

A CAJUN WEREWOLF CHRISTMAS

Selena Blake

A STORMY WEATHER STORY



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A Cajun Werewolf Christmas
By Selena Blake

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Dear Reader,

This is it! The answer to your Stormy Weather questions. While this isn't a traditional romance by any stretch, I prefer to think of it as a glimpse of happily ever after or how my Cajun werewolves spend their first Christmas as a pack.

There aren't really words to express how much your support has meant to me over the years. That's an odd place for a writer to be...wordless. So let me just say thank you for taking this journey with me and I truly look forward to sharing more stories with you in the future.

If you'd like to keep in touch, I encourage you join me on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/authorSelenaBlake> or Twitter: <http://twitter.com/selenablake>.

As always, I'd love to hear what you think. I can be reached at selenablake@gmail.com or via my website <http://www.selena-blake.com>. Sign up for my free newsletter and you'll gain access to my Free Reads archive.

Stay sexy,
Selena

Dedication

To all the readers who've followed the Deveraux men on their journey. Happy Endings are possible. Dreams do come true. I know this because you've helped make my dreams come true. Enjoy!

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Other Books by Selena Blake

Series: Stormy Weather

The Cajun's Captive

Bitten in the Bayou

Seduced by a Cajun Werewolf (previously titled Bound & Determined)

Mated to a Cajun Werewolf

Stranded with a Cajun Werewolf

Surprising Darcy

Just a Little Taste (previously titled The Wine Tasting)

Series: Deep Space Encounters

Reclaiming Isis

Rescuing Natacha

Azula's Rebellion

"Last one to the bottom buys dinner," Burke Deveraux shouted as he pushed off.

Showoff. Jules shoved his sunglasses into place and accepted his cousin's challenge despite his head start. Everyone knew Burke was the best skier in the family, but he wasn't perfect. Jules had won a challenge last week and he was still patting himself on the back about it.

With the girls already safely at the bottom, he bent his knees slightly and gave himself over to the speed. Somewhere behind him on the mountain he heard André and Laurent laughing. No doubt his eldest brother wasn't far behind. The five of them had always been competitive. And the slopes were just one more area where they battled for bragging rights.

Biting cold hit him square in the face as he raced past a grove of trees. With Burke firmly in his sights, he leaned forward and gave a battle cry.

"Yer goin' down," he called. His cousin didn't respond. Instead, he wove his big body through a maze of trees and disappeared.

What the --?

"Move it, Jules!" Laurent said, almost passing him on the left.

Their shoulders bumped. "Yer gonna get us killed," Jules growled, using his elbow to push Laurent away. Wind whistled by his ears and his skis clanked together. His stomach knotted. He was going down.

Summoning his innate grace he straightened and rebalanced. Laurent laughed. No sooner had they separated than André zoomed between them like a rocket on skis.

"Not cool, *mon frère!*" Jules called, dodging a rock. Out of nowhere, Burke appeared overhead, soaring through the air. Snow rained down. Laughing, he landed on Jules' left and kept pace.

"Show off."

Jules banked right toward a straight section and let gravity do the work. Adrenaline rushing, he dared a quick look over his shoulder. Burke was gone again. No doubt barreling through the woods like a crazy backwoodsman.

"Wooahoo!" That sounded like Laurent's voice, but Jules didn't dare turn around again. He had André in his sights. But the landing was coming quick.

At least he wouldn't be buying dinner. Not that he minded, but he didn't like to lose. Ever. The row of buildings came into view as he

rounded a grove of trees. Burke shot through them and darted in front. Five figures waved up at them. Even from one hundred yards away he could pick out his fiancé. Happy, golden haired, drop-dead gorgeous.

With his focus on Angelica he didn't hear Laurent approach until it was too late. His cousin gave him a playful push. Completely off balance, his skis, poles, arms and legs tangled and he cartwheeled across the snow. Even over the impact, the thud of his body making contact with the earth, the clank of ski-against-ski he heard Angelica's cry of alarm.

"Typical," he muttered, as he pushed himself up. No damage done, except to his pride of course. Being the youngest, he was used to getting picked on. The fact that he stood shoulder to shoulder with everyone but Burke hadn't made a difference in the pranks.

But Jules was nothing if not good natured about it. Heaven knew he'd played plenty of tricks on Laurent in the past. But that didn't stop him from giving Laurent a 'payback's a bitch' look.

By the time Jules pulled up in front of the Pack, André already had Juliette in his arms. They kissed like they'd been apart for years, rather than minutes.

"Get a room," he called before bending over to remove his skis.

At the whooshing sound, he turned to see Sebastian coming in dead last. Not because of any lack of ski ability. No. The Alpha thought it his place to buy dinner.

"You big brute," Angel ground out.

Before Jules could react she'd whacked Laurent in the nose. Given the size difference, she couldn't have done much damage but Jules pulled her close anyway. Mouthwateringly sexy in a knee length sweater dress, he let his hand roam over her curves before settling an arm around her waist.

"Hey, hey. Let me fight my own battles, *mon amour*." He brushed as chaste a kiss as he could manage across her lips. She smelled like vanilla and tasted like strawberries.

She had tears in her eyes but she didn't let them fall. He didn't blame her for being protective of him. After all, he felt the same way.

"Ouch." Laurent grasped his nose, but Jules could see he was playing up his injuries. His deep brown eyes sparkled over at Jules.

Though it seemed like ages ago, in reality only five months had passed since he'd been shot by her ex-boyfriend. Bastard. His gentle, artistic Angelica had witnessed the violence first hand. Sometimes he still

saw her gaze cloud over and knew she was thinking about that moment and then the scary hours afterward.

"Serves you right," Violet said, her brilliant blue eyes glowing beneath dark, perfectly arched brows.

"You're gonna take his side?" Laurent teased, his breath coming out in a cloud. He pulled the vampire into his arms, not bothering to rid himself of her gear.

"Of course," Violet said, grasping the front of Laurent's ski suit, she tugged him forward and kissed his nose.

"Aww, he's not hurt. Don't reward him, Vi," Jules said. Violet flashed him a grin.

"So how was it?" Angel asked.

He frowned, searching his memory for a clue to what she was referring. "How was what?"

She grinned and as usual, he felt like the sun was shining on him. "Your last trip down the slopes as a single man."

He tugged a few of her gorgeous golden locks so that she couldn't escape his gaze. "*Belle*, I haven't been single since the day I met ya."

He'd accepted that fact months ago. And nothing had changed in that department. Sure, their Pack had grown, Amanda was going to make him an uncle, Burke had gotten married. Andre and Laurent had been reunited with their mates.

But when Jules looked at Angel he saw his future. Five years. Ten. Two hundred and beyond... thanks to his mother's gift.

"Oh, he's good," Kendall murmured and the others laughed.

Not normally the type to become overcome with emotion, he couldn't get over the fact that Angel would never grow old and waste away. He would not lose her.

Closing his eyes, he hugged her close and sent up silent thanks.

"*Je t'aime*," she whispered.

She'd been studying French for months. But those were the only words he really cared to teach her. They were words he whispered daily.

"Come on you two. You're making a scene," Sebastian called. "And I've got a bet to settle."

Angel sighed as Jules pulled back. "Propriety sucks," he whispered and brushed a kiss across her forehead.

"You guys should run along. You're going to need a head start," Jules called to them, unable to resist throwing down a new bet.

Laurent and André wheeled back. "What for?"

"There's no way you're going to beat the gift I got the baby," he replied with a shrug. Angel laughed and squeezed his waist.

"Baby gift?" Laurent questioned. He gave André a curious glance. Behind them Sebastian laughed, shook his head, and whisked Amanda off.

Leaving their mates behind, they advanced on Jules.

"Baby gift?" André parroted.

"*Qui*. It is customary to give a new mother gifts for her *bébé*, is it not?" He glanced down at Angel and she gave a smile and a nod.

"Well what did you get?" Laurent asked.

"Ugh uh, cousin... You must find your own gift." Arm around Angel's waist, he side stepped his brother and cousin. "Good luck." He gave Laurent a pat on the shoulder, chuckling as he strode away.

Sebastian draped his arm over the back of Amanda's chair and glanced across the table at his youngest brother. Jules was glowing. So was Angelica. Being a bride suited her.

Laurent and André were busy on their cell phones. Tracking down a baby gift, he presumed. Jules had thrown down the gauntlet and the others couldn't resist a challenge. Sebastian might throw his hat into the ring as well so long as Amanda was judging.

The others kept up a steady stream of chatter as they dined on steak and *la bûche de Noël*. Amanda smiled up at him and a silent message passed between them. *Exactement*. This was how it was supposed to be. And now if his *bébé* would make his entrance, everything would be complete.

She smiled as he slid his palm over her belly. How a baby could make her so round, he didn't know. But she looked perfect, plump with his son.

Manda shook her head. *You still think it's a boy, you arrogant wolf. Just betting on the potency of my swimmers, love.*

She sighed, exasperated as usual, and shook her head before glancing over at his brother and cousin.

"Are you two playing a game?" she asked.

Laurent and André snapped to attention.

"Non, Luna. They're losing a bet," Jules said with a smirk. He tossed back the rest of his beer and then raised an eyebrow at André.

"What bet?" Manda sat up as straight as she could, given her condition.

"Who can buy the baby the best present." Jules shot André another look of victory over-top Angel's head.

"And what did you get him?" Manda asked.

"I'm not telling, but it should be delivered tomorrow," Jules replied coyly.

"I'd rather deliver this baby tomorrow," she said with a grimace. Sebastian couldn't help but feel protective over her but she didn't like him 'making a fuss.' It wasn't his fault that she was a tiny little thing and that she looked ready to pop.

Okay, so that last part *was* his fault.

"It's a good thing I don't have to wait a whole nine months for this kid, because I can tell you right now, I wouldn't make it," she added, rubbing her belly.

Sebastian still laughed when he remembered her expression after the doctor had told her that because her baby was half human, half werewolf that her gestation would be closer to six months than nine.

Euphoric was an understatement.

"You'd make it sweetheart. You're a fighter." He squeezed her shoulders and kissed her cheek.

"Put the phones away, you don't need to buy the baby anything." She punctuated her statement with a grunt. Eight other sets of eyes turned her way. "It's nothing. Little bugger just kicked--ouch--me."

"I think he wants presents," Jules said with a trademark Deveraux grin.

Sebastian glanced around the table at each of them still scarcely able to believe that his Pack of five had doubled in less than a year. A year ago he'd been wasting his time with models and celebrities. Now he'd all but disappeared from newspapers. The little firecracker who'd stolen his heart all those years ago was ready to burst with their first child.

Jules would marry Angel in two days time. She suited him well. The frustration that had held both of his brothers in its grip for the last decade was long gone. Angelica let Jules be the man he was. She didn't seem to

care that he wasn't a silent, serious type. He loved to laugh and always had a joke ready.

She always laughed.

Yes, she suited him perfectly. Her flare for the artistic was just what he needed.

Laurent finally had his Violet back. That day back in August had transformed his youngest cousin. And though the beautiful, blue eyed vamp had given Sebastian a mild heart attack at first - she was a deadly assassin after all - he'd grown fond of her.

She tried hard at everything she did. Amanda had completely turned over the biscuit baking to the tall, slender vamp and they'd invested in a large butcher block island that could withstand Violet's strength.

Violet still worked out every day and encouraged everyone else to do the same. Though her days as a hired gun were over and she was thoroughly ensconced in the Deveraux household, she kept her sword at the ready. He always felt more relaxed knowing that she was watching Amanda's back, though he knew his brothers and cousins would fight to the death for his precious wife if need be.

Knowing what she'd been through, what she'd endured so gracefully, Sebastian admired Violet's vigilance and her love for Laurent.

His gaze moved to Andre. His brother threw his head back and laughed at something Juliette had said. Her eyes sparkled up at him and he caught her hand, lifting it to his lips.

Sebastian had never seen André this happy. Though still intense and sometimes guarded, he smiled often. And Juliette was never far from his side.

Burke poured himself another cup of coffee and settled back into his chair, Kendall snuggled against his side.

Sebastian was glad his cousin had worked out his issues with the past. He couldn't imagine living with a loss like Burke's for two years let alone two centuries.

The murder of his beloved was one more reason Sebastian would never return to France, at least not as long as his father, grandfather and uncles were alive. There was the possibility that some of his cousins had turned out okay, but he really didn't give a shit one way or the other about them.

He had enough scars to last a lifetime. Hell, his whole pack did. All five of the men at the table had suffered at the hands of their extended family. He thanked his lucky stars that they'd been able to get away when they had, make a new life and never look back.

Hand on Amanda's burgeoning belly, he wondered when Burke and Kendall would be making an announcement of their own. True, they'd only been married and mated for a few weeks, but...

"What are you thinking about so hard?" Manda asked, her small hand covering his.

"Just how everything turned out."

"I couldn't have planned it better," she said. But he knew his darling wife. She'd always been a force of nature. As a little girl, she'd gotten her way more often than not. As a teen, she'd been hell on wheels. He'd missed her early twenties. But from the moment she'd settled in as the pack Luna, she'd been running the ship with an iron fist.

If she'd had her way, none of the Deveraux men would have suffered loss or heartache for a day, much less a century. But fate was its own beast. The best he could hope for was to learn from his mistakes and earn Manda's love for the rest of forever.

Full from dinner, Laurent patted his belly before standing. Violet was getting better about blending in in public, ordering a meal and somehow managing to make it disappear. That of course meant he was eating twice as much.

Andre and Juliette had left with Jules and Angel a few minutes ago. Burke and Sebastian were still sipping coffee but if he had any hope of winning Jules bet, he needed to get to the store pronto. Violet read his mind and stood.

With a hand at the small of her back, he guided her to the front of the elegant restaurant and handed over his coat ticket. A moment later a woman returned with their things. He gave his mate a quick once over through lowered lashes, wishing he could skip the shopping and have his way with her in Burke's sauna.

You're so naughty.

You love me for it.

You know I do. She gave him a secret smile.

Laurent helped Violet into her coat and handed over her gloves. It didn't look like they were headed back to the bayou any time soon so they were just going to have to accept the cold. Since she'd discovered cashmere mitten-gloves she didn't seem quite as eager to head for warmer weather.

His beautiful mate grabbed the ends of his scarf and pulled him down for a searing kiss. Cold did have its advantages. Long periods of indoor activity, quiet nights in front of the fire, the persistent need to share body heat.

"Don't distract me, sweetheart," he whispered against her lips. "We need to find da *bébé* the perfect gift."

She raised one of those perfectly shaped brows in the way that said 'you want to bet?'

"Come on." He wrapped an arm around her slender waist and started for the door. "I'll make it up to you."

"I know you will." She stretched up and gave his right earlobe a quick nip.

His blood surged south. If he didn't control the urge to toss her into a snow bank and have his way with her, he'd have a full on erection for all the town to see.

"You don't play fair, vamp." Luckily, the burst of cold air from the door helped cool his blood and focus his mind.

"But you love me anyway." She looked up at him, her beautiful blue eyes glowing, the sexy smirk he adored firmly on her lips.

"More than life itself." And he would never tire of telling her that or showing her how much she meant to him.

Shaking her head gently, she gave a delicate sigh. "Let's go find the baby a present."

The sooner we get that settled, the sooner I can have my way with you. She sent the silent message as they made their way out to their Range Rover. Laurent almost lost his footing.

Five hours later they found themselves elbow deep in baby booties. They'd driven all the way to Boston and visited a half dozen stores. None of the toys seemed appropriate for a werewolf pup. Manda had a closet full of tiny blue and pink clothes already.

"I want to get something useful. Practical," he said, idly fingering a zoo themed baby mobile.

The store buzzed with last minute shoppers. Violet jumped out of the way as a group of kids darted by, foam swords waving this way and that. He knew that it was taking all her patience to shop with him. Two hundred years of solitude and dealing death made it extra hard for her to acclimate to normal life events.

“So get them diapers,” Violet said, obviously trying to keep a straight face.

He gave her an exasperated look and she laughed. Damn, she was beautiful. Once again guilt nagged him like tree sap between his paw pads. She would never know the joy of becoming a mother herself. Not with his child anyway.

Obviously reading his thoughts, she wrapped her arms around him and held him tight.

“I’ve told you a dozen times that I’m fine with it. More than fine with it. We’re going to have our hands full with adventures and other Deveraux babies. And the idea of not blowing up like a balloon has its appeal.” She grinned.

What could he say to that? Nothing really. But his heart broke anyway. Not because he had any yearning for children. He just wanted her to have everything.

“How about that?” she asked, looking across the store.

“What?”

“The stroller.” She pointed to a weird looking contraption sitting up on a platform. Overhead lights shown down like it was a gift from the heavens. “Practical and useful.”

He made a non-committal sound and headed across the store. Damned if he knew what the thing did, but its price tag made his eyebrows shoot toward the ceiling.

“They call that the Rolls Royce of baby strollers,” the middle aged clerk said, advancing upon them.

Laurent was man enough to admit that he’d grown used to living a luxurious lifestyle the last few years. And as the sales woman listed off and demonstrated the stroller’s features he knew that he didn’t want his nephew riding around in anything less than the best.

“It’s hard to keep them in stock, believe it or not,” she concluded.

A man about Violet’s height came over and gave the stroller a thorough once over. “We’ll take it,” Laurent said quickly.

Three long hours later, Laurent's patience had vanished. He pushed the stroller through the front door of Burke's cabin, grumbling about *imbécile* shoppers.

Violet was thoroughly happy to be out of the last minute holiday traffic. Years of training and looking over her shoulder made her twitchy when she was in a crowd. Sitting idle on the highway was her idea of hell. Though she tried to relax, there was always a worry floating around in the back of her mind. She would forever have a target on her back.

At least the weather was cooperating. Thick snow clouds protected her from the sun's harsh rays so she could enjoy the outdoor activities. As much as the frigid cold would allow, anyway.

"Hey." Kendall greeted them from the kitchen, a streak of blue across her cheek. As always, she looked chipper as a blue bird.

"Wow." For a moment Violet thought she'd walked into a cookie factory. Juliette smiled and waved a spoon then went back to dipping something in a bowl full of chocolate. Such a chocoholic, that wolf.

The center island was covered with a dozen varieties of glittering holiday treats. Peppermint and cinnamon scented the air, taking her back to a time before she'd lost her family. Back when she ate real food and longed for the sweet treats that Christmas would bring.

"What the hell is that thing?" Sebastian's voice, colored with amusement, broke through her memories. The Alpha's handsome face was a portrait of curiosity.

As usual, Amanda was snuggled down in an oversized chair between her husband and the massive fireplace.

During her years as an assassin, she'd been on the move a lot. Holidays and charming family scenarios hadn't been on her radar. A gas fireplace with a remote was as cozy as it got.

Violet kept her coat, scarf and gloves on and went to stand by the hearth. She was finally getting used to the scent of wood smoke again. The cold however was a different matter. Glorious warmth seeped ever so slowly into her frigid bones.

While the wolves in the house, the coyote too for that matter, seemed to be enjoying the cold temperatures and rustic surroundings, Violet missed the warmer weather of the south. She missed being able to roll out

of bed in her favorite lingerie and not worry about freezing her toes off. But Laurent was right. Cold weather did mean staying in and staying close.

“A top of the line baby stroller.” Laurent beamed.

He parked it in front of the enormous tree the boys had cut down a week ago that took up residence on the other side of the hearth. For the first few days it'd looked positively naked in Violet's opinion but Angel called it a work in progress.

Not prepared for the holidays, Burke and Kendall had rushed out to buy a half dozen strands of white lights and a few boxes of ornaments. They'd spent an evening making gingerbread couples to hang from the elegant evergreen.

Tonight they were supposed to string together miles of popcorn...according to *l'artiste*.

Laurent still grinning about his find, strode over the massive island and snagged a cookie.

“Don't eat them all before we can get a picture,” Kendall begged.

He gave her a patronizing grin before snagging three more. He was ridiculously pleased with himself but Violet smiled at his enthusiasm. Like all the Deveraux men, he'd make a great uncle. Would be a terrific guardian.

Most days it pained her to not be able to give him a child of his own. But she could never let on. It was more about wanting to give him everything because he was the man she loved and less about the actual baby.

She could deny him nothing. And though she knew it wasn't her fault, she couldn't help but feel she was lacking. He insisted that he wanted what she wanted. Children were a casual conversation with deep roots. There'd been a time long ago when she'd dreamed of being round with Laurent's baby.

Such a long time ago.

A lifetime ago.

A heartbeat ago.

But soon Amanda would deliver her baby and then baby mania would die down for a while. They'd play aunt and uncle and go have fabulous adventures at places where parents would never dare to take their children.

It would have to be enough.

Amanda's face fell.

"What's wrong?" Laurent was across the room and kneeling before his Luna in two seconds flat.

Her lips tugged to the side and she wrinkled her nose. "We already ordered one."

"Oh." The single word held his disappointment.

Damn, Violet loved that man. She reigned in the urge to throw her arms around him and show him just how much.

"We can take it back and find something else," Violet assured him.

"Of course," he agreed quickly.

Amanda sucked in a sharp breath and her hand moved to her back. "We might--have to use that--to wheel me to--the--hospital."

"Now?" Sebastian asked, leaping from the chair.

"Not quite yet," his wife said with a wince. "Unfortunately."

Violet shared a glance with Laurent and sent a silent message. *See, I'm not missing anything.*

Though he still looked concerned over Amanda's outburst, the corner of his mouth tugged up.

Sebastian blew out a sigh and sank to his knees. Hands on her protruding belly, he murmured to the baby inside "You need to go easy on your mother, little guy."

Violet's throat tightened, overwhelmed with emotion.

Sometimes Violet found it impossible to believe how tender the Deveraux men actually were. Fierce, loyal, natural born predators and yet, they each had a softer side when it came to the woman in their life. She saw evidence of their love every single day.

One moment Sebastian was the fierce Alpha of the pack and the next, tender father and husband.

"What is dat thing?" Jules voice sounded through the room and she looked up to see him wiping his hands with a rag. He shot Violet a mischievous grin before turning his gaze back to the stroller.

What had he been up to?

If she had to make a bet she'd wager it was bad for Laurent's prospect of outdoing him in the baby gift department.

"A baby stroller," Laurent said, arms crossing his chest.

"Ah..." He paused, studying the stroller for a full ten seconds before he shook his head. "Non, not as cool as my gift."

Jules flashed a grin and then headed for the garage, snagging a sugar cookie on the way.

"We'll see, cousin!" Laurent called after him.

"Come on, handsome. We'll go beat him at his own game," Violet said, slipping her arm into his.

"You men are too much," Manda said.

"Competitive to the core," Sebastian assured her. "Just let them have their fun."

Out front, Laurent pulled up short.

"What--" Then she saw it. The tires were deflated.

He knelt down to inspect them. But Violet already had an idea of who'd sabotaged their return trip.

"Jules," Laurent roared a moment later.

Violet looked over at the closed garage door. "Well, you did push him down the mountain," she reminded him. All was fair in love and war.

"I know," he muttered.

The portico lights brightened the inky darkness as an icy wind sliced through her. She shivered. Laurent, always in tune with her, stood and pulled her close.

"Go get warmed up. I'll take care of this."

"Just pump them up and come back inside. We'll return it tomorrow." She gave him her most seductive smile, feeling tingly in all the right places.

You promised me a session in the sauna.

He brushed his lips across hers and smacked a palm against her ass as she walked away.

Jules woke her with a kiss. Angel rolled onto her back and smiled up at her husband-to-be. "Ready to get married?" he murmured and nipped her naked shoulder.

"Mmm...you know it."

"I guess we should get outta bed den." When he smiled like that, something inside her melted.

She wrapped her arms around his shoulders and raised her head for his kiss. "What's the rush?" she whispered against his lips.

"Just eager to marry you, mon amour."

He always gave the right answer...

Later that morning Angel watched the men build a bonfire in the side yard. According to Sebastian, since they wouldn't be home in the bayou for the annual Festival of Bonfires along the Mississippi River the men were recreating the tradition here.

Still warm from their morning love making, she smiled as Jules strode across the yard, a large log on each shoulder. How had she gotten so lucky?

"I don't think my fingers will ever recover from all these needle pricks," Amanda complained.

Angel turned to see Manda inspecting her fingertips. Then she shifted her gaze to the tall, proud evergreen adorning the great room. Between the lights, gingerbread men, popcorn garland and assortment of shining ornaments it was really coming together. While it wouldn't make a magazine cover, it glowed with love and warmth. She'd documented each step with her trusty camera.

With Christmas music playing softly in the background, the five of them worked side by side in the kitchen. She didn't know how Kendall stood it. For the first few months of their relationship, Angel'd had Jules all to herself without having to share him or her home. Kendall and Burke had just found each other and they'd shared their home, their space with eight others for over a month now.

"Do I have something on my face?" Kendall asked and wiped a hand over her mouth.

Angel smiled at the tall *werecoyote*. She was so much fun to have around. Young and fresh, friendly. Not jaded by years of hate and war like Violet and Juliette. Not pregnant and seething like poor Manda. But Angel wouldn't change any of the women. They'd become friends as well as family.

"I was just thinking you're a saint."

Between six werewolves, one coyote, and one pregnant lady the pack went through a lot of food. The only person in the house who ate less than Angel was Violet. But the vamp was becoming a top notch cook.

Today she wielded a knife like a ninja, slicing the ham and then twenty pounds of vegetables.

"Hardly," Kendall scoffed.

"It's just nice, being here, with all of you. If I were in your shoes, I'm not sure I'd want so many people around while I was just getting to know my husband."

Pack mentality was just one more difference between humans and *weres*. Kendall took it in stride. Angel was just thankful she didn't have to share a bathroom with anyone other than Jules. The fact that their current bathroom had a view of the mountains was a definite bonus.

While Manda gave instructions for preparing the Christmas goose, Angel began stringing bags of cranberries for the tree.

"You're going to have red all over your hands," Juliette said, her voice soft and colored with worry.

"Probably," Angel agreed. She stabbed another berry and juice squirted across her fingers. "Definitely," she amended.

"It's your wedding day," the other woman replied. Though she'd had a few months to get used to it, she still found Juliette's accent the most exotic of the bunch. They'd secretly been studying together, or rather, Angel was playing the student to Juliette's teacher so that Angel would be able to give her vows in French.

Jules was going to be so surprised.

"It's okay, I'm going to be wearing gloves." She'd found white cashmere gloves in town and had bought a pair for each woman. Though she wasn't having bridesmaids, she considered these women her closest friends. She wanted to spoil them a bit and thank them for sharing their Christmas with her and Jules.

"I still think you should put a poinsettia flower in your hair," Manda said, picking up another needle and thread. She reached into the bag and pulled out a handful of deep red berries.

"Don't you think it'll freeze?"

"We're not going to be out there too long, right?" Violet said and Angel could swear she saw the vamp shiver.

"I guess not."

She glanced at the clock. The men had been stacking wood for almost three hours. If she were a betting woman she figured they'd be ready for lunch in the next half hour. That gave her two hours to turn herself into a beautiful bride.

While other girls had been playing with Barbies and daydreaming about their wedding day, Angelica had been climbing trees. But if she'd been the type to daydream, this day would have been better than she could have ever imagined.

Standing on the plateau above Burke's cabin with the White Mountains as a backdrop, she held the bouquet of ruby red roses. Between the heated look Jules gave her and the white cashmere gloves and shawl, she hardly noticed the chill in the air.

He'd insisted they hire a photographer to capture the memories of the day. She knew the importance of a good photograph, of course, but it grated that she couldn't be a photographer and a bride.

Luckily her good friend and world class photographer, Lindsey Moore, had agreed to fill in.

The officiant announced that it was time to say their vows. Jules had agreed that the standard just wouldn't do. Writing her own had been the easiest and at the same time, the hardest, thing she'd ever had to write.

How could she sum up her feelings for Jules in a few sentences? She licked her lips, handed her bouquet over to Kendall and placed her hands in his. *Don't mess this up.* Juliette gave her an encouraging smile and a thumbs-up.

"Jules, you crashed into my world," she said in French, "and changed my life forever."

His gorgeous eyes widened in surprise and he squeezed her fingers.

"You taught me what love is and showed me how I want to live my life. You make me laugh, you make me smile, you make me want to be a better person. I love you more than I did yesterday and know that our love will continue to grow. I see an endless future at your side and promise to love, honor, cherish, and adore you always. Thank you for choosing me to be your wife, your mate."

He tugged her forward, his hands slipping to her waist, and slanted his lips across hers. He was trembling. So was she.

Everyone around them laughed as she clung to him. It didn't matter that he still hadn't said his vows yet or that he'd sealed the deal early.

"*Je t'aime,*" he whispered against her lips.

"Ditto," she whispered back.

He took a deep breath and stepped back, his eyes suspiciously bright. Angel shivered, not from the cold, but from excitement.

“Angelica, my angel, you stepped from my dreams and brought strawberry sunshine into my life.” His words came out in an enchanting frosty cloud. “You are the light that keeps the darkness at bay.”

Oh Jules.

“The warmth that chases away the cold.”

Tears pooled in her eyes and her nose began to twitch.

“The answer to the question I’d asked my whole life. I’ve waited for you for a long time, imagining what your face would look like, what color your hair would be.”

Oh God. She was going to cry. Full-out cry. So much for her promise to not to shed a tear at her wedding. Blinking back the renegade tears, she pursed her lips together.

“But I never imagined just how much I would love you, how much you would complete me.”

Whoa boy. So that’s what Jello knees felt like.

“I promise to protect you *and* your heart, pick you up when you fall, provide a shoulder for you to cry on, bring you flowers because it’s Wednesday,” he cupped her cheek in his hand, “share all that I am and all that I will be. And I promise, Angelica, to love you until my last breath.”

Angel couldn’t wait to see if there was more. She launched herself into his arms, knocking him backward. He recovered quickly, hugging her close. Her feet dangled as he kissed her.

Amanda smiled up at the newlyweds. Her wedding had been more of a shotgun affair but looking back, she wouldn’t have had it any other way. She and Sebastian had sidestepped their feelings for so long that when he’d kidnapped her and taken her off to the bayou, it’d been just the move they’d needed.

She wrapped a protective hand around her belly.

And just look at them now. It seemed, somehow, that their union had set off a domino effect through the Pack.

Jules and Angelica were now married. Laurent and Violet were mated at long last. André and Juliet were finally back together, though it’d been a shock that André had a mate waiting in the wings. Burke had met and married his match in a matter of days.

So much had changed so quickly. But she wouldn't change a think. She didn't miss her life in New York or her job or her demanding bosses. She--ouch.

A sharp pain radiated from her back around to her belly. Holy mackerel.

Don't mess with me baby. I'm trying to enjoy a wed--

Double ouch.

That wasn't just a restless baby. Another pain shot through her and she would have doubled over if she could have. Eyes watering, she moaned. Thank heavens she was sitting down.

Ever attentive, Sebastian's arm tightened around her shoulders and he ran a soothing hand over her belly.

"Ready to meet your baby?" She gave him a brave smile. He, on the other hand, went ashen and his gaze dropped to her belly.

"Now?"

She nodded.

Galvanized into action, he bolted from his chair. "Burke, call the doctor."

"I'm so sorry," she said to Angel and Jules who'd just exchanged rings. They looked like they were going to kiss again at any moment. This was supposed to be their big day.

Angel's blonde brows rose and she rushed to Amanda's side. "Don't apologize."

Jules was right next to his new wife. He looked so much like Sebastian right now. Tall, handsome, protective. "What can we do?"

Another pain welled up inside her and she grit her teeth together, reaching for her friend's hand.

Sebastian draped his tuxedo jacket over her and wasted no time scooping her up into his arms. She soaked in the residual warmth and closed her eyes, knowing he'd take care of her. Though he moved swiftly down the hill, she knew he was taking care with each step.

Amanda shut out all the sounds around her and focused on her breathing. Deep breathes seemed to help. Another spasm wriggled through her and she cried out.

"Hold on to me, love. You're going to be fine," Sebastian murmured.

Good gracious, why did women put themselves through this?

This was all the man's fault. All of it. Ouch. Every. Last. Bit.

"We're almost there, *cheri*."

Burke followed Sebastian and the others down the hill. Who would've thought? Jules and Angel's wedding and the birth of Amanda's baby all in one day?

He pulled his new sat phone from his pocket and dialed Doctor Cooper.

"Doc, I need your help again. Amanda's having her baby."

There was a noticeable pause. "The gunshot victim is pregnant?"

Burke chuckled.

"What are you laughing about?" Amanda screamed.

Burke sobered. "No," he replied, "I'll explain it all later. Can you get here soon?"

"I'm on my way." After confirming his address, Burke quickened his pace so he could open the patio door. Kendall rushed past him into their bedroom and jerked back the linens.

Oh, what the hell? He'd already replaced one comforter this season. "We're going to need plastic sheets if we keep this up," he murmured, stepping aside as Sebastian laid his wife atop the mattress.

"The doctor's on the way," Sebastian assured her and glanced at Burke for confirmation.

He nodded. It was rare for him to feel completely inept. But watching his Luna grimace in pain, knowing there was really nothing he could do for her, it frustrated him.

"I'll get fresh towels. You go watch for the doctor," Kendall said. She seemed so calm. Another facet to her that surprised him and made him fall deeper in love with the *werecoyot*.

Burke nodded and stepped into the living room. Had any of them ever delivered a baby before? He glanced around the room of anxious faces. Not that he could remember. But time was a great teacher.

What a group they made. Dressed to the nines and waiting for a baby to make its appearance. Jules and Angel stood on the far side of the room speaking softly with the wedding officiant.

He huffed out a breath and went to the front door, loosening his bow tie as he went. Violet passed him carrying an armful of wood. She met his gaze and gave him a reassuring smile. "She'll be fine," she said.

Heavens he hoped so. It was all so...precarious.

Gin sat down next to him and let out a low whine. Burke's thoughts exactly. Christmas music had been replaced by low, worried voices and piercing screams. He ran a hand through his hair and huffed out a sigh.

Between the five of them, the men had been keeping the drive and walkways snow free since the blizzard in November. But who knew how long it would take the good doctor to make it across the valley, on New Year's Eve, no less.

Pacing helped him pass the time till he saw a 4x4 coming up the driveway, headlights illuminating delicate snowflakes that reminded him of glitter.

Jerking open the heavy wooden door, he breathed a sigh of relief. Doctor Cooper must have been able to read the tension on Burke's face. As he helped his assistant down from truck, Burke rushed down the flagstone walkway to see if he needed to carry anything.

"Relax Burke. You all have nothing to worry about."

Easy for him to say. His Luna wasn't inside screaming the walls down.

"You remember my fiancé, Jessica?" Doctor Cooper said, an arm around the slender *weretigress*, as they strode to the house.

Burke muttered the appropriate pleasantries, the whole time his mind was on Amanda. Then it bounced to Kendall. Holy hell, how would he manage if she was in Amanda's shoes?

Inside, Amanda's cries could be heard through the house. "You guys try to relax," the doctor said before disappearing into Burke's room.

Easier said than done.

After seeing the officiant to the door, Angel made coffee and Violet brought out snacks.

"This feels weird. Sitting out here while she screams in there," Jules said. He took a healthy swig of his coffee. Then he headed to the bar in the dining room and brought back a liter of whiskey.

Kendall exited their bedroom looking more anxious than he'd ever seen her. Facing down a demented vampire? No problem. He made room for her on the sofa and pulled her close.

"Holding up?" he whispered.

She nodded.

"I'm never going to look at our bed the same way again," he muttered.

Kendall tossed her head back and laughed.

The others looked over at her and just like that, the mood lightened.

“Well Jules, how about a big reveal while we’re waiting,” Burke said.

“Yeah, what’d you get the baby?” Violet added.

His cousin’s smile grew. He sprang up from his chair and started across the room. “Wait till you see it.”

Burke chuckled at Jules’ enthusiasm. “How about you, mon frère?”

“I suppose I’ll have to forfeit since they already bought a stroller and we haven’t had time to go back to town today.” Violet settled onto the arm of the sofa and dropped a kiss on the top of his head.

“I still think the stroller was a marvelous idea,” she assured him.

“Well, cousin,” Laurent said, looking over at André. “What did you get the *bébé*?”

“You’ll see,” André replied.

“You spent three hours holed up in your room yesterday and you still don’t have a gift, do you?”

“They’ll arrive tomorrow.” André looked smug.

“You bought two gifts?” Laurent asked, clearly not appreciating being one-upped.

A bang against the door had them all pivoting in their seats. Jules backed into the room, something large and metallic in his arms. He turned, a child-like grin stretching his lips.

In his arms, a miniature car.

He sat it in front of the fireplace and gave everyone a triumphant look.

“You bought the baby an Aston Martin?” Violet asked, clearly impressed by the gift. She got down onto the floor to investigate, lovingly caressing the silver paintjob.

“Hey, hey, hey,” Laurent said, pulling her back to his side. “No cohorting with the enemy.”

Jules made a show of wiping his hands together, then buffed his fingernails against his chest.

Another piercing scream from the bedroom made Burke cringe.

“What about you, Burke?”

“I wasn’t really in on the bet.”

They gave him a droll look. When had they all not been in on a bet?

"All right." He pushed to his feet and circled the couch. "Where'd you put it, love?"

"It's in the drawer of the sofa table," Kendall replied.

Burke retrieved the embossed folder of papers and tossed them onto the coffee table.

"What's that?" Jules asked.

"Full tuition to Tulane," Kendall said.

"You can do that?" André asked.

"Tulane?" Jules raised an eyebrow.

"You bought the poor kid college tuition?" Laurent asked. "You do know brother that he won't be able to attend for another eighteen years."

So it wasn't as flashy as a mini Aston Martin. "It's practical. We're going to need a doctor in the family."

"Babies aren't practical," Juliette pointed out.

"That's what I said," Kendall agreed. But she kissed his cheek. And she had agreed it was a smart gift.

"I'm totally going to win this," Jules murmured, kissing Angel on the mouth. Though she'd taken off her gloves, she still looked every inch the radiant bride.

"I don't know about that," Burke said. "You think Amanda's going to like a car more than a college education for her child?"

For an instant, Jules looked worried, but then that trademark smile returned. "Sebastian gets a vote," he said.

"Oh, stop with your silly bet and go make dinner," Juliette said, pushing against André's shoulder.

"Jambalaya?" he queried.

"As if you know how to make anything else," Jules replied, smirking.

"I like his jambalaya," Angel said, earning a playful glare from her new husband.

With dinner served and everyone huddled around the fire waiting for Amanda's baby to arrive, Kendall realized that she'd dreamed of this day long before it had arrived. Not the players exactly, but the hominess. The holiday. The twinkling lights on the massive fir tree Burke and Laurent had cut and hauled inside a week ago.

"I hope everyone was finished shopping," Angel said between bites.

The wolves all looked at her, spoons paused over their bowls. They waited, as if they'd missed something important.

"I just meant, it looks like we're going to be here a while and I know we hadn't planned to hang around all evening watching the logs burn."

Jules made a low growling sound.

"You two should go on before it gets dark," Kendall said.

"Yeah. It's honeymoon time," Laurent teased. As the two youngest, he and Jules always seemed to be playing pranks on each other.

Kendall loved the warmth and laughter.

"We're waiting right here," Jules declared. He wrapped an arm around Angel's shoulders and gave them a squeeze. She took his empty bowl and placed it on the end table before kissing his cheek.

The heat in their glance made something inside Kendall hum. Burke must have felt the change since he gave her a questioning look. Could she help it if she wanted to drag him off and have her way with him?

He chuckled softly, obviously reading her mind.

By now she was used to walking in on heated embraces and varying degrees of nakedness. Werewolves were not a bashful lot.

If anything, Kendall found herself blushing fairly frequently.

She snuggled against Burke's side and closed her eyes, soaking in the moment.

André woke at the sound of the door opening. Sebastian held a finger to his lips and a bundle in the other arm. He was grinning from ear to ear. In fact, André had never seen him look so happy in all his life. Not even when he and Amanda had returned from the bayou, happy and married and crazy in love.

They'd made goo-goo eyes at each other for weeks.

André squeezed the beautiful woman laying on top of him and she stirred to life. She looked at him with sleepy eyes before turning to look at his brother. Around the room the others came awake.

The women were the first on their feet, and though they obviously buzzed with excitement he could sense them restraining themselves. Juliette and Violet flanked Sebastian's left side, Angel and Kendall his right.

Juliette eyes sparkled with unshed tears. Damn she was beautiful. He wanted to carry her off and kiss her all over.

"Well?" Angel asked.

Sebastian huffed out a short laugh and then pegged André with a stare. His gaze moved to Jules, then raked over Laurent before settled on Burke. André held his breath.

"Une fille. *Parfaite* and healthy," Sebastian whispered.

A *girl*? André glanced over at Jules. Somehow he managed to look deflated and excited at the same time.

Burke had a secret smile as if he'd known the baby's gender all along. Laurent pushed to his feet and approached the baby. André did the same, taking in the sleeping infant.

"How's Manda?" he asked.

"She's doing great. Happy it's over."

The baby yawned and a murmur swept through the pack.

André stepped back to look over the scene. Everything had changed now. They were no longer single. No longer a pack of adults. There was a *bébé* now. A darling baby girl to be protected and cherished.

"You can go in and see her if you want," Sebastian said, rocking back and forth.

Already a consummate father. André hadn't expected anything less.

Angel stepped past their Alpha and entered the master bedroom. The other women followed and he heard their quiet voices, along with the doctor's deep baritone.

Sebastian looked over at the mini Aston Martin and smiled.

"Who got that?"

Jules eyebrows rose and fell quickly before he gave a self-deprecating smile. "I did."

"She fooled us all. I was certain she was a boy," Sebastian said, though he didn't sound the least disappointed.

"Maybe she'll be into cars, but I guess I lost the bet," Jules said.

Sebastian chuckled softly. "Maybe not. Come on."

They followed him back into the massive bedroom which seemed much smaller with thirteen people crowding it. Amanda sat propped up on pillows, smiling. She hummed to the...

André did a double take. Sebastian was holding the baby in his arms but...

A baby cried.

Manda's gaze lifted to his.

“May I present your nephew?” she said.

“Nephew?” Jules sounded faint. André wrapped an arm around his shoulders to keep him standing. The women laughed.

“But...but...”

“Manda fooled all of us,” Sebastian said, looking lovingly at his wife.

“What did you name them?” Burke asked.

“This is Marie Noelle,” Sebastian said relinquishing his hold on his daughter. Burke accepted the tiny bundle as if he’d handled dozens of babies. But that was Burke. Good at everything he did. And a gentle giant to boot.

Another second ticked by before Andre made the connection.

“You named her after mother?”

A riot of emotions tumbled through him. Confusion, disbelief, pain, and then, an odd sense of healing. Of coming full circle.

Sebastian nodded. “It seemed appropriate after what she did for Manda and Angel.”

Andre digested the words and looked back and forth between the babies.

“We’ll call her Noelle,” Manda said. “She is a Christmas miracle after all.”

Her words seemed to unlock the flood gates. Burke reached for a box of tissues and passed it around to all the women. Andre swallowed past the lump in his throat.

“And my nephew?” he asked.

“This soccer player is Sebastian Alexandré,” Amanda added. “We were thinking of calling him Alex.”

“A good, solid name,” Laurent commented.

The room was quiet for several moments.

“You guys look like you’re at a funeral,” Amanda chided.

That made Jules smile. André pulled himself together and slapped his little brother on the back.

“Come meet him,” their Luna urged. Her request set them all in motion. The women huddled on the bed, talking to Manda and baby Alex. Andre took a turn holding Noelle, amazed at how tiny and light she was. And as adorable as he could imagine. He met Juliette’s gaze over the top of Kendall’s head and he smiled.

One day she'd make a terrific mother and he knew with all certainty, that their baby would be just as beautiful.

"I'll be right back," Sebastian said and stepped to the patio door. They watched as he strode across the patio into the snow. He pulled something from his pocket, and in the fading light, set the enormous wooden pyramid on fire.

A delighted murmur swept through the room. The warm glow filled the room by the time he'd returned. For the first time in centuries, Andre felt at peace with the holidays rather than regret. This was the family life he'd always longed for, come to life.

"Well brother," he gave Jules' shoulder a squeeze, "looks like it's back to the store for another present. Good thing I got two."

He grinned as the other's laughed.

"Not tonight. I think it's time I steal my new wife and begin da honeymoon." Jules wiggled his eyebrows up and down playfully before sweeping Angel off her feet.

Juliette stretched against her mate and enjoyed a rush of cool air over her heated skin. He kept a protective arm wrapped around her middle and growled in his sleep. A thick protrusion twitched against her back, ready despite the early hour.

She pointed her toes and rolled her shoulders. "Merry Christmas," she murmured and then blinked at the sunlight coming through the curtains.

"Morning," he rumbled back.

He nuzzled her neck and she sighed.

"What's that?" he sat up quickly.

"Your phone." She laughed. Half asleep, half horny. *Men.*

"Oh." He stalked across the room giving her a glimpse at his perfect and very naked backside.

"*Oui?*" he said then paused. "Oh, yes. Very good."

He bent over and grabbed a pair of jeans, tugging them on as best he could with one hand and a raging hard-on. Juliette watched the show, grinning.

"I'll see you then."

He hung up the phone and looked around.

"See who when?" She pulled blanket around her as she sat up. Someone had made coffee and -- she sniffed the air -- cinnamon rolls. Her bet was on Violet. That woman was becoming a master chef and she certainly knew her way around knives.

"Our present is about to arrive. I'm glad I got two."

"Two what? This secret is getting--"

He crawled across the bed and silenced her with a kiss. "You'll see soon enough," he said, rolling away.

He shrugged on a sweater and shoved his feet in house slippers before heading to the door. "Come on, you won't want to miss it."

Juliette got dressed and headed upstairs. Burke had a fire going, as usual, and Kendall looked perky as ever, manning the coffee maker. A moment later the doorbell rang and Gin leapt to his feet and ran by, almost knocking the *werecoyote* over. Kendall took it all in stride and Juliette gladly rescued the mug off coffee from her packmate.

Taking a sip of the dark elixir, she followed Gin's path to the front door and saw a woman standing on the stoop with a large basket in her hand. André was reaching for another one.

"What'd you get, hams?" Juliette teased. She sniffed the air, her nose telling her a million details. Perfume, obviously belonging to the haggard looking woman. Wheat, beef, and peanut butter. Rawhide and--

A black furball popped out of the basket and barreled into the house. Gin tripped over himself trying to turn around. He went down in a heap and the black puppy whirled around and gave a playful 'yip.'

"Easy," André commanded the big dog.

Gin stilled and got down on his belly.

Juliette couldn't help but smile. Her mate had always been a dog lover. It didn't surprise her that he'd find two perfect puppies--

Another head popped out of André's basket. This one was orange and white. Juliette narrowed her gaze at the pointy eared creature. She didn't even have to sniff to identify the other 'gift.' The mile long white whiskers did the trick.

"You got the babies a puppy and a kitten?" Kendall asked, sinking to her knees.

"Thanks for coming all this way," André said to the woman still on the doorstep.

“My pleasure Mr. Deveraux. Thank you so much for your generous donation.”

He smiled and waved her off before turning back to the house.

“Donation?” Jules asked.

“I made a somewhat large donation to the Humane Society of Boston and that nice lady agreed to deliver these two bundles of joy on Christmas morning.”

Her mate, the softy. No one would ever be able to tell by his growl and scowl. But Juliette knew the truth. More in love with him than ever she fisted her hand in his shirt collar and pulled him down for a hot, open mouthed kiss.

The others didn't say a word, simply faded into the background, taking the newest additions to the family with them.

“I love you, André Deveraux.”

He kissed his way down to her neck before whispering “And I you, *mon amour*.”

Gin huffed out a sigh from his position in front of the fireplace. According to Master Burke, he was supposed to keep Emma, the feline and Harvey, the canine out of the fire.

Gin was too old for this stuff.

But Burke looked happy and that made Gin happy. Smiling, he thumped his tail a few times. Emma dove for it. He gave the cat a bored stare that made his master laugh.

A mournful cry singed his ears. That set off another. Sebastian and Amanda retreated back into their bedroom with the crying bundles.

How would he ever get a good nap in with all that racket?

Harvey pounced on him from behind. He gently shook the puppy off. They stared at each other. The kid would figure things out quick enough.

Their masters smelled weird and shifted into wolves occasionally but they were good people. And they fed him hamburgers. He gave a happy sigh.

Harvey let out a little yip. Gin grunted.

“I told you they'd be fast friends,” Master André said to his mate. He looked happy. They all did.

Harvey turned in a circle, then another. Silly pup. He'd never catch that tail. Content to watch him try, Gin rested his chin on his front legs. Something snuggled up next to him. It was purring.

"Aww," one of the females said.

Oh the disgrace. He'd never live this down.

He was just about to nose the purring feline away when Harvey came over to investigate. Ugh. Oh no. No... oh he did. Gin sighed and glanced at the two little ones nestled against his side.

One hardly bigger than his front paws with wide trusting eyes, the other dark, fuzzy and full of energy, he supposed he was stuck with them.

Well, they are kinda cute.

"There you go. The Pack's complete," Master Jules said, pulling his mate into his lap.

"Well, not quite," Mistress Juliette said softly. Something in her voice, in the air, shifted. Gin sat up as she handed Master André a small package.

Master André seemed to be holding his breath, looking between the box and his mate.

What's in the box? Oh, let it be a chew toy. A peanut butter chew toy. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Come on, come on. Open it.

Wait... what's that?

Gin couldn't be sure but they looked like -- oh no. The others gasped and started congratulating Master André and Mistress Juliette.

Baby slippers.

The End

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Author Bio

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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.

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"I should have brought birthday cake," Aiden called.

"No, you shouldn't have," she called back as she jerked the thong up her legs and over her hips.

"A great bottle of wine will have to do then," he said as he placed the goblets on her side table. She heard the soft strain of jazz in the air as she stepped into her bedroom and let the giddiness rush through her. Damn, it felt like her first time. Only better. It always did with him.

"I did manage to scrounge up some cheese and pâté." He gave her a grin that should have been illegal. "Or maybe I should just forget about the food and have you for a snack." Two steps and they were toe to toe.

He'd discarded his jacket and tie. The top button of his shirt was open, giving her a tantalizing view. She'd kiss that spot later.

"You're so soft," he murmured, running his hand down her back to cup her ass.

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“And you're so hard.” He had tucked his cock back into his slacks, but she could still *feel* it. With shaking hands she reached up to undo the rest of his shirt buttons.

“It's all your fault, gorgeous.” *What was?* She stared at him, frowning. *Oh, yeah. Him being hard.*

“When are you going to tell me what my surprise is?” She put on her cutest pouty face. With the last four buttons undone, he stepped back.

“Not yet. You're so cute when you beg though.” He handed her a glass of Merlot and held the other to his lips.

“Is that right?” She savored the fruity taste and then crawled onto the bed. “Maybe I should beg a little more.”

“Maybe you should.” He held a pâté covered cracker between them. She took it between her teeth and waited for him to do the same.

The cracker crumbled between them, melting on her tongue. She savored the flavors *and* the look in his eyes. He made her feel beautiful, desirable. She smiled at him and he smiled back.

Together they finished off the cheese and crackers. Aiden refilled her goblet and then approached the edge of the bed.

“Here's the first part of your surprise.” He let a black blindfold dangle from his fingers.