



Wake a Sleeping Tiger (A Novel of the Breeds)

By Lora Leigh

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When readers of dark romance and unbridled desire want to be satisfied, they turn to #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Lora Leigh and her “powerful and highly erotic” (Fresh Fiction) Breed novels. Now a Breed hides in the world of man—until a woman arouses the amused and wildly carnal animal within...

Once, he was Judd—Bengal Breed and brother to the notorious fugitive Gideon. After Gideon disappeared, Judd was experimented on until his tortured body knew nothing but agony.

Now he is Cullen Maverick, serving as the commander of the Navajo Covert Law Enforcement Agency in the small community of Window Rock, Arizona. Despite his genetics, Cullen is able to pass as human because his Bengal traits are recessed. He lacks the ability to smell the emotions, bonds and fears that other Breeds take for granted. And he remains tormented that he wasn't able to mate the woman he loved—at the cost of her life.

He's no longer a Breed, merely a man. . . or so he thinks. But his tiger is about to be awakened by the one woman destined to be his—Chelsea Martinez. And their world will never be the same...

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Editorial Review

Review

PRAISE FOR LORA LEIGH'S BREED NOVELS

"When it comes to writing this genre, Lora Leigh is the queen!"—Romance Junkies

"[A] highly erotic saga."—Fresh Fiction

"Lora Leigh delivers on all counts."—Romance Reviews Today

About the Author

Lora Leigh is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of the Nauti Boys series and the Nauti Girls series, as well as the Breed novels.

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.Chapter 1.

From Graeme's Journal The Recessed Primal Breed

The Primal Breed will know his mate, sensing her even without the benefit of Mating Heat. The recessed Primal will sense his mate, know her and find comfort and calm in her presence. Only Mating Heat will release his Breed genetics, though, and allow the Primal free of its cage-

Navajo Nation Pinon, Arizona

Oh God!

Oh God!

She was just a baby.

Tiny, delicate, a mop of tangled black hair and wide, shock-filled eyes.

Rage clenched Chelsea's guts, formed a layer of ice around her emotions and stilled her racing heart. Logic and training snapped in and she forced herself to move into position slowly.

Horror. Terror.

Those distant, primal warnings of evil were pushed quickly to the back of her mind as the child stumbled forward.

Oh God, she had to get just a little bit closer. If this wasn't timed just right, if Chelsea didn't calculate everything perfectly, then she knew that baby wouldn't be the only one who died in this lonely desert tonight.

Night vision glasses allowed her to pick up even the most minute detail in the deepening night. The sight of huge bite marks over the child's body would live in Chelsea's nightmares. If she survived. Deep, jaggedly

torn flesh still seeped blood, spilling more down the already bloodstained little body.

Long, tangled black hair fell to the child's shoulders and covered the side of her heavily bruised and swollen face. She was weak, far too cold and suffering blood loss definitely, possibly hypothermal shock. If she didn't get that child out of there fast, then she was going to die.

Come here, baby. I'm right here. Come on, let me take you to your momma . . .

The plea was soundless, no doubt useless, but still, she urged the child to the edge of the rising tower of rock that hid her presence from the Coyote soldiers.

She didn't dare show herself. If they saw her, then she'd never have time to get the baby into the Desert Runner she'd taken out that night on patrol.

She was in the middle of a nightmare she couldn't have imagined. Even her deepest, darkest fears didn't hold anything this horrific.

Demonic yips and howls filled the night with terrifying sounds. They were merely tormenting the little baby, keeping her little heart beating fast and hard, her blood seeping steadily from her wounds.

So much evil. The creatures pushing the child through the night were hellish. Only hell could conceive monsters such as the ones trailing after the child.

Right here, baby. Come on, Louisa, you're almost safe. Let's go find Momma . . . She kept her eyes on the child, willing her to come to her, to sense her waiting in the shadows, ready to scoop her up and race her away from this nightmare.

"Momma, help me." The night carried the hoarse, dazed little voice clearly to where Chelsea hid. "Momma, help me." Over and over the ragged plea filled Chelsea's soul with agony and threatened to pierce the layer of ice covering her emotions.

If she let the fear free now, then she'd lose her mind, Chelsea knew. There would be no way to function, to think.

She took her eyes off the child only long enough to check the distance between the enemy and the little girl stumbling through the dark.

The Coyote soldiers were keeping Louisa in sight. If Chelsea just waited, remained out of their field of vision, then she'd have Louisa and be gone before they could get close enough to stop her. Then it would just be a matter of staying ahead of them until she got to safety.

She'd glimpsed their Runner, but she knew hers would be lighter, the motor modified to get an edge on the ones being used by the soldiers. The Breed Underground modified their vehicles for speed rather than defense or heavy weapons. Still, the Coyotes' Runner would be hard to get away from without a good head start.

It wouldn't be easy.

Watching the little girl, Chelsea gritted her teeth and made herself wait. Just a little more.

That's it, Louisa. Come this way. I'm right here, baby.

"Momma. Help me, Momma." The little voice was so weak, the night so cold, and time was running out.

Holding the blanket she carried ready, Chelsea kept a wary eye on the Coyotes and waited, still, silent. The body-warming technology of the covering would hopefully keep the little girl warm enough and protect her from further chill as they raced through the cold night; the open design of the Runner would do little to stave off the chill.

The Coyotes paused, yips and laughter filling the desert as Louisa headed straight for Chelsea, her dazed eyes staring unseeing into Chelsea through the darkness of night.

She could do this. Louisa was almost in place. Just a little closer.

The kids' parents were about thirty minutes away, their desert estate well armed as they waited for word of their daughter. Search efforts were being concentrated in the opposite direction; the report of Coyote soldiers closer to Window Rock had drawn searchers there.

It was that odd piece of information Chelsea had collected the day before that placed these creatures closer to Pinon and already had her in the area when the report went out. She was turning around and heading toward Window Rock when she'd heard the Coyotes.

The child stumbled to her knees and Chelsea felt her breath catch. She was so close.

"Come to me, Louisa," she whispered, a breath of sound she prayed the Coyotes didn't catch.

Louisa made it to her feet, jerky, uncoordinated, but she made it to the edge of the rock.

Chelsea moved.

Snapping forward, she wrapped the dark blanket around Louisa's slight body, lifted her into her arms and ran the ten feet to the Runner she'd left on standby. Before she could jump into the Runner, the night went silent. Totally, completely silent. There was no time to secure the little girl into the opposite seat now.

No time.

It had just run out.

As she latched the restraining harness around both of them, the feel of Louisa shuddering and the sound of her gasping breaths filled Chelsea with dread.

Enraged howls filled the night as Chelsea slammed the Runner into gear and the desert vehicle shot forward. The deep tread of the tires bit into dirt, sand and gravel, then all but picked up and flew through the night.

Thirty minutes.

Thirty minutes to the Cerves estate, and she was on her own until she got there. The radio had gone out, refusing to work, but there was also a chance the Coyotes' Runner was equipped with a jammer. And she wasn't far enough away from them for her radio to work yet.

The Runner's back cameras and radar were working great, though. Good enough to see that those bastards were gaining on her.

She should have never come out alone.

Under no circumstances.

She should have called in backup when she first heard the Coyotes' howls. But her cousin Linc was manning communications and he would have ordered her back.

She'd already been in the area when she picked up the radio transmissions earlier that night that the Cerveses' young daughter had been taken from the compound by suspected Council Breeds.

How the Coyotes managed that, she couldn't imagine.

Checking radar and cameras again, she calculated the distance to the compound and saw a glimmer of hope. She was actually closer than she'd thought she'd be. Not much farther.

Not that she would be exactly safe once she arrived at their compound-if she arrived. The Cerves family had brutal reputations. The Cerves criminal cartel didn't wait to ask questions. They killed first.

As she checked the monitor again, her jaw tightened. Shifting gears with fierce, quick movements, she heard power build in the motor as she pushed it for more speed, gritting her teeth and restraining a curse as the first bullet struck the side of the Runner.

The desert vehicle wasn't bullet resistant and the Coyotes knew it.

Fire flashed in the cameras and the sound of automatic gunfire behind her, pelting over the Runner, had her using every trick she knew to push the motor harder, faster.

Gunfire still erupted behind her, but the pinging had stopped. She estimated she was staying just out of reach of them. But she and little Louisa weren't home free yet, and she was running straight into an armed force that would already be prepared to shoot at the first sign of a threat. A Runner crashing the gates would definitely be seen as a sign.

The night sped by as adrenaline pumped fast and hard through her body and the Runner raced through the desert.

She had to keep both hands on the steering wheel. At the speeds she was pushing the Runner to, she didn't dare take one off to comfort the baby.

Louisa was only eight years old, though, and Chelsea knew that comfort was something the child could have used.

Eight years old.

If she survived, would her young mind ever pull free of what had happened tonight?

Twenty minutes.

She'd been racing through the night for twenty minutes.

The temperature gauge on the Runner was edging higher. It wasn't meant to run this hard, this fast, for this distance.

She was close, though. Any minute she should see the glow of the lights that lit the estate like a damned airport runway.

Guards had surrounded it earlier in the day before Louisa's disappearance. Surely they were still there.

What if they weren't?

What if the estate was deserted?

As she flew over the next rise, those lights glowed in the distance. Rather than pulling back, the Coyotes were firing again, and another ping to the side of the Runner had Chelsea quickly twisting the wheel, fighting to keep the Coyotes behind her. The chance of a bullet hitting her was slighter there. There was no protection to the side.

As she drew closer to the estate, she could see men running, automatic weapons in their hands. The gates weren't opening and there was no time to stop. If she stopped, her side would be exposed as the Coyotes raced past her. She'd be easy to pick off.

Praying the reinforced metal of the Runner's front guard held up, she pointed the Runner toward the gates, her teeth locked tight, her eyes narrowing on that point. If she could just make it to those gates and crash through . . .

As long as the Cerves guards didn't shoot her first.

She prayed they glimpsed the Breed Underground insignia she hurried to flip on. The bright red BU on the front guard was all she'd have to alert them that she wasn't some dumbass just hoping to break through and cause murder and mayhem.

No, she was bringing the murder and mayhem.

"Hang on, baby," she screamed above the sound of the Runner's motor.

Louisa's arms and legs tightened around her, but not by much. Chelsea could feel the dampness of her night suit from the little girl's blood and the child's cold flesh.

"Momma's waiting for you, baby."

She prayed that Samara Cerves-the Blood Queen, she was called-was waiting for the little girl who still whimpered for her, and that the savagery she was reported to have wasn't something her child knew.

Chances were slim, though.

Still, the Cerves compound was the little girl's only hope. And God help the family if anything happened to Chelsea because her own family wouldn't play nice.

Automatic weapons were turned on her as a dozen or more soldiers and security personnel braced to fire on her. Faces brutally hard, determined . . . murderous.

Her life flashed before her eyes and one image held in her mind.

"Cullen." She whispered his name as the gates loomed, coming closer, faster. "I'm sorry . . ."

Metal hit metal, the Runner reducing speed with a force that had the safety seat and harness reacting with the same speed to hold them in place. The collision rippled around the powerful vehicle, the frame taking the brunt of the force, the seat reacting to the still-strong shock wave that hit the interior.

Automatic gunfire ruptured the night as the gates were pushed open, and the Runner came to a stop several feet inside the interior of the compound.

Chelsea was confident the child hadn't sustained further injuries, though for some reason, her own arm was burning like hell.

"Wait! Wait!" she screamed, fighting the hard hands that reached in, tore at the harness and tried to jerk her from the seat. "Louisa. I have Louisa."

She scrambled to release the restraint, trying to be gentle, to hold the child securely as she whimpered, crying for her momma.

"I have her," she cried out, suddenly staring down the barrel of a gun, eyes wide, the certainty of death filling her mind. "I have Louisa."

Hands shaking, she let the blanket fall back, her eyes lifting to the cold, stark blue gaze of the Blood Queen herself. In those crystal-hard eyes Chelsea saw a mother's torment and a killer's need for blood.

"Momma." Weak, fear and terror worn, the little girl was suddenly trying to struggle against Chelsea, ragged nails dragging against the shoulder of Chelsea's black top.

Frantic, hysterical desperation filled the child now; those wide, dazed eyes flickering with horror would forever be seared into Chelsea's memories.

The gun barrel jerked back and the woman was reaching for the girl, screaming for the doctor, and in Samara Cerves's face Chelsea saw such misery, such pale, terror-filled pain, that she had no doubt little Louisa was safe now.

The question was, was Chelsea safe?

"Move." She was hauled out of the Runner with a suddenness she found shocking.

The hands that jerked her from the vehicle were rough and bruising as she was dropped to her feet, then dragged through the courtyard toward the side of the mansion. Stumbling, she had only a moment to glimpse the chaotic activity of soldiers and security personnel rushing behind the woman known as the Blood Queen and the blood-soaked body she cradled in her arms.

"Where are you taking me?" Desperation sliced through her as they disappeared around the side of the house.

She couldn't die here.

Struggling against the powerful grip, she tried to dig her heels into the dirt and loose stones beneath her feet, only to risk falling and being dragged along the ground.

Furious cries were falling from her lips, the need to escape frantic when he suddenly stopped, all but throwing her against the side of the house, his hand pressing over her mouth and his face only inches from hers.

Green eyes flecked with amber rioting through the irises. Rage burned in his gaze, in his expression, along with steely, uncontrolled demand.

Users Review

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