wales, UK. I love to write, and most days you'll find me happily tapping away at the computer whilst in my pyjama-clad bubble. I also spend my time reading, and if that isn't enough I'm often in the kitchen baking up a treat.

If you want to know more about me, you can find me pretty much everywhere!

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