



Claire

The shift into Damara's form was painful. In this body, I haven't shifted very often. But Magnor was great, encouraging both of us and helping to ease the pain of the shift. Once it's done, the pain recedes quickly.

I'm not sure if Magnor was giving us time to recover, or if he really wanted to take his time to look over Damara, but by the end she's strutting and posing like a model.

'He likes the way I look,' Damara says.

'You're beautiful, Damara, what's not to like,' I tell her.

'He's just so big and strong, and now....'

'Magnor has always loved us, Damara, no matter what. Don't go getting shy on me now,' I say.

Apparently, she takes my words to heart, because she barks at Magnor and takes off





running, stretching her legs.

Magnor lifts his head and gives the howl of the hunt before grabbing my dress and giving chase. He would probably have nipped at her heels if he didn't have my dress in his mouth, but instead, he nudges Damara's hind quarters, making her yip and bark excitedly as she runs, trying to stay ahead of him.

When she finally wears herself out, she slows and he trots up to her, rubbing himself on her. He chuffs, indicating that we need to follow him and leads us to the lake where we took him and Tereshan when they were in our body.

Damara drinks some water then lays down, catching her breath. Magnor drops my dress and his shorts in the grass, then gets some water and comes to lay beside her.

'We'll let them catch their breath, then we can shift and walk to meet Keegan from here. It's not too far and will give us some time to see this area again. Maybe we missed something the first time.'





'The area is at our northwest border. There's nothing behind the border, it's just open land moving out to the mountains.'

'The lake has a riverbed that flows out there, too. There are several, but there is at least that one that goes off of our pack lands,' Tereshan says.

'Yes. Maybe we should look at that. We didn't check the water source last time. Maybe the issue has to do with the water, not the soil,' I say.

Magnor stands and shakes out his fur before pushing the shift back into Tereshan. Damara stands, walking over to him. He stays kneeling reaching out to run his fingers through her fur.

"So beautiful, just like your human," he tells her, stroking his fingers down her sides and making her body shiver. "And your fur is as soft and silky as Claire's hair."

He rubs his face against hers, before she pushes herself against him, trying to get into his lap. He chuckles, wrapping his arms





around her as she licks his face.

“Yes, I love you too, Damara. I love you both. And we will get you stronger. We’ll come out to shift more often and let you run. Claire needs to strengthen her human body, but you need to get stronger in this body as well. Okay?”

She lays her head on his shoulder, doing the wolf version of hugging him. He keeps his arms wrapped tightly around her, holding her to him.

“My beautiful girls. This time will be different. I promise. I’ll do everything I can to make sure that we survive.”

Damara sighs and he holds her for another minute before I pull her back. It’s time to go meet Keegan.

The shift is hard again, but not as hard as it was the first time. This time it’s Tereshan rubbing his hands over Damara, whispering in her ear about how brave and strong she is, until the final bone shifts back into place.





I'm panting with exertion and pain when the shift finally ends, and Tereshan pulls me into his lap.

"Give it a moment, just rest."

He wraps his arms around me, and I lean my head against his chest, listening to the sound of his heart beating, following his breaths and slowing mine.

"Thank you," I say, when I calm.

He kisses the top of my head. "No need to thank me. Come on, let's get dressed and take a look at our land."

I pull the dress over my head. "Since you mentioned the river, why don't we follow it and then cut back to meet Keegan." I say.

"Works for me," he says and takes my hand.

I never really had time to explore our pack lands. The most I did was when I was in Magnor's body was run through the forest. During those time, I was mostly fighting, so I didn't really have a chance to explore the





lands. I let Feena handle the arrangement with Keegan, so I only came out here a couple of times and I wasn't looking at the land itself, more looking at it from a space and farming perspective.

Now, I look around, seeing how gorgeous our pack lands actually are. It's rugged, but there are wildflowers growing all over. The lake is surrounded by yellow flowers, blooming all around it. I stop looking out past the lake. The entire area is full of these yellow flowers. They're stunning. It's almost as if they are shimmering in the sunlight.

"Is it always this beautiful here?" I ask, looking out of the land.

"Honestly, I've never stopped to 'smell the roses' as they say. So, I've never noticed. But you're right, it's almost magical."

"Did you ever hear that human song, Fields of Gold? That's what it reminds me of, a field of golden colored flowers. I wonder what kind of flower they are."

Tereshan looks at me. "How do you know





human songs?”

I smile, looking up at him. “Vivienne. She loves them, and she’s got a really good voice. One of the warriors gave her his digital music holder. He had upgraded and put the music on his phone instead and he knew that she liked to sing. Dane got her a speaker so she can listen to the songs. When we would clean together, she would sing. It made the day go by faster.” I shrug.

“Well, now I know what to get her for her birthday. When is her birthday, by the way. It’s soon, right?”

“A couple of months. She’ll turn 18.” The thought makes me sad.

Tereshan’s finger goes under my chin. “What’s that look?”

“What if she finds her mate and leaves?”

Tereshan’s lips press together. “Then we’ll have her come visit. Or we’ll go visit her. But she didn’t find her mate in any of the last timelines, so let’s not worry about that now.





For now, let's focus on finding anything that we missed and then we can see if Keegan finds anything in his soil samples."





Tereshan

Claire and I follow the river even after crossing out of our pack lands. The farther from the lake we get the thinner the riverbed gets and the muddier it looks.

“Wouldn’t you think the water would be clearer here than in the lake?” Claire asks.

“I guess it depends on the soil beneath it.” I look around, realizing that Claire is right. Most of the land here is sandy and rocky. The water should be clearer.

“It’s almost like rust. But I didn’t see that anything had been dumped in the water as we were walking,” Claire continues.

I lean down, looking at one of the stones lying around this part of the riverbed. It’s white color standing out against the grass, dirt and rust color of the water.

“What is that?” Claire asks, coming to squat down beside me.





"Some sort of rock," I say, looking around the riverbed. We're near the end of the riverbed here and there are several of these white rocks lying around.

"Should we take it to Keegan? Maybe he'll know what it is."

"That's a great idea," I say, putting the rock in the pocket of my shorts. "We should start heading that way. I'm not seeing anything out of the ordinary here other than this white rock, are you?" I ask her.

"No, but we might want to make sure that isn't rust in the water."

"It doesn't smell like rust," I say, lifting my nose and sniffing the air.

"You're right, it doesn't."

"But it's worth checking out," I tell her, not wanting to disregard her thoughts.

I take her hand and we begin heading in the direction where we will meet Keegan. I look out over the expanse of empty land beside us.





"I wonder who owns this property," I muse. It's gorgeous land, rugged. It might be worth seeing if I could purchase it and expand my territory.

"Can we find out?" Claire asks.

"Yeah. I have to call my guy today to find out about buying Franco's brothel. I'll have him look into this piece of property as well. It's possible the government owns it, or that it's protected land for whatever reason, but I can find out."

Claire looks out over the land. From here to the mountains, it's mostly flat. "It would be a good area for our wolves to run. Although, it does look a bit rocky, so we'd have to check it out first."

I smile. Of course my mate is worried about the pack members getting injured. I follow her gaze, looking at the mountain.

"I wonder how far the land extends," I say.

"And what's on the other side of that mountain," Claire says.





"I think there's another pack on the other side, so their land probably borders that mountain."

"Which pack?" Claire asks.

"You know, I'm not sure. I'll have to see if my guy knows."

"Your guy," she says, making air quotes, "seems to know a lot. Does he have a name?"

I smile. "Eric. And we pay him a lot to get answers for us. Especially when it's something like the brothel that we want to keep quiet. This way, Franco won't know it's you and I that are looking to buy it out from under him."

When we get back to our pack borders, I can see Keegan and a couple of his men taking soil samples. He's got some sort of contraption set up and it looks like they are putting soil into different containers, before capping them off and putting them into what looks like a portable cooler. Another guy looks like he's testing the soil right here.

"Alpha Keegan," I greet him as we walk up.





"Alpha Tereshan, Luna Claire. I thought we agreed to not be so formal."

"We did," Claire says walking up to him.
"How is Zoey?"

He smiles the smile of a man in love. I'm pretty sure I get that look now too.

"She's wonderful. Yesterday was a lot, but I think it went a long way to showing her that I mean what I say about wanting her for my mate and Luna."

"Well, I'm pretty sure it was clear to everyone else at the table," I say wryly looking at the guy that seems to be testing the soil.

"What's all this?" I ask.

Keegan looks at the guy who continues to add drops of liquid into the tubes that already have some liquid and dirt in them. He shakes them and Keegan waits before answering.

"So, this is our initial test of your soil. Since we don't know exactly what we're looking for, I have my team doing a field test, just to





see if anything stands out.” He looks up at both of us.

“Since we know that Alpha Franco has been attacking you on multiple fronts, I tested for poison first. We didn’t find any, so that’s good.”

I nod, looking at Claire. There wasn’t any last time either, but better to be safe than sorry.

“I looked at the pH levels of the soil too. Four to 7.5 is about where you want your pH levels for growing berries and your levels are at 5-6, depending on where the sample was taken, so that’s good.”

He looks up at us and sighs. “But, we haven’t found anything that stands out to us, and the ground is good for planting. We’re taking some more soil samples to do a deeper study on, but if those results come back fine, I’d like to start planting. We want to give the crops a chance to start growing so they will be ready in a few months.”

“We were starting to wonder if maybe the issue is with the water, not the soil,” Claire





tells him.

“Oh yeah, do you know what this is?” I ask, pulling the rock from my pocket. I hand it to Keegan, who shows it to the guy that was testing the soil.

“That’s quartz.”

“Quartz?” I ask.

“Yes. Very common and depending on what you find, you could make some jewelry for your mate. Amethyst, Citrine, Onyx and there are more, but they are popular styles of quartz that are used to make jewelry.” He says.

“Worth enough to, say, start a pack war over?” I ask.

“I doubt it. As I said, it’s very common.” He shrugs. “Some people even put them in their gardens believing they have healing powers or will help their gardens grow. So, it might be a good thing if your soil here has quartz in it. Personally, I don’t believe in all of that, but some do. And it won’t hurt the plants, so





if we find any, I'd say leave it in the soil."

Claire looks at me. "Maybe that's why the field around the lake and riverbeds has so many flowers blooming! Maybe it's the quartz," she says excitedly.

"You might be right, Claire."

The soil tester guy just shrugs. "Like I said, I don't believe it, but others do. And it could work."

The other guy packing the soil samples looks up. "I believe in it, and so does my mate. Her garden at home always looks great."

I look at Claire. "Quartz. Who knew?"

Keegan hands the rock, or quartz, back to me. "You could take that to a jeweler and have them cut it into a stone for your mate to wear. As big as it is, and depending on how well the quartz holds up, you could make her a necklace and matching earrings." Keegan says to me.

"A gift for my Luna. I like it," I say,





pocketing the stone.

"You don't have to, we could just put it in our room," she says, blushing.

"If you want one in our room, we can go back and get another one. But I want to show off my Luna and what better way than to shower you with stones that came from our pack lands?"

I pull her to me, tilting her head to look at me, not caring who sees me showing my love for my mate.

"When we have time, we'll go hunting for all the different colors. I'll have sets made in every one we find. It will be a constant reminder of my love for you and our pack," I tell her.

She reaches up to touch my face. "If that's the symbolism, then we need to go hunting for stones very soon."

I lean down to kiss her and even though we're in front of several other people, she kisses me back as if she doesn't care.





Every day our bond is getting stronger.





Claire

After leaving Keegan, who let us know he'd be in touch within the next couple of days, Tereshan and I begin to walk back to the packhouse. As we do, I stop, looking around.

"What is it?" Tereshan asks me.

"Isn't this near that tunnel that Dane found in the last timeline? The one where we were able to sneak food into the pack?"

Tereshan looks around. "I never saw it. But I heard about it. I'll tell Dane and Jesiah to keep an eye out for it. We should make sure that Franco can't get in that way."

He turns, pulling me to him. "That was a great thought, my brilliant mate." I know I'm blushing, but I don't look away.

"It feels different this time, doesn't it? Not just this," I say, moving my hand between us to indicate the physical differences, "but you and I working together. It feels like we fill in





the gaps that the other has, whether it's that our strengths are different, or we just really were meant to be the other half of each other."

"It feels good. It feels right," he says. "But, saying that, we need to talk about something that isn't going to feel right."

He strokes my cheek, watching me closely. "I want to go to the brothel tonight. Not only do I need to find out what's going on, but now I want to get Selah's sister out of there.

Looking at it now, it's a horrible place where women and some men are exploited. I don't want to take you there, but I think we'll get more information if you come with me."

My hands instantly go sweaty. After hearing what Zoey and Amelia suffered and they weren't even in the brothel, the idea of stepping foot in that place makes me feel sick to my stomach.

"So, let's talk about it," he says, leading me to a tree and sitting down before pulling me into his lap, so I'm straddling him, and we can talk





face to face.

“If you truly don’t want to go, I’ll go without you. Know that first. It’s your decision. But if you decide to go, I have some rules. You never leave my side, you do exactly what I tell you to do, even if you don’t understand it, don’t argue, don’t fight me and when we’re walking through the crowd of people, never let go of my hand. If someone pulls on you, you tug on me, and I stop and get you out of the situation. Understood?”

I nod, feeling even more sick, but already knowing that I’m going to do it. I have to, if for no other reason than we were just discussing how much better things are going because we are working together. But also, those women need my help too. They won’t trust Tereshan, I wouldn’t if I were them, but they will trust me. Selah even said that when we talked.

“I’ll go,” I tell him.

He tucks my hair behind my ear, running his fingers through it before refocusing on me. “It’s very likely that Franco, Ivy and Eason





will all be there tonight. All three of them will want to hurt me and the best way to do that is through you. So, you never leave my side.”

I nod, running my thumb through the stubble on his jaw line and chin.

“Once we’re in the room, I’ll need you to talk to the women, help them to understand that we’re here to help but that we need any information they can provide to us.”

“Like what? What should I be asking them?”

“If they’ve heard any conversations with Franco, maybe with Eason talking about the brothel or what they are using it for. Obviously, they are taking advantage of women who need help, but there’s more going on, something that we’re missing. Let’s see what they say, if they know anything at all and then we can go from there. But make sure they know that my help, our help, is not dependent on their information. I’d rather them not say anything then give us bad information because they want to try and get out of there.”





He leans forward, kissing my nose. "I know this will be scary for you. It makes me sick to think of taking you there, but it's the only way we're going to get the information we need."

"It's one night," I say, holding on to that thought. For the women there, it's much more than that.

"How are we going to get them out of there?" I ask.

"We're bringing Jesiah and a couple other warriors. We'll drop them off before we get to the brothel. I'll pay to have the girls for the night. They will have to crawl out a window and run to them. But once they get there, Jesiah and the others will keep them safe. It's risky, but it's the only way I'm getting them out tonight if they choose to leave. If they don't, we're not fighting with them Claire. It's their choice and I'm still planning to buy the brothel. We'll get them out one way or another."

He holds me a bit longer as I think through





what he's said.

"Any other questions before we head back?"

"Not now, but I may later."

"Ask before we get there. Once we're there, I want you to act nervous and skittish about being there."

I snort. "Well, that won't be hard."

"I won't let anyone touch you, Claire. You are mine."

He kisses my lips gently. "Okay, let's get back to the packhouse. I need to call 'my guy'," he says smiling.

That makes me laugh and he stops, watching me. "I love that sound. I hope to hear more of it in our future."

"I hope we have more of it between us, and in our pack," I say as he lifts me and puts me on my feet.

"Always thinking of the pack," he says, taking





my hand and beginning to lead me to the packhouse.

When we get back Tereshan asks if I want to sit in on his call with Eric. I decline, wanting to check in with Feena since we've been gone all morning.

He leans down, kissing me again. "What if I want to change our plans and just spend the rest of the day kissing my mate?"

That makes me giggle and I shake my head at him, before turning to head to the kitchen.

"I wasn't joking," he calls out. I turn and blow him a kiss.

"I'll be collecting the real thing later," he calls, making me laugh again.

The smile is still on my face when I walk into the kitchen and see that Dane has Feena against the wall, his body pressed against hers, his hand in her hair. Her arms are wrapped around his neck and he is kissing her like Tereshan kisses me when we're alone. Like he means it and wants to make





sure I know it.

When I hear Feena whimper, her leg lifting to wrap around Dane's hip, I quietly back out of the kitchen. Instead, I head to the library.

When I get there, I'm thrilled to see that all of the unnecessary furniture has been removed and what is left has been cleaned.

"Hey, Luna. What do you think?" Jacoby asks, coming to stand beside me.

"I love it. Now we just need to order some books and get those tutors scheduled to start coming in."

He looks at me.

"What?" I ask, looking at him.

"You're the reason all of this is happening, Luna. You're the reason that Alpha has become a different person, a better Alpha. You have made this pack a better place to live. A good place to live. Every day it's getting better, and we owe that to you."

"It's more than just me, Jacoby. The entire





pack has to work together. That's what makes us stronger."

He smiles, looking away from me.

"What?" I ask again, turning to look at him.

"Spoken like the true Luna that you are."



Tereshan

I pull myself away from my mate, having been serious about spending the rest of the day kissing her. I know she thinks I'm joking, but every time I taste her sugared lemon-flavored lips, I want more. I can't get enough of her.

On the way to my office, I begin making plans for tonight. If we're going to pass this off tonight as me bringing Claire to the brothel, I need to have some things to bring with us. I think about what those will be and make a plan to stop and get them on the way to the brothel. And, since I have to stop anyway, I may as well drop the quartz off. I spin it around in my hand as I open my office door, thinking of what I want to have made for Claire.

I smile when it comes to me, setting the rock aside for now and picking up the phone to call 'my guy'. Even that little connection to Claire has me smiling.





“Eric Stoller.”

“Hey, Eric, it’s Tereshan Colton.”

“Hey, Alpha. What can I do for you?”

Eric is one of the rare wolves that doesn’t live in a pack. He’s made a life for himself in the human world and rumor has it, he took a human for a mate, both of which are extremely rare. However, the man is a genius when it comes to digging up dirt and finding information that I need.

“I need your assistance with a couple of things.”

“Hang on,” he says and I hear him moving things around. “Give me a minute, honey,” I hear him say to someone in the background.

“If this is a bad time, I can call back.”

“No, no, you’re good. What can I do for you?”

“Do you know that brothel that is owned by Alpha Franco?”





He growls low. "I do."

"Problem?"

"Franco tried to put my sister in there, saying she owed him money. I had to buy out her contract to keep her from working there."

"Well then, you should be happy to know that I plan to buy it out from under him and tear it down."

"Do you mind if I ask why? Not that I'm not happy that you are, I'm just curious about why you decided to do it now."

"I've found my mate and in doing so, my eyes have been opened to Franco and how he has been trying to infiltrate my pack in multiple ways. I plan to take him down and this is one of several steps I'm taking to do that."

"What do you need from me?"

"I need to know what he owes on the place, if anything, and what the going rate would be for a building and land in that area. And I need it to stay quiet. If he knows it's me





asking, he'll refuse."

"Okay, I can do that. You said you needed a couple of things. What else do you need?"

"I need you to look up my pack borders. On the north side, there is open land. I'd like to know who owns it and if it's for sale. And while you're at it, there is a mountain range on the land, can you find out who owns the pack lands on the west side of the mountain range. It would be northwest of my lands."

"Can do. Anything else?"

"That's it for now."

"Alright, I'll get started on this and get back to you."

I hang up and begin going through the paperwork on my desk. Claire comes in, still tentative to just walk in.

"What can I do for you, my gorgeous mate?"

"I need your credit card."





I almost choke, it's such an unexpected request.

"You know where the card is." I say, pulling it out of the drawer beside me. I want her to feel comfortable using our credit card but I'm very curious about what she's planning to buy.

She comes over to my desk and takes the credit card before looking up at me.

"You're not going to ask what I'm buying?"

I shrug. "It doesn't matter, but I am curious." I say, tapping my leg, our code asking her to sit in my lap. She's not close enough to me.

She climbs into my lap, and I wrap my arms around her as she pulls my computer in front of her.

"We need to start filling the library with books."

"Is it all cleaned out?"

"It is. It looks great. And empty."





I rest my chin on her shoulder as she begins ordering books, thinking about the books I bought in the last timeline and making suggestions to her selection.

I begin nuzzling her ear, kissing her neck and generally trying to distract her.

“What time do we have to leave?” she asks.

I look at the clock and sigh. “Soon. And I want to shower first. I have to make a couple of stops on the way.”

She turns around in my lap, straddling me and putting her arms around my neck. I watch her, waiting to see what she’ll do.

She looks tentative for a moment then leans in, kissing me. I follow her lead, letting her have control in this moment. She becomes bolder, sliding her tongue into my mouth and teasing mine. Her soft moans make it hard for me to not take over, not take control of this kiss so I can elicit more of her soft, sweet sounds, but I hold back, sensing that she needs this.





When she finally pulls away, she looks embarrassed, but also pleased with herself.

“What was that about?” I ask, hoping I can get her to be bolder like this in the future.

“I’m gathering courage for this evening,” she says.

“I won’t let anything happen to you and if a fight breaks out, and we get separated, you get to Jesiah.”

“Let’s hope nothing like that happens.”

We get ready and meet Jesiah and the warriors downstairs. I run through the plan with them again, making sure Jesiah knows that if something happens, he’s in charge of getting Claire out safely.

“Do we anticipate a problem, Alpha?” One of the warriors asks.

“I don’t, but Alpha Franco is already angry with me, Ivy was kicked out of this pack and Alpha Eason was friendly with Alpha Patrick. So, I’d rather plan for a fight and not have





one, than the other way around."

"Agreed," Jesiah says and the others agree.

"And we may be bringing several of the women back?" another asks.

"Yes, if they choose to leave, they will be running, trying to find you. Stay alert. One of them is Selah's sister."

I chose Heath for this mission since Sadie should know him and can help assure the others that this isn't a trick when they get away.

I drive one car and Jesiah drives another with the warriors. They will stay in the woods just outside the brothel.

I stop first at a lingerie store, quickly grabbing what I need and then I move to the jewelry store a couple of shops down. I tell the man what I want for the quartz and give him my number to call me when it's done.

When I get back to the car, Claire looks in the lingerie bag.





“What’s this for?” she asks.

“Props. I need them to believe that I’m bringing you to train you to pleasure me the way I want.”

“People do that?” she asks appalled.

“Yes.” I look over at her, knowing that if things had been different, if I hadn’t rejected her in the first timeline and that was the only time we’d lived, I would have done it to her. I would have brought her here to ‘train’ her to please me the way I want. Thinking about it now, I’m disgusted with myself.

Claire frowns. “I don’t understand your emotions,” she says quietly.

I sigh, now is not the time for her to question my intent. I want and need her to trust me tonight.

“It’s regret. Regret for the man I used to be, but I’m not him anymore, Claire.” I look over at her, watching her process my emotional state.





"Do you trust me? Or at least, do you trust me enough to know that I will make sure you are safe tonight?"

"Yes."

"Okay, remember our conversation earlier." I go through the rules with her again as we drive.

"Any last questions?" I ask as we pull into the parking lot. Jesiah pulled off the road about a mile back.

"No." The tension in her body says it all. She's terrified.

I climb out of the car, grabbing the lingerie bag and going around to get her. "Don't leave my side." I say, taking her hand.

When we walk inside, I see that Ivy is the new house mother, which means she's managing all the girls in the brothel.

"Alpha Tereshan. What a surprise. I hope you're not here to try and take me back to your cells. Alpha Franco would take offense.





And I see you have your little omega Luna with you. What can we do for you?" She asks, barely managing to remain civil.

"I need a training room and three girls." I tell her.

She sneers at Claire. "Time for you to earn your keep, Luna."

"Are you sure three will be enough, Alpha?" She asks, her fake smile permanently in place.

"I want them for the entire night." I say.

Her eyebrow goes up and her smile becomes vicious when she looks at Claire.

"Of course. You're in for a treat. I have three very capable girls for you."

"Who?" I ask, needing to make sure that Sadie is one of them.

Ivy looks down, not liking that I'm questioning her.





“Lucy, Nita and Sadie.”

“Good,” I say.

I pay for the girls and when the transaction is done, Ivy looks up at us. “Follow me.”

She leads us through the main area where men are lounging around, drinking and talking with scantily clad women and some men on their laps. This time, I’m paying attention, so I see the bruises and fingerprint marks that they try to hide. All of them are shifters, so if they are still sporting bruises, they were hurt badly or very recently.

Claire’s hand is so tight in mine that if she were stronger, she’d probably break my bones. I send soothing feelings to her through the bond just as Franco steps into my path.

“What the fuck are you doing here?”





Claire

I already hate it here. It smells like sex and fear and desperation. Of course, Ivy has to make it so much worse by looking at me as if I'm going to be tortured tonight.

When Alpha Franco steps in front of us, I'm ready to run like Tereshan told me. However, he holds my hand and rather than feeling concern through the bond like I expected, I feel arrogance.

"My reasons for being here are my own. I've purchased three of your women for the night so unless you want to refund my \$25,000, I suggest you get out of my way."

Ivy comes over, running one hand over Franco's shoulder and putting the other on his chest. "Alpha Tereshan asked for a training room."

That gets his attention, and he looks at me with the condescending air I've gotten used to in three timelines. "I'd heard you'd taken an





omega as your Luna. Let's see what's on the agenda for tonight," he says, snatching the bag out of Tereshan's hand.

He pulls out the lingerie, the vibrator, the collar, the wrist cuffs and the leather straps. There are some other things in there that I don't really understand, but Tereshan obviously knew what he was doing.

"Well, looks like you're in for a fun night, girlie. Oh, sorry, I mean Luna. I don't expect that you'll be walking out of here tomorrow morning," He says, looking at me lasciviously. "Too sore," Franco says to me before stuffing the items back in the bag and handing it back to Tereshan.

"I suggest that you make sure you know how to properly please your Alpha, because if he decides you're not worth his time, you'll end up here, and training in this house isn't nearly as gentle," he says before stepping out of our way.

"Have fun," he says before walking off.

"This way," Ivy says, continuing to walk us





through the brothel. I'm thankful that Tereshan didn't want me to act confident. I'm not sure I could have done it. This place is terrifying.

Ivy walks us down a hallway where I hear the sounds of something smacking flesh. I can hear a woman yelp, but nothing more.

Tereshan is pushing calm into me, but it's not helping, my fear of being here is off the scale. In this body, I'm powerless, not nearly strong enough to escape whatever situation I could be forced into. I understand now exactly why Tereshan has the rules he has for me. If someone were to think that I was working here, they could do whatever they wanted to me, and no one would stop them. No one except Tereshan.

When we get to the room, Ivy opens the door. The air is a bit fresher here, made so only because the scent of fear and desperation is replaced with harsh cleansers. I'm pretty sure nothing will get rid of the scent of sex in this place.

"Have fun. I'll send the girls right in," Ivy





says, closing the door as she leaves. As soon as she's gone, Tereshan pulls me to him.

"How are you holding up? I can smell your fear. Do you want me to get you out of here? I can have Jesiah come meet you?"

I hold on to him, taking deep breaths of his blueberry scent, letting it calm and relax me.

"No. These women are forced to live here. I can manage one night."

He rubs his fingers through my hair, massaging my scalp and helping me to relax even more. "I don't know how I ever thought you were weak, Claire. You're one of the strongest people I know."

When a knock comes at the door, he steps away from me. "Ready?"

I nod and he calls for the women to come in.

Three women walk in. They are barely wearing any clothes, mostly it's silk, lace and strappy lingerie and very high heels. I immediately recognize Selah's sister, they





look very similar. The women look at me, and I see regret in their eyes before they look at Tereshan and incline their heads in submission.

“Alpha. How may we please you?” one woman says. She seems to be taking the lead.

“Let’s start with introductions. I’m Alpha Tereshan, this is my mate, Luna Claire.”

They nod to him and barely look at me, as if they already regret whatever they think is going to happen in this room tonight.

They introduce themselves, Lucy being the one taking the lead, then wait for instructions.

“Ladies, I’ve purchased you for the entire night. However, I did it under false pretenses. I know you won’t trust me, so my Luna is here to talk with you. All I ask is that you tell us the truth of anything you know. I’m also willing to get you out of this house tonight, give you protection in my pack, if you wish to leave.”

Now they do look at me, then back at





Tereshan. Tereshan looks at me and nods.

“What my mate says is true. We know that Alpha Franco owns this brothel, and we know that some, if not all of you are here against your will. We want to help, but we also need information. Alpha Franco has been trying to infiltrate our pack, using people such as Ivy to get to my mate and take him out so he can take over our pack.”

All of their lips curl when I mention Ivy. Yeah, I know how awful she is to work for.

“What kind of information are you looking for?” Sadie asks.

“You’re Selah’s sister, right?” I ask her.

She jerks, surprised. “How did you...”

“You look just like her. She’s a member of our pack and we told her we were coming tonight and would get you out if you agreed. Her mate, Heath, is among the warriors that are waiting to get you to our pack. Tereshan made sure you were one of the girls assigned to him.”





"Although, you were selected, as I expected you would be. Your sister was one of the people Franco used to get to me. He did that by threatening you," Tereshan adds.

"So why should we believe you then. We know what happens to traitors. And no offense, Alpha, you don't exactly have a reputation of being kind, especially to your omegas," Lucy says boldly.

"That's why my mate is here. I don't expect you to trust me at all. And you're right, I wasn't kind to you or anyone that I was with, but I plan to change that, and I have already changed that in my pack."

"So, again, what kind of information are you looking for?" Nita asks.

"It seems as if men will have conversations in front of you without really caring that you overhear. As an omega..."

"Former omega," Tereshan interrupts me. I turn and look at him. He just raises his eyebrow at me.





I sigh. "As a former omega, I know that people rarely pay attention to you, as if you are a decoration or furniture in the room. You are there, but not a threat. So, we want to know if you've heard of anything that might have made you wonder. Anything that would make you think that something was off, or that Alpha Franco was desperate.

The three of them look at each other.

"Oh, and I want to make it clear that even if you don't have information, it has no bearing on us getting you out of here if you choose to leave. We just need some insight, something to let us know why Franco is after our pack."

"I'm surprised he let you in, if there's that much animosity between you," Sadie says.

"I paid a lot of money for you three. He would have had to refund that to kick me out," Tereshan tells her.

"That's what I heard," Nita says, snapping her fingers as if she just remembered something.

I move to stand beside Tereshan, still feeling





the need to have him close. The move doesn't go unnoticed by the girls. I'm guessing they have to constantly pay attention to signals from those that they are with, and my move lets them know that I trust Tereshan.

"What did you hear?" Tereshan asks, sitting on a love seat, pulling me into his lap and wrapping his arms around me. "Ladies, feel free to have a seat. We have some time, we're in no rush."

They sit around us, on other love seats.

"I heard Alpha Franco talking to Alpha Eason, something about the brothel being fully leveraged and he can't draw any more funds from it."

"Wait, this place is in debt?" Tereshan asks, astonished.

"I got the impression that he owes more than this place makes," Nita says.

I turn and look at Tereshan. "What is it?"

Tereshan looks thoughtful. "You saw how





busy it was downstairs?" he asks me.

I nod.

He looks at the girls. "It's always this busy, right?"

"Yes."

He's about to say more, when his face jerks to the door.

"You three, get undressed. Lucy, get on the bed, on your back. Sadie, stand by her head, Nita, get on the bed beside her," he says, lifting me off his lap.

"Claire, take off your dress," he says as he pulls his shirt off, tossing it at me.

"Get on the loveseat and cover yourself with this, but don't put it on."

He grabs the bag and quickly rushes to the bed, looking at Lucy. "Spread your legs and start moaning."

She does as he says while he moves Sadie





where he wants her and gets Nita in position.

“Louder, Lucy,” he says, and she begins moaning loudly, saying ‘yes alpha’ over and over. The other two seem to understand what is happening, but I don’t.

Tereshan turns and looks at me. I see and feel the regret in him.

“I’m sorry baby,” he says a moment before I feel pain slice through my gut.

I only have a moment to wonder what happened when the door flies open and Franco walks in.





Tereshan

I heard the subtle shift of the people in the hallway, and I knew Franco was coming to check on me. He doesn't trust that I'm here for the reasons I've said and of course, he's right.

I quickly get the women into position, telling Claire to undress but unwilling to allow Franco to see her in nothing but her undergarments. He won't believe it if she's wearing my shirt, but he will if she's clutching it to herself like she is.

The trio seem to realize that something is about to happen. They may not know exactly what it is, but they jump into action. Lucy puts her arms over her head. Sadie and Nita each take an arm and act like they are restraining her. Nita, crouched on all fours, leans over and begins sucking on Lucy's nipple as Sadie begins tugging on the other one, helping her to fake the moans she's making.





I know if Franco walks in, it has to be believable and as much as I hate having to hurt Claire, I know I'm going to have to touch this woman.

I apologize to her a moment before I slide my fingers through Lucy's pussy lips, coating my fingers in her scent. I do it as fast as possible, but I still see Claire wrap her arms around herself and hunch over as the pain rips through her.

It's at that moment that Franco bursts into the room, and while I never want to hurt my mate, the timing was perfect. What he sees is me, finger fucking at woman on the bed, my mate in pain as she watches, the other two women giving a good show. Both of Lucy's nipples are hard nubs, making it an even more believable scene.

I turn looking at Franco who saunters in, sneering at Claire's pain.

"What the fuck are you doing here?" I snarl.
"I paid for three women, not three women and an Alpha," I say.





He looks around, checking to see if everything looks real. I'll give the girls credit, they figured it out fast, made it look like we had already gotten started.

"I just wanted to make sure you didn't need any assistance," he says, walking beside me but watching Claire who is panting. I want this asshole out of here so I can hold her, apologize to her.

Quickly, he grabs my hand, pulling it to his nose. My instincts had been right, he wanted to make sure that I smelled like one of these girls.

"Do you make a habit of barging in and interrupting training sessions? If so, I'll take my money now and go somewhere else." I snarl.

That gets his attention. "I just wanted to make sure you didn't need anything, Alpha Tereshan. Another girl, perhaps?"

"Are you offering one for free, since you so rudely interrupted me?"





He grits his teeth, but he knows he overstepped. And if Nita is right, which I'm beginning to guess she is, he can't afford to give me my money back.

"Fine," he growls, turning for the door.

"Don't interrupt me again, Franco, or I will expect a full refund," I snarl at his retreating back. "And keep that bitch, Ivy, away from me too."

He walks out, slamming the door behind him.

I'm moving before he takes his first step down the hall, scooping Claire into my arms. I pull her against me.

"I'm so sorry, baby. I knew he'd check. He knows we're here under false pretenses. I had to make sure he believed me."

Instead of the fearful, shivering mate I expect to get, I hear a low rumbling growl. I pull back and look at her. My mate's grey-green eyes are nearly black they are so dark. She grabs my hand, sniffing Lucy's scent on them before turning and snarling at Lucy. "MINE!"





For the first time ever, Claire is acting possessive, acting like a true mate would if another she-wolf touched her mate. I'm secretly pleased, but now isn't the time for her to become aggressive toward these women.

"Come with me, love, let me wash her scent off of me," I say, pulling my hand away from her and nuzzling her ear, nipping it to get her attention.

She turns to me, slamming her lips into mine. Goddess, I want this woman to want me, but this isn't the time or the place. I take my clean hand and grab her hair, holding her in place as I kiss her, dominate her mouth, letting her know that I'm hers, but also letting her know that I'm in charge. I need her to get back to herself. When I hear her whimper, I pull away. Her eyes are still too dark, but they are closer to grey than black now.

I pick her up, just as there is a knock on the door. "Check the door, make sure it's only the girl. Then you three can get dressed and have a seat," I say, moving to the bathroom.





I hear the murmurs of girls in the bedroom as I scrub my hands, getting Lucy's scent off of me. I have Claire caged in front of me, holding her between the sink and my body. When I'm done, I sniff my fingers, then put them in front of her face.

"Better?" I ask her.

Rather than answer me, she pulls my face to hers, rubbing her face and neck against mine, basically scenting me.

"Better," she finally says, her voice deep and gravelly letting me know her wolf is still close to the surface.

I take another moment to caress her face, stroke her lips with my thumb and kiss her gently before I lift her up and take her back out to the bedroom.

I nod to the new girl, who is looking at me wide-eyed. Geez, this girl looks like she's 15.

"What's your name?" I ask her as I sit, putting Claire in my lap and wrapping my arms around her. She snuggles into me, still





needing to be close to me.

“Jessie, Alpha.”

The other three are watching Claire. “Is she going to be alright?” Lucy asks.

“Yes, she’s just feeling possessive, so for now, I’m going to keep her here in my lap,” I say.

“Where I belong,” my mate says, her voice ringing out.

I nuzzle her hair with my nose. “Yes, where you belong,” I confirm.

I turn to the new girl. “Jessie, my name is Alpha Tereshan, this is my mate, Claire. I have purchased you all for the night under the guise of training my new mate. However, I am here for information and to get you out of this house tonight if you choose to leave.”

The girl’s eyes go wide. “How?”

“I have warriors down the street ready to collect you and get you to my pack.”





Her lips begin to quiver, and fat tears roll down her cheeks. "Yes, I want to leave."

Somehow, it's this young girl's fear and glimmer of hope that helps Claire regain herself. She crawls out of my lap and goes to her, hugging her. The girl begins to sob.

Claire strokes her hair and turns to look at me.

I nod, this one has to come with us tonight.

"Jessie's new. She just arrived about a week ago," Nita says, watching her.

"That's okay, she comes too. Now, back to our conversation. You said that the brothel is fully leveraged?"

"That's what I heard," Nita says.

"I've heard it too in a different context," Lucy says. "Alpha Franco was talking to Ivy, saying he needed the money she stole," Lucy looks at me. "I'm assuming she stole it from you."



"Yes."

"She said she couldn't get it, that you wouldn't let her back on the pack lands. He hit her for that, calling her a stupid slut. But the difference is, in that conversation, he seemed to be talking about the pack being overextended financially."

"His pack is overextended too? What the hell is he buying?" I ask.

"Equipment," Jessie says, looking up.

"Do you know what kind of equipment?" I ask her gently.

"Big, expensive equipment, but I don't know what kind," she says.

"Bulldozers," Sadie says. "I heard Alpha Eason say something about a broken bulldozer and Alpha Franco said he didn't have the money to fix it."

"Bulldozers? Anyone know what they are doing with bulldozers?" I ask them.





They all shake their heads.

“Okay. Anything else you ladies can think of?”

They all shake their heads again.

I nod. “Okay then, who wants to leave tonight?”

They all look at each other before turning back. “All of us,” Lucy says.

“Do you know anything about the security on the outside of the building?” I ask.

“There are cameras all over,” Lucy says. “To make sure we don’t leave, but also to know who is coming in.”

“So, they are on the most heavily travelled parts of the building?”

“Yes, and the back, since that’s where the forest is,” Nita says.

“The one on this side is broken. I heard them talking about it tonight. It was supposed to





get fixed, but Alpha Franco couldn't pay the electrician, so they left it broken.

"That works in our favor," I say.

I pull out my phone, grabbing Claire's dress and handing it to her.

"Leave your shoes here. You're going to have to climb down the side of the house. Luckily, we're on the second floor. It should be an easy drop. And then you're going to have to run," I tell them.

I text Jesiah, letting him know that there are four girls headed his way.

"My Gamma's name is Jesiah," I tell them.

"And your sister's mate, Heath, is with them too," I say, looking at Sadie.

"What about you?" Lucy asks.

"We'll have to leave out the front door, but we'll wait until Jesiah tells us that he has you and you are headed to the pack. Then we'll leave."





I open the window, making sure that no one is around, then I turn. Lucy steps up.

"I'll go first. Just tell me where we need to go."

"Go out past the main road, get far enough away that you won't be spotted, then turn right. It's about a mile. Run if you can, the faster you get there, the faster you are safe. They'll be looking for you soon."

She nods and I lift her out the window, leaning down to make her drop as short as possible. Next is Nita, then Sadie and finally Jessie.

"Thank you, Alpha."

"Don't thank me yet. You still have to get there. Go fast, and listen to Lucy," I tell her.

She nods and I watch as they race to street. When I don't see anyone following them, I close the window.

I tuck Claire against my side and text Jesiah that there are four girls are on their way.





Twenty minutes later, I get a text letting me know they have the girls and are on their way back to the packhouse.

I look at Claire. "This time, I'm carrying you out. You will need to look exhausted and worn out."

I stroke her cheek. "Which is exactly how you look. I can't wait to get you out of this place."

I pick her up, bridal style and she lays her head against my chest, closing her eyes. I kiss her forehead before walking out of the room.

