

Ready & Willing
by Selena Blake

Part Twenty Four

What the--

He was around the hood in three seconds flat. Smart man. They needed more room. Why be cramped in a cabin when they had the whole bed of the truck? Or even better... that huge pasture outside the window.

He wrenched the passenger door open. Before she knew what was happening, he wrapped a strong arm beneath her legs and scooped her out of the cab. The maneuver was so smooth she couldn't help but wonder if he'd had a lot of practice.

When he stepped to the back door, she forgot her curiosity and smiled. He made quick work of opening the door.

“You’ve got to keep your hands to yourself, sweetheart.” He dumped her, rather unceremoniously on the seat and reached for the seatbelt. Why did she need a seat belt?

“Kaden, what--“

The sound of the belt running out of the reel halted her words.

“Sit straight.”

“I’m not a dog,” she said, even though his commanding tone turned her on even more than she already was.

He raised an eyebrow as if to say you’re a wolf. Instead, he said, “you’re a temptress. It’s time to buckle up.”

Sighing, she dropped her feet to the floor. He reached across her lap and strapped her in. Damn he smelled good. She reached for him. He met her half way, pulling her flush against him.

Yes!

The drive to mate was so strong that she didn’t care where they did it so long as they got it on. Every second that ticked by increased the yearning inside of her. He was like the world’s strongest sweet tooth craving and the only thing that would quench it was his skin on hers, moving against each other, completing each other.

“I’m reinstating the no touching rule.”

He reached for his belt and the air in her lungs stalled. Whipping the strip of leather from his belt loops, he stepped forward.

“Starting now.”

Breasts aching, thighs slick with her own cream, through the haze of her lust she knew he was right. The cycle had her. Hormones were driving her out of her mind. She wanted his cock deep inside her, thrusting until they both passed out.

He reached for her hand.

“What are you doing?” She swallowed.

“Tying you up so you’ll keep your hands to yourself.”

Her jaw dropped open but she recovered quickly, snatching her hand back. But he was faster. He already had the belt looped like a lasso and he moved with a speed that left her breathless with envy. Her hands were pressed together almost as if in prayer, and bound with the soft strip of leather, warm from his body.

“Kaden, this isn’t funny.”

“I couldn’t agree more.” He leaned closer, a hand cupping her cheek. She rubbed against it.

“I want you, Ava. Don’t think for a second that I don’t. And it’s not just because of your cycle. But we’ve got to get back to the pack and settle this. And I need to drive without distractions.”

“It’s not as if you’re going to kill us,” she ground out, frustrated. He could flip the truck until it disintegrated around them and it wouldn’t stop her need for him. Her chest rose and fell as she dragged in one breath after another.

“No.” He shook his head. “But we might hurt someone else.”

Even through the haze she knew he was right. Sighing, she nodded.

Seat-belted and bound. She hadn’t seen that one coming. Kinky, her wolf growled, not the least bit disturbed.

She trusted Kaden. Trusted him to take care of her and pleasure her. Who would have thought that she, Ava Garnier, would submit to a man?

He brushed his lips across hers. “When this is all over and one of us is named Alpha, my first order of business will be driving you wild with pleasure.” Oh he’d already done that earlier. Which was all the more reason to say to hell with the Alphaship and that silly no touching rule, rip each other’s clothes off and mate like they were the last two werewolves on earth.

“Promise?” she whispered, her voice husky.

“*Shewolf*,” he said, thrusting his fingers through her hair and tipping her chin up. “I’m going to fuck you until you pass out.”

He slanted his lips across hers, his tongue thrusting inside her mouth.

As promises went, that was enough to make her tingle with anticipation and cream her panties. She ached to hold his face between her hands, but she had to settle for kissing him back. Using her tongue to caress him.

Severing the kiss, he started to close the door but he leaned back in and kissed her again. “Thanks for the blow job.”

For the second time that night, Ava’s jaw hung open. Emotions battled with the hormones raging inside of her. Annoyance, desire, frustration, desire, exacerbation and more desire.

Halfway back to her parents’ house, her anger was simmering. They hadn’t said a word to each other which left plenty of time to get riled about the latest turn of events. Once her libido cooled off a bit. After all the time she and Kaden had put into the pack... Surely this was a mistake. A bluff. Something. Anything but the truth.

She never should have come this week. If she’d stayed home, she...no. She’d wanted to show her father, once again, how she was a team player. Responsible. Capable. Versatile.

And besides, she could never regret the time at the ranch. Not after everything that had happened with Kaden.

Which just made her all the more upset. For him.

“I get that I’m not the perfect candidate,” she said when she couldn’t keep silent for another second. “For starters, I have a vagina--“

The right-side tires dropped off the shoulder. Screaming, she reached for the door-handle.

“Sorry,” Kaden grit out, steering the big truck back onto the pavement. “You’re right about that though.”

In the rearview mirror, he cut her a look that made heat rise in her cheeks.

“Kaden!” She was being serious, trying desperately to curb the lust and he -- he was just a horny werewolf. She couldn’t win.

“Sorry, sweetheart. You can’t go talking about your womanly bits, especially womanly bits I sampled less than two hours ago, and expect me to keep my mind, and tires, out of the gutter.”

He gave her a feral grin that made her insides tighten. Her pulse picked up just like it had when her orgasm had raced through her. She wanted to feel that way again. Needed to feel his hands, his lips, his tongue on her...in her.

“You were saying?”

“I’m a woman. Feminism obviously hasn’t hit our kind yet. It didn’t help that I spent the week in the kitchen rather than out doing hard labor with the men.”

“You would have raised too many eyebrows lifting more haybales than the human next to you.” He raised his eyebrows as he stated the obvious.

He was right. Again.

“I like cooking. Don’t get me wrong--“

“And you’re a damn good cook.”

“I just wonder what it’s going to take before men in our pack accept a woman as Alpha.”

“I think you’re looking at it the wrong way.”

She didn’t see how that was likely but said “explain it to me.”

“First of all, you’re battling centuries of tradition and nature. It’s not that the men of our pack think you’re inferior to them, they look at the leaders of other packs. Men. Strong men who’d have no qualm in taking your head.

“If you look at it that way, fear drives them. It’s not that you’re not a good leader, the question for them is can you provide the protection the pack needs?”

“Get real Kaden. We haven’t had a turf war since before I was born.”
He glanced back briefly.

Why didn’t he agree with her? She knew of all the surrounding packs. Things were peaceful. They’d even invited the Alpha of the Oregon pack to Brianna’s wedding. Space was plentiful and so was food.

“It’s not just the other wolves we have to worry about.”

“What do you mean?” She cocked her head. “What aren’t you telling me?”

This was easily the most bizarre conversation she’d ever had. In the grip of her cycle, bound in the backseat of Kaden’s truck, talking Pack business...maybe it was a nightmare. Maybe if she pinched herself, she’d wake up and be cozy in her bed.

“Wolves aren’t the only species to threaten us, Ava.”

“What are you talking about?”

“The Blood Tigers--“

“Are in East LA,” she filled in.

“Only because I brokered a deal to keep them there.” A passing car’s headlights illuminated the space. Kaden looked tense. And if she had to put a name to it: anxious. It didn’t make any sense. None of it did. As far as she knew, her father had brought peace to the pack and to the region.

“But I’ve been friends with Elizabeth McLarean for over a decade.”

“This has nothing to do with your friendship,” he said, glancing at her in the rear view mirror again. “The younger generation has been making trouble lately. Stealing from our stores. Harassing pack members. Picking fights.”

Ava sat, completely dumbfounded, for several miles. Mute, she rolled his words around in her mind, trying to absorb them. Trying desperately to lay them out so that they made sense.

“How could I have never heard a peep about this? Not from you, not from Father, not from Elizabeth? I haven’t heard the slightest murmurings--“

“You weren’t supposed to know,” he bit out.

“What the hell is that supposed to mean?” Her temper shifted up a notch.

“Your father didn’t want to ruin your friendship with Elizabeth over a couple of thugs.”

“This doesn’t sound like a couple of thugs.” It sounded more like an organized group of thugs. A turf encroachment. White Paw Pack had been strong for so long...

"Ava..."

The way he said her name said it all. She wasn't supposed to know about the unrest. She shouldn't be asking questions. The arrangements had been made by men...firmly keeping the women out of it. To salvage their friendship or because women shouldn't be sticking their nose in pack business, she couldn't be sure. Either way, the situation fueled a pain inside of her. Hot, deep. And then there was the regret.

To have worked so hard for so long and be told over and over "be a leader" only to be pat on the head because she wasn't a man. Regret was a bitter pill to swallow. He'd brokered a deal. She hadn't known. Did she really know the Pack as well as she thought she did?

“So it was always you. He brought you in because I’m female and my brother is too weak to lead.” Her father had told her to become a leader, but he’d never had any intention of naming her Alpha.

Kaden was right. An Alpha could only be effective if their rivals believed they were strong. Powerful. A force to be reckoned with.

She, by the virtue of being a woman, was not on their radar. Why had she never seen that before now? Had she been so insulated? She'd never thought of herself as living in an ivory tower, but how else...

No, she wouldn't go there. The past was the past. All the signs had been there, she'd just been too naive, too pampered to see them. Her eyes were open now. "He liked my negotiating skills," Kaden said into the darkness.

Out of any other werewolf's mouth, that sentence would have had her rolling in the seat. Wolves were not known for compromise. Cool heads. Discussion.

Kaden was a shrewd negotiator. She knew that from personal experience. He usually got what he wanted. Her father would appreciate that skill set.

"He liked that I don't back down from a fight," he added. No. He might be willing to talk things out, but she'd never known him to back down. It wasn't in his nature.

"Add that to the fact that you're a natural born leader and claimed no pack as your own, you were too good to resist."

"In half an hour, I've gone from being the man born to lead White Paw pack to an outsider again. What's changed?" His voice was low, but she heard him over the steady hum of tires eating up the road.

"Nothing." She told the lie with ease.

But he deserved better than that. "Everything. It all makes sense now, that's all." "You have every right to become Alpha of this pack, Ava. I've told your father as much." A vote of confidence?

She gave an un-lady like snort. "How'd that go over?"

Kaden wisely remained mute.

"It doesn't matter anymore. Let's just get back to my parents' house so I can chew a few people out."

Now there were two names at the top of her hit list, and she was going to straighten things out.

How ironic that neither name began with the letter K.

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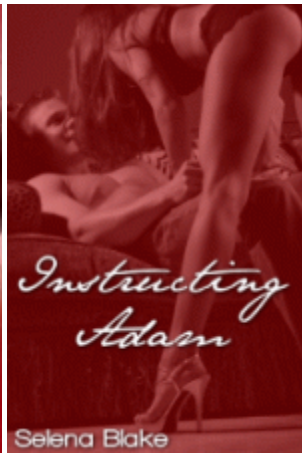
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About Selena

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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