Glory folded her arms, considering the exterior of the small house her mate had built for her. It was painted white, with a wide porch of natural wood on three sides, and a chimney made of native Black Hills stone climbing the fourth. A wisp of smoke rising from the chimney showed white in the sapphire blue of the late afternoon sky. Glory stepped back a few yards, looking at the postcard-perfect view of the house against the reds and golds of the autumn foliage. It was cute.

Glory didn’t do cute. How could she turn cute into scary? Halloween was only a few weeks away. Except for last year, she’d always gone all out decorating for her favorite holiday. Last year … Well, last year she’d been too busy to do anything for Halloween. Between surviving a plane crash, meeting and marrying a hunky werewolf, and finding out she’d gone forward to a time after Armageddon, she’d completely lost track of the days.

But this year would be different. Glory put her hands on her hips, strolling from one end of the house to the other, considering where the spider webs would look most effective.

“Sunshine.”

At the scolding sound of her hunky werewolf’s voice, Glory turned to see him walking toward her from his mother’s house a hundred yards away. Shadow was, as always, all but naked in just moccasins and a breechcloth. His hair, black and thick and heavy, hung down his back to his butt, leaving his broad, beautifully muscled chest bare. At six feet and six inches tall, he was the only man who made Glory feel petite. Hell, he was six inches taller than she was, and almost outweighed her. The fierce Lakota Wolf Clan warrior, who was a terrifying sight in battle, tenderly cradled a pink and blue bundle in one arm.

“Sunshine,” he scolded again. “You are supposed to be lying down, resting.”

“Quit being so bossy. I just wanted to think about how to decorate for Halloween.” She lifted her lips for his kiss and twitched the edge of the baby blanket aside to peek at their daughter’s face. “Hey, there, little Miss Vicki,” she cooed.

“Sh, she’s sleeping.” Shadow hooked his free arm around her waist and towed her up the steps of the porch into their house. “I thought you wanted to call her Victoria.”

“Well, yeah.” Glory watched him set the baby down in her cradle with as much care as if the afghan Lisa Madison had made was wrapped around nitroglycerin. “Victoria for my grandmother, Jillian for Jill, and Tara for your mom. But Victoria Jillian Tara Wolfe is a big mouthful for such a little thing.”

Not that Vicki had felt that little while she was being born. The books in Kearney’s library talked about the joy and beauty of childbirth. They were lucky she wasn’t allowed to burn them. Joy and beauty, her ass. Still, Glory didn’t remember the pain nearly as vividly she remembered the expression on Shadow’s face: terror and joy and awe, all mixed together, as he held the screaming scrap of humanity that was his daughter in his big hands. Glory wished cameras still existed. She never wanted to forget that sight or that moment in time.

“Hm … I wonder what she should be for Halloween? I think I could put together a little witch costume. Do you think we could get a pointy hat to stay on her head?”

“Sunshine, she’s only five weeks old.”

Glory reluctantly agreed. “She’s too young this year, but soon she’ll be going all around the neighborhood Trick or Treating, going to parties, playing with the boys …”

“PLAY—” Almost too late, Shadow remembered to keep his voice low. “Playing with boys?” he hissed, his eyes taking on that weird werewolf glow.

“Uh-huh. You know, Chase and Raven and Matt.”

His eyes went back to normal. “Oh, her cousins, you mean.”

Glory hid a grimace. Their daughter was going to have a hell of a time finding a boy brave enough to date her. That was years away, though, and Glory’s thoughts were on something in the present. She watched her mate put another log on the fire, admiring the way the muscles in his back bunched and smoothed as he moved. Her mate was mouthwateringly sexy. “For this year, I have the perfect costumes for us.”

He turned in a flare of hair, eyes wide in apprehension. “I don’t wear costumes,” he warned her.

“Good,” she purred. “I like you naked best. I thought I could be Little Red Riding Hood and you could be the Big Bad Wolf.” She let her fingers comb through his hair, smooth down his chest to the knot of the cord that held his breechcloth up. “But I don’t have a costume, so I guess we’ll just have to pretend. If I took off my clothes, could you pretend to take a red cloak off me?”

He swallowed hard. “Sunshine, is it too soon? It’s only been a few weeks.”

“Almost six weeks. Jill says everything has healed up just fine after the birth.” She succeeded in loosening his breechcloth. It dropped, showing that though his words were reluctant, his body wasn’t. She took him in her hand, loving the heat and the weight of him. “I’ve missed you, Big Guy.”

His teeth caught her earlobe. “I’ve missed you, Sunshine. I’ll go slow, I promise.”

“Go as fast as you want, but remember the baby’s sleeping. Don’t roar and howl at the end like you always do.”

“Me?” He let go of her ear to give her a wolfish grin. “Who is it that screams my name when she comes?”

She faked a scowl. “I’m not anywhere near as loud as you.”

Shadow lifted her lightly into his arms and shouldered his way into their bedroom. “We’ll see,” he threatened.

Glory surrendered to his hands and mouth. This was a contest she could live with. And if she lost, well, she could live with that too.

Twenty minutes after their bedroom door closed, a roar and a scream woke the baby. In the cradle her grandfather had carved for her, Victoria blinked startled blue eyes, shoved a tiny fist into her mouth and fell back asleep.