



The Witching Hour
Marteeka Karland
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Chapter One

“Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble --”

“What the *fuck* is that, Hazel? That’s *never* worked!”

The bent aluminum pot on Hazel’s rickety stove rattled as its contents boiled. The bright afternoon sun managed to peek through the drapes of both her apartment windows, shining on the old mayonnaise jars resting in her windowsill. She’d never been able to afford the expensive glass flagons she should have been using to store her potions.

Grasping the metal handle with a potholder to stop the rattling, Hazel took a tentative sniff of her brew. She wrinkled her nose, but gritted her teeth in determination, wanting only to complete this spell even if it did stink.

Horribly.

Hazel gave her best friend, Irene, an exasperated look. “Nothing else has, either. Do you have a better idea?”

Irene snorted. “Just don’t pull out the eye of newt or I’m outta here.”

“Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble...” Hazel paused. “What comes next?”

Irene threw up her hands. “It’s no wonder your spells don’t work.”

“Hey, they work. Just not like they’re supposed to.” Hazel wanted to be indignant, but couldn’t manage the effort. Irene was right, to a point. “Now, are you going to make fun of me, or help me?”

“As much as I’d love to help you, Hazel, I don’t know anything about witchcraft.”

Hazel sighed. “That’s okay, Irene. Neither do I.”

They looked at each other a moment, then both started to giggle.

“Oh, well.” Irene hugged her life-long friend with one arm as she picked up her coat from a nearby chair with the other. “At least you didn’t turn Mrs. Johnson into a goat again. It’s a damn good thing she didn’t remember what happened or she’d have you locked up.”

“Don’t I know it! That woman already thinks they should kick me out of this apartment building simply because I’m forty years younger than everyone here.”

“Well.” Irene grinned wickedly. “Not *everyone*.”

Hazel groaned. “You could have gone all day without mentioning *him*.”

“You’re the one who said he was a hunk.”

“Sure. But you didn’t have to *tell* him I said it.”

Irene held up her hands in mock defense. “I only stated the facts as they

pertained to the moment.”

“But that wasn’t *all* you told him. Was it.” Hazel made that last a statement. They both knew she had told the tall, dark, and oh-my-God handsome Drake Cole more about Hazel than she should have. At least, from Hazel’s point of view. She’d met Drake at the wedding of her friends, Laura and Jake, and he’d taken a permanent residence in her fantasies from that point on.

“He seemed to take it in stride.”

Irene’s innocent look didn’t fool Hazel for a moment. “He thinks I’m a blooming idiot, thanks to you.” Hazel pouted. “And I really wanted to jump his bones. Now --” She sighed dramatically. “I guess I’ll just have to slip him this love potion I was making for your hamsters.”

“Why not just cast a spell that makes him forget I told him you were a witch?” Irene deadpanned. They both knew Hazel couldn’t “cast” her way out of a paper bag.

“I would, if I wasn’t afraid I’d completely erase his memory.” Hazel sighed. They joked about it, but it was a very real concern to her. Her spells *always* worked. But sometimes what she got and what she intended weren’t in the same ballpark. Or the same universe, for that matter.

Irene hugged her sympathetically. “Oh, honey. I would never have said anything to hurt you on purpose. It was Laura’s wedding reception and she’d filled me up with champagne. I suppose my tongue ran away from my brain.”

“Now, *there’s* a mental image.”

They both laughed.

“I have to go.” Irene picked up her purse, slung it over her shoulder, and opened the door. “I’ll try to make things right with Drake. He knows I was tipsy. It shouldn’t be hard.”

“Thanks, but no.” Hazel held the door for her friend. “If he can’t accept me being a witch, then I didn’t need him to begin with.”

Irene winked at her. “It would be fun to have a romp in the hay with him, though. Admit it, Hazel. The man’s hot!”

Hazel fanned herself. “Oh, he’s definitely that!”

“See you later. Are we still on for the Halloween party?”

“I guess. As long as I’m back by midnight. I’m going to try a spell that’s supposed to draw its power from the Witching Hour on Halloween night. That way, maybe I won’t mess it up with my weird energy.”

“Okie dokie. I’ll pick you up at six.”

“See you tonight.”

Hazel Montgomery closed the door and walked to the kitchen of her small, but homey, apartment. Okay, homey was probably too kind a word. Maybe it

was just crowded. It consisted of two rooms, one that tripled as a kitchen/living room/bedroom, and a bathroom. Her sofa pulled out into a bed, and there was one recliner. She didn't have room for anything else other than a coffee table, but it was still hers.

Sort of. She paid \$350 a month for the tiny thing, but it was hers as long as she paid the rent. As long as she had her own place, she could explore the magic she was trying so hard to master.

So far, she was failing miserably at it.

Taking a deep breath, Hazel closed her eyes and cleared her mind. When she opened them, she stared intently at the aluminum pot of boiling herb mixture on her stove.

"Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble..." She sprinkled a pinch of red pepper into the mixture and tried to add a few drops of peanut oil, only she sneezed and missed the pot. The hot burner flamed when the oil splattered onto the coil and singed her arm. She pulled back with a yelp. Oh, well. If it hadn't exploded now, it probably would have later. She muttered under her breath as she ran cold water over her arm.

Being a witch wasn't supposed to be this hard!

Hazel filled a goblet with the liquid and looked at her "witch's brew" before setting it on the coffee table. She wrinkled her nose. It stank. Okay, so it was positively *rank*. She pulled a tendril of her jet-black hair to her nose. *Pee eww!*

She needed a bath. Desperately.

After cleaning up the mess in her kitchen, Hazel headed to the bathroom. Stretching as she went, she didn't watch where she was going and tripped over her shoe -- which she had kicked off and left in the middle of the floor -- and hit the little table with her knee before she fell. Grabbing at anything she could to try to break her fall, she knocked the foul-smelling stuff off into her lap. She gave another sharp yelp and pulled her white dress away from her body. Thank goodness there wasn't much of it, and it had cooled somewhat.

Oh, God! That smelled awful!

She had just gotten to her feet when someone knocked on the door. Thinking it was Irene -- the woman *always* forgot something -- Hazel simply flung open the door as she picked up the goblet from the floor. When she stood, she got the surprise of her life.

When Drake Cole heard Hazel's scream, followed by a *thump* and another shriek, he decided he should check it out. The phenomenal part was he was in his own apartment, in his bedroom with the door shut... two floors up. Being a werewolf had its advantages.

The little dark-headed witch downstairs had captivated him since the first time he saw her, though he'd never admit it. Besides, having been charged with her protection by the Witches' Coven years earlier, if she was in trouble, it was his duty to help her.

Witch.

He chuckled. If that girl was a witch, he was Lassie. She probably dyed her hair black and dabbled with trinkets and Ouija boards. How in the world she had convinced the coven she was a witch was beyond his imagination. To him, letting her run amuck was a risk to the haven for supernatural creatures Mount Bell harbored.

But she was absolutely adorable!

And *young*. He doubted she was much over eighteen. Her short, slender frame screamed youth, as did her fresh appearance and air of innocence. She had jet-black hair that curled so tightly it looked like a home perm gone wrong. It hung almost to her waist and stood out from her head so much, he'd always figured she spend a fortune on hairspray. Her skin was milky white except for her cheeks, which seemed to have a permanent rouge to them.

He took only enough time to jerk on a pair of jeans before heading down the steps and to her door. Banging rapidly five times in succession, Drake listened carefully for any signs of trouble within. He heard her mumbling to herself, and the door opened...

And the stench about knocked him down.

She might not *be* a witch, but she sure *smelled* like one. The strongest witches he knew didn't smell *too* badly, but the weaker ones, the ones who tried to do things potions were never meant to be involved in, stank to high heaven.

To werewolves, they *all* stank.

She was bent over at the waist, her ass almost in his face -- and a shapely ass it was. He might have appreciated the view more, if his eyes hadn't started to water.

Heading to the kitchen area with a cup and dishrag in her hand, she spoke without looking at him. Damn, this place was small!

"What'd you forget this time, Irene? And why didn't you tell me how bad this stuff smelled?"

Drake cleared his throat. "Are you all right?"

Hazel whipped around and shrieked... again.

"Omigod!"

Drake tried valiantly to suppress the smile he knew was forming on his lips, and raised his hands in a non-threatening gesture. "Sorry to startle you --

Hazel, is it?"

"I thought you were Irene." She looked terrified, clutching her fist to her heart.

Drake did smile then. "No. I'm definitely not Irene."

Hazel's face turned bright red as she looked around her small kitchen. "I'm sorry about the smell." She immediately turned on the fan above the stove and grabbed a can of air freshener from under the sink. "I was... err... cooking."

"Perhaps you should call out for pizza."

She wrinkled her nose. "You're probably right."

Having had a chance to adjust to the dominant smell, Drake could detect some of Hazel's own unique scent. She smelled... clean, fresh. Like mountain air on a warm spring day after a light rain. Roses and strawberries with a hint of mint.

"I was passing by and heard you scream. Are you all right?"

"Oh! That. I splattered oil on a hot burner and singed my arm, then tripped. It's nothing. I'm fine."

He looked at her for a moment, not saying anything. There was something odd about her scent he couldn't quite catch. Before he could puzzle it out, she started spraying the damned air freshener and the subtle scent was lost.

"Are you going to the building Halloween party?"

His first inclination was to yell a resounding "no!" Instead, he asked, "Are you?"

She fidgeted with her dress, which was drenched with foul smelling liquid.

"Yes." She cleared her throat. "For a while anyway."

Drake narrowed his eyes as he concentrated. If he wasn't mistaken, the girl was aroused. He could smell the sweat dampening her body. Had he interrupted something?

She was certainly dressed like she was expecting male company. Her linen dress hung loosely on her body, yet managed to frame her figure to wonderful advantage. He could discern full breasts spanning from a narrow ribcage, a tiny waist, and curvy hips. The dark, wet spot covered her from just below her breasts almost to her knees, where the skirt ended. Slender legs and bare feet peeked out from the hem and his libido kicked into gear. He could feel his fangs and claws begin to lengthen. He clasped his hands behind his back to hide them.

Damn.

With the moon full tonight, and it being a blue moon at that, it was hard for him to control the beast within him. Normally, he'd simply shift and show her his true nature.

If she were truly a witch.

Having a witch as a consort would be good for them both. He would have her power to draw upon when needed and more control over his animal side after they'd consummated their relationship -- she would have a familiar to go where she could not, and much-needed protection.

If she were truly a witch.

"I'm sorry to have interrupted you." He smiled. "Perhaps I'll see you at the party."

Hazel swallowed. "Yes," she squeaked. "That would be lovely."

"It's a masquerade party, you know. What will you be dressed as? I wouldn't want to mistake someone else for you."

"Err... I haven't made up my mind."

"Well," Drake opened the door to leave, "I'll just have to sniff you out."

As he closed the door, Drake heard her groan and chuckled quietly to himself. She might not be a witch, but he would have her. His wolf nature demanded he seek her out.

The wolf *always* got what he wanted.

Chapter Two

It took Hazel almost two hours and four showers to *finally* get the smell out of her hair. Although she used all kinds of moisture-filled shampoos and conditioners, her hair still dried out and frizzed terribly. She looked like she'd stuck her finger in a light socket.

With a sigh, she pulled her hair back as tightly as she could and wound the thick mass into a bun that covered almost the entire back of her head. Small curls escaped, creating little springs all around her face and neck. With her too-pale skin and her jet black, wild hair, she looked exactly like what she was. A witch.

Deciding she'd never be convincing as anything else, Hazel put on the black dress she'd rented for tonight. Form-fitting from throat to mid thigh and trailing down the back, it was still short in the front. The sleeves were tight to the elbow, where they opened up and flowed loosely below her wrists. A diamond-shaped mesh opening revealed a little more cleavage than she was used to, but she thought she looked quite fetching.

She smiled. What would Drake Cole make of her now?

He was, quite possibly, the sexiest man she had ever seen. He'd filled her tiny apartment with his presence as well as his body. There was something

almost menacing about him, yet she didn't feel threatened by him. And he smelled...

He smelled, strangely enough, like vanilla. And pine.

She was drawn to him, to his presence.

To his body.

Oh. My. God!

She'd never seen a body like that before. Not on anyone real. Pictures, paintings... Michelangelo's *David* might have come close. Only, impossible as it sounded, Drake was sexier.

His hair was dark, streaked with various shades of gray, and fell to his shoulders in wavy strands. Hazel always itched to tangle her fingers in it to see if it was as soft as it looked. His hair-dusted arms bulged with muscles and veins. The sprinkling of hair across his naked chest wandered down his abdomen and disappeared into his unbuttoned jeans. She could only imagine what else was in those jeans.

But oh, what an imagination she had!

Blinking rapidly several times, she pulled herself out of her sexually dazed reminiscence. What was she *thinking*? Drake Cole had lived in her building for over a year and hadn't said more than two words to her until today. She hadn't said more than two words to him, either.

She tried to concentrate on setting up the items for her midnight spell, but her mind wandered, as it always did when she thought about Drake. She had admired from a distance because she had other things to think about. She was a witch. Without anyone to turn to for guidance, she was intent upon teaching herself. If she was going to do that successfully, she didn't need the distraction of a handsome man.

The rapid knocking at her door reminded her she had somewhere else to be for a little while tonight. Hazel opened the door on the way to the sofa. Sitting, she put on her black, spike-heeled shoes with the straps that wrapped around her lower legs.

"Damn, girl! You really *are* trying to get fucked, aren't you?"

Irene's laughter made Hazel fidget. "It's the only dress the costume store had that fit my needs. Do I look too much like Elvira without tits?"

"No. But I do think you're going to be the cause of several elderly women getting plenty of attention from their husbands tonight."

"As long as they aren't dirty old men grabbing my ass, I'll be okay." Hazel laughed.

"Oh, I'm sure there will be a few of those." Irene smiled. "Just don't turn anyone into a wereskunk or anything. The goat was bad enough."

"Wereskunk." Hazel snorted. "Do I look like Stephanie Burke? I'd never

turn anyone into a wereskunk, even in fiction.”

“Let’s go. If we’re late, Mrs. Johnson won’t let us have any punch.”

Hazel wrinkled her nose. “I think I’d rather drink that concoction I made earlier. Hey! I just had a thought.”

“Oh, no. Not again. I’ve been down this road before, and it never ends well.”

“This will work. I know it will!” Hazel grabbed a bottle of flavored water from the fridge and they both headed out the door.

“Stick this in your purse, Irene. We’ll try it once we get there.”

“Try what?”

“I’m going to turn that water into wine. We’ll have our own private party at the party.” Hazel grinned mischievously.

* * *

When Drake returned to his apartment, his breathing was erratic. Every lover he’d ever taken in his life was insignificant next to Hazel. He never misled women about his intentions -- his wolf nature demanded he give in to his baser appetites from time to time -- but he’d never even considered taking a woman for more than a pleasurable evening or two.

Until now.

As it was, Drake hadn’t been able to think about anything other than the tight little body downstairs, and how many times he could take her in one evening before they both passed out. He hated himself for that, but he’d learned long ago that he could only fight the beast so long. Now, Hazel had definitely gotten under his skin, at least as far as his physical need was concerned. He had a feeling that, given time, he’d find a whole other side to her. One he was loath to let go.

He sighed. Who was he kidding? He already didn’t want to let her go. Now, he was stuck going to this absurd little get together. One more thing to prove he was becoming obsessed with her.

He hated parties.

Everyone was loud, obnoxious, and smelled funny. It wasn’t so bad when everyone was drunk. At least they had a reason for being annoying. But this party would have all the un-pleasantries without means for him to dull his senses if necessary. And he was *sure* it would be necessary.

Hazel might not be a witch, but she had sure bewitched him.

Drake dressed from throat to toe in black leather -- a black, floor-length cape graced his shoulders. Should he lose control tonight, he would at least have a way to hide himself. His shifting abilities were completely unpredictable during a blue moon. With this being Halloween as well, that problem

doubled.

Oh well, he'd just have to do the best he could. He was an alpha werewolf, leader of his pack. He could handle a little full moon magic -- just as he had done all his adult life.

The party was held in the penthouse where the owner of the building, Irma Price, resided. Drake held his breath as he knocked on the door. Letting it out, he inhaled gingerly. Up until this moment, Drake thought that concoction of Hazel's was the foulest thing he had ever smelled. When Mrs. Price opened the door, however, he discovered how wrong he was.

Everyone in this particular building was at least sixty. He wasn't a physician, but he knew that with age, some of the senses dulled, particularly eyesight and hearing. Now, Drake was convinced the sense of smell dulled as well. Dramatically. Otherwise, everyone in that room would be wearing gas masks.

The instant Mrs. Price opened the door, he was assaulted by a sickly sweet, slightly musky, floral, and overpowering perfume. The smell got into his nose and simply wouldn't be vanquished. The last thing he wanted to do was touch *anyone* in that room, but when Mrs. Price offered her hand, he smiled, gritted his teeth and took it.

"Drake! I'm so glad you made it." Mrs. Price ushered him in. He cringed inwardly when she slipped an arm around his waist under his cape. The short, portly woman went about making sure everyone in the room knew of his arrival. It wasn't long before he was surrounded by little old women with blue hair, all of them fussing over him, all of them touching him. At one point he was *sure* someone grabbed his ass, and more than one hand brushed against his crotch.

And he was *covered* in old woman perfume.

He was about to leave when he caught another scent underneath everything else. *Roses and mint*. Hazel was here.

He turned slowly, scanning the faces in the room until he found her. She wasn't a witch, she was a siren! She drew him to her like a moth to a flame, and he was powerless against her pull. His fangs lengthened, his heart rate increased and his claws itched to explode from his fingertips. He wasn't sure he could prevent a shift and knew that, as the night progressed, it would only get worse.

He shouldn't be here. The blue moon combined with his lust for Hazel was an explosive combination. Something a true witch would understand.

He was about to disengage himself from his admirers and leave when Hazel spotted him, as well. Her smile was enough to brighten the whole building. Looked like leaving right now was out of the question. He had to see her,

smell her. He wanted to strip her out of that fuck-me dress and taste every inch of her body, drown in her sweetness and wholesomeness until nothing else mattered.

He excused himself, pushed aside the groping hands, and made his way to her. She was absolutely stunning, and incredibly sexy. The animal in him wanted to fuck her until his lust was sated. The man in him wanted to savor her, convince her to come back for more. All of him wanted to make her his own.

When he took her hand in greeting, he inhaled deeply. "You smell different." She blushed prettily. "I should certainly hope so. I stank."

"Yes," he replied, not trying to hide his amusement, "you did."

They both chuckled.

"I like your costume." She was trying not to get caught looking him over, but he noticed.

Using the opportunity to take a closer look at her, Drake let his gaze rest on her breasts before moving down to her tiny waist and generous hips. "Yours isn't bad either, Hazel."

Drake let the silence build as they stood there. When Hazel began to fidget, he took her elbow gently and ushered her to the balcony. "Let's get some fresh air."

She breathed a relieved sigh. "Thanks. I think I'm about to drown in old woman perfume."

He raised an eyebrow. "I hadn't noticed."

Once outside, Drake closed the sliding glass door and moved to one end of the balcony. Hazel stood with her arms resting casually on the railing, looking over the city. It wasn't quite dark yet, but the moon and North Star still shone brightly. The streets below were already alive with partygoers and trick-or-treaters. As the night wore on, the activity would increase, and the creatures of the night would participate in the world of humans undetected. Himself included.

* * *

When Hazel turned around, Drake stared at her, his eyes almost luminous in the failing light. The man took her breath. He was everything she wanted physically in a man, and she had little resistance against him. He looked hungry as his gaze all but devoured her, and she couldn't resist a little exploring of her own.

His slightly shiny leather suit hugged every bulging muscle in his body, including the one between his legs, which seemed to be growing more

prominent by the second. She jerked her gaze back to his face, hoping she hadn't been caught ogling his privates.

No such luck, if the smirk on his ruggedly handsome face was any indication. Heat suffused her face, and she returned her attention to the view. She didn't hear him move, but a few seconds later, his voice at her ear caused her to jump. "Do you like what you see, my dear?"

Chill bumps rose on her arms, and her nipples tightened almost painfully. The fine hairs on the back of her neck stood up, and she shivered as his warm breath tickled her ear.

Denying it seemed pointless. This man knew his effect. "I doubt any woman wouldn't."

He placed his hands on the rail, surrounding her body with his. "I didn't ask about any woman."

"I most definitely like what I see." She probably should have at least *tried* to sound nonchalant, or shrugged off his interest in her response, but she had never been very good at hiding her feelings. It was part of what would make her a good witch -- once she figured out what she was doing. Her sincerity and genuine desire to help others would be infused in her potions and spells. It was also something that could really get her into trouble with Drake Cole. He grasped her shoulder and turned her gently until they stood face to face. His expression was animalistic, his eyes hungry. "I like what I see as well." The gentleness of his words belied his expression.

As did the kiss that followed.

Drake's lips were moist, slick, and he kissed her with great expertise. Hazel was quickly lost in the bliss he created, her mouth mimicking his kisses, her hands clutching his sides as she tried to keep her balance.

When he slid his tongue into her mouth, skillfully licking and creating unimaginable pleasure within her, she tentatively did the same. His wild taste intoxicated her, but heightened her senses instead of dulling them. Not even trying to hide how this experienced affected her, Hazel closed her eyes and gave herself up to the pleasure Drake created.

* * *

Taking Hazel outside was the smartest thing Drake had ever done in his life. First of all, he doubted she would let him kiss her in front of everyone inside. Secondly, it got him away from all the overpowering scents and allowed him to catch Hazel's true scent for the first time and he was able to figure out what he'd been missing.

Hazel... was a virgin.

Drake supposed he should be surprised -- even *virgins* weren't virgins these days -- but he wasn't. Somehow, it fit Hazel.

If he had been a gentleman, Drake would have stopped before things got out of hand. But he wasn't. He was, sometimes, more animal than man, and he had no problems taking Hazel where no man had gone before. In fact, the thought only added to his desire for her.

He would be the first man to ever make love to this delectable woman!

But not yet.

Wrapping his arms around her waist, Drake pulled her against him, wedging his leg between hers, connecting with her cunt. She gasped, but didn't resist. Her eyes were wide, her mouth parted. She was trembling.

"Sweet Jesus." Her whisper was so low, he almost didn't catch it, even with his incredible hearing.

"What's the matter, little witch? Are you afraid of the big bad wolf?"

Her pelvis moved slightly against his thigh, but she controlled herself almost immediately. "I'm not afraid of you, Drake."

"You're trembling."

"So?"

"If it's not fear --" He grinned. "-- what is it?"

"Err, well," she stammered, seeming unsure of herself for the first time since he'd met her, "you know." Hazel smiled nervously and shrugged.

"Yes, Hazel. I *do* know."

She actually stopped breathing for a second. "You do?"

"Of course." He simply could not contain the smile spreading across his mouth. She was too damn innocent for her own good -- which was really saying something considering she was in the arms of a werewolf on a Halloween evening of a blue moon. "Don't you?"

Her brow wrinkled in the most adorable way. "Um, sexual arousal?"

He laughed then. He couldn't help it. "Are you telling me, or asking me?"

She blinked several times before pulling back from him. "I -- I don't understand."

"How old are you, Hazel?" He retained his hold on her, though she was no longer pressed so intimately against his body.

"Wha --? I'm twenty-one. What's that got to do with anything?"

Drake took a half step nearer to her, backing her up against the balcony railing. He spoke slowly and quietly, looking her directly in the eye. "Can you explain to me how a woman as incredibly sexy as you are made it to twenty-one still a virgin?"

"How did you know that?" Hazel gasped. She couldn't *believe* he knew that! Was she that inept at kissing? Oh, God! She was! And he was making fun of

her. She pushed him back, but he retained hold on her arm.

Still grinning, Drake pulled her back into the shelter of his body. “You are absolutely delectable, do you know that?”

“No,” she retorted, “I don’t. As you so *graciously* pointed out, I’m a bit out of my element.”

He chuckled. “For which I’m exceedingly grateful.”

“Look, I really don’t need you pointing out my shortcomings. I already know what they are without your help.” Jerking away from him, Hazel ducked under his arm and stormed back inside.

Jerk!

Swine!

Wereskunk!!

Of all the *nerve!* Hazel couldn’t believe she’d let herself get swept away by such an arrogant bastard. Nice-looking he might be, but he was a complete asshole. It wasn’t some crime to be a virgin.

Besides, she’d been studying the art of witchcraft since she was sixteen. She hadn’t had time to think about sex. Everything she’d learned, she’d learned on her own, and it had mostly been trial and error. Witches guarded their secrets very well.

Hazel headed toward the kitchen, pushing open the swinging door harder than necessary. She needed a glass of water. Hell, she needed a *drink*.

“Hazel? Are you okay?” Irene caught the door on its second swing back, stopping it, and approached her.

“Where’s that bottle of water?”

“In my purse. Why?”

“I’m going to try my spell.”

“Hazel, what happened? You’re shaking all over.” Irene placed a soothing hand on Hazel’s arm and petted her gently.

“Nothing.” Hazel took the bottle and rummaged through the cabinets until she found a wine glass and poured the water into it, muttering, “I just decided I don’t like handsome men.”

“Oh,” Irene said knowingly. “You and Mr. Cole didn’t hit it off?”

“Well, yes and no.”

“I’m confused.”

“Me too.”

Hazel took a small sip of the contents of the glass and made a face. “Yuck! Why do they make peach flavored water so sour?”

“I like peach water.”

“Are you drinking this, or am I?” Hazel asked, exasperated.

“Well, I kind of hoped you’d share.” Irene leaned against the counter and

watched Hazel intently.

Hazel paused a minute, looking at the glass. “Is there a packet of sugar anywhere? Near the coffee pot maybe?”

Irene craned her neck to look across the room. “I think so.”

Hazel looked at her, annoyed. “Well, do you think you might hand me one?”

“What are you doing, Hazel?” Irene hadn’t moved.

“I told you. I’m going to turn this glass of water into wine. Now, I’d like it to be drinkable when I do, so would you *please* get me a packet of sugar?”

“Why not just go back to your apartment?”

“I don’t have any alcohol there.”

“A bar, then.”

Hazel threw up her hands. “I’ll get it myself.” She rummaged through the canisters.

“What if this backfires and you blow something up?”

“It’s not going to backfire, and there’s nothing to blow up. All I need is this glass, the water, and an incantation.” Hazel sniffed. “I have everything under control.”

Irene held her hands up in defense. “If you say so. Fire away.”

“Thank you.” Hazel rolled her eyes. “Now. I need to concentrate on what I’m doing.”

“Okay. What do you want me to do?”

“Nothing. Just be quiet.”

“I can do that.”

“You’re still talking, Irene.”

“Sorry.”

Hazel closed her eyes briefly and centered herself. The only thing that existed for her was the glass of water in front of her.

“Glass of fruit fresh from the vine --”

“I seriously doubt a peach would fit in that glass. Doesn’t your incantation need to be a bit more realistic?”

“Did I mention I needed quiet?”

“I was just pointing out a flaw in your spell.”

“It’s not a flaw. How would you know if it was a flaw?”

“Well, I’ve been helping you almost since you started learning witchcraft. I think I’ve learned a thing or two along the way.”

“Do *you* want to do this?”

“I’m not the witch.”

“Exactly! Now, shush!”

It was Irene’s turn to roll her eyes, but she kept silent.

Hazel sighed. “Okay, okay. I’ll change it a little.” She tapped her finger on

her chin. "Let's see." Thinking a minute, Hazel glanced at the empty bottle sitting on the counter. "I've got it!"

Hazel closed her eyes once more and took a deep breath. Opening her eyes, she started the incantation again. "Sparkling fruit fresh from the vine --"

"It's not fresh fruit in that glass. In fact, it's probably not even got real fruit juice in it at all."

"Oh for ever more!" Hazel threw up her hands in exasperation.

"Well, it's the truth!"

"If you don't shush, I'm going to dunk you in Mrs. Johnson's punch."

"Hey, I'm just trying to help."

"Then hush it!"

Before Irene could say anything else, Hazel blurted out, "Sparkling fruit fresh from the vine, turn this water into wine," all in one breath.

Hazel and Irene stared intently at the glass.

Nothing happened.

"Taste it, Hazel."

"I'm afraid to. You taste it."

"I'm not going to taste it. This is *your* spell."

Hazel looked at Irene. "Well, you could have fooled me." Hazel gingerly picked up the glass and took a small sip. She made a face. "The sugar didn't help."

"Did it work? Did you turn water into wine?"

Hazel sighed. "No."

Irene's shoulders sagged. "I wonder what you've done *this* time."

"I don't want to know. Are you ready to leave? I'd really like to get out of here without having to drink that punch. It smells almost as bad as the perfume around here." Hazel dumped the contents of the glass down the sink and rinsed it out.

"Yeah. I'm sure there's still something I can do to help you prepare for your midnight spell."

"You know, it just occurred to me that you've helped me with just about every spell I've ever attempted. Maybe the problem isn't me. Maybe it's you, Irene."

Irene snorted. "Maybe I'm just too damn sexy for your spell."

Hazel groaned as they left the kitchen. "And maybe you're just as big a klutz as I am."

"Yeah. Maybe."

Both women laughed and walked arm in arm through the crowd of people. As they passed by the punch bowl, Hazel swore something smelled funny, but she tried not to inhale too much. Last time she'd breathed too deeply in

this room, it had made her head spin.

When they walked out the door, neither woman noticed Drake, eyes glowing, watching them intently and curiously as he took a sip from his cup of punch.

Chapter Three

Hazel looked around her tiny apartment. She'd lit about a hundred candles in various locations around the room, and could just imagine how the heat was going to strain her air conditioner before too long. Once Irene helped her set up the candles and the mirror, Hazel was alone to contemplate her spell. She looked in the full-length mirror at her reflection. Having removed her costume, Hazel stood in a black slip that stopped just above mid thigh and had slits up both sides. Her hands roamed over her body, shaping it, viewing it critically.

When Drake touched her, her body had come alive like never before. Nothing could compare with the thrill she'd experienced in his arms. She wanted to know what she had been missing out on, but not with just anyone. It had to be with Drake. For some reason, even the thought of giving her body to anyone else was terrifying.

Hell. The thought of giving her body to *Drake* was terrifying, but she had to have more of him. She knew that, no matter what, he would see to her pleasure. It was something about him. He *oozed* sex. It was impossible for a man like him *not* to see to his partner's pleasure.

She only had twenty minutes before midnight, and she simply couldn't concentrate. Meditation hadn't worked. All she could think about was Drake. If this spell was going to work, she had to be able to concentrate. Right now, that was next to impossible.

This was her one chance this year to use energy other than her own to cast a spell that would bring out her true power. She couldn't blow it because she was too preoccupied by a handsome face.

Hazel took a deep breath as she centered herself and stood in front of the mirror. Crossing her fingers tightly, she stared intently at herself, ignoring the shadows reflected with her own image in the mirror.

She spoke quietly, but firmly, staring into her own eyes. "To reach the height of powers known, one's own true self is freely shown. Reveal what hides so all may see, as I will, so mote it be."

Nothing happened.

She sighed. Story of her life.

“What the *hell* did you do?”

That was Drake’s voice!

Catching sight of him in the mirror now, she whipped around, and before her eyes, Drake morphed into a -- a -- a...

Drake’s body sprouted black and silver fur -- right through his clothes. His nose lengthened along with his teeth, his fingernails curved into claws. For a moment, he stood there somewhere between a man and a beast, seeming to struggle with himself, then the transformation completed itself and she stood face to, err, snout with the largest animal she had ever been near.

They stared at each other for several moments. Hazel was afraid to breathe.

What had she *done*? *How* had she done it?

“Oh, Drake!” Hazel rushed toward him before stopping short. What if he attacked her? She probably would if she were in his place. “I’m sorry! I didn’t mean to -- to turn you into a -- a -- a *dog!*”

The big beast plopped down onto the floor, his legs sprawled and looking as confused as an animal can look. Drake whined a bit, looking up at her with wide, blue eyes.

Hazel couldn’t help it. She held out her hand to Drake. When he licked it tentatively, she threw her arms around him and buried her face in his fur. “I can’t believe I did this to you. I’m *so* sorry, Drake! I’ll change you back, I promise!”

Hazel didn’t know what to do. This was worse than the goat thing. She stood and, unable to resist, scratched his head between his ears. If dogs could express themselves as humans, she’d *swear* he actually rolled his eyes.

“Sorry,” she muttered. She was about to extinguish all the candles and try to reverse her spell when Drake growled. “Hey, I said I was sorry. Don’t worry. I’ll change you back.” She swallowed. “Somehow.”

“Open up! Police!” A deep, masculine voice boomed through the closed door.

Hazel jumped away from Drake as if she’d been shot, and Drake placed himself between her and the door. He barked and snarled better than any guard dog she’d ever heard, but that didn’t stop her unwanted guests.

“Ma’am, if you don’t call off your dog and open the door, we’re going to have to call animal control. I have a warrant for your arrest.”

“Arrest? What did I do?”

“Open the door, ma’am. I’ll explain once I’m inside.”

Drake barked louder, lunging first at the door, then at Hazel when she tried to pull him away. He pushed her back into the apartment, away from the door and the police.

“Drake, you’ve got to stop it. What will you do if they take you to the pound? I’m sure it’s all a misunderstanding.” She could almost see them carting Drake off in one of those doggie paddy wagons. “Now, into the bathroom with you.” She herded him in the tiny room, Drake looking as disgruntled as Lassie possibly could.

Hazel hurried to the door and opened it as far as the security chain would let her. “What’s the problem, officer?”

“May I come in? I’d rather explain inside. There are several people out here.”

The officer looked rather annoyed. Peeking over his shoulder, Hazel couldn’t blame him. There were at least fifteen blue-haired ladies with arms crossed and feet tapping.

Hazel shut the door briefly to unlatch the chain then let it swing open wide enough for the officer to walk through. “What’s this about?”

Hazel recognized the kind, but burly, blond-headed officer, John Perkins. Looking decidedly uncomfortable, he rubbed the back of his neck. “Well, ma’am, Mrs. Johnson says you’re the one who spiked the punch at the party. She says she thinks you got her drunk a few weeks back, as well, and she can’t remember anything about the whole afternoon.”

“Spiked the punch?” Hazel was so confused, all she could do was blink. “I didn’t realize the punch *had* been spiked. Why would I spike the punch?” She was getting angrier by the second. Hands on hips, she added, “And how does that give you the grounds to arrest me?”

John grimaced. “She thinks you’re trying to steal her book of county fair blue ribbon winning recipes.”

“Mrs. Johnson? My grandmother gave her most of those recipes. I don’t need to steal those.”

“Not Mrs. Johnson. Mrs. Price.”

“You’ve *got* to be kidding! That woman can’t make good Kool-Aid.”

John’s lips twitched. “Maybe so, but her son’s the sheriff and he’s given me orders to bring you to the jail for holding until we get this straightened out.”

Hazel held up her hands. “Look, even if I *did* spike the punch -- which I didn’t -- that’s not against the law. As to the ‘attempted theft,’ what ever happened to innocent until proven guilty?”

“I know, Miss Montgomery, and I’m sure you won’t be in jail past tonight. But Ralph said to bring you in, and if I don’t, he’ll just do it himself.”

Hazel shivered. Ralph Price gave her the creeps. The man was like an octopus with about fifteen extra tentacles. He never met an ass he didn’t like to grope.

And his hair was greasy.

And he smelled funny.

“Will you keep him away from me if I go quietly?”

“I’ll do my best, ma’am.” John, ever the Boy Scout, stood straighter with his hands behind his back.

It would have to do. Looked like she was spending the night in the county jail.

Chapter Four

Though he tried with all his might, Drake absolutely *could not* shift back into his human form. He wasn’t sure how she’d done it, but Hazel seemed to have blocked his transforming ability. What was it she’d said?

One’s own true self is freely shown...

Okay. That made sense. His animal self was the part he kept hidden from the world. But why couldn’t he shift back?

He could hear Hazel and John talking, knew she was leaving with him, but couldn’t do anything about it. He wanted to shout at her to let him out, for her to stay where she was, but all he could do was bark. Damn. He really was Lassie!

And that made Hazel really a witch.

Holy shit! Could it be as simple as that?

Hazel was really a *witch!* A *virgin* witch. Who ever heard of a virgin witch? Her power would be completely unpredictable. Sexual energy was the most powerful influence of any paranormal ability. Sex engaged *all* the senses, and could elicit a wide range of extreme emotions. Since Hazel hadn’t tapped into her sexual energy, she wouldn’t have the ability to use her power to its fullest advantage. She could do magic, but it might not happen in the way she thought it would.

One’s own true self is freely shown...

She must have been trying to bring out the ability she knew she possessed. His image got caught in the mirror and *poof!* He was the one hiding, he was the one who got transformed.

The door to Hazel’s apartment closed and his body began to contort. His fur disappeared, his claws retracted, his fangs shortened to his normal teeth -- he was returning to his human form. Either her spell was wearing off or it was dependent on her being close to him. Whatever. *Thank God!*

He was naked. His clothes had been ripped to shreds by the fur growing out of them when Hazel’s spell caused him to shift. So he could either go

upstairs naked through a group of groping geriatrics, or he could try to make it in his wolf form and possibly cause a couple of coronaries.

He sighed. Why was small town America *so* complicated? If he lived in New York, Hazel would still be in this apartment and he...

Might still be a wolf.

Somehow, he doubted Hazel would welcome the idea of having sex with him in that form, and sex was the reason he was here. He had followed Hazel and Irene when they left the party and waited patiently until Irene left Hazel alone. He had thought to woo her -- to make her first time the most pleasurable experience any woman could ever have.

Oh well. He would still do that, just a little later than he'd anticipated. First things first. He had to get Hazel out of jail. Then, they'd talk.

Deciding that the chances of him sneaking upstairs as a dog were a lot better than escaping questing hands if he went out naked, Drake opened the door.

Glancing both directions, he shifted and quickly moved up the two flights of stairs to his own room. Luck was with him for once, and he saw no one.

Shifting back into his human form, Drake was thankful he never locked his door when he left. He was just about inside when someone grabbed the left cheek of his ass and squeezed.

"What the --?"

"I remember when my James had buns like yours."

"Mrs. Sanders?"

The short, plump woman peeked around the open door. "I remember when my James..." Her eyes got a faraway look and seemed to mist over for a moment. "Never mind. My James was never hung like that." She looked up at him and winked. "But he sure knew how to use what he had." With one last swat to Drake's bare butt, Mrs. Sanders hobbled away, cane in hand.

Drake smiled. He hoped he was as spry in his old age. No doubt James had had his hands full with his woman.

Once inside, Drake thought about his plan as he dressed. It was almost one in the morning. Though the Witching Hour had passed, there was still a blue moon on Halloween night. Hazel had caught him at his weakest, but once the blue moon set, he should be able to be in her presence without shifting against his will, no matter what spell she cast.

He'd only have to wait a few hours, until just before dawn. He grinned.

Blending in with the night wouldn't be difficult then. It was always darkest just before the dawn.

Chapter Five

The streets of Mount Bell were silent when Drake slipped inside the jail. The deputy, on his way back in from a smoke break, didn't see the shadow follow him. Drake kept to the shadows easily in his wolf form. The lights were dimmed and, once inside, Drake had no problem remaining unseen. He sniffed the air, looking not only for Hazel, but for Sheriff Price as well. In this small community, the supernatural creatures blended in with the rest of humanity almost perfectly. Their scent, however, always gave them away. Drake was looking for Price's scent as another canine/human mix -- a coyote. Nothing.

Finding Hazel was easy. He simply followed her fresh, virgin's smell until he stood outside her cell, still in his wolf form.

She slept sitting up, her back against the wall in the empty room enclosed by bars on three sides. Her knees were drawn to her chest and her head rested on her folded arms. She shivered slightly. The only thing in this world he wanted to do was enfold her slender frame in his arms. Okay, that wasn't entirely true. Sure he wanted to hold her, to savor her... after he'd made love to her for hours.

She looked so fragile sitting there. Her inky black hair fanned out over her legs like a curtain. Tiny. She was so damned *tiny*. And so, so beautiful.

Drake looked around the room. Thank God for small towns. Mount Bell still had holding cells in the sheriff's office, just like Mayberry. With Barney in the can, no one else was around, so getting Hazel out would be a snap.

Drake found the keys to Hazel's cell on the desk, and picked them up with his mouth.

When they jangled, Hazel's head snapped up, and her eyes widened.

"Drake?" Hazel's confused whisper was the most powerful aphrodisiac Drake had ever experienced. Setting the keys on the floor in front of the cage, Drake shifted slowly and carefully. He wanted her to see every second, wanted her to see what he was capable of. "Oh, God. Drake!"

In that one breath of air, his cock grew painfully hard. Her sweet breath drifted on the air and mingled with the clean, natural scent of her body.

He opened the door slowly, carefully. The last thing he wanted to do was frighten her. Of course, a virgin looking at his present state -- well, it couldn't be very reassuring. She gulped visibly and backed away as he approached her.

"Grandmother, what a big, err..." She shook her head. "Drake, why are you naked?"

"All the better to fu --" His voice trailed off. His ears roared. She *smelled*

like heaven. He'd never felt such a physical response from a woman before, and it hit him all at once. It was everything he could do not to shift into his beast form. Sex had never been a problem before. Not with him. He knew that some male werewolves had difficulty staying in their human form during sex at times, but only when they were with their mate.

He simply couldn't stop himself. He had to have her.

Now.

He grabbed her upper arms and pulled her to him. Looking into her wide, green eyes, Drake hesitated only a moment before crushing her lips with his. His head spun, and his skin itched with the need to shift. His fingers ached with the need for his claws to explode through the skin. This need was taking him over. Everything he was feeling was primal -- an alpha wolf claiming his mate.

Her fear was a very real entity in his narrow world. She was frightened, but still she clung to him and kissed him back. Her nails scratched shallow furrows into the skin of his back. Had she been a she-wolf, she would have left her mark on him. He pulled back to look at her, baring his teeth.

Hazel was way out of her league. She knew that the first time he'd kissed her. Now, something inside her snapped. His kisses were rough, demanding, and she was determined to give him everything he wanted and more.

When he ended their kiss, she almost screeched in protest. Her body was bereft without his mouth on her. Grabbing two fistfuls of his hair, she hissed and forced him back to her. She drove her tongue into his mouth, meeting him thrust for thrust. Her hands gripped his muscled shoulders and arms, and she dug her nails into his flesh. She had a need to inflict a small amount of pain to mix with the pleasure he took from her body.

Hooking her leg around his hip, Hazel shifted her pelvis into Drake's. His cock slipped under the front hem of her a black slip to press insistently against her satin-clad cunt. The breath left her in a rush when the head pressed her clit and danced around it as they moved against each other. "Sonofabitch!" Hazel's muscles contracted when a swift, but incredibly intense orgasm seized her. She wanted to scream, wanted to thrash wildly and shriek at the top of her lungs. Instead, she fastened her mouth at the juncture of Drake's neck and shoulder and bit. Hard.

His grunt followed, but instead of pushing her away, he pulled her more tightly to him, gripping her hair painfully. His hips thrust into her belly, then he shifted so that his cock slipped between her legs, rubbing her clit insistently with every stroke he made.

Over and over, Drake plunged between her legs, his arm tightening around her head. His cock pulsed and twitched. When another orgasm exploded

over her, Hazel felt something warm trickle down her leg and she realized he'd come with her, on her. He marked her with his scent as if to stake a claim on her.

They stood there a moment longer before Drake pulled away from her slightly. Kneeling before her, he lowered his head between her thighs and licked the damp flesh there, cleaning her, yet using no soap or water. Hazel suspected he meant to make her comfortable without removing his scent. He looked up at her, a puzzled expression on his face. Then, shaking his head, he stood and took her hand, leading her into the night without another word.

* * *

Hazel's head spun. What had she *actually* done? She had turned Drake into a dog, but she got the feeling there was more to it than that.

Drake never let go of her hand as they made their way back to their building, always keeping to the shadows. Morning traffic was beginning to pick up, and they were still several blocks away. When they hid under a bridge while a line of cars crossed, Hazel had time to really look him over. The light was still dim, but she could make out the powerful, chiseled contours of his body. She had never seen a man to match him. Muscles played across his back as he crouched low to the ground, watching the early morning commuters and occasionally glancing at the lightening sky.

"If we don't hurry, we're going to be seen by everyone." Drake was clearly upset, if his grumbling was any indication. Of course, Hazel couldn't blame him. Sexy as he was, she still suspected he was uncomfortable with his state of undress. Not to mention the fact that she was an escapee from the county jail.

"If you had clothes on, I seriously doubt anyone would notice us."

Drake turned to her. Yep, he was agitated. With her, at the moment. Hazel cringed when he looked at her.

"You saw me shift the first time. My clothes shredded. I can't transform into my wolf self and keep my clothes."

"But -- but *I* transformed you. I was trying to cast a spell on myself, and I somehow turned you into a dog."

"Wolf, Hazel. I'm a werewolf. I'm not a *weredog*."

"Whatever." Hazel shrugged. "Do you mean you can turn into a dog --"

"Wolf."

"Err, wolf, whenever you want to?"

Drake smiled. "It's not exactly that simple, but yes."

"But how --"

“Can we not do this *now*, Hazel? I’m naked, it’s almost daylight, and you’re a fugitive from justice. There are more important things to think about at the moment.”

“Sorry.” Hazel thought for a moment while Drake resumed his watch, presumably looking for a lull in the traffic so they could make a break for it.

“By the way, how are we going to cover my jail break?”

Drake turned back to Hazel and grinned. “Don’t worry. I’ll think of something.”

When the road was deserted once more, Drake took Hazel’s hand and continued on. In the morning light, he seemed like a mythical creature. The erection he sported reinforced that thought. His cock was as huge as the rest of him. And, oh, what a creature it was! Hazel might be a technical virgin, but she’d seen enough to know that Drake sported a monster between his legs. It was hard for her to concentrate on where she was going because all she could do was stare at him. His cock, when she could, his ass, his broad back, rippling with muscles... he was simply scrumptious!

His whole body was alert. He seemed to be more aware of his surroundings than the average person. He sniffed the breeze several times and he even cocked his head a time or two, listening to something she couldn’t hear.

Oh. My. *Gawd!* The man was a *pooch!* He really *was* a dog, err, wolf, err, canine. Whatever.

The point was he wasn’t exactly human.

But did she honestly care?

She’d figure that out later. Right now, there wasn’t much she *could* figure out other than how much her fingers itched to play grab-ass with those tight buns of his. She wondered how much that would affect his concentration.

The route he led her through the town was winding and always in the shadows but eventually led back to their apartment building. The sky was lightening to early dawn by the time they entered his apartment via the fire escape, and Hazel was beginning to droop. Even her surge of lust couldn’t be sustained through her fatigue.

“What are we going to do about Ralph?”

“Sheriff Price?” Drake grinned. “I’ll get Jake to take care of him. I’m sure there’s a law against wrongful imprisonment.”

Hazel sighed as she sat down on the couch. Her eyes felt like someone had thrown sand into them.

“You’re tired.”

Drake’s observation wasn’t a question. Hazel knew there would be no lying to him on that subject. Hell, she probably looked as tired as she felt. She smiled. “Yeah. It’s been a while since I pulled an all-nighter. I guess I’ll head

back to my own apartment.” Hazel stood and reached out her hand to Drake. “Thanks for coming for me.”

Drake grinned. “Thank you for coming for me. Twice.”

“I -- I -- err --” Hazel felt the flush start at her breasts and move up her face rapidly. “I didn’t mean it *that* way! I mean --” She took a much needed gulp of air. “-- I mean, thanks for breaking me out of jail.”

Drake took her offered hand. Pulling her to him, Drake wrapped his other hand around her waist, holding their intimate position when Hazel would have pulled back. Her clothed body pressed against his nude one, and Hazel felt another surge of lust.

She couldn’t say anything. She couldn’t even keep her eyes on his face. The muscles of his chest beckoned her eyes and her fingers. His chest was covered lightly with black and silver hair that was soft and silky to the touch. She dragged the fingers of her free hand through the curls, fascinated that his chest could look so hard yet feel so soft. Muscles bunched beneath her touch, and she thought she heard a growl deep within him.

When she finally raised her gaze to his face, he looked as savage as any beast she’d ever seen.

“If I didn’t trust my senses enough to know you were a virgin, I’d swear you were driving me crazy on purpose.” Drake ground his cock into her belly to make his point.

“I’m sorry.” Her voice squeaked and she would have jumped away from him if he hadn’t held her tightly to him.

“Don’t be.” He grinned. This time, it was feral -- a predator on the edge of control. “Unless, of course, you still plan on returning to your apartment.”

“Well --” Hazel fidgeted. “It *would* be the first place Ralph would look for me. It might not be wise to place myself where he could find me easily.”

“Good choice.”

Drake scooped her up and took her to his bed. His intense gaze bore down on her. Did she really want this? Was she ready?

“If you’re going to leave, Hazel, you’d better go now.”

“No.” She had to do this *sometime*, and she somehow knew that Drake would be an attentive lover. He’d definitely make sure she got pleasure out of this. “I’m just nervous.”

Drake mounted the bed at her feet, kneeling astride her ankles. Running his hand up the length of her legs, he pushed her dress up her hips and hooked his fingers in the waistband of her panties. “Trust me, Hazel.”

Hazel raised her hips so he could drag the silk down her legs. She knew she should say something witty, but she was having trouble stringing two thoughts together, much less words. Deciding sometimes silence is golden,

she simply closed her eyes and let nature take its course. Her body dictated her actions, not her thoughts.

Drake slid her black slip off her body easily, caressing each breast as he went. Hazel's groan surprised her. She never expected anything to feel so good as Drake's hands on her body.

When she was as naked as him, Hazel was prepared for anything other than what actually happened. Drake simply kissed her mouth once, rolled over to lie beside her, pulled her bare bottom against his erection and covered them both with the sheet.

For a moment, Hazel just laid there, Drake's arms wrapped securely around her. Her body tingled where he touched her. Even so, her eyelids were heavy and her limbs sore from sitting in that stupid cell.

"Um, Drake?"

"Hum?"

"I thought we were, err, you know."

"We are."

She turned her head to look at him over her shoulder. "I may be a virgin, but I know what having sex is and we are *not* having sex."

He grinned. "Well, not right at this moment, but we will."

"I don't understand." No man she knew in this same situation would do what he was doing.

"You're tired. I'm still somewhat under the influence of both your spell and the Halloween blue moon. I think we'll both enjoy things more after we've had a few hours to rest."

"Oh." Hazel didn't know what else to say. He wasn't going to have sex with her now. Disappointment didn't even begin to cover how she felt.

As if he'd read her mind, Drake flexed his hips, his cock burrowing between the cheeks of her ass. "Don't worry, my beautiful witch." He kissed her neck. "I'll give you all the carnal knowledge you need." He palmed a breast.

"Once we've both rested --" He flexed his hips again. "-- when we can more appreciate each other."

Hazel shivered, goose flesh popping out all over her body. "This is torture. You're into that sadistic shit, aren't you?"

Drake's chuckle vibrated through her body where it touched his. "I have no idea what you're talking about. I simply believe in making each experience as pleasurable as possible. Your first time should focus on you, and you can't fully enjoy it as tired as you are." He shifted to bring her even closer to him, wrap his arms more securely around her. "I refuse to let anything keep you from fully enjoying it."

"Well." Hazel snuggled into his arms. "When you put it that way, how can I

object?”

Chapter Six

How could she object? What the *fuck* had he been thinking? Hazel slept soundly. Squarely on top of him, her legs straddling his hips, her temptingly wet cunt enfolding the length of his cock with its lips. All he'd have to do was shift his position slightly and flex his hips and he'd be fully imbedded inside her.

He groaned.

He wished he hadn't thought of that.

Thank God it was well into the morning and the full moon was no longer a problem. He was back in control of his animal self, but he could feel a tickling sensation inside him. It was a sensation he never thought he'd feel except on those rare blue moons. True, the previous evening was just such an event, but that need to transform he associated with that damned itching always faded with the light.

Not so this morning. That sensation seemed to be centered on the close proximity of the woman wrapped around him...

Could it be that simple?

He tightened his arms around Hazel reflexively. This was his woman. His *woman*. The need to shift without the presence of the moon was supposed to mean he'd found a mate, and to drive him to *mate* with her as soon as possible. Was that what was happening to him?

He could feel the stupid grin spread across his lips. Drake Cole had found his mate. And she was a witch.

* * *

Screaming woke Hazel. She was a virgin, in the most technical sense, but she'd figured out long ago about orgasms. Or at least she *thought* she'd figured them out.

Drake had latched his lips onto her cunt and was sucking and licking for all he was worth. Hazel tangled her fingers in his silky black and silver hair and pulled him to her as hard as she could. She screamed and screamed, bucking and grinding and wrapping her legs around his head for good measure.

The waves seemed to go on and on and on before diminishing to a sizzling, pulsing throb. When her body was again on a normal keel, Hazel simply

went limp.

Which was probably a good thing, considering it had to be tough for Drake to breathe.

But Drake didn't come up for air. Instead, he simply shifted his position and settled in to feast. One finger slid into her, then two. He glided them gently within her body, only to retreat and start over again. His tongue gently flicked her clit, seemingly mindful of its oversensitivity.

"Oh, God. I can't move." Hazel's body felt nice and tingly, but heavy as lead. The chuckling emanating from between her legs confirmed the fact that Drake didn't particularly care.

"Then just relax and enjoy."

Drake's free hand wandered up her body, finally resting on her breast and kneading gently. Her breath caught when he plucked the nipple to a taut peak, and she arched her back, encouraging him to do it again. He complied with the other breast, while his morning beard scratched her inner thighs erotically and enhanced her pleasure. When they finished, she knew his mark would be left on her.

Pleasure built within her rapidly. She hadn't even recovered from the first orgasm and another was simmering just beneath the surface. When she was just about to fall from the precipice Drake had taken her to, he pulled back and she couldn't breathe. Thinking he didn't realize he'd stopped just as she was about to come, Hazel gritted her teeth and gripped the sheets, concentrating on moving air through her lungs.

Drake started nipping and licking again. All around her pussy, her clit, and back again in just the right places with just the right amount of pressure. His hand never stopped its wandering over her upper body and his fingers never left her cunt for long. The internal massage he performed on her was driving her wild. She couldn't believe how wonderful this was! He seemed to know exactly which buttons to push. Once again she just *knew* she was about to come, and once again, Drake pulled back.

Hazel couldn't stop the groan when the tingling in her groin faded.

"What's the matter, love?" Hazel didn't buy that innocent sounding question for an instant.

"Somehow, I have the feeling you know exactly what you're doing."

"I have no idea what you're talking about, Hazel." Drake's grin was positively wolfish. "Is there something you need that I'm not doing? All you have to do is ask."

Hazel managed to rise up on her elbows and glare at him peeping up from between her legs. Her intimate moisture glistened on his mouth and chin. That particular sight only made things worse. She groaned again and fell

back to the bed. “You’re trying to kill me, aren’t you?”

Drake didn’t say a thing, he just took another wet lick from pussy to clit.

Hazel jumped and cried out. “Good God!”

“Definitely ‘good’.”

He dipped his head again, and Hazel honestly thought she’d die from the pleasure he created within her before he lifted his head again. His hands continued to stroke her from within and without, all serving to tighten the coil of tense, ever present bliss. Still, she didn’t come.

She tried to pull him up her body, to tell him without words what she wanted, but Drake simply wrapped his forearms and hands around her thighs, holding her open for his mouth, and teeth, and tongue. Always, he pulled back just before her climax overtook her.

“Drake, if you don’t let me come soon, I swear I’ll turn you into a toad.”

Hazel barely recognized her own voice. She was breathless, her tongue felt too large for her mouth, and her throat was dry. Her breathing was erratic and too fast, as was her heart rate. Drake’s effect on her bordered on insanity.

“All you had to do was say so.” Oh, she *so* wanted to wipe that smirk off his face!

It took only a couple of seconds for Drake to slip on the condom before he kissed his way up her body. His tongue delved into her belly button and trailed upward, wrapping around each nipple before finally plunging into her mouth. He kissed her hungrily, and she clung to him. Her toes curled into the sheets, and she gripped his hips with her bent knees. His cock rested in the cleft of her pussy and gently but persistently rubbed her clit as he rocked his hips back and forth.

“Are you ready, little witch?”

“Will you do it already?” Hazel trembled with need and excitement. If he didn’t hurry, she might well die from this experience, if she didn’t kill him first.

He shifted his position slightly and the head of his cock pressed against her opening, but did not invade her.

“As wolf of the moon, I become familiar to this witch.” His muttered words sounded formal, but Hazel didn’t have time to contemplate them before he took her mouth again. He slid into her slick cunt easily when he kissed her. The expected pain was only minimal and replaced almost immediately with exquisite pleasure. The slow, rhythmic thrusting of his hips never wavered. His gaze never left hers, as if he was looking for any signs of discomfort from her.

Hazel smiled and reached up to stroke his cheek. “I’m okay, Drake.”

“You’re sure? I don’t want to hurt you.”

“You didn’t.” She met his thrust with her own to emphasize her point. “Now, are you going to fuck me, or play around all day?”

Drake grunted before answering her question. “I never intended to fuck you, Hazel.” Before she could utter a word, he flipped them, rolling to his back and situating her astride his hips. Crossing his arms behind his head, he grinned. “I intended for *you* to fuck *me*.”

The rush through Hazel’s body was unbelievable. What he was suggesting was the most erotic thing she had ever heard. Yeah, it was old-fashioned, but Hazel always thought of sex with the man as the aggressor. To be in control of her own pleasure, of his pleasure, was something she never thought about. It was a daunting task, but one she was more than willing to take on.

Hazel placed her palms flat against his hair-dusted chest. His nipples perked and pebbled beneath her fingers. For a while, she didn’t move. She wanted to savor every moment, to remember every second.

His muscles jumped beneath her, and he flexed his hips, his hands coming from behind his head to rest on her thighs. “You are truly... bewitching,” Drake said. The comment should have been funny, but it was anything but. She could see in his eyes he was sincere.

“So, maybe I’m not such a bad witch after all.” Hazel giggled.

“Oh, you’re not a bad witch.” Drake’s voice was tight, strained when he spoke. “You just need some carnal knowledge.”

Hazel bounced about the time that Drake surged upward and they both cried out. Drake’s fingers digging into Hazel’s legs created the perfect amount of pain to mix with the pleasure where their bodies joined.

“Oh, God.” Hazel’s voice wavered unsteadily. She moved again, several times.

“I second that.”

Hazel arched her back, offering her breasts. She wasn’t disappointed. Pulling and tugging at her nipples, Drake drove her to the very edge of sanity, but it wasn’t enough. They met each other faster and harder, never taking their eyes off the other.

Hazel cried out in frustration. “Damn it! I didn’t know sex was so *frustrating!*”

Drake growled from beneath her and thrust one hand between them, flicking her clit.

“Fucking hell!” The orgasm that overtook Hazel was nothing short of nuclear. She danced on Drake’s dick until the spasms faded and she was left with a warm tingling in her pussy.

Drake flipped them once again, never parting their joined bodies. The

sensations in Hazel's cunt never died, but grew stronger again with their new position.

"Moon and stars, you feel good!" Drake looked strained. His face was red, and the veins at his neck and temples stood out in stark relief. "I don't know how long I can hold back." He stopped moving, a helpless look on his face. "Hazel..."

She didn't know exactly what was going on, but she knew what he needed. Her. Her body. Sex, hard and aggressive. He looked like a wild beast. She was scared, but more excited than she'd ever been in her whole life. This experience far exceeded her wildest expectations.

"Take what you need, Drake." Hazel caressed his cheek. "I'll be okay." She didn't have to offer twice.

Drake surged forward with a roar. Hazel bent her knees, resting her feet on his calves for leverage. She met every thrust with one of her own -- she had to. She could do nothing less than give him exactly what he needed, and a passive lover didn't seem appropriate.

He never took his eyes from her. As he moved within her in ever increasing thrusts, his breath blew over her more and more rapidly and sweat glistened on his forehead. Drake growled and latched his mouth to her neck as he fucked her. She cried out in surprise and pleasure when his teeth scraped her shoulder. Arching her neck, Hazel offered herself to him. Something in her trusted him more than she'd ever trusted anyone in her life. Besides, she was on the verge of another orgasm, and she'd be damned if she'd let fear get in the way of it.

Over and over he slammed his cock into her cunt. His balls slapped her ass, and that sound was accompanied by his growls and her whimpers. She whipped her head to the side and he latched on to her shoulder more firmly. She dug her nails into the cheeks of his ass and urged him into her harder, faster, meeting him halfway, adding her own urgency to his.

When she came, she screamed.

And screamed and screamed and screamed.

Drake roared his own climax, giving one last, hard thrust and joining their bodies together tightly. Hazel opened her eyes as he made the last surge and caught his gaze.

What she saw should have not only alarmed her, but disgusted her as well. Drake's teeth lengthened and his eyes glowed a beastly yellow. A light dusting of fur spread across his face, and his nose and mouth lengthened slightly. His fingers dug into her back and she realized that claws had sprouted.

He was changing.

“Drake?”

“I -- Hazel, I’m sorry...” He closed his eyes and took several deep breaths.

“I don’t think I can keep from shifting.”

She smiled. “It’s okay, Drake. I’m not going to freak.”

He barked a short laugh, and it was *really* a bark. But it must have been the tension break he needed because he regained control and, in a few moments, returned to his human form. Still imbedded deeply within her pussy.

He lowered his mouth to her neck once again, this time to gently lick and kiss the damage he must have done. It stung, but she didn’t really mind.

“I didn’t intend to hurt you, Hazel.”

“I know you didn’t, but I can’t complain.” She guided his face to hers and kissed him softly. “I enjoyed myself very much. Thank you.”

“For what? Scaring the wits out of you? Almost completely turning into a -- a *dog* while we made love?” He rolled off her and raked his fingers through his hair as he lay on his back. “Well, I wanted your first time to be memorable --”

“And it was.” She sat up, looking down at him. “Just think. Years from now we’ll look back on this and have a good laugh.”

He looked at her like *she* was the one who’d almost changed into an animal.

“You’ve *got* to be kidding. What could you *possibly* find humorous about this situation?”

Hazel couldn’t help herself. She giggled. Just one little sound, but once out, it unleashed a tide of uncontrollable laughter. Brushing tears from her eyes, she clutched her aching sides and pulled her knees to her chest. “Oh, God! You should have seen it from my vantage point, Drake. You almost turned into the Big Bad Wolf! All I needed was a red cape and a little picnic basket and --”

“That is *not* amusing, Hazel.” He looked disgruntled, but she couldn’t help herself.

“Of course it’s not amusing.” She broke out in giggles again. “It’s damned funny!”

“Hazel.”

“Oh, Drake, lighten up. I just lost my virginity and it was the most incredible experience of my life.” She kissed him firmly. “Now, let’s do it again.”

His eyes widened. “You want to do it *again*? After what just happened?”

“Of course.” She grinned, mischief on her mind. “But this time, I get to pick the position.”

His slow grin started butterflies fluttering in her stomach. “You do, do you?”

“Mmhum.” She crooked her finger, beckoning him to her. When he reached out for her, she turned and presented her ass to him and looked back over her

shoulder. "Doggie style."

* * *

Drake took her up on that. He had her more ways than he thought possible. In fact, he was pretty sure they added several pages to the Kama Sutra. Though he'd become jaded over the years, he'd found a whole new enjoyment of sex with Hazel.

He'd also learned what it meant for a werewolf to have a mate. Every time he got close to orgasm, he could feel the wolf raise his head. It was as if his wolfen self had the same need to acknowledge his mate as his human self did. No wonder his brothers of the moon had such difficulty controlling the wolf when with their mates.

Once he'd pledged himself to her, there was no turning back. He was hers, whether or not she was his. At its best, their relationship would give them both great advantages -- he could draw on her power as a witch when necessary, and she would have a wolf familiar, not to mention the best sex imaginable. At its worst, he would be her slave -- at her beck and call -- and she would be free to seek her pleasures wherever she chose.

For an alpha wolf always in control of his destiny, the thought was disconcerting.

Hazel stretched beside him and he wrapped his arms more securely around her. Snuggling closer, his new mate snored softly. He wondered how she'd react when she found out.

* * *

Every muscle in her body ached deliciously. Hazel would have groaned if she hadn't been afraid it would hurt. Still, she couldn't keep the silly grin off her face. She'd just made love to the most stunningly sexy man she'd ever seen, and he'd not only seen to her pleasure, but he'd pushed her boundaries farther than she'd ever imagined.

Drake's warmth seeped into her back, and she sighed. His arms flexed around her, and he mumbled, and she realized he was still asleep. Carefully, she turned over to look at him. God! He took her breath away. He was the most perfect specimen of what the male form should be that she could have ever imagined.

God help her, what was she doing here? Self confidence she had in spades, but this man could have any woman he wanted -- probably *did* have any woman he wanted. What was she doing falling in love with him? It was a

surefire way to get her heart broken.

But God help her, she *did* love him. Had loved him since the first time she saw him, at Laura and Jake's wedding. Fantasies with Drake as the star had taken over her dreams since that day, and she was helpless to resist.

The fantasies paled in comparison with the real thing, though. Within Drake's arms, Hazel felt... protected. Complete. It was like they were two halves of the same whole. But did he feel the same way?

Her thoughts were interrupted by the buzz of the doorbell. At first Drake didn't move, but when the unwanted guest kept up the persistent buzzing and punctuated it with several knocks and shouts, he had no choice but to wake.

"Drake Cole! I know she's in there. Open up!"

Well, shit.

Ralph Price, sheriff of Mount Bell, had come to claim his prisoner.

Chapter Seven

I'm going to kill him. Drake couldn't believe this was happening. That bumbling oaf Price *dared* to try and take his mate! Never mind that he had absolutely no reason under the law to do so, but the man was a damned coyote. Drake *hated* coyotes. Coyotes were werewolves who chose not to follow the code of honor they swore when they took a mate. They never mated for life. They were sneaky. And they *stank*. Ralph was no exception. In fact, he probably smelled worse than most. Drake considered not letting him in, but thought better of it. Like it or not, Hazel was still under arrest and he'd broken her out of jail.

"Make it quick, Ralph," Drake growled when he opened the door.

"Where is she?" Ralph looked over Drake's shoulder, trying to see inside the apartment.

"It doesn't matter. She's not leaving."

"She's an escapee." Ralph's smile was as oily as his hair. "If I say she's leaving, she's leaving."

"How about I sue your ass for false arrest? Aren't you up for re-election this year?"

Ralph flinched, but Drake knew that coyotes were nothing if not persistent. They simply backed up and came at you from a different angle.

"Go ahead. In the meantime, I'll keep the little witch under lock and key where she belongs. You know how long it can take for the judicial system to

work. It could drag on for months and with her *lawyer* the one holding up the system, I doubt I'll have to release her."

"No judge in his right mind would remand her to custody on a charge like this." Drake paused a second, thinking. "What the hell is she charged with, anyway?"

"Bootlegging and disturbing the peace. Not to mention she already has one escape attempt on the books. The bootlegging charge should hold her, while the attempting escape should be enough to get her bail denied." He grinned. "Nothing you can do about it, wolf. She's going with me. Maybe she'll decide to live on the wild side. I need a new bitch, and I can already see her strapped down to my cross."

Drake wanted to lunge at the scrawny sheriff and break his fool neck, but he knew that would only land him in more trouble and he had to be free to get Hazel out of trouble.

"If you so much as even *think* about that again, I'll show you the meaning of the word 'wild.' You do *not* want to push me on this, Ralph." Drake deliberately didn't mention that he'd taken Hazel to mate. Hazel didn't know yet, and if she didn't want him, he had no intention of announcing that fact to the world. It was the only prudent thing an alpha wolf could do. "You just better pray she doesn't come into her power before I get her legally released."

Ralph's eyes narrowed. "What do you mean by that?"

Drake grinned. "She was a virgin. *Was* being the key word." God! An alpha wolf did *not* have to stoop to such vulgarity! Hazel would probably kill him. "She has no idea of her power potential. I figure you've got until nightfall before things start happening. After that, it's either get her to the Witches' Coven or watch your jail come down around your ears. Me personally, I kind of hope you choose the latter. I'd like to see you explain *that* to the city council. Most of *them* aren't creatures of the night and those that are really don't want to be exposed."

Ralph looked at Drake, probably sizing him up, then he barked a laugh. "No way that little girl has that much power in her. She's a bumbling little clown."

Clenching his fists to keep from pounding the living shit out of Ralph, Drake advanced on Ralph. "You keep thinking that and you'll let the whole damned state in on this little haven. Do you think the others will let you live if you take that away from us?"

Ralph stood toe to toe with Drake. Just like that stupid man not to realize the trouble he could get them all into. "You let me worry about that. Hand her over."

“The testosterone is getting a bit heavy, guys.”

Thank God Hazel was dressed -- in his shirt and sweats. Drake had a feeling Ralph intended to drag her out of there however he found her.

“I need you to come with me.” Ralph’s sneer made Drake want to vomit.

The man definitely had something other than truth, justice, and the American way on his mind.

“I trust my lawyer is allowed to come with me?” Hazel raised an eyebrow at Drake.

“The good sheriff has decided you should be held without bail. I think it’s ridiculous, but I have to make arrangements for a judge to hear my argument.” Turning to Hazel, he winced when he saw the hurt look on her face. “I’m sorry, Hazel. I’m trying to stop this mess, but I can’t be two places at once.”

Her smile was tight. “No problem. Do what you have to do.”

Ralph grabbed her arm as she headed for the door, pulled her hands behind her back and snapped a pair of handcuffs on her. Hazel’s beautiful face filled with shock and mortification.

“Come on, Ralph. Is this really necessary? She’s going quietly.”

“She escaped once. I can’t take the chance she’ll try again.” He winked at Hazel. “Besides, I like the possibilities this situation presents.”

If looks could kill, Ralph would have been six feet under -- or twelve or eighteen. Hazel and Drake both shot him identical looks of anger. The skinny little man laughed.

“Don’t worry, Drake. I’ll take good care of your little witch.”

Knowing Ralph was trying to goad him into doing something stupid, Drake simply crossed his arms over his chest and grinned. “Try not to turn him into a toad, Hazel. Keep in mind how hard that would be to explain.”

Hazel looked from one of them to the other, open-mouthed. “I -- ah,” she cleared her throat, “I’ll try not to.”

* * *

Déjà vu is a horrible thing sometimes. Here she was. In a jail cell. No cot or blanket. Only a brick wall, and Ralph Price stripping her with his eyes from his desk. Unfortunately, that’s where the similarities ended to her previous stay. This time, she was in the basement of the jail and strapped to some medieval-torture-device-looking thing that held her off the ground by her wrists. Her ankles were tied to posts that spread her legs wide apart, and there was a bar at the small of her back that thrust her middle forward and stretched her shoulders to the point of pain. She had been held that way for

about half an hour and her wrists ached and burned. There would definitely be bruises.

That wasn't the worst of it either.

The good sheriff had changed his clothes, and the difference was *not* an improvement. He was dressed in leather -- though not much of it -- spiked liberally with metal studs. He had leather, calf-high boots, and leather Speedo-looking trunks that hooked to two leather straps crossing over his chest. Oh, and leather gloves and a leather half hood.

The man was *very* fond of leather.

Too bad it wasn't fond of him. With his pale, hairless, chicken-skinny legs and knobby knees, and farmer's tanned arms and pale chest with a mat of hair in the center of his sternum and nowhere else, he looked slightly worse than ridiculous.

What an awful day. Thank God she was still dressed, although she had a horrible feeling that would change soon.

At the moment, Ralph stood a few feet away from her with a flogger -- yeah, it was leather too -- in one hand and slapping against the other. The grin on his face was anticipatory, and the slight bulge in his briefs left no doubt as to what he was anticipating.

"Drake says you're limited in your sexual knowledge. Let me show you all the deliciously painful things I'm sure he didn't."

"How about we don't and you let me go home?" Hazel was nervous. How far would the little man go? Surely he wouldn't rape her. He was the *sheriff* for crying out loud!

"I can't let you go home. You ran away." He wagged a finger at her. "That was very, very naughty."

Hazel rolled her eyes. This was so clichéd, she would have laughed if it had been happening to someone else. "Okay, I promise not to do it again."

"Not good enough. You've been a bad little girl. I'm going to have to show you what happens to bad little girls." He slapped the flogger on his bare thigh and let out a surprised yelp. "Ow!"

She tried not to snicker, she really did, but it slipped out anyway. Not exactly the smartest thing she'd ever done. He looked at her, anger and lust in his eyes, and she knew she was in trouble.

Slinking toward her, he reminded her of an animal who thought to play with his helpless prey before he moved in for the kill. "Thought that was funny, did you?"

Swallowing, she said, "Uh, well, yeah. It *was* funny." She stuck her chin up in defiance.

"I think it's time I taught you a lesson." Ralph advanced on her and

something inside her snapped... just as the door to the isolated room burst open.

Chapter Eight

The second Drake stepped into the little room, he knew he was going to have to kill Ralph. But first, he'd make him suffer for each bruise on Hazel's beautiful body. The only surprise was that she was still fully clothed. The next second, he realized what was about to happen. Hazel looked mad as hell. What he'd said to her before she left with Ralph came screaming back at him and he said the first thing that came to mind.

"Hazel! Don't turn him into a --"

"Ribbit. Ribbit."

All that leather lay in a pile at Hazel's feet. In the crotch of the trunks, a little blob jumped, never quite freeing itself.

Neither Hazel nor Drake said anything for a few heartbeats. Then, Hazel sighed. "Well, it looks bigger now than it did before."

Drake approached the jumping shorts with caution. Did toads have teeth?

"Ribbit. Ribbit."

Carefully, he nudged the scrap of black leather and, sure enough, a little brown toad jumped away from Hazel. Pausing to look back over its shoulder, the large toad bounced its butt out the opened door.

"Ohmygod!"

"It's okay, Hazel."

"No, it's *not* okay! I just turned the sheriff into a *toad*! How am I going to explain this?"

"You're not." Drake took a step toward her. "You won't have to. Ralph will go to the Witches' Coven and they'll fix him. Well --" He chuckled. "-- once they've had a good laugh at his expense." He looked Hazel up and down. *Damn!* She looked scrumptious! He wasn't normally into bondage, but seeing her stretched out, her breasts thrust forward, her pussy open for his, err, viewing -- well, it would be once he removed her clothing. "All you need to worry about is how long it will take me to adjust these straps to a little more comfortable level before I, uh, adjust your clothing." He held up his hand, thumb and forefinger only slightly apart. "Just a little bit."

* * *

“Uh, Drake?” Hazel tried to ignore the surge of lust that shot straight to her pussy. Would he really strip her down while she was tied up? “Shouldn’t we be getting out of here?”

His grin was nothing short of predatory. “Why? We’re secluded. If I hadn’t possessed the senses of a wolf, you two wouldn’t have been disturbed for a very long time.”

“Uh, yeah. Well, wouldn’t you have a better time if I could participate?”

“Nope. I think I like you just the way you are.”

“But what if I don’t want to stay like this?”

Again, that wolfish grin. “You’d be a little more convincing if I couldn’t smell you from across the room. I’ll bet your cunt is dripping, and I didn’t smell it before I suggested this little foray into the depraved.” He eased toward her.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.” Hazel was a little scared, but Drake was right -- she *was* excited.

“Oh, really?” He stopped inches from Hazel, trailing a finger down the row of buttons on her shirt before dipping into her sweats. Hazel hissed through her teeth and Drake raised an eyebrow. “Hmm. What have we here?”

Hazel knew what he was referring to. The flesh of his fingers slid easily against the wet, slick flesh of her cunt. “Ah, Drake?” Her voice was so shaky and breathless it didn’t even sound like her own. “Untie me and we’ll go back to your place -- or mine -- anywhere you want.”

“I ‘want’ right here, with you at my mercy.”

Hazel expected he would rip the shirt from her body. Instead he slid each button through the buttonhole carefully, never taking his eyes from hers. The edges of the shirt caught the tips of her breasts and his finger again traced the pattern it had earlier, but on her bare skin this time. She shivered, and a small whimper escaped her throat.

“Oh, God! Drake. What the hell are you doing?”

“I’m giving you a tour of the wilder side of sex. After all, I *am* a wolf.”

Her breasts were his first prey. He sucked and nipped, and she was powerless to do anything to stop him. Her back was bowed just enough for them to be offered for his hungry mouth, and he took them without hesitation. The underside received equal attention, as did the valley in between. In the exact center of her chest, he sucked vigorously. The accompanying sting told her he’d marked her.

And she rejoiced.

She *wanted* to belong to Drake, to know that he’d always be there for her. She also wanted him to belong to her. Being what he needed, doing what he wanted, was as strong a need in her as breathing. Hazel had no doubt he

would make any sexual experience most pleasurable, so why was she resisting?

Any thought she might have been entertaining was yanked from her mind when one of Drake's fingernails lengthened into a claw. Using it to cut away her sweats, it wasn't long before he had her naked except for her shirt.

Dipping another finger into her pussy, he pulled back the gleaming digit.

"Still deny you're excited?"

"Are you going to talk all day or fuck me?"

* * *

Fangs exploded in Drake's mouth and his claws lengthened as his sexual appetite was stimulated almost beyond endurance. Unexpectedly, his transformation went no further. He expected Hazel to recoil, to refuse him, fearing he'd hurt her -- or worse, become an animal as they had sex. She definitely wasn't ready for that. She didn't, however. In fact, her eyes got wider and she grinned.

"Do I look good enough to eat?" The cheeky comment wasn't exactly her style, but Drake could smell how turned on she was. She was definitely going to get into anything he wanted to do to her.

Which is how it should be with mates.

He knelt between her legs and took a long, wet lick. Her cunt was ambrosia. Nothing he had ever experienced could compare to the sweetness of her taste. Her whimper was the sweetest music his ears had ever heard.

"Mmmm. I'd say you were *definitely* good enough to eat."

Latching onto her cunt, he sucked. And sucked, and sucked, and licked, and sucked some more. By the time he'd finished, Hazel was no longer whimpering. She was screaming.

At the top of her lungs.

And Drake had had enough of this little game. He wanted more. He wanted to be buried balls deep inside that wet cunt.

Growling, Drake ripped the ties holding Hazel's wrists and ankles with his exposed claws. He had no intention of tying her when they had sex, but there was no reason he couldn't use Ralph's strange contraption to his own advantage. With one swift move, Drake spun Hazel around and she stumbled, landing with her belly over the bar -- just where Drake wanted her.

Jerking the snap on his jeans loose and the zipper down, he barely remembered to dig a condom from his back pocket and sheath himself before grabbing Hazel's hips and plunging into her with a sure, fast stroke.

She bucked against him, not fighting him, but moving with him. She looked

back over her shoulder and bared her teeth.

Over and over he sank into her. Harder and harder she pushed back against him, meeting his thrusts. He fisted his hands in her hair, pulling her slightly upright. "You are mine -- my mate of the moon. Accept me as such and give yourself into my keeping."

He knew she had no idea what he was talking about, but he couldn't stop himself from demanding it of her. When she hesitated, confusion on her lovely face, he let go of her hair and wrapped his arm around the front of her leg to find her clit and flick it.

She screamed again. "Yes! Anything you want. I can't stand this! Let me come!"

Her order was not that of a submissive woman, but of an alpha witch. She was every bit as powerful as he and, though she didn't yet fully realize her potential, she took to her new role with a vengeance.

Their previous mating was exploratory -- she followed where he led and everything was designed by Drake to maximize her pleasure and guide her where she needed to go. This time, Hazel became a demanding lover, giving as much as she took, but always pushing him where she wanted him to go. He smacked her ass, a sound whack leaving a pink handprint on the left cheek. "Is this the way you want it?"

"Yesss!" Her hiss was animalistic, as were the shrieks and shouts coming from them both.

Over and over he slapped her ass, always leaving his mark, always with a positive response from her. Soon, their coupling was almost violent in its intensity. She gripped the bar at her waist for leverage; he held to her hips or upper thighs to pull her to him repeatedly.

"Oh, God, Drake! Fuck me! I'm coming!" Her shrieks filled the room, and her bucking became so vicious that Drake was seriously tested just trying to hang on to her.

"Do it. Come on my cock and milk my seed."

With all the strength left in his body, Drake fucked her. His whole being was ready to explode through the tip of his cock and into her grasping pussy. When she came, there was no way he could hold back. Spurt after spurt emptied into her body, and his shout mingled with her screams until they were spent. He collapsed on top of her, breathing as heavily as she was.

"Are you all right, Hazel?"

"I don't know." She laughed softly. "I think I may have strained something." Drake hugged her to him. "Me too, sweetie." He brushed her hair aside and kissed the back of her neck. "Let's get out of here."

"I'd love to, but you sort of made short work of my sweats."

“My sweats, and the shirt is long enough for you to make the ride home.”
“I hope you’re right. Otherwise, Sheriff Price can add indecent exposure to my list of offenses.”
“You could always fly us home on your broom.”
Hazel groaned. “Oh, you *had* to say it.”
“Well,” Drake stood and pulled her with him, “at least there’s no law against piloting a UFO without a license.”

* * *

The ride to their apartment building was probably the fastest ride Hazel had taken in her life. The sun was high in the sky, and the air had just the slightest touch of frost to it. When she got out of the car, her legs formed chill bumps, and all she could think about was that she hadn’t shaved them that morning and they probably felt like a porcupine.

Once they reached the safe haven of Drake’s apartment, he kissed her forehead. “Go freshen up, if you like. I need to make a phone call.”

Hazel wasn’t sure what to do. Should she kiss him? Should she simply go to the bathroom? What was the nature of their relationship at this point? She simply didn’t know. Drake must have seen confusion on her face because he stepped to her and framed her face with his hands.

“What’s wrong, Hazel?”

Laughing nervously, Hazel tried to duck her head and shrug him off, but he held gently, but firmly to her.

“Come on, Hazel. After what we’ve shared together, you can’t possibly be afraid to say what’s on your mind.”

She sighed. “I guess I just don’t know where we go from here. I don’t know what you want from me. Hell, I don’t know what *I* want from *you*.” She met his eyes and held them. “I just know that something special happened to me, and I’m not sure I’m ready for it to end just yet.”

Drake didn’t say a word. He slowly, carefully, gently descended his lips to hers and kissed her tenderly. “It’s not going to. Once all this is taken care of, I’ll explain everything.”

Hazel nodded. There was much they needed to discuss. Not the least of which was what the hell she was going to do about having turned the sheriff into a toad.

Oh well. It could wait. Right now, she needed to shave her legs.

Drake watched Hazel disappear into the bathroom. Though he had had his share of lovers, he had never shared his life with anyone. The fact that he was a werewolf prevented that. He was more than willing to change his life for Hazel, but he really *did* hope she wouldn't start taking over all his personal things, like using his razor to shave her legs or whatever.

Okay, so she could shave *whatever* with whatever she wanted to, but that wasn't really what he needed to think about right now.

Picking up the phone, he punched in Jake's number. He needed his partner's help.

"You're supposed to be in court, Drake. Where the hell are you?"

Drake winced. Shit. He *knew* he was forgetting something. "I had a little trouble last night, Jake."

"Yeah, well, I managed to talk Judge Bishop out of a contempt charge. You owe me. Big time."

"I know. Just like always, I guess."

The chuckle from the other end of the line let Drake know that his friend was glad, as always, to be able to help out. He just liked to pretend otherwise. "You remember Hazel Montgomery?"

"The friend of Irene's who claims she's a witch?"

"The very one. Only, she *is* a witch. And she turned Ralph into a toad."

There was silence on the line before Jake burst out laughing. "'Bout damned time. That man's had it coming for years."

"Yeah, but he had Hazel under arrest and I helped her escape. Twice."

"Why was she under arrest?"

Drake filled Jake in on the previous evening's activities, to which Jake had another good laugh.

"You're right, my friend. Ralph doesn't have a leg to stand on, but it's always better to be safe. I'll square things with Judge Bishop. He never liked Ralph anyway." There was a pause. "What are you going to do about Ralph? Those of us who understand won't be the least worried about it, but there are still people in Mount Bell, including my wife, who don't realize there really *are* things that go 'bump' in the night."

Drake chuckled a little, himself. "Let the Witches' Coven deal with him. If anyone can straighten him out, they can."

"And Hazel?" Jake's softly stated question rang in Drake's ears. What *was* he going to do with Hazel?

"I'll think of something."

"I just bet you will."

Chapter Ten

Once out of the shower, Hazel was loath to put Drake's borrowed shirt back on. Yes, it was Drake's, but at the moment, it smelled like Ralph. An image of him standing there in that ridiculous get-up flashed through her mind and she giggled.

Not finding a robe or extra shirt in the bathroom, Hazel wrapped a towel around herself and peeked out the bathroom door. She wasn't sure why she was shy now -- he'd seen her naked before -- but it seemed different somehow. Okay, so maybe "different" wasn't the right word. But she just *knew* something was about to happen between them sexually that would cross the boundary between a casual sexual relationship and something a lot more meaningful.

She was scared, but also excited.

Slipping into the bedroom to look for a shirt, Hazel missed the shadow in the corner until she shut the door and turned around.

Drake stood leaning up against a wall, splendidly naked, with his arms crossed over his chest. His expression was unreadable, but Hazel knew this was it. Whatever was about to happen would change her life forever.

"Lose the towel." His order was issued quietly, without force, but she could tell he meant business. Still, she hesitated. Did she want to do this -- whatever 'this' was?

"Why?" Her question emerged as more of a squeak than a spoken word.

"Because I need to see that lovely body of yours. I need to touch you. I need to make love to you." He straightened and took a couple of steps toward her, his eyes now showing his raging need. "Then, I need to fuck you until we both pass out. Will you let me?"

Swallowing, Hazel wasn't sure what to say. God, that was what she wanted, but she didn't think she could stand it when he decided he'd had enough and moved on to the next willing woman. "I can't."

"Why not?" His step never faltered. He knew exactly what he was doing, and he had no doubt he could accomplish whatever he set out to do.

"Because..." Hazel was beginning to panic a little, and tears threatened to spill down her cheeks. "Because I don't know if I can let you go when this is over. We've made no commitment to each other, and I refuse to push you into something you don't mean." When he simply smiled at her, she grasped the towel more firmly to her chest. "I mean it, Drake. You were my first. I

don't know how to separate sex and love. If I walk away now, I may be able to do so with my heart intact."

"What makes you think I can?"

She blinked, several times. "I beg your pardon?"

"What makes you think I can walk away, or let *you* walk away, and keep my own heart intact?"

Hazel opened her mouth to reply, but found she couldn't answer that question. Why indeed? He'd given her no reason to think it was all one-sided -- in fact, he'd done everything he could to make sure her pleasure was maximized.

"I need you, Hazel. Do you remember what I said the first time we made love?"

She thought a moment. What was it he'd said? Something that sounded very formal, but she hadn't had the chance to contemplate it at the time. Her eyes widened and she said, "'As wolf of the moon, I become familiar to this witch.' What does that mean?"

"It means, my little witch, that I gave you my life, my love, for as long as I draw breath."

He'd said something else, too. Something about her accepting him as her "mate of the moon." "Oh, my!" Hazel sucked in a breath. Then she narrowed her eyes. "You didn't do some crazy bullshit thing like take away my choice to accept or reject you as your 'mate of the moon' or whatever, did you?"

Drake laughed. "No, sweetheart. I tried to, to make myself feel better about what I'd given to you. I truly want to be your mate, but it's your choice. It will always be your choice."

"So what happens now, Drake?"

He grinned. "I make love to you. Then we'll see if you want to, or even if you *can*, take me as your mate. Now, drop the towel, Hazel."

She grinned. "Is this the 'making love' part?"

He snorted. "Yeah, this is the 'making love' part."

Turning, she looked over her shoulder at him as she stepped to the bed and climbed in. Giving him what she hoped was a seductive grin, she lay back and held up her arms to him. "No. You take it." When he stepped toward her, she added, "If you think you're man enough to satisfy what you find."

Was she *crazy*? She knew what she was doing would enflame him beyond reason, but she did it anyway. Something about having Drake on the edge of control excited her beyond belief and she simply *had* to sustain it. The wilder he got, the better she liked it.

And wild she was going to get, if the look in Drake's eyes was any

indication. In three quick steps, he reached her and whipped the towel from her body with a sharp, crisp motion. Settled himself between her legs, his groin rested in the cleft of hers, his belly to her belly, his chest to her breasts. “You drive me wild, little witch. But you’ll have to wait for what you want. I said I intend to make love to you first, and that’s exactly what I’m going to do.”

He reached for the nightstand and a condom package, but Hazel stopped him. “Not this time. I *am* yours, Drake. And you are mine. Make love to me.”

His mouth descended to hers and his tongue licked at the seam of her lips, seeking entrance. He pumped his hips rhythmically, as if he were already inside her, instead of merely rubbing her clit like mad with his fat cock. She expected he’d keep that up a while, then tease her as he’d done previously, but he didn’t. On one up stroke, he shifted his angle and was inside her with no effort whatsoever. He never missed a stroke. If not for the change in his eyes, Hazel might have thought he didn’t realize he had thrust inside her. She arched her back and bared her neck to him as she whimpered. “Impatient, are you?” Hazel managed to squeak out her question, not at all sure why she was pushing him so much.

“Asking for it, are you?” His chuckle sounded very strained.

“Apparently. What do you intend to do about it?”

He shifted his position slightly and maneuvered a hand between their bodies, found her clit and pinched it gently. “Come, witch. Now!”

Hazel was sure that they heard her screams in another zip code. Like Jupiter maybe! She couldn’t stop the thrashing of her body as it pumped convulsively into Drake’s, trying to get more from him, milking her own pleasure for everything he could give her. Drake bared his teeth and growled, never missing a stroke. The tendons and veins in his neck stood out as he roared at her, yet he didn’t come.

With one last, powerful surge, Hazel wrapped her legs around Drake’s hips and held him inside her as tightly as her muscles would let her. It was a few moments before she relaxed enough to let him go.

“Now,” he growled, “tell me what you want.”

Hazel took a deep breath and plunged in. “I want to know what I need to do to prove I can be your mate.”

He froze, predatory lust blazing in his eyes. Growling, he took her mouth again. Time after time, he surged forward, deep inside of her. Animalistic growls and grunts emanated from his throat and he nipped and scored her flesh with his teeth and nails. With several mighty thrusts, Drake’s cock pulsed and spasmed inside her, setting off her own orgasm once more. Her

body was exhausted, but she still wanted more. She *needed* more.

“Drake?” She tried valiantly to pull her mind from the sexually induced haze that had overtaken her body. She caressed his cheek, and his head descended to her right breast, pulling at the nipple gently, sensually.

He buried his face between her breasts and kissed her chest one last time before standing and pacing away from the bed a couple of steps before turning to face her again.

“To be my mate means that you accept all of me -- everything that I am. The wolf included.”

Hazel wasn't sure what response he expected from her, but the one she gave him apparently wasn't it. She couldn't help it. Uncontrollable laughter bubbled up inside her and she clutched her sides.

The disgruntled look on his face said it all, but he added his comment anyway. “That wasn't supposed to be funny, Hazel.”

“Oh, Drake!” God love him, he just didn't get it. Her giggles started all over again when she thought about all she'd been through with this wonderful, beautiful man. How could he possibly think she couldn't accept him -- all of him.

Drake's sullen expression helped Hazel get herself under control again, and she rose from the bed and crossed to him. Embracing him, she told him the only thing she could think of to ease his fears.

“When I was a child, my grandmother told me all kinds of fantastical stories. One was about the long line of witches in my family. The other was about their familiar counterparts. In all of those tales, the witch's familiar was also her husband.” Hazel smiled, backed away from him and sat on the bed. “The familiars always came in the animal form of canines or felines, and once the familiar and the witch chose each other for a mate, nothing else mattered to them.” Scooting her bottom back on the bed and placing her feet on the edge, Hazel spread her legs and lay down. “Love me, Drake. Love me with all that you are.” His growl vibrated through her body. “You've had me as a human and as a mixture of human and wolf. Complete the cycle and let your wolf self take what he needs.”

“My wolf self doesn't ‘make love,’ Hazel.”

“Then fuck me, my beautiful, beautiful wolf.”

Chapter Eleven

The savage lust in Drake's eyes told Hazel all she needed to know about his

state of mind. Her pussy flooded. This promised to be one wild fucking ride! In the blink of an eye, Drake shifted. The very large black and silver wolf approached her with an identical look in his eyes. This was her Drake, but at the same time, a whole other side of him that she was about to know intimately.

The transformation might have been lightning-quick, but his approach to her was not. Because she lay flat on her back now, all she could see was the top of his head and ears, but when he reared up with his front paws on the bedside and dipped his head to her cunt, she really didn't care if she could see him or not.

The feel of his canine tongue on her clit was incredible. He licked her rapidly from ass to clit and everywhere in between, all the while growling and snarling. She reached between her legs and pulled his furry head to her by his ears as she came harder than ever. Her body seized and her lower body pushed against the contraction. A gush of fluid ejected from her cunt and Drake lapped it up as quickly as it was expelled.

When she was once again in control of her body, Drake nosed her leg, pushing her back. Hazel obeyed. Her limbs felt like lead, but she moved as he directed her with the pressure of his snout and body.

Not knowing what other position to take, she got to her knees with her elbows resting on the bed, her ass high in the air. The thought of what she was about to allow to happen to her was probably the most taboo thing she could think of, but it seemed right. With her and this wolf. With anyone else, she could never have entertained the thought. But this was her mate! Chosen by her, as he chose her for himself.

His claws at her back and hips let her know he'd mounted her. The wet lick at her neck soothed her. The fur caressing her from neck to rump served as a reminder of the nature of their relationship. All of it was the most erotic thing she had ever experienced.

She looked over her shoulder at him as he entered her. The eyes shining back at her glistened with intelligence and lust. Once he was fully embedded within her pussy, Drake started to move. His thrusts hurt with their depth and strength, but Hazel reveled in it all. She couldn't take her eyes off of him and he held her gaze for a while before looking away, then back, then away again.

It took Hazel a moment to realize he wanted her to look in another direction, and when she did, she caught their reflection in the dresser mirror beside the bed. The sight took her breath away, and triggered another orgasm.

She bucked against the furry beast at her back, meeting him thrust for thrust. The girl in the mirror mimicked her actions and the wolf fucking her

wrapped his forepaws around her hips and laid his muzzle across her shoulder before biting the juncture between her neck and shoulder none too gently. Pumping into her with enthusiasm and force as if she were a bitch wolf in heat, the canine fucked her with a savage intensity. Hazel screamed once more as she came. She could feel Drake swelling inside her and knew when he came they would be tied together until his cock went flaccid.

“God, Drake! Come in my pussy. Come in my pussy!”

There was a growl, followed by a series of yelps, and Hazel felt the heat of the great wolf’s cock swell inside her, tying them together when his come exploded inside her. Her cunt filled to overflowing and she felt some of it trickle down her thighs.

In mid-yelp, Drake shifted to his human form, and the sound turned to a loud groan. He collapsed on top of her, her knees sliding from under her so that she lay flat on her belly. Drake lay there only a few seconds before rolling to his side, taking her with him. He was still deeply embedded in her cunt, and obviously had no intention of changing that position. Pulling the cover over them, Drake wrapped his arms around Hazel and her last thought before sleep claimed her was, “Wouldn’t Grandma just die if she heard about this.”

* * *

They must have been so exhausted that both of them slept right through the night, because when Drake woke, Hazel was still snugly tucked into his chest. His cock had long since slipped out of her, but with waking, he felt it “waking” as well. How could he possibly have sex so many times in one day? At this rate, his dick would fall off before he could actually marry Hazel, and that would end the honeymoon really quick.

The silly grin spreading across his face brought with it a chuckle that bordered closely on a fit of giggles.

He did *not* giggle.

Beside him, Hazel stretched and yawned. Making a face, she put her hand over her mouth. “Gomphmng.”

“What’s the matter?” He knew he still had that grin on his face, but he didn’t care. Besides, she was adorable when she first woke up.

“Nuttin.” Hazel rolled to the edge of the bed and climbed out.

“Wait. Where are you going?”

She turned back to him, smiling, but grimacing just the same. “Morning breath.” Then she disappeared into the bathroom down the hall. Drake chuckled.

Stepping inside his own bathroom, Drake brushed his teeth and washed his face before he stopped to look in the mirror. He grinned. His hair was a wild, tangled mess, and his bare chest and shoulders bore red welts -- evidence of the fierce lovemaking of the previous day.

He looked damned good, if he said so himself. Growling, he struck a pose, pectorals and biceps straining with his effort. The sharp, stabbing pain in his left chest muscle reminded him of the workout he'd given it. He winced and grabbed his boob. He was right. He *had* strained something. Note to self: Hazel gets to be on top more often. The giggling from the other room reminded him that he'd not shut the door.

"Good morning, Hazel. I was just -- um --"

"Yeah." Hazel walked to him and wrapped her arms around him. "I know what you were just. I think it's cute."

Drake pulled back. "Hey, alpha wolves are *not* cute."

Standing on tiptoe and kissing his nose, she giggled. "This one is."

"Oh, you're *so* good for my ego." He rolled his eyes and exhaled through his nose. "What am I going to do with you, little witch?"

"Well, you could announce our partnership to the Witches' Coven. Since Grandma died before I chose a familiar, I don't have anyone to do that."

Drake kissed her gently on the mouth. "Since I'm an alpha wolf, and leader of my pack, they'll accept my account."

Hazel cocked her head. "You know how the coven works?"

"Of course. Do you?"

She looked away and sighed. "Not really. My Grandma died just before my twelfth birthday. She never talked about the coven, other than to say she'd had a falling out with them before I was born. All I know is that when she died, none of them took me as their student." She looked back. "I haven't seen or heard from them since."

"Wait a minute." He held her at arm's length so he could look into her eyes when he spoke of this. "You haven't had contact with other witches in this area?"

"Not since Grandma died. She was the only witch I've ever actually met."

"Well, shit." Drake wanted to be angry that the nosey busybodies had used him in such a way. Instead, he chuckled. They were just looking out for their own, after all, and they'd enlisted the help of the big bad wolf.

The more he thought about it, the funnier it seemed and it wasn't long before he was laughing so hard his eyes watered.

"Did I miss something?" Hazel looked truly perplexed.

Drake wiped tears from his eyes and wrapped Hazel securely in his arms.

"Honey, did you *ask* any of them to teach you?"

“Well, no. Grandma said a witch always chose her pupil, not the other way around. I figured if any of them were interested in teaching me, they’d come to me. Grandma said that a young witch, without a teacher, would attract one to her with her raw power.” She shrugged. “When no one came to me, I assumed that either I wasn’t powerful enough to attract someone to me, or whatever differences my Grandma had with them affected the way the coven felt about me.”

Bringing her hand to his lips, Drake nipped her wrist. Hazel yelped and tried to jerk her hand back, but Drake held fast and licked away the hurt. “Hazel, honey. How long have you known me?”

“That hurt, you ape!”

“It was supposed to. Now, answer the question.” He couldn’t help grinning when he thought how well the Witches’ Coven had manipulated the high and mighty alpha wolf.

“Since Jake and Laura’s wedding. Why?”

“Because, sweetheart, the Witches’ Coven charged me with watching over you since shortly after your grandmother died.” The shock on her face said all he needed to know. “I guess you didn’t know that.”

“I thought whatever had caused them to expel Grandma applied to me, too, since I never heard from anyone.” She looked lost, on the verge of tears.

“All this time. Why didn’t they say anything to me?”

“Because --” Drake hugged her close. “-- they were waiting for you to come to them.”

“Talk about not communicating.”

“Yeah.” He chuckled. “But they *were* looking out for you, making sure you didn’t end up in the clutches of a predatory witch. I’ve had your scent since you were twelve, though I never actually *met* you until Jake and Laura’s wedding. If anything had happened to put you in danger, I would have known and intervened.”

She smiled up at him. “So you’ve had my back covered all this time and never even introduced yourself to me?”

“I was trying to remain objective.” He’d been *trying* to stay out of her pants.

“So, what changed your mind?”

“The first night I smelled you masturbating.” He should have known then he couldn’t keep his distance for long. He’d had to seek out his own pleasure that night.

“Drake!” She swatted at him and she laughed.

“You’ll have to show me what you did sometime.”

“You’re *horrible*.”

“I’m horny.” It seemed to be a constant thing when he was around her.

She looked at him and smiled. “Me, too.”

“What do you want to do about it?”

She smiled coyly at him.

He knew *exactly* what he wanted to do. “Do you still have that Elvira costume?”

A huge grin spread across her face. “Just call me ‘Mistress of the Night’.”

The End

Marteeka Karland

Marteeka makes her home in Kentucky with her brat husband and her darling son. (Or is that the other way around?) Her family is her passion in life. She works as an Emergency Room Technician and has for the past eight years.

Marteeka’s been writing for most of her life, but only recently found erotic romance. This genre opened up a whole new world of possibilities for Marteeka and she is thriving on the endless promise of what is to come. Science Fiction has been her favorite topic since she saw her first episode of *Star Trek*. Now she combines Sci-Fi/Paranormal with Erotica -- she has found her place in the writing world.

Marteeka welcomes comments from her readers. You can contact her at mkarland@net-power.net