



Ready & Willing
by Selena Blake

Part 26

Kaden growled for a moment before letting her down. “It pisses me off that you have them in the first place.”

The smile that stretched her lips made her cheeks hurt.

She let her fingernails rake down his chest as he backed away. “Would it make you feel better if I told you that I got them with you in mind?”

He stepped back to her and kissed her. Just a short, quick peck but it spoke of need and urgency. “Don’t move,” he said against her lips.

“I wouldn’t dream of it.”

When he returned to the shower, sheathed in a fresh condom, she knelt on the floor. Water showered her back, heating her chilled skin. The crystal clear liquid might as well have been made of anticipation because she was soaked with that too. Bending her arms, she lifted her hips, smiling when his growl filled the air. How did a sound make her feel so sexy? So desirable?

A stream of water ran down her spine. With a flick of her head, she flung wet swath of hair out of her face.

“Good God, woman.” His voice was so low, so gravelly she hardly recognized it. His hands slid over her hips, squeezed, then roamed up her back. He trailed a fingertip down her spine, his touch gentle, achingly slow. She was thoroughly and completely hooked.

Every brush of his fingers excited her nerve endings. Each brush of his lips touched something deep inside her. Something that had never been touched before.

“How could I have missed this?” he mused.

“Don’t beat yourself--“ He tweaked her nipple. “Up,” she finished on a sigh. She wiggled her hips, needing to feel him inside her again. To prove to herself that this was real, that he was really here, making love to her, that this was *not* some fabulous erotic dream.

He nipped the blade of her left shoulder with his teeth and a shiver ran through her. She was just about to beg him to take her when she felt the broad tip of his penis run up and down her pussy lips. The water made every movement smoother, slicker, more erotic. The lack of resistance was delightful and left her breathless with anticipation.

Why didn’t he take her? Why was he toying with her?

He was trying her patience. She shimmied her hips again and made a sound of desperation. Smart man that he was, he filled her with a single, glorious thrust.

“Yes...”

The next time he rolled her nipple between his finger and thumb she felt a jolt of white hot desire zing straight to her womb.

Need.

Her head fell forward and her eyelids drifted close.

“Make me come, Kaden.”

Hands on her hips, he pumped into her slowly...smoothly. He had far more patience than she'd given him credit for. Perhaps too much.

The wolf inside wanted it hard and fast.

There would be time for slow and sweet later. For exploration. Now was the time for fast and furious. To release all the pent up desire from the last few days.

“Please...”

“Have I told you how sexy you are when you beg?” he murmured as he picked up the pace. But it wasn't fast enough. Not nearly.

Growing impatient, she cried his name. Then she reached between her legs for his balls.

He brushed her hand away and shifted his hips. With his next thrust...the feeling of completion, wholeness, took her breath away.

She threw her head back, a cry of delight on her lips, as her orgasm started. He made a sound of satisfaction and a large hand slid up her back and tangled with her hair.

He held her there, captive to his movements.

Harder. Faster. Until she was panting from the exertion. Her arms screamed for forgiveness, but she didn't dare change her position. He rode her through one wave of orgasm right up the mountain to the next.

And then he stopped.

Slowly withdrawing...so slow she thought he'd never fully exit. But then a fast, hard thrust seated him deeply inside her again.

Wicked.

Temptation.

Torture.

With one hand still tangled in her hair, he reached the other around to play with her clit.

“Mmm...”

“You are so fucking beautiful. So wet.” He kissed her shoulder. “So mine.” He followed his words with his teeth. But they were sharper than normal, piercing her skin gently between her neck and her shoulder.

Mine...the word floated around her, drowning out the sound of water splashing against the tile.

His finger gave a quick flick back and forth and then she was falling again. Through space and time, into a pool of bliss.

He was claiming her.

A whimper erupted from her throat as searing pleasure shot through her. He did it again. And again. Moisture flooded her pussy and he picked up the pace, the whole time, carefully stroking her.

Gasping his name, another orgasm spiraled through her. In the same instant, he stilled inside her. With his arms bracketed around her and his teeth holding her steady, she couldn't have moved if she'd wanted to.

She didn't want to. She could stay here like this forever.

His frame went rigid, except for his cock. Despite her own mind altering ecstasy she could feel the length of him twitch as he found his release.

He made a sound of bliss and buried his face against the side of her throat. Several long minutes ticked by, their breathing the only sound other than the echo of the water hitting the tiled floor. Long deep breathes, short quick breathes as they eased down from the peak of pleasure. She didn't dare say anything to disturb the moment. In fact, she kept her eyes closed and memorized every kiss, every caress.

There might come a day when all she had were memories to keep her warm. When that time came, she wanted to be able to relive these moments in Kaden's arms.

"Now that I've gotten us sweaty again, perhaps I should help you get clean," he said softly, and then gently bit her earlobe.

Her heart knocked around in her ribcage. So this is what happiness felt like. Sheer, unadulterated happiness. The kind most people only dreamed of. And all it took was having Kaden want to spend more time with her.

"I was hoping you'd say that."

He pulled out, discarded the condom and then pulled her to her feet. She felt well-loved and very unsteady. Smiling up at him, she blinked away the water droplets and she wrapped her arms around his waist, holding on tight, lest she melt into a puddle at his feet.

White Paw could do much worse than have him as an Alpha.

Kaden turned off the shower and reached for a towel. Even though he'd found release, twice, he was still on edge. He'd let himself get wrapped up in a *shewolf*, be distracted and forget about Pack business.

But he didn't regret a single second in Ava's arms. Frustrated by the lousy timing of the whole situation, he stalked into Ava's bedroom.

Making love in the shower had soothed his more primitive side...but only for a moment. He could hear the party going full swing. Perhaps taking an extra thirty minutes in the shower hadn't been his brightest move, but no matter what happened tonight, he wouldn't change a thing about this evening.

Fuck. He couldn't wait to be inside her again.

"Kaden..." she called.

"Yeah?" he answered, turning to the open closet. An overhead light cast her in a spotlight. She wore a form fitting blood-red dress that made his mouth go dry. Ending just above the knee, it showed off her legs to their best advantage.

Legs he'd just had wrapped around his waist.

A feral grin stretched his lips. *Take that, Alain Whatever-your-last-name-is.*

“Can you zip me up?” she asked, wrestling with the zipper beneath her right arm. Sleeveless perfection.

Towel hugging his hips, he started toward her. Zip her up and get dressed. Zip her up and get dressed. Zip her up--

She smiled up at him and he felt something in his chest tighten. There was something in her eyes, something in the way she glanced at him, almost shyly...and then she turned to the side, lifting her arm to expose the gaping zipper.

“Thank you.” Her voice was so quiet, so unlike the Ava who’d gone down on him in his truck. So unlike the rapier tongued woman he’d verbally sparred with in the past. This was the softer, less wild side and damn if she wasn’t that much more appealing.

Standing stock still, she offered him another smile. Appreciation, tenderness, and dare he hope, love...they were all there in her eyes. And briefly, he remembered that moment at Bryan’s wedding when Brianna had looked at her groom like he was her whole world.

Kaden had wanted that for himself. A woman of his own. A woman who loved and adored him, who would weather storms with him.

The way Ava was looking at him right now...he couldn’t help but feel he was at the center of her universe.

She didn’t realize she was at the center of his.

She’d been at the center all these years and he’d been too blind to see it. But he’d fixed that. He’d claimed her. She hadn’t said a word to stop him.

“You’re welcome.”

She stepped into a pair of stilettos that did amazing things to her calves. The same shade as her dress, she did a little twirl atop the spiky heels. “Do I look okay?” For a moment his lips forgot how to form words. Red. Short. Tight. Curvy. The syllables flashed through his mind but his tongue wouldn’t work.

She stared at him expectantly. He licked his lips. If there were any other Alphas at the party, they'd probably drop dead from heart failure. No fighting needed. That would certainly be one way to win beat the competition.

"Way better than okay."

He backed out of the little room before he did something he shouldn't, like strip her naked. Now that he'd sated his sexual appetite, it was time to get to work. *Mate*, said the wolf.

Business first, he growled back.

Ava felt calm for the first time in months. She strode out of her old closet, confident that she would turn heads and make Alain rue the day he'd ever decided to screw with her. The heat in Kaden's eyes said it all.

If they could just keep the fire banked between them until pack business was finished...

She paused, earrings in hand, as Kaden shrugged into a jacket. Her mouth went dry as he turned and all thought of banking fires and simmering desires fled her mind.

How he managed to throw together such a smoking outfit with so little time and a single duffle bag, she'd never know. What she did know was that those jeans had been made for him. Dark denim, tight in the ass. She grit her teeth together so her tongue wouldn't fall out of her mouth.

The charcoal t-shirt showed off his powerful chest to its full advantage. A short, black zip up jacket gave just the right amount of sophistication. He'd even managed to scrounge up some leather shoes that complimented the outfit. Gone was the rough, tough, dusty cowboy and in his place, an urban wolf.

Sexy as hell.

He turned around and flashed a brief smile. She swallowed hard.

"Ready?" he asked, holding out his hand for her.

Oh, handsome...you have no idea. She was more than ready. "And willing," she murmured, sliding her fingers against his palm.

He ushered her through the door, his hand slipping to the small of her back.

“I’m ready to make Alain swallow his tongue,” she admitted quietly as they strode down the hall, side by side.

Those handsome lips twitched. She wanted to kiss that sexy little crease at the edge. Then rub her cheek against his. Nestle close and stay there all night long. He paused on the top step of the grand staircase. She glanced up and saw him survey the crowd below. There was a fierce gleam in his dark eyes. She shivered as he tucked her hand into the curve of his arm. Sometimes he was downright scary. She would hate to be counted as his enemy. Lucky for her, she was now his lover.

And his mate, the wolf whispered.

“You sure know how to make an entrance,” she whispered.

There was a momentary pause in the chorus of conversation. She kept her hand tight on his arm, letting the other caress the railing. Said entrance would be ruined if she fell on her face. Searching the crowd, she looked for her parents.

Almost everyone in the wide entry turned to watch them descend the steps. Ava smiled to herself in satisfaction. She still had it. There wasn’t anything a few yards of red silk and a pair of three inch heels couldn’t fix.

They didn’t stop to make chit chat. Almost as if he was reading her mind, Kaden headed for the back terrace. The throng of people glanced their way and parted. Beneath the flowering arbor, she gazed out at the party-goers.

She only recognized about half of the people in attendance and she could smell plenty of human flesh. Fancy perfume. Cologne that made her nose twitch, and not in a good way.

Frowning, she swept her gaze across the crowd again. She didn’t see any of her family. Not her brother, nor Alana. So this wasn’t a family event. That should have made her feel better. It didn’t.

Was her father lending the house to someone? That would explain why she hadn’t been involved with planning the event. But surely he’d be here. Her mother too. And she was willing to bet her favorite teardrop earrings that if her father was here, Alain wasn’t far away.

She knew the instant that Alain had spotted her. A gaze so intense that the hair on the back of her neck stood on end pegged her.

“There he is,” Kaden murmured. She followed his gaze, slowly, as if she didn’t have a care in the world. Knowing that slow, steady movements could drive a man insane, she did her best to blink in slow motion. *Take that, mascara commercials.*

To her surprise, Alain was standing next to the redheaded woman Kaden had danced with at Brianna’s wedding reception. What was *she* doing here? Carrottop paused from gulping down a cocktail to say something to Alain. But Alain’s piercing gaze never wavered from Ava. Damn him. He was still ridiculously handsome. But he was not going to become the Alpha of this pack.

Pulling her shoulders back, she decided to pretend she was completely at ease. Kaden had taught her that a good bluff could drive the other party crazy. And if she played her cards right, Alain would be tugging on his tie in no time. She turned a luminous smile to Kaden. The usual tendril of desire that snaked through her when his gaze met hers coursed downward. Her breathing shallowed and she turned to look out at the crowd again.

Numerous couples danced around the stone terrace. Without missing a beat, Ava said “dance with me.”

Though Kaden didn’t say a word, she could tell by his quick response that he was pleased with her request. They made their way to the dance floor and he slid an arm around her waist, pulling her closer.

For a moment, she closed her eyes and imagined that it was just the two of them. That the rest of the world and all their responsibilities didn’t exist. Kaden had asked her what would happen if neither of them became the Alpha...if the Alphaship wasn’t at stake. She was starting to get some definite ideas. Dancing. Kissing. Hot shower sex.

All acceptable ways to pass their time.

All preferable to dealing with business and pack laws and too much testosterone.

No crunching numbers. No ensuring future viability and security for a species that could survive better than any other on the planet. No baby-sitting. No trying to win her father's praise.

She'd been striving, for so-so long, to outdo her brother and sisters. And that was the crux of the matter. She'd spent far too much time trying to win her father's approval and not nearly enough living her own life.

But it was that drive that had put Kaden directly in her path.

"I can still remember the first time I really noticed you," she whispered.

"Yeah?"

She opened her eyes and tilted her head back. "You were following Father through the foyer toward his office. I was coming down the stairs...all of..." she counted back the years. "Fourteen. You had this swagger about you. Masculine, predatory, and yet, graceful. All wolf. That's what I thought."

His gaze flicked around the dance floor, as if gauging if anyone was eavesdropping.

She let her gaze follow his.

"So when did you decide you wanted to become the Alpha?" he murmured.

"I--" Her fingers plucked at his jacket and she kept her gaze locked on the zipper. "When I was fifteen my two older sisters complained to Daddy that I wouldn't stop following them around. I idolized them. They were so cool. Older. Confident. I was just learning to control my shifts. They'd mastered it. I had this massive crush."

On you. She smiled at the memory...at her adolescent plan. "They had boyfriends. I was interested in clothes. They had a license to shop. I convinced myself that if I could be like them, I could win you."

She shrugged away the next memory. The one that had shaken her world. "Their comment crushed me."

He squeezed her hand.

“My dad told me to stop following and take the lead.” The major events of her life flashed before her eyes. Straight As in school. Honors at graduation. Meeting and learning about every member of the pack.

Wow. What a pity party.

Her wolf snarled at the weakness.

“I’ve been failing ever sense.” She looked up then. “I’ve been following what I thought my father expected of me. I followed my mother’s example. I thought...I don’t know what I thought. In fact,” she said, glancing around again at the crush of well dressed bodies. “I’m not really sure I thought it out all that much. I just thought ‘Daddy wants me to be a leader.’ Somehow I thought that meant taking his place one day. And I suppose I thought that if I became the Alpha then I’d have what I really wanted. His respect. Yours. My sisters’.”

“You have mine, Ava.”

He let go of her hand and cupped her cheek.

For a single, bliss filled moment, he stared down at her, not with heat. But with tenderness. A tenderness that belied *what* they were, *who* they were. And then, in front of everyone, he ducked his head and kissed her. A gentle, smooth brush of his lips. She melted against him, more turned on than ever before.

So this was what all those romantic comedies were about. This feeling. Not the crazy, hot, nuclear desire. But a tender, almost lazy desire that melted her from the inside out, sweetly, slowly. And built her up, made her feel like the world was at her feet and that anything was possible.

Even earning the love of a werewolf who’d snagged her eye, and her heart, almost a decade ago.

When he raised his head again, she half expected to come crashing back to earth. She’d never felt so light, so carefree.

She sucked in a deep breath. Staring into his eyes, she realized something. “I don’t want his respect anymore. Or my sisters’.”

He traced her jaw with the pad of his thumb.

“What do you want?” It was time to lay it all on the line. For the first time in years, she felt absolutely sure of herself and not the least bit conflicted.

“You.”

Before he could reply, his gaze flicked over her shoulder and he pulled back a fraction.

“Here comes your father,” Kaden warned.



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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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