

Bear Seeking Bride: Thorn (Bear Canyon Brides Book 6)

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About This Book

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Identical twins and bear shifters, Doctors Gavin and Hawk Thorn have been searching a long time for a mate to complete their triad. They have worked hard to succeed in both their personal and professional lives, but their success means nothing without a mate to call their own.

Tired of meeting women only interested in sex and money, Gavin and Hawk place an ad for a bride listing all of their combined redeeming qualities. Desperate for change, Ava answers an ad for a mail order bride to a seemingly perfect man. When she finds out Thorn is actually two perfect men, she must decide whether to accept their love, or run back to her boring, lonely life.

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Chapter One

Ava Redmond put the lid on the plastic container that held her holiday decorations and sighed as she looked around the room. The spacious apartment had been her home for several years, but it had never felt so bare and empty.

She hauled the two boxes of décor into her office and then returned for the long box holding the artificial Christmas tree. The tall, skinny tree was beautiful when assembled, but fluffing all the prongs was a timely process and she missed the smell of live greenery.

Growing up, her father had always insisted on a real tree. Every year he would pile everyone into his truck and set out for the mountains. After a nearly two hour drive, they would pull into a small dirt parking lot, gather an axe and rope from a man in a little shack, and set out to find the perfect

tree. After they'd found it, her father would cut it down, strap it in the bed of the truck and they'd start the journey home.

Her sister, Claire, would complain the whole time, but Ava would open her book and ignore her younger sibling. Every now and then, one of the holiday tunes from the radio, or one of her parent's voices, would break through her concentration, but she'd always welcomed those distractions.

She hadn't had a real tree since her parents had passed away and she missed the smell filling her home. She'd been living in the same apartment since she'd graduated from college, and it was on the third floor of a high-rise in the city. On her first Christmas alone, the thought of hauling a real tree up and down two flights of stairs, or wrestling with it in the elevator, had given her incentive to buy an imitation. She'd figured once she had a permanent man in her life, she wouldn't have to worry about carrying the tree up alone.

Of course that hadn't been the case with her ex.

Even though it had meant so much to her, David hadn't wanted to mess with a real tree. Looking back, he hadn't wanted to mess with a lot of things she'd liked. Except for her dream of owning her own bookstore. For that, he'd jumped in with both feet, and she'd stupidly followed with her inheritance.

Three years later, she was right back where she'd started, only with lighter pockets.

She and David had dated nearly a year before she'd told him about her bookstore idea. He'd been overly supportive, talked of marriage and commitment, and convinced her to add him as an equal partner, even though he had less capital. She'd eagerly taken his advice, and then built her dream. She'd picked the perfect location, stocked the best books, made several promising connections with distributors and publishers, and turned her little dream into a successful business.

Everything seemed perfect until six months ago, two years into the project, David announced he was marrying her sister and he wanted her half of the business. Her entire world flipped upside down as his words had slowly sunk in.

While she'd been splitting all of her time between him and the bookstore, he'd been running around town, partying and cozying up with her estranged sister.

She and Claire had never been close, but after their parents' deaths, they'd been virtual strangers. They were as different as night and day in both size and appearance, and Claire had always resented their parents for loving both of them the same. The woman had felt entitled to more love because she was short, thin and had their mother's coloring. Ava was tall, curvy and took after their dad.

A wave of sadness washed over her as she thought about her parents, and her thoughts drifted back to the last time the three of them were together. She'd gone home for spring break and her mother stood at the stove making pancakes, while she and her father sat at the island counter and drank coffee. She'd told them a joke one of her professors had shared with her class the day before, and her father's booming voice echoed around the room when she'd reached the punch line.

The man had been over six feet tall with red hair and deep blue eyes. His striking ginger head drew attention wherever he went, and she remembered always feeling safe and protected by his side. Claire had their mother's hair, eyes and height, but Ava had gotten the woman's soft, round

curves. Her father had never seemed to mind his curvy wife; in fact his desire for her curves would have been hard to miss. He'd showered her with love and attention every day, and Ava longed to find a man who looked at her with the same devotion.

Looking back, she'd known all along that man wasn't David, but his betrayal had still hurt.

Even though he'd known how much she'd loathed her sister, and how much pain and torment Claire had caused, he'd purposefully developed a personal relationship with the woman. Over the years, she'd shared many painful and private moments with him, only to have them thrown back in her face. His vicious parting words attacking her appearance had hurt, but his demand for her dream had hurt more.

Desperate to cut all ties with the lying, cheating scumbag, she'd sold him her half of the business for cost, and bowed out gracefully. Unfortunately, she would never be really free unless she left town for a fresh start.

When she'd built her business, she'd planned to own it forever. She'd picked the perfect location, and worked with the local businesses to give their patrons an ultimate shopping experience. Now that it was gone, she found herself avoiding her favorite hangouts.

All the friends she'd had when she'd been single had drifted away over the years, and all of their couple friends had stayed with David. After the break-up six months ago, she'd not only been heartbroken, she'd been completely, and utterly alone.

The approach of the holidays had motivated her to volunteer, and while she enjoyed the work, she still came home to an empty apartment every night. Ultimately, she didn't feel as though she belonged anywhere anymore, and it was time to move on.

A new city and a new job were the perfect solution.

The change of scenery would do her good.

Gavin Thorn dragged his feet into the kitchen, ran his hand through his hair, and squinted at his brother sitting at the table. His identical twin brother, Hawk, studied the tablet he held in one hand, and took a sip of his steaming coffee with the other. The man had obviously been up longer than five minutes.

Gavin pressed the button on the single-serve coffee machine and took a deep breath as the mug began to fill. He added sweetener to the hot brew, and then joined Hawk at the table.

"How can you look so chipper? I feel like crap, and my head is throbbing."

"You drank more than I did, and I've already downed three ibuprofen and two cups of coffee," Hawk said.

"We're getting too old for this shit," Gavin swore. "Those girls last night didn't even look legal, or natural. Where the fuck are the real women?"

“Hell if I know,” Hawk said, shutting off his tablet and placing it on the table, “but I can’t do another club or bar scene. We’re like magnets for every desperate, gold-digging, sexed up female in a fifty mile radius, and that place last night was the worst. I can’t believe Jordan recommended it.”

“Yeah, sophisticated my ass,” Gavin cursed, and took a huge gulp of his coffee.

The caffeine pushed some of the cobwebs out of his head, but he was still angry.

They should have known better than to trust an unmarried man’s advice on where to meet women. As soon as they’d walked into the place, they’d caught the attention of every woman who’d ever fantasized about a threesome. They’d been approached many times before, and they were looking for someone to share, but it was the first time the married women hadn’t even tried to hide their wedding bands.

When he’d inadvertently let it slip they were both doctors, even some of the women with dates had approached them. It had been amusing for about five minutes, and then he’d started drinking. The only reason they didn’t turn around and leave was because they were already out, and they didn’t want to try another place they knew was the same or worse. The only reason they tried clubs at all was because they knew they wouldn’t meet anyone in Bear Canyon.

He and Hawk had moved into Bear Canyon five years ago after the government had recognized the need for pure shifter communities and sanctioned the land for grizzly bear shifters. While relocating to a shifter town has always been voluntary, many shifter advocates had opposed the lands claiming rights violations and segregation, but most shifters had openly welcomed the change. Shifters have always desired peace, and raising cubs in a huge city, especially with nervous or uneducated humans, is stressful on both the parents and children.

Unfortunately, in every species of shifter, the men outnumbered the women nearly three-to-one. They’d already met all the available she-bears in town and none of them were meant to be theirs. They were meant to share, they’d always known that, but they needed a woman who could handle both of them. Although they were identical on the outside, they were very different on the inside. Usually, a woman could handle one but not the other.

His thoughts made him wary and he sighed heavily.

“We will find someone,” Hawk reassured him.

“Yeah, I know,” he agreed. “I just thought we’d have met her by now.”

He’d always thought they’d have a few cubs running around by the time they turned thirty-five, but they only had seven more months until that magical birthday and they hadn’t even met their mate yet. Never having cubs would suck, but he could deal. Never having a mate would slowly drive him insane.

He and Hawk needed a woman to complete their triad.

“I have an idea,” Hawk hesitated. “It’s risky, though.”

“What is it?”

“What if we placed an ad?”

“Are you insane?” Gavin yelled. He slammed his mug down on the table and some of the liquid sloshed out and landed on his hand. He ignored the burn, and continued to yell. “We’d get every crazy in the world able to board a plane bothering us. They’d show up to fuck, steal our money and leave before morning. What the fuck is wrong with you?”

“Calm down. God damn, that’s not what I meant,” Hawk said, exasperated. His brother handed him a napkin, and smiled. “Before I explain, though, please tell me how they are going to steal our money in the middle of the night?”

“You know what I mean,” Gavin snapped. “Their car will break down. Or they won’t be able to afford the plane ticket home. Or, I don’t know, there really isn’t a home and we’re stuck with them until they can earn enough to get their own place, but they’ll never get their own place and then we’ll be stuck with some insane threesome junky for the rest of our lives. No fucking way.”

“Don’t you think that’s a little extreme?” Hawk asked calmly.

God he hated his brother sometimes.

Hawk had always been the quieter of the two, but it wasn’t because he was shy, or brooding, as most people expected. It was because he was watching, thinking and planning. The man rarely made decisions without plans, or at least some sort of knowledge, and Gavin was the complete opposite. He was talkative, friendly, outgoing and spontaneous. Instead of thinking everything through, he often jumped first and thought about the consequences later. Not about the important things, of course, but with the small things.

They complemented each other perfectly, but it was extremely difficult to find a woman who appreciated both personalities. Hawk wouldn’t have brought up the ad if he didn’t already have a plan. *

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