

Book 3 Fierce Wolf Chapter 1 - Tips

0 8 minutes read

Thorne Winter gripped the wheel of his new black Ford Bronco. The sale of his family's property had finally gone through, and the first thing he had done was purchase the vehicle in cash.

The Doolittle family had helped him and his brothers get their identifications and other documents so they were able to live in accordance with the human government's rules. Not that Thorne cared about any of that. He just wanted out of the Doolittle's house. The bear shifter family had been kind to him and his brothers, but Thorne hated living off charity more than he hated listening to his little brother Blake's whining.

Thorne drove around the corner, enjoying the warming spring air coming through the open window. He felt better than he had in decades. Living in wolf form under the Snow Queen's curse, there had never been a single good day in the last seventy-five years. With the potion created by his eldest brother and alpha's new mate, Luna, he could now finally live as a man. With the money from the sale of the property, he could do anything he wanted.

The potion allowed him to stay in human form, but there was still pain and psychological torment. He tried to ignore it, but the longer he took the potion the less it seemed to work. He wasn't going to let that keep him from moving on with his life. He'd been trapped for too long in the darkness of his animal mind. He was ready to be in control. To be free and to do whatever he pleased.

The brothers had all received over \$300,000 in cash, which was a substantial amount of money, even in this new modern age that he barely recognized.

They had run all the way from central Alaska to Fate Island. The place now felt like home. And since two of his brothers had already found their mates here, it was easy to conclude that he might as well.

He wasn't sure if he was ready to buy a home or if he wanted to start traveling the world. Until he found his mate, he couldn't go very far from Luna's potions. She had to brew new batches that required many rare ingredients and months of preparation.

He only used the potion during the day, trying to conserve as much as he could, even though he hated to have to sleep in wolf form. It was demeaning and humiliating. Most shifters had a good relationship with their inner animal, and so had Thorne before the curse. Now, being a wolf was the last thing he wanted.

He wished he could just drive off into the sunset and never be heard from again. He wasn't sure he even wanted a mate.

There had been debate among the brothers as to whether the Snow Queen had lied to them about how to break the curse, but both Rex and Damien had been cured when they had made their claiming bites. And he had no doubt the same would be true for him.

He rounded the corner into town and pulled up in front of the apartment building where he was going to view a rental.

It was a small one-bedroom apartment, but anything was better than sleeping in the Doolittles' workshop for the rest of his life. It was time to move on. Rex lived with Luna above the bookstore, while Damien and his mate Venus had just bought a renovated Victorian mansion right outside of town. Venus was a famous supermodel with a deep bank account. The two of them were living it up now that she was free of her controlling mother.

Thorne climbed out of the truck and met the property manager in the front office of the apartment building.

"You're Thorne Winter?" she asked with a smile.

"That's me. I came to see the one bedroom."

"We just put in new carpets, and it has fresh paint. I think you're going to love it."

He followed her into the elevator, and she made small talk about the weather.

Thorne didn't care about the weather, and he didn't care to talk to the woman either. He just wanted to see the apartment and sign the lease so he could get out of the Doolittles' hair.

He made the right statements in the right places just to be polite and was relieved when the elevator door slid open on the third floor. They walked down the hall and the woman shoved the key into the lock.

They stepped into the apartment. The living room was open to the kitchen over a counter. It looked clean and had decent finishes. Not that it mattered to Thorne. He'd grown up in a backcountry cabin a hundred years ago. Everything had been made of wood and stone. He barely recognized the world anymore.

"Right through here is the bedroom," she said, opening a door and showing him the good-sized room. She slid open a mirrored door and showed him the closet. He rumbled affirmatively and nodded his head.

"And through here is the bathroom."

She walked across the hall and showed him the lavatory. Everything looked acceptable. He didn't need much. Although he had developed a taste for hockey and ice-cold beer.

"I'll take it," he said, looking out the big window at the view of the harbor and the ocean beyond. This would be a perfect place for him to start his new life. Whatever that might mean.

"Excellent," she said. "We can sign the papers down in the office."

Forty-five minutes later, Thorne had the keys to his apartment and was ready to move in. He didn't own anything in the way of furniture, and only had a few changes of clothing that he'd already packed up and put in the Bronco.

Selkie was a decent-sized town that even had a university. There were plenty of places to buy furniture. So, he went to the local furniture store with a wad of hundred-dollar bills in his wallet, and quickly purchased a bed, a small couch, a table and chairs, and TV, and scheduled to have it delivered by the end of the day. He also needed housewares, sheets and blankets, and all the other things one would need to start a home.

He went to the island's general store, a place glitzier and shinier than anything he'd ever seen in his life. He grabbed a cart and started walking down the aisles, throwing the things that he needed into his basket. A box of dishes, a pot and pan, silverware, sheets and blankets and all the rest. When he was done, he used the last of his hundreds and checked out.

After he carried everything upstairs to his new apartment, there was a buzz on the intercom that nearly made him jump out of his skin—but the property manager had explained how it worked so he knew what to do.

He buzzed in the furniture delivery guys, who carried everything up and set it in place just where he wanted it. When they were done, he made his bed with the fresh sheets and grabbed a beer from the fridge while he set up his TV.

He still didn't have internet or cable so the only thing he could pick up was a local public TV channel that was nothing but ice-skating and fishing reports. He sighed as he drank his beer and ate his microwave burrito. It wasn't anything like Rebecca Doolittle's cooking. But he had his own home.

As the sun set over the ocean out the front windows, Thorne felt a sense of peace wash over him that he hadn't experienced in a long time. It startled him and nearly made him drop his beer.

He had lived with his family all his life, even before the curse. He'd grown up on the same land where his father and grandfather before him had homesteaded and all his brothers had followed in their footsteps.

After the curse, he and his brothers had roamed the property hunting elk and caribou and living as animals in a pack. But now he was on his own for the first time in a hundred years. And it felt good.

No brothers breathing down his back or fighting. No guilt over taking up space in the Doolittles' home. He could drink all the beer without asking. He could watch boring TV or turn it off and scroll the internet on his phone.

His brother Felix was a thousand times more obsessed with computers and the internet than Thorne, but he too found it fascinating. Almost any question he had could be answered with the click of a few buttons. These were amazing times.

He tapped on the icon for mate dot com and opened his profile. He hated to admit, even to himself, that he checked the app every single day—multiple times. He took another sip of beer, looking at his profile for the hundredth time and scrolled through all the less than 100% matches.

He sighed and turned off his phone, setting it on the couch beside him. Then he looked up at the fishing report on the TV. His mouth dropped open and his heart started to beat a million miles a minute.

A woman with curly blonde hair and big hazel eyes was on the screen, wearing rubber coveralls and standing knee-deep in mud. The interview was about clams or oysters or something. Thorne was too shocked at the sight of her to even comprehend.

The words under her on the screen said her name was Heather Thomas, a Marine Biology professor at Selkie University. He shook his head and ran his hands through his hair.

His inner wolf screamed, Mate, mate, mate.

He scrubbed his hands over his face and blinked his eyes, trying to get a grip. Maybe he needed another dose of potion. He pulled the little vial out of his pocket and took a swig. That always calmed down the rage of his wolf. But the inner beast still insisted that the woman was his.

He shook his head, trying to get his bearings, but before he knew it, he was on the phone, calling the local public television network.

"I need to speak with Heather Thomas," he said, but then realized that the person on the other end of the phone was just a recording. He let it play through and then pressed nine to leave a message.

"I need to speak with Heather Thomas. She is my mate. She needs to join mate dot com so we can be sure. Please tell her."

He hung up the phone, feeling like an idiot. He growled at himself and nearly threw the phone across the room. The tone of his voice, the desperation in his gut. He couldn't stand it. He grabbed his keys and his coat and charged out of the door.

Downstairs in the night, he trudged down the street to the pub and burst into the room that pumped loud country music into the air. Pool balls cracked and a group at the bar burst into laughter. Thorne growled, hating this feeling of not being in control. His inner wolf screamed for his mate as he made his way to the bar. He slapped a hundred-dollar bill down when the bartender walked over to him.

"Give me your best whiskey. And leave the bottle."