



Ready & Willing
by Selena Blake

Part Seven

Kaden strode up to Ava's door, still wondering how he'd been out maneuvered. She wasn't like most women he knew. Take away the mall, nail salons and Starbucks and they were outta there. No, she was different alright. She was determined, persistent. And while he was used to the tenaciousness that most *shewolves* exhibited when it came to thinks like sex, he wasn't used to waging war with a woman.

Ava wanted to look good in front of her father, but that was no surprise. For as long as he'd known her, she'd been trying to win Phillip's approval.

Not two seconds after he'd knocked did she open the door. Her delicious scent swirled around him and he once again noticed how lovely her eyes were. But then he let his gaze drop to delicate plaid shirt that hugged her breasts. Pearlescent buttons strained to hold her cleavage in check.

Okay, so it wasn't that tight, in the scheme of things, but it was certainly revealing enough. Especially the little V that revealed the swell of her breasts – dear God – it made him swallow.

Knowing he was oogling her and he would likely get caught doing so, he continued his evaluation. It wasn't that her shorts were *that* short. No. It was the way they molded to her thighs.

"Glad you could make it," she murmured in that pleased yet slightly sarcastic way she had. Very briefly, he noticed the bag behind her.

Please don't turn—

*Around...*the thought died as she turned and picked up the duffle bag, giving him a fine view of her backside. The way the denim hugged those twin globes of perfection... *Fuck*. He was royally screwed. So much for telling himself to keep his mind on the job at hand. Even his thoughts were disgustingly poetic.

As if to piss him off even more, she wore cowboy – cowgirl? – boots. Heaven help him. There would be no rest for him on this trip. He'd be slinging sick cowboys off her left and right...not to mention the aching hard-on in his jeans. He gave a few more mental curses for good measure.

Wordlessly, he took the bags from her, and headed back to his truck. He

heard the lock click behind him as he hoisted her gear into the bed of the truck.

“Rick and the other guys are already on the way,” he told her as she approached. As much as he tried not to notice the little details about her, he couldn’t help but appreciate the way her hair shimmered in the morning sunlight. Averting his gaze, he glanced over at her sports car. Not red, like he would have expected. No, he’d been surprised when she’d chosen a blue green color that reminded him of her eyes. Not that he’d ever mentioned that.

“Excellent. We can stop by a grocery store on the way.”

He crossed his arms over his chest and leaned against the bed of his truck. “Why?”

“So I can get ingredients for dinner,” she said, as though it were obvious.

He was quickly coming to realize that nothing was obvious where Ana Garnier was concerned. “You cook?” That was news to him.

She made a sound somewhere between a sigh and a laugh. Then the corner of her luscious mouth turned up in a way he was finding irresistible. She probably did it on purpose...

“You’ll just have to wait and see.”

She circled the truck and he was right behind her.

“You don’t have to do this. I’ll tell your dad that something more important came up.”

She pursed her lips for a moment as she stared up at him. Why did he feel like he’d just kicked a puppy?

“If you don’t want to ride with me, just say so, Kaden. I can take my car.”

He looked over at the convertible. Such a guy magnet. On one hand, he didn’t want to spend time alone with her. On the other, he didn’t want her to be able to drive into a ditch or get herself into some other sort of trouble.

Phillip would kick his ass.

“Just get in the truck.”

Eyebrow raised in censure, she opened the passenger door. He was prepared to give her a boost, no matter the cost to his libido, but with effortless grace she hopped up onto the step and swung herself into the cab. The click of her seatbelt was like the final nail in the coffin. They were stuck together. For better or worse.

Kaden hadn't said a word since they'd left the grocery store an hour ago. Ava didn't mind but wondered what he was thinking. She knew that he wasn't as unaffected as he wanted to seem. His heartbeat hadn't slowed since he'd shown up on her doorstep, not that he'd ever admit it. Even now she could hear the accelerated thump-thump-thump over the sound of the road.

He'd seemed genuinely surprised when she'd pulled out reusable bags and insulated grocery bags. He hadn't uttered more than a few words the entire time they'd been in the store, but she'd felt his gaze on her constantly. At the checkout counter, he'd paid before she had a chance to get her wallet out and reached for the bags. For a man who didn't seem to want her company he had sure been in a hurry to get her back to the truck.

Luckily, she had a few tricks up her sleeve, so long as she could keep a level head. For now, all she could do was stare out the window. California was a beautiful place. And with Kaden at the wheel, she got to enjoy the scenery going by. Rolling hills. Farms. Vineyards. Picturesque towns.

Before she knew it, they were turning down a gravel drive and passing under a tall sign with *River Fork Ranch* proudly displayed in wrought iron. The iconic sweep coming off the H gave the sign an elegant, yet rustic flare and hinted at the beautiful river cutting across the property. Her father had bought the place years ago, as a source of income. Cattle, milk, grains, and hay were all produced on the 25,000 acre farm.

Cattle grazed in the fields, unaware of the distress in the bunk house. In the distance, she saw a man on a four wheeler riding the fence line. When they

finally pulled up in front of the barn, she saw Rick and a bunch of other guys from the WhitePaw pack heading inside. Wesley, tall and dark haired, strode next to them.

A cloud of dust blew by as Kaden parked the truck. Wesley turned toward them and lifted a hand in greeting. Her silent companion was out of the truck, circling to her door as she unlatched it. Not wanting to hear his lecture, she jumped down from the truck and brushed by the sexy wolf.

“Wesley...it’s been a while.” She gave the ranch foreman a quick hug and stepped back. As usual, the hair on the back of her neck was standing on end. Kaden was probably glaring a hole in her back, but she wasn’t going to change her behavior to suit him. Contrary to his belief, her being here and the Alpha position had nothing to do with her reasons for coming to the ranch.

She’d known Wesley most of her life and she hated to see anyone sick or in pain.

“Sorry I couldn’t make it to the wedding yesterday,” he said in that slow, smooth way of his.

“Put us to work, Wes,” Kaden said, forgoing pleasantries.

Wesley merely raised an eyebrow.

“Don’t worry about it. I’m sure Mom will show you pictures next time you’re at the house,” Ava said. “I’m gonna go put the groceries away.” She backed away from the two men.

Kaden shook his dark head and started for the barn, tension radiating from him. He’d need to calm himself down so he wouldn’t spook the animals, but she wasn’t going to be the one to tell him that.

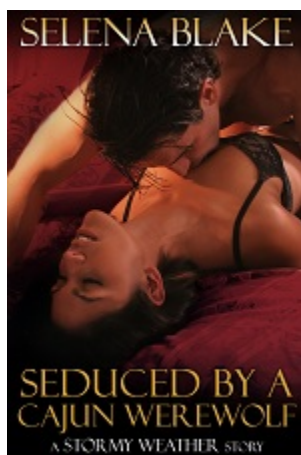
She watched him as he walked away. No matter how many times she told herself to keep her mind on the goal, she kept getting distracted. The way his jeans clung to his thighs and hugged his ass, it was no wonder she couldn’t keep her mind off him. And if she were honest, her mind wasn’t the only thing she wanted on him.

It'd take a miracle at this point to erase the imprint of tight denim encasing two of the longest, strongest legs this side of the Mississippi from her mind.

Darn. She needed a cold shower.

★ ★ ★

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About Selena

An action movie buff with a penchant for all things supernatural and sexy, Selena Blake combines her love for adventure, travel and romance into steamy paranormal romance. Selena's books have been called "a steamy escape" and have appeared on bestseller lists, been nominated for awards, and won contests. When she's not writing you can find her

by the pool soaking up some sun, day dreaming about new characters, and watching the cabana boy (aka her muse), Derek. Fan mail keeps her going when the diet soda wears off so write to her at selenablake@gmail.com. Visit her online at <http://selenablake.com> or become a friend at <http://www.facebook.com/authorSelenaBlake>

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