

Fatal Temptation: Between Two Alphas

novel Chapter 10

If you hadn't come in and set my whole pack on edge, I would've been claiming you and introducing you as my mate, instead of figuring out how-the-fuck I'm supposed to get you out of this mess.

Your mate!?

That wry smile is back on his face.

My wolf yips happily.

One of his hands caresses my neck and I shiver.

“Execute the traitor!” someone yells.

“She’s a rogue!” shouts another.

I glance past Eric at the mob gathered. If he wasn’t physically barring them from me, I have no doubt they would’ve set upon me... like a pack of wolves.

He tenses and growls.

I instinctively put my hand on his arm to calm him.

A she-wolf steps forward; she’s about my age, maybe twenty-two. She’s tall. Her skin is tan and her long dark hair falls almost to her waist. She must’ve shifted because she’s not wearing clothes either. Her breasts are big and crowned by small, dark nipples.

“What’s the meaning of this?” she asks.

The Alpha doesn’t acknowledge her. His eyes stay on me.

“She’s a rogue, Eric.” She jerks her hand toward the rest of the pack. “Let her loose and we’ll handle this.”

So I can be torn apart by the lot of them? Thanks but no.

He stares at my hand where it touches his skin. His arm is warm to the touch and smooth over the muscles beneath. He doesn't move to push my hand away, and though I should, I don't let go.

"Mia Riorsen is the security engineer I told you about," he tells her.

"So? We've got our pick of companies in Silicon Valley. She broke the rules in coming here and whatever that shitshow was with the alarms—we still might have to deal with the authorities—"

"I only illustrated the inadequacy of your defenses and your tech," I say.

"Do I look like I'm talking to you, mutt? Shut up unless I tell you to speak."

Nala snarls beneath my skin, and I start toward the woman only to be blocked by Eric.

I don't know what's coming over me. I'm not violent like this. Not usually.

And just as I managed to soothe him, it takes only a touch and the word "*Easy*" whispered in my head to calm me.

Is this wolf my mate? I'm drawn to him. He's in my head. And his nearness is something I can't imagine going without now that I've experienced it.

"Corinne, she isn't a threat. This whole scenario was just to illustrate that our systems are antiquated. You're one of the heads of security. You know we're long overdue for upgrades."

"Bullshit," the girl growls.

But some of the other wolves are relaxing now and nodding. They trust their Alpha and since the alarm has reset, I'm thinking they're less concerned about me now than when I first made my grand entrance.

Is there any scenario where we coexist? I ask him.

Eric's eyes search mine. *You only have to accept me as your mate, and all of this ends. You'll have a home and your children will be safe.*

I know nothing of this pack or its people. Will my kids *really* be safe? Or by mating to the Alpha am I putting targets on their little heads. I can't imagine this girl Corinne welcoming me or my family.

You have to decide, he tells me. *We aren't like other packs. Our tradition is long-standing for mates to **choose** each other. The bond won't even kick-in fully until you do.*

I don't bespeak him in mind, but Eric hears me anyway when he replies, *We embrace the will of the Goddess and the gift she gives us with our free will.*

"Don't," he warns me.

If I am to have any chance here, I must stand up for myself. Wolves respect strength and power. If I back down, there's no telling how or when they might try something else.

My wolf howls in agreement. *Fight.*

Did you mean what you said? I ask him. *About mates and choices?*

Every word, he tells me, his dark eyes intense.

Then let me choose.

Eric curses savagely but he lowers his arms.

I haven't trained in years, not since I left my home. And I'm not big or especially strong. If I shift, I have a chance... but...

My body feels cool and oddly bereft without him near.

"Don't, Mia." He's already trying to protect me.

Fight. My wolf is riled, she pushes the thought to me. *Stop talking and fight.*

I turn to the girl. “I challenge you for a place in this pack.”

Corinne laughs. “You? Challenge me!?” She glances around at her packmates like she can’t believe how dumb I am.

“That’s what I said.” Then, because I’m obviously losing my mind, I punch her in the face.