

Enslaved

“Well, Paul. I’m guessing you must be an alpha, to be calling a lone wolf to enter your territory.”

A long pause. “Yes, I am.”

“And you are aware of what an alpha’s responsibilities entail?”

“Yes.” A bite of anger strengthens his voice.

Good. At least there's a little backbone in this guy. Not much, but a little is better than none.

“And the reason you need me instead of calling for your beta to lend a hand with this situation is...?”

“Rick is my beta. That’s the guy who—”

I sigh. “Yeah, I had a feeling you might say that. How big is your pack?”

“Ten. There are ten of us. We just settled here, and well, some of us didn’t have packs before, so we made one of our own. But—”

“Turns out some of this new pack were keeping secrets about why they were lone wolves?”

“Something like that.”

I stare at the cabin. This is a problem. If there’s a wolf killing women—human women—that’s going to attract human attention sooner rather than later, and that’s a problem for shifters everywhere.

“Where’s your pack?” I ask.

“Texas.”

Fuck.

“I’m not in the area.” Not even close. Even if I left Madden Grove right this second, Texas is still more than fifteen hours away by car. I could fly, but I don’t have the money

or the patience to deal with being packed on a plane for hours. The thought alone is enough to make me claustrophobic.

Then there's the reason I came back here. And the witch. I need to deal with this witch.

"I can pay you." A thread of desperation works its way into Paul's voice, enough that has me wondering just how long this serial killing wolf has been busy, and how many women have died before Paul figured out a way to reach me and worked up the courage to do it.

"Yeah," I mutter, "I figured you could."

Whoever gave Paul my number would have told him I don't work for free, and that I'm not cheap but I get the job done.

There weren't many ways for a seventeen-year-old lone wolf to survive, and this was one of them. Ten years later and I'm so good at what I do, I don't even need to go looking for work. It finds me.

"I'm on the East Coast," I tell him. "But there's another guy. He—"

"They said you were the best. That you could do it quickly."

"Of course they did," I mutter. Cause that's all the people who hire me want. Get in, kill whatever they want killing, and get the fuck out of their territory as soon as fucking possible. Because what alpha wants a lone wolf to settle anywhere near his land? None. Not a single fucking one.

Squeezing my eyes shut, I massage my brow with my free hand. This is the sort of job I wouldn't hesitate to take on. There's nothing about it that would give me nightmares after—or add to the ones I already have. It's a clear issue of someone needing to die.

"Look, I'm going to give you Greg's number. He can—"

"I tried him already, okay? He said he doesn't deal with alphas or betas, or he would, but it would cost double."

And there's a reason for that. Greg likes the easy jobs, the ones that threaten his neck as little as possible.

I push the truck door open. "I can't do it. You'll have to find someone else."

"There isn't anyone else," he says, his voice high with panic. "Just you and me. The rest of the pack won't do it. They think Rick will kill them."