

Fatal Temptation: Between Two Alphas

novel Chapter 51

“No!” It’s an instinctual reaction. I shove him off me, using all my strength.

Cam’s expression falls.

I’ve...*rejected* him.

He shakes his head, crushed.

I don’t want to hurt him.

But it doesn’t feel right. I don’t know why I feel this way or how I know it. “We can’t,” I tell him.

“We just did,” he says calmly, even though I know he’s not. “And we certainly fucking can.”

I shake my head and sit up on this bed. My hands are shaky. I clasp them together. “Ashley?” he growls. “Is this about her?”

Yes. But only partly.

I love this man.

My wolf recognizes him as our mate.

But the time in my life when I was mindless with love, rendered thoughtless by passion... that time has come and gone.

I can’t just think about myself now.

“You’re still mated to another woman,” I remind him. “The same woman whose family is hell-bent on war.”

I don’t dredge up the fact that she already tried to kill me once.

“We need to understand the bigger threats surrounding us, Cam. We have to do what’s best for our children.”

It’s the wrong thing to say. He snaps his head back like I’ve slapped him. “I will *always* protect my children. And I am the Alpha—protecting my pack from threats is my sole purpose.”

I’m not trying to offend him, but clearly I am.

“Cam...what are you doing here?”

He looks tired now. “I flew down here to accompany you. So you wouldn’t be alone. So I would know you were protected. So our children would know you were protected.”

Part of me is so happy.

Part of me is... disappointed. It’s as if he doesn’t trust me to take care of myself, or as if he doubts my intelligence and capabilities. And what does that mean that he should leave the Pack just because I chose to go off somewhere?

If something happens while he’s gone, he’ll blame me.

They will *all* blame me.

I draw my clothes back on.

Making love to Cam was everything I dreamed of.

And now I just want to cry.

I rub a hand along my neck and it comes away with blood. Not a lot. But enough to know he’d intended to mark me.

I stare at the blood on my hands for a long time. I wanted him to mark me. For *years*, I’d waited and hoped that I could someday have him claim me. I remember thinking how proud I’d be to have his mark on my skin, so everyone would know that we belonged to each other.

“Don’t look so disappointed,” he tells me. He’s angry now.

I’ve hurt him. Deeply.

“It’s not for the reasons you think.” I sigh. “I assume you know why I’m here.”

He nods. “Your father is my beta.” He’s jerking his clothes back on too. “You should think about that. It put him in a bad place.”

“Did he tell you where I was going?” I need to know if my dad’s loyalty is to me or to his Alpha.

“He didn’t have to, our kids did.”

Cam frowns.

I hate that I ruined this moment. I hate that I’m conflicted. This man is everything I’ve ever wanted and yet...something doesn't feel right.

When he tried to mark me...I panicked. I don’t understand it, I just know at that moment I didn’t want him to do that to me.

He opens the door. I have no idea whose room we just debauched, but I feel like I need to leave a note or have the sheets laundered or something.

“It’s just sex, Mia.”

“Where I’m from,” I say, “we don’t have oracles.”

Theo taps Corinne on the nose. “We don’t talk about Bruno-no-no.”

She laughs and punches his shoulder. “Did you seriously just quote *Encanto*?”

“I did.” He grins at her with affection and it’s like no one else exists around them.

My attention flits between the two of them. It's clear they have an easy relationship, and an intimate one. And that bit of humor about a kid's movie, wasn't expecting that from this ...whatever he is.

I glance around the courtyard.

They don't look so deadly now though.

But of the fifteen or so people in this courtyard, the ones that hold my attention most are these 'Other' beings.

Theo, one other male, one female and one non-binary.

They are...not human or wolves or vampires.

They carry no scent I've ever encountered before.

"If you keep sniffing like that," Theo tells me. "You'll give yourself a headache."

Corinne smirks at me.

I asked once. I won't be so rude as to ask again. But the thought keeps pestering me: what are they?!?

"That conversation will have to wait, wolf." He inclines his head.

I sense her before I turn. My wolf stirs irritably.

The wind blows her scent and with it some faint, long forgotten memory.
”

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novel Chapter 52

JACE

We're in Mia's house.

As Morgan explained, she'd warded the place herself and its protections against those who would wish harm would extend to her and us too, as we are within its walls.

Every space, she explained, has a fingerprint.

I'm not sure I really understand what that means, but if we can burn the daylight here and not risk exposure before approaching her coven's corporation, I am all for it.

This mission will be hard enough without worrying about civilian engagement or dealing with enemies prior to even breaching the laboratories.

The schematics will get us past the loading bays and we can steal a rig from one of the many shipping depots in the area. Morgan can spell any security or guards as we roll up so we don't trip the alarm.

Once we're in the loading bay, we'll have access into the main building.

She knows the layout from there for where to go, and Jacob will gain access to their computers in the shipping bay so he can access their mainframe and obliterate our trail.

If all goes to plan, we'll be in and out before anyone even realizes.

The guys have raided the fridge and Declan's cooking up a storm.

They have a basketball game on the tv.

I'm in Mia's room.

It's a nice space. Simple, but with soft pillows and a pale lavender accent wall. It fits her. Unpretentious but still pretty.

"You hiding out, wolf?" Morgan asks.

She comes in.

I'm lying on the bed with my arms crossed behind my head.

I don't expect her to lie out beside me, her head on her elbow, so when she does, it takes my mind in a totally different direction.

This is Morgan.

We are alone.

In a bed.

Thane rumbles.

He likes where this is heading.

"How do you feel about this plan?" I ask her.

She gives a small shrug. "We'll have the element of surprise. And it's not been long, so they won't be expecting me to come back given how I was excommunicated when I left."

"I don't want you tangled up in this. You can tell us where to go. Jacob can handle the security."

"No. It's too risky. You need me for this."

I don't like the danger for her. "You should stay here. We can figure it out. Or better yet, get your ass back to Montana. They can't touch you on our lands."

She reaches out and traces my bicep through my shirt. "My own big bad wolf to protect me."

“I will, Morgan, to my last breath.” Her eyes go wide with surprise, like she can’t believe what she’s hearing, and I keep talking, “But you’re a powerful woman. You don’t need any man to protect you.”

She nods. “I appreciate that. And ...what you said.”

She’s blushing.

“Come here.”

She leans right into me, her arms looping around my neck, her breasts pushing against my chest.

I draw back. “Lose the glamour. I want it to be just you and me.”

She looks uncertain for a moment and then her face changes. Those subtle, sweeter features coming through. She can be anyone at will, but there is nothing sexier than the female in front of me. With her too stubborn chin, and that dusting of freckles. And eyes that aren’t as bright as they were before, but that are somehow more attractive for as clear and soft as they appear to be.

I growl as I close my eyes and claim her mouth.

She matches my passion.

Hands dragging over my chest, pulling at my back. My shirt is tugged free of my waistband and then she’s drawing it over my head. The moment my chest is bare, her mouth is tasting and taking, burning a path from my neck down to my abs and back up again.

She won’t rush this. No. This woman is bewitching me, and she doesn’t need a spell or chant or anything more than that lush fucking mouth of hers and her irresistible body.

When she finally unbuckles my jeans, I hiss out a breath.

“Where you taking this, Morgan?”

Her smile is the sexiest thing I’ve ever seen.

Then she's getting rid of my pants and freeing my cock.

She strokes and grips, finding the pressure and pace I like most and I don't have to say a word. She learns my body and plays me perfectly.

I breathe deep, making sure she hears me and she sucks a nervous little breath.

That's right. There isn't going to be a single secret between us.

When her full lips close around my tip, I lift up my hips, making her take all of it. At the same time, I feast on her flesh, my tongue molding to her center.

The dual assault surprises her and she gasps around my dick.

She's hot. Wet.

Her legs start trembling around my neck.

I slide two fingers into her and draw back to smooth her wetness over her clit and further back to her ass.

She jumps.

I clamp down on her legs. From this position, she can't move. She can only take what I'm giving her.

She whimpers.

She makes some confused sound of pleasure.

And comes all over my face.

I guide her through it, soaking up every sound and tremble, knowing that it'll take me a lifetime and this one bit of a pleasure won't come close to satisfying me or my wolf.

"Again," I tell her.

I move my mouth to bite at her ass cheeks, my hands still on her, in her, so there's no real break.

She shudders.

On the next orgasm, she goes boneless. I savor that and her heady scent.

I hiss a breath.

She pauses for a fraction of a second then she redoubles her efforts. She works over my cock with her mouth and some combination hand motion that has me gasping for air.

Her laugh is dark and delighted and challenging.

And though we don't have much time, I'm going to savor every second.

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MIA

She looks like me.

That's my first thought.

Same eyes. Same shape of the nose and chin.

She doesn't even look much older.

Wolves are long-lived, but even with our regenerative abilities, she looks, I don't know, ageless or something.

I have the odd thought that if Morgan's coven wanted my genes, they really should've started with this woman.

Cam has his hand on my back, supporting me, and as too many emotions bubble up, I'm eternally grateful he came to be here with me.

"Theo. Crius. Azreal. Rhea." She addresses the 'Other' beings. She doesn't acknowledge the wolves. Aside from a nod in their general direction.

She wears a fitted white dress. It sets off her tanned skin and is paired with heels that look expensive. Her hair is swept up and the hat that sits at a jaunty angle on her head looks both stylish and practical for this New Orleans heat.

She removes the hat as she draws even with the table.

Cam's hand tenses between my shoulderblades. Is he getting the same vibe as me?

She doesn't fidget or convey any sense of nervousness or even excitement.

This is my *mother* who hasn't seen me in close to twenty-five years. Maybe she could smile or show some warmth or move in for a hug or something.

Nope.

I stand up slowly. "Adriana, I believe?"

She nods.

The music continues to play.

I can feel the heavy stares of the Ravens and wolves, Cam and the Others.

What now?

I can't say that I'm happy to see her. I didn't even know she existed until a day ago. I thought she'd died when I was a child. So any warm, motherly attachments are unknown to me.

Is there resentment?—oh yes.

Not so much that I'm bubbling with anger or wanting to lash out. It's just a low, pervasive bit of negativity.

This woman deserted me.

She chose her gift over her child—*children*.

Which begs the question—is it just me and Ashley? Or do I have other siblings out in the world that I also have yet to meet?

She sits at the table and begins preparing herself a plate of food. She glances at Theo. "Pour the Louis Roederer. I believe we stored that vintage twenty years ago for this day."

Theo's eyes flash white.

In under a minute a servant brings the bottle, a giant magnum and several other servants bring a table with enough flutes for everyone.

"You're dismissed," he tells them. "Clear the mansion."

Nala growls.

I glance at Corinne. She's avoiding looking at me. She definitely isn't looking at my mother. That smell is back. The one I detected when we first drove into this city.

Death.

I don't get the impression that this Seer is telling anyone nice, feel-good predictions of long lives and prosperity.

Theo keeps his hand on Corinne even as she slides into the chair next to him.

Cam?

I see it, he tells me.

What the hell does *that* mean?

She turns to the Others. “To you, Titans of our world–”

Titans?

“May you continue to watch and guide, ensuring a world for *all* beings.”

What is this about–she’s being inclusive and acknowledging everyone at this table, but I barely know any of them.

I don’t know *her*.

“... To you, protectors of my bloodline.” She toasts to Cameron and all the wolves before she finally looks at me. “And to you, my daughter...”

I meet her gaze and there are so many things I want to say. I have so many questions. They bubble up like the wine in my glass. But when I open my mouth, I don’t know where to begin.

I only know that I feel a void.

An emptiness growing inside my chest and it causes physical discomfort.

The mist is in this courtyard now. It paints the walls and dims the sky. It swirls in a way that makes this early sunny day seem like the center of a storm.

Cam, I don’t like this. What’s happening?

He's tense beside me. His eyes flutter.

It's the pack, he tells me. They're trying to reach me, but I can't connect with them.

NOT good. None of this is.

We need to leave...

He grabs my hand and we stand abruptly.

Adriana—my mother—lifts her glass and drains it. When it's empty she stares at us. "There's nowhere to run. They're already here."

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"Hello husband."

Holy shit. It's Ashley.

She's here. Walking into the courtyard in a long floral dress that hangs on her frail body. Her hair is pulled back and even sickly, she is beautiful. Her voice is like a siren's song and I wonder if this was one more deal she made with the witches to be able to entrance others so easily.

As the sound fades, I shake my head to clear it.

She turns to our mother. "Adriana."

My mother nods. There is something in her expression that is haunted. Is it acceptance or regret? The recognition that all of her choices have led to this moment of reckoning. Or maybe it's just seeing her two daughters whom she'd abandoned together. Finally.

Then again, it could be the gun in Ashley's hand.

Ashley sniffs the air. "Well, I must say, this feels familiar. Fucking her again, Cameron?"

He doesn't argue or apologize. "It was only through your treachery that I was separated from my mate in the first place, Ashley."

His voice is calm, patient even.

What is that sound? The singing is back only it isn't coming from Ashley now, maybe it wasn't her in the first place?

The melody... it's distracting me, drawing my attention to the mist.

Mia! It's Eric. He's in my head. *My sister...*

"Corinne," I whisper. "You need to leave."

She points up to the balconies.

And then I see them. Wraiths. Dozens of them.

They're human...but not. They smell like death. They *are* death.

And their insatiable appetites mean we will have a hard fight to break free of this place.

They're in the mist, a part of it, and the singing in the air drowns the jazz and hisses of the wraiths.

"Why the hell would you bring me here!?" I shout at my mother.

It was *her* map.

I came to find her, seeking answers and instead I led us all into a trap.

"*You* brought me here," Ashley says to me. She laughs cruelly.

Oh my God. I've caused this.

I set us on this path.

And in doing so, I brought my love and my Alpha, Corinne and her warriors, into this place.

“Corinne. Run!”

“Too late for that,” she says.

I turn to Cam. “You need to get out of here. Now. You need to get back to our kids.”

He’s already shifting. His body expanding and his face morphing into his lycan form. He won’t run. He won’t leave me.

“Ashley,” I try to reason with her. “Please don’t do this.”

“I have lost everything!” she reminds me. “And it’s all because of this bitch!”

She lifts the gun in her hand and shoots our mother. At such a short range, the bullet goes straight into Adriana’s heart.

The blast echoes in the courtyard.

It is the signal the wraiths are waiting for.

They leap over the balconies and pour out of the mist before my mother’s body hits the ground.

There’s a horrible roar and then the creature is thrown off me.

I shift back to human.

Corinne is above me. She’s in her lycan form and she’s the last thing I see before three wraiths drag her away. “Noooo!”

The mist melts.

The screaming fades.

But the singing intensifies. I blink, my vision blurry.

There is a woman. She's tall, over six feet tall, with dark eyes and hair. She walks among the fallen wolves, pausing at Lianne and Rachel. Jessica's body is somewhere on an upper floor.

"Sisters," she proclaims.

Her hand sweeps over them like she's scooping the air and then she holds her hand to the sky. Actual ravens circle her and take flight. A second flock lands on one of the upper balconies.

I see this in slow motion.

I think I'm hallucinating.

The battle still rages.

At one point, Corinne's body drops from the balcony and lands on the table, shattering dishes and glasses. Her head lulls to the side and her eyes are unseeing.

My vision too, is dimming.

Then Cam is above me. He's dragging me up and holding me against his chest. He's roaring, and trying to staunch my bleeding.

I get it now. Why I panicked when he tried to mark me.

Because if he had... If we finished our mating bond.

Then he would die now with me.

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CAMERON

“Get me a healer!”

The courtyard is awash in blood. The wraiths took their fill and then, like with the mist that carried them in, they receded.

It’s eerily quiet in the aftermath.

The tall woman who was singing—if she was even real—she’s gone.

Several black birds remain. They perch on the table and on the rooftops. Watching. Waiting.

Shift for me, Mia. Come on now.

Her blood pools beneath her and though I can hear the faint beat of her heart, the pulse is so slow that with each pause I wonder if it will be the last.

“No, my love. Stay with me!”

I apply pressure to her wound.

“Nala. If you hear me... shift. You’re stronger and Mia needs you.” But her body doesn’t move and there is nothing to suggest she heard me.

“Mia! Come on, open your eyes, honey. *Please.*”

I take in the carnage in the courtyard.

Wolves are dead and eviscerated.

Plates and shattered glass line the cobblestone ground.

The air smells of flowers and blood, wine and death.

I glance across to where Adriana lies. She’s the spitting image of Mia and the lifeless eyes that stare back at me are too much like my beloved mate’s.

The Titans are gone. Only the one called Theo remains. He sits on the ground with Corinne cradled in his lap.

If he is indeed some old god, then I marvel at the tears that stream down his face. Because such creatures, though they may guide and watch humanity, are not known for their compassion for our species.

Eric... he will be gutted.

Even more so, because he told Corinne to protect Mia.

She did...and paid the ultimate price for it.

The other women are dead too. They were swept up and ...consumed. What remains of them is unrecognizable.

“Mark her,” Theo tells me.

“What?”

“Your woman.”

If I do this, I’m breaking her trust and forcing our bond.

She didn’t want that.

But if I don’t do it, she’ll die.

“Mark her,” he says again. “Or she will follow my raven’s fate.”

I don’t think. I bite down. Her neck is already mangled but I let my teeth break the skin, away from the blood vessels I’m desperately trying to triage.

I draw back and hold my own wrist above the wound. I’m bleeding and I flex my arm to force my blood to mix with hers.

Normally, we would profess each other as mates and the marking bond would extend both ways, with Mia then marking my neck or chest. It is an old tradition, one not many wolves practice these days because the teeth marks are too much for human society and even masking the marks isn’t practical.

“Please, please Mia.”

I can’t think about our kids. Or her father, my beta.

They’ll be devastated.

Me...I’ll never get over this woman. She was mine from the beginning and in all the years of my life, she is the only thing that brings me peace.

“*Mia*,” I kiss her head. I drag her close, needing to hear her heart to know that it still beats, that she is still breathing.

I wasn’t gentle with her.

I didn’t worship her the way she deserved.

I didn’t love her or give her the words to let her know what she meant to me.

Her last moments on this earth were filled with betrayal and brutality and my selfishness.

I rock her in my arms. “Live. *Please*.”

Conn is howling, the mournful sounds echoing in my brain until I’m certain I’ll die or go insane.

I feel my own blood swirl. My heart thumps out of rhythm and slows.

We are joined now. One. Complete.

Either she comes back or I *will* perish along with her.

She survives or I follow her to the grave.

Shift, I command.

“Now *goddamnit!*” I scream.

“*Shift!*” I demand again and I put the full force of my Alpha powers behind it.

SHIFT!!!

He sweeps up Corinne. His eyes are on the front courtyard and he runs with her in his arms before taking the stairs to the upper floors.

An SUV pulls up behind the fountain.

“If you want to take your dead with you,” she tells me, “load them up now.”

One of the Titan’s opens the back door of the vehicle and body bags line the open trunk. The seats are already folded down.

The sight of it all...is sickening.

I scoop up Nala and bring her into the trunk. I make sure Mia’s comfortable and lean down to kiss her snout. “It’s okay. We’ll go soon.”

Then I collect what I can of our fallen comrades. My hands are bloody and my heart is heavy by the time I finish.

I’m not sure what to do with Mia’s mother.

Although I realize that I don’t trust him as implicitly as I once did.

I cross her arms over the hole in her chest and seal the bag.

“Here,” the female Titan says. “Adriana left this for her.”

I glance up at the balconies.

“Theo will pay a grave price for what he has done...” she says quietly.

I’m not sure what that is.

“I need to take the other woman back,” I say instead of asking questions. “Corinne is the Alpha’s sister. Her pack... they’ll want her buried on their grounds.”

She shakes her head. “There won’t be anything to bury.”

Her eyes are cold and almost colorless. This creature is chilling in its complete lack of empathy.

She snaps her fingers and fires spark. They consume the dead wraiths and the local dead wolves. The flames catch the walls of the building and climb quickly.

Smoke billows from somewhere inside the grand mansion.

She’s going to torch this place.

“You should go, wolf,” she warns. “There’s nothing left for you here.”

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CAMERON

The flight back is somber.

With the time difference, it’s barely dinner time when we land.

Mia is a shell of herself.

She’s healed and I think Ashley awakening must have had some part of that. Whatever ties bound us are severed. To ensure it, I put my Alpha strength into breaking the bond with her while I was on the jet.

It caused pain, a sharp and swift slice through my body like a portion of my being was fracturing... and then it dissipated.

I connect with my father to make sure Merilee and the rest of the pack is okay. I’d hoped—gods, how I hoped—that Merilee would be healed.

But that is not the case.

I hate that Dr. Lee is right, that the affliction was caused in utero, when Ashley used witch-magic to trick me.

Whatever was done to make my wolf believe she was my mate, that had an irreversible impact on the daughter we conceived.

My dad assured me my daughter, though not improved, Merilee has not declined further, either. She's safe. Jacelyn and Aaron too.

That's good. That's the most important thing, but how did my pack not notice their former Luna awakening and leaving packlands?

How the fuck did Ashley do what she did!?

I was told Ashley awoke some time in the night and slipped off site.

As for the attack on us here in the Crescent City, it echoes what had been done to Eric's pack prior to Mia arriving with Jace.

Ashley and her brother Philipe are in league with vampires, and I marvel at what deal might grant dozens of wraiths at their disposal.

Maybe it's just money—hundreds of millions of dollars might make for such a partnership. Or maybe it's something more...

A common enemy. Common goal.

But to even suggest such things is an anathema.

It is treason to our species.

To make it to New Orleans so quickly, she must have been able to track us or maybe there was some tie to Adriana. Or me. Or Mia.

I don't know.

I don't give a shit.

She's gone... and good riddance.

Ashley and her brother Philippe would need to be captured. Dealt with.

I really didn't want to think about what the end game would be with her. Because she is the mother of my child, but I wouldn't let that stop me from justice. I couldn't. Not after New Orleans.

Her transgressions are too severe.

Mia stirs. She shivers again.

I try to cover her with a blanket but she shakes it off.

Physically, Mia is healed.

Emotionally, I'm not sure.

My mate looks ...broken.

I have an urge to fill the silence but that isn't what she wants. The few times I tried to get her to talk, she closed her eyes and turned away.

From her breathing, I know she isn't sleeping now.

Her eyes are closed and she's angled her body away from me.

That hurts.

But I can't force it.

I didn't expect her to take Corinne's loss or the other women's deaths so hard. But while she did actually sleep, she cried out for those women. She wept and whimpered and when I tried to touch her, to hold her and console her, she rioted.

She needs time and space.

Such violence and loss is not processed so easily. If ever.

I think back on the damage I did to her all those years ago when I cast her out and how she lost *everyone* and everything.

I've hurt this woman so much.

I rub my chest.

Her pain is mine.

She is my mate.

If she lets me, I'll spend the rest of my life trying to make it up to her.

Conn makes a grumbling sound. Like my idea is stupid.

My wolf isn't wrong.

What tears me up is knowing that there is no 'making up' for anything. The hurts we inflict are always there. Perhaps the actual wounds heal.

But scars remain.

We prepare to land on the private airstrip that our pack owns. We don't normally land this particular jet here because of its size and the length of the runway, but I'm not worrying about that right now. For all I give a shit, the plane can rot here.

We have bodies to transfer and who-the-fuck-knows in a giant crate to deal with.

I hesitate to even bring that box onto packlands, seeing as how everything that Seer woman touches turns to ash.

Maybe he told my old man, but such information—especially as how it has threatened pack—should've been relayed. To *me*.

I want to take care of *her*.

"Help them," I tell him. *Unload the bodies first. Then the trunk.*

Sean?

My beta-Mia's father-responds immediately. *Is she alright?*

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Fatal Temptation: Between Two Alphas novel Chapter 57

JACE

The doorbell rings.

What. The. Fuck.

I glance sharply at Morgan. "Did you contact anyone?"

She's naked and half asleep in the bed beside me. "Who? When?" She throws a pillow at me. "Yeah, I grabbed up the landline while we were switching positions."

I snort.

"Stupid question, wolf."

She's right. Neither of us have left each other's sight for hours.

"It's probably the guys," she says. "Doordash or Uber Eats or something."

"Yeah, probably."

But I don't think so.

A few seconds later, there's a knock at the door. "Hey Jace...you're going to want to come out for this."

I push from the bed slowly and draw on my jeans.

"Stay here," I tell Morgan.

But she's already standing and getting dressed too. That's probably for the best. She isn't a wolf, she can't shift the way we can to protect our bodies.

"Relax, puppy—"

"Oh no you didn't..."

She laughs.

With a twirl of her hand, the bed and everything in this room is set to rights. As she follows me out of the room, she's chanting something.

It feels like a physical wall of energy that pulses through the room and moves into Morgan. She's gathering her power and it is intense.

"I take it this isn't a food delivery," I say to my men.

They shake their heads.

Okay then. We have a potential threat on the other side of that door.

"Remember," she says quietly, "no one who wishes harm can pass."

Michail acts like he's stomping a staff into the ground. He raises his arms. "You shall not pass!" He gives his best Gandalf imitation.

We chuckle at that.

"Seriously though," Morgan says. "We are safe here. Stay inside. We're only vulnerable if we step outside these walls."

"On three," I tell them.

"One, two..."

Jacob opens the door.

Before I can catch her—Morgan runs outside.

“Damn it, woman!” I yell and lunge after her. This witch is quick and I stop short when I see her hugging someone.

“What are you doing here?” she gushes, and there is such joy in her voice.

I stop short. That ‘someone’ is roughly five-foot-three and maybe a buck twenty. She has short spiky blonde hair, no, not blond, white. Her skin is smooth but there are crinkles at the corners of her eyes and around her mouth. She gives me a once-over then winks.

When Morgan finally releases her, she steps back and swipes at tears. “Come in, come in, Nonna.”

Grandma???

I step back and so do the other guys. We fan out in the living room and Nonna walks in. Morgan holds her grandma’s hand and the gesture is almost childlike in its innocence, she is so happy to see this woman.

“My, oh my,” Nonna exclaims. She stares at each of my men in turn. When her gaze lands on me and rather shamelessly appraises my bare chest, I actually feel myself blushing. I don’t think I’ve ever blushed before.

She pat’s Morgan’s hand. “Oh darling, I do love me some wolves.” Her dark eyes swing to Morgan. “If I’d known you were entertaining, I would’ve worn my 70s self glamour.”

Morgan laughs. “Nonna! Behave.”

The older woman snorts.

I like her instantly.

Morgan makes introductions before guiding us all into the kitchen where we sit or stand around the central island.

Michail resumes eating a slice of pizza.

Jacob watches the interplays intently, cataloging details and assessing the situation. Declan offers Nonna something to drink. She smiles fondly at him.

“There isn’t much time,” she tells us.

Morgan and I glance at each other. “You know why we’re here?” she asks.

Nonna arches a brow. “I can guess. You always were way too attached to that she-wolf. I blame your mother. She was so paranoid and power-hungry she never allowed you to make friends.”

“Okay, let’s get to it then.” She glances at my packmates before her gaze settles on Declan. “Oh. Yes. *You*.”

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Fatal Temptation: Between Two Alphas novel Chapter 58

Morgan lifts her hand and tendrils of blue light and electricity swirl around her fingertips.

She’s buzzing with power. Literally radiating it from her hands.

Her eyes are alight with wonder and then they fall when she realizes what was done. “No, no, no.” She runs across the kitchen. “Bring her into the other room.”

Declan strides into the living room and instead of laying her down, he sits on the couch and keeps the little woman on his lap. She’d chosen

wisely when she picked him. Maybe Nonna sensed how fiercely loyal and protective Declan would be.

Morgan kisses Nonna's cheek. "Are you okay? Talk to me." Her voice is thick with tears.

I can hear the older woman breathing, but whatever she did sapped her strength significantly. She looks older now, worn in a way that would suggest failing health or illness.

"Why would you do that!?" Morgan is frantic.

I put my hand on her shoulder hoping to calm her.

She starts crying.

I wrap my arms around her waist.

Nonna breathes deeply. "I appreciate the display of emotion," she says without opening her eyes. "But let's suck it up, eh, buttercup."

Declan chokes on a laugh.

Morgan draws back as if her grandma slapped her.

Nonna opens one eye. "I love you, Morgan."

Morgan drops to her knees beside the couch and throws her arms around Nonna's neck. She's still crying but it's less sad now. More great racking sobs of relief.

I stand there and Declan and I share an awkward look. We're wolves. We snarl and growl, bark and bite. But generally, we aren't prone to outwardly showing our emotions. I rake a hand through my hair. I'm not so good with tears.

Declan sure as hell isn't.

I've seen him face entire hives of vampires with less nervousness.

And seeing my woman cry, short of taking her back to bed and fucking her senseless, I'm not real sure how to make her stop.

Nonna grins up to me. "Don't worry wolf, she's fine."

Morgan gives her grandma one last hard squeeze and then she stands back up. "I'm better than fine." She holds up her hands and stares at them in wonder. "I'm unstoppable."

Nonna smiles proudly. "Yeah, you are."

"I can't accept this," Morgan says abruptly. "This is your power. Your gift."

"Yes," Nonna agrees. "And it is mine to give." She makes a shooin' motion with her hand. "You go on now and get ready. I think I'll sit here a while more yet, and let this stud bolster me." She nods. "It's true, there's nothing like a big hard man to get everything flowing."

Declan's face flushes red. He sputters.

I laugh hard.

Then Nonna ogles my chest and I'm back to feeling self-conscious again. She cackles. "Splendid creatures, these wolves."

She's fucking with us, but it's in such good nature and intended to lighten the mood so her granddaughter won't bear the burden of this sacrifice.

And that's what it is, I realize.

A sacrifice.

Nonna has given her magic to Morgan.

I don't know much of the witch world, but even I can see that this is a rare and very significant event.

When the humor dies down, Nonna closes her eyes, and we all see that for as much as she is teasing and smiling, she is very very weak.

“Rest, Nonna.” Morgan kisses her forehead.

We walk back into the kitchen and let the guys know that everything is okay. The explanation is kind of moot. With our heightened senses, there isn’t a detail that they’d miss with all of us crammed in the same house. And, yes, that includes the hours of sex.

Wolves don’t have the same hangups about intimacy that other species seem to.

“We’ll leave on schedule,” I tell them.

“I have some news,” Jacob says.

“Oh?”

The doorbell rings again.

“Right on time.” Jacob smiles.

“What is?” I ask.

“Special delivery. Cam called Alpha MacPhearsona last night and let him know we were in town. And Eric said he’d send supplies.”

“Nice.” Then I take Morgan’s hand again and lead her back into the bedroom.

* * * * *

MIA

I’m not doing so well.

I’m conscious of that, so I guess that’s something, like if I’m aware that I’m messed up it must mean that I’m not so far gone.

But I still can’t seem to make my way back to right.

There is so much death...

My mother.

Corinne.

Rachel. Lianne. Jessica.

I'm sitting on the front porch of the cattle cabin in a remote corner of our pack's land. No, not *our*. Cameron's.

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Fatal Temptation: Between Two Alphas novel Chapter 59

JACE

The tractor trailer backs into the loading bay. There is a subtle rocking as it butts against the giant rubber pads at the dock.

We wait in the dark.

Our wolf eyes let us see clearly, but Morgan keeps her hand in front of her with a small flame glowing.

It flickers, casting shadows around her face.

Jacob and Michail are standing near the roll up door. Declan is driving.

There's a knock against the container door, it's soft but tells us the shipping official at the labs will be opening the bay.

Morgan moves to intercept them.

As the back opens, she's already murmuring a spell.

The young guy stands frozen.

He holds a clipboard in one hand and a lollipop hangs out of his open mouth. It falls in slow motion and cracks against the concrete floor.

“What did you do to him?” I ask her.

“Nothing permanent,” she assures me. “His mind and body are suspended in time. In a few hours, he’ll wake up and be fine.”

Michail lifts him up—the guy is like a statue, unmoving and unblinking—and sets him in the back of the semi.

“One sec,” Jacob says.

He checks the guy’s pockets and pulls out an employee key card. Then he rolls the back shut.

“Hope he isn’t afraid of the dark.”

Morgan shrugs. “His thoughts are frozen too. I’m not cruel. I wouldn’t trap a person in their own mind.”

Jacob has heavy bags of computer gear in each hand. Declan carries an assault rifle. But he slings it behind his shoulder. He drags a jacket on next. That’ll cost time if he needs to use that gun, but for now, I agree with his choice.

“This way,” Morgan says. “But first...”

She mutters a spell and I watch as Michail’s features are transformed. He looks like the young guard. *Exactly* like him.

“This better not be permanent, witch.”

She smirks. Then she changes her own features. Her hair shortening in length and darkening to black in color. Her eyes and skin darken too. She somehow adds several inches to her height. “There,” she says. “We’re even.”

Morgan leads us into what appears to be a warehouse portion of the building. Giant pallets are stacked against walls and in rows.

There are a few workers on forklifts at the opposite end of the room and they move like worker bees, stacking crates and disappearing into another section that's marked by dropped down plastic strands, the kind you might see in a refrigerator or controlled-temperature storage area.

We wolves don't deal in magic so seeing what all is possible...it's eye opening.

She walks with purpose. Not too fast and with an easy confidence.

Maybe it's because she understands that the less attention we garner, the better, and with her new glamour she won't get caught on surveillance. Or maybe it's because her grandmother's power has imbued her with enough magic to face anything.

"Two o'clock," she says.

There they are. Another set of closed-circuit cameras.

We keep our heads slightly angled away and our eyes down. It won't matter if we're recognized. Not in the aftermath, anyway. But it'd be great if we could avoid at least the initial onset of enemy personnel.

We move into a long hallway. There are doors on either side and ahead I see a bay of windows.

"Security office in forty feet," she says.

Ahead of that is a door, and a very sophisticated keypad beside it.

Morgan is building her magic again.

I can sense it now, it gives a hint of spark to the air, a current that is almost indistinguishable. Maybe it's because we've been intimate, or because I'm a wolf, but I detect the minute changes. There is even the slightest smell-like ozone after a storm.

She casts her hands out and tendrils of smoke extend. The bluish white smoke moves quickly, slithering down the remainder of the hall and beneath the door into the security room.

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