



## Ready & Willing

by Selena Blake

### Part Eleven

The wind carried Ava's hauntingly beautiful howl downstream. Kaden trotted out of the river and stopped in front of her. She looked up at him, her brown eyes brimming with liquid heat. Her tale patted the earth a few times before she let out another howl.

Feeling freer than he had in years, he threw his head back gave a cry of his own. She rose up on all fours and moved shoulder to shoulder with him. He glanced over at her.

She nodded at something across the river. He followed her gaze and saw a large three quarter moon climbing into the evening sky. She nudged his shoulder. He leaned back and gave a playful nip.

Long ago he'd accepted the moon's magnetic qualities. He stood still for a long moment, admiring the silver orb. Ava seemed equally enthralled. But she was the first to offer up a throaty bellow of praise. Kaden joined in. For several incredible minutes they howled at the moon rising over the hills. They howled at the stars. They howled for the sheer joy of it.

Damn it felt good to be in his true form, calling to the moon. Sharing the moment.

Ava raised a paw and gave him a shove. He pushed back and she rolled onto her side. This playful side of her was new. He pounced, wrestling, rolling.

She tried to hold his muzzle closed with her mouth but he out maneuvered her. No way was he going to play the submissive pup. She scooted away, stretched down, butt and tail in the air.

On the other paw, he wasn't above nefarious tactics. He laid down on his belly and crawled forward a few feet. When he was almost within touching distance he rolled over on his side and showed her his belly.

She bounded up and came over to investigate. Poking him with her nose, she stood over him like she'd won a prize. Staring up at her, he forgot he was playing a game. She was too lovely for his peace of mind. Lust poured through him. She must have smelled the change in his blood. Tipping her head to the right, she stared down at him.

Bending down, she nuzzled his neck and then licked his cheek.

Oh, Ava. Stop before you get us both in trouble.

In his base form his self-control sat just above zero. He held as still as possible even though every cell in his body screamed for him to take her. To nuzzle her back. To cover her body with his and give them what they both wanted.

When he didn't reciprocate her actions she backed up and sat down. He pushed to his feet and glanced up at the moon again. The sun had set and the last vapors of light lit the sky. His eyes had adjusted so easily he hadn't noticed.

He closed his eyes and took a deep breath, memorizing the moment. Every gurgle of the river, each blade of grass humming in the breeze, the way the moonlight gave the valley an iridescent glow. The way Ava had looked down at him...almost as if she too was memorizing their time together.

She'd posed a good question earlier. What would she do when he was named Alpha? He was coming to realize just how much of her life she'd dedicated to nabbing the position. Though it seemed like she'd always been just out of the picture, that obviously wasn't the case.

For the first time he felt a conflict of interest. His feelings for the beautiful shewolf with the howl that would haunt his soul were at war with his knowledge that he was the wolf for the job.

Fuck.

Ava got to her feet and gave a quick yelp before heading back up the hill. Nose to the ground, she followed their path home. Concentrating on putting one foot in front of the other, she tried not to let Kaden's rejection sting.

Who was she kidding? It hurt worse than a shot in the arm. The sooner she got away from him, the -- Atop a hill she saw lights to the east. The twin golden orbs cruised over the land. She paused and turned to listen. Kaden stopped beside her.

So much for getting away from him.

She sniffed the air but didn't detect anything unusual. She didn't think Wesley would be out this late, but she'd mention it when they got back. According to the reports she'd worked on for her father, cattle theft was on the rise in California.

Kaden must have been thinking the same thing. He took off for the main house, giving a long series of loud barks, his tone urgent.

Impatient herself, she raced after him. She was counting this as her workout for the week. Maybe the month.

On the hill above the main house they slowed as if by mutual agreement.

Though she knew she was in good shape, she was huffing and puffing like the Big Bad Wolf.

Kaden must have seen the gangly ranch hand at the same moment she did because he slung a leg over her shoulders and pushed her to the ground. They lay there for several agonizing moments, his elbow digging into her back. The ranch hand lit a cigarette and took his sweet time heading back to the bunk house.

When she couldn't take it any longer, she snapped at him. He immediately shifted his weight off of her and nuzzled her cheek in apology. Her heart squeezed. Damn, he was one handsome wolf. Big, broad, perfectly shaped ears, large paws and a tail that would make any Shewolf swoon.

And to feel him against her like that...

No. She absolutely was not going to think about it. She needed to get to Wesley. Dragging her gaze from the big wolf at her side, she surveyed the compound below.

When the coast was clear they slunk down the hill, practically tiptoeing their way back to the main house. In the cover of the back porch she peeked into the window.

★ ★ ★

Also By Selena Blake





See what's coming soon from Selena Blake by [signing up to her newsletter.](#)

#### 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](mailto:selenablake@gmail.com). Visit her online at <http://selena-blake.com> or become a friend at <http://www.facebook.com/authorSelenaBlake>

**Copyright 2011 Selena Blake**