

Chapter 95 Corruption

Ethan

“What do you mean, this isn’t enough?” I growl, glaring at the investigator. I’ve just handed him everything we found in Eve’s safe, from her murder schemes to her personal legends detailing all the money she stole from the Atelier over the years. To my shock and absolute fury, the detective simply blinked and told me it was all circumstantial.

“Sir, no one saw her writing this, we don’t know that it actually belongs to her.” He insists stubbornly.

“Are you serious?” I demand. What I really want to ask is ‘do you even have a brain?’ or ‘how the hell did you get this job when you clearly aren’t intelligent enough to have made it through grade school.’ However I have a long history of playing the diplomat in the face of challenging people, so I restrain myself – though not without difficulty. “It’s practically a full confession, it was locked in a safe in her room and it’s in her handwriting. The perspective of events she describes makes it obvious she’s the author.”

Shaking his head, he frowns. “That’s all speculation.”

“You haven’t even had time to fully examine it.” I hiss,

"Just go through it, you'll see that I'm right."

"I can't accept that." The detective refuses, seriously testing my patience. "It's not admissible evidence. It wasn't found in an official police search or with a warrant, and you admitted you broke into her safe to access it. No court in the world would accept it."

"I'm a concerned citizen, who found evidence in my own home and I'm bringing it to you with all the details of its discovery. That's perfectly admissible." I grumble, wondering if perhaps I should have left it in the safe and called them to the house. However the man's next words make it abundantly clear he's less worried about the chain of evidence, than he is with passing off the blame.

"And how do I know you didn't doctor all this stuff?" He asks impudently, "You could have made it all up."

"Are you accusing me of fraud?" I question harshly, "the victim was my mother, I want to find her killer more than anyone."

"I mean no disrespect, Alpha." He insists, not seeming the least bit sincere. "I simply mean that you'd do anything to protect your mate."

"I want to talk to your supervisor, right now." I grit out, resisting the urge to throttle the man.

He pales, "Sir, that really isn't necessary."

"Yes," I correct him, "It is. I fact I should have required it

from the beginning. Your incompetence on this case has been staggering – so staggering that it's beginning to defy belief. It makes me wonder why you're so determined to imprison the wrong woman, and why you keep defending Eve when the writing is clearly on the wall."

"Fine." He glowers, "you're not the first pack member who hasn't agreed with the direction of an investigation, or the first entitled nobleman who thinks they can pull a few strings and make things go their way. The force commander hates those types more than anyone – so you go right ahead. Just see how much faster it gets Jane arrested."

In the end, I didn't go to the force commander. Not just yet.

Instead I called in the private investigator I used to look into Eric, telling him I needed everything he could find me on the police investigator – as soon as possible.

After returning to work, I spend the whole day just trying to figure out how I'm going to keep this under wraps until the investigator gets back to me. Jane sent me a text last night after she confronted Eric, telling me she needed a girl's night and was going to go stay with Linda. She promised to fill me in on what happened when she gets home tonight, and frankly that was fine by me.

I swore the kids to secrecy about what we found in the safe, in part because I didn't want to get Jane's hopes up when I knew there was a chance things wouldn't be resolved easily. I've been suspicious about this crooked investigation from the beginning, and the more time that passes, the more likely it seems that something more is going on behind the scenes.

However, the other piece of the equation is that I want to tell her myself – I want to see the look on her face when she hears the news, and I don't want her to know that the kids were involved until after the fact. It will stress her out even more than she already is to know they're aware and worrying about all this, let alone trying to investigate it.

So Jane's delay gave me the time I needed to convince the kids we should let this be a fun surprise for her, but keeping the secret for one night when she wasn't even there is a very different matter than dragging it out for Goddess knows how long. I love my kids, but four year olds aren't the best secret keepers, especially not when they're so excited by what they found.

However in the end the problem solves itself, because around five thirty I get a call from my PI, and his voice is completely triumphant. "I've got him."

"What do you mean?" I ask, feeling a surge of hope.

"Already?"

"Well it's like you said, the man's either a complete idiot, or so overconfident in his own abilities that he thinks he's completely above suspicion and doesn't need to cover his tracks." The man, a bear shifter called Jackson, shares. "Are you ready?"

"Yes," I answer eagerly, "What did you find?"

"Well for one thing, our friend the detective is a bit of a ladies man." Jackson announces, "and he has truly terrible taste. "Would you like to take a guess as to who he's been seeing lately?"

"Don't tell me," I mutter, feeling a profound sense of disbelief. "Eve?"

"You got it." He confirms. "If she's pregnant, ten to one he's the father, because they've been sleeping together since before Jane came back into town. He has a cache of photos and videos I desperately wish I could unsee on his computer, some from her, some with her. And then there are the messages," He continues, "it looks like she's been stringing him along for months, promising to let him claim her completely if he helps her get away with all this."

Swearing under my breath, I ask, "I suppose you didn't find this information legally?"

"You don't hire me because I do things by the book, you

hire me for finding the impossible." He reminds me, "but if you're worried about bringing this to the police commander, don't worry. While I was hacked into his system I sent a few emails from his account. One to the commander, a few to the papers. It'll be obvious that he didn't send the files himself, but he made a very big mistake including himself in some of their... recreational videos."

"Holy shit." I grin, feeling so warmly towards Jackson that he might be at risk of getting kissed if we were in the same room. I tell him as much.

"Then I'm definitely glad I chose to call you." He laughs, "but you can always show your appreciation when you write my check, Alpha."

"Have no doubt about it, I will." I confirm, already planning on giving him an insanely large bonus.

"Well, I just got the ball rolling for you." Jackson explains, "by now the police will probably be arresting him and confiscating his devices, and he won't have seen it coming from a mile away. And this time tomorrow he'll be the biggest story in the territory."

Thanking Jackson profusely, I hang up and start gathering my things to head home, when my phone rings again, and this time it's the police commander.

"Hello?" I say, trying to sound nonchalant.

"Alpha," he greets me in reply. "I'm afraid I'm calling to inform you about something quite unpleasant."

"Go ahead." I prompt him, sounding more eager than wary.

"We've just taken Detective Smithers into custody." He shares. "It seems he's been having a tawdry affair with Eve Mechant, and we've found considerable evidence that he's been helping her frame your ex wife for your mother's murder."

"I thought something was off with him." I remark coolly, "just this morning I dropped off a box of evidence implicating Eve for the crimes, and he ignored it and accused me of fraud."

"Yes." The commander continues, "about that, I'm sorry to say that when he was arrested he was in the middle of shredding the documents you brought him. I don't know what all was included in the files, but my assumption would be that he got rid of the most damning pieces first. The only reason I knew you brought it to him, is because a junior officer witnessed part of your conversation earlier."

"How much was he able to destroy?" I ask.

"More than half, by the looks of it." The commander admits. "I'm afraid Jane isn't off the hook just yet."