

## Chapter Four

### Dimitri

The moment Jules walks out of my home, I know I've made a huge mistake. Her intoxicating cinnamon scent is all around me — in the hallway, the living room, the study. It's drawn my wolf to the surface, and my skin itches with the urge to shift.

Usually, I can suppress my inner beast. I can bury him so deep that I almost forget he's half of me.

But something about Jules activated my wolf to the point that he won't be ignored. He's insistent. Ravenous. Wild. Unhinged.

One word keeps echoing in my head over and over.

*Mine.*

The second I laid eyes on Jules, a ruthless primal need took over. In that instant, I knew I had to have her — in my home, in my life, in my bed.

Before I could come to my senses, I basically demanded that she move into my house and made her an offer I knew she couldn't refuse.

What the fuck is *wrong* with me?

I fired my old housekeeper weeks ago, and it shows. I know this place is a filthy wreck, but it beats having a stranger milling around my house all the time.

Whenever Hilda was here, I felt like an intruder in my own house. I couldn't shake the feeling that she was watching my every move — just waiting for some juicy bit of information that was worth selling me out to the tabloids for.

In retrospect, I know I was just being paranoid, but after Rhys's betrayal and the press firestorm that followed, I just couldn't stand having her in my house one moment longer.

I bought this house so I'd have a private retreat for when the hustle and noise of the city became too much for my wolf. The solitude of the property and the vastness of the mountain mean I can let my beast out to run without fear of being seen.

Aspen was the one place I could be myself, and now I'm going to be sharing my personal sanctuary with a woman who makes my wolf even *more* volatile.

She'll be here when I wake up. She'll be here when I go to sleep. The prospect of never having a moment to myself makes me want to crawl out of my skin, but there's another part of me that's thrilled at the prospect of having Jules under my roof.

The thought of her waking up just down the hall, sleeping in my house, and showering mere feet away sends all the blood rushing to my cock.

*Mine.*

I try to shake the refrain loose, but it does no good. The need to have Jules is overpowering and *seriously* fucked up.

I've spent all of thirty minutes with this woman, and in that time, my wolf somehow managed to form this possessive attachment to her. He wants me to claim her for my own — mark her as my mate.

Fuck.

I could kill Beckett.

He knew I didn't want anyone in my house, and yet he called Jules's company. His message is clear: *Get your shit together.*

That's when the embarrassment sets in. For the first time in weeks, I look around — really *look* at the state of my house. Two weeks' worth of dishes are piled in the sink, and my clothes are scattered all over the main floor. There's a quarter inch of dust coating every piece of furniture and muddy paw prints trailing in from the back deck.

I've been so focused on containing my wolf that I hadn't realized I'd let it get so bad.

I mean, who *lives* like this?

A fucking animal, that's who.

I'm just glad Jules didn't venture upstairs to my room. I shifted in my sleep again last night and shredded all the bedding. A pile of feathers is all that's left of my down pillows, and I gnawed one of the bed posts in half.

I don't think Jules bought my story about the bear in my study. There's no way she would have believed a bear did that, too. My girl is too smart for her own good.

*She's not your girl*, I tell myself firmly. But with Jules's scent all around me, I'm finding it hard to think of anything except her quick brown eyes, silky raven waves, and that pretty little mouth clamping down around my cock.

Shit. I need to get laid. Maybe I can fuck this weird attraction to my housekeeper out of my head for good.

My wolf growls in protest.

He only wants *her*.

Lucky for him, none of the tech-sector ladder climbers want to touch me with a ten-foot pole these days. After all the bad press, I'm a pariah. A cautionary tale. Another eccentric billionaire bound to lose it all.

Pulling Jules's card out of my back pocket, I pick up my phone. I need to call Jules and tell her that I won't be needing her services after all. It's the only sane thing to do.

I get the entire number punched in, but my thumb just hovers over the call button.

*Mine.*

I know the stress of the last few months is finally getting to me. And, after being separated from the pack, my wolf is acting erratic. It would be stupid to invite Jules here, and yet I can't bring myself to make the call.

Even though it's selfish and stupid and reckless, I shut off my phone and toss it onto the couch.

Now that I've met her, I can't just forget her. For the first time in months, I don't feel that suffocating weight on my chest threatening to crush me. I feel light and untethered. Or maybe unhinged.

I find myself looking forward to seeing her again, and I realize that it's not just my wolf who wants Jules to stay.