

SECRETS WE KEEP

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Chapter One

Trisha Holt stared down at her wristwatch and sighed. Why she ever believed Bill would actually show was a mystery to her. It wasn't like he had a glowing track record. No. The man had let her down more times than she was willing to count. Still, she'd agreed to marry him. The idea of turning thirty in a month and still being single scared her, though she wasn't sure why. It's not as though thirty was old. It did seem to be that pinnacle point, at least in her opinion. Once reached, it serves as a marker for the next stage in life—a family.

The man she really wanted to be with didn't think of her as girlfriend material, let alone wife material. No. Her best friend acted as though she was an extension of himself rather than a female willing to lie in his arms for the rest of their lives. She'd resigned herself to trying to stay romantically neutral where he was concerned but he made it hard. They were together every day. Thoughts of stroking his cock as she stared into his gorgeous blue eyes flooded her every time she was near him.

Growing up an only child had left Trisha always longing for company. Always a loner, she never warmed enough to her schoolmates to consider any friends. Perhaps that's why she took to art. It wasn't normally considered a group activity and it functioned as a creative outlet. She'd excelled and had gone to college for it. Upon graduation, she'd landed an entry-level position at a prestigious advertising firm. It was then she made her first real friend—Dane Bennett.

Dane worked in the office building adjacent to hers. After seven years, she still wasn't entirely sure what he did. She did, however, know that it had something to do with investments and that he must be pretty damn high up in the company. Whenever she used to phone his office she'd have to go through four people to get to him. Each woman would ask her name and reason for calling, then inform her that Mr. Bennett was in a meeting and was not to be disturbed. The minute she teased Dane about it, it stopped. Since then, whenever she called, they immediately put her right through to him. As if that wasn't enough proof of his position, he seemed to be able to come and go as he pleased. He even timed his lunches with hers and on days she was sick, he came over to her apartment and kept her company.

Dane had never invited her over to see where he worked, but he did manage to stop by her office a few times a week. All the women she worked with had crushes on him, even Ester, the sixty-year-old receptionist. Each one poked and goaded her about dating Dane. Again and again, she found herself explaining that they were just friends, nothing more. It didn't matter that she was lying through her teeth and that she'd give up everything to have him. The idea of asking him out on a date had occurred to her once, right after they'd first met. But Dane had made some odd comments that led her

to believe she wasn't his type of woman. Comments like, "We're a breed apart, baby. A breed apart. It's a good thing we'll never be more than friends." The strangest one was, "I'm not only more of a man than women can handle, I'm flat out more than a man." He was bizarre like that. The cryptic phrasings and the disappearing several nights a month had all seemed weird to her at first. Now, she was used to them—to Dane.

He'll make some woman a fine husband.

The sound of her cell phone ringing pulled her out of deep thought. Rifling through her purse, she found it. "Hello?"

"Hey Trish, I'm not interrupting Bill's endless rambling, am I?" Dane's deep voice moved through the phone and wrapped itself around her, comforting her, easing some of the embarrassment of being stood up—again.

She smiled softly. "No, you're not interrupting Bill. He'd have to be here to do that."

Dane was quiet for a moment. "You didn't want to spend the evening in that stuffy restaurant anyway, remember? You always break out from the caviar he tries to make you eat. Remember the last time the ass took you there? I ended up staying at your house for two nights because whatever you ate didn't agree with you. You're a burger and fries girl, just the way I like 'em. Hey, aren't they showing that French film you like so much down the street from that restaurant?"

Trish nodded her head and bit back tears. Dane knew her better than anyone and she'd only known him seven years. "Yeah, you're right." She glanced around, taking in table after table of men and women dressed in designer clothes and sporting more diamonds than she could count. "Gawd, why did I agree to this?"

"Because you always want to see the best in everyone."

It would have been so easy for Dane to say that he'd warned her and she knew that. But that wasn't his style. He'd spent months telling her Bill wasn't right for her, that he was too shallow to be right for anyone, but she didn't listen. She never listened, and look where it had gotten her—alone in a crowded restaurant on the verge of tears.

Standing, she eased her skirt down and grabbed her handbag. If the waiters wanted to charge her for the water she'd had, then fine. It would probably come back on her later too like the caviar. All she wanted to do was get away from the snooty establishment and forget about Bill. "You're too good to me, Dane."

"I know."

"Uhh," she sighed as she stalked towards the door. "I'm not sure I can find a good side of Bill. That's horrible to admit, isn't it?"

Dane chuckled. "That's nothing compared to what I'd like to say about him."

Trisha laughed as she pushed the front door opened. She went to hail a cab and stopped when she spotted a large man out of the corner of her eye. The man's back was to her. His tousled black locks were done in the current style of short on the sides and

back while semi-spiked on the top. His six-foot four-inch frame and broad upper body made him stick out in the sea of high-society people that filtered down the sidewalk.

“Trish, are you still there?”

Walking up behind the man, she grabbed his backside. Giving it a good squeeze, she giggled into the phone. “Oh, I’m right here, with my hand on an incredibly nice ass. Mmm, I’m loving the black leather jacket.”

“Really? And whose ass would you be touching?”

“Don’t know. Just some man I found standing outside a restaurant that’s across the city from his place. Gawd, Dane, you should see him. He’s perfectly fuckable. If you don’t hear from me for a few days it’s because I’m holed up with him, letting him have at me.”

Dane turned slowly, and the minute she saw his shockingly blue eyes, her pussy dampened. Sliding her tongue over her lower lip, she looked up through her lashes. His arm wrapped around her and he brought her to his massive chest. “Perfectly fuckable? That doesn’t sound like you. Where’s my sweet little Trish?”

“Sweet little Trish? Hmm, maybe you don’t know me as well as you’d like to think. And I said what I meant. You are perfectly fuckable.”

“Guess I don’t know you at all but damn, with talk like that you make it hard to stay platonic. Still though, to be grabbing a stranger’s ass in public and declaring you’d fuck him is a bit much. Considering the ass you grabbed was mine, I’m willing to overlook it this time.”

She laughed, still talking into her phone even though she was face-to-face with Dane. “You wouldn’t think it was too much if you saw the guy. He’s a total babe.” She winked and a grin spilled across his rugged face.

“You shouldn’t talk to strangers, Trish. You never know what could happen. That guy could take you up on your offer. He might have his way with you, leaving you too sore to walk the next morning. He could be one of those guys who can think of nothing more than bending you over and fucking that sweet ass of yours. And I’d have to hunt down any man who touched you and kill him. Especially if he beat me to your virgin ass, and trust me, Trish, once you had my dick in you, you’d never want another,” he said, arching one dark eyebrow.

Shocked to the core by Dane’s sudden sexually charged demeanor, Trisha closed her phone and stared up at her friend. “Mmm, that just made it all the more tempting. And I’ve got to admit that you’re good with the on-the-spot dirty talk.” Flushed from thinking about Dane fucking her, Trisha needed to change the subject before she did something stupid, like beg him to spend the night making love to her. “Thanks for coming. I should have guessed you’d know Bill would screw up again.”

Dane glanced down at his phone and smiled. “I can’t believe you just hung up on me. The love just pours out of you, baby. If we really were fucking, would you have hung up on me? I’d say I’m jealous of the men in your life but having been a firsthand witness to the number of guys you’ve dumped sort of makes me happy we’re just

friends. At least this way, I can stare at your ass and know it'll be around come morning. Not that you'd ever shake me. I'm afraid to admit it, but you are stuck with me for life."

Punching his arm lightly, she buried her head in his chest. A small sob tore free of her throat and she bit back the tears that threatened to fall. Dane stroked her hair and wrapped both his arms around her tight. She always felt so safe in his arms. Bill never made her feel that way. Neither had anyone else. Keeping her heart from falling for Dane had been a hard battle. Up until several months ago, she'd thought she was winning. For some odd reason, as of late, whenever Trisha was masturbating or even thinking of sex, it was Dane she thought of. It was Dane's cock she envisioned sliding in and out of her while she crammed the dildo into her cunt. And it was his name she called out when her orgasms hit.

"Come on, we've got a movie to catch."

Trisha pulled back from him slowly and shook her head, tears glistened in her eyes. "How did you know he'd do this to me?"

Dane ignored her question and ran his thumbs over her cheeks. "Don't shed another tear over that bastard, Trish. He's not worth it."

"I know. I wasn't crying over that."

His forehead furrowed. "Then why are you upset?"

"I'm not. It's just the minute I found you out here, I was so happy to see you that I couldn't help myself. You always make everything better. You're like a pro-bono shrink, without the credentials." Quickly she stood tall, and still only came to his shoulder. "Okay, to the show it is."

A slight fall breeze blew past them and Trisha shivered, snuggling closer to Dane's large, warm body. He pulled away from her. Removing his jacket slowly, his eyes locked on hers. "Here, it's too cold for you to be running around the city in that *little* dress. It's not like the jackass can even appreciate the package, let alone the packaging."

The tone in his voice made her take pause. Dane had never sounded so angry, so passionate about anything before. He'd always come across as a relatively easygoing guy. At the moment, the look in his eyes both scared and excited her. She shifted slightly, in an attempt to stop the cream that was threatening to form between her legs. It didn't work. The added stimulation caused a torrent of it to flow. The tiny black thong she wore was coated in it and sitting in a movie theater would be uncomfortable. Sitting at home sounded so much better. Maybe, if she was lucky, Dane would clean the cream from her shaved pussy with his tongue.

Yeah, not in my wildest dreams.

"Hey," she said, sliding her arms into Dane's leather jacket. It hung past her butt and swallowed her arms. "How about we skip the movie tonight. We could pick one up and just go home to watch it. Is that all right or would you prefer to do the movie?"

Dane's heart beat wildly in his chest. He grinned as he noted Trish's mention of them going home. She didn't separate or point out the fact they didn't live together. She

talked about him like one would talk about a lover, a spouse, a mate. He'd wanted to ask her a million times to look at him the way she looked at the string of losers in her life. Why she picked men who were obvious heartbreakers baffled him. He'd love her, never hurt her, even kill for her if the need arose. The only problem was that in the end it would never work. He knew better than to get close to a human but he hadn't been able to control himself when he bumped into Trish on the street in front of his office building. He'd been just about to take a sip of his coffee when this tiny blonde with large loose curls walked right into him, sending his coffee down the front of him. That surprised him, but what shocked him more was that he'd never sensed her near him. It wasn't every day that someone got close enough, without his knowledge, to bump into him. Yet, this five-foot-five woman with hazel eyes had managed to do just that.

Trish had been so upset about making him spill his coffee that she'd immediately launched into trying to wipe it off him. Each touch of her tiny hands made his body tight and his cock hard. When she reached the top of his slacks, he fully expected her to stop. She didn't. No. Trish kept going, placing the tissue from her purse over his rock-hard erection. If she noticed he had a hard-on, she didn't say. It wasn't until he cleared his throat that she stopped and glanced up at him. He could still remember how the morning sun caught her smooth, pale skin and seemed to reflect back at him. The beast within him had fought for supremacy that morning, almost winning, as he'd been caught off-guard. The wolf rarely wanted out except for the days surrounding a full moon. The fact that it not only reacted to Trish, but did so a week prior to the next full moon hadn't been lost on him. But as much as Dane wanted to believe Trish was his mate, he knew it wasn't possible. Lycanthropes didn't mate with humans. It was forbidden.

Keeping their relationship purely platonic had been the hardest thing he'd ever done in life. And considering how, when he was younger, he'd had to fight other pack members for the right to live, that was saying much. He'd grown up without a father there to protect him within the pack and they weren't easy on him or his mother. The official story was that his father ran out on his mother. That wasn't entirely true. His father had turned on his own pack members, killing one of the head guards. Dane thought it had more to do with the guard being crooked and less to do with his father but that wasn't his call. And since he'd never sought out a position on the council for the pack, his opinion didn't matter. He also didn't get a say when others referred to him as the traitor's son while growing up.

Never once in his life did Dane resent his mother. No. In his eyes, she could do no wrong. She was a single mother who worked multiple jobs to see to it that Dane was provided for. Eventually, leadership of the pack was passed on and many of the old ways died. He proved himself by showing he could not only fight and survive but be a cunning, deadly opponent when provoked, and the harassment stopped. The "traitor's son" tag was dropped and Dane became a man—a very successful man. His mother wanted for nothing now and never would again. Too bad he couldn't say the same of himself. He wanted something all right. Something he could never have.

Trish.

As he stood out in the open with Trish, her sweet floral scent assailed him, making his cock harden and his arms tighten. It wasn't as though he hadn't tried to fill the gap she left in him. He'd bedded more she-wolfs in the last seven years than he had in all the years prior to that. Still, none satisfied him. They were good for a hard fuck but nothing more. He had no interest in spending endless hours in bed with them, exploring every tiny detail of their bodies, sliding his tongue into their pussies to taste their cream, before filling them with his seed. Being close to Trisha made him think of all those things and more.

"Hello," Trish said, waving her tiny hand in front of his face. "Is anyone home or are you spacing out on me?"

Dane smiled down at her and nipped playfully at her fingers. The moment he actually caught one, he didn't let it go. Drawing it into his mouth carefully, he sucked on it slowly. Trish's mouth dropped open and her tongue darted out and over her lower lip. She'd kill him if she kept doing that. Fighting the need to fuck her had become a full-time job. Trish consumed his every thought. There would be nothing sweeter than getting to sink his cock into her and claim her as his own. Releasing her finger, he waited for her to yank it away. She didn't. Instead, she ran it lightly over his lips and stared up at him. She looked lost, vulnerable and he wanted a piece of Bill, particularly his head, for leaving her like this.

Dane kissed the tip of her finger and winked at her. "I'm fine, baby. Are you sure you don't want to go to the movie? I don't mind taking you. I always look forward to spending time with you."

Trish moved closer to him and every bone in him ached to wrap his body around her and fuck her until she screamed his name and acknowledged she was his.

"I'm positive. Home and a movie sound perfect."

"Home, huh?" He gave her a questioning look. "Would that be your place or mine?"

She shrugged. "Either. But remember what happened the last time we tried to watch movies at that penthouse you try to play off as an apartment?"

Dane laughed. Oh, he not only remembered what happened that night, he jacked off to it on a regular basis. His furniture had all been selected by an interior designer. He'd left all the decisions up to the woman. It was rare that he had guests over. Any woman he fucked, he fucked at a hotel. The idea of their smell being in his apartment appalled him and with his heightened senses, he'd pick up on them long after they were gone. Trisha had been the only woman he ever took directly home with him.

She'd made comments about his home looking more like a showcase than a place someone lived. It wasn't until they attempted to get comfy on his very uncomfortable sofas that he realized just how very right she was. After a half hour and no luck finding a relaxing way to watch the movie, Trish suggested his bed. For a few seconds, he couldn't breathe, couldn't think. Those were the exact words he'd longed to hear fall

from her lips. Too bad she'd only suggested his room as an alternate movie viewing location.

The bedroom worked wonders and the next thing he knew, he woke to find himself holding a sleeping Trish, still fully clothed, but with his hand on her breast and hers between his legs. Massaging the soft mound of flesh beneath his fingertips, he was shocked when Trish began to cup his sac. The need to come was great and the last thing he wanted to do was cream his jeans in front of Trish. It was that moment that he woke her with a tiny kiss on the tip of her nose.

He would have relished the experience if Trish hadn't have gotten so upset about being an hour late for work. After that, they'd taken to hanging out at her apartment. It was small, but cozy.

As much as he wanted to wake to find Trish next to him, he wanted her to be happy more. Being with her was prohibited and breaking the lycan law would put her in danger as well as leave her brokenhearted again. Refusing to be another in the line of scum she dated, Dane held back the urge to kiss her now. "I think your place would be better."

"Yeah, that's what I thought too."

Chapter Two

Dane watched Trish as she finished the last of her pizza. It was her favorite food. She washed it down with some diet soda and pushed her plate away. Sliding closer to him on the oversized couch, she nudged his plate. “You barely ate. What’s wrong? You normally eat a whole pizza by yourself.”

Glancing down, he noticed she was right. He’d only taken a few bites. Watching her laugh and eat as the movie played had captivated him. Dane set his plate on the coffee table and leaned back on the couch. Trish grabbed an end pillow and plopped it on his lap. He froze. If she put her head in his lap, he’d never be able to control the raging hard-on he’d get. Her cheek grazed his cock and it sprang to life. She adjusted her head and the action caused him to squirm. The thought of her sucking him off was almost too much. Picturing those hazel eyes looking up at him while he laced his fingers in her loose, long curls was just one of the many fantasies he had regarding Trisha.

Feeling her shiver, he reached back and grabbed a white throw off the back of the couch. He covered her and she snuggled closer to him, deeper to his groin. God, she smelled so good. And the feel of her hand on his upper thigh drove him mad with lust. The tiny white tank top she’d changed into and baby blue loose pajama bottoms weren’t helping him keep hold of himself. Her nipples were hard from the cold and he could clearly see their pink outline. The urge to taste them was strong. He fought hard to hold back.

Dane couldn’t stop himself as he ran his hand up her tiny arm and into her hair. He knew she used a shampoo that smelled of roses and that she used the faintest bit of baby powder daily. Years ago, he’d memorized her scent, her face, every tiny detail, wanting to file it away for the rest of his life. Whoever his chosen mate would be could never compare to Trisha. He could only hope that they would stay in touch even after he finally mated and she married.

Trisha married? The thought of that had ripped at his gut for the past three weeks. That’s how long she’d been engaged to Bill. The moment Dane heard the news, he did his best to act excited when all he really wanted to do was rip Bill’s throat out and tear his heart from his chest. And the thought of punishing Trisha for betraying him had entered his mind as well. Though the punishment he’d had in mind ran more towards pleasurable bedroom activities. Spanking her ass cheeks while he slid his dick in and out of her sounded like the perfect form of discipline. Knowing how creative he could be, Dane was sure he’d think up even more ways to “teach her a lesson”.

It will never happen. I’m an animal and she’s human. It’s forbidden.

“Oh, I love this part,” Trisha said, patting his inner thigh.

He would have acknowledged what she'd said but it was then he caught a whiff of the enemy—Bill. He listened as the man walked down the hallway. Dane's body tightened. He'd only been around Bill a dozen or so times, but that was more than enough to want to smash the guy's face in. He was a well-known chiropractor who'd hired the firm Trish worked at to do some promotional materials for him. It had taken him less than a week to ask Trish out and less than a month to break her heart for the first time of many. Dane hated him from the word go but it wasn't his place to be possessive of Trish. Just because he couldn't have her didn't mean no one else could either. Did it?

Bill knocked on the door and Dane fought the growl in his throat back down. Trish sat up fast and glanced at him.

"I'm not expecting anyone."

"I'll get it." Dane managed to keep the sneer off his face as he stood. The tension in his shoulders was great and he wanted to relieve it by annihilating Bill's face. Trish didn't stop him as he went to the door and he couldn't have been happier. Intimidating Bill with hard looks was one of his favorite things to do.

Tossing the door open, Dane stared into the Bill's pale gray eyes. "Yeah?"

Bill looked stunned and Dane smiled. "Umm...I'm looking for Trisha. We were supposed to have dinner tonight but I got held up."

Dane caught the whiff of women's perfume and then the heady smell of sex. None of the scents Bill wore were Trish's. The scumbag had been fucking another woman while he was supposed to be meeting Trisha. Clutching his hands into tight balls, Dane narrowed his eyes on him. "So, Bill, what is it that kept you after work so late? Was it traffic, a client, or some other *pressing* matter?"

"I...umm...it was an emergency," Bill muttered.

Arching an eyebrow, Dane gave him a knowing smile. "Right, a chiropractor's job is never done. Especially when someone needs a good, *hard* late-night...adjustment."

Dane sensed Trish moving up behind him. Waiting for her to scold him for his behavior, he stood tall. There was a lot he'd kowtow to for Trish, but Bill wasn't one of them. When Trish wrapped her tiny arms around his waist and reached up to stroke his chest, his heart stopped. She rubbed her body against him and purred softly. Visions of sinking his dick into her ass hit him. Knowing she'd be tight and passionate only made it worse. His cock dug painfully into his zipper. If he didn't free it soon, he would go insane and fuck her against the wall if need be. Glancing towards the living room wall, Dane smiled.

"Trish! You told me he was gay!" Bill shouted.

Dane's mouth dropped open. He'd been called a lot of things in his life and that was not one of them. Coming from the twit before him made it even worse. "I am NOT..."

Trish swept her hand down over his ass before moving to stand at his side. "No, Bill. I never claimed anything of the sort. You're the one who thought it was funny to be

snide about Dane. Not me! Anytime I mention his name you get defensive and start trying to tear him down when you don't even know him."

Anger, rage, hate rolled off Bill and Dane couldn't help but pull Trish behind him slightly. If the dirty blond dumbass before him laid one hand on Trish, he'd never get it back. Suddenly, Dane really hoped he'd try to touch her. It was sick and he knew it but it was also the nature of the beast. Currently, the beast wanted flesh and blood from Bill.

"You told me there was nothing between the two of you. You said you'd never in a million years sleep with him!" Bill poked Dane in the chest and Dane smiled. The need to rip the man's finger off was great. He held back.

Trish tensed. "There isn't anything between Dane and I. We're friends. In fact, he's like family to me."

"Into that sort of thing, are you, Trish?" Bill sneered at her. "I could call myself Uncle Bill and we could do all sorts of kinky things. Not that it would satisfy me though. You're dead from the neck down in bed anyways."

Dane growled but Bill paid him no mind. The man was a bigger idiot than Dane had first imagined. The minute he sensed Bill's blood pressure increase, Dane slid his body directly between the prick and Trish. It was a good thing because Bill picked that very second to try to lunge forward. Dane put one hand up and thrust the man into the hallway so hard that he bounced off the opposite wall.

"Dane!" Trisha shouted, pushing past him. She couldn't believe he'd just struck Bill. Sure, the guy was an ass, but that didn't give Dane the right to hit him.

Dane grabbed her arm lightly, pulling her back into her apartment. "Leave him alone, Trish. He intended to strike you and that's not acceptable."

"What?" she asked, staring into his blue eyes in disbelief. "How you do know what he intended? Bill would never hit me."

Bill staggered to his feet and glared at Dane. "You'll be hearing from my lawyer!"

Trish was about to make a comment when Dane suddenly interrupted. "Is that before or after you fuck the woman you reek of again? I get that some men can't be with just one woman, but to fuck one who wears cheap perfume and smells like a smokehouse when you *had* a woman as perfect as Trish is sick! I can tell you right now, the minute I get to sample her sweet flesh and fuck her glorious body, I'll never let her go."

A woman as perfect as Trish? Had he really said that aloud? Did her ears deceive her or had he talked about fucking her like it was a sure thing?

Bill's eyes widened. "How did you know who I just fucked...?" He stopped and stared at Trisha. "I didn't mean...I don't know what he's talking about."

Trisha should have felt angry, betrayed, even enraged. All she felt was Dane as he pulled her into his arms and rocked her gently. Pulling the engagement ring from her finger, she sighed as she handed it to Bill. "Take it and go. Don't bother calling me or

trying to make this better. I'm dead from the neck down and wouldn't be able to answer the phone anyway! You've done nothing but hurt me since the moment we met and I'm tired of thinking you'll change. Having someone by my side forever isn't worth putting up with you."

"Don't do this, Trisha. Don't throw away what we have. It was just one girl. I swear. It was late and she was there. And you know you're not a lame screw, sweetness. I was hurt, that was the anger talking. Not me."

Trisha cringed, not wanting to hear the lies fall from Bill's lips any longer. "Just go."

"Why, so you can fuck a man you said couldn't keep a woman more than a week? What was it you said? Oh, right...his dick was too small and his ego was too big to make any woman want to put up with him." Bill spit each ugly word out at her.

Infuriated by his lies, Trish launched out of Dane's warm embrace and smacked Bill hard across the face. "I would never say that! You're just jealous that Dane did what you never could—he made me love him by just being himself. Hell, from the first moment I laid eyes on him, I've been in love with him and the only damn reason I ever even went out with you is because I'm clearly not his type. Because trust me, buddy, if I was the kind of woman Dane wanted, I'd sure the hell give him all of me and make sure to explore every erotic fantasy I've ever had about him! Don't think for one second that it was you I saw while you were fucking me. Every minute with you, I pictured Dane above me, his dick in me. The only problem with that was I'm sure his is bigger and I'd bet my life he knows how to use it a hell of a lot better than you! A friggin' dog humping a leg knows how to screw better than you!"

With that, she turned and walked towards the bathroom, leaving Dane to get rid of Bill. With any luck, he'd toss the prick through the wall this time. Bill would have to fend for himself, there was no way she'd stop Dane again.

Chapter Three

“Trish, baby, are you okay?”

She didn't move from the edge of the bathtub. Having planted herself there some twenty minutes prior, she'd only just got the tears to stop flowing. Hearing the concern in Dane's voice warmed her heart. It also embarrassed her. After running over all the harsh words that had been thrown out, Trisha realized that she'd not only admitted that she loved Dane, but also confessed to fantasizing about him while fucking another man. Facing him now would be beyond awkward. In fact, the idea of never laying eyes on him again sounded better than having to explain herself. She was head over heels in love with Dane. A man who'd kept his distance from her in the romantic category from day one. A man who dated tall, beautiful women, with rock-hard bodies and icy cold stares. A man who came right out and laughed in her face at the idea of dating her.

We're a breed apart...

“Trish?”

Wiping her cheeks, she fought for control. “I'm fine, Dane. You should probably head home. It's getting late.”

“If you think I'm leaving you alone tonight then you don't know me at all.”

“Really, I'm fine.”

“Trisha,” Dane droned out. Rarely did he use her first name. He was aggravated.

“Just go. I need to be alone.”

“Fine.” His sudden acceptance of her wishes took her by surprise but she didn't question him. If he was willing to go so she didn't have to face him, then fine.

Trisha sat on the edge of the tub waiting until she was sure Dane was gone. Sighing, she stood slowly and stripped out of her comfy pajamas. The evening had her neck and back so tight that nothing short of a hot bath would help. Gathering up her bath supplies, she rolled her eyes when she found her towel shelf empty.

She tossed the bathroom door open and came face-to-face with Dane. His blue eyes raked over her and his jaw ticced. The hard look that passed over his face not only made her feel as though she were most hideous woman in the world, it scared her. Quickly, Trisha tried to slam the door shut, but Dane threw his hand out and held it open.

His nostrils flared and he looked so intent, so lethal that she yelped.

“Dane?”

“Damn you, woman.” He closed the distance between them fast. “I've spent years fighting what I feel for you and when I'm at my weakest, you not only say the words

I've only dreamt of hearing you say, you walk out and flaunt that gorgeous fucking body of yours too! Do you have any idea how hard you make me? My dick aches for release every moment I'm around you."

"Wh-at?" Trisha shook her head and tried to step back from Dane.

He grabbed her arm and held it as he brought his face down to meet hers. Skimming his free hand over her breast, he smiled as her nipple hardened. "You like that, don't you, Trish? Look how quickly you react to me. Why the hell do you have to be human?"

"*Human?*" His comment was so odd that she wasn't sure what else to say to him.

Dane didn't respond. Instead he seized hold of her waist and lifted her high into the air. She bit back a scream only because she knew Dane would never hurt her. When he set her on the icy cold sink the need to cry out returned. The hard feel of the porcelain against her hot pussy made her ache for him to fill her with his warm cock. He dropped down fast and pushed her legs apart. Any attempt she made at closing them failed.

"Dane! Please, you don't have to do this. I didn't mean what I said," she looked away, knowing she could never lie to his face, "I don't love you. I don't think about you sexually. I just said it to make Bill angry enough to leave me alone. So please get up before it's too late to save our friendship."

He growled fiercely and stared up at her, his blue eyes seemed to swirl for a quick second. "Don't lie to me, Trish. I'm sick of the lies and the walls between us. I've wanted you...this," he said, running his long thick fingers over her mound, "for seven years and I'm sick of it. I'm taking what's mine. It's high time I claimed you for my own. There's no point in denying you're my true mate."

"Claimed me? Dane?"

"Yeah, baby, claimed you and this shaved little pussy. Damn, if you would have ever hinted that your cunt was hairless, I'd have tossed you down on the floor and fucked you like an animal. My control's been hanging by a string for years, Trish, and knowing that would have done me in...*is* doing me in."

One of his thick fingers darted into her tight channel and she drew in a sharp breath. Instantly, her cunt soaked him, causing little sucking sounds to come from her as he finger-fucked her. She watched as his long tongue darted out. The minute it came into contact with her clit, she was helpless to fend him off. Grabbing him closer, she cried out, "Oh God, there, yes, there."

He chuckled into her pussy, the sound vibrating through her, causing more cream to flood her now soaked core. Dane varied licks and sucks, making Trisha's hips jerk. She couldn't stop herself when she began to grind herself against his face. His gaze met hers. It was erotic, so perfect watching him eat her cunt out that she lost the battle to regain control of her emotions. Instantly, her body began to quiver as mini-waves of pleasure moved through her. Dane inserted another finger and began fucking her wildly with them. His tongue flickered over her clit in a pattern that made her cry out and grab hold of his head even tighter.

“Stop...I’m going to come...please stop,” she panted.

He didn’t stop. No. Dane increased everything and dug his free hand into the flesh of her ass. Trisha hit her zenith head-on. “Dane!”

Dane continued to suck on Trish’s clit as she came. The syrupy taste of her swollen bud was too alluring for him to resist. Never before had a woman tasted this good, smelled this sweet and made him this hard. One taste of Trish made him forget about lycan law. Tonight he would claim her come hell or high water, forever binding them. Trish would hate him forever when she found out what he was. How could she not? But the need to take her as his mate, his wife was all-consuming.

Pulling his drenched fingers from her pussy, Dane licked them before sliding back down to her slit. Lapping up every last drop of her sticky, sweet cream left him needing to bury his cock to the hilt in her. It coated his throat and the bliss of having what he’d always wanted consumed him. “You taste like honey, baby, all sticky and sweet.”

He rose to his feet, expecting to see Trish looking shocked. He found her staring up at him dreamily with a slight smile across her face. She took hold of his shirt and began to work it over his head. The feel of her tiny hands on his bare abs made him growl. Her fingers lingered over each swell and he could hear her blood beating faster. Knowing she wanted him too, found him desirable as well, only made his mission stronger. But she was so small, so petite that he wasn’t sure she could take all of him. He’d spread her as far as he could get her to go with just two fingers and his cock was a hell of a lot bigger than just two fingers. The idea of hurting Trish made him attempt to pull away.

Dane froze when Trish grabbed hold of his belt loop and tried to yank him forward. When she spoke, all his resolve vanished. “You’re right, Dane. I do want you. And I do love you. I was afraid to tell you. I don’t want to lose you. You’re the reason I keep going.”

Her rose-colored lips called to him. The need to kiss her was always there, only now he gave in to it. Moving his head down, Dane kissed around the edges of her sweet mouth, wanting to savor every second with her. Trish tried to slide her tongue past his lips, but the thrill of teasing her, even for just a bit, was too great. Kissing a path to her ear, he growled slightly as he kissed the outer edges of it. He slid his tongue over the tiny row of silver hoops she had in her ear. Instantly, the silver made his tongue hot, coming close to burning it. Though he hated to stop the little game, the beast he carried within made him susceptible to silver.

He jerked when he felt Trish’s hand slide down the front of his pants. Forgetting his need to tease her, Dane went back to her mouth and slid his tongue in as she worked his cock free of his jeans. Her delicate touch, her natural exotic scent still coating his tongue and her hazel eyes staring back at him caused his distended flesh to pull taut. Filling her with his essence, his come was the only option available to him. He’d give Trish what he’d never given another woman, his heart and his seed.

Trish gasped into his open mouth as she ran her tender little hands over his hot flesh. She played with the tip of his dick and he knew that pre-come seeped from him.

The feel of her thumb skating over the head, smearing his own juices over him felt divine.

“I need you inside me, Dane. I need you to fuck me.”

His pants weren't all the way down yet so he fought like hell to kick his boots off to get to Trish. Once freed, he moved forward, pressing the head of his cock against her soaked, hot entrance. She was tight. He'd never fit. The aftereffects from eating her out left her slit quivering, driving Dane closer to the edge of losing his control. The preternatural urge to mark her smooth skin crept up on him. Dane trembled as he loosened his grip on her, needing to put distance between them before he did something he shouldn't—bite her.

As Dane moved to pull back, Trish's hips surged forward, sending his cock into her excruciatingly tight vagina. Screams broke free from Trish and his heart raced, he knew he was too big for her. “Oh God, Trish, baby. I'm sorry!”

Trish grabbed hold of his shoulders and hoisted herself up, wrapping her legs around his waist, completely sheathing his dick within her heavenly body. Afraid of hurting her more, Dane stood perfectly still. It was Trish who moved first, kissing him passionately as she rode him hard and fast. Her cunt gripping him, fastening him to her with a seal he never wanted broken.

“*Mmm*, Dane, please...please fuck me.”

“I don't want to hurt you, baby.”

Her gaze met his and his heart hammered in his chest. She looked like a vixen, a goddess who was taking what she wanted and gods only knew that he needed her to want him even half as much as he wanted her.

“Fuck me.”

Unable to resist, Dane thrust his hips as Trish continued to ride him. The viselike grip her pussy had on him made it hard to move without coming but he held strong. He never knew his little Trish was so wild, so passionate and the idea of her sharing this side of herself with all the losers she dated infuriated him. She was his woman and he'd kill anyone who tried to come between them.

The beast within roared to life and Dane didn't bother to fight it down. “Tell me the truth, baby. Do you love me? Or was it all lies?”

“Dane?”

Doing his best to control the beast long enough to hear her answer, Dane scolded her, “Answer the question!”

“Yes, Dane. I love you. You're the only man I've ever loved.”

Pumping his cock into her harder, he reached up and pulled on her hair, causing her head to tip back. The scent of their sex and the glistening sheen of the thin layer of sweat on her body made it even harder to keep his orgasm at bay. “Trisha, will you have me forever? Walk by my side. Carry my seed within you and trust that I'll always protect you?”

“Dane?” she asked, staring up at him through dark blonde lashes. She must have seen the determination in his eyes because she didn’t wait for his response. “I’d walk through the fires of hell for you, Dane...yes, I’ll have you!”

Her core clenched his shaft tight, milking it as her legs quivered around his waist. The sweet smell of her orgasm let the beast out. Instantly, his teeth lengthened. He growled madly as he bit down on her shoulder, rooting his cock deep inside her and shooting jets of come into her receptive womb. He knew Trish couldn’t take birth control, that it made her sick and that she was staunch, and sensibly so, about men wearing condoms—even though she’d never once suggested he wear one. He also knew that she was his mate and the combination meant they’d create a child easily.

Trish cried out as Dane bit her. The white-hot pain was dulled by the instantaneous feel of him filling her with hot waves of his seed. Everything in her told her to pull off, to not take all of his come but she didn’t. She’d dreamt of the moment Dane would take her, tell her that she was his, breaking down the barriers, and it had finally arrived.

Vaguely, Trish became aware of Dane placing the tiniest of kisses on her shoulder. The pain was gone. It was as if it was never truly there. “I swear I normally last a hell of a lot longer than that, baby,” he whispered in her ear.

Trisha clung to him, pulling at his shoulders to keep him close. “If you’d have lasted any longer, I would have never made it. I’d have passed right out.”

He chuckled softly and kissed her neck. She twisted, trying to stop from giggling and realized that Dane’s cock was still hard. Pulling his face up to meet hers, she narrowed her eyes on him. “I felt you come, didn’t I?”

The twinkle in his blue eyes made her body tighten. How many years had she waited for this moment? How many nights had she spent touching herself and cramming a dildo in her pussy while thinking of Dane? Too many to count.

“Oh, I came, baby, and I’m going to come again very soon. I hope you’re not too sore because there is so much more I want to do to you. But first...”

But first? Oh, God he’s going to give me the “we can be fuck buddies” speech.

Trisha’s gut clenched and heat rose to her face. “It’s okay. I know I’m not your type and I appreciate you doing this for me. I don’t really think tempting fate twice is wise. I need a shower and then I’m going to bed. You should get home too. You’ve got to be up early tomorrow to meet with your new girlfriend. Though why you ever promised to take her to the countryside for the remainder of the weekend, I’ll never understand. You told me about how worked up she got over a spider. I can’t imagine her in the wilderness.” She tried to pull off Dane but he held her tight to him. “Dane, I need to get cleaned up and get some sleep. I think I’ll give Steve, the guy from the layout department that keeps asking me out, a call in the morning. It’s last minute and all but he might be up for doing something. He hated Bill too so he must be an okay guy.”

Something akin to anger passed over Dane’s face. His jaw tightened, and his eyes hardened. “I’m not fucking going anywhere tomorrow and neither are you. There is no one but you in my life now, Trish, and there damn well better be no one but me in your

life! You told me you loved me, said you'd walk by my side and carry my seed. And I told you exactly how I feel about you."

"Did you?" she asked, knowing that he hadn't said how he felt about her but rather what he wanted to do to her. "Besides, we both know that things are said during the throes of passion that aren't meant. You don't really want me."

"They're not meant?" Dane carried her backwards and pressed her against the wall. "Feel that," he said, thrusting his cock deeper into her. "Does that feel like I don't want you? You make my dick so fucking hard that I'm not sure if it will ever go down. I've shot you full of so much come that I should be sated for weeks. I'm not, Trish. I want more—I want all of you." Anger rippled through his throat. "The animal within me will not stand for its mate rejecting him and neither will I."

Trish held tight to his shoulders as he pumped his shaft in and out of her. His arms tightened and his face reddened yet the fierce, deep fuck he was giving her continued. "Animal inside you? Dane, honey...are you...okay?"

Dane growled and when Trish looked into his eyes she found them swirling. Unsure what was going on, she grabbed the sides of his face, making him focus on her. Out of the corners of her eyes, Trish saw dark fur all over Dane's arms. She tried to scream but his mouth clamped down on hers. Fighting to get her body free from his impaling cock, she pushed hard on his chest and had no effect on him at all. She'd never feared Dane before but this wasn't the Dane she knew. Her cunt betrayed her, clenching tightly around his cock as she peaked yet again.

As the daze of the orgasm cleared, she became aware of Dane's chest pressed tight to her while he continued to fuck her. Normally smooth, hard and hairless, it was now covered in a thin coating of hair. Instincts kicked in and Trish raked her nails down the side of his cheek. Instantly, Dane released her, pulling his cock from her womb, leaving her feeling empty but able to flee. And flee she did. Trish bolted through the bathroom door and ran hard and fast for her bedroom. Slamming the door shut, she flipped the lock and ran towards the phone.

Chapter Four

Dane stood rooted in place for a moment trying to make sense of what had happened. One minute he was fucking the woman of his dreams, his mate, and the next she was clawing at him smelling of so much fear that it nearly broke his heart. Glancing down, he noticed that he'd done a partial shift into a wolf. His arms and chest were covered in fur and his fingernails were unnaturally sharp. For a moment he couldn't breathe, couldn't think. This wasn't the way he wanted to reveal his secret to Trish.

Fearing he'd ruined his chances with her, he sniffed the air and caught her scent. Never before had he been so determined to get to someone. His supernatural hearing allowed him to pick up on the sound of Trish attempting to call someone. He also heard her strangled tears and the fear in her voice.

"Not my Dane. No...God no, that wasn't him," she whispered so softly that a normal human wouldn't hear.

He turned the knob to her bedroom door and found it was locked. It shouldn't have surprised him but it did. Never before had Trish shut him out, fearing for her life. If she only knew what it meant to be a lycan's mate she wouldn't be afraid. He'd never hurt her or allow harm to come to her or their children.

Children?

He caught it then—the change in Trish's scent. When had that happened? She smelled sweet and wonderful, but now she smelled of him as well, more than just what would happen during sex. No, his scent had merged into hers and that could only mean one thing—his semen had found its target and impregnated his mate. Joy spread through him, only to be doused with a heavy dose of reality. His wife, the mother of his child was terrified of him. That was unacceptable and if it took scaring her a bit more to make her see that he loved her and she him, then so be it. Slamming into the door, he broke through it with ease.

The sight of Trish huddled on the floor near her bedside table broke his heart. She held the phone in one hand as though she'd forgotten how to use it and tears ran wildly down her cheeks.

"Baby, I didn't want you to find out this way."

She jolted upright and clutched the phone tight as she shook. He expected her to scream, run, anything but what she did next took him by surprise. "That's why you disappear once a month, isn't it? It's why you turned me down when I tried to ask you out long ago. You said we were 'a breed apart' and you meant it. You're not human, are you?"

"I'm human, honey, just with some extra qualities as well."

A nervous laugh escaped her. “Yeah, like sprouting fur and swirling eyes.” Her attention went to the phone in her hand. “I couldn’t do it...I couldn’t call the police. It doesn’t matter how much you scared me, I couldn’t lose you, Dane. Why is that? Why can’t I make myself hate you?”

Dane exhaled, unaware that he’d been holding his breath at all. “Because you love me and you know that I love you.”

Her round hazel eyes stared up at him and her lip quivered. “You love me?”

Closing the distance between them, Dane bent down slowly, afraid he’d send Trish over the edge by being too close. She shocked the hell out of him when she reached out and touched his cheek. When she pulled her hand away, he noticed the blood on her fingers.

“Dane, I didn’t mean to hurt you. I was scared. I didn’t mean to do this to you.”

He hadn’t even realized she’d drawn blood. Nothing but knowing she was safe and wouldn’t leave him had mattered. “Baby, I never meant to break the news to you that way. Hundreds of times over the last seven years I’ve tried to think of ways to tell you what I am but I couldn’t. The risk of losing you was too great.”

Trish put her hand out to him and he helped her to her feet. She turned and began to climb onto the bed, keeping her hand in his. “Come on, I think I need to be held. Promise not to eat me.” As she said it, her free hand went to the spot he’d bit her. Her breath hitched as she looked back at him. “This is what you meant by claiming me, isn’t it?”

He nodded and moved up, wrapping his arms around her tiny body. The soft swell of her ass cheeks made his dick harden. Trying to avoid the temptation, Dane held her tight and kissed the top of her head. “Yes, baby. That’s what I meant by claiming you. You bear my mark, my scent and...” He couldn’t bring himself to tell her the entire truth.

“And what, Dane?”

“And according to lycan law...err...werewolf policy for lack of a better description, you’re my mate now—my wife.”

Trish stiffened and he fully expected her to make another run for it.

“We need to make it official according to human law as well,” she said sternly. “I’ll not have our baby born without your name behind mine.”

“How do you know that you’re...?” he asked, too shocked to form a complete sentence.

Trish wiggled her ass against his hard shaft and laughed softly. “I don’t know. I felt different the minute you came in me and then I just knew. I knew a piece of you was in me.”

“Does that scare you?” He was careful to keep his voice neutral.

“No. I love you. I’m just getting all of you now. Even the pieces you keep hidden from the world.”

She wiggled her ass again and Dane gave into the need to fuck her again. Pushing on her shoulders, he eased her over, leaving her standing with her ass in the air. Licking his fingers, he slid them into Trish's wet pussy, coating them until he knew they were extra slick. He withdrew them and rimmed the tight rosette of her ass. Trish bucked as he inserted one finger into her portal. Two pops later and several sharp gasps from Trish, he was finger-fucking her ass.

Dane tried to insert his cock into her cunt but Trish was too short. Growling, he took hold of her hips and lifted her onto the bed. He climbed up behind her as she steadied herself on her hands and knees. He didn't wait for her permission. He surged forward, cramming his dick into her tight pussy and his finger into her ass.

"Oh God, Dane. Uhh...so full, umm, there, yes there."

With his shaft thoroughly coated with her cream, he withdrew and pressed the tip against her anus. She tightened. He leaned his body over hers and kissed her neck softly. "I'd never do anything to hurt you."

"I know."

He inserted the tip of his dick into her core. She screamed out below him and he gave her time to adjust to having something the size of his cock in her ass. The minute Trish began to slide back against him, taking his shaft further into her, he knew she was ready to accept him.

A feral smile passed over his face as he looked at his cock buried in his wife's ass. "Mmm, baby, I'm about to take you to a whole new place. Are you ready to be good and thoroughly fucked by me?"

"No," Trish whispered, causing him to stop in mid-motion. "But I am willing to be good and thoroughly loved by you, Dane."

"Baby, you have been loved unconditionally by me for seven years. Now, I'm just marking my territory."

Sliding his hand down her stomach, he found her clit and rubbed it as he rooted his cock deep in her ass. Trish cried out with a start before moving against him, taking every inch of him as he pumped into her. Her virgin ass was as heavenly as her cunt. Emotions surged through him and the second that Trish's orgasm hit his followed. Dane stayed in place as the last of his seed filled his mate's ass.

Epilogue

“I can’t believe the head of your pack knew this would happen. I find it hard to believe that the guy knew we’d end up mated and let you worry the entire time about claiming a human,” Trisha said, staring into her husband’s blue eyes.

He reached out, touched her slightly swollen belly and smiled. “Apparently, they knew how stubborn I am so they lied about humans being forbidden. I guess they once were forbidden but the laws were changed some years ago. Only the council had access to that information, since they make their decisions behind closed doors, so they allowed many of us to keep believing it to be true.” Dane shrugged. “It wasn’t hard for them to pull off since I kept myself isolated, for the most part, since the moment I met you all those years ago. I didn’t want to have to lie to their faces about you or risk them finding out about how I truly felt about you and all the while they were laughing behind my back about it. I should be mad but I’m not.”

He winked. “I got you in the end and that’s all that matters.”

“Still,” Trisha said. “The man and his cohorts were good. He pulled off a hell of an act, Dane. You have to admit it.”

“Yeah, he did. So did the rest of the pack. Rumor has it that they’ve been lying to other pack members about humans being forbidden too. Guess I’m not the only stubborn one of the bunch. You know, the head of the pack was shocked it took me so long to buck the system. He thought I’d have done it the minute I first laid eyes on you. I have to admit, I seriously considered it. They tell me that I have a rebellious nature. I’m not seeing it.”

“Oh, you, rebellious? *No.*” Trisha laughed as she moved to embrace Dane. He kissed the top of her head and held her close. “You know, you should really consider running for a position on the council. Your leader has a point. People do respect you, Dane. You’ve earned it.”

He shrugged. “I’ll think about it. To be honest, it doesn’t matter to me. I have you now, baby.”

“I love you.”

“And I love you more than life itself, Mrs. Bennett,” he whispered.

She smiled and gave his ass a squeeze. “I love that we got rid of your hard furniture. Mine is so much better in here, don’t you think? Now, as far as you holding out on owning your own company...”

He laughed and lifted her quickly into his arms. “Well, I didn’t want you to think I was full of myself, baby.”

Trish rolled her eyes playfully and held tight to his neck. “Gee, honey, why would I ever think that?” His eyes widened as he feigned shock. She giggled. “Oh, and I love you too, Mr. Bennett. But can you answer one thing for me please?”

“Anything, baby.”

“Why haven’t I got to see your office yet?”

A wicked smile graced his face. It was one that screamed unbridled sex and lust. “Honey, it’s hard enough for me to not masturbate just thinking about you. If your scent was all over my office, I’d spend the entire day jacking off.”

“Or you could spend the entire day fucking me while I’m spread across your desk.”

Dane groaned. “Great, now that image will haunt me. I’ll end up in the bathroom with my dick in the sink, hoping the cold water will calm me down.”

“I could climb under your desk and suck you off all day,” she said, cocking an eyebrow at him. She knew the effect she had on her husband.

“Trish, baby, you’re killing me.”

“Take me to bed and teach me a lesson.”

“Oh, I intend to. You’ve been a very naughty girl teasing me like that.”

“Who was teasing? I’d love to have you bend me over your desk and fuck me until I can’t stand.”

“It’s a date then, baby. You better tell your boss that you’re quitting earlier than you originally said. If he needs a reason tell him that your husband wants to spend as much time buried in your tight little pussy and ass as he can.”

“The women at work are already jealous enough. But not nearly as jealous as Bill when he found out.”

Dane growled and his eyes swirled. “I still don’t understand why you won’t let me eat him. No one would find his body.”

“That’s not even funny, Dane! Like I want to taste him when I kiss you.”

“Good point.” He pushed their bedroom door open and carried her to the bed. “I say we practice for tomorrow’s workday fuck marathon.”

“Mmm, sounds good to me.”

The End

About the Author

I grew up fascinated by creatures that go bump in the night. From the very beginning I was odd and creative—a combo every mother hopes for. After studying art all the way through school, I majored in it at college. One rather unexpected child later, I changed my major and finished with a great balance of art and business. I'm working on my MBA with a concentration in marketing but it's taken a back seat while I plug away at the keyboard.

I live in Ohio with my husband and three boys. They definitely keep me busy. Between convincing one he really doesn't need to have his eyebrow pierced, listening to the middle one's philosophy on life and pulling the youngest off the countertop, I do manage to eek in a very small amount of writing time during the day. More often than not, my writing is done from 8pm until 3 am.

If the following years are half as good as my first one in writing, I'll be a happy gal! I'm doing something I love, meeting tons of new people, have the greatest readers in the world and the support of my family. The only thing I still don't have is that hot lycan on a motorcycle. I'm working on it, though.

Mandy welcomes mail from readers. You can write to her c/o Ellora's Cave Publishing at 1056 Home Avenue, Akron OH 44310-3502.



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