



**Ready & Willing**  
by Selena Blake

Part 14

The phone slipped from Ava's hand as Kaden whispered her name. She stepped forward, forgetting his earlier rejection by the river. All the jumbled emotions, the lust, the craziness ironed out and everything made sense. Him. Her. Them. The past didn't seem as important. Neither did the future.

What happened would happen. But right now...this. Them--Alain backed out of the door leaving them alone. This moment with just the two of them, this was real.

Three strides brought him toe to toe with her. He cupped her cheek in his

hand and she closed her eyes for a moment, savoring his touch.

"I'm sorry," he murmured. His voice was so tender that she opened her eyes, stared up into his gorgeous brown gaze, full of worry and remorse.

*Oh, Kaden.*

It took a strong man to admit when he was wrong. To apologize. To make her feel like she mattered more than anything else. He accomplished it with two words and a single touch.

"Kad--" She didn't get a chance to finish his name before he slanted his lips across hers.

Hands skimming down her back, he jerked her against him. Flush. Chest against chest. Though a sheet of tissue paper wouldn't fit between them, she needed to be closer. Naked. Skin against skin.

All this time. All these years. Her desire had grown and now she was in his arms. Returning kiss for kiss. Smiling as he growled against her lips. Gasping when he thrust his tongue into her mouth, igniting a fire inside her.

Always the fearless leader, he backed them up until her legs hit the edge of the bed. Without severing their lips, she sank back and he followed, his big body covering her own. Just like she'd always dreamed, he was solid. Strong. Exquisite.

"Ava...are you there? Ava?" Her mother's voice pierced through her lust.

Ava blinked.

Kaden and Alain stood on the other side of the room, eyebrows raised. She glanced down at the phone clutched in her hand.

*Holy hell.* That daydream had been so real. So--hot...

She swallowed, turning away from them. "Yeah," she said to her mother, then licked her lips.

Somewhere in the house, a door slammed, further pulling her from her daze. "I've gotta go Mom. Give Alana my love. I'll talk to you tomorrow."

"All right. Good night."

Ava stared down at the phone in her hands. Alana was pregnant. Ava was on a wild ride down the rapids of emotion and lust. The possibility that there were poachers on the ranch-- it was all too much for one night.

"Is everything okay?" Kaden asked.

She turned toward him and found them alone together, just like in the daydream. "Fine."

Just peachy, in fact. The light hit him just right, setting off a contrast of lights and shadows, showing each muscle of his torso to the best affect. Did he have a secret life as an underwear model?

Get a hold of yourself, Ava. Forget about the runaway hormones and erotic daydreams.

Easier said than done. In that daydream, he'd been the world's most accomplished kisser. And in three easy steps she could find out if her dreams were true.

Yep. She was just freaking fabulous.

"So Alana's pregnant..."

Frustrated, sexually and otherwise, she pursed her lips and give him her best ‘no-shit-Sherlock’ look. Sometimes it would be so much easier to just shift and bit him in the ass.

Right now she needed something else to focus her attention on. She needed space. And since he didn’t appear to be leaving any time soon...she pulled her shoulders back and brushed past him.

“I need to get some air.” And time. And distance from Kaden so her emotions would balance the hell out. Damn, it sucked being a *Shewolf* sometimes. Torn between a beast and delicate human femininity. *Damn, damn, double-damn.*

Kaden was so tempted to grab her as she walked by. To run his hands over her skin, trace the thumping pulse point at her neck with his tongue, sink his fingers into her hair.

She’d been effervescent with happiness over the prospect of becoming an aunt. In all the years he’d known her, he’d never seen her smile like that. But something had erased that smile.

She’d gone into a trance, staring at him like she was watching a movie.

He knew he should let her go. Give her the space she needed. That they both needed. An Alpha didn’t have the luxury of chasing tail. He had to be sensible. Put the Pack before his own needs.

He wasn’t the Alpha...yet.

And Ava’s scent made his blood catch fire. The warm, womanly fragrance had shifted in the last twenty four hours. He couldn’t rest until he’d put his finger...or nose... on it. The wolf in him demanded he follow her and find

out what had changed. One inch at a time. Clothing optional.

Who was he kidding? Clothing wouldn't be optional. He knew himself too well. Tonight he'd lay awake, obsessing over her smile and how good she smelled. Just like a ripening berry. Only stronger. And more exotic. More magnetic. More--

*Oh no.*

She couldn't-- He strode back down the hall and found her across the table from Wes, hands on her hips. The two of them stared down at a map.

"Here's the ranch property," Wes said, tracing an outline with his finger.

Kaden paused, inhaling deeply. No, his nose was not fooling him.

Ava leaned in for a closer look and Wes's chocolate gaze lifted. His nose started to twitch; then his nostrils flared. For a tiny moment a look of bliss softened his features. Then he shoved away from the table and took three steps back, his gaze swerving to Kaden's.

"Are you okay?" Ava asked, clearly concerned. Her slender frame skirted the table and she started to reach for Wes' arm.

Kaden stop the growl that simmered from deep inside. Wes held up a hand and nodded quickly.

"I'm fine. Where'd you say you guys were?" Wes shook his head, as if to clear it.

No doubt the same four words were running through the other wolf's mind. *She's the boss's daughter.*

From this angle Kaden saw the corner of her mouth turn down before she

turned back to the map. “We were about here.”

Ava braced one hand against the well-worn table-top. The yoga pants hugged her ass in a completely indecent way as she pointed to a group of green squiggly lines.

Did she have to bend over like that? She might as well wear a target with the words *Do Me!* written on it.

Wes sighed and backed up further, turning away from her slightly. Or the sight of that gorgeous ass, more likely.

Kaden was glad he wasn't the only one going through a mini hell-on-earth but the thought of Ava attracting any man but him...willingly or not, made the wolf inside him snarl. She was too delicious too resist.

*And you have no claim on her.*

*Fuck.*

“I seriously doubt you could see a neighboring property from there,” Wes said as Kaden pulled his gaze away from the display of seductive curves.

The light overhead held her in its spotlight, turning her hair gold. The ultimate siren's call... He could easily slide up behind her, brush those luscious locks aside, and leave his mark on her neck. Right there in that delicate spot between throat and shoulder, where her skin was satiny smooth and warm. Ten seconds and he could claim her for all the world to see.

Fists clenched, Kaden crossed his arms over his chest.

“Several of the guys are saddling up,” Wes told him, his voice low and rough. “We're going to go have a look. Think you could creep back up to the

ridge and keep watch.”

Kaden nodded. “No problem.”

Wesley nodded. “Got my cell number?”

Kaden pulled his cell from his pocket and they exchanged numbers.

“We’ll meet back here in,” Wes glanced at his watch, “two hours?”

Kaden nodded again, his gaze swerving to Ava. Her brows lifted in annoyance and he knew what she was going to say before the words even left her lips.

“What should I do?”

Wes bolted for the door, shoving a cowboy hat on his head. He didn’t look directly at her. More waved in the direction of the table. “You stay here and hold down the fort.”

Ava’s eyes flashed. But Wes was already gone.

She started after him but Kaden put himself between her and the doorway.

“Kaden!”

“Next time, Ava.”

“I don’t understand why I have to stay home like a good little wifey while you guys are out tracking poachers. And don’t you dare say it’s because I’m a woman. I’m stronger than half the men on this ranch and you know it.”

Color blossomed in her cheeks and he almost caved. Almost kissed her. Damn the consequences. God knew he wanted to. More than he wanted his

next breath or bacon for breakfast. He wanted to forget the ranch, the Pack, and everything else so that he could do exactly what he'd wanted to do to her at the wedding.

"I know you are." She was stronger than any woman he'd ever met. Physically and mentally.

"Then why--"

"Can't you tell?"

Those amber eyes shot liquid fire up at him.

"You're in heat, Ava." Of the fifty two weeks in the year, her cycle had to be now. When they were stuck together in close quarters. And everything inside of him was demanding he stake his claim. Mate with her.

Her eyebrows jerked up and her jaw dropped open.

*Claim.*

He licked his lips. "I need you to stay in the house. Just do that for me, okay?"

All at once the fire inside her dimmed and she looked ready to cry with frustration. No man was good with tears, least of all him. Something inside him ached at the knowledge that she was unhappy. Frustrated. Stuck inside like a dog in a kennel.

"Why?" she finally asked.

She'd given him brutal honesty an hour ago on the back porch. She deserved the truth from him now.



“Because I’m not the only male who’s going to notice--”

“Kaden--“

“And I can’t stand the thought of the other guys sniffing around you. You have no idea how good you smell sweetheart. It’s damn near impossible to resist-- Don’t make me have to tear one of my friends off of you.” He growled at the thought, his inner wolf buzzing with violent energy.

Her eyes widened but she didn’t back down. She would never back down. He liked that. Admired it.

“I can take care of myself!” She started to brush past him again but he quickly thwarted her effort.

Hard headed, beautiful-- stubborn.

“No one touches what’s mine, Ava. Got it?”



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

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