

Wolfless, Fateful Encounters Chapter 4

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Travis

I sat in my car parked down the street from the address I now clutched in my hand. I kept looking from the notepaper to the mailbox with the numbers and wondering if this was where she really lived. It was a single-story rundown house with faded paint and weeds grown to knee height. The one shutter remaining lay crooked on one hinge, and a giant crack ran across the glass of the window. It was now or never, so I took a deep breath and pushed out of my Mercedes. The heavy front door opened to a stunning blonde. Her highlighted hair sat perfectly styled against a designer dress. I examined the manicured nails and thick cosmetics, knowing they were priced beyond the cost of this property's worth. The woman's appearance starkly contrasted with the slum house surrounding her. Disappointment instantly caused my stomach to drop, and the cold exterior of a future Alpha slipped into place. The woman shivered and dropped her gaze like any shifter would in the presence of an Alpha. Not submissive to my dominance as she had that night but submissive out of fear of my power.

"C-C-Can I help you?" she sputtered. This couldn't be the same woman whose subtle strength called to my overbearing one. My wolf didn't even perk up his ears at the sound of her voice.

"I'm hoping you can." I try to give an easygoing smile, "I'm trying to locate an item I lost a long time ago."

The woman perked up, "What item would that be?"

I pulled the picture taken at the pawn shop from my suit's inside jacket pocket. I held it out to her. Her expression showed that she had no recollection of the item. I had read the report. The shop's owner said the woman wanted it sold, not pawned. He claimed she was calm and commanding, but this girl before me trembled under my scrutiny. Something didn't add up about this situation, but I needed answers, and this was my first lead in six years.

"I lost it six years ago at the Westward Hotel." I offered. Slowly, her face changed as she realized what I was saying. A flicker of fear crossed her features before she regained her composure. This woman knew exactly what night I was referring to. Good. I will finally get some answers to the event that night. Her eyes flicked up and down the street before landing on me. "Why are you here, and who are you?"

So, she did know something. I smirked, "So you know something about that night?"

She hesitated, and then her eyes drifted to the ring on my finger, which symbolized my status. With tears in her eyes and a quivering chin, she asked, "What do you want with me?"

"Were you the woman I slept with that night?" My tone is more deadly than I meant it to be. She gulps, taking a step back into her house and gripping the edge of the door with one hand. If she thought this flimsy door could stop me, she was naive.

"What would you do if I was?" Her fear engulfed my nostrils and irritated my patience. There could be a million explanations for why she was blonde, not raven-haired like the girl who haunted me. The beautiful creature of my memory was nothing like the terrified she-wolf before me.

"I won't hurt you. If that is what you are getting at. I couldn't stop thinking about our night together." I sighed, giving her a sliver of the truth. Early on, I learned that if you wanted honesty from other people, you had to reveal a connection by telling them a little about yourself first. Sometimes, it was a small truth, but most of the time, I lied. This small admission seemed to snap the fear from her features as the wheels turned behind her eyes. I'd seen that calculated look on far too many social climbing shifters, not to know what her internal debate was about. When whatever mental acrobats she jumped through finished, her face set into a decision. I didn't like the sight of it.

Her voice took on a sultry undertone that made my skin crawl, "You could stop thinking about me?"

I shook my head, "No. I couldn't stop thinking about that night. We had a lot to discuss about what happened. I was severely intoxicated, so my memory is fuzzy."

A shy but almost sinister smile graced her lips, "So you don't remember the night you stole my virginity?"

Shit, I had thought that was the case, "Why were you in my hotel room that night?"

"I just wanted to meet my girlfriend for a gal's weekend. Instead, I lost my virginity to someone I didn't even know!" Sobs shook her shoulders as huge tears leaked from her eyes, yet I felt nothing. The whole scene felt overly dramatic and fake as fuck. I held onto fantasy feelings for this woman for six fucking years. I wanted to punch my dick for putting me in this situation.

More tears blackened her cheeks as the heavy makeup she wore washed away. Her pouty lip shook, and my brain couldn't understand the difference in her lips. They had been so soft and kissable, responding and molding into mine like we had kissed a thousand times before. This woman's lips looked so full that she must have had work done. It all looked gross, and I could feel my anger rising more. I felt tricked and betrayed, but it was no one's fault but my own. I needed this conversation to end. "So you pawned my amulet for revenge?"

"No!" She wailed, "When my father discovered I was no longer pure, he disowned me. No one in my pack would speak to me, let alone hire me for a job. So I pawned the amulet for money because I was desperate."

I resisted the urge to roll my eyes. Her house was pitiful, but her designer clothes, jewelry, and shoes were in season, which meant she wasn't lacking in money. My necklace would only fetch a few grand at best, yet her shoes were easily worth \$10,000. The dramatics of this whole scene caused a headache to begin. The woman continued, "So this is all your fault! The fact I live in shame and squaller is because you seduced me, stole my innocence, and left me to deal with it alone."

"What would you have me do?" I retorted. I didn't remember any seduction, but maybe I remembered it incorrectly. I could be in the wrong, though, because I had drunk myself stupid. Had she not wanted me the same way I wanted her that night?

"Take responsibility." She demanded, her tears magically drying up.

I pinched the bridge of my nose, "What do you want to happen exactly?"

"Take responsibility for the life you stole when you took my virginity!" Her voice turned sultry and manipulative.

I realized now that she wanted security. Although her clothes showed wealth, she lived in poverty. She wanted financial security to live her life. I wondered if she was born into wealth and expected me to provide her with a trophy lifestyle. "So you want me to provide a cushioned life for you?"

"Yes. You ruined my chances at that happiness, finding a respectable husband, or getting a reasonable job. The least you could do is give me financial support."

I nodded, taking a step away from her. Shit, I'd been played. The woman hadn't known who I was six years ago, but it was clear she knew now. I had more wealth than I knew what to do with, so this request would be easy. Getting over the disappointment that my fantasy was just that, a fantasy, would be brutal. I should've taken Sammy's advice and let her go years ago.

"Your name?" I demanded my icy Alpha mask holding firm.

"Jessica Calloway." Jessica stuck out her hand for me to take. I knew she expected me to take her limp fingers and kiss the back of her hand, but I ignored her. I was barely holding in my emotions; if I touched her, then I would lose them. She was the opposite of everything that I thought she was that night. Instantly, my longing for her ended.

"Travis Conri," I replied, pulling out my cellphone to begin taking care of this clusterfuck.

