

~ Zoya ~

by Windstar and Zee

All comments are welcome at zeeamy@gmail.com and adarkbow@yahoo.com.

Disclaimer: This is a sequel to [Chance](#), it is probably a good idea to read that one first as things will make better sense. There is violence, blood, and sex; par for the course in one of our stories.

Two queens stared at each other, silent sentinels across the field of battle; monochrome towers of black and white had fallen but the pawns were still in play, cannon fodder for royalty.

Chance frowned and studied the board, wondering how she was losing so badly. What annoyed her even more was that Zoya wasn't even paying attention to the game. Tired of waiting for Zoya to do something, she spoke up. "You going to move?"

Zoya looked up from the report she was reading, gave a quick glance to the board, and moved her bishop before going back to her report.

Chance glowered, "Could you pretend to play?"

"I told you this was a bad idea, but you insist on having this bonding time. I'm busy, I'm leaving in two days for LA, and Zinaida has a ton of meet and greets lined up to woo business to the Reservation."

"Well, since you're not fucking blondes senseless, I was trying to spend time with you. I even didn't bring Tyler." Actually, Tyler was working late at the hospital. "And I know you like chess so I thought I'd try to meet you halfway."

"I like chess," Zoya agreed as Chance gleefully took the bishop Zoya had moved into play.

"Check mate," the Alpha said, not looking up from the paper she was reading and making a note on.

"What?" Chance sputtered, looked at the board and then groaned.

"I like chess, but I find it frustrating to play because I know what the outcome is going to be from the first move."

Chance frowned, "That's impossible." She started to reset the board.

"Why does everyone think I'm stupid?" Zoya groused.

"I don't think you're stupid." Chance defended herself.

"Yes you do. Because I stayed on the Reservation, and didn't go to fancy colleges, and I like to fuck women -- lots of women -- and fight, and in general live in harmony with my animal side. You still have issues with being a werewolf, but I'm beginning to suspect that you just enjoy feeling tortured."

Chance growled, "Just play the stupid game."

Zoya sighed, set down the paperwork, and watched Chance's opening move.

"Checkmate four moves," she said to her half-sister.

Chance stared at the board in horror, "How the hell?"

Four moves later, Zoya had done as she had predicted.

Bones came in, sipping tea. "How the hell, what?"

"Four moves. She said she'd beat me in four moves, and she did."

Bones stared at the chess board and gave a shudder of horror. "You didn't!. Never play chess with her; it's like she can see all the moves before they happen. It's no fun to play with her."

"I'm Russian; chess is in my blood."

Chance made a face. "That's stupid; I'm your sister, so I'm Russian too."

"Only half, and not the half that does strategy and plays chess."

Chance had to struggle not to hit Zoya.

Bones patted the sheriff on the shoulder. "She's a gracious winner, too. Don't let it get to you; you have a ton of other strengths that she doesn't have."

Chance crossed her arms over her chest defensively.

Bones stared pointedly at Zoya and cleared her throat.

"What?" Zoya asked, looking up from her paperwork. "Fine, we'll go to the shooting range later and you can feel better that you can fire a gun better than anyone I know, even myself."

That's it. You squish my ego and make me feel as bright as a three year old, and that's all I get?" Chance bitched.

Zoya thought for a moment. "Chance, you have your talents, many of them revolving around skills that make a good police officer. You care about the people you are sworn to protect, you forgive easily and are slow to anger." Which was the only reason her sister was with that liar Tyler; despite what Chance said, it was the only thing that made sense. "You serve the community to make it better. I bend the community to my will to make it better and that is the fundamental difference between us. I'm smarter in a logical sense, where your people skills are far better than mine." She frowned. "And apparently you can heal from a life-threatening silver wound."

Chance unconsciously raised her hand to where the scar on her face went down through an eye. The vision was slowly coming back in that eye, something no one could explain.

"Well, Ivan the Terrible is your personal hero, so it's not surprising," Bones said, sitting down in an unused chair and changing the subject so the sisters would not dissolve into a fight.

"Ivan was just terribly misunderstood." Zoya sniffed, ignoring the horrified look she was getting from Chance.

Chance caught on that it was time to change topics. "So, uh, how is therapy going?"

Zoya looked back up with a glare, and Chance wished she'd asked about the weather.

The ballroom was filled with expensive tuxes, dresses, and jewelry. Alcohol flowed easily, and the bartenders at all the open bars were kept busy refilling drinks. A band played the appropriate mix of oldies and mellow new hits so no one was left out or offended. It smelled of a thousand different perfumes, colognes, and business deals going down.

To Zoya Pavel, currently using the assumed name Zinaida Peterson, it was horribly boring. Perhaps she should have allowed Bones to accompany her; at least the woman could have set something on fire and she could have laughed as fake hair and fake boobs melted away to nothing. But Bones wasn't here. She was actually very much alone, drowning in a sea of humanity; it was terribly depressing. She supposed she could lower herself to woo one of the sheep for an evening tumble in bed, but really, why lower herself?

"Zinaida Zinaida Peterson, I'm so happy you could make it," a loud, red faced man said, slapping her hard on the back.

She tamped down on her instinct to gut him and turned, plastering a fake smile on her face. "And you are?" she asked boredly.

He blinked, not used to someone not knowing who he was. "Um, Dan, Dan Steadman, I'm the CEO of Daichi Corp. We make people's lives better."

"I'm sure you do." The bored tone was still in her voice.

"I was hoping to run into you. I understand you're the person to talk to about getting contracts in with the wolves on the reservation."

"Mmm," she said, eyes scanning the room, just in case. Paranoia kept her alive.

He blathered on, "Our pharmaceutical company is looking for a cheap test market, and since the werewolf reservation is not under federal regulation"

Her eyes snapped back to his face. "So you'd like to come in, build a facility, dump toxins into the water and land, and do some testing on Weres -- whose physiology is nothing like a humans -- so you can then slap a label on and say "was tested on humans" because of an old anti-discrimination law that was passed in the 60's saying we are humanoid and not pets."

He stammered, realizing how much he had let slip, "Well no.. of course not. That would be illegal."

"Mr. Steadman, other than the pollution to her land, Zoya might be agreeable to you setting up a research facility near the border so your human scientists wouldn't have to actually live on the reservation."

"Really?" He blinked, surprised; perhaps not all was lost.

"Sure. Of course there couldn't be any testing on her Weres; she's extremely protective of her people and lands. So I guess that would leave you with a facility and scientists with nothing to research."

"Oh." He deflated.

"However, what about stem cell research? Zoya really doesn't have the same religious problems that the human world has and think how much advancement your company could make without the federal government poking into your business. Your company would be well ahead of others in that field in a couple of years."

His eyes lit up again, seeing dollar signs.

"Zoya would of course like that lower-level jobs go to her people. Like security, janitorial, and food service. The Weres don't have the education that your people would have, of course."

Dan couldn't believe it, a research facility guarded by Weres. What could be safer than that? "You really think you could get Zoya to go for such a thing?"

"Give me your business card and I'll let you know in a couple of days."

"Of course."

Thankfully he left quickly, off to celebrate with another drink.

She sipped her drink and mingled a bit more. Finally, she couldn't take any more and she started making her way to the exit. It would take a long shower to get the stink of humanity out of her hair.

Unfortunately, the exit she wanted to use was currently being blocked by a rather aggressive woman, who had what looked like a female escort on her arm. Escorts from a service always had a certain smell to them.

"Seriously, I can't believe you had the gall to show up here," the woman belittled someone else Zoya couldn't see.

"This event is for the big dogs, not little mice like you. So scurry away back into your hole."

One of the woman's hangers-on sniped, "I can't believe you showed up dressed like that. Did a bird nest in your hair? This event is for the movers and shakers, not the special needs."

"I bet she doesn't even have a date. Gina did her a real favor even dating her; obviously one she wasn't grateful for."

"Excuse me," Zoya snapped, annoyed. She meant to pass through them all and leave them to devour whatever small rabbit they had cornered. The woman was smaller than her, but not much. With heels on, they were the tallest two women in the room. Her hair did look vaguely as if something had nested in it, and the power suit she was wearing was a tad too masculine and too large for the woman's slight frame. Zoya sighed though as she saw the watery eyes on the verge of tears and the pride that kept the woman from spilling them.

She plastered a smile on her face. "Darling, I wondered what was keeping you. I should have guessed your bitch of an ex was trying to win you back. Look at the cheap whores she's reduced to renting by the hour." She gave a sniff of distaste as she looked this Gina woman up and down.

"This is your date. Really?" Gina gave a barking laugh.

"Well, at least she doesn't have to buy herself a date," Zoya replied disdainfully. She looked at the woman whose arm she was currently holding. "Seriously, darling, no matter how many times you tell me, I still don't see what you saw in that," Zoya shook her head, and masterfully moved them out of the pack of estrogen.

She lead them back out towards the entrance hall where security stood like silent statues watching the people enter and leave. "No need to thank me." Zoya said to the woman who had been silent since their retreat. She had to wonder if she was drugged as this was so out of character for her.

"Really?" The stranger gave Zoya an even stranger look. "Or is that just something you say to try and put people at ease?" She was shaking a little with fury, arms trembling under Zoya's hands.

The problem with humans was they didn't understand civility, politeness seemed to be beyond them anymore, and they called Zoya's people animals. Unconsciously Zoya rubbed her hands up and down the woman's arms to calm the trembling. "Apparently they were just pointless words." She judged her mood, debating weather or not to go back in, but decided the night was a wash. She was blaming this all on her sister and her sister's damn therapist.

She led them out past security and out the front doors she stopped on the steps and looked back. The woman's ex was watching them, she'd followed as far as the security checkpoint.

"Your psycho ex is watching, man that is creepy."

"Do you" The stranger cleared her throat, embarrassed at the way her voice had wobbled dangerous close to a sob. "Do you think she's maybe sorry?" Hopeful eyes looked at Zoya through the awful haircut.

The eighties were dead but apparently the stranger's hair stylist didn't know that.

Zoya snorted and then felt bad as a tear slipped out of the woman's eyes. "No, I don't think she feels sorry at all. She's not the type." The truth hurt, but it was a clean wound unlike a lie that would fester and sicken. Then surprising herself she leaned forward and kissed the tear off the woman's cheek tasting it. "Trust me you can do better than that bitch."

The other woman gave a startled laugh that was part cry. "Thanks." She didn't really think she could, but it was nice of her rescuer to say so. "It was nice to meet you." She paused near the parking lot.

Zoya smiled. "No it wasn't." But it was nice of the woman to say, maybe manners weren't dead. "Drive safe." She turned to the valet and handed her him his ticket the odd fashion impaired woman already an afterthought.

#####3

The woman in the power suit fled from the conference center, cursing the idea that had brought her there the entire way to the parking lot.

Stupidity! What had she been thinking? She'd even put on the only suit she actually owned for the occasion!

Stupid, stupid, stupid.

The mental barrage lasted through tipping the valet guy, a healthy tip since he'd kept her car nearby, and slid into the leather seat.

"God that was stupid." She muttered, the Audi Quattro smoothly accelerating away from the conference center. It wasn't her fault her personal life was a disaster zone was it?

Still muttering to herself she pulled out the bluetooth headset she kept next to the driver's seat and clipped it to her ear. The sooner she got out of this city the better for everyone. Eyes on the road she typed a long string of digits into the touch sensitive cell phone screen, waiting for the encrypted message to flash across the front before dialing her parents number.

The woman, who was very careful not to use her actual name, Isabel, while out on a job wondered if her parents were actually there. It was early morning where they were, and they were often up and doing things by now.

Her mother picked up on the fourth ring, just as she was crossing the midtown pike toward her job for the night.

"Hi honey, what's wrong?"

"Hi Mom, why does something have to be wrong when I call you?"

"Oh it's not that honey. Your father and I were worried you'd decided to go to that conference."

The woman sighed, closing her eyes for a second before taking a right turn.

"I did mom."

There was silence on the phone and finally her mother sighed. "Honey, you know that's a bad idea. We tried to tell you that before. Are you all right?"

"Just my dignity shredded." The blonde mumbled, swerving around a double parked car.

"What was that?"

"Nothing Mom. Look, everything's fine. I just needed to find out why she left me, you know?"

"Honey, you know I love you, but she left you because you're not really ready for a relationship. And you know you have problems with people."

"Thanks Mom." The blonde rolled her eyes, checking her rearview mirror for anyone following her, more out of habit than anything else.

"Here, your father wants to talk to you." There was a low mutter of voices and then a strong masculine voice picked up.

"Pumpkin?"

"Hi Daddy."

"Listen darling, I could come out there and pay your ex a visit if you want?"

"Daddy! No. You're retired remember?"

"Oh come on Pumpkin. An old man can do his favorite daughter a favor can't he?"

"Daddy, no. She's my problem, not yours. I don't want her ending up well you know."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes Daddy."

"All right. We heard from your brother by the way, he's in Asia right now. Big job."

"Yes, he told me." The woman rolled her eyes. Remembering the taunting tone her brother had used to describe his next big job.

"The Organization is giving you work right? I could call Jacob and make sure you're getting the jobs you deserve if you want. No daughter of mine should be taking on pissant little jobs"

"Daddy!" She interrupted before things could get started. "I'm doing fine. I have a job tonight, if you've forgotten. Also, they're called the Outfit now."

"Right. Still. I think I should call the partners"

"Daddy. No! We went over this before. I'm doing this by myself."

"You sure?"

"Yes."

"All right pumpkin. I'm proud of you. Talk to you later. Here's your mother."

Another brief pause as the phone was handed over.

"Sorry about your father honey. I think he's getting a little bored with retirement. But don't worry, he has a cliff jumping session today, that will relax him."

"Thanks mom. I gotta go." She pulled up in front of the four star hotel, nodding at the valet as he started out towards her car. "I love you both."

"Love you too, dear. Let us know how it goes."

"Will do, bye mom." She hit the off button on her cell, shook her head and slipped out of the car as the valet opened the door for her.

The suit got a small raised eyebrow, which disappeared as she shoved a fifty in his hand. "Keep the car close."

"Right, no problem." The young man got in and she walked towards the front doors. The place was pretentious, marble everywhere, expensive rugs and antiques placed where you couldn't miss them. All to remind the people who were staying there that they had money and were using it well.

She snorted mentally and ignored the check in desk, heading straight for the elevators in the back of the lobby. Ten floors up and she got out, going to room 1006, one of the hotel's larger suites.

There was a pair of latex gloves in her pocket that she pulled out and slipped on as she approached the door. No need to leave behind any obvious evidence.

The door opened with her keycard and she immediately started getting undressed, happy to be out of the awful suit. The duffel bag on the bed was right where she'd left it, so was the small trip wire she'd left at the entrance to the bedroom. Careful not to disturb that, she crossed to the bag and started getting dressed.

Low rise jeans, a short tank top, nice leather boots and she felt normal again.

Then she set about putting together the sniper rifle in the bottom of the bag.

The parts clicked together smoothly, the actions as familiar to her as breathing by now. First the stock and barrel, then the stabilizer and then the high power scope. Finally a noise and flash suppressor on the end of the barrel, just in case.

"I wish I had my brother's luck with women." She muttered, crossing to the balcony and getting comfortable. It might be a long wait.

Three hours later and she was still there, watching the tower across the street from her, rifle cradled in her hands as she watched through the darkness. It was well past midnight now but her eyes sharpened as a light came on in the office complex.

The office lights of a certain vice president of finance flickered on, and then she could see a shape moving inside the large corner office.

"Work time." She whispered, raising the sniper rifle and aiming through the scope. A flick of the thumb and the magnification jumped. Her job for the night was busy sorting through papers, getting them ready to take with him.

She didn't know why he'd been selected, only that he had. It was best not to ask too many questions about targets.

That was rule number two.

A slow easy breath and her finger slid, caressing the trigger as she rested her finger against it.

Another slow breath and she tracked his head, waiting for that perfect shot. Patience, she reminded herself, she had time, all the time she wanted.

He bent over the desk, studying one of the papers and she framed his head in the cross hairs. A slight adjustment for distance, another for the wind, 6 mph out of the east, and she let out a breath, squeezing the trigger between one heart beat and the next.

There was a small noise, as loud as two champagne corks popping and the familiar recoil of the rifle against her shoulder. Across the street the bullet punched through the window pane, shattered it, and continued on through the back of the man's brain, out the front and into the wall beyond.

She was up and moving before his corpse hit the desk and slid to the ground. First she undid the trip wire, not a good idea to leave the small explosive charge there when the room was searched.

The rifle was undone, tossed into the bag, which was stuffed with her discarded suit and she was out of the door and heading to the elevator. Only after she'd left the room did she take off the gloves, which were also shoved into the bag.

Another fifty for the valet and she was on her way, smiling as she typed in a simple text message to her handler.

Job Done.

Now to find out where the next one would be and what to do until then.

#####3

Zoya returned to her suite with a sigh. Happily she kicked off her heels and shimmed out of her dress, leaving it a heap on the floor. She should hang it up but she wasn't motivated. Nearly naked she crossed to the bathroom and removed the contact lens that hid her startling blue eyes. They were the thing that people remembered about her and made it hard to be forgotten. The contacts had become a necessary evil in her life outside the reservation.

She stretched happily and slipped into the robe after washing her face. She poured a glass of water and sipped it as she moved over to the desk and booted up her laptop. She deftly entered a string of commands and plugged in a headset.

Her tech wizard who had the unfortunate name of Agnes had assured her several times this would make her phone calls untraceable and scrambled if someone did manage to figure out where she was. Agnes had gotten an irritated look when she'd asked if the Government could find her. "They wish they had stuff this good." Had been the indigent response.

"Zoya's Den of Sin." Came a voice over the line and Zoya blinked and looked at the headset.

"Tell me you're not answering my house phone like that, Bones."

"Okay, I'm not answering your house phone like that."

Zoya pinched the bridge of her nose.

"So how are things in the big city?" The Hellhound asked.

Boring. I have a couple of more clients firm up for bio research."

"Well that should make the Feds even more nervous. You know if they think you're doing bio-warfare they'll attack us."

"They've never stopped attacking us Bones. There are tons of men like Bob with their secret Government experiments to make Werens that they control."

"Whoa, sorry. I didn't mean to trigger the whole world is out to get me speech." Bones chuckled on the other end of the call. "So hob-nobbing is going well, did you meet anyone?"

Zoya frowned, there was that odd little moment were she'd stepped in with the blonde, she didn't remember her name. The whole thing had been completely out of character for her she rarely played shining knight for a woman she was fucking let alone some fashion challenged human.

"This is the point where you normally growl at me and tell me you don't need to lower yourself to fucking apes." Bones voice brightened, "so I'm assuming this means you've met someone and your having a crisis because of how you normally treat humans."

Zoya gritted her teeth for a second. "It's not like that. I just was nice to some woman pretended to be her girlfriend because her ex was being a heinous bitch."

There was silence. The Bones broke in, "So were you trying to get back karma points for all the times you've been that heinous bitch ex?"

"I'm hanging up now. I assume this means that all is well in the pack."

"Hunky dory."

Zoya ended the call and for the 100th time wondered why she left Bones in charge other than the fact she scared the piss out of just about everyone when she put her mind to it. Chance was still in her lovestruck honeymoon phase with Tyler or Kephri or whatever the woman called herself. It was annoying they'd been together for over a year now. Shouldn't they be over it by now? And really, how thrilling could sex be with the same person over and over again.

Zoya's fingers drummed over and over on the desktop and finally she put the headset back on and typed in another number.

The phone rang and rang, and just when she thought it would go to voice mail Chance's out of breath voice came on the line.

"Hello? Zoya? Is everything all right?"

"You really are a boy scout sometimes." Tyler whispered in the background.

"Chance, I'm fine." She said quickly to settle her sister's anxiety.

"Uh, okay, not to be rude, Zoya, but it's a little after midnight here."

"Oh, right." She frowned. "I'm not certain why I called." She said and then went quiet for a moment. Then something occurred to her. "Why are you out of breath?"

"Oh Tyler has me tied up with something." Came Chance's slightly high-pitched response.

"At midnight."

"It's called rope." Tyler's voice came on the phone loud and clear. "And unless it's an emergency...." Her voice disappeared and her and Chance could be heard talking softly.

"Seriously, you let her tie you up?" Zoya blurted out.

"Untie my left hand." Chances voice was heard, then her sister's voice came through very clear on the phone.

"Not that it's any of your business, I let her do it any time she wants. So for the last time, what's up?"

"How can you trust her enough to let her do that?" Zoya asked seriously.

"I just do. It makes her happy to have that much control over the big bad werewolf who is that much stronger than she is. What does it matter Zoya it's my relationship even though I know you don't get it, but a human makes me very happy." Chance was getting tired of the constant argument that they had about her love life. "I don't want to be with a werewolf or a half-breed. I'm in love with Tyler; she's who I want to spend the rest of my life with. And unless you're in dire peril I'm hanging up now."

Zoya let it go. She was in an odd mood and it felt like she had a ton of questions for her little sister but no words and no understanding of what she wanted to ask.

"Don't wear yourself out. I need you out there ready to protect and serve my towns."

Chance snorted. "Night Zoya."

Zoya disconnected and tossed the headphones away. One, she decided, should never think of their sister tied up in a sexual manner. That was way too much information. She sipped her water and sighed it was early here in LA, only an hour until midnight.

She could go out she knew of a few bars that had a more supernatural clientele or she could slum it and go to a human bar. She shut off the laptop and got up, undoing the tie of the robe wondering what she wanted to wear.

#####3

Isabel Ingfred stared at the entrance to the club, swallowing convulsively, she couldn't go in there, just the very thought was giving her the start of a panic attack. Early today had been bad enough with Gina. She wasn't certain she could take another verbal ego crush. These kinds of clubs were all about looking good and talking the game. Gina had made it clear although their short relationship that she didn't have what it took to move in those circles.

A half hour later Isabel sat in her car, blue eyes staring through the windshield at the entrance of the club. Despite the best advice from her family, actually going into the club with other people around had proved impossible. She'd actually had the beginnings of a panic attack by just standing in the line to get in.

"Fuck it." She muttered, starting the car and pulling out. There was no reason to put herself through this. She'd just go back to her hotel and watch the History channel, like every other night.

At the light before the on ramp to get onto the highway, Isabel blinked and leaned in a bit to peer at a red Ferrari ahead of her. "Oh you've got to be kidding." She leaned sideways, double checking the license plate. "Shit. Gina." What was her ex doing out in her Ferrari? That thing had been one of the reasons Isabel had gotten interested in Gina in the first place, and her ex almost never drove it.

She should just go back to the hotel. Leave good enough alone and accept that it was over.

Except that she found herself turning to follow the Ferrari, ignoring the logical part of her brain.

History channel would have to wait as she followed the red Ferrari, wondering why she was doing this. Probably, she reasoned, the same reason she'd put on that stupid suit to confront Gina in a room full of people.

The club they pulled up in front of was a meat market. Isabel grimaced at the people, in fancy dresses and showing a lot of skin, waiting to get inside. This, apparently, was the place of the day to be seen in.

"Boom Boom?" Isabel peered up at the stylized sign and rolled her eyes. "Fantastic." What the hell was Gina doing here?

The blond sighed, she should just leave now before it turned into another scene like back at the conference. The woman, of obvious Nordic descent, was just about to shift out of park when Gina stepped out of the Ferrari.

Damnit, Isabel gritted her teeth, why did Gina have to look so hot tonight? That just seemed to make the entire thing worse. Well fuck her, Isabel could be happy with someone else.

Maybe.

Then Gina paused by the open door, speaking to a bouncer and Isabel eyebrows both went up. Gina hated talking to the hired help, what exactly was going on here? The suspicion went up another notch when she saw Gina hand over a wad of cash to the bouncer and stride inside.

Well, well. Gina had just paid for something, information probably, although drugs weren't completely out of the question.

That settled it, she had to find out what was going on. And if it was an excuse to see her ex again, then who was she to argue with fait?

#####3

Zoya didn't know why she was here, okay she did but it was to depressing to think about. Her therapist wanted her to go without sex for a month. Something about trying other bonds other than sexual ones.

It was something she had decided on a whim, because Chance was annoying her with happiness. So she had started seeing Doctor Wisnor. She wasn't happy about the no sex thing.

"Hey." A woman with a lot of cleavage on show and a familiar looking face edged up to Zoya's table. "Can I get you a drink?" She licked her lips, hopefully. She had to nearly yell over the pounding sound of music from the dance floor.

Zoya blinked and looked at the woman. "Sure."

"Great. Be right back." The brunette leaned over, just far enough to show off a bit more cleavage and then weaved her way towards the bar.

Why had she come to a human bar? Because it was less likely she'd sleep with anyone here. Zoya sighed.

"Here you go." The woman reappeared, shoving a crystal glass full of a dark liquid across the table to Zoya. She slid into a seat across the small tabletop with a matching glass. "Cheers!" The woman yelled over the deep bass music.

From as near to the entryway as she could stay, Isabel tried to blend in real well with the furniture, blue eyes deady as she glared at the woman sitting across from Zianada. Why was Gina talking to the woman that had helped her out at the conference room?

Zoya, no Zianada she needed to remember such things, when she was away from the Reservation, smiled wanly and said, 'Cheers" as she took a sip.

"Sorry about that little... incident at the conference!" The woman yelled, sipping at her own glass of whiskey. "Do you really know Isabel?" The brunette smiled, charmingly. Gina sipped again, watching the other woman with interest.

"Of course." That was right, this was the heinous bitch ex. "Is this the part where you threaten me to stay away from her because you're going to win her back?"

"No." Gina licked her lips. "This is where I ask you to dance with me. You think I actually care about Isabel?"

Belatedly, Zoya sniffed her drink but found it just to be a drink. For fuck sake was a personal crisis was making her careless. "And if I say no?"

"Then I'll just sit here and pout." The woman produced a very believable pout, lower lip trembling and everything.

"I don't think you have a problem getting women, even if you have to pay for them." Zoya said a somewhat cruel smile on her lips. Was this woman across from her what people saw in her?

The woman's teasing pout faltered and for just a second there was naked anger in her eyes. "Too bad." The woman tossed back the last of her drink and stood up. "Guess you can just sit here all alone. Pathetic, just like Isabel."

Zoya laughed. "You aren't used to being turned down, and I just did so I guess that makes you pathetic not me. Since you don't get what you want." She took another sip of the drink.

Although Zoya probably would have acted just like that if she'd been turned down, twisted everything around until the world was the way she wanted. But in her defense she had a small nation to run and the lives of hundreds maybe thousands depended on her.

The woman called Gina, leaned in close, so close that her breasts were brushing across Zoya's arm. "I always get what I want." She hissed, something sharp stabbing against the back of Zoya's shoulder.

She yelped and tried to jerk away from the pain. Her eyes wide her senses went into overdrive. The little bitch was attacking her. Easily she kicked out with a foot sending Gina flying backwards, happy she had changed into jeans, a simple T and black boots.

People yelled, the sound drowned out by the music as Gina crashed through a group of them. Those with drinks that had just gotten splashed all over them gave either Gina or Zoya dark looks and a few choice gestures. Grinning, and wiping away the blood from a busted lip, Gina stood up. In a small break of people moving she held up a syringe, dangling it from her finger tips and then waving goodbye to Zoya.

Then the surge of people shifted and she was swallowed back up in the crowd.

Zoya staggered back off the chair trying to reach around to her back. She felt warm, warm was traveling through her veins from her head to her toes and her heart was suddenly pounding in her chest. She lurched crashing into a waitress and then blindly groped her way to the bathroom along the wall. Everything was fucking overwhelming she thought her ears would bleed and she wanted to howl out in pain.

Isabel stood torn and paralyzed by the amount of people around her as she watched Gina stalk out. The bitch was smiling happily and it was a close call for Isabel to avoid going after her and trying to kill her right then and there. But.... she owed the stranger that Gina had just poisoned. Whoever she was, she'd gotten Isabel out of a rough spot in the conference center.

Cursing, the blonde squeezed between people, following after the staggering woman.

Zoya was certain she'd been poisoned, well her cover identity had been poisoned, because she wasn't dead yet. She shoved past the giggling young women as they exited the bathroom.

Isabel was only a step behind and shoved one of the young women aside. "Hey..." The teen started only to stop as Isabel whirled on her. "Fuck off." The blonde said with a smile and then turned, ignoring the line of people waiting for the bathrooms, just like the poisoned woman had.

"Bathroom's closed." Isabel yelled shutting the door in their face and locking it. The sudden quiet of the bathroom was a blessing. Warily she turned to see where the poisoned woman had ended up.

Zoya was huddled in the ADA stall face against the cool tile trying to shut down her hyper-driven senses. It was like being a cub again only to be in the epicenter of a human party. She could hear everything whispered conversations, kisses, and beating of hearts. Smell their sweat, shit and stench.

Her stomach rolled and she leaned forward screaming as her muscles seized and her heart did a tango in her chest.

She needed to shift, if she did that everything would be okay. Her cover would be blown but she'd be alive.

"You've been poisoned." Isabel said, slowly, cautiously approaching the twitching woman. "We need to get you to a hospital. Do you understand what I'm saying?"

"N-n-no, no hospital." Zoya stuttered not having the strength to look up. God, why couldn't she shift? "C-c-can't c-control my, my muscles." She whimpered out.

"Yeah. That happens." Isabel crouched next to the woman, watching the seizing. She should just walk away. This wasn't her problem. Let the club people figure out what to do. "There's an emergency exit to the back of the club. If I help you, do you think you can make it that far?" Isabel found herself asking, as she could hear her Father's voice telling her she was being an idiot.

Zoya wasn't used to being helpless. "Wh-wh did she do to me?" She asked slowly. She was going to kill that bitch, she was going to hunt her and feast on her heart. She normally didn't go for the horror show but for that bitch she'd make an exception.

"Injected you with a syringe, probably filled with her special little concoction. It has a neurotoxin and heroin in it. She sometimes mixes in Cocaine too, just for kicks of course." Isabel, leaned against the wall, watching. "I'm kind of surprised you're still alive."

Zoya screamed again as her muscles seized this time her head went backwards cracking into the tile and her vision went black around the edges. For a moment she looked dead, eyes seemed fixed on something only she could see and breathing and heartbeat were not visible.

"Ah shit." Isabel muttered, crouching next to the taller woman. She had no idea if CPR would help with this, but she was about to try it.

Then her hand shot out fisting in Isabel's shirt and her eyes blinked looking at the blond. "How the fuck do you know so much about what she injected me

with? Is this some sort of sick fetish thing you two play?"

Despite the situation, or maybe because of it, Isabel laughed. "Listen, you want me to leave you here, you just say the word."

"This is my fault for being nice. I knew there was a reason why I wasn't a nice or good person. But I thought, hey it works for my sister. She's been with the same woman for what feels like years and they still have a healthy sex life. So I thought I'd try being nice. And it gets me injected with a fucking executioner's cocktail." She paused in her ranting and took a breath.

"Help me up. I think I need to vomit and I'd rather do it in the toilet." Her body wasn't being very clear on what it wanted at the moment. But she was fairly certain her meager dinner was going to make a comeback.

"Yeah, being nice sucks." Isabel slipped her arm under the trembling woman and hauled her up to the toilet. "Oof, you're heavier than you look." She grumbled, wondering what the hell she was doing.

Zoya stared at the toilet and then the giggles started they burned through her body in a fashion that was annoying but then finally she vomited through the giggles. It was the weirdest experience of her life so far and she'd had sex with a vampire.

"Oh god." Isabel whimpered, trying not to look too hard at what was being spewed into the bowl. "I can't believe I'm doing this." She gagged a little, feeling sick to her own stomach. "Look." When the current wave of vomiting was done. "You want me to get you out of here or not?"

Zoya nodded feeling a little better. Although now she really wanted to go run a marathon, have sex, or take a nap. The whole thing was very confusing so she just nodded and hoped something happened.

"Fuck." Isabel grumbled, slinging the taller woman's arm over her shoulder. "What are you, a weight lifter?" She muttered, hefting them both to their feet and towards the door, staggering side to side. If she could get them out the back the car wasn't too far.

"No." Zoya giggled. "I'm a superhero, I have a secret identity and everything."

Which, Isabel reflected, would pretty much make her night perfect.

Ignoring the angry looks from those still waiting outside the bathroom she headed them down the dark hall to the small steel door that let out to the back of the club.

"Do not throw up in my car." Isabel hissed, balancing the trembling woman on one side while she tried to open the silver Audi's door with the other.

Zoya looked at the car. "Its shiny like the moon. I like the moon." She looked up and frowned. "Can't see the moon in LA because you got no wolves."

"Uhh... all right." The human managed to get the door opened and stuffed the trembling woman in the seat. Running around she got into the other drivers side, squealing the tires a bit as she pulled them away. "Hey, what's your name?" She realized she didn't even know what the taller woman's name was.

Zoya blinked and looked over at the woman. "You look different but I know you right? Or are you an illusion my head made up?"

"Let's go with illusion." That would be easiest for everyone involved. "I can't believe I'm doing this." The blond muttered, turning them up onto the highway. There really was only one place she could take the poisoned woman.

"This is stupid Isabel, you shouldn't be doing this." She muttered, even as she turned the car towards the city center.

#####3

Gina would have smiled happily as she slid into the leather seats of the Ferrari, but it hurt to smile. She hadn't expected the kick. Most people were convulsing on the ground in seconds after being injected. Although the data she had received on her target had hinted that Zianada Peterson was thought to be a werewolf half-breed the woman did work for Zoya Pavel being the very public face of the Reservation Chamber of Commerce. She recruited business from around the world to set up shop on the reservation and if you didn't play by her or Zoya's rules, apparently you got fucked in a painful shower scene from a violent offender prison.

That was where she had come in, apparently some mining company currently had their balls in a vice with the Reservation and wanted to send a message they didn't appreciate getting fucked over. She wasn't certain on the specifics but they had built the processing plants for the ore and then Ms. Peterson had found a loophole were they had violated their contracts. So the company had been escorted out leaving their equipment and plants behind and slapped with a lawsuit. The federal government wouldn't step in and do anything saying their hands were tied so they had come to the Outfit.

Gina was a rising star, especially after dating Isabel. It had been easy to undermine the mousy woman, destroy her self-confidence and steal her clients, and get herself promoted in the Outfit. So now Isabel's star was tarnished and on the decline while hers was rising. It had been even sweeter if Zianada and Isabel were dating, she doubted it. Data hadn't mentioned a love interest and Isabel had never been on the reservation.

She accelerated onto the highway and hit speed dial. "Its done. The package will be headlines tomorrow." She reported and then hung-up.

#####3

Zoya vaguely remembered the drive. She was freezing and then hot, then there was the bright blue duck who wanted to have a discussion on where to find God's belly button.

She was trying to remember here she was Zianada Peterson because one slip and the Government would have her. Because the Government would have preferred that they stay simple beasts locked up on a Reservation. They hated the fact she'd built and empire in the middle of theirs. One souvenir to only her wants and desires. An Empire filled with nearly impossible to kill soldiers that could sweep through the US and cull the human herd. She blinked her thoughts scattering as she realized something.

"Why are we stopped?" At least she thought they had stopped moving she didn't hear any engine noise. "And where did the duck go?"

"What is it with you and ducks?" Isabel got out and moved around to the passenger side door, opening it and half dragging, half supporting the taller woman as she got out. "We're someplace safe. Come on, gotta get some antidote in you or it's going to be a really long night."

"I just need some water and some sleep. I'll be fine in the morning." She looked at the woman who was helping her walk. "Who are you again?" At least she was blond that was her usual type. "Did I pick you up at the bar? Cause I'm not supposed to do that for a month, my therapist thinks I need to try and go a month without sex."

"Only a month?" Isabel grunted, wishing she could keep the taller woman walking in a straight line. "Yeah, you picked me up at the bar." Blue eyes rolled. That was the easiest explanation. The less she said the better. "Come on, in the elevator." A special combo lock was mounted inside and she rapidly typed in the correct code.

The elevator, grudgingly, moved up to the fourth story of the unremarkable looking boxy apartment building. Thankfully it let out right in front of the safe house door. Praying it wasn't being used; Isabel entered the key code again and shoved the door open. "Just a little further." She muttered, trying to keep the white-blond haired woman upright.

"Yeah a whole month, its harder than I thought it would be." Oddly she was finding that she was getting turned on by talking about sex or lack of and she did have a thing for blonds.

"Poor baby." Isabel got them both into the bedroom, with a last shove sending Zoya onto the bed.

Zoya's forehead creased in a frown and she tried to think back but there was just a big blank spot in her memory. "You sure cause I'm really turned on and this doesn't look like a hospital." The belt was giving her a lot of trouble her fingers feeling fat and stiff.

"That's probably the cocaine." Isabel moved over to the bathroom, rummaging around until she found the extensive medical kit and the syringes inside.

Finally she got the belt undone and started on her jeans, pausing she pulled her t-shirt off. "Uh..." She blinked finding the room empty. "Does this mean you don't want to have sex?"

Emerging from the bathroom, Isabel blinked, amazed that the woman was still moving. "You're hot as hell, I'll give you that." She considered the syringe and the reaction that Gina had gotten from injecting her in the club. "Take the antidote and we can talk." It was, after all, not often she had a woman actually taller than she was, half naked in her bed.

Zoya looked at the syringe. "I'm really not into drugs." But there was a flicker in her memory with another woman showing her a syringe.

She didn't like that woman.

"It's not a drug." Isabel sat down on the edge of the bed, annoyed. "Look. Just take the damn medicine before your heart explodes in your chest okay? Then, if you're still alive, we can talk about sex." She had to be crazy to even consider something like that.

"Okay." Oddly compliant Zoya took the needle. "What do I do with it?" She looked at it lost.

"Oh for the love of... Here." Isabel wrapped her fingers around Zoya's and shoved the needle into her thigh, pushing down on the plunger to push the antidote home.

Zoya growled at the pain and her head cleared a bit and then she slumped back on the bed feeling odd as her heart rate slowed down.

"There." With gentleness that she didn't often show, Isabel pulled the syringe out and then tossed it aside. "See, no drugs, not illegal ones anyway." She hesitated, suddenly not sure what to do.

Living people were not her specialty.

Zoya blinked. "This has been the weirdest night of my life." She slowly got up and staggered to the bathroom. Half way there her jeans slipped down her legs because of her undone belt and she nearly tripped. She just stepped out of them and kept going.

"Yeah..." Isabel leaned way out to watch her go. "It's one of my weirder ones too."

In the bathroom she splashed water on her face and rinsed her mouth out. She blinked looking at herself in the mirror, the brown eyes were wrong, but not if she was Zianada. She was in LA as Zianada, she was here on business but something had happened. There were still holes in her memory.

The last thing she remembered was waking up in the car and a blue duck.

She spit water into the sink again and then opened the medicine cabinet looking for mouth wash. She blinked at the handgun she found there.

She un-chambered the bullet and popped the mag. Loaded. She reloaded it and put it back in the cabinet. Then gargled with mouthwash.

"Uh..." Isabel fretted, wondering what she was supposed to do now. "You all right in there?" Fantastic, a live person who wasn't in the Outfit, in the safe house. She could get killed just for that.

"Fine." Zoya replied and then opened the bathroom door. She debated for a moment and then decided she was a weak power hungry werewolf who was far to used to having what she wanted when she wanted it.

She stalked over to the bed not really concerned that she was naked. "I'm still turned on. You mentioned something about sex if I took the shot?"

Isabel had been figuring out how to get the woman out of the apartment without letting her know anything more than she already did. The blond head

jerked up in shock and blue eyes stared up at the woman with nearly white hair. "What?" It came out as almost a squeak.

Zoya chuckled and got onto the bed straddling the blond's waist. "You're wearing too many clothes."

Isabel opened her mouth to say, something, she wasn't really sure what, but the other woman's lips stopped her words. God her body was hot, she thought dimly, hands moving along the strong nearly naked back. When she could breathe she blinked again. "I don't even know your name." Was the best she could come up with, breathing harder.

"I don't know yours either." Zoya said kissing her again.

"Fair enou..." Isabel started, interrupted again. Giving up with the protesting, not that she'd been doing that very well, Isabel undid the other woman's bra. Who was she kidding, she wanted this.

Zoya chuckled and started the process of devouring the human from head to toe.

#####3

"We have to go." Isabel mumbled, her fingers still curled around the other woman's hip. Her other hand was considerably lower and she didn't want to really move it. They were on the bare mattress; she wasn't really sure where the bedding had gone.

Zoya was a demanding lover she knew what she wanted in bed and took it. She was happy to see the woman took direction well and her stamina even her werewolf lovers would be hard pressed to match the blond currently in her bed.

"Right now. We have to go right now." She rotated her hips slightly.

Her breath catching, Isabel whimpered as she pressed her fingers deeper. "We shouldn't be here. Should go soon."

"Then why did you bring me here? If we shouldn't be here." She lifted up slightly and then slammed back down on to those fingers her eyes closing shut and a flush was blooming on her chest.

"You were dying." Isabel growled, finding a nipple to bite lightly. Recent experience had taught her that she had to hold on tight when Zoya moved. The woman was stronger than she looked, and she looked plenty strong.

Zoya doubted that. "Why did you save me?" She growled in response to her nipple being bit, she liked that and no one she slept with on the reservation was brave enough to do that, of course in her world biting had a much different meaning.

The blond human shoved Zoya's legs apart, settling between them. "Because." Was her intelligent response, grinning as she bit again. "Why'd you let me?"

Zoya laughed. "Because the duck said I should. At the time the duck seemed very reliable." She sucked in a breath grabbing handfuls of the woman's hair. "I thought we didn't have time?"

"You and that duck." She moved lower, intent on her goal now. "We'll make time." It wasn't like she had a lot of chances to enjoy a night like this.

Zoya held her still. "I don't know if you deserve that." She grinned evilly. "Answer me a question. Why did your ex try to kill me and how did you know how to save me?"

The brief power nap she'd taken had been more than enough to allow her brain chemistry to reset and restore the holes in her memory. She had a pretty good idea, she'd never needed their services. As a werewolf she did most of her own dirty work.

"You ask a lot of questions for a woman who basically tore my clothes off." the human licked her lips, still intent on her goal. "My ex, for whatever reason, seems to have decided to kill you." She shrugged. "Sorry."

"Is she going to try it again when she realizes I'm not dead?"

"Maybe." Isabel sighed, stilling her fingers, when she realized the white haired woman was actually intent on talking this time. "She probably was just pissed at you for helping me out earlier. Thanks for that, by the way."

"No problem. It was my good deed of the year." She let go of the woman's hair. "You don't have to stop." She grinned.

Blue eyes narrowed and she tweaked exposed flesh. "Maybe I want to stop."

Zoya laughed and then easily flipped the other woman over on to her back and nipped her belly.

"Or not." Isabel laughed, hitting the bed without much struggle.

"You might want to stop, but do you want me to stop?"

"If you stop I'll kill you." Isabel whimpered, squirming underneath Zoya's body.

Zoya snorted and started kissing her way down the blonde's body.

#####3

She didn't know how much later it was when she woke up to the sound of elevator doors opening on their floor. Then footsteps. Zoya's eyes hurt, probably from wearing contacts for so long. She rolled off the bed and grabbed her clothes. "Hey blondie." She whispered. "The only other woman in here with incredible stamina and a bad haircut."

"Shit." Isabel's eyes popped open. "We fell asleep?" She glanced at the clock and her eyes widened even further. It was well after sunrise now. "Fuck." She rolled off the bed, snatching up her clothes and quickly putting them on. She stopped dead as she heard something at the front door.

Without saying a word she pointed at the bathroom, urgently.

Zoya nodded and slipped inside. She was going to blame this whole incident on the drug cocktail that bitch injected her with. She didn't sleep with humans... But she might start rethinking that if they all fucked like mysterious woman out there.

Maybe her sister had known this whole time and hadn't clued her in on the secret.

She frowned looking around the bathroom. There weren't a lot of places to hide if someone looked inside.

Isabel stuck her head in, reaching in with one arm to grab the loaded gun out of the medicine cabinet. "Can you fit out the window?" She asked, hopefully flicking off the safety and stuffing it into the back of her jeans. They only had seconds before company arrived.

Zoya looked at the window. It was small, but she had the Alpha wolf ability to change portions of her body so she'd be able to do it. "Sure no problem. Next time I expect flowers and dinner. Not to be shoved out a window."

"Get out of here." Isabel hissed the front door opening behind her. She gave the white haired woman a wink and turned to go meet her visitors.

The Were opened the bathroom window and started the painful process of slipping out of it. She needed food badly and soon or she'd slip into a coma. Once out onto the ledge she shut the window and shifted her hands into claws and moved easily out of view.

Isabel was at the door to the rest of the apartment when the front door opened and the two men in dark suits entered. "Hey fella's." She said brightly, hands casually resting on her hips.

This was bad, so very, very bad.

The men blinked in surprise and then their hands moved away from their guns.

"Its Ingfred's kid." One of them said into the mic in his coat cuff.

"Yeah, no worries. Sorry about using the place unannounced, but I needed some where to crash. You know how it is." She really hoped her smile was as charming as she thought it was right now. People skills weren't really her thing.

The smell and condition of the bed gave away what had recently occurred.

"Agent you know the safe houses are not to be used for personal usage. This will have to be reported and put on your record." He covered up the mic. "Off the record." He gave her a thumbs up.

Her fair skin was always a curse when it came to covering up a blush, but she managed to give him a thumbs up in answer. "It was worth getting written up for." She gave a pleased smile.

His head cocked to the side listening to a voice coming through on the ear receiver. He gave the other man a signal to search the room and make sure they were alone. "Your guest has left?"

"Sure has." She kept her hands in view as she stepped aside, keeping her back towards a wall as she did so.

Once the other man did a sweep and gave the first man a nod of all clear he started speaking again. "Gina failed with her mark. The Outfit is now offering the job to you." He produced a small silver disc and handed it to her.

Carefully, without any sudden movements, she took the disc from him. "This isn't coming from my normal handler?" She asked, cautiously. She had a bad feeling about who Gina's mark might have been.

"No this is coming from the top. In light of how your performance has been lately... well consider it a performance evaluation if you fail you'll be given early retirement."

A bead of cold sweat wormed it's way down between Isabel's shoulder blades. "Got it." This one wasn't optional then.

He nodded to the other agent and they turned leaving.

Isabel watched them go, disc held between her finger tips, feeling sick to her stomach.

Had she just spent a wild night of sex with her mark? That went beyond a stupid move and into the territory of idiocy and someone with suicidal tendencies. Just the hint of that having happened would have her, at best, being tossed out of the Outfit. More likely, she'd become a mark herself.

She had a mini-laptop in the bag she'd brought up from the car and it didn't take long to turn it on. Trying to avoid being sick, she slid the disk into the slot on the side and, with only the briefest of pauses, put her thumb on the built in biometric scanner.

The picture that flashed onto the screen was from a face she'd spent the night kissing.

"Oh shit." She slammed the lid down, so hard she might have just broken the screen.

"Oh shit!" She got up, backing away from the screen, horrified. No, it wasn't possible. She was not in this situation! Sure, she'd broken a few of her parent's rules, nothing big though.

How had she gotten this messed up?

There was a crash from the bathroom and a muttered curse.

The gun was in her hand, a reassuringly solid weight, before Isabel pressed herself up against the wall next to the bedroom door.

Zoya was annoyed. More from the fact her foot had caught on the window frame and now her hand was in the toilet. So much for stealthy, top of the food chain werewolf.

"God damnit." She cursed again and got herself upright and out of the toilet. She was pretty certain she heard the door open and shut and then open and shut again. But if she was wrong they knew she was in here so she decided it was safe to turn on the water and wash her hands.

Out in the living room, Isabel rested the barrel of the gun against her forehead, thinking. She should kill her now, immediately, without question. The woman was hard to kill, she was sure of that, but a bullet to the brain would hurt anyone.

Zoya washed her hand and opened the door. She wasn't certain what to say. 'Its been fun, but I only fucked you because of the drugs.' Seemed a little harsh even to her, plus it had generally been fun. She only quirked an eyebrow at the position of the gun. "So... um... I don't think the gun should point there."

"Oh." Isabel lowered it until the business end was pointed unwaveringly at the white haired woman's head. "Should it point there?"

Zoya's eyes narrowed. "So this is some freaky fetish game you and your ex play." Her muscles coiled and her stance shifted ready to react and her gaze focused on the finger pressed against the trigger.

"My ex?" Isabel actually grinned a bit at that. "Gina. I guess it sort of is a game. Too bad I didn't realize the rules." What was she doing? She had to pull the trigger. She shouldn't have even hesitated!

"Let's try this again." She didn't lower the gun. "My name is Isabel, what's yours?"

"For right now its Zianada." Zoya answered. "So Isabel what are you planning on doing with that gun?"

"I should be blowing your brains out." Was the immediate answer. "Do you have a lot of enemies, Zianada?"

Zoya didn't blink at that. "A fair number of them."

Isabel swallowed, tensing her finger, trying to make herself pull it. For the first time in her life her body didn't obey her. She tried again, and again all that happened was the pistol wavered.

"Fuck." She lowered it.

Zoya moved quickly not caring that the woman had changed her mind, she could change it again. She pinned her to the wall her forearm in her throat and took the gun. "You stupid, little girl. You pull a gun on me and you think I'm going to let you live. I work with werewolves or did you not bother to read the information on me."

Fearless blue eyes stared back at the Were. "I just got the disc you idiot." She snarled. "You really think I care who you work with? You should just leave. Go back to wherever you came from."

Zoya respected that she didn't flinch everyone flinched. "I don't live my life by their rules, next week someone else will try and kill me; someone else will be pissed off. That's business. If they can't take it they should go do something else. But to give up and run away with my tail between my legs that's not going to happen. Cause then the people who hire people like you win. Oh I know what you are Isabel." She copied the way Isabel said her name curling her tongue around it.

"I never run. So if you want to try again I'll be having a meeting with a possible client tonight at the Bradford Hotel at 10pm." She released the clip letting it fall to the floor. "I removed the bullet from the chamber earlier. You would have needed to fire and then fire again."

And it wouldn't have been enough time to stop a pissed werewolf.

"You're a bigger idiot than I thought if you're going to go to that meeting. Do you think Gina isn't going to try to finish what she started?" The blond said angrily. "Don't be stupid, just go home. Get out of here while you can."

She let her go and pushed away from her. "You need a stylist and a haircut, and not from CheapCuts." She pulled out her wallet and produced a card. "Go here and ask for Ophelia."

"Now you're mocking my hair?" Isabel said, outraged.

She put her wallet back and started for the door. "It's a bad cut on you."

"And I cut it myself." She muttered, scooping up her gun while she had the chance. "Don't be an easy mark, don't go to that meeting!" Isabel yelled after her.

"Isabel either you're an assassin or you're not. I don't hire your 'Outfit' because I do my own dirty work, so if a little piece of ass is going to get in the way maybe you need a new line of work. And not as a hair dresser."

Furious, Isabel raised the pistol, trying again to squeeze the trigger, having no compunction about shooting a woman in the back. And again she couldn't. "AHH!" She screamed, kicking a mirror and shattering it.

She paused at the door and looked over her shoulder unimpressed with the outburst. "Oh, and I hope your ex is there." There was no warmth in her voice or her gaze. She opened the door and was gone.

"Fine!" Isabel yelled at the door. "Go and get yourself killed you stupid bitch!" She whirled, stalking back to the bedroom.

Time to leave.

#####3

"Well I know the whole month wasn't up yet, but I was drugged. I hardly see it as my fault; the drugs made me want to have sex." Zoya sighed and looked at the mirror, holding up the blue shirt and then the red one. Sadly the blue made her blue eyes pop but with the brown contacts that wasn't going to happen.

"Well, no you're right, I want to have sex fine on my own. Would I have had sex with her without the drugs? Uh... maybe. It's hard to say."

For some reason she wanted to look good for Isabel when she tried to kill her again. In fact she'd be disappointed if Isabel didn't show up. "Is it wrong that I like that she's morally flexible about killing people?"

Pack hierarchy often still revolved around blood challenges that often ended in death. Somehow it made Isabel a sort of Alpha in a human way to her werewolf mind; it didn't compete with her werewolf nature but still raised the human up in her eyes.

"Well I wouldn't say I like killing people but I don't feel bad about it when I have to do it. Like those soldiers that hurt Chance and kidnapped Chance's mate, I didn't feel bad for killing them."

She sighed and went with the red shirt.

"Seriously, I have to start over. No sex for 30 days. Seriously? Fine. I'm going now. Yes, I'm upset but I have a meeting. Yes, I'm not just saying that. This is me hanging up." Grunting in annoyance she turned off the phone and threw it on the bed.

She was dressed in a few minutes and was in the elevator headed down to the dining room.

No dress and heels this time, she was well aware who she was meeting with and wanted ease of movement in case things went bad or actually worse considering there were two assassins after her now.

Black shoes, black slacks, belt, and red button up shirt open just a bit to reveal a silver chain. She liked that bit, that was the sign of a real Alpha, and it fucked with the government watchdogs that were always on her heels.

The doors opened and she spotted two women who had Gina's minions practically written on their foreheads.

In the dining room Isabel wondered if she could just shoot the head chef and get it over with. If the man tried to pat her ass one more time, she was not going to be responsible for what happened. It was bad enough that she had to wear this ridiculous white waiter's uniform, without added insults.

"Hey, so what did you say happened to Julia again?" A fellow waiter asked as she picked up a tray of drinks from the bar.

"She fell down a set of stairs and broke an arm." Isabel told him, again, with a glare.

"Oh." He frowned. "She slipped?"

"Yeah, something like that." Isabel muttered, spotting Zianada, or whatever alias she was using tonight, enter.

Zoya paused at the hostess' podium. "Not to alarm you, but it looks like you have two pros working in your bar. I know how that's bad for business, since you only allow certain escort services to be here who have gotten the hotel's approval." She pointed to Gina's two minions.

The man looked nervous for a second. "Thank you, I will have the trash taken out."

"No problem. I'm here for a business dinner with a Ms. Molly Jones. A British lady."

"Yes, she hasn't arrived yet but I will take you to the table."

"Good evening." Isabel gave a tight smile as she appeared next to the table. "I'll be your waitress tonight. Can I get you something to drink while you wait for your guests?" She stressed the plural part of that.

It was really amusing to watch two of Gina's people get hustled out the back.

"I'll have a glass of red wine." Zoya said not bothering to look up at Isabel. When the woman didn't move she looked up bored. "Was there something else?"

"You're being an idiot." Isabel said quietly, setting out the two menus. "You think those two at the bar were the only ones here?"

"No of course not, and your going to get yourself shot if you keep trying to save me. Are you my killer or my hero Isabel?"

"I'll get your drink right away ma'am." Isabel said with a tight smile and headed for the bar.

Zoya gave a lecherous smile as she watched Isabel walk away.

"Who's the hottie at table three?" The bartender asked, pouring a glass of wine for Isabel as she waited.

"She's a bitch." The blond growled, annoyed that she was even doing this.

"Oh right." He waggled his eyebrows and slid the glass across to her. "Bitchy's good. I could do bitchy."

"No." She took up the glass. "No you couldn't." He looked at her strangely, but she didn't care as she took the glass back.

"Your glass of wine, ma'am." Isabel said with a fake smile as she put it down in front of Zoya.

Zoya drummed her fingers on the table wondering if Isabel was going to try to kill her and if she'd be disappointed if she didn't. "Hmm... oh thank you." She said realizing the focus of her thoughts had returned.

"It's probably poisoned." Isabel said, the smile real this time as she took out a pad. "Ready to order, or are you still waiting for your girlfriend, I mean guest."

She brought it to her lips and sniffed it and then took a sip. "Not poisoned."

"Oh well, better luck next time." This, Isabel thought, was definitely the strangest mark she'd ever had.

She set it down and looked at Isabel. "Are you being pissy because you think I have a girlfriend? Or are you being pissy because you have to kill me? Or are your people skills just this bad?"

The assassin shrugged. "Let's go with a little of everything. You ready to order or not?" She could almost feel the look she was getting from the maître d' as he kept an eye on the new girl.

"No I'll wait for my guest." She said taking another sip of wine. "Although I doubt she'll have anything but the blood soup."

"Eww." Isabel looked up from her notepad at that. A vampire, just what she needed involved with what was already a cluster fuck. "I'll be back then." She spotted someone in the servant's corridor she wanted to have a word with.

She set the glass down. "So how do you kill people Isabel? Is it distant and removed or is it in their face so you can see the horror on their face when they realize they're going to die?"

Isabel hesitated, frowning as the person she'd spotted slipped back into the shadows. Later, she promised, later Gina and her would have a word. "What does it matter?"

"Well the answer says a lot about a person. I'm also intrigued you got my blood soup reference even though Vampires are not allowed in the US, it didn't seem to phase you. Me, I work with werewolves I'm use to supernatural weirdness."

"You run across a lot of weirdness in my work." Isabel grinned slightly. "Besides, you haven't met my family." She muttered, distracted again as she watched the bartender get called away. "I'll be right back."

"Very well." Her nose twitched and she smelled Gina.

"Hey where are you going? Table three needs more water..." Isabel ignored the maître de, heading back into the kitchen and trying to find out where the bartender had just disappeared off to. He'd seemed a nice young guy, chatty and eager to please. She didn't particularly want Gina, or one of her henchmen to eliminate him.

"Ah! There's my sweetness!" Came the heavily French accented voice of the cook and she bared her teeth in a grimace as a meaty hand groped her rear. That was it, she'd put up with everything she could. Whirling, she forced open one of the walk in refrigerators, and grabbed his fancy neck frock, dragging him inside with her.

"Oh darling, not during dinner service!" He grinned at her and she punched the balding egotist in the mouth. Sputtering he yelped in pain and she pulled one of her knives, shoving him to his knees, wrapping her arm around his neck and pressing the point to the fat flesh there.

"Listen to me you fat French fuck. If you ever touch my ass again, I'm going to filet you like one of your little fish out there. Got it?"

He nodded, quickly, blood still coming from his mouth. "Good, cause I'm not having a good day and..." She paused, her cell phone buzzing in her pocket. "Sorry about this, just hold still."

Left handedly she dug the phone out of her pocket and put it to her ear, holding the chef down with the other. "Yes?" She snapped.

"Isabel, how's it going?" She rolled her eyes. "Look Mark, this isn't a good time."

"I know, I know, but I just got told by the upper ups, that if you don't take care of your job, you're going to be retired. Got it? That's not good."

"Yes. I know that Mark." She eyed the sweating chef who had just started to move. "Move and I slit your throat, got it?" He swallowed convulsively.

"What?"

"Not you Mark. What is it?"

"Just wanted to tell you, get the job done or its bad news."

"Yeah thanks. I'm working on it, but Gina's here. Didn't she already blow her chance? Can't you get her called off?"

"She's got a lot of favors owed her these days Isabel, I warned you about that. I'll see what I can do."

Fine." She snapped off the phone, and then showed the chef towards the door. "You tell anyone about this, anyone at all and I'll find you. Got it?"

He nearly pee'd himself nodding and then stumbling out.

Zoya plastered a smile on her face as Ms. Jones was brought to the table. The woman was pale and beautiful, long dark hair, stormy blue eyes and pouty red lips, everything she had been told and more. "Ms. Jones a pleasure." She stood kissing the vampire's hand.

"A pleasure to meet you as well, Zianada." The vampire purred, carefully not smiling as she took the seat that was pulled out for her. "What excellent taste's you have to dine here." She eyed a few of the waiters and waitresses.

"Well it had a reputation for serving a specialty clientele; I thought that would appeal to you." She sat down eyeing the two guards who stayed back near the wall, blending in. "I'm very happy to have a meeting with you, but I'm not certain how Zoya and the Reservation can be helpful to you. Werewolves and Vampires have not gotten along in several centuries."

"That is unfortunate, for both of our kinds." Molly's voice dripped with sexual promise, even when she didn't really mean it to. "I don't think either of us can argue that we came out of the vampire wars with everything we wanted." She smiled, a little.

"Well I can't speak for you, because I know better than to ask a lady's age but the wars are before my time. I'm more interested in business and, well, profit. That is what Zoya hired me to do. So let's just say I don't have any grudges to carry currently."

"It is nice to speak with someone with such a clear viewpoint." Molly brushed her fingers across Zianada's. "My employer" her eyes sparkled in amusement at calling him that "would like to propose a business venture with Zoya."

"I'm listening." It took a lot of effort not to jerk her hand away.

"I'm certain you are familiar with the place on your reservation known as nightshade? My employer would like to regulate the vampires who exist there. Currently it is a no man's land, and unknown vampires are always a threat to those around them."

"I'd have to double check with Zoya, I am aware of Nightshade but she is the only one in contact with the vampire there. I'm not sure of the particulars of the relationship. But I will pass on your employer's wishes." She sipped her wine and looked for their waitress.

"Nightshade from rumors is a rough place where nearly every wish and desire has a price. Are you sure this 'employer' can run such a place. It would take someone with age and power."

"My employer would be happy to make certain intelligence assets available to Zoya in exchange for this aid." Molly did that little smile again. "He would not be asking if he did not believe he could do it." She plucked a perfectly white card from her pocket and placed it on the table top. "Have Zoya call me with her answer. Please remind her, we can be excellent friends to your people." And even worse enemies, but that of course went unsaid.

"Do you mind me asking your employer's name. I'm just curious." She let her finger run along the side of Molly's hand.

"Oh, aren't you daring." Molly purred, capturing that hand in her own. "My employer will remain just that, my employer until he decides otherwise."

"Fair enough. Now can I treat you to dinner, since you did come all this way to see me. I hear the blood soup is excellent although I will admit to never trying it." She grinned looking for Isabel growing concerned.

"How nice." Molly's eyes danced with amusement. "But I have other plans for dinner." The very tip of her tongue darted out to lick her lips. "Perhaps you'd care to join me?"

Zoya laughed. "Sorry I belong to Zoya's pack having fang marks would piss her off to no end."

"Pity. You have such a beautiful neck." Molly smiled, broadly for just an instant, fangs prominent. "Perhaps next time?" She rose from her table. "I'll be waiting for Zoya's answer."

"You'll get one." She promised. "Thank you for the complement on my neck." She stood and helped the vampire stand.

"And so gallant also." Molly purred, her nostrils flaring as she breathed in deeply, taking in the other woman's scent. "Until later." She promised, gathering her people with a look and departing.

Zoya moved slightly to the right and waved to Molly. A dart hit the chair she had just been standing in front of. Blithely pretending ignorance, she sat back down and finished her wine.

Isabel emerged from the kitchen, catching sight of the departing guest, and carrying a tray of food that she snatched from the kitchen. Not caring who it actually was for she set it down, quickly, in front of Zoya. "Your food." She hissed, continuing on towards the opposite side of the restaurant and where the dart had just been fired from.

Zoya frowned seeing the grilled Portobello mushrooms and other vegetables piled high on the plate. "This is for a vegetarian, defiantly not mine." She complained, chuckling as she got a middle finger.

Isabel disappeared into the stairs leading to the restaurant's second level, intent on what she was about to do to whoever she found up there.

The Were pushed the plate away and looked up at the manager came over to her table.

"Um, I'd like to apologize..." He started.

She cut him off. "No need the service is excellent and the floor show has been very entertaining."

Floor show?" He looked confused.

She just smiled. "I however think this was delivered by mistake. But her energy and enthusiasm makes up for a lot."

"Well I'll take it back right away." He smiled, taking up the plate. Right at that moment Isabel came back down from the upstairs, a satisfied look on her face as she started to undo the ridiculous white shirt.

God she wanted to have sex again and her therapist had her starting from day one again.

"I quit." Isabel smiled at the manager, shoving the shirt into his hands, which were already full of a plate of food.

"But... what?" He was completely lost.

"I quit." Isabel reiterated, starting for the door. "Tell the chef to go fuck himself!" She yelled over her shoulder, wondering if Zianada was going to stay.

Zoya just shrugged and finished the last of her wine. Stood up with careless ease and took out a money clip and left more than enough for the wine. She made her way lazily out of the restaurant pausing in the bar behind a dark haired woman. She leaned forward smelling a familiar perfume.

"Nice seeing you again Gina. Next time you want to get close to me try a different perfume."

Gina glared, infuriated that her target was walking out of there, again! "There's always next time." She promised, darkly.

"Of course, but you won't know when or where, and when you least expect it. You'll be staring down at your stomach wondering why your entrails are spilling out. Next time is when I decide." She gave her a wink and walked out.

Isabel was waiting for her in the hotel lobby, confused as to why she wasn't in her car driving as far away from this place as she could.

Zoya spotted Isabel and spread her arms out wide a perfect target. "All I ask is you don't shoot me in the head so I can leave a pretty corpse."

"Fuck you." Isabel snarled. "You could have just died, twice!" She tried to keep her voice low; she was in the middle of a hotel lobby after all.

People gave them odd looks anyway.

"Well technically people have a greater chance of dying in an accident at the office, so..." She stood in front of Isabel grin playing on her lips. "Want to go out with me?"

"I should kill you. Just for being so annoying!" The infuriated woman ground to a stop, certain she had just heard something mistakenly. "What?"

"Want to go out grab a drink, maybe dance?"

"You're crazy. I mean, seriously, you're certifiable." Isabel crossed her arms, tilting her head up a little so she could see the taller woman's eyes. "Where?" She found herself asking. Which just proved that insanity was transmissible.

"There's a little place that has a good jazz band."

A startled scream, muffled by the distance to the restaurant, drew attention away from them. "Oops. I guess someone had to use the bathroom." Isabel grinned. "We better go."

"Excellent." Zoya said with a beaming smile, and moved them towards the huge double doors, nodding at the doorman. "I know several places depends on what your in the mood for. Latino, jazz, dance club, or country western?" It was LA one could find anything. "I even know of an S&M place if that's to your taste." She laughed at Isabel's red color. "I didn't think so but I enjoyed you turning red."

"I meant, what kind of place do you want to go to because I'll have to find something to wear." Isabel muttered, darkly, shoving her hands into her pockets. "I'll just wear my hair back in a pony tail, but I'm going to probably need something other than jeans right?" She usually just pulled her hair back anyway.

Zoya made a face at Isabel's hair. "You didn't see Ophelia." She fished her keys out of her pocket and wound her way through the cars in the gated parking lot. "You're dressed fine for some places and not for others, so it depends on where you want to go." She paused outside her car and sniffed.

"Your ex has a very distinctive perfume." She muttered and then crouched down looking under her car. "Pressure plate and a timer. Very cold." She stood back up. "Looks like you're driving or I could drive your car since I know where we're going."

"You are not driving my car." The blond started towards the employees' parking lot. "I don't let anyone drive my car, it's a control thing." She flashed a smile at the Were. "I'm sure you, of all people, understand that."

Zoya sighed, but followed. She fished her cell phone out of her pants pocket and dialed a number.

"Hey, its me." She frowned at the response. "I'm sorry next time I'll just say shut up and listen... so shut up and listen. I need you to come do a sweep of my car and remove a bomb and whatever else was tagged on it." She listened for a second. "Not that its any of your business, apparently someone has hired a hit on me... I'll be fine... your concern is noted, now just do your fucking job." She hung up and then dialed another number.

"Hey beautiful... yep, I met with this Molly woman she matched your description to a T... uh huh... no I didn't get name she just kept referring to her employer... okay. I will..." She snorted in laughter. "Just go look for your boat and worry about your own lovelife and not mine... uh huh I'll keep that in mind. Take care."

She hung up and slid into the car. She looked over smiling at Isabel. "Clothes, maybe a haircut?"

Giving her passenger a look, Isabel revved the engine and waited for Zoya to buckle up before peeling out of the small parking lot and cutting across two

lanes of traffic so she could go in the other direction. She really wanted to ask who it was had just been talking to, but she kept it in check for now.

God she loved the way this car accelerated.

"I thought we were going to a club, but now we're going shopping and to a club? Are you insinuating something about my fashion sense?"

"Your fashion sense is rather hit and miss. That suit you were wearing to that business party was rather hideous, but then later when you helped me out of the club when your ex poisoned me that was okay. Or I would say what little I remember being tossed on the floor." She smiled and wiggled her eyebrows.

There came a ringing from her pants and she brought her cell phone out with a sigh. "Yes?" She sighed. "Bones, I'm fine. I'm going to assume Earnest called you... Look everything is under control, its just a little cat and mouse.... I'll be fine. I'm having fun; I might even extend my stay a few days." Zoya started fidgeting and blushed. "Um, I don't want to talk about it right now I'll call you tomorrow?"

She hung up and cleared her throat nervously and decided to turn her phone off.

"You're popular." Isabel remarked wryly, slowing down as they approached a red light. "So if that was Bones, should I call you Kirk? Maybe Scotty?" She grinned sideways at the Were, wondering if she'd get the reference.

Zoya's forehead wrinkled in confusion, "Why would you... Oh, I get it. Star whatever it was. I never really saw the show." She was a little young to have seen it originally on air and she would guess the same for Isabel. During its heyday in reruns she had been in juvi for werewolves. "I wouldn't have pegged you for a sci-fi geek."

"I'm not a geek." Isabel glared over at her passenger. "You haven't told me where we're going yet." She looked back at the road, wondering again why she was doing this.

Zoya just smiled back at the woman. "You haven't told me what you want to do. I gave you options."

Keeping her eyes on the road, Isabel said casually. "Well, I guess we could go look at clothes first, if you really wanted to."

"Its up to you. The person makes the clothes; the clothes are just accents to their personality if used right." Zoya turned back in her seat looking out into the road.

"Must you be so difficult about everything?" Isabel asked, exasperated.

"I'm not being difficult, you are. You're being wishy-washy in your wants and desires. You're waiting for me to make a decision for you. At first I thought this was odd for an assassin but it kind of makes sense. You don't really chose your targets, the whole line down people are telling you what to do, when and how."

"Thanks, any other insults you'd like to give me? Other than the fact that I have bad taste in clothes, my hair isn't nice and I'm being wishy-washy?" Isabel glared at the car in front of them. "And" she kept speaking angrily. "I'm choosing the place we're going." She spun the wheel, pulling a completely illegal u-turn in the middle of the street to a series of honks and angry gestures of people in the other lane.

Zoya just looked amused. "You might be upset, but you never told me I was wrong."

She just braced herself as the woman pissed off the world around them.

"You're really bad at this date thing aren't you?" The assassin growled, zipping in and out of traffic as she barreled down the well lit street. Only at the end did she slow down rapidly, turning right and heading into a quieter neighborhood.

Zoya noticed that Isabel still hadn't told her she was wrong about anything she'd said but decided not to voice it again. "Are we on a date?" She wasn't certain she'd ever been on one.

A little uncertain, Isabel glanced sideways at her. "Didn't you just invite me on a date?"

That was a first she wasn't certain she'd ever taken a woman out, but her therapist couldn't let her have sex for a month so that very few options other than to come up with something other than sex.

"Well I invited you out to..." She paused confused. "I guess I did."

"You don't know?" Zoya asked. "Didn't you date the other woman in my life currently trying to kill me."

"Well..." Isabel frowned a little. "We didn't do so much actual dating."

"Aren't you the little slut?" Zoya said with a chuckle.

"You're the one who's therapist told her to avoid sex for a month."

"Thanks to you I have to start over." The Werewolf grumbled.

"Aren't you the little slut?" Isabel teased back.

Zoya laughed. "Never claimed I wasn't."

Although sex in the pack wasn't always about the pursuit of pleasure it was also about dominating and control of other members.

"I don't know if you've noticed but it's kind of hard for me to meet people in my field of work that aren't trying to kill me." Isabel said, wondering why she

was even talking about it.

"Well who would know you're an assassin unless you told them? I only know because of an odd quirk of fate. So just meet someone and just be vague about what you do, tell them you work for an evil corporation. Or something."

"I don't like people." Isabel muttered, pulling into the first parking spot she saw near her destination. "That's where we're going." She pointed across the street at a nondescript looking place.

Zoya was silent for a second and then got out of the car. "How did you end up dating Ms. Evil Personality? If you don't mind me asking?"

"Gina?" Isabel got out, hitting the button on her key that secured the car behind her. "We did a job together."

"Then she seduced you and next thing you knew you were dating." Zoya guessed.

"Kind of dating." Isabel shrugged, walking across the street and having to lengthen her stride to keep up with Zoya. It wasn't often she had to do that. "But it was nice, you know, to be with someone?"

Gina had completely taken advantage of Isabel, Zoya realized. The woman had completely preyed on Isabel's social insecurities. "So where have you brought me?"

"A place my brother and I found a while ago. It's... rough around the edges." She stepped around a Harley parked on the sidewalk and opened the door to the sound of country music coming from inside. "But they're nice people after you threaten them a few times."

"Lovely." Zoya said following her in.

The place was surprisingly busy considering how nondescript it looked from the outside. Country music wasn't just being played from the sound system; there was an actual three person band in the back playing it. Everyone turned to see who had just entered and then studiously chose to ignore them.

"See, nice people." Isabel grinned as three bikers got up and moved out of a bench by the door. "They even save my table for me, thanks boys!"

"And how did this become your table?" Zoya asked sitting down.

"She stabbed a man's hand, right there." The waitress suddenly appeared at their table as if summoned, two mugs of dark colored beer that she placed down in front of them with a solid thud. "Call if you need anything else!" The bubbly red head winked and then was off to her next table.

"See, nice people." Isabel smiled, taking her heavy mug with a sigh of pleasure.

Zoya grinned and sipped her beer. "You do realize the waitress was hitting on you."

"What?" Isabel frowned. "No she wasn't."

"Yes she was, but that's fine since you're with me."

It was the kind of bar that they had plenty of back home on the Reservation. Only with more Weres.

"So we've established that this is a date. What else do people do on a date?" Isabel sipped the bitter beer, relishing the taste.

"I'm not sure." She tried to think back what had Chance and what's her name done. "I think people talk about their lives and do things together. You know like movies, coffee, and stuff." Save their lover from the clutches of an insane man with too much power in the US military.

Blue eyes stared blankly at Zoya over the rim of the beer mug as Isabel tried, frantically, to figure out what sort of talk she could actually have. "I like a 9 mm pistol." She blurted out when nothing else occurred to her.

Two people moved to stools farther away from them.

"I live on a Reservation with Werewolves and other shifters." Zoya countered.

"I've never lived in one place since I was sixteen." Isabel put down the glass, laying down the challenge.

"I have lived in the same place except for when I was in juvi." The were sipped more of the beer her eyes sliding around the bar checking everyone out.

"Ha." The other woman smiled. "If that's the best you can do, you're barely even pathetic. My only friend only talks to me because I threaten her with the fact that I know where she lives."

Zoya smiled softly. "I was in juvi for killing two men." This was getting dangerous; she couldn't remember what was on Zianada's background story.

"Oh." Both eyebrows went up in surprise. "You've killed people?" She studied Zianada's face, realizing she probably wasn't as surprised as she thought she'd been. "Only two?"

"No, I've killed a lot more than two. But those were my first before I was legally an adult." But that was definitely not in Zianada's background, they were getting a lot closer to Zoya.

"I thought you were just the spokeswoman for your tribe?" Isabel looked thoughtful. "That is the right word right? Tribe?"

"Pack. And I'm a recruiter I guess you could say. My job is to lure business on to the Reservation."

"That kind of sounds boring. Sounds like a lot of meetings." Isabel took another sip, taking her time with the beer. She couldn't afford to drink much, dulling

her senses was never a good idea.

"Yeah, it is, but it's important. Business means we don't have to rely on the crappy federal officers to police us and all the hunters that come on or other shitheads who think we're subhuman and not worth common decency. It means we have an economy to have schools and a police force."

She gave a tight smile when she realized she was preaching, "Sorry."

"Don't be sorry. You should always be proud of things you fight for." Isabel leaned back, smiling faintly. "Are you good at it? Getting businesses to believe you?"

"I'm pretty good and offering them something they want. Sometimes they think they can fuck over the stupid animals but that never ends well."

"So those are the one's who want you dead." Isabel nodded, thoughtfully. "Any chance they'd back off? Take back the contract?"

"Ah the mining company. I wasn't certain who wanted me dead thank you. They tried to fuck over the stupid animals, and now they're into litigation up to their necks and they very thoughtfully left equipment and a refining plant for Zoya's Weres to run."

Horrified blue eyes stared at Zoya. "I didn't... I mean..." She stuttered, completely undone as she realized she'd just let the Mark know who had taken out a contract on her. "Oh god." She whispered, hitting her forehead on the table top. "Stupid. So stupid." she muttered.

Zoya looked at the upset woman, while the rest of the bar tried very hard to look anywhere but at them. She sipped her beer. "If it helps any I always thought it was them, so it wasn't a surprise." Seeing that her words weren't helping. "Would you rather we not do this?" It was harder to say that than she thought. The woman was a human and Zoya was Zoya, this really couldn't end well.

So she finished her beer. "I can leave and then when you shoot me, I can pretend to be surprised?" She offered.

Blue eyes peered up at the annoying woman as Isabel lifted her head just enough to see her. "You could act surprised?" She rolled her eyes and lowered her head again. "This is going to get me killed." Isabel, surprisingly, didn't sound particularly upset about the idea. "Just, try to keep from getting me to spill too many secrets? Please?" Since when had she gotten so bad at lying?

"I'll do my best." Zoya vowed. "So um, I'm almost 40 and I work a lot." She said trying to divert the upset woman back to their game, but it was so badly done even Zoya winced.

Isabel laughed though, raising her head. "Really?" She grinned, trying to forget the disaster that the evening had been so far. "That's the best you have? That you work a lot?" She took a nice big gulp of beer, trying to wash away the taste of panic. "I'm guessing there's no Mrs. Zianada out there? Or Mr.?"

"I guess it is. The best that is. But no there is no Mr. or Mrs., uh..." She forgot her surname for a second for Zianada. "Peterson. This is going to sound lame but that's one of the reasons I started seeing a therapist. My sister, she's a rather simple person, simple in needs and wants not in the head, and she's got a steady girlfriend and for the most part people like her. Although as her girlfriend puts it sometimes she's so full of moral fiber it hurts to look at her. I just don't think I can be that morally good. I'm more flexible. I have to be." Zoya wanted to kick herself, who told someone on their first date that they were seeing a therapist. Then she wanted to kick herself again Zianada didn't have siblings. She settled for downing the rest of her beer.

"Is your therapist a Were also?" Isabel asked, curious about how things actually worked on the Reservation. The less time they spent talking about her, the more chance they had of Zianada finding out what sort of person she was sitting across from.

Zoya gave a strained laugh. "I'm not a Were, I just work for them. Because that would be illegal and..." At the odd look, "Oh you were um, yes she is actually a half-breed who has passed Government testing proving she is not a Were so she could leave the Reservation to go to college." She got up nervously. "Would you like another drink? I'll just go get us another drink."

This was failing miserably, "What the fuck am I thinking? I'm thinking about dating a human and basing a relationship on a lie." She mumbled to herself. Her therapist was going to have a field day over this.

Isabel watched her walk away, amused by the obvious nervousness, although that amusement died as she considered the woman's words. She hadn't really meant to say that the woman was a were, but she'd been a bit too adamant about the fact that she wasn't. What she'd meant to ask was if the therapist was a Were, like her employers, but it had come out wrong.

A little confused, Isabel watched her interact with the bartender and wondered what exactly she was going to get to drink when the woman got back. She took the opportunity to watch her. Zianada, or whatever her name actually was, moved well. Gracefully even. She already knew, from experience, that the woman was stronger than she looked.

God, did those legs ever end? Isabel wasn't usually one for staring at peoples legs, but Zianada's seemed to go on forever. She had to run, or jog, probably to keep that sort of runner's physique. There weren't many women in the world that were taller than Isabel, even if she was considerably shorter than her father and brother.

Zoya smiled at the bartender and put money down on the counter, leaving a nice tip. Enough to be nice but not enough to be remembered. She easily managed the beer for Isabel, the bottle of tequila and two shot glasses. Even avoided the burly man who tried to grope her ass without spilling a drop.

She kicked back shoving the stool sharply sending his stomach slamming into the edge of the bar.

If anything, Isabel's smile widened as she watched the little interaction. "I don't think I've ever had a beautiful woman bring me a beer, along with a bottle of tequila and shot glasses." She eyed those glasses with a little unease. "You planning on switching to tequila?"

"I'm splurging a little. Its expensive to get tequila on the Reservation, well decent tequila at a decent price. There are a few microbrew houses and even one that makes their own vodka." She shrugged and sat down. "You can join me if you want; I promise not to take advantage of you." And she found she meant it, an odd earnest little promise in a dive bar.

"Who said I wasn't going to take advantage of you?" Isabel finished her first mug of beer and slid it out to the edge of the table. Where it promptly disappeared as the red headed waitress snagged it and continued on her way with a wink and a toss of her head at Isabel.

Who completely missed the intent of that gesture.

"You pouring or am I?" She frowned, trying to remember when the last time she'd actually drunk until she got drunk. Certainly never since she'd joined the Outfit. She ignored the voices in her head reminding her why this was a bad idea.

Zoya laughed a little at the comment. "I think you've already taken advantage of me and it was fantastic." She winked and set the beer down between them followed by the glasses. "I'll pour." She set down the shot glasses and the bottle. The tequila was clear like water instead of golden in color.

She poured a shot and set it down in front of Isabel and then poured herself one. She tossed it back finding it as smooth as it looked. "You want a lime and salt?"

"Uh." Isabel eyed the glass uncertainly. "Do I?"

Zoya poured another drink. "Have you ever shot tequila before?"

"Sure." She said a little quickly and then met the other woman's eyes and sighed. "No. Being drunk is usually a quick rout to being dead." That was one of her father's mantras, but today had so far been such a cluster fuck she didn't really see how it would hurt.

Besides, she wanted to let go for once.

"This stuff," Zoya held up the shot glass. "You shouldn't need to follow with a lime or salt but if its not your thing that's fine we can get you some if you want. And," She reached over touching Isabel's wrist gently with her fingertips "it's okay to sip it."

"Sipping is good." She really wasn't sure what her limit was with that stuff. A beer or two, a glass of wine, all that was fine. But hard liquor was an unknown and she watched the clear liquid pour with interest. Carefully she took up the shot glass, sniffing its contents and then tentatively sipping it.

It didn't have the burning sensation that she'd come to associate with tequila from margaritas. "That's not bad." Isabel said, surprised.

"When you pay a little extra for the good stuff it normally is." She brought her shot glass to her lips and downed it. "So why do what you do? What made you wake up one day and decided being an as.. uh, exterminator was the career for you?" Zoya asked curious.

"Family tradition." Isabel sipped again, finding the taste and the way it warmed her chest, growing on her. If this was what real tequila was like, she thought it was a good reason to spend extra on the good stuff. "Isn't that how most people end up doing what they do?"

Zoya nodded sipping her shot and then refilled their glasses. Her father had been pack leader but their pack had been small and his ambition hadn't been that great despite the way everyone had come to him for advice. The ambition to unify everyone in the tiny parcel of land they'd been given was all her. She'd expected to be pack leader but even then when she had returned to the Reservation after juvi she'd had to kill the pack leader that had taken over and then she'd had to kill the pack leaders of the packs she had taken over. It was violent beginning to her rise in power.

"I guess family can point us in a direction." She said picking up her shot glass.

"Family is everything." Isabel said with a small shrug, having accepted that motto a long time ago. "Did you grow up on the reservation?" She sipped a little more tequila, trying not to let it overwhelm her.

Even here, a part of her rallied against giving up too much control. There was always a possibility that Gina, or someone who owed Gina a favor, had seen them come here. That even now they were being stalked.

She didn't think so, but that suspicion was drilled deep into her psych after all these years. Isabel had made a mistake with Gina, trusted her too easily. She didn't intend to repeat that mistake.

"Yes, except when I was in Juvi." Zoya responded. "It was a hard miserable experience. Zoya has thankfully made a lot of changes." Oddly enough the werewolf found herself relaxing in the little dive bar drinking with an assassin that was supposed to kill her.

"They shipped you off the reservation for Juvi?" Isabel could see how that would have been worse than normal.

"Yes, the federal Government had a lot more pull on the Reservation then." Were's had been slow to form a cohesive formal government, unwilling to give up pack mentality.

"I never understood that." Isabel blinked in surprise as she realized that she had just finished her first glass of tequila. She didn't say anything to stop her as the woman across from her poured her another glass. "I never understood why you guys didn't get a better part of the deal after the vampire wars."

Zoya looked at Isabel for a moment judging the seriousness of her words, the woman sounded almost sympathetic. "A lot of it is religion, mark of the beast and all that. But mostly the werewolves have themselves to blame. They lived and acted as animals, so they ended up getting treated like them. Don't get me wrong a lot of shifters like being ruled by animal logic, I guess it makes the world safer in that simplicity."

"It was still a raw end of the deal. Getting rounded up like that, shoved out onto those reservations. Yours might be doing well, maybe because of your boss, but I've heard others are still the same shit holes they always were." The mug of beer was almost room temperature by now, so she ignored it in favor of the tequila.

"Well they assumed a shifter was a shifter, wolves from Mexico don't necessarily want to go to Alaska and wolves from Russia don't want to be in the middle of the US. Then there is the issue of putting cats and dogs together." She gave a bitter smile and downed a shot instead of sipping it.

"Yeah." Isabel studied her glass of tequila, wondering how much she should say. "I heard about some of the infighting, back in the 20's when the

reservations were just getting set up. Sounded bad."

"It was a blood bath from what some of the older shifters say." Zoya filled her shot glass up, "But I'd rather not talk about the politics of the Reservation; it's depressing." And she rather enjoyed these cover identities where she could leave all that behind for a time. Although she did like the power and control being Alpha gave her so she would never give it up completely.

"And what else do you suggest we talk about?" Isabel grinned. It was hard to imagine the two of them had that much in common and chit chat had never been something she was good at. "Your sex life?"

Zoya made a face at that. "I never would have told you that but your ex drugged me."

The grin got a little more evil. "I've never heard of a therapist recommending someone abstain from sex for thirty days." She pretended to think it over. "Will you get some sort of chit for surviving the program, like in AA?"

Zoya's eyes narrowed. "No, its not like I'm addicted to sex. I had no problem abstaining. I'll have you know I managed 23 days just fine."

"Twenty three?" The assassin's smile widened. "I'm sorry, did I ruin your streak?"

It was on the tip of Zoya's tongue to say something cutting about if she hadn't been high as a kite it would have been easy to resist Isabel. But oddly she held her tongue. It was all true, but because they had they were here.

"Yes, you did. It was worth it though." She said instead and gave a shit eating grin before sipped her drink.

"Good answer there, tex." Isabel purred, eyes narrowed as if she had an idea of what awful things that the other woman might have just said instead. "So what now? Do you have to stay in the city?" She really hoped not, Gina was still trying to complete the contract.

"For a bit, there's someone I'm interested in knowing better. Plus having you and Gina try to kill me is the most fun I've had in a while."

"You are crazy if that's your idea of fun." Isabel took another sip of the too smooth tequila. "It's crazy of you to be sitting here with me, you know that right? I could try to kill you at any moment."

"Why haven't you?" It was possible Isabel was that good of an actress all of this was some game to get Zoya to drop her walls and then easily kill her.

"Maybe I'm just waiting for the right moment." It was a lie of course, and she was certain that Zainada knew it.

"Of course you are. Can't wait for that moment." She refilled Isabel's drink. It occurred to her that she hadn't eaten and this might be a cheap date if Isabel hadn't eaten either. "Do they serve food?"

"Of course." Isabel craned her neck out of the booth, waving as she spotted their waitress. Who was over by their table within moments. "Hey ladies, what can I get you?" She asked Isabel.

"Food." The assassin looked over at her companion an eyebrow raised in question.

"A sandwich is fine, ah, roast beef?" She asked hopefully.

"Roast beef, sure honey." The waitress smiled at Isabel. "And for you sweetie?"

Isabel, obviously smiled back. "That sampler platter of appetizers, the one with the fried clams?"

"Got it, be right back." The waitress gave her a wink and sauntered off, while Isabel looked back at Zainada.

"See, they're nice people."

Zoya smiled amused. "Uh huh, she's nice cause she wants to get into your pants and even if she doesn't get into your pants you'll still leave a good tip."

"Listen you, she's just naturally..." Isabel trailed off as her cell rumbled to life in her pocket. Grimacing she pulled it out, the grimace turning into a full wince as she saw the caller ID. "Sorry, I have to take this."

"Okay." Zoya smiled and refilled their glasses.

Watching the woman across from her, Isabel flipped the cell phone open and held it to her ear. "Hello? Hey, how's it going?"

She sat back, watching her dining companion fill her glass again. She really shouldn't drink more. "Yes, I know. I'm taking care of it." She met Zainada's eyes. "There have been some complications."

"Why don't I step outside for some air and you can have a private conversation." Zoya said figuring this was about killing her.

Plus it would give her a chance to call her sister and maybe get some tips on what people did on dates.

Isabel sighed and nodded. This was not going to be a pleasant phone call. "I'm having dinner with a friend. Yes." She said, irritated, "I do have a friend. I have two actually. Not that it's any of your business."

Zoya hid a smile and got up.

The assassin got distracted by watching the taller woman walk out, blaming her lapse in concentration on the tequila they'd already had. "What did you say?" Realizing the voice on the other end was still talking. At the irritated answer she frowned. "You called me, dear brother, so don't get pissy if I've got other things to do."

The cool air felt good even though it carried the stench of LA on it. Zoya fiddled with her phone for a second and then turned it on. Ignoring the three messages, she called Chance.

"Hey it's me. Can I talk to your girlfriend?"

She almost chuckled at the confused silence coming through the line.

"Um, honey, its Zoya she wants to talk to you... well no, not really but I could ask."

A confused sounding Tyler took the phone from her girlfriend. "Zoya? You hurt? Someone shoot you?"

"No, then I'd want to talk to Chance." Zoya said chuckling. "I, uh, had a question about... dating." The word dating was whispered.

There was another bit of silence before Tyler started laughing. "Dating? Chance, honey, I think you're sister met someone she likes." The doctor stressed the word like. "What do you want to know Zoya?" She teased.

"I don't know if I like her that's why I want to date her. Um... what do humans like to do on dates? What did you and Chance do?"

"I abducted your sister out of a hospital and took her to a small trailer in the middle of nowhere. Are you sure you want to try to emulate my experiences with your sister?" Tyler laughed.

"You did what? I don't think I've heard this part."

"Honey, don't tell her those things!" Chance begged embarrassed.

"I thought for sure that Chance had told you already." Tyler dodged Chance's attempt to grab the phone, making a face at her. "I guess that's a story for when you get back. Normal people usually take each other out to dinner, maybe coffee, go see a movie. Most people don't have sex on the first date either, Zoya."

"Really? Why not. Its important to know if you're sexually compatible isn't it?"

Tyler sputtered for a second. "Because, as great as the sex is, it's nice to know that you're relationship is based on more than just a physical attraction."

"What if we've already had sex? Is that bad?"

"Uhhh..." Tyler hesitated. "Well, was it just a one night thing? I mean, is she just expecting you to leave?" Once again, she dodged away from Chance's attempt to grab the phone now that things were getting interesting.

"I don't know, that's why I want to take her on a date." She left out the part were the ex had tried to kill her already and the fact that her date might try and kill her.

"So what do humans do on a date? Werewolves we'd shift and go run around, maybe hunt something."

"So I guess she's human." Tyler chuckled, really amused by that. "Zoya, you sure you want to get involved with, what was it you called me, a weak human?"

"Well you are! Kind of, except for the whole super soldier drug you shot yourself with. But compared to us..." She trailed off. "She kept up with me in bed, and she's funny in a sort of awkward way, and... well there's just something about her"

And the whole going to kill her thing but again Zoya didn't bring that up.

"Right." Tyler was still sounding like she was about to laugh, and probably would when she got off the phone. "Talk with her Zoya. That's the important part. Just get to know her, find out if she fits you. That's the important part. Was the sex good? That's always a good sign too of course." In the background Chance kept asking questions, which Tyler kept ignoring.

"It was very good. She kept up better than most of the werewolves I sleep with,"

"I keep telling you that Weres aren't as good as you think..." Tyler laughed as Chance gave her a pinch. "Just get to know her Zoya. I know that's hard, but that's the way humans do it. Oh, and remember, there's no alpha in human relationships. Here, I think your sister wants to say something." She finally offered the phone back to Chance.

"What the hell are you doing in LA?" Chance asked.

"Working. I had those meet and greets, you know as Zianada." Zoya replied confused.

"No not that. Getting involved with someone, a human someone. This poor woman thinks you're Zianada not Zoya, and I bet she doesn't know you're a werewolf."

"Um, put Tyler back on, she was nicer."

"Look, I think you should think about this. I've never heard you say anything nice about humans and I'm afraid this is just a thing you're going through, with the whole therapist and dating a human..."

Zoya cut her off. "Last time I checked I was the alpha and the older sister, you just... just... I'm fine. I'm hanging up now."

"A relationship based on a lie doesn't work well!" Tyler yelled in the background. "That's from experience."

Zoya frowned and snapped the phone shut and then turned it off. "Hey Isabel you ever want to sleep with a werewolf? Surprise you have." That probably wasn't the best way to put that.

The bar door opened and the schmuck who tried to grab her ass before came out. He smiled at her and Zoya just ignored him. "Hey babe you got a light?"

"No, but if you call me babe again I'll rip your balls off and hand them to you." She said brushing past him and headed back inside.

Their food had been delivered while Zoya was outside. It lay untouched on the table top in front of Isabel. The blond woman was resting her forehead against the table top again, unruly, unkempt hair still pulled back in a pony tail.

"Uh, you okay?"

"You have to die." Isabel mumbled.

"Someday sure."

"No." Worried looking blue eyes looked up at her. "In the next 24 hours. You have to die."

"I'm assuming if I don't something bad happens."

"If you're not dead tomorrow the contract becomes an open contract. Which means you become open season for anyone who wants a shot." Suddenly exhausted, Isabel picked up the bottle of tequila, refilling her shot glass that she'd emptied just before Zainada had come back inside.

"What happens to you if you don't kill me?"

Zoya sat down and played with her sandwich, not really hungry.

Blue eyes dart sideways and Isabel shrugged, picking at the fried clams she'd been wanting all evening.

"That good huh." She picked up her sandwich and took a bite. Chewed swallowed and then set it down.

"That was my brother." Isabel smiled faintly. "Always looking out for his baby sister." She picked at the fried clam. "You should go back to the reservation. Get out of LA tonight while you can."

"Why don't we get out of here?" Zoya said getting up and digging some cash out of her pocket. "This is getting depressing and we're on a date. So turn your phone off and let's go."

"We're still on a date?" A bit of hope flickered in those blue eyes at that, even as Isabel pulled out her phone and pressed the power button. "You do the same then."

Zoya dug her phone out of her pocket and showed it was off. "Happy?"

"Better." Isabel admitted, not sure she could be happy again. "Here." She pulled out another twenty and left it with the other woman's money on the table. "Tip."

"Uh huh. Come on before the waitress comes and asks for your phone number." She snagged the tequila off the table and headed for the door.

"At least I wouldn't have to kill her." Isabel mumbled, following along behind the other woman. "Where are we going?"

"Look if you want to go date the waitress go date the waitress." Zoya grumbled once they were outside. "So either we're on a date or we're not. You can worry about killing me in about 18 hours."

Isabel's lips twitched into an almost smile. "Deal. 18 hours it is. So where are we going?"

"Give me your keys." She held out her hand.

Blue eyes narrowed a little. "I don't let people drive my car."

"Hand me the keys, because you're not used to drinking tequila."

Hesitantly, and slowly, she handed over the keys. "She's my baby."

"I promise to respect her in the morning." Zoya said taking the keys and handing the bottle to Isabel.

She unlocked the car and moved the seat back a bit and then got behind the wheel. Eighteen hours what the hell was she going to do for 18 hours? Longest and only date of her life.

Isabel got in as well, moving her seat up a bit and trying to ignore the urge to kick the other woman out of the drivers seat. "You still haven't said where we're going."

"I'm thinking. If you had one night left on earth what would you want to do?" She asked starting the car.

"Go to a carnival." Isabel looked out of the passenger side window, beginning to suspect she had gone over her limit for tequila sometime ago. "I always wanted to go to one with a date." She looked back over at Zainada. "I don't think there's any in LA though."

"There must be." She pulled out into traffic. She smiled. "Venice beach."

"Venice." Isabel looks back out of the window, resting her forehead against the cool glass. "God that was a mess."

"Bad date with heinous bitchy ex?" She smoothly merged onto the 5 and then zipped into the carpool lane.

"A bad hit." Isabel grimaced. "I've had a few bad jobs recently."

"I'm sorry to hear that." She merged on to the 110. "I blame Gina."

"Me too." Isabel grinned suddenly at that. "I'm really going to have to do something about her and her little posse. And what the fuck is that all about? Why does she get people? I want people."

"You don't have people?"

"No." Isabel knew she was pouting a bit, but she could blame it on the tequila.

It took them longer to get there than she thought but it was still before midnight when they got to Venice beach. Zoya stared at the car in front of them. With a growl she hit the button and the window went down. "I believe you're trying to cock block me out of my parking spot." She said calmly to the young man in the suped up car and the gang tattoos.

Isabel actually snickered at that.

He gave her the finger and revved his engine; currently neither one of them was getting the spot each one of them just blocking the other.

The blond sighed. "I could just shoot him for you."

"No, no. I asked you on a date. I got this one." She got out of the car, leaving it running, and approached the electric blue street racer in front of her.

"So you mind backing up?" She asked friendly she even smiled exposing her teeth.

He flipped her off, again. "Fuck you, you bitch."

Zoya reached forward and snapped his middle finger. "That seems to be distracting you from having a real person conversation." She said as he screamed in pain. "You know only a small percentage of Hispanic men are really in gangs I think its like 2 percent or something. But then there are that 2 percent that make the rest of the world fear all the nice, hard working ones who just want to make a good life for them and their families."

He reached under the seat and pulled a gun. Zoya nodded her head as if expecting that and in a blur grabbed the hand with the gun breaking several bones in the wrist and then smashed his head into the steering wheel and then again. In a quick move she tucked the gun in the waistband of her jeans and then slammed him back against his seat. She shifted the hand against his throat so she had claws instead of fingernails. "Back off or I'll bleed you." She growled out in his face.

He nodded and managed to shift his car into reverse even with a broken hand.

She stepped back shifting her hand back and massaged the muscles as she watched him drive away.

She slid back behind the wheel. "All settled."

"Nice." Was all that Isabel said, grinning as she watched the other woman pull into the parking space, and reclaimed her keys did she speak again. "Learn moves like that while you were on the reservation did you?" She pushed the button to lock the car doors, waiting as Zainada moved around the car and they both started to walk towards the entrance to the amusement park.

"The Reservation can be a violent place. So I've picked a few things up." She smiled at the guy in the ticket booth. "Two." She slid the money across.

There was a wooden rollercoaster and other dubious rides meant to make one vomit by spinning and then there were the games. "There must be a shooting game. I'll let you win me something."

"I though you were supposed to be winning things for me?" Isabel smiled though, slipping her arm through the other woman's. She could pretend they were just a normal couple out on a date if she tried hard enough.

The assassin sighed in pleasure as they entered. "I always liked these, from the first time I went to one as a kid. My mom would take my brother and I to one whenever she saw it. Said it was important for us to do things normal kids did."

"I've never been before. There was a magician and a juggler that use to come through the Reservation when I was a kid." She smiled as Isabel tucked her arm through hers. "I could try and win you something maybe the one with the bottles and the softball; I'm not really good with guns."

There was a band playing somewhere she could hear the music and the smell of deep-fried food was overwhelming. "So games first or rides?"

"No, no. That's not how it goes, silly rabbit." Isabel patted the arm she was holding while she looked around, mentally plotting where to go first. "First we get food, the messier the better. Then we do a game or two, and then we do a ride. When that's done, we start the cycle all over again. I see I'm going to have to educate you on the real way to go through a fair."

Zoya nodded slowly. "Okay." Isabel was a little pushy when she forgot to be shy and awkward, and Zoya found she didn't really mind. She pulled them along slowly down to the row of food. With a sigh she looked down at her nice red button up shirt.

They gorged on food and then Zoya won a stuffed German Shepherd, it took her a few tries to figure out the trick to bottles but once she had it she thought the carnie was going to cry. "Its a wolf." She insisted. "Not a dog." And Isabel had just smiled at her but Zoya could tell there was a sarcastic comment she was holding back behind those lips.

They did some rides which Zoya did not like, cause it messed up her senses, but when they went to start over the Were insisted they go to the beer garden for beer and to listen to the band.

There were a few people dancing to the Latin music and more were just sitting at tables drunk.

"Come on, come dance." Zoya said playfully trying to pull Isabel on to the dirt square that was the dance floor. It was lit with white blubs strung everywhere and the crescent moon and stars above them.

The beer had given Isabel back the buzz that she'd lost on the ride to the fair and she didn't take that much convincing to get out onto the floor with the other woman. They fit together nicely, although Isabel wasn't used to not leading. It took a few seconds for them to match each other's movements but when they did she let her head rest against the taller woman's shoulder with a sigh of pleasure.

"You're not bad when you forget to be all pushy."

"Someone reminded me that humans don't have Alphas in their relationships." Zoya said softly as she let her hands rest dangerously low on Isabel's hips but she didn't let them go any lower. This was nice; perhaps this was the connection her therapist kept talking about.

"Who told you such words of wisdom?" Isabel sighed in pleasure again, enjoying the way they were moving together. She didn't particularly like the fact that they were in a crowded area doing this, but at least she could keep an eye on the people around her as they turned.

"My sister's girlfriend of all people." She chuckled a little at that. "We don't normally get along." They danced to the next song and Zoya shook her head. "Just relax, stop scoping out the possible exits and targets. Just have fun."

"I am." At Zainada's disbelieving look, Isabel smiled. "I am." She said more firmly. "I haven't had to take any antacids all night long, I'm not alone in a hotel room trying to figure out how to get to my next target, and I'm dancing with a beautiful woman. What's not to like?" She rested her head against her shoulder again. "I just have a thing about crowds."

Zoya looked around them at the three other dancing couples and 10 drunk people at the tables. "This is a crowd?"

"What's the saying?" Isabel watched one of the drunks get up and sway dangerously on his way towards the portapotties outside. "Three's a crowd, some days."

"Fair enough."

They stayed out, shuffling on the dirt for another song and then Zoya led them off. "You want another beer? Its almost last call."

There wasn't time for another ride, even though Isabel gave them a longing glance. "Sure, one last beer." She didn't want to leave yet, but most of the people were already starting to head towards the park exits.

"Or we can go ride the roller coaster again." Zoya said leading them out of the beer garden.

"No, beer's good. I don't want you looking so green again." Isabel teased.

"I was fine on the rollercoaster now the tilt thingy that made me want to hurl." She paused. "Whatever you want to do, just tell me."

"Come on tough girl, I hear the last beer of the night calling your name." Slipping her arm through Zainada's, she gave her a tug the last few steps towards the beer tent. There was a clock inside, and she avoided looking at it. Time was the enemy tonight.

"Who says I'm tough? I'm just a pencil pusher." She grinned and kissed Isabel's cheek before going up to the table to get them another beer.

"Sure you are." Isabel mumbled, watching the woman walk away with pleasure. Now how to insure she saw more of that tonight?

"I could have killed her a half a dozen times tonight." A voice whispered in Isabel's ear. "So how does it feel having to kill your new girlfriend?"

"Hi Gina." Isabel was rather proud of herself for not jerking in surprise. "Who says she's my girlfriend?" A glance out of the corner of her eye confirmed it was her ex that was standing behind her.

"Well that's what she said when she saved you from disaster at the conference and then at the Boom Boom club she didn't deny it when I came on to her, and I've watched you be very close tonight." Her eyes flicked to the target. "I wonder what the top tier will say when they find out about this? Hmm. And I wonder who gave her the antidote for my little drug cocktail?"

"She's my target, not yours." Isabel hissed, turning towards Gina, blue eyes narrowed. She had her pistol tucked away; maybe it was time to make a try for it. "What do you want?"

"I'm the best. I don't fail. This isn't your style for your targets, it's a little too personal, you don't do personal. You like shooting them from a distance. Back off and let me finish this or I'll finish both of you." The woman threatened.

"She's my target until tomorrow evening. I wonder what the partners would say if they found out you were poaching other people's targets. You know how unkindly they look on things like that." Isabel eyes flicked around, trying to spot the sniper she was almost positive Gina had hidden somewhere.

Gina blinked, surprised, Isabel wasn't confrontational. "I, ah..." She let her gaze flicker to the target only she was gone. "Fuck." She hissed her eyes darting around.

"Loose track of someone?" Isabel lifted her chin, even managing a grin. "Run back into your hole Gina. She's mine until tomorrow."

"You won't do it, you're too close Isabel." She snarled back before heading to the exit.

Zoya came strolling back in and bumped into her. "You might want to pick your friend up before someone notices him. Porta potty number 2, might be all sorts of questions as to why he has that big gun." She smiled and picked up the two beers she had left on the table next to the exit from the beer garden.

"We have to go." Isabel said the instant Zoya was back with the beers, eyes darting around nervously.

"Why?"

She pressed the beer into Isabel's hand and made her sit down. She sat next to her straddling the chair and sipped the barely cool beverage.

"Gina's here! You just saw her!" Blue eyes stared up at Zoya as if she was insane. "That's why."

"So, she's not armed. Her associate fell down and broke his neck." She placed something on the table -- the clip from the man's gun.

Isabel stilled at that. "He did?" She felt the cup of beer pressed into her hand. "I stood up to her, she's going to be pissed."

"Should have done it a while ago." Zoya was silent for a moment sipping her beer. "Gina is a lot like me. We're really good at finding what makes people tick and then we use that. We wrap them around our fingers and we use them until they have nothing left to offer us and then we tear them down and let them destroy themselves."

It was awkward to say it because saying it to Isabel she felt bad.

"I can't see you letting people destroy themselves." Isabel reached over, brushing her fingers through that blond white hair. "We really should go though. She's going to get pissed and send others here."

"It's going to be kind of hard without her car keys." Zoya admitted putting the keys on the table next to the clip.

"How..." Isabel stared at them, then up at the woman she didn't know. "All right. Who are you? No pencil pusher, no matter where you grew up, knows how to pick the pockets of an assassin..." Isabel trailed off, as the other woman's words penetrated her confused brain.

"Who are you?" She said, glad she wasn't reaching for her gun.

"Does it matter I'll be dead tomorrow?"

"I always want to know who it is I'm supposed to kill."

"You're supposed to kill Zianada Peterson and that's what my ID says." She played with the empty cup. "I've ruined our date now."

"No." Isabel set aside the cup, standing up and offering a hand to the other woman, whatever her name was. "My time's not up yet."

Zoya hesitantly reached out and took Isabel's hand. "Where to next?"

"Do you like the ocean?"

"Of course. There's no ocean on the reservation so I always jump at the chance to do business in California."

"Come on." The human pulled the woman along. "What do I call you?" She tensed as they exited the beer tent, eyes scanning the roofs around them. There could be a sniper hundreds of yards away of course.

"I'd hear a bullet before it got even close to us Isabel." Zoya said wrapping an arm around her waist and started moving towards the parking lot. "I'd prefer if you called me Zianada because Zoya's not supposed to be on US soil." To be truly honest with someone was the hardest thing she'd done and Isabel would have to kill her in the morning.

Isabel stumbled a step or two. "Zianada it is." She managed to mutter; glad they were almost to the parking lot. "I'm driving." She said, stubbornly. The parking lot was a logical place for an ambush and she tensed even further as they approached the Audi.

"You've been drinking." Zoya pointed out.

With a dark look at the woman formerly known as Zianada, Isabel handed over her keys. "There must be a tracking device on the car. That's the only way she could have found us." Isabel looked at her car mournfully. She was going to have to take the car apart to find it.

Zoya unlocked it. "Pop the hood I'll see if I can find it. Your ex does have a really unique perfume."

"What would that have to do with... oh." Isabel winced and rubbed her head. "You'll have to forgive me if I start feeling a bit insecure." She popped the hood.

Zoya looked up at her. "What would you feel insecure about?"

"It's a quirk people have when the person they're with can do things like smell the faintest hint of perfume left behind probably days ago."

"Well it's just a tool. I'm sure you'd take your car in to some guy and he'd do the same thing with some gizmo. I'm no different than him."

"All right gizmo, you find anything?" Isabel grinned, trying to ignore the itch between her shoulder blades from being exposed in the parking lot.

Zoya bent over the hood looking then she closed her eyes and sniffed. She dropped down and fiddled around under the car and then a small black box no bigger than a quarter was tossed out and Zoya got up grumbling at the oil stain on her sleeve.

"I'll get it dry cleaned for you." Isabel promised, giving her a quick kiss on the lips. "Thank you, now I don't have to take the entire car apart to find it."

"Mmm. That's all I get for crawling around on the ground?" She pouted.

"That's all you get in the parking lot of the fair for crawling around on the ground." Isabel winked and got into the passenger side seat. "We going?"

"Yep, where am I going?" She took a breath to calm her libido that had roared to life with just the tiniest hint of sex and then got behind the wheel.

"The beach. Someplace nice where we can watch the sun come up after finishing that tequila bottle you have." Isabel leaned over, pressing Zoya back into her seat as she kissed the woman hard and fast. "Thanks." she whispered, pulling back to her side of the car.

"Don't do that again until we're out of the car." Zoya warned and then pulled out of the spot.

"Why not?" Isabel grinned, liking the idea that she might have some influence over the woman beside her.

She hit the highway following the signs to Long Beach. "Because my libido will demand I pull over and ravish you, it's not used to going so long without." Zoya sighed. "That didn't sound good, did it?"

"It sounded interesting." Isabel laughed, leaning her head back and watching the night fly by them. "So long without? What was last night?"

"Yeah but I was drugged. I'd like to fully remember everything. What I remember was great, don't get me wrong."

"If you're lucky, there might be a repeat performance." Isabel promised.

This was harder than she thought, the whole dating thing. Caring about someone's feelings. She broke out of her thoughts. "Really? So I haven't just made an ass of myself?"

"Only in an adorable sort of way." The blond smiled. "Don't worry, you don't have to try quite so hard. I'm not going to run away screaming. If anything, I'm surprised you're still here with me. You should have taken off running hours ago."

"Well um, I didn't tell you I was a werewolf and some people have strong feelings about that."

"We have established I'm not most people right?"

"True, but someone told me that I shouldn't base a relationship on lies."

The smile faltered and then died away as Isabel looked back out the window. "We've got twelve hours left, is that enough for a relationship?"

"I'm willing to try. How about you? I can take us back to the hotel." It would hurt but she'd do it.

Shaking her herself out of the beginnings of despair, Isabel turned back towards the other woman. "You owe me a walk on the beach." She said, pushing away the worries and certainty that this wasn't going to end well.

"A walk on the beach it is." She kept heading down the highway.

"And then more tequila." Isabel smiled again.

#####3

The marine layer was blocking the rising sun but Zoya was still looking at the sky as she talked on the phone. She'd never gotten that repeat performance but it was probably for the best; sand had a tendency to get into sensitive places.

Next to her on the sand Isabel was asleep, the empty bottle half way buried in the sand.

"Thanks Bones, I think this will work out, just don't tell Chance -- she can't lie worth a damn. But bring Tyler; we know she's a great liar and can talk that medical mumbo jumbo."

"Tell me it isn't morning already?" Isabel whimpered, not opening her eyes as she lay where she'd fallen asleep sometime in the wee hours of the morning.

"Sadly, beautiful, it is." She closed her phone and leaned over, kissing Isabel lightly on the lips.

"Mmmm..." One blue eye cracked open. "Getting better. Want to try that again?" She refused to acknowledge that it was the morning already.

Zoya smiled and bent over again teasing rose colored lips.

"Much better." Isabel said, a little breathless as she opened both eyes after that kiss.

Zoya smiled and brushed Isabel's bangs out of her eyes. "This was the best date I've ever had. Thank you Isabel." It was doubtful they'd see each other after today. It would be hard to pull off. "If you ever want to come work on the Reservation let me know." She said hopefully, but knew the Outfit just wouldn't let one of its assassins go.

The assassin's smile turned bitter sweet at that. "Thanks." She leaned up against Zoya's shoulder again, wishing she could stay there. "We don't have much time left do we?"

"No we don't." Zoya confirmed. "I made some calls and have everything set up for my death scene. I'll be at that sidewalk cafe across from the hotel at 1pm today for a late lunch. As long as you don't shoot me in the head, everything will be fine." She leaned forward slightly and nipped the tip of Isabel's nose and then kissed her cheek.

"What?" Isabel jerked back, staring at Zoya in surprise. "What do you mean, don't shoot you in the head? I'm not going to shoot you." She had a half formed plan about finding someone that was vaguely Zoya's build and mangling the body to show as proof of death.

"You have to. Or I think something bad is going to happen to you, I'll survive anything but a head shot and silver bullets. I'm a Were, remember." She reached out to sooth the human but frowned as Isabel jerked away. "Am I missing something?"

"Of course you're missing something. You want me to shoot you!"

"Honey, you have to shoot me. Between the two of us who has the better chance of getting up and walking away. If you don't shoot me what will they do to you?"

"That doesn't matter. There's another way, we could come up with something else." Isabel didn't want to shoot Zoya, didn't want her lying in a pool of blood. It was easy to kill someone she didn't know, but she didn't think she could do it to someone she liked, much less whatever they were doing.

"It's the only way. Or Gina will get the shot and she might get me in the head."

"I can deal with Gina." Isabel was actually looking forward to trying. "You don't have to do this. Zainada would be dead, you'd be dead."

"There is no way out of this for you safely without Zianada dying. You said yourself in 24 hours the contract opens up." She sighed, "I wish we'd met sooner but..." She doubted she would have given Isabel the time of day. "This is what we have."

A short nod and Isabel buried her head against Zoya's shoulder, wanting to pretend the world didn't exist. But it did and she couldn't make it go away, no matter how much she wanted it too right at that moment. "It'll be a sniper shot." She said, quietly.

"It will be fine." Zoya said. "My people will be waiting to swoop in so no one can autopsy me or any other stupid shit."

"Gina will probably be there too." She reminded the were.

"Probably. Don't let her get to you. Some how I think all the problems you've been having lately, like Venice beach, that's her." Zoya said softly before getting up and brushing sand of her black slacks.

Isabel nodded mutely, refusing to let go of Zoya's hand as the taller woman pulled her to her feet. "What do you want to do for the rest of the day?" Time, the enemy, was still ticking away.

"Take a shower, maybe dine in." She wiggled her eyebrows.

She pulled Isabel into her side and started up the dunes to the car. "Seriously we can do whatever you want."

"Your hotel is probably compromised, and so is mine. So how about we find a new one with a big plush bed?" She smiled in anticipation, refusing to think about that night.

"Fancy that there's a hotel down the road. I think I remember when we passed it last night."

"Fancy that." Isabel held out her keys. "I'm going to guess you want to drive?"

"Of course not, it's your car." Zoya said opening the passenger side door.

"That didn't seem to matter before." The human said wryly, sliding into the drivers seat.

"Because you were drunk and I didn't want you to get pulled over and have to explain the sniper rifle in your trunk."

"Who says I have a sniper rifle in the trunk?" Isabel gave her a wink, shifting into gear and pulling out of the mostly empty parking lot.

"I was just guessing because well... it's what you do."

"And I'm good at it." Isabel frowned at the road ahead of them as she scanned the area for that hotel. It was true, she was good at what she did, but her personal life was a complete disaster these days. Now she was going to have to shoot someone she actually liked.

"Stop thinking about that. Or I'm going to have to start acting like the bitchy Alpha that I am just so you'll want to shoot me."

"Don't want that." Isabel said, dryly as they pulled into the hotel parking lot.

#####

"I definitely want to shoot you now." Isabel purred, lying naked across Zoya's chest. They were both quite naked and she rather enjoyed the exercise that they'd just taken part of. It hadn't taken that much kissing to get Zoya's shirt off. And only a little more to undo her pants and shove them off. Then she'd had to pleasure of taking her time exploring the taller woman's body.

It was also nice that Zoya hadn't been high on anything this time. Isabel smiled as she replayed the last few hours in her mind. Sex had always been a pleasant diversion, but she'd never really gotten how some people claimed the world moved during it. Zoya was certainly an inventive partner.

"Huh?" For after sex talk that was the weirdest comment she'd heard and she wasn't big on after sex talk or cuddling.

"I said..." Isabel swung her legs up over Zoya's, straddling her. Rising up a little, she pushed forwards, rubbing her body against Zoya's. "You really made me want to shoot you now."

"Why? I thought I performed rather well." Her now blue eyes went almost white as desire thrummed through her body.

"Was just thinking that if I did shoot you, I could dress up in a naughty little nurse's uniform and nurse you back to health." Isabel gave a wicked smile, sliding one sweat slick thigh between Zoya's legs and pressing upwards.

Zoya growled a little at the image in her head and her hands clenched tightly around the flesh at Isabel's hips and ass. "You're evil." She said as her hips pressed down against her thigh.

"What," Isabel gasped, moving at the rhythm that Zoya set, "did you expect?" She bit her lip, wanting this moment, like the others before it, to last far longer than they did. Minute by minute the day was slipping away from her, no matter how hard she tried to hold onto every second.

"You're evil." Zoya repeated her fingers moving through Isabel's wetness until she found what she was looking for and then an evil chuckle moved through her chest.

"Ohhhhh..." Isabel groaned, whimpering. "Now," she gasped, "who's evil?" She reached down herself, fingers brushing against Zoya's as she slid them into the Were.

"I think you're still winning." Zoya's voice came out in a whine and her eyes slid shut.

Isabel leaned down, squirming against Zoya, not even trying to stop her body from moving as she latched onto Zoya's breast. She'd discovered something about the Were. "I like to win." She growled, adding another finger to her thrusting and biting down on an already swollen nipple. Zoya, she'd learned, liked to get nipped.

Zoya's chin tilted up and she completely forgot her evil yet pleasurable plans for Isabel she groaned and then at a hard bite she came spasming hard around Isabel fingers.

She didn't black out, Zoya just didn't have the strength or desire to open her eyes.

"I really like winning." Isabel purred, slowly easing her fingers out and then giving them a lick clean. Humming in pleasure she settled down on top of the of the other woman. "Hmmm perfect."

"Aren't you even a little tired?" Zoya said cracking an eye and seeing the satisfied look on Isabel's face.

"I can be tired after..." She trailed off, looking away. "Tonight I'll be tired." She did lower her head onto Zoya's chest though, closing her eyes.

Zoya could have kicked herself.

"Don't think about that. Think about me doing this." She rolled them over pinning Isabel's hands to the bed. "Can't have those distracting me again." She said mostly to herself and started nipping at Isabel's neck down to her shoulder where she bit slightly harder drawing blood she licked it away. "You're mine now." She growled and then continued down the center line of Isabel's body spending time at each erogenous zone to properly worship it.

"Yours?" Isabel hissed in pleasure, back arching as she tried to urge Zoya onwards, faster. The taller woman refused to be hurried though and by the end, Isabel was pleading for release.

Much later and a phone call to push back the time table Zoya was in the shower trying to look at her left butt cheek. "Did you bite my ass?" She shouted over the water. It sure as hell stung when she turned around under the spray of water.

"No." Isabel lied, peering down the chamber of her pistol. "Why would I do that?" She smiled, blowing at a piece of dust that was stuck there.

"It sure feels like you bit me and I should know I've been bit and clawed a lot. This would have been the first time I liked it though." She chuckled and then thought they would turn into sobs for a second and she leaned her forehead against the tile trying to get a grip.

She was going to have to pay her therapist for extra sessions.

With a long look at the open bathroom door, Isabel set aside the pistol and leaned back in her chair. She'd been tempted to join in the shower, but that would have made things even harder. "I was thinking, about the hairdresser you recommended." She said instead.

Zoya winced. "Sorry I was being a bitch."

"You were right." The human stood up, wandering over to a mirror and critically eyeing her shaggy blond hair. "Maybe I should get it cut." And maybe new clothes. The jeans were nice, but they were getting rather holey.

"Only if you want too." Zoya shut off the shower and got out grabbing a towel. She turned and looked in the mirror. "You did bite me."

"Stop being a baby." Isabel grinned, then blinked in surprise as she saw the happy look on her face in the mirror.

Zoya laughed. "I'm not being a baby I'm just shocked. No one bites an Alpha. Just don't tell anyone I liked it."

"Your secret's safe with me." Isabel ran her fingers through her hair, trying to get it into something of an order. "Wait, no one's bit you before? Not even a little nibble? No wonder you liked it so much."

Zoya ran a the small towel over her hair. "Nope you'd be the first. Werewolves bite during sex to show dominance or possession. Who'd bite the Alpha?"

"Sad that you've never had something you enjoyed so much." Isabel said, looking into the mirror. Even she wasn't sure who she was talking to.

A sad smile flickered over Zoya's face. "Yeah." She covered her face with the towel, drying her hair vigorously until she got herself under control. Being Alpha was doing those things that were unpleasant; sacrificing her happiness was one of those things.

She hung the towel up and started getting dressed. "We should get going?" her voice was hollow.

Turning away from the mirror, Isabel nodded, having to clear her throat twice before she could talk. "Yes. We should get going."

#####3

Zoya sat in fresh clothes looking for all the world like she was expecting someone at any moment. In fact she kept checking her phone to make sure she had the time, because it all was about timing.

It was harder than she thought to say good-bye. Zoya had made a practice of not caring about anyone but Chance and Terri. Because she never knew when she'd have to assert herself and when Weres asserted themselves it was violent and brutal.

Logically it was silly, they barely knew each other. Isabel was human, and would die far sooner than Zoya would. Isabel would be an easy target to be hurt in her world and there were many more reasons but Zoya's heart cared for the woman who looked like a Norse Goddess with a bad haircut.

In the building across from the cafe, Isabel slowly undid the baggage that she had brought up into the office building with her. The floor was for rent and any other day, she would have been proud of what an excellent spot she'd found for the shot. Today, today she was just sad as she undid the hidden compartment at the bottom. Inside was her rifle and she took no joy this time as she snapped the pieces together.

They hadn't had a chance to go to the hairdresser, and her blond hair was pulled back in a ponytail again.

With hands that only barely shook, she moved closer to the window. It wasn't hard to cut a large circle out of the glass and then there was nothing to do but raise the rifle and start scanning the street below. It was just another hit, she kept repeating, another job.

Just like all the others.

Except that it wasn't and she swallowed past the lump in her throat.

Zoya sighed as she saw the time and wondered how much it hurt to get shot. Chance seemed to get shot a lot and she was fine. In a move that looked accidental she knocked her drink over and on to her lap causing her to stand up. This moved her chest to about where her head would have been.

She had spotted Gina across the street and didn't doubt others were watching.

The move was perfect; the alignment was without a doubt one of the easiest shots Isabel had ever had to make. Which didn't explain why her eyes were watering as she stroked the trigger. The sniper rifle bucked against her shoulder, but she couldn't look away, had to watch the effects of the shot.

Getting shot Zoya reflected, didn't hurt really at all as she stared at the shattered glass of the table top in front of her and looked at wonder at the red splatters that looked like paint.

What hurt was the shut down of her body as it needed to start healing a life threatening wound. She staggered back tripping over the chair and hit the ground. Someone started screaming. About time, she'd been shot at least 40 seconds ago and no one had noticed until now.

Isabel watched through the sniper scope, holding her breath as she saw the blood. All of that red blood spreading out across the sidewalk, seeping out of Zoya's chest. People were screaming now, rushing away from the body. In the distance she could hear sirens. She should leave, there was no point in staying here, but she couldn't look away.

There was a hand clapped to her shoulder. "She told me you'd stay and watch, putting yourself in danger."

Isabel spun, whipping the rifle around instinctively, lashing out at whoever had just managed to sneak up on her.

Bones easily knocked the rifle aside, stepping back. "I'm Bones." She introduced herself with a mocking grin.

Hands stinging from the force of the blow, Isabel glared. "Bones? You're Bones?" No one had told her that Bones was quite that striking a figure. "I was picturing some old man with bad joints."

"Well that's what you get for assuming." Bones' black skin and black clothing had easily hidden her in the dark office. "You're good at what you do; she'll be fine."

"Promise?" Isabel hated the uncertainty in her voice. "I shot her next to the heart, are you sure she'll be all right?" Even as she spoke she started to take apart the rifle, the sirens were almost on top of them now.

"I promise." She picked up the round circle of glass and then ran a finger around the edge and then the edge of the hole in the window watching as it heated up and started to glow and then she replaced the piece of glass.

"Nice trick." Isabel undid the last of the rifle parts, stuffing them back into the bag. She hesitated at the stairs, her escape route already planned out. "Bones?"

"Mmm, yes." The woman turned looking at the blonde.

"Tell her..." Isabel hesitated. "Tell her I wish we'd met in a different life."

"I'll tell her. Isabel..." Bones hesitated. "She gave up something for you and I won't lie and tell you what a good person she is because she's not, she's mean, petty, violent and self-absorbed. This is the most out of character thing I've seen her do. Other than you being blond not much of this makes any sense." She shrugged. "I think what I'm trying to say is, if your life changes call her."

"Someday." Isabel smiled sadly. "Goodbye Bones." She turned, hefting the pack onto her shoulder and hurrying down the steps. She was late already;

she should have been on her way out of the building the second after pulling the trigger.

Bones nodded and flipped her cell phone. "Tyler she's being loaded into an ambulance number..." She squinted. "124, you better get there before someone cuts her open."

She hung up laughing at Tyler's snappy comeback.

#####3

Zoya sat at her desk staring at all the paperwork on it and debated trying to organize it. She pushed it around for a while making random piles. It had been like this for months, thankfully she had enough people well trained in their jobs that they were happy to do them and relieved that the Alpha had stopped micro-managing them.

That relief only lasted the first month; in the middle of the second month people started to worry. In the third month another Alpha came swaggering into the reservation and tried to take over. Assuming that Zoya had lost her power of control. His head now was rotting on one of her fence posts around her house. She emerged, tore him to shreds, and then went back to denning.

This had been going on for six months now.

Bones was sitting in the kitchen with Chance and Tyler watching Terri make tea.

"I'm just saying this has to stop. She just mopes around upstairs. I can't remember the last time she went out. There have been no blond bimbos leaving after a night of meaningless sex. I've been handling full moon duties and I had to push her out the door both times those other Alphas tried to vie for dominance of this territory and pack."

"Well maybe she just needs time to get over this woman..." Chance interjected.

"It's been six months. This place can't survive without Zoya and I mean the real Zoya not this milk toast clone that's taken over in her place. Who do you think keeps all the different packs from going nuts? Just her and her attitude."

Chance was still having a hard time believing that Zoya was this hung up on a woman, let alone a woman who'd shot and nearly killed her. "Maybe a vacation?" She was grasping at straws and looked to Tyler for help.

Upstairs Zoya slipped her jeans down letting them pool at her feet and looked over her shoulder trying to look into the mirror. The red outline of Isabel's teeth was still there and she wasn't certain what it meant. Well, she knew what that meant but only wolves could do that. She sighed and picked her pants back up her legs and buttoned them. Then she sat back down and rearranged the piles on her desk.

Downstairs, Tyler sipped at her tea, smiling in thanks to Terri as the woman offered her some honey to go with it. "She's physically fine. The bullet missed her heart by a few centimeters, which I know would have probably killed a normal person. Zoya of course healed the damage fairly quickly. I've only been able to get her to let me check the scar tissue once, but even that should be gone soon enough." She shrugged at her lover's look. "I don't know what to do about her mental state. She's seeing a therapist you said?"

Chance nodded playing with her tea cup but didn't drink. "She's seeing Dr. Wisnor the lady I was seeing for a while..." At Bones look she shrugged. "I was having nightmares about Tyler leaving me and was becoming way over protective. Tyler threatened to leave me for real if I didn't calm down. So I sucked it up and saw her for a few months." She played with the cup a bit more. "It worked; we're still together so I recommend her to Zoya."

Tyler reached over and slipped her hand into Chance's free hand, squeezing it. "I don't know what else we can do then. Unless you three feel like trying to hire that assassin to kill Zoya again."

Bones sipped her tea and looked up at the ceiling for a minute letting the smell of the tea invade her senses. The problem was that assassins didn't just get to retire not unless they lived to be old and gray and the company they worked for had enough dirt to bury them. "Maybe she should go on vacation. The Alpha of the Black Forest Pack in Germany has always wanted to meet with Zoya and I think I might have gotten some information that a certain blond was going to be working in Germany next month."

"Germany?" Tyler looked dubious about that. "You really think that we can get her to go that far away? She was getting antsy about going as far away as L.A. last time."

Bones sighed. "It will be hard but I think we can make it happen, especially if Chance asserts some pressure on her." She sipped the cool tea.

Terri spoke up. "Have you tried telling her to pull her head out of her ass? You're all treating her like she's fragile. Alpha's aren't fragile. Tell her to go get the girl or get over it." The matronly woman looked at the three of them sitting there. Finally she looked at Tyler.

"You can do it those two are too concerned about Zoya's feelings, some demon and Alpha they are." She chastised.

Tyler sighed and stood up. "Don't worry honey, you're still my Alpha." She bent over and gave Chance a quick kiss. "If you hear a window break, that's probably because she's thrown my body out it."

With another sigh and a glare at Bones for good measure, the doctor started towards the stairs. "If I'm not back in a half hour, somebody come rescue me please?"

Chance looked guilty. "Honey, I can go..." Terri gave her a look. "stand outside and catch you if she does throw out the window."

"You two are just enabling her." Terri said giving Chance and Bones a glare.

"Thanks." Tyler grumbled, starting up the stairs. She really didn't want to do this. Even after all this time as her sister's girlfriend, Zoya and her weren't exactly the best of friends. She had a suspicion that was due to the fact that she was a human and not good enough for Chance, at least in Zoya's eyes.

"Time for the old army try I guess." Tyler muttered, taking a deep breath and then knocking twice on Zoya's door.

Zoya looked up from where she was restacking the papers on her desk in order of date received. "Come in." She didn't say anything when Tyler entered just went back to re-sorting and re-stacking.

"What are you doing?" Tyler wasn't sure what she'd expected, but she certainly hadn't expected Zoya to be doing paperwork.

"I'm... organizing." She'd been organizing the same paperwork for two days. Perhaps she'd get around to actually reading the stuff on her desk. "The Reservation just doesn't magically get money. I have to oversee contracts and stuff..." She sighed and set down papers in her hand and just looked at Tyler. "Was there something you wanted?" It came out as an actual question instead of a bitchy verbal smackdown.

"See, that right there shows that there's something wrong with you Zoya. You just asked me if I wanted something." Tyler took a liberty she normally wouldn't have unless she was trying to annoy the Were, and sat down uninvited in front of her. "I want you to stop sulking up here like a love sick sixteen year old. It's really unbecoming in an Alpha."

"What? I can't be nice to my sister's girlfriend who won't go away no matter how hard I try." The sneer on her face didn't last and it slowly fell off as Tyler patiently looked at her. Zoya let her forehead hit her desk and mumbled. "When does it go away, this lovesickness? I can't think of anything but her. I have no motivation I just sit at my desk and think about her." She banged her head a few times.

"That's called being in love." Tyler looked out a window, wondering again how she'd gotten stuck with this job. Shouldn't Chance have had to come up here and do this? "I'm going to assume that's a first for you?"

"Yes. Is there a cure, maybe a shot?" She sat up looking at Tyler hopefully and that was seriously something she never thought would happen. Her looking to Tyler for help. The woman was a doctor surely she could fix this.

"Zoya." Tyler said in the voice she reserved for especially trying patients. "Other than giving you a lobotomy, which trust me I would enjoy, there's no cure. So you've got two options here. Sit up here, feeling sorry for yourself, until some Alpha wanders onto your reservation and manages to put you out of your, and our, misery. Trust me, wait long enough and it's bound to happen."

She leaned back in her chair, watching Zoya intently as she continued. "Two, you get up off your ass and do something about it. Go find the girl, go find another girl, I don't care, but stop being such a whiny little bitch."

Zoya's eyes narrowed and her blue eyes became frosty. She stood up resting her hands on her desk, the wood groaned. "Get out. I don't need some human telling me how to run my affairs."

"Really? Because from where I'm sitting that's exactly what you've been reduced to. Poor me, poor old me, I fell in love and let the girl get away. Come on Zoya, I hitch hiked across most of the US to get back to your sister. You just going to lay down without a fight?" Tyler was gambling with her life, but at least that last bit had sounded like the old Zoya again.

"She knows where I am. How many Alpha's named Zoya are there in the world? She could have found me at any time but hasn't, it's been 6 months with nothing. No card, no phone call. For crying out loud, she's an assassin - she could have at least tried to shoot me again!"

Zoya was shouting loud enough Chance and Bones looked up at the ceiling nervously.

Zoya sat down heavily rubbing her temples.

"Logically there are two possibilities again. One, she never wants to see you again. Two, she can't because she's scared of getting you killed. I'm going to bet on reason two, considering what Bones told us about having to get her out of where she shot you." Tyler gentled her voice. "Zoya, you can't keep going like this. Too many people count on you, as hard as it is for me to admit that."

Zoya pulled out an expensive bottle of flavored vodka and two small glasses. She poured herself a healthy drink and then a less healthy drink for Tyler and slid the glass over. "You're right." She tossed the drink back in one swallow and poured another one. "You need to stop standing up to me, I might start to respect you."

"God help us if that happens." Tyler said dryly, tossing her shot back as well and then grimacing at the familiar burn. She really didn't like vodka most days, but it seemed like a bad choice to turn it down right now. "So what are you going to do? Bone's thinks she knows where your assassin is going to be next."

"Bones is an idiot. She a professional assassin; they don't give out itineraries on the next place they're going to kill someone. Unless it's an assassin convention." She looked at Tyler. "I am going to have to find her and then find some way to make the organization release her contract." This meant she was going to kill the top tier of the Outfit.

"You better not tell Chance then. You know how she gets about all that breaking of the law stuff." Tyler set down the empty shot glass. "I know we don't get along, but if you need help, again, just let me know." For now she was glad she hadn't just gotten thrown out of a second floor window.

Zoya looked at her drink. "Tyler I don't like you because you used my sister and lied to her and she took you back without even a blink. She just forgave you and what the hell did you do to earn that forgiveness? Other than that I don't have a problem with you. You're a good doctor, you help my people extremely well for the crap pay I give you, you make my sister happy, and you helped me out a lot when I was in LA." She tossed back her drink and then put the bottle away.

"Just so we're on the same page, I don't really care if you like me or not. Sure it would make things easier with Chance, but she's the one I love, not you. I think you're a controlling, manipulative bitch most of the time and whatever happened between me and Chance, is just that, between me and Chance. But" Tyler smiled wryly. "You aren't so bad when you forget that you're the big bad Alpha." She stood up. "Just do something other than sit here and sulk."

Zoya just started laughing. "Good thing we're clear on that. Now go down stairs and get Chance and go home. I have a trip to plan."

#####3

Germany was an interesting place, although Isabel had no intention of saying that to anyone. The autobahn had been a pleasant surprise on her evening excursions. She'd been in the country before, twice actually, but she'd never had time to just sight see. It was a rare job when she did more than spend a couple of days in a hotel, checking out her target's whereabouts before finishing the job and heading on to the next one.

Los Angeles was an aberration in that pattern.

A mistake, she tried to convince herself, something she should never have done. Never have given into the temptation that was called Zoya. Who was dead, she reminded herself again, for only the fifth time that afternoon. She couldn't afford to make any more mistakes, not with the senior partners watching her every move.

There'd been too many mistakes already; at least a few of them she knew had been caused by Gina. That she hadn't been able to settle accounts yet with her psychotic ex was something that annoyed her to no end.

Closing her eyes she leaned her head against the brick behind her and contemplated the last six months of her life. They'd been busy, that was for certain. She'd been constantly on guard against Gina's attempts to ruin her, all the while handling every job that the partners threw her way.

Some of those jobs had gotten messy and she winced a bit remembering a few of the debacles. Her father would have been horrified at a couple of the close calls she'd had already.

The phone in her pocket buzzed and, without opening her eyes, she slid it out.

"Hello?"

"Hi Pumpkin!"

"Hi Daddy." She smiled, even now happy to hear his voice.

"How are you doing?"

"I keep telling you dad, I'm doing fine."

"Yes, but your mother doesn't believe you and you know how she gets when she has an idea in her head"

Isabel laughed as she could hear her mother's voice in the background yelling something. The phone changed hands.

"Isabel?"

"Hi Mom."

"I know you keep pretending everything is all right, but you don't sound good. Even your brother noticed last time he talked to you. Why don't you come here for a visit?"

Isabel did open her eyes at that, only to roll them. "Mom. I'm busy." Which was only part of the truth of course. She might be able to fool them over the phone, but one look at the dark circles under her eyes, or the weight she'd lost, and neither of them would be fooled for a second.

"Well as soon as you have a break, I want to see my baby girl again."

"Mom! I'm not a baby."

"You'll always be our baby. Love you. We'll call you tomorrow."

Isabel sighed, putting the phone back and closed her eyes again. Sometimes she wondered what it would have been like to have normal parents. Ones that took her to school and at the end of the day picked her up to bring her back to a normal home.

She just didn't have the reference for that sort of thing though. It was an alien world to her, as foreign as this feeling she'd developed for a certain Were. Who she'd shot in the chest and left bleeding out on the city streets.

Forcibly she turned her mind away from that memory; it invaded her dreams far too often already.

The phone chirped in her pocket and she opened both eyes as she pulled it out to check the display. This time she pressed a blue tooth headset to her ear, sliding the phone back away to free up both hands.

"Hello?"

"Target is en route. It will be exiting the doors shortly."

"Copy." Isabel murmured, pulling up the sniper rifle that had been laying on the roof top next to her and peering down the scope towards the main entrance of the airport. This would be a tricky shot, but her instructions had been specific, the shot had to be taken during broad daylight, in front of as many witnesses as possible.

"Target is one minute away from exiting." The emotionless voice on the other end informed her.

"Copy. Awaiting description." She scanned the doors, watching people come and go. Happy couples, hanging on to each other, laughing. Serious looking business men coming and going from never ending meetings. Children, tired from traveling, or hyper about the thought of getting on a plane. There was

always such a seething mass of humanity around an airport. Some days she spent hours watching them from spots just like the one she was in now.

When the seconds passed and she didn't get any further instructions Isabel raised an eyebrow.

"Awaiting description." She repeated.

"Hold one, validating target."

That was a first and she frowned a little. Firsts were never a good thing.

People were coming and going and she knew a minute had to be up shortly. How was she supposed to do a job when they wouldn't even tell her who it was she was taking out?

"Awaiting description control." She repeated again, finger sliding down to the trigger.

"Hold. Validating target." The voice sounded definitely more stressed this time and she swallowed. Who exactly was it that they were trying to validate down there?

"Target validated!" The voice suddenly snapped. "White hair, black jacket, emerging now."

"Got it." Isabel murmured, sighting the crosshairs on the center of the woman's head just as she turned towards a waiting limousine.

And Isabel froze, her heart actually stopping for a second as she stared down the scope at Zoya's face.

"Take the shot." The voice in her ear said. When she did nothing, said nothing it repeated more urgently this time. "Agent, take the shot!"

Her finger trembled against the trigger and she swallowed dryly. The crosshairs never wavered as they tracked Zoya's head, perfectly aligned on the center of her forehead as she stalked towards the waiting car.

"Take the shot!"

The voice was yelling now and she watched, still stunned as Zoya got into the limousine and drove away.

With trembling fingers she reached up and pulled the ear piece off, disconnecting the yelling voice on the other side.

There really was only one word to describe what had just happened.

"Fuck."

#####3

"Seriously, she was going to shoot me?" Zoya said a tumbler full of scotch and ice against her forehead.

"Well obviously she didn't or you'd be dead." Bones said sitting cross-legged on the table in Zoya's suite. "They have a back-up following you, now she'll kill you and then Isabel."

Zoya' opened a bright blue eye. "How do you know these things?"

"Hello, demony, hellhound from hell. Or did you miss that part?"

Zoya glared.

"Assassins are very morally flexible folks and you'd be amazed how many are actually demons and half-breed demons. So I have connections and I've been sleeping with Michelle, Michelle is the overworked under appreciated personal secretary for Leon Visk one of the top tier in the 'Outfit'. She knows lots of things."

Zoya blinked. "How long has this been going on?"

"How long have you been denning upstairs in your office?"

Zoya bared her teeth in a growl.

"Whatever?" Bones slid off the table unconcerned. "Now go get dressed. We're going out, I've even hired escorts."

"What? Bones you didn't? Please tell me you didn't?"

"I'm sorry; you're the one with the reputation for a different pretty girl on your arm every night. The Alpha here is going to expect it. So go get dressed. I expect Isabel and Gina will follow us to the club but since it is a supernatural club they won't do anything."

"What? Great so now Isabel will see me with hookers on my arm." She shook her head and got up downing her drink. "Wait how do you know Gina will be there."

Bones shrugged. "Michelle told me."

Zoya shook her head and started getting dressed.

#####3

March in Germany was a toss up of weather, some days were cold and blustery and others were warm and full of sunshine. The evening was cold and windy people were dressed in warm coats and scarves.

Bones looked unhappy as she always did when the temperature turned cold.

Zoya being a Were naturally ran hot and wore soft denim jeans, that blue shirt she'd never had the chance to wear in LA, the one that made her eyes look amazing, and long black leather coat that went down mid-thigh. She was surrounded by the scent of femininity, having a curvy blond on either arm nearly overwhelmed her senses with their perfume and body oils. They were lovely in a fake way; they made themselves up to please her for profit not out of any real desire to look nice for her. They were human and something else, but the perfume made it hard to track what that something else was.

"Fritz is waiting inside." Bones said quietly as they approached the club.

The club was hard to spot blending in with the rest of the warehouses down here, there was no loud music to be heard or bright lights. More than likely a spell was put on the building to prevent noise from leaking out into the night.

Zoya nodded and tried to get her head back into Alpha mode. Fritz was an unknown. He was new to the position of Alpha of the Black Forest Pack, having challenged and killed Engel a couple of months ago. This made her wary of a power play.

Two blocks back, Isabel sat in a black BMW, eyes fixed on Zoya and her companions. She recognized the one called Bones, but the two escorts were new. Despite the cold dead feeling in the pit of her stomach she felt her lips pull back in a snarl at the sight of them.

The temptation to see how well they could dodge a high powered rifle bullet was nearly overwhelming.

Only the cold dread stopped her and she clenched the steering wheel to keep her hands from shaking. What the hell had she done? She'd disobeyed a direct order! There was no way to keep the partners from knowing what she'd just done.

Her fingers only shook a little as she picked up her cell and punched in the long string of numbers.

"Hello?"

"Hi Daddy." She whispered.

"Honey? What's wrong?" His voice was all business and she smiled. She could almost picture him, blond hair like hers going to silver now. His dark blue eyes narrowed in concern. Her mother would be nearby, her jet black hair only recently starting to turn gray at the temples.

"I messed up."

"How bad is it?"

She watched Zoya walk into the club, a smiling pretty blond on either arm. "Bad."

"I'll come get you."

"No." She jerked her attention away from the pub. "It's my problem. But they might come after you."

"Don't worry about us sweet heart. Your mother and I both know who to trust and who to kill."

She closed her eyes, forcing herself not to cry. What a mess she'd made!

"Thanks daddy. Stay safe. I don't know when I'll be able to talk to you again."

"We love you pumpkin. Don't forget who you can trust. If it gets worse, call me. Family above all else, remember?"

"I remember. Tell mom I love her." She turned off the phone. Now to find a back way into wherever it was Zoya had just gone.

Zoya paused before entering the club eyes searching the darkness around them. They were being watched and she had to wonder how mad Isabel was with her right now. She shook her head, growing angry. She didn't owe Isabel anything. The woman had six months to send her some kind of sign and there had been nothing. She straightened a little bit and stepped forward.

The bouncer held up a card. "Whadya see?"

"Me pulling your spleen out through your asshole." She growled blue eyes flashing silver.

The mass of flesh in front of her blinked at her, uncertain he'd heard what he heard. Looking at her eyes he started sweating.

Bones chuckled, "Good to have you back boss."

The rope was moved and they entered the club.

Bones melted away into the pounding industrial dance music and Zoya moved forward to where she sensed the other Alpha. The moment they got too close, their aura of alphaness or of their beast rubbed against each other, and they both froze looking at each other across the club.

Zoya stood tall and everyone, even the escorts, moved away instantly feeling uncomfortable and threatened standing inside Zoya's aura that she unleashed to its full power easily overwhelming Fritz's aura.

He snarled and then tipped his head giving her this round.

She smiled and leashed her aura back up. The escorts were instantly back at her side and they moved over to the German Alpha. He was shorter than her with yellow blonde hair and ocean blue eyes, short and stout he looked nearly immovable. She relaxed though when she noticed his right hand playing with the hairs on the back of another Were's neck. At least he wasn't going to hit on her or maybe try to force a mating.

"Zoya." He said with a nod. "It is a pleasure to meet you." He poured them a drink from the same bottle and drank his first to show it wasn't poisoned.

"It is a pleasure to meet you." She said taking the drink.

In the back of the club, with the human servers and bartenders, Isabel slid through the shadows. She was well aware that the people around her were not what they seemed and she brushed her hand against the pistols hidden on her body. They were a reassuring presence, as were the silver bullets she'd loaded them with before entering.

It wasn't hard to spot Zoya, she had a circle of empty space around her as she and the German squared off. Again she grimaced, angry as she watched the two escorts slink back to drape themselves off of Zoya. She really, really wanted to hurt those two.

Jerking her gaze away she started scanning the room. There had to be someone else here, someone who had been sent to take care of her miss at the airport.

Zoya found Fritz to be fairly friendly and his whole reason for wanting to meet her was to learn how she had built up her Reservation to be its own independent country. He nodded and listened as she talked. "Your main problem is that the government here has regulated you to ghettos in the city. You pay taxes and work in the city you have no separate sense of pack. They've assimilated you into the city by accepting you just enough but still they treat you like second class citizens."

He nodded agreeing. Then looked down at his boy toy at a subtle press against his leg.

"Do you mind if we go dance?"

"No, no, go ahead. I'll stay here and work on this bottle."

They got up and left and one of the escorts started taking liberties with her hands. Zoya tried to ignore it for a bit as she sipped her drink and then let out a hiss of pleasure. Her eyes closed and she let her head tilt back to rest against the wall behind her seat

"I'm not getting killed for someone who can't even go a month without having sex!" Isabel yelled, not even caring if Zoya could hear her or not, pistol rising and pulling the trigger in her fury. There was, apparently, no fury like that of a woman scorned.

Zoya's eyes opened in surprise. With the loud pulsing of industrial techno music the shot hadn't been heard. She pushed the blond escort away roughly and she fell to the floor. Zoya's eyes flashed silver in her anger zeroing in on Isabel.

"You bitch!" she shouted, sliding off the stool. Her leg gave out and she realized the bullet was silver.

"Bitch?" Isabel laughed, pistol still up and aimed. "At least I'm not screwing two whores!"

Everyone went still as Zoya's rage washed over them. Fritz's Weres stepped forward growling.

"If anyone touches her before I get a chance to rip her head off I'll kill them!" Zoya shouted.

"Big words for an Alpha who keeps getting shot!" Isabel snarled.

She growled throwing her jacket off already her skin was rippling with the change. She quickly shifted her nails to claws and sliced the skin in her leg and then reached in with her unshifted hand and pulled the bullet out.

The escorts silently moved quickly away. "Six months with no mate, what did you expect? Me to just stop living because you were too chicken shit to be a part of my life."

"You idiot! I was trying to protect you! But no, you had to show up here!" Isabel blinked as she realized what Zoya was doing and considered her options. Turning she sprinted past a startled bartender into the back of the club. She wasn't about to face a Were who had fully changed shape without getting into a better position.

There was the crunch of bones and tearing of fabric. Then a snow white wolf was tearing across the bar as Isabel's departure triggered her hunting response.

"Out of the way!" Isabel yelled, shoving through the crowded backstage. A few show girls went flying with yells, and the assassin left general chaos behind her as she hit the rear exit at a run. The door bounced off the rear wall as she tumbled out into the back of the club.

Bones ate a peanut. "Okay the escorts were a bad call" she muttered getting up from the bar and left a few Euros.

Zoya dented the door when she hit it and came out into the street snarling and growling. She stopped for a moment to scent the air and took off.

Generally, Isabel could count on her long legs to give her an edge against most people chasing her. Against a wolf, that advantage disappeared. She cursed as she sprinted for her car. Why had she parked so far away from the goddamned back entrance?

Zoya's endless lope easily ate up the distance between them and she snapped her jaws at Isabel's legs catching only air.

With a lunging jump, Isabel slid across the hood of the black BMW, yelling as she went. "Leave me alone you bitch! I'm going to shoot you again!"

Zoya slid to a stop before her body impacted with the car. Blue eyes watched Isabel and she crouched down low to the ground snarling.

Since she had the option between going for her keys or the pistol that was already in her hand, Isabel opted for the keeping the pistol up, and the car between her and the snarling wolf.

"Why did you have to come back!" She shouted at the snarling beast. "I was doing fine without you!" That was a lie, a big one actually, but she was furious and jumped up on adrenaline.

Zoya's ears flattened against her head and the muscles in her leg tensed. Eyes never left the gun in Isabel's hand. Suddenly those muscles uncoiled and she leapt over the hood of the car.

"Oh fuck." Isabel thought she said it, but she was never really sure afterwards. The next thing she knew she was lying on her back, gun a few feet away and hands holding onto Zoya's head, trying to keep those teeth away.

Zoya was mad and Isabel had shot her but her heart really wasn't into it. The fur flew off turning to dust and in a surge of heat, bones and muscles, broke apart and re-knit. She slammed Isabel hands down. Jaw clenched with all sorts of angry words ready to come spilling out.

"Get off me you... you... wolf!" Isabel struggled, kicking at the body on top of hers, but doing so blindly. It was hard to fight effectively when there were tears in her eyes.

"You bitch! I waited six months for you and you fucking shoot me. No call, no note, nothing, it's not like I'm hard to find." Her right hand shift and she rest claws against the artery in Isabel throat, teeth bared. "And you shot me with silver. So I assume you meant to kill me, so why didn't you just kill me when I got off the plane."

"I was trying to keep you safe!" Isabel yelled right back. "Why is that hard for you to understand?" She tried to pressed up, getting shoved right back down by the were. "I..." At the last question, the assassin closed her eyes. "I couldn't."

"You what? Well you seemed to have proven that you can." Her leg was still bleeding the silver slowing down the healing, anger had carried her far.

Isabel snorted. "If I wanted you dead I would have shot you in your head."

"I loved you. I pined for you in the most humiliating of fashions. So what the fuck was that, a love tap?"

"That was me shooting someone who I..." She shook her head not able to say it. "who showed up with two, not one, but two goddamn beautiful escorts hanging onto her! That's what that was about!"

Zoya blinked, "You were jealous of the women Bones hired to escort me?" Her grip relaxed and her right hand shifted back.

"No." She met Zoya's eyes and sighed. "Maybe. Why are your eyes blue?"

"Because Zianada's were brown and I'm not Zianada."

"She's dead." Isabel tensed again. "Because I shot her, in the chest. And the Outfit bought it. Which they won't now that I didn't blow your head off..." Isabel trailed off. "Wait, how did you know I was at the airport?"

"Why do you always assume I'm an idiot?" Zoya said getting off Isabel slowly, eyes warily watching to see if she pulled another gun.

"Because you keep getting contracts on your life." Isabel stood up, warily as well, eyeing the were.

"Yeah well I put the contract on my life, to see if you'd shoot me or not. Guess I got my answer."

"You what?" Isabel said, dully. She really wasn't this slow to catch up with things going on around her, but Zoya always seemed to make her feel like she was standing still. "You set me up?" Tears threatened and Isabel turned her back, swallowing against the sob. "You set me up."

Zoya was quite for a long moment. "I guess I did." Suddenly she felt bad and the trick to being a good Alpha was never feeling bad about anything.

"I didn't take the shot." Isabel's voice was low. "I didn't shoot you in the head. The Outfit knows that now, the senior partners are going to put me down for this. They'll go after my family too, if they can."

"Are you saying you do or don't want to kill me?" She was unclear.

Or that could be the blood loss.

"I don't know!" Isabel turned, flinging up her hands. "You're infuriating. You just come in here; ruin my life, like it's nothing. It was my life!" she hit Zoya's shoulder.

Zoya grabbed the hand holding it to her skin. "My life is ruined without you in it. You wouldn't come to me any other way so I set this up. If you did it then at least I knew where I stood with you."

"You can't mean that." Isabel whispered, crying again, she who never cried! "You want me with you?" She didn't believe it, didn't dare believe it.

"Of course I do." At Isabel's disbelieving look she struggled to say something that would prove it.

"I haven't had sex since that last day with you." She said finally.

The human stared at her, then shook her head and with a laugh that was more a sob than a laugh, hugged her. Tightly and rested her head against Zoya's shoulder. "I won't be some sort of pack slave to you." She said, warningly. "And all the Outfit is going to come after us." It was nice to say us though.

"I'll be opinionated; I'm used to being on my own." She kept going. "I'll piss you off, and you'll piss me off."

Zoya gave a sigh of relief. "I'm a self-absorbed bitch you should more than likely piss me off every hour. So does this mean I have to get rid of the dancing girls?"

"If you don't I will." Isabel growled. "And they won't walk away from it." She promised. Her eyes shot open as she realized she was touching skin. "You're naked."

Zoya rolled her eyes. "Clothes don't really shift well. They tend to rip apart."

"Right." That forced a small smile. "You can't stay here. It's too dangerous." She didn't let go though, savoring the feel, the smell and touch of the other woman.

"Uh huh." Zoya said with a smirk. "Can I kiss you now or will you shoot me?"

"I don't know. Only one way to find out." Isabel smiled, wider this time.

Zoya leaned forward the rest of the way and kissed her slowly letting her desire slowly ramp up and spill out. She pulled back. "Gina's close by." She whispered into Isabel's ear.

"I really want to shoot her." Was the returned whisper, Isabel sighing as the kiss ended. She wanted that to keep going. "We should go."

Zoya nodded. "You can try to kill me again anytime, that's the best foreplay ever." She said with a wicked grin.

Isabel smiled back, and gave her a hard pinch to the ass.

"Careful I still have your teeth marks there."

Bones melted out of the darkness and threw clothes at Zoya. "I've paid the escorts for the evening; shall I tell them their services aren't required for the rest of the trip?"

Zoya winced and waited to get shot.

Again.

"The next words out of your mouth better be "Yes Bones, I'll never be asking for whore.. I mean, escorts again"" Isabel said, sweetly.

"But I've never... they were her idea... Yes Bones and I'll never be asking for whores or escorts again." Zoya said slipping into a pair of jeans and a then a simple blue cotton shirt.

"Good answer." Isabel drawled, pulling out her keys.

"I'm going with her. Because I'm annoyed with you, you can stay and smooth things over with Fritz and his boytoy." Zoya said hoping Isabel let her into the car.

"Whipped looks good on you Zoya." Bones said chuckling and then slid back into the shadows of the street.

"One day, soon, you're going to explain to me what it is that Bones does and who she is." With only a little bit of hesitation, she unlocked the car doors for Zoya.

"We've never had sex." She said sliding into the seat.

"Good start." Isabel grinned, gunning the engine and peeling out onto the street. Cars swerved behind her, narrowly avoiding her. She kept an eye on the mirror for any signs of followers. Gina and who knew who else was back there, she was sure of it.

"Well that's what you were really asking." Zoya said letting her eyes slid shut. "I need to go hunting or I need a lot of barely cooked meat."

Seeing no cars coming out after them, Isabel slowed their pace a little. No sense asking to get pulled over for speeding when she didn't have to. "I know just the place." She took the first left, hoping she remembered how to get there.

#####3

Gina's eyes narrowed and she sat back on the roof top setting the binoculars down next to her. She pulled out a cell phone and dialed a number.

"Median Security Services, Michelle speaking."

"I need to talk to Mr. Visk."

"Mr. Visk is busy at the moment may I take a message."

Gina blinked. "This is important."

"Mr. Visk is busy."

Gina's face turned red. "I have confirmed that Ingfred has failed to terminate her target and request a back-up team to eliminate Ingfred and target."

"Request denied, have a good day."

"What?" Gina nearly screamed.

"Gina, you have had a string of sloppy assignments lately, consider this an evaluation. You perform the task given you or you are retired. Have a good day." Michelle hung up.

Gina just blinked, listening to the dial tone.

Michelle got up and snapped latex gloves on to her hands. "Okay Leon where were we?" The pale bald man with sickly looking skin looked at his secretary from where he was duct taped to his office chair. "Oh yes, you were going to give me the codes to your Swiss account." She produced a glass vial with an eyedropper top.

#####3

Zoya leaned forward and flicked the seat heater on and then leaned back, letting the heat from the leather seats soak into her bones. She closed her eyes but after a while she found the silence oppressive. She opened her eyes and let her gaze rest on Isabel. She could see the muscles in the woman's jaw clench and relax.

"You're still pretty mad at me aren't you?" She said finally breaking the silence.

"What gave you that idea?" Isabel snapped and then immediately regretted it. "Sorry. I haven't been sleeping much and then those two floozies were on your arm" She sighed. "I keep seeing your head in my crosshairs at the airport. I almost shot you."

"But you didn't." That's all that mattered to Zoya. She was silent for a moment trying to find something to say. "I like your haircut. Did you see Ophelia?"

"My last couple hours in L.A." Isabel smiled slightly, running her hand through the stylish cut she was now sporting. "Do you like the color? Ophelia talked me into it." She'd always been what was known as a dirty blond, but after taking one look at her, Ophelia had demanded that she change it to the current red highlights.

It was well known that Zoya had a thing for blonds. The Were just looked at the haircut that flattered Isabel's face and the red highlights and smiled. "I do, it makes you look dangerous, which we already know but now it's like that danger is more honest." She shut up, knowing she wasn't making any sense. "It looks hot on you." She finally gave up and said.

Isabel smiled, some of the anger draining away. "Good. Ophelia mentioned something about it being more honest. She also threatened me if I go to any one else for a haircut. I think she was serious." She bit her lip in thought. "Do you have to stay in Germany long?"

She wasn't going back to her hotel, that place was probably a death trap now. Thankfully she never traveled with a lot of things anyway. At the end of the intersection she turned right, smiling as she saw the bright neon lights of their destination up ahead.

"No not long. I should probably have another meet and greet with Fritz because I left so rudely tonight and he'll be concerned I'll think he sent you to kill me. So I should reassure him that we are still on friendly terms."

She cautiously leaned over, things might be friendly but she didn't doubt Isabel would be pissed for days over what she'd done. She moved until her face was in Isabel neck and inhaled the woman's scent feeling her rough edges smooth over. "I missed your scent."

Isabel's eyes fluttered closed for a second, enjoying the touch. "I never thought I'd like it for someone to tell me that." She admitted, pulling into a large parking lot behind what looked like an outdoor mall. The lights were bright and raucous, and Isabel gestured towards it.

"There's some great food stalls in there, fresh meat that they'll cook or not, however you like it."

Zoya shook her head and got out of the car. "How do you know about such things? Most normal people don't know about such things." She shut her door and moved quickly over to open Isabel's door and held out an arm to help her out.

Since she was still a little pissed at the other woman, Isabel just shook her head, sliding her arm through Zoya's and holding on there as they walked towards the not too busy outdoor mall. Later in the evening the place would be crowded, but they were barely into the night now and the stalls were only just starting to get going.

"That one there, the one that says Danzig's in German, that's a good one if you want to try it?"

Zoya nodded and moved them over towards the stall, her bare feet were quiet on the cobbled stones an odd mixture of old and new world. Her stomach growling as she caught the smells of cooked and raw meat. She reached into her pocket and realized she had no wallet it was back with Bones in her leather jacket.

She made a face and quietly said. "I don't have any money its back in the clothes I had on in the bar."

"Is that how all our dates are going to go?" Isabel laughed, digging into her pocket. "I wouldn't mind being your sugar momma." She teased, giving a quick wave of hello to the burly man behind the open pit grill. He nodded in return, hacking into a huge side of beef and carving it up.

Zoya made a face and gave an annoyed growl. "That comment just fucked with all my control issues." She said finally and sat down on a ratty stool next to Isabel.

"I know." Isabel winked, sitting down next to her. The burly man took one look at Zoya and seared a huge looking steak only long enough to get grill marks on the outside. The inside was definitely still bleeding as he slid the entire thing, which filled a huge platter, in front of Zoya.

"Bratwurst." Isabel said, eyeing the bleeding meet askance.

The large man nodded, grabbing a string of deliciously crispy looking sausages and slicing them up on a tray for her. A few sides were added, unceremoniously and she had a plate in front of her. Two mugs of beer were added for good measure, and she slid over a decent amount of Euros as

payment.

Zoya cared little for how she looked. She had been shot with silver and had shifted form, her body needed fuel or she was going to pass out. She did however; take the time to cut the meat before shoving it into her mouth. "That's good." She moaned and wiped her mouth as juice from the meat dribbled down.

"Sorry." She looked slightly embarrassed and then turned her attention to her food.

"No problem." Isabel winced, trying not to watch as the bloody juice dribbled down the other woman's chin. It was hard to watch considering how much Isabel had come to dislike the sight of blood, especially on Zoya.

"You're hungry; I know shifting takes it out of people." She focused on the bratwurst in front of her. "I don't know what to do now." She admitted, eating.

"Do? As in this very moment or in general?" Zoya asked wiping her mouth again. It didn't take long for her to clear her plate. "In my opinion. Right now we go back to where I'm staying. I let you beat on me to work out whatever other anger issues you have about me setting you and this all up, then we have sex. In general.." She downed half her beer. "You come back with me to the Reservation and be my bodyguard; apparently, I'm really bad at protecting myself and people keep trying to kill me."

"As simple as that?" Isabel gave her a skeptical look. "I mean, sure the sex is easy, but you just think I'm going to move out to your reservation?" She had to work hard to avoid smiling. Tweaking the Alpha was, she suspected, going to be one of her favorite pastimes.

Zoya was silent as she finished the last of her beer. "I think you just called me easy."

Isabel smiled down at her dish. "I think I just did."

"Fair enough, but I'm not cheap."

"Good thing I'm not poor." Isabel's grinned wickedly.

The man slammed a full stein down in front of Zoya, taking away her plate to refill it.

"Seriously, what would I do on the reservation? If I get bored I get cranky and then I end up shooting someone."

"Good, I have lots of people who need shooting." Zoya said sipping her beer. "Seriously. The main towns are pretty well tamed but do you understand how many different shifters are shoved together on the Reservation? I spend a lot of time bullying people, killing people, fucking people and making business deals." It was a good thing Weres didn't need 8 hours of sleep a night, since she rarely got it.

"If I move there and you fuck around with someone else I will shoot you and them, probably several times." Isabel was serious as she looked up from her nearly empty plate. "I don't share well."

"I'd probably rip the throat out of anyone you'd fuck around on so, fair enough."

They shared a smile that made the large butcher back away. "Good." Isabel held out her hand, happy despite everything.

Zoya looked at the hand and then reached out with her own. "I better get more than a hand shake." She grumbled.

"You want a lap dance right here?" Isabel raised an eyebrow. "That might be a bit much even for this place." The first of the Goth customers were starting to trickle in now that the sun was firmly down.

"So? Like I care about their wants and desires." Zoya said finishing her beer.

"All right." Isabel pushed Zoya back against the bar and climbed up onto her lap, straddling her. "This what you wanted?" She breathed, biting onto Zoya's earlobe as she pressed her hips against the taller woman's. "Or this?" She more or less slithered against Zoya's body, rubbing against it.

Zoya's eyes went bright and she grinned watching Isabel move until her arousal became painful. "Okay stop, stop." Her control was crumbling, she'd really gone to long without sex and her body was reminding her of that fact. Her eyes were now wolf bright and her nails slightly longer; her whole countenance had shifted to something that screamed inhuman.

A man was leering at Isabel ass and she snarled and growled at him.

"Time we go." Isabel grabbed Zoya's hand and tugged. She probably should get the Alpha out of here before they got involved in a blood bath.

Zoya let herself be led away by Isabel. "Can I drive?"

The human laughed, only hesitating a little as she handed over the keys.

"Thanks, but I'm not really staying at that Hilton we checked into." She smiled knowing that Isabel trusted her enough to drive and loved her enough to humor her control issues.

"Of course not." Isabel slid into the passenger seat, closing her eyes in pleasure as she let some of the tension leave her shoulders. "Gina's going to know where to find you, maybe not here, but when we get back to the reservation. I want her dead, but she's my problem."

"If that's what you want I'll let you kill her honey." Zoya patted Isabel leg. "I set her up to be here for that anyways, although I was planning on killing her, but if you want the kill." That was a sign of love, for an Alpha giving up a kill for their mate.

One eye cracked open. "You're humoring me aren't you?" She looked around, wondering where they were driving. "Where are we going anyway?" She'd have to call her parents soon, let them know what had happened. And her brother, eventually.

"No. Seriously, if you want the kill you can have it." Zoya drove down the silent streets to the outskirts of the town. "I'm actually staying in a cottage near the next burg."

"A cottage?" Isabel smiled. "I think I'm going to enjoy being out of the cities for a while." She stared watched the dark streets flash by. "It'll be nice to stay in one place more than one night."

"I liked being Zianada every once in awhile to get away from the Reservation and the politics. But I can understand as an Assassin I bet you didn't stay in one place too long."

"No. Not for long." She looked over at Zoya, studying her strong face as they drove. "I know you have a sister, but do you have any other family I should know about?"

"A brother... kind of." She said her knuckled going white as she gripped the wheel tightly for a second and then relaxed remembering that night.

Isabel said nothing, simply sliding her hand along Zoya's thigh and then resting it there. She wouldn't press if the Were didn't want to talk about it.

"The men I killed, the ones I went to Juvi over, they were hunters. They shot my parents in the head while we were out running. Kill shots, they couldn't heal from that. Ivan, my older brother, took a glancing blow to the skull. The silver bullet caused permanent brain damage before the FBI would release him to a pack doctor. Chance and I were fine. They took her away though, sent her to live with her mother's family; took away my pack and my family so I grew up without either because I defended my family from murderers."

That was the worst thing for wolf shifters, to be alone.

"Family before everything." Isabel said, understanding that. "I'm sorry. But you have your sister back now right? What about your brother?"

"He's unstable. I should kill him, put him down, but I can't." Her fatal flaw as an Alpha. "I have him locked up in a facility on the Reservation. I pay a small staff to care for him."

"My brother's a bit like that. Not quite stable." She smiled a little sadly. "He's a better assassin than I am, though. Takes all the jobs, any of them, even the ones I won't touch. Dad always said he was better."

"I like you just the way you are, because if you were a touch more amoral you would have shot me despite how good my sexual prowess is."

She had to laugh at that. "You're mind works in strange ways." Isabel leaned back, leaving her hand right where it was. She liked it there on Zoya's thigh, feeling the muscles move as the other woman shifted the car through its gears. "Do you have to tell Bones where you're going?"

She pulled off the road on to a dirt road. "She knows and she'll show up late in the afternoon, she has things to do, like follow Gina around."

Zoya slowed down the dirt road. The cottage wasn't visible from the road; it only became visible after the road turned and they passed a bunch of trees. Zoya pulled into the converted garage a short distance from the house. Once upon a time it had been a barn. She turned off the car and tossed the keys to Isabel, got out of the car and slowly stretched every muscle, then leaned on the car and looked at Isabel.

"If you would disarm yourself of your firepower, please. You can set it on the hood of the car." At a look from Isabel she continued. "I know you're still mad at me and I'd rather work through this now rather than later. You're pissed I set you up, ruined your life and sent you spiraling into this horrible gray area of the unknown. If you want me to say I'm sorry, I'm not going to... but I will let you try to hit me." She moved and went and closed the doors; on the off chance Isabel wiped the floor with her werewolf butt she'd prefer to reduce the chances of anyone seeing it.

She turned back after shutting the doors and an eyebrow rose as she saw the guns. "Impressive, and I'm not sure where you hid those all. Maybe someday I'll look for myself." She grinned; happy at least Isabel hadn't tried to deny she was pissed off at Zoya. "I'll even go easy on you, I promise not to shift."

"How nice of you." Isabel rolled her shoulders, amazed at how much she was suddenly looking forward to this. There was no doubting that she was still pissed off, a lot. "I've carefully planned every step of my life along the way, you know that?"

They circled one another in the dirt floor, the only light from a single over head flickering fluorescent strip.

"I had plans, damn you." She sidestepped, swung at Zoya's face and then kicked at her side as she ducked the punch.

"I was going to follow my father's footsteps, become a full partner and then retire!" Isabel grunted, taking just barely deflecting a hit from the taller woman. Damn she was strong.

"How boring. See? I brought you excitement." She chuckled as Isabel's eyes narrowed and the woman kicked at her. She ducked the kick and danced away. "Come on, you can do better than that. You're a fully trained assassin." She fell for the leg feint and took a punch in the ribs.

She grunted and retreated, warily watching the assassin.

"Boring?" Isabel was dimly aware she was screaming as she pressed her attack. "Boring!" She beat her fury against Zoya, ignoring anything resembling the tactics her father had taught her or defenses her mother had taught. "I would have been one of the most powerful people in the world!"

Zoya dodged and ducked most of the blows.

A few landed and she grunted in pain. She caught Isabel's arm and tried to put her in a submission hold only to have the woman easily counter it and slither out of the hold. Zoya didn't even try to be a punching bag for Isabel's anger; she knew she'd end up eating through a straw until she healed. She matched her attack for attack, keeping her werewolf instincts chained up tight so she didn't kill Isabel.

It took a while, but finally Isabel's anger drained enough that her blows slowed and she rested her fists against Zoya's chest, breathing hard. "Why'd you have to be you?" She whispered, tired.

"You're just that lucky." Zoya said. She wasn't breathing hard but she was sweating and blood was crusting on her face and chest from where a good blow had hit her nose.

"I'm not pissed anymore." Isabel muttered into Zoya's chest.

"I love you." Zoya said in response. Lifting her hands slowly and putting them on top of Isabel's fists. "And I'm sorry I'm the most powerful person in the world, or will be once I destroy a few vampires."

"Why do you have to say it like that?" Isabel lifted her head, shaking her head despite the tears in her eyes. "You aren't the most powerful person in the world."

Zoya snorted. "That's cute. But I'm currently in the process of destroying the top tier of the 'Outfit', so I can have you." She frowned. "It sounded better in my head, but now that I've said it out loud it sounds creepy and possessive."

"You're what!?" Isabel jerked back as far as Zoya's hold on her would let. "The entire top tier? How can you take out the entire tier?"

"Cause I'm one of the most powerful people in the world. I just generally don't do things like that because it makes the US Government uncomfortable and they might nuke me."

She sighed. "Can we go inside? I need to reset my nose and maybe have a drink and a shower. Then I'll tell you everything."

"You..." Isabel shook her head, at a loss for words. "Shower sounds good." She said finally.

For a moment Zoya was afraid to let go, that Isabel would run off, but finally she removed her hands and went to open the door. "Don't forget your guns."

It was tempting; Isabel was good at fleeing, hiding from things. Things like the life changing events that were engulfing her without her control. She carefully picked up the pile of weapons and trailed along behind Zoya feeling lost and cut adrift. "Anyone ever tell you that you've got a healthy ego?"

"It might have come up." Her eyes watched Isabel warily; the woman's whole body language screamed that she would run. "Although, with you I have no ego. I've spent the last six months denning in the most humiliating of lovesick fashions." She'd never created a den for anyone. Her home was her territory, not something she shared, and for six months she'd been sharing it with a woman who wasn't there, waiting for Isabel to just show up.

"I've never lived with someone." Isabel warned, eyes flicking about as she took in the windows and doors, forming a mental map of the entire cottage. "Nice place." She hesitated but finally closed the door behind her.

"Me neither." The cottage was simple and rustic but there was electricity and water. "I normally kick the woman I sleep with out in the morning." If she waited that long.

"Have there been a lot of women?" Isabel laughed at her own question. "Never mind. Don't answer that." She poked around, indulging her curiosity and stashing one or two of her weapons as she did.

Zoya moved into the bathroom and looked at her nose. She ran the water and washed the blood off and then dried her face. "I don't know, maybe I'll look meaner with a slightly offset nose." Although it would just reset the next time she shifted.

"Sexy in a mean, I'm the Alpha, sort of way." Isabel leaned up against the door frame, watching her. "Not sure you can get any sexier."

"Are you saying you want to shower with me?" Zoya said turning to look at the other woman.

"Are you saying you'd let me?" Isabel asked, fingers slowly unbuttoning the shirt she was wearing. The nervousness was still there, but it was hard to want to run away with Zoya looking so good in front of her.

Zoya nodded, blue eyes fixated on Isabel's fingers.

"That a yes?" Isabel purred, fingers finishing their journey with the last button. She was obscenely happy she'd worn a nice bra this morning.

Zoya nodded again and swallowed, hoping to get moisture to her vocal chords as the shirt now opened just enough to tease her with a glimpse of flesh.

Those nimble fingers continued downwards and she shimmied out of her tight pants with a teasing look at the Were. She really was enjoying the way Zoya was watching her; that was true power, she thought, sauntering toward the still woman.

Zoya's fingers flexed but other than that she stayed absolutely still, watching Isabel approach her. She almost swooned taking in the woman's scent, it was coated with desire, desire for her. "Lovely," she croaked.

"Glad you approve." Isabel slid past Zoya towards the shower, intentionally pressing against her as she did. Hopefully there was hot water; she didn't think this would be enjoyable if there was only cold water. Once the water was running and hopefully heating, she turned and ran her fingers down the front of Zoya's chest.

"You're wearing a lot of clothes." She slid off her own shirt, letting it drop where it may. Underneath was only the bra and matching panties.

Zoya nodded and her hands started fumbling with the buttons of the jeans she was wearing. So much for being Alpha, she was now feeling about 17 again and like it was the first time she was going to have sex.

"Let me do that." Isabel knocked her hands away. "I like this." She smiled, teasingly as she undid the buttons and then pushed the jeans down and off. Her

fingers skimmed along skin as she did. "Mmmm..." She hummed in pleasure at those long legs.

Zoya's breath caught in her throat and then she whined slightly at the teasing touch on her legs.

"Soon." Isabel promised, pushing Zoya's blouse off her shoulders. She swallowed, having forgotten, or tried to forget, how amazingly responsive Zoya's body was. No bra or panties, her earlier shape shifting had taken care of those. Isabel pushed her back against the wall. "I was going to wait for the shower, but I can't." She pressed against Zoya, kissing her hard.

The Alpha of the biggest pack in maybe the world let herself be dominated by a human woman, and Zoya rather liked it. She growled and pulled away, nipping at Isabel's shoulder, but then returned to kissing her.

Isabel had a brief idea of trying to make Zoya beg, but she was suddenly far too urgent for that. It had been a long six months without any company other than her own. Desperately she sank to her knees, lifted the Were's leg over her shoulder, and dived in without warning.

"God you're wet." She mumbled, or at least she thought she did, as she slid fingers inside and joined them with her lips and tongue.

Zoya scrambled to keep from losing her balance and at the last second her arm found the sink bracing her. Her eyes slid closed and her head banged back against the wall. She was already so close; it had been a long six months. Her other hand tangled in Isabel's red-blond locks.

Twice now Zoya had told her she loved her, and Isabel hadn't answered. She'd wanted to, but she'd held back. Here though, fingers sliding in and out of Zoya's wetness and her taste in her mouth, she could try to show her.

The werewolf came with a muted cry that wormed its way out through her clenched teeth.

"Perfect." Isabel licked her lips, leaving her fingers where they were as she stood up and kissed her thoroughly.

Zoya blindly reached into the shower and shut the water off. "I don't think we will be using this for awhile." She murmured against Isabel's lips.

She opened her eyes and looked at Isabel, studying her face, finding what she was looking for. She smiled and then leaned forward, kissing each eyelid. "It's okay, you'll tell me someday."

#####3

It was late, or maybe early, depended on how you looked at such things, Isabel thought. The cool night air felt good on her skin as she considered the stars above her. Her mind was still trying to catch up with the changes that had just been forced upon her.

Although, she smiled wryly at herself, most of those changes were for the good if she was going to be honest with herself. Very good if she considered the pleasant post sex ache from most of her body.

She'd had fond memories of Zoya's energetic abilities as a lover, and it was nice to know that those memories hadn't been wrong. They'd hadn't made it out of the living room before the Were was on her and her smile widened as she remembered their slow passage from bathroom, to living room, with a stop at the kitchen and finally to the bedroom.

The last time had been slow, achingly slow. Isabel's eyes closed with a sigh of pleasure as she remembered their last bout of lovemaking. There'd been no hurry by then, each of them had been sated but they'd pressed against each other in a slow almost gentle cadence. Which had, she smirked, none the less resulted in an amazing orgasm before they'd finally given into sleep.

Hours later she'd awakened to find herself curled up in Zoya's arms. It had been a very nice way to wake up, but she'd needed a moment alone. A time to think through all the ramifications of the night before.

So she'd slipped out of Zoya's arms and crawled through the bedroom window to lie out on the roof. Morning was just starting to lighten the sky, and she was looking forward to watching the sun rise. It wasn't something she often indulged in, but today she would.

Zoya was awake. She was lying on her stomach on the bed eyes open she watched the window that Isabel had disappeared out of. She didn't follow. It was hard but she didn't. For all she knew Isabel had taken off but the more rational part of her mind knew the woman probably just needed space. Which was hard and went against her more animalistic nature. Weres needed family and pack, and it got worse when they took a mate. Isabel was her mate even if the woman hadn't realized it yet and Zoya hadn't marked her, yet.

Tyler may have taken well to the mark but she was uncertain how Isabel would and she was uncertain how her pack would take to Isabel. Isabel, she knew, could take care of herself.

Quietly she got up and slipped on a robe and made her way to the kitchen. There were lots of parts to mating. Proving she was a good provider which could manifest itself in providing a kill, giving up a kill or preparing food. Food was big in Were culture, gifts. For now Zoya had the desire to make breakfast for Isabel.

She didn't normally cook, it was the reason she hired Terri. She opened up the small ice box and frowned.

A scent came floating on the air currents and tickled Zoya's nose, the hairs rose on the back of her neck and she growled. Another Were was close by. A second before the bullet slammed into the door of the ice box Zoya jumped back into a crouch.

The man didn't say anything, he was as silent as the pistol that he tracked Zoya's movements with. The bullets punched holes into the couch, at least a couple of them going through Zoya as they did so.

"Zoya?" Isabel yelled from the roof, having heard a familiar sound from inside. A silencer didn't completely silence the firing of a bullet, and it could do nothing for the sound of bullets hitting a metal refrigerator.

Zoya gritted her teeth as bullet slammed into her bicep. She growled and her skin started split white fur flowing over her body like an avalanche. A werewolf leaped over the couch charging the man.

He was only momentarily taken off guard then tried to jump out of the way of the charge.

Zoya caught him in the shoulder spinning him around into the wall instead of out of the large mirror like she'd planned.

Lips pulled back she snarled and lunged snapping her teeth at his neck and face.

"Werewolf." He grunted, a little surprised as he grabbed for the knife at his side and slashed upwards. The silver tip angled for Zoya's eye as he slashed, his movements smooth and deadly fast despite the lined face and white hair.

Zoya pulled back and circled him warily, eyes never leaving the knife. She had gotten a good smell of him, and he smelled nothing like a Were, somewhere there was someone else. Fear curled in her gut as she remembered Isabel was alone and naked on the roof. It went against her instincts to flee from a fight but Isabel was more important. She backed up a few steps and then ran down the hall for the bedroom.

Isabel was just swinging in through the bedroom window when Zoya burst in through the door. Something, obviously, was very wrong considering the bleeding her lover was currently doing all over the floor.

The human caught slight of movement down the hall and she threw herself at Zoya, tackling the taller woman and sending her to the ground with a grunt of pain. Two bullets sang overhead, cracking the plastered wall where they hit.

"How many?" Isabel demanded, fingers finding the gun she'd hidden under the mattress the night before and firing a couple of shots down the hallway. Just to keep their guest honest.

The wolf barked twice and then sniffed Isabel all over making sure she was unharmed. She shifted again going from animal to monster, the twilight form between human and animal. An ear twitched catching movement on the roof.

"Two." Isabel muttered, crawling to the door and shoving just the tip of her pistol out. Two quick bursts again, this time they were answered, one bullet coming so close to her hand it left a scorch mark.

"Jesus." She pulled back, impressed at whoever's marksmanship.

Something large was moving on the roof above them and she sent a couple shots up through the roof, missing whatever it was but forcing it to be more cautious. Six shots, she'd have to reload soon now.

It was hard but Zoya forced her mouth to form human words. "Out through the window, I'll draw attention, you go for car." With a good push she could toss the small dresser down the hallway blocking it and swing out on the roof to confront the person up there.

"You better be right behind me." Isabel said, rising to a sprinters crouch. Any second now the person down the hallway was going to throw a grenade into the room and it was going to end badly.

At Zoya's grunt, which Isabel took as agreement, she sprinted for the window. A bullet, perfectly aimed, nearly took her head off but grazed her shoulder instead. A flesh wound, she hoped as she felt the burning sensation and flung herself at the window.

Just as she did, the thing from the roof leapt. She crashed into it just as it was about to hit the window and their combined weight tumbled ungracefully towards the ground.

From down the hallway the shooting stopped and the man called. "Isabel? Is that you pumpkin?"

Zoya pushed the dresser to the door and shoved it down the hallway before turning to the window. She hesitated as the words penetrated her brain and then she was out the window looking for Isabel.

Isabel was on the ground, trying to get her breath back after having been landed on by a were. The were was rapidly shifting form, black hair disappearing as the woman worriedly held Isabel. "Isabel? Darling? Can you hear me?"

Zoya landed behind them growling. "Get away from her." The white fur on her spine raised up making her look larger. Muscles were tensed to charge and bloody wounds were healing but still blood stained white fur. But she'd kill whoever she needed to keep Isabel safe.

"Don't you dare hurt her!" The woman yelled in answer, getting up to put her naked body between Isabel and Zoya.

Behind her, Isabel forced herself up onto an elbow, coughing. "Zoya mom stop it" she wheezed, trying to suck in air.

Zoya froze and said the only thing that came to mind. "Mom?" Isabel's family had tried to kill them - or actually her - fucking lovely.

Still wheezing a little, Isabel stood up, wishing she'd gotten dressed before the entire family reunion had happened. "Zoya, meet my mom. Mom, this is Zoya, someone you are not going to kill." She looked beyond Zoya's shoulder and sighed. "Daddy! Put down the rifle!"

Zoya, the pack Alpha of the Reservation, just nodded her head. She could have moved out of the way of the rifle but that would have left Isabel in the target, of course that was before she'd known it was her parents.

Her fur fell off and then slowly and almost painfully her bones broke apart and reknit, she was too tired and too hungry. Isabel had already burned off most of her energy. She eyed the other Were suspiciously not caring it was Isabel's mother. The woman had not shown her throat to Zoya in submission and until that occurred she could not be considered friend, only foe.

The wound on her leg had reopened and other bullet holed in her body bled sluggishly. She needed food and she wanted to flee, finding this all very

overwhelming. "I'll go start breakfast." She snapped, and turned, marching around the side of the house naked.

"But honey, I had a clear shot!" Isabel's dad yelled down from where he was perched on the side of the window sill.

"No shooting!" Isabel yelled back, stomping a naked foot. "I'm going to get dressed and help Zoya, you two just calm down!" Muttering angrily to herself, Isabel hurried after the only slightly limping were.

"I'm sorry about that Zoya, they just get protective. My dad must have traced my cell phone call last night and then decided to come help. And mom well" Isabel trailed off, not really sure what to say.

"Is a werewolf." Zoya snapped back. A werewolf invading her territory, but it was Isabel's mom, and Zoya thought her head was going to explode trying to reconcile werewolf instincts with human behavior.

"Yeah." Isabel winced as Zoya slammed open the door to the cottage. "I was going to tell you about that." She caught sight of her dad up the stairs and gave him a shake of her head, telling him to stay where he was.

Zoya stepped around the broken dresser at the bottom of the stairs and moved past it to the bathroom, where she turned on the sink and splashed cold water on her face. "She's not just a Were, she's a Blackwater Were." She recognized the mix of Native-American and Anglo in the woman that was somewhat distinctive to the Blackwaters. "So is this some kind of game to fuck with me?" She asked. The Blackwaters were the only Weres with enough independent power to resist her on the Reservation, with them and their Ranch. The feud between them was legendary.

She wetted the towel and pressed it to her bicep.

"Are all your Aunts and Uncles having a good laugh because the mighty Zoya fell in love with one of their non-shifting nieces? Is that why you never tell me you love me back?" She couldn't look at herself in the mirror with the tears that were in her eyes and instead looked at her arm.

"Are you crazy!" Isabel jabbed Zoya in the chest with a finger, furious she would even say such a thing, much less think it. "You think this was just a set up! Are you fucking insane? Do you understand how paranoid that sounds?" The blond human threw up her hands.

"You come into my life and destroy it and then when my parents show up, because I told them that I'm in deep trouble with the Outfit because of you, you think I set this all up!" She gave a bitter laugh. "I'm so thankful you think I'm that omnipotent! I can't believe I fell in love with someone who is clearly deranged."

If Zoya had wolf ears at the moment they would have perked up. "You love me?" For a moment she thought she had imagined the look she'd seen in Isabel's eyes last night. She laughed and then picked Isabel up spinning them around in the small bathroom. "That almost makes up for your parents trying to kill me." She peppered kisses on Isabel's face and shoulders and whatever other pieces of skin she could get to.

"Almost?" Isabel laughed, ineffectively batting at Zoya's shoulders. "Put me down you insane person!" She was laughing though and she hugged the Were, tightly, when she got put down on her feet.

"You must have known, I at least knew Weres? I mean, otherwise I would have run away screaming before now."

"I knew you were familiar with the supernatural world. You didn't bat an eye about blood soup or me meeting a vampire. But it never once occurred to me that you were a half-breed." She gave one last sloppy kiss to Isabel's collarbone and then set her down. "I don't really have a problem with your mother on an intellectual level, but she's invaded my territory; that's a big deal to Weres. I even respect her for coming in to save her child, family and pack are everything. But..." It was hard to put into words. "I'm bleeding all over you." She said change the topic.

"Yes you are." Isabel didn't really care but she did have her parents lingering outside. She gave the Alpha a push towards the shower. "Shower and I'll have food ready for you when you get out. Then I'll formally introduce you to my parents."

Zoya nodded. "Clothes." She shouted through the door Isabel was exiting through. "Clothes would be good."

A bundle came flying back in through the door. "Clothes." Isabel laughed.

Catching the bundle she set it on the sink. She turned on the shower and stepped into the spray, hissing as it hit the wound on her leg.

Her girlfriend was a Were, which would be easier for the other pack members to handle although she'd been prepared to handle anyone who had a problem.

She had no doubts that Tyler would find this amusing.

Downstairs, Isabel was moving around the kitchen preparing a basic breakfast with a lot of protein for Zoya. Her parents were watching her with fairly inscrutable looks from the cabin's remaining table.

"Mom, would you stop growling? She's going to hear you."

"I don't care." Her mother tossed her long black hair, sniffing. "You do realize who it is you've decided to risk your life over?"

"Yes Mom I do." Isabel sighed; she'd been anticipating having this conversation over the phone, not in person.

"Dear." Her mother, who had thankfully found some clothes, was watching her worriedly. "You know her reputation don't you? I can't believe your cousins haven't told you it before."

"Mom! It's fine. I know she messed around and she knows if she does it again I'll kill her and whoever it is she's fu sleeping with." Deciding to add the entire carton of eggs, Isabel started breaking. This was going to be uncomfortable.

Pumpkin. We're sorry about barging in here." Her father broke in. "But you sounded upset on the phone and well it looked really bad. We found your car and what looked like a fight there was some blood and then when I came in here it looked like another fight."

And his mind was sticking to a fight because he didn't want to think about his little girl doing anything else.

Isabel kept her back to her parents; she did not want to explain why her face was turning red. "Daddy, I told you it was my problem. How did you get here so fast anyway? Weren't you supposed to be on the way to Egypt?"

"Well we hadn't actually left Italy yet, so we just you know... you're much more important than Egypt. Besides Visk was found dead, as well as Smithe. I was concerned."

They didn't say murdered in their line of work. But it was pretty clear what had happened. "Someone's cleaning house."

"Smithe also?" Isabel did turn at that, surprised. "That's two senior partners. What about the others? Maybe you and mom should go take a vacation somewhere else?" Somewhere far away.

"Daris went into hiding, we think, and Gongyk is scrambling to find hunters to get to the source of the problem. But no one is returning his phone calls."

Her mother nodded, having already heard most of this on the way over. "Don't worry about us dear, we'll be fine. We're worried about you though. Are you sure..."

Isabel cut her off. "Mom. She's good for me. You know I was a wreck for the last six months."

Her father patted her mother's knee. "You really shouldn't lecture on this, you know how your family felt about me." He whispered.

"I also know how my family is going to feel about our daughter dating Zoya." Her mother shook her head again and Isabel smiled, watching the two of them. "It's good to see you. I was going to try to come see you guys after the next job."

"Whoops, the eggs." She whirled, catching them before they got too done. Unfortunately the omelet was now going to be scrambled eggs.

He didn't know what grudge the Blackwaters had against Zoya and he didn't care. It was probably something Werewolfy that he wouldn't understand.

"You're welcome, pumpkin."

The front door opened and Bones came in. She glanced at everyone and the smashed dresser. "Well now I don't have to go to Egypt."

"Bones?" Isabel blinked, shook her head and hoped she'd added enough eggs to the pan. "Bones, these are my parents, Erik and Magena." Her family didn't really go in for normal names. Something between the Native American and Nordic heritage she suspected.

Bones waved. "Wow, this is awkward. I'm just going to walk back out the door and come back later."

"Why were you going to go to Egypt?" Isabel asked, before she could leave.

She started walking backwards to the door. "Does Zoya know anything about you? Like how your parents are part of the top tier of the 'Outfit'"

"She's not completely out of the loop." Isabel said, dryly, starting to portion out the eggs and toast. Hopefully the coffee would be ready in a few minutes; she'd made it dark like her dad liked.

The hellhound's hand was on the doorknob turning it. "Do you two talk ever? Or just have sex?" She opened the door and quickly left.

"That's Bones?" Her mother whispered to her father. "I thought she'd be taller."

"She can be if she wants." Zoya rumbled out, "And I've never slept with her despite rumors."

"And never will." Isabel said, with only a very slight edge to her voice. "Breakfast's ready." She rolled her eyes at her mother's smile.

Magena watched her daughter setting out food. "You've never wanted to help me in the kitchen before. I didn't even know you knew how to cook eggs dear."

Zoya's lip was curled back, exposing her teeth, but other than that she thought she was handling having another Were in her space.

Isabel's mother sat up a bit straighter in her chair, eyes narrowing at the Alpha. She would not be intimidated by this blow hard of a woman, no matter what her relationship to her daughter was.

"Mom. Zoya? Could you two stop growling at each other over breakfast?" She gave her father a pleading look.

"Actually, we can't." Zoya said. "Its a werewolf thing, so all things being considered we're being pretty civil."

Her father held up his hands, showing this was beyond him.

"Just be glad your brother isn't here Isabel." Her mother agreed, taking the offered plate with another sharp look at Zoya.

"Yeah that would be fun." Isabel muttered, setting a huge pile of food in front of Zoya.

"You could just show me your neck and we'd be done with this." With any other wolf not in her pack she'd have forced the issue but because this was her mate's mother she was trying very hard.

"You could show me yours." Magena bared her teeth.

Zoya laughed and unchained her Alpha presence, letting it wash over the room. That was how she controlled a whole territory that wasn't necessarily just wolves.

Sweat beaded on her the older woman's forehead, until she had to look down, shuddering. "Zoya." Isabel said softly, seeing her father tense in his chair, not needing to see the hand that he'd just dropped to pistol.

Zoya struggled to chain it back up and it fought her the whole way. "Do I bother you when you're doing a hit?" She grumbled and then went and grabbed a plate and leaned against the counter. She used the fork to play with the eggs on the plate.

"No, but I don't usually do a hit on your mother." Isabel watched her go, torn for the first time by something with her own family.

"It would be hard to do since she's dead." She grumbled. "Okay, I'm sorry. I was out of line." She mumbled to her plate.

"Mom?" Isabel prodded, hoping this wasn't about to blow up. What was it about Weres that made them so prickly sometimes?

Magena sighed. "I'm sorry I entered your house without invitation and attacked you. But, I would do it again if you hurt my baby girl."

In the way of apologies, it wasn't the greatest.

There were several things Zoya could have said to make the matter worse about what sort of attacking she had done to Isabel, but wisely for a change she said nothing in regards to that.

Instead she said. "And Bones was going to Egypt to kill your parents." She held up her hands to forestall an eruption. "In my defense I didn't know they were your parents because honestly I don't even know what your last name is." Which was silly, she could plan to undermine a super-secret assassination organization but didn't know her girlfriend's last name.

She then prepared to get slapped. Or more than likely shot, again.

"Ingfred." Isabel said, really working hard to avoid smiling. "Our last name is Ingfred. Daddy got Mom to take it as her last name even, although he won't explain how no matter how much my brother and I plead for the story."

The man in question sniffed. "Its not a story kids should hear about their parents."

She got up, moving over in front of Zoya. "Why were you sending Bones to go kill off my parents?"

Zoya sighed. "Because the 'Outfit' wasn't just going to let you run off with me. So I set up this plan in motion to see if you would kill me, and if you didn't to see if you still wanted to be with me. Part of which revolved around destroying the Outfit so you wouldn't have to look over your shoulder for the rest of your life."

"Not a bad plan." Magena said, a little grudgingly.

"Leon Visk's secretary Michelle is in the process of rolling over assets and other talents to a firm she is starting. There will be no clean up team for this hit. Just you and Gina. Also, I can't let people just kill my employees; it looks bad. You and I know Zianada wasn't real, but she was to the rest of the world."

"So you were going to kill my parents to protect me?" Isabel couldn't hide the smile anymore. "That's sweet." She really shouldn't be finding this so funny, but it was funny after the morning of them nearly killing one another.

"How can you just let your daughter get retired like that?" Zoya asked looking up at them. She stabbed her cool eggs and started to eat, suddenly hungry.

"If you haven't noticed yet, which you should have, she is rather stubborn when she decides something. And she decided that this was her life, and her problem." Eirik answered, between bites of scrambled eggs, in his slightly accented voice.

"I told them it was my problem." Isabel said, in agreement, leaning up against the counter next to Zoya, close enough that they were touching.

Zoya turned her body unconsciously towards Isabel and lifted her head slightly exposing her neck to her. "Whatever, it's your family." She said shoveling more eggs into her mouth.

"Family before everything." Isabel touched Zoya's waist. Wishing they would get along better, but no one had been shot over breakfast, so that was pretty much the best she could hope for. "Now you're going to tell Bones not to try to kill my parents, right?"

"Since they're still alive I assume she figured that out all on her own."

The Alpha set down her plate and then opened the fridge with a sigh as she saw the bullet holes. "I don't think I'm getting my deposit back." She pulled out a beer and held up another in question to Isabel mom and dad, and then finally to Isabel. "As my sister says, it's 5 o'clock somewhere."

"Beer with eggs, sure." Isabel didn't really want a beer, but anything to help with the awkward silence that had just settled over them.

Zoya snorted and put the beer back. "If you don't want one then just say no or no thank you."

"I didn't say no!" Isabel gave her a poke and reached past her to snag the beer.

Magena smiled, relaxing a little as she saw the way her daughter stood up to Zoya. "I told you, she has her father's stubborn streak." She said, picking up her own beer. Maybe this wasn't such a disaster.

Zoya popped the top and then drank the beer looking at everyone. "I like her stubborn streak." She kissed Isabel on the cheek. "So what do you have

planned for the rest of your trip?"

#####3

"Are you sure about this?"

"Daddy, yes. I'm sure." She gave the white haired man a hug, holding on tight for a second before letting go. "I love her." There, she'd actually admitted it to her parents.

Her father smiled, ruffling her hair. "Nice hair-do kiddo. Much less ragged than the last one. This part of Zoya's influence on you?"

She shrugged, a little embarrassed.

"We'll see you again soon, pumpkin. Just give us a call if you need anything."

"Yes, Dad." She hugged him again and then turned to her mother. Glad that they were outside of the cabin now. It was easier to talk with her mother when Magena wasn't constantly growling at her lover.

"Mommy?"

Her mother heard the question in her voice and stepped forward without hesitation, hugging her daughter. "It's all right. I think she'll be good for you, and if she isn't"

Isabel sighed, there was a down side to having a master assassin for her father and a Were for her mother. Threats like 'I'll kill you if you hurt my daughter' carried a bit more weight than the usual parental threats.

"She will be, she is."

"All right." Magena held her daughter out at arms length smiling at her proudly. "This isn't like with Gina is it?"

"No, it isn't." Isabel smiled, happy.

"Good." They hugged again and Isabel watched them walk towards where they'd stashed the car up the road. She waved to them one last time before they disappeared around the curve and then headed back towards the cabin.

Time to make sure Zoya wasn't too pissed about the assassination attempt.

#####3

Isabel parents had left, finally. Although not without a few veiled threats of what they would do to Zoya if she hurt their little girl and promises to visit sometime soon. Not too soon Zoya had hoped.

Zoya flopped bonelessly back onto the bed. Somehow it was decided they needed to have make-up sex. She couldn't remember, right now, whose brilliant idea it had been and it didn't matter. "Please tell me you forgive me, now." She was going to need a nap soon because there were still bullet holes in her body that needed to heal.

"As long as you forgive me too?" Isabel lay draped, more or less on top of Zoya. She had thought about getting a shower, but she was too tired now to even think about moving.

"Uh huh, very forgiven." Zoya could kind of see why, 'hey my mom's a werewolf,' might not have made it into the conversation last time they met. "You don't have any witches or zombies hidden in your family tree?" She asked to be funny.

One blue eye cracked open to give the woman a mock glare, which failed horribly since Isabel was still trying to calm her racing heart down. "No zombies, no witches, no vampires that I know of. Just mom and her side of the family." She closed her eyes and yawned. "That's not going to be a big problem is it?"

Zoya let her right hand trail over the skin of Isabel's hip and back making random patterns. "It's not great but we'll figure it out. I love you enough to try." She yawned. "I guess I know why you have such great stamina but I can't figure out why you don't smell even a bit like a werewolf. Normally I can sense these things even with half-breeds who take after their human side."

"Lucky I guess." Isabel smiled, fully expecting some sort of repercussion for that quip. "Good deodorant?" She continued.

Zoya growled annoyed and then flipped them over pinning Isabel hands over her head. Her eyes were bright blue and she looked into Isabel's darker blue eyes searching for something. She slowly released her controls on her alphaness and it surged up like a magic wave. It rubbed against Isabel introducing itself and then moved through her searching.

It was feral and animal it was the blood call of nature full of violence, destruction, chaos and its own set of rules too foreign for human minds to comprehend. And it curled up inside of Isabel content and happy with what it found, it found someone who understood and soothed it

Isabel rubbed her cheek against Zoya's, whispering nonsensical things as she felt the larger woman's body slowly relax. She wasn't sure what had just happened, but it had been fast and dangerous, she was certain of that. "Better?" She said once Zoya had relaxed enough that she could see her eyes regain some of their normal look.

Zoya nodded relaxing. Isabel was something special, a combination of DNA that defied human and werewolf genealogy of that Zoya was certain. She let her body melt into the curve and dips of Isabel body content not to have to shutter away a part of herself. All of her accepted Isabel and Isabel seemed to do the same with her.

The Alpha always wasted so much energy holding parts of herself in check and now for the first time in a long time she completely relaxed

Stroking her back, Isabel smiled; amazed at the openness she'd just seen in Zoya's eyes. For something like that, for the look she'd just gotten from the other woman, she could live with changing her entire life.

"Good." She said simply closing her eyes, contently.

Bones entered the house without any problem, because she was part of Zoya's pack but she had never felt Zoya's 'Alphaness' for lack of a better word so much. It was like its own magically barrier around the house. It would keep away most other normal Weres, demons, and a variety of supernatural creatures. Alphas could try to push through it if they wanted. Bones was not an Alpha despite what others might think of her. She was a pack creature, created to work with others and serve a master, freewill was still hard to comprehend even after all these centuries.

She sighed looking at the mess downstairs. "Well there goes the deposit," she muttered, carrying groceries into the kitchen.

#####3

Bones was examining the bullet holes in the couch when she heard footsteps coming down the stairs. She cleared her throat. "Just letting you know I'm here Isabel. So don't be naked or shoot me."

"I'm not naked, but thanks for the warning about shooting you. I'm a bit on edge these days." The human said, slipping the pistol back into its customary place at the small of her back. "Sorry about the mess Bones, glad you didn't kill my parents."

"I'm glad I didn't kill them either." The hellhound held no illusions that Zoya would have let Isabel kill her if it would have made the Alpha's girlfriend feel better.

"Brought..." She blinked. "Where's Zoya?"

"Upstairs, still sleeping; I think I wore her out." Isabel didn't even try to hide the pleased smile at that thought. "Hmmm... Coffee." She headed for the coffee maker, happy that some kind soul had made a fresh pot.

Bones blinked again at the statement. "Well then... okay."

Isabel studied the woman - and what the hell was a hell hound anyway? - over the rim of her cup of coffee. "You've never slept with her, right?"

The hellhound scratched the back of her neck and then moved to the kitchen making a face. "Eww, no. Nothing personal but she's not my type." And she was more than certain she wasn't Zoya's type

"Good." Isabel sipped again, wondering if she could ask the blunt woman questions. "I need some advice." She sighed, deciding to just get on with it.

"Shoot." She said moving to the ice box that she had stuffed cloth into the holes and taped over them with duct tape. "You're not a veggie are you?"

"A veggie?" Isabel raised an eyebrow.

She pulled steaks out, wrapped in butcher paper, and set them on the counter. "You eat meat, although it would be hilarious if you didn't. Oh, poor Zoya would never live it down."

"Oh, a vegetarian. No, I'm not. Although..." Isabel grinned. "I might tell her I am next time she pisses me off." The human perched on a rustic wooden stool, prepared to watch with interest.

"I think Zoya expects me to live in her house when we get back to the reservation." She watched Bone's carefully. "I don't think I want to." She hurried on. "I do, but I don't want to just move in like I was taking over the place."

"Yes, it's good to keep her on her toes or she gets complacent and takes you for granted." She considered the human's words. "Well it's a big house. With just her, Terri and I. Tell her you want your own space in the house, a room that's just yours to do what you want with. You could set up a rifle range in the backyard and she'd be thrilled."

"That's not what I meant." Isabel shook her head. "I knew this was going to be hard to explain. That's why I wanted to talk to someone else before I made a mess of things with Zoya." Drawing patterns on the counter top, she considered her words.

Bones searched through the drawers until she found something to be used as a broiler pan. "Look wolves are clingy, they can't help it. The fact she hasn't bitten you with a mate mark shows that she understands your need for autonomy and is trying to meet you halfway." She dumped some garlic out of the bag and found a knife and started chopping it in quick efficient movements.

"But if you live anywhere but with her on the Reservation it will cause problems."

If Zoya brought Isabel onto the Reservation without a mating bite it would cause problems but she figured Isabel could handle herself.

"I don't want to just waltz in on the arm of the leader of the reservation!" Isabel frowned. "These people won't know me, won't know who I am. Won't that cause her problems also? She goes abroad and then all of a sudden returns with a mate?" It seemed like a horrible idea to Isabel. "What if I lived nearby? In a house on her property or something?" She winced, not liking the way that sounded either.

"Then it shows everyone she cannot keep her mate happy and its a red flag for every would-be Alpha to come challenge her. She'll do it to keep you happy. She'll build you a house if you want one."

Isabel's head made a nice little thunk as she hit it against the bartop. "Great."

She looked up after a second. "Guess I'm moving in with you guys." She wondered why that thought terrified her. She looked over Bones' shoulder. "You making lunch?"

"Try dinner. It's almost 4pm." Bones said amused. She brushed olive oil and then put garlic and mushrooms on the steaks.

"It is?" Isabel blinked, confused at where the time had gone. Then she smiled, remembering exactly where the time had gone. "Oh right."

"Isabel, if you're not ready to commit to this roller coaster engagement then don't. Werens find a mate and lose their brains. Which isn't all that different from you humans. Although I'm impressed you can withstand her 'Alphaness', I'm not really sure what to call it. But this much unleashed would make most humans freak out and run away," Bones said, looking at Isabel; she'd swear the human didn't even feel it.

The human in question shrugged, not really aware of the question. "But I do want to commit to it. She's amazing, really amazing. It would be nice to know her better, but I understand if she can't take the time to do that." Isabel's stomach growled, reminding her how long ago breakfast with her parents had been. "I think I'm a little worried that I'm not used to being around people."

"Good thing you won't be around people." Bones replied. "Werens aren't people. Don't ever confuse them like that."

Isabel rolled her eyes at that. "I did grow up around my mother and brother, I do know what a Were is like. I've even visited the reservation, once, when I was a teenager."

Bones' mouth made a perfect O of surprise. "I expected all sorts of responses - that was not one of them."

"You did realize my mother was a Were didn't you?" Isabel blinked, she'd kind of assumed that since Zoya had known it on sight, Bones would as well.

"Well the whole house stank of Were and battle, I guess I didn't focus too closely on... Oh, God, your mother is a Blackwater Were." She started chuckling at the irony.

Isabel's head made another thinking sound as it hit the table top. "Yes." Why was she always destined to have a difficult time of things?

Bones threw the prepared meat into the oven. "I'm just impressed you still want to date Zoya. You must have heard all sorts of bad things about her from your family."

"Yes, but they're not any worse than the stories from dad's part of the family. You do realize he kills people for a living, right? I mean, killed. He's retired now."

"I wasn't around when she took power, but it was brutal. I'm not certain how the Blackwaters managed to stay independent, but they did. I would guess there is a tentative truce there." Bones opened the fridge and held up a beer. "Want one?"

"Thank god, yes!" She needed a beer after today, even if most of it had been spent having sex and sleeping. "When did you show up?"

"A little bit ago. It was quiet, so I assumed you were finished bumping and grinding. I checked on Gina, she's freaking out by the way. She's totally cut off from everything. Then I went to the local market."

Dark blue eyes sharpened at the mention of Gina. "You know where she is?" Isabel licked her lips, considering what she could do with that information. "Where is she?" She had her rifle still in the trunk of the car and any number of pistols. Maybe she could take care of this little problem before Zoya even woke up.

Bones was familiar with that look in Isabel's eyes, Werens got it all the time when they were going to go do something noble and stupid. Normally it involved killing someone or something for some sort of imagined slight. She hesitated, thinking. "She's in Frankfurt, she went to the airport picked someone up and then returned to her hotel..."

"Bones!" Zoya's voice snapped from the stairs. "Do not finish that sentence."

"No, come on Bones, finish the sentence!" Isabel pleaded, she was so close she could almost taste it. "Just two more words, one being the name of the hotel, that's all you have to say." She really, really wanted that name.

Bones really wanted to be any place other than where she was currently. "Uh, it's um.."

Zoya padded silently into the kitchen looking disheveled, in a good way, in faded worn jeans and a simple black t-shirt. As usual she was barefoot. The werewolf Alpha glared at Bones. "You were going to tell her and then she would have run off while I was still sleeping. I would have known nothing. I would have thought she freaked out and ran off, wanting nothing to do with me."

Bones just lowered her gaze to the floor and looked anywhere other than Zoya; this was not the time for smart, witty one-liners, not if the Alpha was being insecure.

"I would have left a note." Isabel narrowed her eyes, trying to ignore how good Zoya looked. "I just want to take care of this one little problem. I can do this, I have been an assassin, and a good one, for almost eight years now." She knew she was getting defensive, but she needed Zoya to at least trust her a little bit.

"That's not the point. I do trust you, I don't doubt how good you are, and I already told you, you could have the kill."

Bones' eyebrows rose a bit at that.

"But you were going to run off without telling me. You didn't trust me or us enough to tell me before you ran off, because, I don't know... I might stop and inject some logic. Like who did she pick up at the airport? And, she already saw us together in the alley, she knows we're together. So she's going to be expecting you to come after her to protect me." Finished, Zoya crossed her arms over her chest, her narrowed gaze switching between Bones and Isabel.

The human frowned, trying to come up with a plausible way to explain what she had been thinking of doing. "You're sexy when you're annoyed." were the words that actually did come out of Isabel's mouth. "And, I wasn't just going to rush into it. I would have checked out the target first, made certain I had a kill shot before taking it. I wanted to do this so this threat wasn't still hanging over us, so we could move on from here."

Zoya blinked and most of her bad mood evaporated. "Really?"

Bones just shook her head in disgust.

The werewolf uncrossed her arms and moved over to Isabel, kissing her. "We are a couple now, I don't like being left in the dust on something like this. You need to trust that you can come to me and we can talk about these sort of important situations. I already said you could have the kill on Gina and I'm not going back on that."

Bones was pretty certain that this wasn't Zoya. Zoya didn't share decision making on important things. The woman was the Alpha, the final word.

"I know." Isabel shot a look at Bones who was doing her best to disappear as she finished making food. "I warned you, this is new to me. I don't" she shrugged. "I'm not used to having to talk things out with some one else." She relaxed into Zoya's arms, glad she would indeed get the kill shot on Gina.

That bitch was hers.

Zoya nodded. "We'll work on it together, I'm sure our roles will be reversed sometime in the future." She wiggled her eyebrows "can we have make-up sex?"

"Please don't." Bones snapped out. "I'm right here and dinner is almost ready."

"She's right. You need food anyway." The smell of the steaks was really making Isabel's mouth water. "Besides, there's always later." She grinned.

Bones made a face at that and pulled out the broiling pan letting it slam on to the counter. "Dinner is served."

Zoya wisely said nothing. She gave Isabel a quick kiss on the cheek and started looking through the cupboards for plates.

Bones pulled some fresh rolls out of the bag and pulled butter out of the ice box.

In a few seconds Zoya had the small table set and pulled out a chair for Isabel.

"Thanks." It was nice, she was starting to think, to have Zoya being so chivalrous. "So now will you tell me where it is that Gina is staying?" She licked her lips, enjoying the smell of the steak in front of her. Whatever else Bones was, she certainly knew how to cook a mean steak.

It was even red in the center, just like Isabel liked it.

Bones set down the rolls and butter as well as a ceramic jug filled with water. Her dark brown eyes flicked to Zoya before answering. "She's staying at the Maritim Hotel."

Zoya scrapped the garlic and mushrooms off before cutting a piece of steak and popping it in her mouth chewing, she swallowed and asked. "Do we know who she picked up at the airport?"

Bones hesitated. "Not specifically no."

"But."

"But she looked like a Hunter, from the church." There was just something about Hunters, especially the church trained ones, that had an aura around them of fanaticism and holy righteousness.

"Hunter from a church?" Isabel looked from one to the other, confused at the words. "What does that mean? Another assassin?"

Zoya cut another strip of meat and chewed before answering. "We don't really have church sanctioned Hunters in America. They would be like assassins, but their whole purpose for being is to kill all the unclean in the eyes of God. Primarily Demons, shifters, and vampires."

"The church has little camps all over the alps were they take in orphans and train them to be killers." Bones broke in. "The weak are weeded out, normally by dying, and the strong survive. They are given an education of: religion, languages so they can read dead languages, weaponry, and fighting demons, shifters, and vampires."

"The inquisition." Isabel wrinkled her nose. "Whenever religion comes into killing it gets messy." She speared a piece of meat. "With us it's business, you kill the person you're hired to. Those guys" She shook her head. "I saw them wipe out an entire family once to save their souls."

She looked up, a little troubled. "Why would Gina be with one of them? She's not religious."

"Because she knows she can't kill Zoya and you by herself, so she's asked for help. A Hunter will have no problems taking down a Were."

"Hey." Zoya said insulted. "I'd like to think I'm pretty hard to kill."

"You haven't been training your whole life to kill supernatural creatures. Hunters literally train from childhood."

"She's right." Isabel stared down at her half eaten steak, feeling a little less hungry now. Taking out Gina wasn't going to be easy, but it was doable. Taking out Gina if she had outside help got a lot more difficult. "We should kill her tonight, before she gets any more help."

Zoya ate some more, weighing the pros and cons. She grabbed a roll, tearing it apart. "Okay." She agreed although she didn't like to rush some things.

Bones do you have a shadow on Gina?"

The Hellhound nodded. "But it's only set on Gina, it won't follow the Hunter, if that is what she is." They still didn't know for sure.

"She could just be some floozy that Gina picked up for a night of fun." Not that Isabel was bitter about her ex, no, not at all. She shoved another piece of meat in her mouth and chewed before she said something bad.

Zoya quirked an eyebrow. "Are you jealous of your ex?" She wasn't sure if she should be upset or not.

Isabel coughed, going red as she inhaled a piece of meat in surprise at Zoya's question.

"Unless you're Zoya, you don't fly people in to have sex with them." Bones added to be helpful.

Nearly choking, Isabel glared at the two of them. "Are you trying to kill me?" She gasped.

"No. That would be counter productive to this whole plan I set in motion. And despite what Bones said I've never flown a women in to see me for a booty call."

Giving the hellhound a dark look, Isabel cleared her throat. "I am not jealous of Gina, or whatever floozy or person she's dealing with. I might be a little, tiny bit, upset with her though." Which, she admitted privately, might be influencing her desire to kill her ex as soon as possible.

"Then why did this mystery woman suddenly become a floozy?" Bones countered.

"You're about to become a floozy." Isabel said darkly.

Zoya sighed and scooped up the garlic and mushrooms onto her fork and smeared it on her roll, eating it.

"That sentence made no sense. Seriously, you're dating one of the biggest floozies out there and you're jealous of your ex." Bones said with a grin.

"Hey." Zoya broke in.

"Slut then."

Zoya thought about it and then nodded, giving up.

"I really am wondering right now if hellhounds like silver as much as Were's do?" Isabel outright glared at Bones. "Zoya is not a slut anymore; she's officially off the market."

"Thank you Isabel, I especially liked the part were you said I wasn't a slut." Zoya said dryly.

"Not anymore." Isabel patted her lover on the back. "I said you weren't a slut anymore."

The dark skinned woman smiled sweetly. "Shall I show you my silver piercings?"

"No!" Zoya broke in. "There will be no showing of piercings."

"Piercings?" Isabel raised an eyebrow, filing away the note about the silver for later. "As in more than one?"

"Demons tend to like a little pain. Bones is no different, so she's got a few piercings." She paused thinking about the conversation. "You said I wasn't a slut anymore, implying that I used to be one."

"I have only known you for a little over six months Zoya." Isabel took another bite of food, chewing while she looked thoughtful. "Who am I to go against Bones' word on that? I just know you're not going to be a slut anymore." This was definitely a strange conversation, but it was fun teasing Zoya.

Zoya threw up her hands giving up. "Doesn't my word count for anything?"

'Huge slut', Bones mouthed.

"Love, you agreed with her." Isabel tried hard not to laugh at Bones.

"I just did that so she'd shut up and it was better than floozy."

"Baby." Bones muttered and got up, picking up her plate and everyone else's.

"It was delicious Bones, thank you." Isabel patted her stomach, happily. She had been burning calories a lot during the day before. "You're not a floozy." The human leaned in, nipping Zoya on the throat before kissing her. "Besides, you're all mine now."

Zoya's eyes got a little glassy at the bite and she relaxed in her chair. "True. All yours now."

"That is just gross to watch. I've never seen her brain melt like that before and I've seen her throw women out of her house naked in the rain followed by their clothes just because she was done with them."

"Good." Isabel's smile widened. She really was proud that she was here and none of those others were. She didn't know what she was doing, but she was having fun trying to figure it out so far. "Want to go hunting tonight? Take down Gina?"

"Okay." Zoya said automatically, much to Bones disgust.

Excellent." Isabel nearly bounced out of her chair. "I have to go to my weapons then." She wanted to have a perfect bullet ready for Gina's head.

Zoya nodded and got up with a stretch.

"Let me know when your brain comes back and reasserts itself as the dominate life form in your body instead of your clit." Bones grumbled washing dishes.

Zoya blinked. "What?"

"You are Zoya. An Alpha if there was ever an Alpha. Bitchy, controlling and other not so nice words."

"I still am, Bones. I can come over there and put your head through the ice box if you want."

"Sweet talker." Bones said with a laugh.

Zoya growled and started up stairs to change into clothes she wouldn't mind destroying when she shifted.

#####3

"This is so not good." Isabel whispered, watching the compound across from her through her favorite pair of night vision binoculars.

Bones had been wrong; it wasn't a hotel that Gina had checked into. It might look like one, have a sign for one and even a Michelin rating posted proudly outside. There was no other similarity to an actual hotel for normal people to stay in.

The valet was armed, she could see the faint outline of a machine pistol hidden under his uniform jacket. The doorman had a Heckler and Koch MP5 behind his booth and that wasn't saying anything about the front desk people she'd caught a glimpse of inside.

"Not good at all."

Zoya flicked Bones ear. "What do I pay you for? Can't you tell the difference between a hotel and a compound?"

"Shut up or I'll tell her all about how you slept with a vampire."

"You did?" Isabel turned at that, surprised.

Zoya glared even harder at the Hellhound but said nothing else on the matter. She was quiet for a long time staring at the building where Gina was holed up. "Yes." She said softly. "I did."

It was probably the first time she'd been used and not the other way around. It had been a wake up call that had made her look at herself, and her life and the relationships in it. Eventually a therapist. She shook her head, focusing on the here and now.

Ignoring a suddenly strong bout of insecurity, Isabel turned back to studying the compound. "This was going to be hard enough to get to Gina in a normal hotel. In there..." She shook her head.

"So," The werewolf said softly. "We bring her out here to us."

"We'd need something she'd really want. A clear target." Isabel looked back at Zoya, worriedly.

"I don't like what you're thinking, Zoya." Bones said. "If she did hire a hunter then you won't hear those bullets before they slam into you."

"She's right." Isabel shifted, uneasily and looked back at the hotel. "But she'd come after me if I made an attempt on her. You two would have to keep her new friends busy."

"And how are you going to get to her?" Zoya asked.

"Apply for a position?"

"What? At the hotel that's not a hotel?"

"Sure. These places are always looking for hired help. I have good pedigree. With the Outfit getting reorganized it's the perfect excuse for looking for a new job. It doesn't have to be perfect, just good enough to get me inside the secure house and near Gina. Then I make my attempt, if it works great, if not I get out, lead Gina out of there and we deal with her out here." It wasn't a great plan, but honestly Isabel liked it better than sending Zoya to get shot.

"And what do we do while you're in there?" Without her, where Zoya couldn't protect her.

"Take out Gina's henchmen." Isabel didn't know where they were, but they had to be around here somewhere.

Zoya frowned. "Fine. But if you die so help me..." She had nothing.

"Don't worry. I'll be back." Isabel grabbed Zoya's shirt, kissing her quick and hard. "Family is everything after all."

Zoya smiled like a mindless idiot and watched her leave.

Bones made little whipping noises behind her back until Zoya turned and put the Hellhound in a headlock and gave her a nuzzle.

#####3

Isabel hurried down the stairwell, putting distance between herself and the two Weres. She didn't think Zoya had caught her half lie, but she might have kissed the other woman a bit more enthusiastically than usual to make certain she didn't think about it.

Or at least didn't realize the problem before Isabel got to the hotel.

"I really hope she forgives me for this." The blond whispered to herself, taking the stairs two at a time and then jumping the last few steps to the bottom landing and then hitting the emergency exit out onto the side street.

Please, she prayed as she headed for the front door of the hotel, please god, let Zoya forgive me for this.

There was no way a facility like this, a safe house for hire to those with money, would just hire her off the street. There were always checks to be made, carefully scheduled interviews and references from other people in the business.

Someone just walking in off the street wasn't going to get past the security at the front doors. Not without a prior appointment, and she didn't have time for that. There was no doubt in Isabel's mind about what would happen if Gina convinced the Inquisition to help her.

The fanatics would be coming for Zoya and anyone else on the reservation they considered to be an abomination in the eyes of their god. She doubted that they would get very far, but there would be bloodshed and a lot of Zoya's people would shed that blood.

Maybe even Zoya herself.

That thought, the image of Zoya lying in a pool of her own blood like she had in LA, drove Isabel into a plan that was insane. There was no way she would have ever conceived something this crazy before. Love seemed to have given her insanity.

If that was the way of it, so be it. She was starting to understand now, finally, what family meant. She wouldn't lose her new family to a sniper's bullet, or a fanatic's silver stake, not now when she'd only just gotten it.

The doorman saw her first as she started across the street towards the doors of the hotel, the valet was only a few seconds slower. They didn't seem overly worried as she stepped up onto the sidewalk and headed towards them.

Amateurs then. The real muscle would be inside, waiting to be summoned.

"Hi." She flashed a smile, speaking in German as she headed for the doorman. The bellhop was coming out from his little booth, heading towards her as well.

"I was hoping you guys knew where a bar was? I'm kind of lost."

She could see the puzzled look in the doorman's eyes, she wasn't dressed like a tourist after all and her German was excellent. Out of the corner of her eye she could see the valet look her up and down and start to smile.

"If you want a bar I know a good" He started, relaxing his guard.

Isabel struck the doorman first. Kicking with the flat of her foot and all her strength against the side of his knee in a move her father had trained into her from before adolescence. The knee was weak there and when done right it snapped sideways, breaking and immobilizing your opponent.

It was done right this time and the crack of bone was loud, not as loud as his scream of pain as the doorman went down to the ground.

"You bitch!" The valet yelled, reaching for his gun, but it was too late for that. He'd gotten too close to her and relaxed too much. The assassin grabbed his hand, spinning him around and down to the ground and yanking up on it until the bones in his arm were nearly breaking.

The doorman on the ground was starting to stir, shock overcoming some of the pain so she drew her pistol with her free left hand. She knew from experience that the barrel looked huge when pressed against the side of a person's temple, and she smiled coldly at the doorman as he went stock still at the touch of metal.

"I want to talk to management. Now!" She yelled, not for their sake of course, but for the cameras that she knew were watching.

"Hey, lovesick moron." Bones said from her headlock. "I think your girlfriend pulled a fast one on you."

"Wha?" Zoya looked over her shoulder. Then her face became stony, her anger boiling over. She let go of Bones, glaring as the door opened and her girlfriend and her captive walked inside.

"If she lives I'm going to fucking kill her." She growled.

#####3

The hunter got up from where she had been praying, and kissed the cross before letting it slid back under her shirt. She did not like this woman, she was unaware of the agreement between this Gina and her Church, it was not her place to ask questions, her duty was to follow orders. She had been told to come here and help this woman remove a problem.

She stood up. "What is that you wish from the order?"

"I want you to do what you people do! Take out that Were before she messes everything up. Or at least take care of the other Weres and let me take out that one." Gina really didn't see how this was so complicated. Didn't these people do this sort of thing regularly?

"And who is this Were?" The Hunter's voice was soft and relaxed, despite how annoying she was finding the American. She ran a hand over her short brown hair, long hair was a vanity. She was tired, she'd been pulled off the trail of a demon for this. Weres were low on her list of evils to fight in the world.

Others in her order found them more dangerous, citing their ability to mimic humans and blend in, in the natural order of the world. She, however, concerned herself with pure demons that raped, murdered and strived to bring their demon masters into the world to pervert it. Be that as it may, the elders had sent her here.

"I have plenty of things to take her out, but I need to know what to expect."

"Her name is Zoya. She's the head of the largest Were Reservation in America. I imagine she'd be a pretty little target for you. She's got some sort of flunky with her, my people think her name is Bones but we can't find anything else out about her." That was annoying; her resources had been severely limited by the hostile take over of the Outfit. Gina didn't like that, she was used to having better resources than everyone else.

Mary sighed. She disliked pay for play mercenaries. "No, where do expect her to go and do. No wonder you called us for help you, your information is incompetent." She would have to do her own tracking and trailing.

"It was the best we had." Gina reminded herself, again that this was the best idea. She needed help to take out these targets, and with her usual reinforcements reduced, she'd been forced to call in debts from the Church. That never ended well, but hopefully the bloodbath would just involve those she wanted dead and she could regain her position in the new organization.

She twitched as the bedside phone rang. There was absolutely no good reason for her to get a phone call and plenty of bad ones.

Snatching the telephone up off the base she frowned as she listened to the voice on the other end. "What? Who?" Gina's eyes bugged a little. "She's here? Where? Don't do anything." She slammed the phone down and shook her head.

"Amazing. The useless bitch is suicidal."

The Hunter said nothing. The woman apparently was all ego and flash with very little virtue to keep her upright; she bounced around from crisis to crisis instead of making a plan. Already this interruption left the taste of disaster in her mouth.

"I need to deal with this." Gina grabbed her fitted jacket, proud of the way it looked on her. She checked that her pistol was loaded and smiled. "And we'll get the information you need out of it also."

"We will see." The hunter said, her own clothes drab in comparison to Gina. "I would hate to have to do all your work for you."

"Don't worry sister, you won't."

"The title of sister is given only to those worthy of basking in the love of God. I am a soldier of God." There would be no heavenly reward for her when she died but this was her burden to bear so that the earth would not fall into darkness.

"Right, right." Gina didn't really care as she gathered the last of her things. "About time I put Isabel out of her misery." She muttered to herself.

The Hunter moved to a battered hard leather case and opened it, removing two guns and a silver stake.

The guns slid easily into the worn holsters on her hips and the stake disappeared up a sleeve.

"Let us talk to this Isabel."

Once downstairs they moved between rows of security personnel that were lined up outside of the manager's office. The large men were all heavily armed and aiming the way that Gina was going. She raised an eyebrow, interested in what was going on. "You Gina?" The man nearest the door to the office asked, gripping a combat shotgun. He glanced at Gina's guest but didn't say anything about the Hunter.

"Yes?" She wasn't sure what was going on, which made her uneasy. "Manager's inside, along with most of the office staff." The man nodded towards the door. "We hear any shots, we're coming in and ending it. Got it?"

Gina nodded, slowly, in understanding. What exactly was Isabel up to?

"What a powerful woman this Isabel must be to have garnered so much attention and firepower." The Hunter commented in her soft-spoken way.

"Insane you mean." Gina snarled. Drawing her pistol she took a hold of the door and pushed it open.

The hunter left her weapons where they were. No need to bluster like a puffer fish, she knew she was dangerous and that was enough. Gina was beginning to remind her of a show dog, on the other hand.

Inside the door Isabel was perched on the edge of the desk, the heavy glock pistol in her hand pressed against the side of the man's head that she had pinned to the desk top. Four others were tied up on the floor nearby, gagged, blindfolded and duct taped together.

"Hi sweetie." She smiled, proud she didn't gag when saying it as she spotted Gina. "Glad you and..." blue eyes flicked to the Hunter, measuring her and finding her just as deadly as she'd feared. "Your friend could come down."

"Isabel." Gina looked around, knowing that any shots in here would end in everyone getting mowed down by the security outside. The man on the desk tried to say something, but it came out muffled by the tie stuffed in his mouth.

"Who's your friend?" The blond nodded at the Hunter.

"I am called Mary." The Hunter replied. The name meant nothing all girls were named Mary and all boys Joseph.

"Mary. Right." Isabel licked her lips. She could take Gina, right now. But there was the small issue of getting out of the room alive after that. "I want a deal."

"What?" Gina sneered. "You don't get a deal, you're out of the loop, you're probably about to get retired permanently."

"You're out of the loop too." Isabel pointed out; amazed she'd ever been attracted to Gina. The woman was nothing compared to Zoya.

Mary assessed the Isabel carefully. This woman's eyes were still alive unlike Gina's showing that she was not a murderer or hardened killer. There was a hard profession that required a tightrope act to navigate between pleasure in the act of killing and careful detachment to do a job.

When there was pleasure in the act of death and not in a job well done then one had given in to their own personal demons.

When Gina had nothing to say to that, Isabel kept talking. "I'm offering a trade. You get Zoya and I get my life back."

Gina's eyes narrowed. "You're lying. Why would you want to turn in Zoya? You're with her. You've gone native."

"You of all people should know something about using people for your own ends." Isabel shifted the grip on her pistol, keeping it casually pressed against the manager's head. As long as he was in here, the guards stayed out there.

The hunter raised an eyebrow at that. "Either you trust she is here for a way out. Or trust she is here to stop you."

Damn, Isabel glanced at Mary. Why couldn't the inquisition have dumb people?

Gina's eyes narrowed as she thought it over, those same eyes watching Isabel with a shrewd look. "You'll take us to where Zoya is?" There was no reason to not take advantage of this opportunity.

"Yes. Then we part ways." Isabel didn't want to appear too eager to get a shot at Gina's head.

The hunter rolled her eyes. The woman was desperate, sloppy and useless. Mary was beginning to wonder if the woman had done any of the things on her dossier.

"Zoya is smart, resourceful and brutal. She commands not just her own kind but shifters of all sorts of breeds and maintains peace in a parcel of land slightly bigger than Rhode Island. Do you really think she won't know she's been set up?"

the hunter voiced, not giving much hope that Gina would listen to anything but her pride.

"I'll get you close; the rest is all up to you." Isabel said, quickly, cursing again the fact that the Hunter was there. She could ruin everything.

"That's all I need." Gina said, deciding on her course of action. "Take us to Zoya and we'll finish this."

"This is your hunt." The hunter conceded no hint of the irritation she was feeling.

"Great." Isabel jerked the man up from the desk. This was one hotel that she was never going to be welcomed back into as a guest.

"Sorry about the problems Bob. I'll be happy to pay for damages, of course." Isabel yanked the man's tie out of his mouth. She'd been careful not to do more damage than necessary. It was a good idea not to piss off the small army in here if she didn't have to.

The manager wiped his hands on his pants and then sat up looking at Isabel warily. "That won't be necessary." He said in the best professional voice he could come up with. He'd gone through training, of course, but it was something else entirely to experience the real thing. He cleared his throat.

Isabel raised an eyebrow. He didn't want reparations? That seemed odd.

He opened his desk drawer pulling out a piece of paper and hit a small hidden button at the same time. "Ms. Ingfred you work for the Outfit, which at this time is no more. Bank accounts and assets have been frozen or emptied. Frankly, your money is no good, as well as Ms. Tolivers."

Isabel was pretty sure the expression on her face was about the same as the one on Gina's as they stared at the short man. "My accounts are frozen?" Gina recovered first, voice rising dangerously at the end.

"Yes, you are to vacate immediately. Fail to comply and we will use force."

"You can't just throw me out!"

"Please don't make this difficult."

Watching Gina bluster, she made a mental note to avoid telling Zoya about this.

A guard opened the door and looked in. "Problems?"

"No, I think everything has been worked out." The manager replied.

"Come on Gina. Time to hunt down Zoya. The sooner it's done, the sooner you get your accounts again." Isabel had to wince at that. She had money set aside, but about half of her money might have just evaporated. She hadn't thought about that.

"Fine." Gina snapped.

"Are you always this sloppy?" The hunter asked Gina.

Isabel's snicker probably didn't help.

#####3

Bones watched Zoya work, just a tad bit concerned. "I think you're blowing this out of proportion."

"She wanted me; excuse me, us, to take care of Gina's minions. Well I am." She growled out as she slammed another dagger through the body she was holding up to the brick wall. The assassin had good taste in cutlery as the daggers slid through the flesh and into the brick.

"She probably had a good reason for what she did."

"The one where she deceived me or the one where she used me and is working with Gina?"

If Zoya wasn't wielding sharp knives at the moment Bones would have slapped the Alpha upside the head. "Now who's being passive-aggressive?" She hesitated a second then said. "She's scared of moving in with you. She wants to but she doesn't."

"What?" Zoya stopped playing pin cushion with the assassin and looked over at the Hellhound. "When did she tell you this? Why didn't she talk to me about it?"

"Because you Werewolves are weird when you come to mating? You meet the right one and you know; humans aren't like that. They need some wooing."

"Hey I woo'd." Zoya defended.

"Um, you had like one date. Then you went all Uhaul. If that's not the lesbian dream I don't know what is."

"I did no such thing... well shit. So how do I fix this?"

"Well you're the Alpha, how do you fix it?"

Zoya sighed and rubbed her face, smearing blood on her cheek. "Isabel and I need to talk."

"Yes but don't go saying, 'We need to talk' those are the four worst words to have in a relationship."

Zoya thought about it for a second but came up with nothing. "I don't get it."

Bones chuckled. "Well most assholes at least use that phrase when they're dumping someone, but you're too callous most of the time to do even that. You just throw their clothes out the front door and when they go after them shut the door and change the locks."

"I'm not that bad."

"Uh huh."

"I did that once and she was picking out baby names. Baby names!"

Zoya stepped back looking at her handwork. "Does it get my point across?"

"If she didn't like you it screams stalker in a bad way, other than that I think she'll know you're pissed."

Next to Gina's dead minion written in the woman's own blood was the word Isabel.

"Couples therapy." Bones added after a moment.

"Now what?"

"We go look for more minions of Gina."

#####3

"Wow. You really pissed off that bitch." Gina let out a whistle as they studied the handy work in front of them.

Isabel nodded mutely, staring at her name written in big bloody letters. Gina was right, she really had pissed off Zoya. That answered the question of if the Were knew what she had done.

"Damn it, that's three of my people now!" Gina swore, yanking one of the daggers out of the woman pinned up on the wall. Behind them were the dozen or so minions that had answered Gina's call. The woman had been incensed that some of her people hadn't come when she'd summoned them.

The reason why was now becoming quite obvious.

"She's taking apart your backup." Isabel said, helpfully, crossing her arms and trying to pretend she wasn't worried. There might, she admitted reluctantly and only to herself, have been a problem with her plan. She might have underestimated, just a little bit, how angry Zoya was going to be.

"I guess this answers the question of whether or not you can trust her." The hunter said holding her weapons bag easily, her hand gripping the worn leather strap of the bag. "Sadly she now knows you're not on her side which has pissed her off. Which takes away an advantage we had." She studied the bloodied body on the wall. "Interesting. She seems to have used the woman's own weapons against her, instead of shifting and killing like an animal."

Isabel bit her tongue, stopping herself from saying that Zoya wasn't an animal and if they thought she was she'd rip them apart for underestimating her. This was going to complicate things, again.

"Come on, let's follow the trail. I'm sure we'll find a couple more of your minions staked out along the way."

There was the head of an Asian male his head on the pommel of his sword, a sword that had been driven into the cobble stones of the street. It just got

worse from there, the one they were currently looking at was the skeleton of a small car and the charred skeleton inside it.

"I see why you called me; your people are worthless, like cannon fodder to this werewolf. Wolves prize loyalty and family above all else, when she realized you betrayed her to another woman it must have sent her into frenzy, yet..." Frenzy wasn't right. "But these are cold and deliberate no mark of the beast in their deaths when shifters frenzy they let the devil embrace them into their beast marked forms."

Isabel eyed the Hunter, wondering if she was going to have to take the woman out. The Hunter was becoming a lot more observant than the blond woman wanted. If she kept down this line of reasoning it would have unpleasant consequences for them all.

"You're not missing any other people are you?" She asked Gina, distracting her from the Hunter's line of reasoning.

"No." Gina said, reluctantly. "This is all of them."

"The kill's still fresh." Isabel said, the car was still smoldering. They couldn't be far behind. "She'll be nearby."

At the prospect of a nearby kill, Gina's eyes lightened. "Excellent." She jerked her head at the gathered minions. "Search for her, quickly." When they didn't exactly leap at the opportunity to confront a werewolf, Gina drew her pistol.

That got them moving and Isabel rolled her eyes. No wonder her people weren't the best, she kept them in line with threats. That never got the best out of people.

"I can't believe I didn't get my own people too." She grumbled, earning a mocking laugh from Gina.

"Having people is a liability. You care about them, they die. Or you care nothing and in return they give you nothing." The hunter replied as she fished a small green twig out of her bag and frowned as it turned from green to black and then crumbled to dust. "The fire is demonic. Interesting."

#####3

Zoya grinned and put some money into the gyrating crotch in front of her face.

"She's going to shoot you again." Bones said sipping her beer.

"Probably. But I think I'm justified. She ran off to play double agent with her ex, I get to play at slut." She winked at the dancer as she moved off to another customer.

Bones rolled her eyes. "I called Fritz and he and his Weres are aware of what's going on. He's not happy and I don't think we'll be invited back to Germany any time soon. But he's sent a call out and all his people are bunkered down until we end this land war."

"Good." Zoya shouted over the music and chugged her beer. She raised her pint at a fellow customer and nodded. "He's next." She said to Bones. "Gunman, I can smell the gun-oil from here."

The man in question was busy typing something into a cell phone, telling Gina exactly where it was that he'd found the Were. He hadn't really wanted to find Zoya, in fact he'd thought the strip club would be a safe bet for waiting out whatever was about to happen.

Unfortunately he'd nearly tripped over Zoya on the way in. Message sent, he slipped away the cell phone and casually started edging his way towards the back of the bar. Maybe if he got in a clear shot, he'd even be rewarded?

"You know there are a lot of casualties in here." Bones pointed out.

"Fine, we'll take it outside. You know, for a demon you sure are a prude about somethings." Zoya finished her drink. "I'm headed for the water closet."

Bones nodded understanding.

Zoya grinned as the man followed her, the door to the bathroom was locked, as she knew it would be; a woman had gone down the dark hallway a minute before. She leaned against the wall pretending to wait. The man followed. She looked up with what she hoped was a drunk expression. "I think the mens is free."

She saw the gun, glint dark and dangerous in the weak light. "Hope you have silver in that, and you might want to look behind you. You did remember there were two of us, right?"

His eyes widened and he ducked looking quickly behind himself. The moment his eyes left hers she leapt forward grabbed his wrist crushing the bones until the gun dropped and then pulled him forward making his whole body bounce hard off the exit door.

The alpha then hit the push bar to open the door and dragged them outside.

#####3

Gina looked at the front of the strip club, smirking.

"Huh. Guess she needed to do something to unwind other than killing my people. Guess you weren't enough for her, no surprise there Isabel." She laughed, checking her pistol as they gathered near the corner of the strip club.

Isabel, again, reminded herself that she'd get cut down if she shot Gina in the head with her minions nearby. She needed a clear opportunity, hopefully when the Hunter was looking the other way also.

Some of her fury at picturing Zoya getting a lap dance must have shown on her face, Gina and the eleven remaining flunkies laughed at her.

Let's do it." Gina said, snorting with amusement as she made certain in her guns.

"Do it?" Isabel frowned as they headed for the door. "There's people in there. Don't you want to wait? Get her outside?"

"That's the problem with you Isabel. You can't always kill people from a distance, sometimes you need to go right in after your targets." Gina nodded to her associates.

They were all stressed out, Isabel could tell. They were all twitchy now, aware that the werewolf they were going in after had killed four of their friends. Gina might be in control of herself, even though Isabel doubted that, but the rest of her people were little better than thugs hopped up on adrenaline.

Gina might have armed them, given them big ass weapons, but she hadn't trained them how to keep cool under pressure.

"Everyone just stay calm." Isabel said, watching one of the men with a shotgun twitching as he looked from side to side rapidly.

They weren't even bothering to hide their weapons as they entered the club and Isabel swallowed, seeing the large bouncers stand up and head towards them in unison. "Gina..." She started to warn her.

Then things got messy.

Someone, either the bouncers or Gina's hopped up minions, got trigger happy. A shotgun blast blew the head off the closest bouncer, but the second one used a pistol to drop the man who'd shot him. Then everyone was shooting, Gina's people, hopped up on adrenaline and fear, started shooting at anything that moved.

In another place and time it would have amused her to find that she and the Church Hunter had instinctively taken cover behind the same shiny steel wall, listening to the shooting going crazy inside.

"I take it back, I don't want minions anymore." Isabel flinched as a shotgun blast blew the corner off the wall next to her. People were really starting to scream now; she could hear them even over the shooting.

"Relying on people other than yourself is a risk. As we see now. Gina is not the leader she thinks she is. A good leader would have filled her people with confidence and a sense of calm." The hunter commented as she bent over to open her bag.

"She needs to be stopped." Isabel brought out her pistol, checking the round in the chamber to make certain she was ready for what was about to happen. Either she was about to shoot Gina's people or she was going to shoot the Hunter.

The Hunter considered Isabel words. It wasn't her place to interfere with humans and their cruelty, that was between them and God. Hunters concerned themselves with hunting the agents of the devil.

"I hunt demons, not humans, no matter how they have strayed from the path." She unzipped the bag. "She wastes my time with this." Inside a woman screamed and begged for her life. The hunter closed her eyes and rubbed the back of her neck. Despite what most thought of her she was not unfeeling.

The shooting was moving away from them, as Gina and her people moved deeper into the strip club. They were apparently beyond common sense. "Then stay here." Isabel snapped, choosing her course of action.

"... however, after reviewing the facts find that Gina and her crew have been possessed by demonic influences of great malice and must be stopped."

"Good thinking." Isabel met the Hunter's eyes and then nodded, once, before she entered the chaos.

The hunter muttered a prayer and removed a metal rod from her bag and a mirror.

#####3

"Holy shit." Zoya said jumping at the first sound of a shotgun blast. She frowned and looked over her shoulder. They had left a present for Gina in the alley behind the strip club and were down the street at food vendor buying gyros.

"Should we go back? That doesn't sound good." It sounded like a slaughter.

"That's going to attract cops." Zoya said frowning.

"It's the right thing to do." Bones pointed out wiping sauce off her chin.

The food vendor shouted something at them in German and started closing his cart.

"Um, if you want moral fortitude and a sense of fair play, call Chance." Zoya said, taking another bite of her gyro.

"Your girlfriend is back there, possibly in danger."

Zoya sighed and dropped her gyro. "Fine."

"You'll feel awful if something happened to her."

"True, okay, fine. This is me running into danger instead of away from it."

#####3

Inside the strip club was hell on earth.

Isabel had seen and, she was honest enough with herself, done terrible things throughout her career. None of that could have prepared her for what she met inside that club. Gina had gone insane; the stress had finally gotten to her.

The human could hear her, somewhere deeper inside, screaming Zoya's name. Someone, a man she thought, was begging for his life. The sound of a shotgun blast cut him off with sickening finality.

Isabel had grown up knowing exactly what it was that her father did for a living. She'd known that he killed people, bad people, people who needed to die before they hurt others. It had been na'd've; she knew that now of course. But she'd always held onto that ideal, that those who she killed deserved to die.

The people in front of her now, splayed out in their own blood, they didn't deserve this. There was no justification for what was happening. It was all the worse because some of this was her fault.

None of this would have happened if she hadn't been so eager to get to Gina. So certain she could outwit the other assassin.

So confident in her own abilities.

Her flunkies were still shooting at anything that moved around them. They'd been drawn into Gina's madness as well.

The one closest to her was a tall white man, a black t-shirt stretched over a body builders frame. He was splattered with blood from the stripper he'd just shot in the head. Even as Isabel moved towards him, he emptied the magazine of his Uzi into her mangled body. Laughing as he did in an orgy of violence.

The sound of her silenced pistol was drowned out in that gunfire, but the effects were noticeable. His head jerked forward and then his entire body fell over into what was left of the girl in front of him.

One down, eleven left.

The odds were not good, even with the Hunter behind her somewhere.

She caught another scared male patron, shoving him behind the bar as one of Gina's shot at him with a shot gun. "Stay there!" Isabel yelled at the man, although whether he understood her English or not was debatable.

She was running as she fired, but the first shot was low, catching the shotgun woman in the chest instead of the headshot she wanted. It didn't stop the shotgun wielding woman and she shot again, this time at Isabel.

A pain in her left arm told her at least some of the shotgun pellets had hit, but by then she'd adjusted her aim and the woman's head jerked as well, and then the shotgun and body were crashing to the floor.

Two down.

There was a startled shout from nearby as the Hunter made her presence felt as well and Isabel smiled grimly. Make that three down.

Blood was dribbling down her left arm, she could feel the warm wetness coating her arm and leaking past the cuff of her shirt to coat her hand.

"Zoya!" Gina's incensed scream was closer. The club was mostly silent now, only the stripper music playing in the background. Here and there she could hear people whimpering, or crying out in pain.

Gina wasn't the only one who was wondering where Zoya was. Isabel hoped she wasn't far away. She followed the sound of Gina's voice, stepping over bodies and shattered glass as she went. The Hunter was somewhere behind her, she thought.

"Zoya!" The scream came again. "Come out you fucking bitch!"

Isabel moved slowly, carefully sweeping the room ahead of her over the sights of her pistol. There were more henchmen somewhere, although she frowned a little as she wondered where they had all gone.

Certainly Gina had to be running out of people to shoot by now? She must have realized that Zoya wasn't here by now. What was the other assassin doing? Had she gone that completely insane?

Those questions lingered in Isabel's mind as she ducked into the next room. Private booths lined the walls and she tried, hard, not to think about what the sticky substance she was walking through was.

A flash of movement caught her eye and she turned, finger squeezing the trigger before her mind realized she'd seen Gina. The assassin was standing just around the corner, a perfect target. Isabel's shot was perfect, aimed right at Gina's forehead, centered right between the eyes.

Instead of the blood splatter she'd been expecting, the bullet shattered the mirror that she'd just shot.

A fucking mirror? Isabel started to turn, only to catch Gina's fist to the face.

#####3

Gina drug Isabel through the halls covered in bodily fluid. "Do you realize how badly you've fucked up my life?" She shouted at the dazed woman.

"There's a reason you're a solo player Isabel, your people skills suck and your brain goes to mush if there is more than you in a room."

Gina hauled Isabel up the stairs on the stage and jerked her upright, caring very little if Isabel's arm broke.

Isabel struggled against her, trying to think through the pain. Getting hit in the face with a pistol butt had really sucked.

The assassin kicked the pole and found it sturdy to her liking. "This was about more than the outfit, do you think the outfit pays me enough for minions. I've been outsourcing for two years now, and with this job they gave me an option to buy in."

She forced Isabel's hands behind the pole and secured them with large zip tie.

"You're insane." Isabel licked blood lips. "They'll hunt you down for moonlighting."

"Who's still alive?" Gina barked out waiting for her people to sound back. Four voices sounded out. "Cover the exits and find that Hunter."

Groggily, Isabel tugged on the bonds holding her, wondering why she wasn't already dead.

Gina moved around Isabel looking at her. "What outfit? Who's going to stop me, they're gone thanks to that werewolf."

There was something important here, something Isabel's confused brain was still fumbling around with. "Who's been paying you?" She asked, with a sickening feeling in her stomach.

"Your ex-girlfriend now, if that little present with your name was any indication. Which puts my plan in a hard place. You were my bait, I saw you shoot the woman and she still makes out with you! Werewolves don't do that. So you were my bait and you fucking ruined it." She backhanded Isabel.

"I was always going to kill you Isabel because if you killed Zoya and I didn't, well, I'd never get in with the Russians. I had to have the kill shot."

More blood, this time for Isabel's nose, dribbled down her face and she saw double.

Gina ran a hand through her hair thinking. "Maybe if I tell her I have you, she'll come and pay me so she can rip your liver out herself." Gina was running out of time, sun rise and she was either in or out.

"What Russians?" Isabel mumbled, spitting blood. She didn't understand how she could have so badly underestimated Gina, but she had to buy time.

"It's a sweet deal, once you're in, you're in forever. Think of how my skills would grow over time." Gina's gaze became almost lustful as she considered the possibilities.

"You're insane." The blond forced her head upright, hoping Zoya wasn't far away now. "Nothing's forever."

"Some things are. Some people are, Isabel." She snorted, "What a simple world you live in."

"What are you talking about?" Isabel focused her eyes, slowly, on Gina's face. There was a look in Gina's eyes that was desperate, almost insane. "What have you done?" Isabel whispered, sudden dread taking hold.

"Nothing to concern yourself with Isabel. You and your werewolf lover will be dead by sunrise. You have to be." Gina circled Isabel thinking. "Somebody find me a number for the Reservation in the US, I need to contact Zoya, let her know I have a present for her."

Somebody brought her a cell phone and Gina snagged it roughly out of their hands. "Get back to your post."

"Yes? Listen I don't care who the fuck you are get me Zoya on the line, I have her little fuck toy."

She jerked her head back as the voice on the line laughed at her. "What do you mean which one?" Gina snapped into the phone. "Isabel, tell her I have Isabel."

"I'm going to enjoy watching her kill you." Isabel snarled, twisting and squirming, trying to pull free. The ties were stronger than they looked, making her wrists bleed.

"No you won't, you'll be dead."

"Get over here so I can kick your teeth in!" Isabel yelled.

"What?" She blinked at the phone. "Not you, I wasn't talking to you. Just get Zoya on the line now!"

Inside the strip club the ring tone of a current pop song began to sound through the club, sounding loud and out of place.

"Hello?" Zoya's voice echoed through the club and in Gina's ear through the cell phone.

"Glad you called her, you idiot." Isabel tried again to kick Gina, still short.

The blood drained from Gina's face. "She's in the club!" She shouted.

"Of course I am, and you're down another person. Tick tock, daylight isn't that far away and I'm sure the cops are on their way by now." The phone went silent as Zoya hung up.

"Things not really working out as they should Gina?" Isabel taunted, relieved to know Zoya was nearby. Certainly Gina's minions wouldn't stand up to the alpha werewolf and Bones together?

"Shut up!" Gina brought the gun up pointing it in Isabel face. "I'm going to enjoy killing you." Something round hurtled at them on the stage out of the darkness and she automatically moved the gun from pointing at Isabel to the object, firing.

From behind her a figure moved quickly rushing the stage. Zoya easily leapt onto the stage, body slamming Gina off.

Isabel yelled in sheer joy as she watched her ex go flying. "Take that you bitch!" She yelled, through blood filled mouth.

Zoya turned, looking at Isabel, her expression not happy.

She shifted the nails of her right hand into claws and stalked over to Isabel. "I'm not sure why I'm bothering, it's obvious only one of us thinks we're in a relationship." She grumbled but cut the plastic tie.

"Is that the one of us who went to a strip club?" Dark blue eyes narrowed. "Did you enjoy your lap dances?"

"Well you're assuming a lot since you didn't see the present I left for Gina in the Alley."

Her hands free, Isabel poked the were in the shoulder. "You went to a strip club! Should I ask how many g-strings you shoved money into?" It really wasn't a good time or place for the discussion, but Isabel was pissed.

"Seriously, you want to talk about this now? Fine. A couple, but my girlfriend ditched me to run back to her ex."

"I was trying to save you from my ex!" Isabel threw up her hands. "Have you not noticed how she's trying to kill you?"

"Did you fail to notice the part where we are a couple and we talk about things that affect us, such as exes trying to kill me."

That hit a nerve and Isabel looked away, wiping at the blood on her face and immediately regretting the move as her broken lip complained. "Sorry about that. I thought..." She trailed off, miserably. "It wasn't supposed to go like this." The deaths of innocents.

"Yeah, well, yeah... at least you aren't one of those dead." Zoya said her face softening a little.

"At least you're still talking to me. I wasn't sure you would be after the stunt I pulled." The human admitted, softly. She ducked her head, looking away from Zoya at the admission.

"And that was a very stupid stunt, I can't believe you, we had just talked about..." Zoya sputtered but her anger was deflating and Isabel was doing everything a cub would do which caused human intellect to be overridden by wolf instinct. "You could have died and you're mad at me for the off chance I might have gotten a lap dance, which I didn't." The werewolf moved forward and slow wrapped her arms around Isabel, sniffing her, making sure she was okay.

"You're hurt." She whispered.

"It's nothing bad, just a few shotgun pellets." Isabel leaned against Zoya, indulging in the few stolen seconds of intimacy. Her shoulders sagged in relief, she hadn't realized until just then how scared she'd been that Zoya would never forgive her.

"I'm still upset you went to a strip club." She grinned, stepping back and pulling out her spare pistol. "No doing that without me anymore."

The shooting had stopped, so either the club was completely empty now, or Gina's people had finally come to their senses.

"Bones is cleaning up the rest of the trash so I could rush in and play hero." The werewolf paused and looked at Isabel. "So does that mean you're okay if I go to a strip club with you?"

"No lap dances from people other than me though." Isabel had to draw the line somewhere didn't she? "I hope the Hunter doesn't realize Bones is more than just a Were." She turned; ready to put Gina out of her misery, pausing when the space where Gina's body had been was empty of everything but shattered glass.

Zoya lifted her head sniffing. "It's hard to get a scent in here over the smell of arousal and blood." She turned looking around. "Let's get off the stage and out of the open." She had been so intent on Isabel she hadn't realized how exposed they were and she wasn't certain why the Hunter hadn't taken a shot.

That was an excellent idea, and Isabel cursed her inattention around Zoya as she moved them towards the back of the stage. "Gina was bragging about being hired by some other group, any ideas who?" She stepped around a dead stripper, again struck by the knowledge that this was at least partly her fault.

It might be time for her to fully retire from the business.

Zoya blinked. "That hadn't occurred to me. Bones asked Michelle to make sure Gina was sent as back-up on my hit. Organizations other than crime syndicates that do hits and assassinations are rare so it might be a South American drug syndicate or maybe the Italians or Russians. Werens don't use outside contractors, nor do demons."

"She did say Russians, but" Isabel shook her head, slowing as they moved into the changing room for the dancers. It looked empty but the hairs along the blond woman's arms stood up. Eyes darting everywhere she considered the area. The tall metal lockers and mirrors lined all the walls and formed a sort of zig zagging pathway towards the rear exit.

The other option was to go back the way they had come, and she was certain the Hunter would take a shot at Zoya if she could.

Zoya froze and for a moment it looked like she would shift. She growled. "Back. Something not right." It smelled human yet not and it wasn't Bones, perhaps a demon, but she wasn't sure.

For once, Isabel didn't argue, she just nodded and started to back up, keeping a wary eye on the room in front of them.

It moved fast, faster than she would have thought possible if she hadn't been staring right at the shape as it exploded from its hiding spot. The force of its passage blew open the metal doors of the lockers, sending dancing girls uniforms strewn behind it like a hurricane.

Isabel thought she pulled the trigger, maybe even hit it, but it didn't even slow down. Not even a Were could have taken that hit without slowing, but this thing barely felt it.

All of that passed through the blond human's mind as the thing swept up to her and brushed her aside as if she barely existed. With what seemed like careless ease she was flung sideways, slamming into a metal row of lockers. The force crumpled in the front and she slid down to hit the ground.

Then the thing, it looked like a person she thought dimly, groping for her pistol, was on Zoya.

Zoya wasn't taken completely off balance but she hadn't expected a vampire. Leg muscles contracted and she sprang back away from the silver knife the vampire slashed into the space where she'd been. Growling, she started to shift and charged forward. Clothing and skin shredded and fur spilled out. Bones and joints broke and reformed, shifting Zoya's features, making her into an animal.

Weakly, Isabel tried to get up, stumbling. Her head was ringing from the force of that impact and she thought her nose was bleeding again but she couldn't be sure.

The vampire was infernally fast, faster even than Zoya, although it wasn't quite as strong. With a smile that bared fangs, he met her halfway, silver knife leading the way.

The werewolf twisted out of the way, barely, but the dagger skimmed her ribs and the wolf howled in pain. Logic bled away under the instincts of the fight and survival. They traded blows, Zoya landed a solid blow that threw the vampire back but she was tiring. She had not received a deadly wound yet, but each small cut from the silver knife was beginning to wear on her as she lost blood and silver entered her system, sickening her.

They were too close together and moving much, much too fast for Isabel to get a shot. Even without her eyes blurred from what she was thinking might be a concussion, she wasn't sure she could have avoided hitting Zoya.

And her bullets were silver today.

Trying to force her stomach to stop threatening to revolt, she wobbled to her feet. The assassin was not used to feeling helpless, but she did as her love traded blows with a vampire. She'd never fought one of those before, that was Hunter territory and she cursed the fact that the Hunter was probably off trying to kill Bones at the moment.

Zoya's claws scored several bloody furrows on its body before she was launched and crashed into the bar. Glasses and bottles smashed under her weight and alcohol stung as it seeped into cuts. Stunned, the Were shook her head, white fur stained red shifting with the movement. The vampire was there in the blink of an eye, the silver knife raised.

"Stop." Came the cool calculated voice as well as the sound of the hammer from a gun being drawn back.

Gina stood, gun pointed at the vampire. "She's my kill, mine. You gave me till sunrise."

With a snarl that sounded like a curse, the vampire drew back, leaving the Alpha were she was. "Fool." The vampire whispered and Isabel felt her skin crawl at the sound of the disgusted voice. She had no doubt about what the Vampire wanted to do as he gazed at Gina.

She wondered if Gina knew as the woman stepped towards Zoya, a victorious look on her face. "If I'd known it would be so easy to get you out into the open Zoya, I would have strung your little fuck toy from a pole long ago."

Isabel closed her eyes, trying to steady her mind and body. It was hard, but she licked her lips and concentrated past the pain and blood. She had one chance at this and she hoped Zoya would have a way to deal with the vampire or they were both dead anyway.

"I'm going to live forever!" Gina smiled down at Zoya, finger tensing on the trigger of her gun.

Isabel's gun spoke first and the bullet punched a nice neat hole in the left side of Gina's temple. What it did coming out the other side of her head was considerably messier. Gina was dead before her body hit the floor, crashing through a round table.

"Fuck you." Isabel whispered. With an inhuman scream of rage the vampire turned to attack.

The hunter was there, suddenly, in front of Isabel. She slammed the metal rod down into the ground and a barrier sprung up over the both of them.

The vampire slammed into the barrier again and again, its rage focused on Isabel.

The hunter prayed, eyes watching the vampire's movements. He was so ordinary looking it was hard to recall what he looked like the moment your eyes left him. But she watched, waiting for an opening, very aware that behind the vampire the werewolf was stirring in the wreckage of the bar.

Not certain if her eyes were playing tricks on her, or if she'd taken one too many blows to the head, Isabel wavered. Would a bullet go through the thing, whatever it was, that the Hunter was doing?

"Zoya!" Isabel leaned against the crumpled locker behind her. "Go!"

The vampire's attention seemed to waver and she held up a bloody hand. "Look at this!" That got his attention. "Yes, look at all the warm blood."

The werewolf's ears perked up and rotated forward listening to each word Isabel said. She didn't move eyes uncertain, but then Bones was there skin smoking slightly and shivering. The hellhound jumped up and smacked the back of the werewolf's head.

"Get out of here!" Isabel yelled. Even if they killed the vampire, that left the Hunter and Zoya was already hurt. She waved the blood back and forth, watching as the Vampire tracked her hand.

The Hunter was unhappy with losing her prey but in truth Gina had been in service to vampires it looked like. She would have helped the woman cement

her deal with the blood-vermin and then more than likely Gina would have killed her. No one would know Gina had not done the kill herself.

Zoya's shoulders sagged and her ears folded down against her skull, and her tail drooped.

But they fled as sirens broke through the night air.

As the vampire's eyes darted to the exit the hunter lifted the iron bar and the barrier dropped. At the same time her other came up firing her weapon into the monsters head.

"Nice shot." Isabel slid down the outside of the locker, wincing as the move jostled her aching ribs.

The gun was holstered and the hunter was moving forward, the silver spike emerging from her shirt sleeve and she shoved it into the thing's heart, watching as it went still as death. Whether or not it was in final death was unknown but she would let the authorities deal with it. The vampire would be a perfect scapegoat for all the death and destruction.

She turned, looking at Isabel, desire to go after the werewolf fighting with her compassion towards her fellow man who was in need. "Thank you." She said finally and moved to crouch next to Isabel. "You had a few good shots yourself."

"I think I'm retiring." She dropped her pistol, listening to the sirens getting louder. This was going to be a complete mess to explain and she wondered how she was going to do it.

"You should go." Her hand grabbed the Hunter's arm. "But not after Zoya. She's not evil. Just a bitch."

"Love makes you blind, she's still a monster. No I should stay. We will need to explain how we stopped the vampire and its minions after it committed such monstrosities on the poor people here."

"I can do that." Isabel closed her eyes and leaned her head against the metal behind her. "You people aren't supposed to get arrested. I owe you one for not going after Zoya anyway."

"I won't be arrested; I will flash my credentials and explain the situation and go. And I didn't let her go, she escaped while I was subduing a more immediate threat. Hunters never let anyone go, to show weakness or sympathy for creatures of the devil is an unforgivable act by a Hunter." Mary explained hoping that Isabel understood what she was saying. She wasn't certain what would happen if it was known she let the werewolf escape.

But it would not be pleasant. Purification and other rituals and then rejection by the church.

She ran a hand through her short hair, perhaps it was time to request a retreat, so she could refocus her spirit on her work. She had seen them on the stage. Her gun had been trained on Zoya, but she had been so human with her fear for Isabel so clear on her face, as well as love.

She hadn't been able to pull the trigger.

"I didn't think I'd be saying this, but, it's been good to meet you, Mary." Isabel said, offering the Hunter her hand. People were yelling in German at the entrance of the strip club; they didn't have long to wait now.

Mary hesitated. "Thank you," she said, taking Isabel's hand.

She let go and held up her hands, talking rapidly in German as a spotlight hit them.

#####

It was a beautiful day. The kind that Isabel hadn't seen much of since she'd left the U.S. after the debacle that had become her trip to LA. She'd refused to work in the entire north American continent after that. To the displeasure of her handlers of course. The Jeep's engine purred as she sped down the empty highway.

Somewhere, way back there, she'd crossed into the reservation. It was hard to tell where, the desert still looked like the desert. If there hadn't been a rusting sign at the border, she would have missed it completely.

The blond wondered if she knew what she was getting into, or even if Zoya knew what she was getting herself into by inviting them to move in together. Isabel didn't. Of that she was certain. Frankly, Isabel was scared of the very idea of moving in together, which was part of the reason she hadn't quite gotten around to telling Zoya she was coming.

In her rearview mirror, a SUV painted in the colors of the Reservation police pulled out on to the road and started following.

"Oh great." She let off the gas a little as she spotted the cop car.

After a few seconds the lights on the police car flipped on.

"Shit." Isabel sighed, rolled her eyes and pulled over to the dirt shoulder. "I can't even go one hour here without a problem."

The SUV pulled up behind Isabel. The car shut off and the door opened and tall shape got out, approaching the driver's side.

Jesus, Isabel thought, they do grow them tall out here. She rolled down her window, looking up into a face that bore a striking familiarity to the one she had come so far to see. "Good afternoon Sheriff."

This was proof positive that the universe had a twisted sense of humor. Her hopefully soon to be live in girlfriend's sister was the Sheriff of the entire reservation.

"Afternoon. I'll admit up front you weren't doing anything wrong." The woman drawled, hand resting on the butt of her service weapon.

"So you got lonely and just wanted a pleasant afternoon chat?" Isabel twisted in her seat to get a better look at the Sheriff, wondering if she should have done a little more homework about the family.

Chance gave a smile that was less than friendly. "That must be it, since I don't have enough to do in my day. Ran your plate, oddly you don't live here."

"Oddly I'm visiting." Oh dear, Isabel had promised herself she'd be good with the righteous sister. Apparently she was going to break that promise to herself.

"You know this is the Reservation, don't you?"

"I did see the big rusting sign about forty miles back, yes." She smiled.

"Fair enough. You mind if I check your car. I get a little nervous when humans visit. Especially by empty backroads."

"Check my car? Is that code for search my car?" Isabel raised an eyebrow.

"No, no code, I'm just going to do a visual check. Search means moving things around."

"Of course. Mind if I wait outside of the car while you do your visual check?" She wondered what the good Sheriff would make of all the luggage in the back.

"No go ahead, just keep your hands where I can see them." Blue eyes watched Isabel carefully, they were bright but darker than Zoya's.

"Certainly." Isabel slid out of the door, still unused to the tall Jeep. "So you just linger out here watching for people you don't recognize?"

"Yep, it's close to a full moon, we get a lot of humans with hunting gear in their cars. This happens to be the stretch of road they like to sneak in on," she said, opening the door and looking around.

A dark eyebrow rose seeing all the bags and Chance sniffed, taking in the scents. There was the faint scent of gun oil.

For her part, Isabel leaned against the side of the Jeep, watching the Sheriff do her visual inspection of all the bags inside.

"You planning on moving here? That's a lot of luggage." Chance asked.

"Maybe. Depends on the offer I get, I suppose." The blond shrugged, a bit of nervousness creeping in her voice despite her best efforts.

Chance sighed. Another woman trying to kill her sister, dear God what did Zoya do to these women. "I see."

"That would make one of us." Isabel looked out into the desert. Not many people here, it was wide open. She could come to get used to that.

The moment she looked away, Chance moved, slammed Isabel against the car and quickly got her hands behind her back and cuffed.

"Oof..." Isabel grimaced as still healing ribs were abused. "Nice to meet you too, Chance."

Chance ignored that, she hit the radio on her shoulder. "Chance here. I have another one of Zoya's exes. Her car smells like gun oil."

"Family reunions are going to be a lot of fun." Isabel quipped.

Chance ignored Isabel listening to her ear piece. "Yeah send out a car. I'm out on Black Cat Road, about 15 miles from the border." She talked into the radio.

"You know," Isabel said, conversationally, "I really didn't expect this sort of warm welcome from Zoya's sister after she came all the way to Germany to get me. If she didn't want me to move in with her, she could have just sent an email or something."

Chance froze. "Scratch that, have Zoya call me."

Waiting for Zoya to radio her back was awkward, Chance thought, although her body language didn't show it. At least it wasn't a 100 degrees out.

She studied the woman who, from all accounts, had stolen Zoya's heart. She looked harmless, which probably meant she was more dangerous than a pissed off rattler stuck in your bed sheets.

This was going to be something Zoya never let her live down; then again, Zoya never let her live anything down.

"Aren't you going to ask me anything?" Isabel shifted, wishing she hadn't been quite so easy about getting handcuffed. She was also rethinking her decision that day to wear a sun dress, it definitely was out of the norm for her but she'd thought it would be a good first impression.

"I could but there's no point until I confirm your identity." Chance said in that same soft drawl that put people at ease and off their guard.

"So your the sister who's shacked up with a human?" Isabel stretched out her legs, determined to at least get some entertainment out of the situation.

"That would be me. You want me to open the door so you can sit in the seat and not get your dress dirty?" Chance asked.

"Naw, this'll be more fun explaining to Zoya." Isabel flashed a smile. "Then I'm pretty sure I'm going to slap her, probably." She looked thoughtful. "I'm still thinking about that bit."

Chance cracked a grin for a second. "That will get people talking."

Your sister is too literal too literal for her own good." The blond human squirmed, trying to get comfortable. It was hard, considering she was sitting on the ground with her hands handcuffed behind her. "I told her to get out of the place we were at..." She skirted around the reasons why "And your sister gets entirely out of Germany!"

The smile went away and Chance was stone faced again. "She didn't have much choice in the matter." She said quietly.

Bones voice came through the radio. "Chance, what's up?"

"What do you mean she didn't have a choice?" Isabel's smile died. "She's all right isn't she?"

Chance sighed and clicked a button. "I thought I asked for Zoya not you."

"She's busy."

"Doing what?" Chance voice shifted to irritated.

"Alpha things."

Isabel raised an eyebrow, interested in the answer to that.

"Bones what is she doing? She's supposed to be taking things light.

"Okay, before you get mad, she's fine and she can't ignore threats to her status as Alpha..."

"Bones, what the fuck is she doing?"

"She's up at Wolf's Run taking care of Urs."

"What? Urs is my issue." Chance shouted.

Isabel sighed, shaking her head.

"Well he threatened you while you were temporary Alpha while we were in Germany. Which is a challenge to her."

"Urs just did it because it was me, it has nothing to do with Zoya." Chance muttered a bunch of curses under her breath.

"Would you just tell Bones that I'm here? Please?" Isabel was getting tired of the bickering that wasn't getting them anywhere.

"Bones can you verify this is the 'Girlfriend' and not a psycho ex." She held the radio up to Isabel's mouth.

"Isabel, is that you?" Bones asked excitedly.

"Hi Bones, sorry it took me so long to get here. The Germans were not happy about the vampire thing." Isabel leaned forward to talk into the radio.

"Oh, it is you. I'm glad you decided to come visit; Zoya will be over the moon. Sorry we just left. Zoya got silver poisoning; I had to get her back to the reservation."

"Yeah, I was kind of expecting to see you guys after the German cops let me out." Isabel glanced up at the Sheriff, wondering what she was making of this.

Chance cleared her throat. "You two can keep talking or I can uncuff her and you can get out here to show her the way to Zoya's while I go round up wonder Alpha."

"Oh, sorry. Wait, you cuffed her?" Bones asked.

"Yup, behind my back too."

"Black Cat Road about 15 miles from the border."

"Oh, I'm going to tell Tyler you're handcuffing other women."

"Tyler?" Isabel's grin widened.

"You do that, Bones." Chance said, unphased, and shut the radio off.

"So do I get off the hook this time, officer?" Isabel smiled sweetly.

"Right. Women who come out here upset that Zoya dumped them out of their life?" Isabel rubbed her wrists.

She undid the cuffs. "Bones will be here in a few minutes at the rate she drives and will take you to Zoya's. A word of advice - you win Terri's heart your life will be golden, piss her off and Zoya can't help you."

"Terri. Got it." She eyed the Sheriff. "That's it then?"

"I could keep talking but Urs is a werebear and Zoya's not recovered from the silver." And Chance wanted to be the one to kill Urs, but she had a big problem with people who abused kids.

"Then I'll come with you."

"Nope, you go with Bones. Wolf's Run is a bit savage, now I don't doubt you can handle yourself but you'd be a distraction to Zoya, especially wearing that."

"It was supposed to be distracting." She wouldn't call the thin material exactly see through, but it was close. "Get out of here Sheriff, keep Zoya alive will you? I've got plans for her."

Chance nodded and quickly moved to her SUV, in a second she was pulling out back down the road.

#####3

Terri looked around her kitchen at the two humans and the hellhound. "Anyone like more tea?" It was getting dark out and she knew Tyler was growing worried about Chance.

"Please." Isabel was going crazy.

She was trying not to tap her foot, but she was failing horribly as she waited for some sign or word from Zoya. Certainly they were all right? The Sheriff had looked competent and Zoya was good at things like this.

Terri brought the kettle over and refilled the cup.

"Thank you Terri." Tyler reached over and patted the newcomer on the shoulder. "Don't worry. Chance is with her, they'll be fine."

"They'll be fine dear. They always are and God loves his fools and no bigger fool than the Pavels."

"We should go out there." Isabel set down her tea cup, not having taken a sip. "We could..." She paused, thinking of the sniper rifle in her trunk. "Help."

There was the sound of a car door slamming followed by another then voices shouting at each other.

"Of all the stupid things, you're healing, healing Zoya. You had silver poisoning."

"I'm going to kill her." Isabel sprung to her feet, chair falling over as she sprinted for the front door.

"I don't think they heard you in LA, maybe you should shout louder." Zoya yelled back. "He challenged me for Alpha. That monster wanted to rule my lands."

Isabel sprang through the front door, amazed at how desperate she was to make sure that Zoya was in one piece.

"No, he challenged me. Because a few years ago I gouged his eye out and shot him in the knee with a silver bullet in front of his whole town. The FBI agent made him look bad; he's my kill, Zoya. He was the one selling kids to that preacher. You made me hold off because it's hard to get someone strong enough to keep those cesspool towns in line and he can. So if you changed your mind, I deserved the kill."

They trailed off as the front door opened. Both of them were splattered with blood. Zoya was wearing an old pair of sweats that Chance had in the back of her SUV.

Zoya blinked. "Isabel?"

"Zoya." Isabel slid to a stop in front of her, eyes wide as she took in the blood splatter all over her.

Isabel was here and in her house and she looked good.

"Are you all right?" Zoya looked like shit.

"Isabel. You... ah... here... I... I'm fine."

"Good." Isabel's hand came up and around, slapping the Were on the cheek hard.

Zoya frowned and looked at Isabel confused. "Are you breaking up with me?"

"No you idiot!" Isabel grabbed her shoulders. "But I am pissed at you right now."

Chance really wouldn't have believed the scene in front of her but she'd seen it with her own eyes. "I'm just going to go inside and Tyler and I will escape out the other door."

Chance edged by Isabel and crept inside, shutting the door.

Isabel planted her hands on her hips, glaring at Zoya. "Well?" Barely noticing they were alone now.

"What did I do?" Zoya asked confused. She'd given Isabel space like Bones recommended, when Isabel was ready she'd come find her and then they could den.

"What did you do?" Isabel asked, incredulous, throwing up her hands. "I didn't mean for you to leave the entire Continent of Europe when I told you get out of there. Chance said you had silver poisoning, but you didn't even try to get in touch with me while the Germans were holding me. That was two weeks ago Zoya. Now I come here, finally, and what happens? You're off trying to get yourself killed when you're still hurt. How's that for something you did?"

"Well with the Hunter there, we couldn't stay and I wasn't in any shape to take on a Hunter. Bones had to basically smuggle us back here. I don't remember a lot. Plus Bones told me to give you space, that I was freaking you out by being too clingy."

Zoya scratched an ear, not certain to say the right thing to say. "I'm sorry." She thought she'd give that one a try.

At that, Isabel's shoulders sagged. "I thought you'd regretted the entire thing." She looked away, praying she was wrong.

"No, no." She hesitantly reached out to Isabel, taking her hands. "I don't regret anything. But Bones told me about the conversation you two had in the kitchen and how I was moving fast for you because werewolves find a mate and then just live together and your not exactly a Were."

"It was a little fast." Isabel smiled a little, remembering that conversation. "Actually, it was a lot fast. And I've never lived with someone. But," She looked up, squeezing Zoya's hand. "I'm here and everything I own in the world is in the back of that Jeep over there."

Zoya leaned forward kissing Isabel's cheek. "I'm glad, but if you're not ready we can work something out. I want you to be sure; this can be a little overwhelming."

"You" she hit Zoya's shoulder "are not taking that offer back! If I have to, I'm camping out in the front of your damn yard until you give in."

"What? What did I say now?" Zoya was completely perplexed. "I'm trying to accommodate your needs, something I rarely care about in the people I'm seeing."

"You can accommodate my needs by unloading the Jeep and then getting us dinner." The blond leaned up and kissed her, slowly, enjoying it. She'd dreamed about that kiss for weeks now, sustained by it while the Germans decided if they trusted her even with the Hunter vouching for her. "Then" she smiled over her shoulder as she headed for the front porch. "You get a present."

Zoya, nodded and started for Isabel jeep. "I like presents," she murmured.

Terri smiled at Isabel as she came inside. "I used to tell her all the time to stop wasting her time and energies on those weak things, that she needed a strong Alpha."

"Terri, I'm just a human, I'm not an Alpha." She blinked then grinned. "Remind me to tell her that my parents want to come for a visit. That's going to be a fun time."

Terri laughed. "You don't trigger the senses girl, but you're not human. You're a Were, a Were stuck in human skin. The Blackwaters have that genetic quirk that effects a small percentage of their children. You're better than an Alpha though; you calm her and make her happy, but are strong enough in your own right so her Alphaness doesn't push your will to hers. That's important."

"A Were in human skin?" Isabel thought that over, looking out the window as Zoya loaded herself up with the luggage from the back of the Jeep. "I like that." She looked back at Terri and grinned. "I think I'm going to like it here."

"I hope so." Terri had no illusions; Zoya would curl up and die if Isabel left. Some people were just like that.

Zoya struggled with all the pieces of luggage to the front door then stared at the door for a moment trying to open it with the power of her mind because all her hands were full. When that didn't work she tried to kick the door with her foot.

"Can someone get the door? Hello? I know you can hear me."

There was something that sounded suspiciously like snickering from the other side of the door before Isabel, with an almost straight face, opened it. "Thank you." She smiled at the Were who was carrying all of her things. There wasn't much, but a few of the pieces of luggage had to weigh close to a hundred pounds each.

Zoya held back all the comments she wanted to make and entered her house. She set the bags down in the entry way. "How long have you been here? Did you get the tour?"

Sliding her arm through Zoya's, Isabel patted her arm. "Nope. I was just talking with Terri. I think she approves; at least, I hope she does. I haven't seen anything other than the kitchen and the living room so far."

"Um, okay. It's good she likes you, although I wasn't worried." The Alpha was temporarily flustered and tried to get her bearings. "This is the dining room. We don't really use it, because I don't have people over for formal eating events."

"Which is a pity." Terri's voice came from the kitchen. "She's always having super secret meetings in her office and eating on the go."

"On the other side of the living room is a gym that I never use and a media room that I use sometimes to unwind and watch movies." She showed her the rooms briefly, holding open the doors so Isabel could peek in. "Okay, moving to the upstairs." She lead Isabel up the stairs.

"That's my office and war room on occasion. My bed room and 3 empty bedrooms I've never bothered with. You can pick one for your room. Although I'd like it if my bedroom became our bedroom, Bones was really keen that I not put pressure on you."

Isabel tugged on her hand, stopping her. "Let's settle this right now, all right?" She reached up brushing her fingers through Zoya's almost white hair. "I need a space of my own. Maybe not to sleep in, because it was really nice sleeping with you at the cabin in Germany, but a place to put my things. I need some space of my own, Zoya, just a room I can retreat to if I need to be by myself. I'm trying, but it's going to be a slow process."

Zoya nodded her face serious. "Good. I'm glad." She leaned forward, nuzzling her nose into the hair at Isabel's neck, taking in the woman's scent. "I missed your smell, I missed your voice, and I missed you getting irritated with me." She spoke into Isabel neck. She was careful not to touch her too much, not wanting to get blood on the woman's dress. Zoya pulled back. "You pick a room and I'll put your stuff in it and you can put whatever stuff you want in our bedroom. I even made space in the closet."

"You did?" Isabel sighed, relaxing into Zoya's body. She didn't care about the blood, or the dress, she'd been missing the touch for what seemed like forever now.

"I thought you'd left Germany because you realized you didn't want to be with me." She said, quietly, admitting the fear that had kept her restless throughout the long days after the massacre at the strip club.

"No, I, uh collapsed after the fight. I had acute silver poisoning. Bones smuggled me out of Germany, afraid to stay there for treatment in case more vampires were around looking for me. The strain of traveling on top of the silver put me out a couple of days. I've only been up and moving for 3 days and no one knew where you were and your cousins the Blackwaters haven't returned any of my calls." Zoya explained. "Bones kept reassuring me, you'd find me when you were ready."

"And you were out fighting someone?" Isabel thumped Zoya's shoulder in frustration. The woman was going to kill her one day. "Come on." She tugged on her hand. "I can choose a bedroom later. You need to get cleaned up and then we'll find you some food before you collapse."

She probably shouldn't have made Zoya unpack the Jeep in her condition, but damnit she was still a little annoyed with her for getting hurt in the first place. Keeping hold of the taller woman's hand she found her way towards the bathroom off of Zoya's bedroom. Amused to see, as they passed, the open closet that had half of its space already cleared out.

"My parents wouldn't tell any of my cousins what was going on. They were worried about the vampire's involvement, didn't want to get any of the family involved more than necessary. I'm retired by the way, the strip club was officially my last job. I already told Michelle, Bone's friend, who's done a great job in consolidating power." As she spoke she started up the shower in the old style claw foot tub, glad to see that the water pressure was decent.

"I had to fight him. He challenged Chance when she was acting Alpha. I couldn't let it go much longer. Plus he's a werebear and Chance is Chance." Logically she knew Chance was a highly capable werewolf who had been trained by the FBI, but she was still her little sister, the one she had failed so much in the past.

"Do you know how big werebears get? They can be fucking huge." She slipped out of the sweat bottoms and got tangled up in the top. Zoya was leaner usual, her ribs visible and the cuts from the silver knife were red angry scars on her body.

"You haven't been eating." Isabel said softly, batting away Zoya's hands so that she could help get the woman's shirt off. The mangled mess was tossed aside, she was pretty sure that both top and bottoms could be written off as a loss.

"I have." Just not the five days she was unconscious and delirious with fever, but Isabel didn't need to know that. She slowly slid into the warm water, smiling in pleasure. "That feels great."

"Good." Isabel perched herself on the edge of the tub, watching Zoya relax. "Then you haven't been eating enough." Apparently Isabel was going to have to keep an eye on Zoya's health among other things. Reaching for the shampoo she started in on the woman's white hair, still amazed at it's fine texture.

"I'm worried about the vampire being there."

"I am too. I have limited interactions with Vampires. There are two that run Nightshade and another has requested a meeting to discuss taking over Nightshade. Other than that I've never really had a run in. Vampires are kill on site in the US. It wouldn't have been hard to find out I would be in Germany. Since in order to leave the Reservation I would have to fly out of Reservation and change plans in Mexico, I'm not allowed on US soil, I have to file a flight plan with the US so they are aware. But other than bitter feelings about the Vampire wars I'm not certain of any vampires that I've pissed off." Zoya's eyes slipped closed in pleasure as her scalp was massaged with shampoo.

"I'm coming with you to your meeting with the vampire." Isabel was certain on that point as she continued her ministrations. She'd never washed another person's hair before, it was a relaxing activity, she'd have to make sure to do it again. "I'm retired from assassinations, but I'm still taking a very active interest in your safety."

"I like that. Talk to Chance, she is the sheriff which translates into all sorts of things with the budget I have. I think she'll be more than happy to give up bodyguard duty to you." Zoya was feeling very relaxed and her eyes were closed and she had thought this was going to be a crappy day and now it was pretty much the best day she'd ever had. "So what's my present?"

Isabel laughed, leaning down to give an exposed ear a gentle nip. "You haven't gotten dinner yet, so no present yet."

Zoya shivered at the nip and then pouted. "Fine, present later." She ducked under the water and scrubbed the shampoo out of her hair.

Sitting back up she shook water everywhere.

"AH!" Isabel ducked, giving the Were a dark look. "You did that on purpose I think."

Zoya laughed and got out. "Maybe." She grabbed a towel and started drying her hair.

"Hmm." Isabel enjoyed watching, she'd come a long way for this view and she was determined to enjoy it.

"I'm sure Terri's made a huge dinner for us, then I get my present."

"And I get mine." Isabel looked down at her now wet sun dress, shrugged and took it off. Tossing the wet garment at Zoya she walked out of the bathroom wearing only a thong and bra, adding an extra sway to her hips as she went.

Zoya watched her go. "I missed you. Did you go shopping with Ophelia?" The underwear looked new and sexy.

"No, I haven't been back to LA." She grinned. "But she might have given me advice over the phone." Isabel was glad she'd taken the hairdresser's advice.

Giving Zoya a look over her shoulder, the human went in search for something decent for dinner. She was amazed that she'd avoided jumping Zoya in the bath. But the woman looked much thinner than she had, and Isabel hadn't come all this way for her to let her just drop from malnutrition.

Zoya followed her out, "We left your bags downstairs but you can borrow something of mine." She said opening a drawer and pulled out a pair of workout shorts.

"Oh these are perfect." She ignored the shorts and picked up a pair of boxers, slipping those on and grabbing a well worn looking t-shirt. "Even smells like you." She slid them on.

Zoya smiled, liking how Isabel was now wearing her scent. She slipped on the shorts and a t-shirt.

"I'm happy you're here," she said, opening the bedroom door for them.

"So am I." Isabel paused, looking around the large bedroom and smiled. She was going to be fine here.

Moving forward, she took Zoya's hand in her.

They were going to be fine here.

The End.

All comments are welcome at zeeamy@gmail.com and adarkbow@yahoo.com

[Windstar's and Zee's Scrolls](#)
[Index Page](#)