

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?"