

Tereshan

Franco's voice is like a bucket of ice water getting thrown over me. All the excitement I was feeling at Claire's need for me shrivels in an instant. I can see by her face that she is having the same reaction.

"You'll have to be more specific Alpha Franco. What 'they' are you speaking of?" I ask, turning the car around. I want to get onto our pack lands, and I also want to warn Dane and Jesiah. Franco and Eason may not attack tonight, but they will be attacking soon.

"My whores, where are they?"

"Why are you asking me? If you can't keep watch over your workers, that's not my problem. I left with my mate. Ask Eason and Ivy, they saw me."

He growls menacingly. "Ivy is getting medical attention. She says you attacked her."

"She touched my mate, so did Eason. If they do it again, the same thing that happened to Alpha Parker will happen to them. Feel free to spread the word. My mate is off limits to everyone."

If I wasn't so sure that they were already planning to come for Claire, I wouldn't challenge him like this. But since I know they will, I have no problem threatening

them. All of them. Because when they come for her and my pack, I will destroy them.

"If I find out you had anything to do with this..."

"You'll what?" I snarl as I cross into my pack lands. I can see the patrols racing around the borders.

'Dane, double our patrols here and at Keegan's.'

'Is this about the girls that showed up here?'

'Yeah, why, is there a problem?'

'Better if we talk when you get here. Are you almost back?'

'Just crossed the borders,' I tell Dane.

"You've been warned, Alpha Tereshan." Franco snarls back.

"Well, at least you've finally grown a pair of balls and are coming at me face to face rather than trying to use my pack mates to get to me. You lost the last time to tried to fight me, Franco. You sure you want to try and come at me again? Because I have no problem ripping your head off."

"We'll see about that," he says, disconnecting the line.

When we arrive at the packhouse, people are milling around. The atmosphere heightened, on edge. Claire

looks at me.

"What's going on?"

"I don't know, Dane said something about needing to talk when I got here."

When we walk inside, it's chaos. The girls are in the living room area, blankets wrapped around them and Jesiah is standing in front of them, snarling viciously at everyone.

"What the fuck is going on in here?" I shout, getting everyone's attention.

"Alpha!" Feena says sounding relieved and rushing over.

Claire begins to walk toward Jesiah.

"Claire!" I say warningly. I don't want to hurt my Gamma, but I will if he touches her and he looks ready to attack everyone.

"Jesiah," she says softly. She doesn't take her eyes off of him, approaching him slowly.

At first, he doesn't respond, looking at everyone else in the room and snarling.

"Jesiah." She says, still gentle, but with more emphasis.

He turns and looks at her, his eyes focusing on her.

"Which one of them is your mate?" she asks him.

Mate? I look at the girls again and I see what I missed, and what Claire saw. Lucy's eyes are locked on Jesiah. I can only imagine what it was like for him to bring her in here with the very minimal clothing that she was wearing. If it were me and I had found Claire in that condition, I'd be out of my mind too.

She stands, holding the blanket tightly around her. "I am."

She looks at Jesiah. "You need to accept my rej..."

"No!" he snarls.

Well, now it all makes sense. Jesiah found his mate, and similar to Zoey, she attempted to reject him, but he won't accept it.

I take a deep breath. "Everyone not new to this pack or directly involved in this conversation, OUT! Dane and Feena, you two stay."

When the room clears, Jesiah relaxes his stance and stands. I look at the others.

"Anyone else find their mate?"

Nita looks down. I smell the salt of her tears before I see one fall in her lap.

She looks up at me. "I smell him, but I haven't seen him,

and I don't want to."

I nod, looking at Sadie who is wrapped in her sister's arms.

"Feena, can you and Selah find rooms for these three. I'm sure Selah and Sadie would like to be close to each other."

"Yes, Alpha. This way, girls," she says, leading them to the omega side of the house. I'll talk to them tomorrow, but for now, they need food and rest.

"Have a seat." I tell Lucy and Jesiah, as I turn to Dane.

"We snuck this group out of Franco's brothel, as I'm sure you're aware. He knows they are gone. I doubt he'll attack tonight, but he will soon. We need to watch Eason as well. It's very likely he will attack with Franco."

"I'll take care of it," he says, turning to deal with the patrols.

When it's just the four of us, I turn back and sit down, pulling Claire into my lap. Time to try and salvage another mate bond.

"Lucy, I know this must have been a shock for you. I'm sure when you started work tonight you had no idea you'd find yourself here in my pack and with your mate. That's a lot to have happened in a few short hours."

I look at Jesiah knowing he's not going to like this next

part, but she has to know that I won't allow her to be forced into a mate bond she doesn't want.

"You have every right to reject Jesiah if you don't want him as your mate."

His response is instant and exactly as expected. He snarls challengingly at me. Magnor pushes forward and growls warningly back at him. He pushes until Jesiah's wolf, Reed, submits.

"I think what my mate is trying to say," Claire jumps in, "is that while we won't force you into a mate bond, Lucy, we would like for you to take some time before rejecting Jesiah outright."

"He doesn't want me," she says quietly, plucking at the blanket.

"Yes, I do," he says.

She shakes her head at him. "You don't know..."

"I don't care," he says.

"Lucy, there is no harm in getting to know Jesiah. And there is someone that may understand your concerns very well," Claire says.

Lucy scoffs. "I doubt that."

"Do you know Zoey and Amelia?" I ask her, realizing where Claire is going with this conversation.

Jesiah's eyes go wide as he catches on too. He turns and looks at Lucy. She looks at all of us before answering.

"Yes, I know them. They left the brothel a couple weeks ago. Franco was furious."

"Zoey is mated to Alpha Keegan, the Alpha of our neighboring pack. She, like you, wanted to reject him immediately. He asked her to get to know him and she is doing that. She's giving him a chance to see that he means it when he says that he doesn't care what happened to her. I think that's all Jesiah wants right now. A chance to prove to you that he means it when he says he doesn't care about your past," Claire says, kindly.

Lucy turns and look at Jesiah. He takes her hand, pulling it to his lips and kissing her knuckles.

"That's all I ask. Let me prove to you that I want you, that I don't care about your past. Because I don't. Well, I want to kill that fucking asshole Franco for what he did to you, but that doesn't change how I feel about you. The mate bond is special to me, it always has been," Jesiah says to her. "Just please, give me a chance," he says, and I can hear the desperation in his voice.

Lucy must hear it too because she nods.

"Okay, I'll give you a chance."

He breathes a sigh of relief. "You won't regret it."