

OUR KING, OUR MASTER BOOK 1



*A*  
KING  
*to be*  
CLAIMED

Brea Alepoú

# A KING TO BE CLAIMED

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BREA ALEPOÚ

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## WARNINGS AND TRIGGERS

*A King to Be Claimed contains a HFN ending, scenes with multiple partners, mild blood play, and a king who just wants to be loved.*

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# TITOS

“WATCH WHERE YOU’RE WALKING.” A MAN SHOVED TITOS HARD ENOUGH HIS small frame flew and hit the wall.

He groaned from the impact, sliding down the wall unable to hold himself up. His body feeling too tired to even put up a fight. The man who shoved him kept walking, not caring that Titos now sat on the floor. His vision blurred for a second before he caught himself from slipping even farther. He pulled out his prepaid smartphone—that wasn’t all that smart—to check the date, and there, clear as day on the tiny screen, was a little note under the date. He banged his head back on the wall.

He had asked for the day off, but Jeffery, his boss, had begged him to come in. Titos always needed a little extra money, so he’d said yes, completely forgetting why he’d needed the day off in the first place. He needed to get back to his apartment and lock himself away. He tried to push himself up, but he kept slipping. He didn’t even have enough strength to pick himself up off the floor. He wanted to cry for how stupid he was to allow himself out of the house during such a time.

Sure, it only came about once every two months, but when it happened to him, he was no better than a corpse. He huffed out a breath, counting to three before trying to muster up all his strength. On three, he made it up the wall. He breathed heavily, tired from his exertion.

He turned on shaky legs and went to find his boss. He had to let him know he was leaving. There was no way Titos could stay in his condition. If he passed out or—gods forbid—he ended up at a human hospital, they’d find out he was, in fact, not fully human. He had serious doubts that his human

half would be enough to fool them.

Titos calmed his nerves, taking deep breaths. He couldn't afford to freak out over his blunder. He'd made a mistake and now he needed to fix it. Simple.

Except it wasn't simple at all.

He couldn't find his boss. Not even Greg, the manager, was around. He leaned against the wall next to his boss's office door and brought his shaking hand up to wipe the sweat that had broken out on his brow. He felt cold and hot all at the same time, and he needed to leave now.

He would leave and apologize to his boss when he came back to work, and if he was fired, then he would move on. It was about time for him to leave the little town of Laramie, Wyoming. He'd stayed longer than he'd planned, but Jeffery paid him well and even let Titos rent the little studio apartment above the shop.

"Titos, you okay?"

He did an internal dance of happiness from hearing his boss's voice. He turned to look at the gruff man that was Jeffery Wilson, owner of Wilson and Sons General Store. Jeffery was a third-generation owner and had yet to get the sons part of the store's name. Titos thought it was because the man wore what he ate, literally. He was currently wearing mustard and pickle relish, having most likely had a hot dog from the vendor that hung out in front of the shop.

"No, actually, I'm not feeling too well. I really need to go," he said.

Jeffery's dark brown eyes scanned over Titos. He was tempted to say fuck it and walk out on his boss, consequences be damned. He held back. Jeffery had never been mean to him, and he had always been understanding of the days Titos had asked off.

"Yeah, you look a little pale. I called Megan. She said she should be here in a few minutes."

Titos didn't feel like he had minutes, losing the small grip he had on his control. He was seconds from passing out, and really, he'd rather pass out behind doors that were locked. The hospital fear was real. Jeffery had called the ambulance once, because Megan had gotten a bloody nose. If that happened, he would have to go into deeper hiding. Like, find a cave and sleep there for months before he could come out, and even then, he might not be able to escape. Damn technology was so advanced that it was impossible to hide. He looked at his boss and gave the best puppy dog eyes he could

muster.

A door banged behind him. He tried to turn and see who'd walked in, but his head started to spin. He started to take deep breaths in through his nose and out through his mouth. He was going to be sick. Turning had been the wrong move. The toast and water he'd had for breakfast felt dangerously close to coming back out.

There was a hand on his shoulder, shaking him, and words were said, but nothing penetrated the fog that had claimed his head. He shook himself loose of the deep fog and followed the hand up to Jeffery's face. His face was pinched with concern, and Titos tried to concentrate. Jeffery's mouth was moving, but sound and words were slow to come to him.

He swallowed the bile that had come up, and it burned a little going back down. He should have stayed in, and now he was regretting it. He felt someone put their arm around his waist, taking most of his weight. He groaned. Everything was so fuzzy. The arm around him wasn't big enough to be Jeffery's, but he couldn't think of anyone else who would help him. He was about to ask, but they started to move. It took all of his effort not to give the stranger all of his weight and pass out.

He blinked, and he was no longer in the store. Panic gripped him, ice cold fear running through his veins.

"Calm the fuck down, Titos, or you're going to fall over the railing." Greg's harsh voice came through the fog that permeated his mind.

He blinked a few times, trying to clear his vision and brain. Sure enough, they were right outside his little place, and Greg was trying to hold him against the wall and open the door at the same time. Titos wasn't making it easy for him either, his body shaking like a leaf. He needed to calm down.

He was right outside the little place he slept in. He could never find it in himself to call any of the places he'd slept in home, no matter how long he stayed there. The audible click of the door opening was sweet music to his ears. He was moving to get inside when everything tilted sideways.

"Goddamn it, Titos. You're small, but you're heavy as shit right now." The exertion in Greg's voice showed he was having trouble with Titos.

He tried to lift himself up, but his body didn't respond. Greg grunted as he pulled Titos over the threshold. Titos's legs dragged on the floor, his knee banging against the small dresser he had in the corner. The pain radiated up his leg, but he didn't have the energy to even whimper from it.

His blow-up mattress was laying on the floor with a sheet and a thin

blanket tossed on it. Just how he had left it before his boss had called him. He was so stupid to say yes to coming in when he needed to be locked away.

“Come on, man, help a little,” Greg said as he struggled with getting Titos to the bed.

He tried, he really did, but every time he tried to force his body to move, it wouldn't budge. It was frustrating, and he was seconds away from tears. With a hard push, Titos rolled onto the blow-up mattress. His whole body fit on it, and he was as comfortable as he was going to get for a while.

He focused all of his energy, trying his hardest. “Fine. Thanks. Go,” he said.

He only got three words out, but Greg eyed him suspiciously for a second before shrugging.

“Sure. But whatever drug you're on, I'd leave that shit alone if I were you. You can't even stand.” Greg shook his head at him as he walked out the door.

That was last thing Titos saw. He released all his control and relished in the feeling as sleep took him over. It was nothing but blackness in his dream, and that was the best kind of dream. He floated in the inky blackness, his body feeling weightless. It felt good to let loose and dream of nothing. He had no idea how long he slept, but a sharp pain made his back bow.

The burning pain he felt was familiar, and he groaned as he started to come to. He moved his head first, turning to look out the small window. Sure enough, it was pitch black outside. He moved his fingers, testing his body's responses. He tried his arms next, then his feet and legs. Everything was moving, a little sluggish, but it was moving. The mark on his back burned hotter, and he groaned from the pain. He got off the bed, shaking off the remainder of sleep.

With the mark on his back burning so hotly, he wasn't sure if he could concentrate long enough to check his surroundings. He took a few breaths to collect himself. He cracked the window open a little, the crisp cold air touching his lungs on the first inhale. It was refreshing and just as good as a hot cup of coffee. He leaned closer to the window, drawing more air into his lungs. The cold felt amazing to him. He could never understand people who hated the cold.

He felt the first little piece of his power inside of him awake with the fresh, cold air. He wasn't *powerful*, but he had a touch of power. He had enough to cast out and check his surroundings. He couldn't go far, but a few

miles would be enough. If the hunters who stalked him were closer than that, he would know in seconds. Hopefully, they would be further out, and he could have time to get out of town.

It felt as if he was a part of the wind, gliding and touching everything in its path. Everything seemed normal, except there was something drawing the breeze to it. He wanted to touch it, wanted to wrap around it and feel what this something was that called the wind. It felt as if the thing wanted to touch the wind too. He pulled the breeze back, unsure if it was dangerous. He reluctantly moved on, leaving the tempting object, needing to make sure he was safe. The object didn't seem to have hostile intentions, but he would keep an eye on it later. He first needed to check that he was safe, or as safe as he could be.

As he did his last sweep with the little power he had, he felt the disgust and hatred coming off the ones who tracked him. He quickly checked how far they were. He had enough time to get out and run. He would need to catch a ride or get to the bus. He opened his eyes to check the time. It was midnight. No buses ran this late, and the hunters would be there before the busses started to run again. He panicked for a second, trying to think of a way out. Everything around him started to sway again.

“Fuck, come on. Not right now. This is life or death,” he said as he clutched his head.

It throbbed with the beat of his heart. He needed to run. His hiding place had been discovered, and at the worst time possible. He couldn't use his ability to check his surroundings again. If he did, he risked passing out. He did not want to end up in their hands, knowing his fate if he was ever caught by them. They would kill him and not quickly. He waited for the dizziness to settle down before he attempted to move.

Standing on shaky legs, he waited another second for them to feel stronger. On steadier legs, he moved and went to grab his emergency bag. He looked at the mini fridge in the corner of the room, knowing he would need plenty of water. He went over to grabbed some, pleased he'd made the decision to stock up.

He went into the half bathroom, bent over, and the dizziness started up again. He swallowed the rising bile and reached behind the toilet where there was a small box. He opened the box and took out the stack of cash he kept just in case he had to run.

He had collected the money from odd jobs here and there and from

different places. Each place he traveled to, he always asked to be paid in cash. Most of the money was spent for living, but he put away as much as he could.

He stood, with all of his stuff ready to go, and looked over the room that he'd stayed in for the past three months. He didn't feel anything leaving it. It was never home to him, but he'd liked living in Laramie, Wyoming.

He felt bad for ghosting on Jeffery, but his boss could keep his last paycheck to make up for the way he was leaving. He walked out the door, making sure to leave the key under the mat with a note. Through his years of running, he found that people tended to leave the police out of it when there was a note. The last thing he needed was for the human police to hunt him down too. The note was simple, saying he left to go live with family and that Jeffery could keep his last check for payment of the room.

Of course, he wouldn't go stay with family. That's who he was running from. He felt the sadness of thinking of his family try and take over, but he had no time for it. He rolled his shoulders, determined to get out of town before the hunters found where he was staying. He ran down the stairs.

He was in a rush but running down the stairs was the wrong thing to do. He bent over and threw up; his whole body shook with the effort of holding himself up.

He wiped his mouth. Grabbing one of the waters from his backpack, he took the first sip and swished the cool water in his mouth. He spit and did it a couple of times before swallowing some water. His stomach cramped with the emptiness of it. He'd sat during the ordeal and now had to work to get up. His body ached, and the marking on his back burned.

The marking had been the reason why he'd often avoided danger. It wasn't perfect, and there were times his mark didn't warn him at all, but when it did, he didn't hesitate to run. He stood, moving at a slow pace. He couldn't afford to stop or pass out at this point, so it would be best if he just moved at a pace his body would allow. It wasn't fast, but at least he was moving away from the danger.



# TITOS

HE WALKED FOR A WHILE, UNSURE OF THE TIME, BUT IT WAS STILL DARK outside. The cold air calmed him as he walked, the wind winding around him as if it protected him. He knew it wasn't true, but he wished it was. The marking on his back burned less the farther he traveled. He didn't travel the usual roads. He'd grown up in the Valtruse House, and they were known for hunting and tracking. He'd been a pariah growing up, but he was still taught the basics, up until he'd had to run.

That day still gave him the chills. Sixteen should have been the best year of his life. He had already been a late bloomer. When the time came for him to be tested, to see if he had a beast inside of him or had power that would benefit a king or queen, he had nothing. He couldn't even swallow blood.

Many of his house said it was because he was half human, but he'd never met his father. His mother had passed when he was five, leaving him in the care of his aunt. She had been nice enough, but she had her own children to tend to. It hadn't helped that he was nothing like the other edoli. He didn't drink blood, and he had no desire for any of the edoli that stayed in the house. That had made him strange in many of their eyes. Most edoli gained their power at the age of fourteen.

*HIS SIXTEENTH BIRTHDAY.*

*He'd just got back from hunting, and he had a huge haul. He walked into the home he shared with his three cousins, aunt, and uncle. It was more like*

he shared it with no one, since all of them were normally gone, but it still wasn't Titos's. His aunt was a keeper in the Valtruse House, and she stayed at the main home on most days. She only came back to the small house on occasion, usually to see her children and to make sure they were okay.

Two of her children had already been sent to other houses as gifts, since his cousins Denzi and Sakoi were both powerful. They had good blood running through them. He had heard they both were taken as keepers, and his aunt and uncle were pleased. It meant that they were held in higher esteem, since two of their offspring were taken as keepers by strong households. There was only one cousin left in the Valtruse House, Klaido, and the queen wanted to save him for an alliance.

Klaido was extremely powerful for his age. He wasn't near a king or queen's level, but he was powerful to say the least. The queen wanted to save him for an alliance that would truly benefit her.

"How much longer must we keep him? He is a stain upon our family," Klaido said.

Titos stopped right outside the door, listening. He knew that he was weak, and they all looked down on him. He couldn't do anything about the human side of him. He hated it about himself. His mother had been one of the strongest keepers, but he was born so weak. Because of his mother's power and legacy, everyone had assumed he would be just as powerful. Or at least half.

But he wasn't.

"I agree, Merlith. He needs to go. The boy is powerless and brings no value. For god's and goddess's sake, the boy is sixteen, and the most he can do is feel where a deer is," Denzi, his uncle, said.

"I know, I know. I promised Navari that I would watch over him. What would you have me do? Break my oath? I followed my mistress order but I also gave my word to my sister." His aunt sounded distressed.

He felt like crap. He had known that his uncle and cousin didn't care for him, but he had hoped that his aunt at least cared for him. But here she was, just keeping a promise to her dead sister. She didn't want him there either.

"For how long?" Dishes crashed as Klaido let his anger out.

Titos flinched. He knew firsthand how out of control his cousin got when his anger escalated.

"I'll talk to Queen Mila and see if she can send Titos off."

"She won't send someone that makes the house look weak and pathetic."

*She'll have him killed," Denzi said.*

*Titos's body shook with fear. They would not see it as a cruel act, but as a mercy killing.*

*"He should have died. Every two months he gets even weaker, not even able to move on his own. He should have been put out of his miserable existence long ago," Klaido said.*

*"Come on, darling. I know you want to keep your promise to your sister, but even you must realize killing him would be taking care of him. He would no longer be plagued with such a weak body. You would be helping to end his suffering."*

*Titos held his breath for his aunt's answer. He already didn't feel safe in the house, but now that he knew his cousin and uncle wanted him dead, he feared for his life.*

*She blew out a breath, obviously resigned to what they were saying. "You're right, but I'll talk to the queen first."*

*Cold dread gripped his heart. He'd hoped that his aunt would at least fight on his behalf. He moved quietly and walked out of the only place he'd called home. They had never seen or heard him leave.*

THAT HAD BEEN EIGHT YEARS AGO, AND HE STILL FELT THE SADNESS AND anger of that day. To think, he was so weak they would rather he be dead. The first year after he'd left, he'd thought he was safe, but a hunter from the Valtruse House had found him. He hadn't run—he hadn't thought there was a need—until the man started to beat him up. The hunter had said many things that night: the queen had ordered his execution, he was a weakness she didn't want out in the world.

It didn't matter he'd left and never told anyone what house he came from. He was seen as a weakness.

He had barely escaped that night. The hunter'd had him pinned against the wall in an alley when a few humans started to yell and tried to help Titos. While the hunter was busy with the humans, Titos had made a run for it. Ever since then, he had run and hadn't let any of the hunters or small trackers get a hold of him.

He heard a twig snap behind him. *There was no way the trackers had*

*gotten so close so quickly.* He kept moving forward, not looking back, and he heard another twig snap. The hunters or trackers wouldn't be dumb enough to snap twigs, but he still kept moving, unsure of who else it could be. He didn't have the time to check the wind for who or what was following him.

He picked up his pace when he heard the branches above him move. *Fuck, they're in the trees.* He turned, leaving the small forest. If he made it to the road, they wouldn't be able to jump down and ambush him. He kept moving, acting as if he hadn't heard anything. He slowly pulled the twelve-inch blade that he kept on him. He sharpened it daily, making sure to have it ready when he needed to fight. He may have been weak in the magical area, but he had trained with the blade since he was a young child. He wouldn't go down without a fight.

Before he could make it to the opening near the road, a dizzy spell overtook him. His symbol burned with ferocious intent. It felt as if his whole back was on fire and not just the marking. He groaned as his head spun and his back burned at the same time. He tried to fight through the dizziness and just make it to the road. There, he could stop a trucker and catch a ride.

He heard three sets of shoes hit the ground behind him, and he knew it was deliberate. They wanted him afraid. All hunters were trained to sneak up on prey. The game they played while they hunted him seemed to be about how much fear they could cause before approaching.

"How the fu-fuck...?" His head pounded, making it hard for him to ask how they'd found him so fast. When he'd felt for them, they had been hours away, yet they stood right behind him. He turned, slowly, to face them, his blade hidden, knowing he would have to try a surprise attack. He was too weak to take them head on.

"Ugh, you're so weak it's funny. This task is child's play. I don't know how the other trackers failed to catch you. The queen finally allowed me to find your pathetic ass," Klaido said.

Titos hadn't expected his cousin, and he groaned again. He knew the surprise showed on his face. He'd assumed Klaido had been sent to another house, but he saw the light sheen of lilac surrounding Klaido's body representing Queen Mila.

"Oh shit. You've become Queen Mila's keeper. You've shared blood and are now bonded."

"How fucking weird is that? He can see fucking colors, but he has no power. My mother took you because you could see bonds when you were a

babe. Fuck, what a shit that turned out to be. Everyone swore that meant you'd be powerful, but you can't even hold that blade in your hand properly."

Titos reflexively tightened his grip. He would show his cousin what kind of grip he had on the blade when it went through his skull. He calmed his nerves before he acted, knowing he had to be smart when dealing with his cousin.

"I'd rather see colors than be bonded to a dying queen," he said. In hindsight, Titos realized antagonizing his cousin probably wasn't his smartest choice.

"You dare speak of my mistress that way? I will tear your fucking head off and relish in your bloodshed," Klaido said.

Yeah, not his brightest moment. He was making his cousin angry, and while most people made mistakes when they were angry, Klaido didn't. Titos remembered whenever Klaido got angry when they were children; he would hunt and kill the animals with deadly accuracy.

He stared at his cousin, trying his hardest to focus so that he missed nothing. His body wasn't cooperating with him, and he felt his legs weaken before he fell to the ground. He stayed upright on his knees, because he wouldn't give them the satisfaction of thinking he had given up.

"Fuck, you're so weak it almost takes the joy out of this."

The dead grass around Klaido crunched as he circled Titos. Titos strained his neck to watch him. Klaido was behind him, though Titos didn't think Klaido would end it that way; killing him from behind would bore his cousin. But causing a fatal wound or tripping Titos wasn't out of the realm of possibilities. He knew his cousin got a sick satisfaction from watching the life leave someone's eyes. He wouldn't miss that for anything.

Klaido walked back in front of him. Titos knew there were other hunters around, but they hadn't moved toward him, so all of his focus was on Klaido. He would be the one to deal the final blow.

"You look just like your mother did. On your knees, waiting for your death."

Confusion hit Titos instantly. His mother had died fighting another house.

"Oh, I can tell by your face you don't know." Klaido tilted his head to the side. "You poor thing. My mother killed your mother."

"You're a fucking liar," Titos screamed. Anger and confusion warred inside of him. His aunt had loved his mother. He'd found her next to the tree that his mother was buried under plenty of times. She couldn't have been the

one to kill her.

“Wow. You actually believe that your mom went to an enemy house without anyone else and died. Come on, Titos! Even you can’t be that stupid. Why the fuck would the most valued keeper in Valtruse House be sent to a hostile enemy?”

Titos refused to bend to Klaido. There was no doubt about his mother's death in his mind, but he wouldn't give Klaido the satisfaction of responding.

“I can tell you're thinking about it, but believe whatever you want. Your mother was stupid and chose a human over her bond. She disgraced my mistress, and Queen Mila quickly ordered her execution. No wonder you're so weak. Your mother was weak-willed. Who falls for a human and then has their child?” The disdain and hatred in his voice rang clearly.

Titos had known his cousin didn't like him, and sure, he knew on some level that Klaido hated him. But listening to Klaido... The man truly hated him with all of his being. Titos had no idea what to say. He just didn't have the brain power to deal with it. He needed to avoid death first, but with how his body was shaking, he doubted that would be an easy feat.

“Enough catching up. I need to bring your head to my mistress,” Klaido said as he began to strip.

He was getting ready to shift. Titos was fucked if he didn't think of something. If he remembered right, his aunt was a snake and his uncle a panther. Klaido could turn into either of those creatures, or he could be a combination. Everyone had known Klaido would turn into a powerful beast as he had had the power awaken in him long before the usual age, but he'd needed a master or mistress in order to shift. Klaido—someone who was already deadly—now had the ability to shift.

Klaido took off his boot, and Titos watched, contemplating his choices. He could stab his cousin as soon as he attacked, but it most likely wouldn't kill him. Or he could end everything, not give Klaido the satisfaction of killing him. His hands trembled. Eight years he'd avoided them, and now, when he was at his weakest, he would be killed by his cousin or by his own hand.

He wanted to laugh at the ridiculousness. They wanted to kill him for no other reason than he was born half-human. He didn't involve himself with the edoli and stayed with humans. They didn't care though. They would have his head on simple principle, and Klaido just wanted to do it for the fun of it.

Klaido was ready to shift. Titos saw the color of the bond get stronger.

Klaido was pulling power from his queen; the more power he pulled through the bond, the faster or bigger his shift would be.

Crashing sounds through the branches and leaves came from their left. Klaido stopped his shift to look, and before he could react, a thrown knife was sticking out of the middle of his chest. Blood running down his chest, Klaido stood there, surprised, before rage took over his face.

Titos turned his head, looking for the one who'd thrown the blade, and the other hunters drew their weapons. They were ready to fight, but no one could see who or what and thrown the knife.

"Find whoever threw this. Now," Klaido said as he pulled the sharp tool out in one quick flick. He grunted with the effort, but his bond glowed so brightly it hurt Titos's eyes. He had to blink a few times but avoided closing his eyes altogether. When the light dimmed, there was just blood on Klaido's chest, gone was the cut. If there hadn't been dried blood on his chest, Titos would have believed the whole knife-in-the-chest thing hadn't happened.

"Who's your friend?"

Titos had no fucking clue who was helping him, and while he was grateful, he hoped it wasn't some human. He would feel bad if the human died just because of him.

"Wouldn't you like to know," he said.

"Doesn't matter. We'll just kill whoever it is. I'll make them wish they'd never helped you."

"Why are you so sure it's only one person?" Titos was going to play up the situation to his advantage. He had no idea who or what was helping, and he didn't have a clue if it was more than one person or not. But if he didn't know, that meant neither did Klaido.

Klaido squinted at him, looking for a crack in his lie.

"Shit," Klaido said as he turned to scan the woods.

Titos could no longer hear the hunters, but that wasn't unusual as they could move without any sound. The only reason he'd heard the twigs breaking and grass crunching before was because they'd wanted him to know they were on him.

Klaido turned back and walked right over to him. For a second, Titos swore the man was going to kill him, but instead, he kicked him so hard Titos hit the tree behind him. The air knocked out him, he gasped for breath. It hurt to draw it in, and his body shook from the pain. By sheer will, he kept his eyes open. His vision was blurry from his tears, but he wouldn't miss

anything.

Klaido was gone, he knew that much. His body hurt too much for him to really move or run. He was so very tired of running, but the alternative was death. As much as he hated running, he didn't want to die either.

Tired, his blinks started to get longer. He shook his head, trying to get rid of the fog, but it only made him dizzy.

"Hey, can you stand?" said the most angelic voice Titos had ever heard. A warm hand touched his shoulder. His marking didn't burn, meaning the hand had no ill intent toward him.

"Help. Please. I..." He was going to pass out any second, but he needed to hold on.

"It's okay. I'm here to help, Master."

Titos was lifted and cradled against a hard body that felt all too right. His eyes closed before he could say more to the man that had just come to save him. He felt secure in the strong man's arms.

*Did he just call me 'Master'?*



HE HELD THE YOUNG MAN IN HIS ARMS. HIS MASTER. HE LOOKED SO WEAK, as if he hadn't rested in days. It didn't mean Seth didn't notice how beautiful his master was. He had strong cheekbones, light brown hair, and thick eyebrows. He hadn't gotten a good glimpse of his master's eyes before they closed, but he knew they had to be just as beautiful as the rest of him.

He carried his master toward his car. He couldn't believe he'd found a master! Years of wondering, searching, and refusing to pledge to others, and he'd finally found one of his own. He shivered. He had come close to losing him, his master having been cornered and about to be killed. He was obviously hunted by another house. Seth hadn't checked which house wanted his master dead, he'd just acted.

He'd taken out the first two hunters with no issues, but he'd needed the other three that were standing with their leader to come to him. He'd made a commotion to draw them near him. It'd worked and he was able to kill them, but he hadn't dared to challenge their leader; he was an actual keeper. He'd had his own power *and* the power of whomever he served. If it was a queen or king, was unknown.

Seth had fought with keepers before who were bonded to a king or queen, and he'd lost miserably. They had more power than a non-bonded edoli. When an edoli found their master or mistress, the urge to serve them was strong. Not only that, but the power the bond built was incredible. The stronger the keepers, the stronger the queen or king. Once an edoli had a king or queen, they no longer addressed them as such. They referred to them as their master or mistress, as keepers are owned completely by their bonds.

Seth buckled his master into the passenger seat carefully, placing him so that he didn't get a crick in his neck. He raced over to the driver's side. He heard the crash of trees, followed by a screech. The screech was so loud he wouldn't have been surprised if humans came to check it out. Stark yellow eyes glowed just beyond the tree line, the screech coming again as the eyes started to get closer.

Seth got into the car and drove. He looked in the rearview mirror. A giant snake with a head larger than his body slithered out. He was right to not fight the keeper; the creature was huge. He focused back on the road, picking up speed. He would get his master out of there.

He drove for a few hours. The sun started to rise, and his master still slept soundly in the passenger seat. It was odd to look at the young man and consider him his master. For years, Seth had worried he would never have a master. Then he'd decided to go to Wyoming. He'd had no idea why. It was just an itch to go. Little had he known, it would be the place he would meet his master.

He had been sitting at a diner, eating a burger that had tasted fantastic. Needing fresh air while he enjoyed his food, he'd cracked open the window he was sitting next to. Once the window had been opened, he'd smelled the most tantalizing scent. It was chocolate with a hint of spice, and soon the smell had wrapped around him, caressing him.

When he'd tried to reach out to it, it had pulled back. He'd felt abandoned, as if he'd lost something precious. He had paid quickly and left in search of the smell. He'd made it to a small apartment above a store, but there was no one there. The sheets had been warm, and he'd inhaled the scent on them, knowing right away his master had been there.

He'd soon tracked his master, only to realize he wasn't the only one looking for him. He'd quickly observed the situation and determined that the people after his master were there to hurt him. He'd been angry at the idea of someone hurting his master.

A groan from the passenger seat pulled Seth from his thoughts and anger at the way the hunters and keeper had cornered his master. His unconscious passenger moved a little, adjusting himself in the seat, and turned a few times. He sighed, finally giving up on getting comfortable, and Seth wanted to take him to a bed where he could get better rest. A car was no place for his master to sleep. It was uncomfortable. But he was determined to put enough space between him and the keeper that was after them.

“Ugh... The fucking sun has it out for me.” His master covered his eyes to shield himself from the bright sun.

Seth glared at the sun, wishing he could will it to go back down so that his master could rest longer. He still looked tired: dark bags were under his eyes, his cheeks were sunken in, and he cracked his neck from side to side. Seth wished to rub all the kinks out of his shoulders, make him so relaxed that he glowed.

“We should keep going. The more distance we gain the better, but if you wish, we can stop to rest and possibly eat,” Seth said.

At his voice, his master sat up straight and turned to him. Seth turned to look at him, and his breath caught in his lungs. His master’s eyes were more beautiful than he could have imagined. They were pale green, almost white. It was strange but beautiful.

“Please look at the road before we die in a car crash.”

Seth looked back at the road, but he wanted so badly to look at his master.

“Look, I don’t know what’s going on, but thanks for saving me back there. I’m pretty sure I was a second away from death.” His master rubbed his eyes.

Seth growled.

“Did you just fucking growl?”

Seth felt his master's eyes on him. He had growled, but only because the thought of losing him was painful. They hadn't even bonded yet, and he knew without a doubt that he would serve him.

“Ummm, okay, great. I escape from my crazy killer cousin and now I’m with a stranger who just growled at me.”

“I wasn’t growling at you, Master. I was growling be—”

“Hold up, you did it again. Why are you calling me master?”

His master sat up, leaning so that he could get a look at Seth. Seth didn’t understand. His master had known about keepers and seemed to have grown up with them. Yet, he sat there and acted as if he hadn’t realized that he was a king.

“Because you are a king, and I wish to serve as your keeper,” Seth said. *And as your alpha the one to always be by your side. To forever stand with you and protect you.* He kept that part to himself though. He needed to show he was worthy of that position before asking it of his master.

His master laughed, but it wasn’t a joyous sound. It was one of despair. “I think you got your wires crossed. I’m not even powerful enough to be

considered a follower. Fuck, I've been relegated to living amongst humans, so I know you got it wrong."

Seth knew he hadn't gotten it wrong. He could feel it now, the pull to serve his master. But his master hadn't felt it. Could he not be worthy of serving him?

"Master, I can feel the call. I know you're a king. Why else would I be pulled to the woods in Wyoming?"

"Fuck if I know. Maybe you like sleeping under the stars. Wyoming has little in the way of viewing them."

Seth growled again. His master did not trust his word, and, what was worse, his master thought so little of himself.

"Stop calling me master. Just call me Titos."

Seth relished in his master's name. Master Titos. He would help him realize that he was, in fact, a king. Seth wasn't sure how powerful Master Titos would be, but he would try and help him become the most powerful. That way he would never have to quiver in fear again.

"Usually, when someone gives their name, they are expecting a name back. You know, so I don't think you're a serial killer or something. Not that the blood on your hands and clothes is helping with that thought." Master Titos made an art of sarcasm.

Seth laughed as he looked down at himself. He had blood splattered everywhere. He was proud to where the blood of those who had tried to hurt Master Titos. "I apologize, Master Titos. I am Seth of Vindoun House."

Master Titos groaned when Seth had called him master. He knew he should obey an order, but he felt the need to remind the young man he was a king. There was silence after he said what house he was from. He glanced over, and Master Titos's mouth was wide open, his eyes as big as saucers. Seth couldn't blame him, he got the reaction a lot when other edoli found out he was from one of the biggest and oldest houses in America.

"Are you not pleased by the house I'm from? Is your house an enemy of Vindoun House?"

Master Titos shook his head. "I have no house."

He sounded solemn, and Seth wanted to pick him up and hug him. Master Titos's stomach growled loudly, and Seth felt bad he didn't have anything for him to eat. He started to take an exit, so they could go to a restaurant. He wouldn't have his master be hungry.

"What are you doing?"

“Taking the exit. You’re hungry.”

“Yeah, but I'm pretty sure no one will serve us. You're covered in blood, and humans don't take kindly to people walking into their businesses drenched in blood.”

“I am proud to wear this blood. They tried to kill you.” Seth puffed out his chest. He didn't understand human issues. He'd spent much of his life in his house's territory, and the humans there knew about edoli and their beliefs. On his travels, many humans were strange about things, but he paid them no attention.

“Wow, you must not get out a lot. Well, I've been living alongside humans for the past eight years. They see all this blood on you, and we get a one-way ticket to the local jail where you're going to have to pass my ass around to get a cigarette.”

Seth balked. He wouldn't let anyone touch his master. “I don't like cigarettes, and if anyone tries to touch you, I will kill them before they can lay a hand on you.”

Master Titos laughed an actual laugh, and it sounded wonderful to Seth. He would cut off his right arm to hear more of that laugh.

“I'm not even going to get further into that. Let's just find a hotel so we can get washed up, and then we can find food.”

Seth nodded, glad that Master Titos had automatically included him. It felt as if his master had already accepted him.

THEY PULLED INTO SOME MOTEL THAT SETH DIDN'T FEEL WAS GOOD ENOUGH for Master Titos, but Master Titos had said they would stay there. Seth wouldn't argue with him, no matter if he had just watched a cockroach crawl into one of the rooms. Master Titos had made him stay in the car, something about how he shouldn't be seen bloody.

Seth agreed, but he felt useless. He should be next to Master Titos, watching his back for anyone planning to attack him. They had driven far, but he didn't think they were in the clear.

Master Titos had struggled getting out the car. He was weakened by something, but Seth wasn't sure what. His master now walked back toward the car as if he wasn't plagued with some illness. He was everything a king

should be, head held high. He may not think of himself as a king, but Seth saw it.

His master was all king.

“You can get out. The room is right here,” Master Titos said, grabbing his bag from the floor of the car.

Seth got out of the car and followed his master to the room they would be in. Master Titos unlocked it, but Seth stopped him from entering. Master Titos opened his mouth to say something, but Seth interrupted.

“Let me check it first,” Seth said.

Master Titos huffed out a sigh and leaned against the door jam. “Fine.” He sounded tired again, and his eyes were half-lidded.

Seth glanced at him one more time, then did a sweep of the small room. The dingy carpet looked as if it hadn't had a proper cleaning in a couple of years. At least, he knew the bed had clean sheets on them, since he could smell the cleaning product that was used. He checked the bathroom, and it was clear.

A little shitty, and definitely not worthy of his master, but it was where his master wanted to be.

“All clear,” Seth said. He looked at Master Titos and saw he was slipping down the doorframe, barely holding himself up.

“Master, maybe you should rest some more first.” Seth picked him up, closing the door by kicking it with his booted foot.

“I need to eat before I sleep. If I don't, then I'll wake up with a headache the size of Texas,” he muttered as he snuggled into Seth's arms, his nose rubbing over Seth's neck.

His skin broke out in goosebumps from Master Titos's touch.

“Mmmmm. You smell so fucking good,” Master Titos said as he pushed his face closer and sniffed Seth's skin.

Seth moaned as he felt his master's tongue lick the column of his throat. Would he bite him now and start the bonding? He didn't even care that it would be in some dingy motel. He would let his master claim him anywhere as long as he claimed him.

“You even taste good.” He bit down on Seth's neck.

Seth growled. It all felt too good, and he wanted it more than anything.

Master Titos released his bite on Seth's neck, and Seth knew his skin hadn't broken from the bite. He hadn't felt a single fang.

“Too bad I can't bite you and really make you mine.”

It broke Seth's heart how sad Master Titos sounded. "Then I will cut my neck so that you may lay claim to me. It does not matter to me if you cannot bite me." Seth held Master Titos with one arm and reached for one of his throwing knives.

Master Titos shook his head. "Even if you did, it wouldn't matter. I can't keep blood down. That's why I can't be your master. I'm not even worthy of being an edoli. I'm more worthless than a human." A small sob came from him as he shook in Seth's arms.

Seth squeezed his master to him. He would find another way to bond them, or he would serve without bonding. He felt it deep inside of him: he was meant to stay with Master Titos.



# TITOS

HE FELT LIKE SHIT, AND HE WAS TIRED AGAIN. THE LITTLE REST HE HAD gotten in Seth's car was not enough. He usually slept hours without moving, and he would have a snack stashed for when he woke up. Most of the snacks were high in protein or carbs, something to help his body sustain itself while he slept. It only lasted three days, and, to his calculations, he was on day two. His stomach started to cramp. His eyes were closed, but he could still feel Seth in the room.

The big edoli was determined to stay near him, even though Titos had informed him how weak he was. He had felt a pull towards Seth, but anyone would. The man was tall and stacked with muscles. His long, dreaded hair was in a ponytail, but Titos wondered what it would feel like against his skin with Seth above him. He shivered, not from the pain, but the pleasure he was feeling just thinking about Seth.

He couldn't believe the edoli thought Titos was a king. There was no way. No kings or queens had come from his family line in hundreds of years. Even when his great-great-great-uncle, a keeper for the Valtruse House, had mated with the queen. Their children had just been regular edoli, some powerful, but none the level of king or queen.

He had wanted to bite Seth. The man smelled so good. It was like fresh snow in a forest, clean and crisp. Edoli drank blood, but he had never been able to stomach it. He would get sick whenever he took in even small amounts. Just thinking about it made him feel worse about himself.

Titos was awake and aware time had passed since he'd fallen asleep. He slowly moved to sit up. Warm, strong hands were there to help him in

seconds.

“Please let me help you, Master.” Seth’s deep voice warmed Titos to his core.

He sighed. How could he be Seth’s master when he could not bond them?

“Here. I did not want to go too far, so I don't know how good it will be, but it's some food.” Seth handed him a handful of fruit, a bagel, and some yogurt.

“Where did you get all this from?” Titos tore into the bagel, the sweet carbs like heaven to him. The bagel was a little stale, but he hadn’t eaten in a long while. He wasn’t sure how long, but it had to be more than twenty-four hours.

“I went to the front desk and asked for some food. They gave me this,” Seth said, pointing to the bounty he had placed on Titos’s lap.

Titos finished the bagel in record time and started to peel a banana next. “I’m pretty sure the continental breakfast is over. Please tell me you took a shower and changed your clothes before you went.”

Titos looked at Seth, checking to see if he still had on the bloody clothes. Titos groaned. Seth didn’t have a shirt on, all his caramel colored skin on display. Titos’s fingers itched to touch the hard plains of Seth’s chest and his fucking ten pack of abs. Titos hadn’t even known that was possible. He nearly swallowed his tongue.

Seth growled, and Titos jerked his head up to look into Seth’s eyes. He hoped he hadn’t offended him. When he looked into his hazel brown eyes, there was nothing but heat. Titos’s stomach squeezed, having nothing to do with hunger and everything to do with desire. Titos’s tongue darted out as he swiped it across his lips. He needed a drink of water to cool off.

“I can smell your desire, Master, and you're making it hard for me to hold back.”

Holy fuck. He could *smell* it.

Titos looked down Seth’s body again. “And if I don't want you to hold back?” he said as he took his shaking hand and touched Seth’s chest. His muscles flexed under his skin, and Seth’s body was so hot Titos swore the man was on fire.

“You must eat and regain your strength,” Seth said.

It was like a bucketful of ice water splashed in his face. Why would Seth want him? He probably looked as if he was sitting on death's doorstep. He probably smelled. Titos couldn’t remember when he had last had time to

shower, and his hair was probably oily. He retracted his hand and moved his eyes back to the food that sat on his lap. He no longer had an appetite. He would eat because Seth had gone to the trouble of getting the food, but he didn't want it. He just wanted to go back to sleep.

Seth's large hand shoved food out of the way, and Titos was lifted out of the bed. He yelped in surprise, unsure what was happening. When he refocused, Seth was under him. Not only that, but Titos had been naked under the covers. When had he gotten undressed? He lifted his arm and sniffed.

"You bathed me?"

Seth blushed. Titos hadn't thought it was possible to see such a big man blush, but there Seth was, blushing under him.

"Yes, Master. I thought you would sleep more comfortably clean."

Titos blinked, then bent down and kissed Seth's full lips. "Thank you. And please call me Titos."

Seth smiled at him. "You're welcome, Master Titos."

Titos moaned. "You know that isn't what I meant. Just Titos."

Before Seth could say anything back, Titos kissed him again. He had only kissed once when he was a teenager, and it hadn't felt anything like how Seth kissed him. Seth's hand moved to grab his head, tilting it, and he licked Titos's bottom lip. Titos opened his mouth, wanting to taste Seth. Seth didn't hesitate, his tongue stroking against Titos's. It was so hot, but the kiss felt so cold at the same time, as if he was eating ice.

It felt so good he moaned. He started to move his hips, rubbing his hard dick against Seth's chiseled abs. Something so hard shouldn't feel so good against him. The sounds that were coming out of him were foreign to him. Titos pulled back. He was close to coming, but he didn't want to come on Seth's abs. And how embarrassing would it be for him to just come from kissing?

"Is something the matter, Master?"

Titos ignored the 'master' part; they would work on that later. "Umm. Well, you see. Umm." He bit his lip. How was he supposed to tell Seth that he was twenty-four and still a virgin? It was unheard of among the edoli. Seth's warm hands rubbed up and down his sides in a soothing manner.

Titos rolled his shoulders. "I'm a virgin." He said it so fast he wasn't even sure if Seth had understood him.

Seth's hands stopped moving, his head tilting in question like he hadn't heard what Titos had said. Titos knew he had to be as red as a tomato he was

so embarrassed. He started to move, to get up and away from Seth. Seth wouldn't want anything to do with a virgin who had no idea what he was doing.

Seth stopped him from moving. Titos was about to yell at Seth to release him when Seth spoke.

“Master, please look at me.” Seth sounded strained.

Titos turned to look at him and saw his pupils were dilated. Could he dare to hope that Seth still wanted him? “You would still have me?”

Seth growled. “You are my master. Of course I want you. But now that I know you are untouched, I want you even more. To have a master who has had no one else pleasure him...” Seth's growl grew louder, his eyes glowing with the power that he held. Seth was powerful, that was for sure. He would make a formidable keeper, and Titos wanted to give that to Seth.

“I did not bring any supplies with me. I am sorry, Master. I wish that I had thought of it before. But there are other ways to pleasure you.”

Seth maneuvered around, stripping his pants off while keeping Titos balanced on top of him. Free of his pants, Seth moved Titos's hips farther down his body. He spit in his hand and grabbed both of their dicks together. Titos was too caught up staring at Seth's large dick to contribute. Seth's was bigger than his, and they would need supplies for sure if Seth was to be inside of him. He knew that's how he wanted it too, Seth moving inside of him. He moaned with the image in his mind as Seth's hand stroked them together.

It felt so good. His head rolled back as he moved his hips to the time of Seth's strokes. It wasn't enough. He felt close, but it just didn't feel like it would push him over the edge. He whimpered, not sure what to do. He was close but couldn't get over. Seth pulled him down and moved them to their sides so they were face to face.

“This way I can keep my hands on you and kiss you.”

That sounded good to Titos. Seth's mouth was back on his, kissing him deeper. Titos felt as if he was transported to the top of a mountain, crisp, cold air surrounding him. He didn't feel cold, the air settling something inside of him. The sky was a light blue, not a cloud in sight. It felt peaceful.

He heard a growl under him, and he moved toward a cave in the mountain. He wasn't afraid. He felt a familiarity to the beast in the cave. He entered, and ice blue eyes the color of the sky stared back at him. He crouched to coax the beast out, and it moved slowly closer to the entrance.

As the beast approached, Titos saw what it was. It was an ice mantichore

wolf. It had a large body covered in spikes and a light sprinkling of white fur, with the head of a wolf but a tail of a scorpion. It growled in warning at Titos, but he still took a step toward the giant beast. Its head was large and probably could fit half of Titos's body in its mouth. He reached out his hand and ran his fingers through its fur. It tickled his hand; the beast closed its eyes as it pressed closer into his hand.

"Will you stay with me?" Titos asked.

The beast opened its eyes, and Titos saw the intelligence in them. It rolled over, showing Titos his belly, and Titos touched it.

Titos was suddenly back in the motel room, moaning as he came on Seth. His body shook from the release, and he felt Seth come with him. He also felt a bond with Seth, but something was wrong. He had come, but something was off. He looked at Seth, willing his body to come back from the euphoria he had just felt. Seth's eyes were dimmed, and his lips were purple.

"What have I done?" Titos could tell that Seth was dying, but he hadn't taken blood. There were no injuries on Seth. He tried to shake him, but Seth was too heavy.

"Seth, what's wrong? Please answer me. I'm scared. I don't want to lose you when I just got you." Tears fell as Titos stroked his hand against Seth's face.

The light in Seth's eyes was dimming faster; his pulse had slowed down and was barely there. Titos had no fucking clue what to do about it.

The door to their room crashed opened, and Titos screamed. He quickly grabbed one of Seth's throwing knives and covered Seth. He would protect him, even if Seth was... He didn't want to even think about it. He would figure something out to help Seth, but first, he had to get rid of the threat that had kicked in the door. A young guy walked in, his skin pale and hair pitch-black.

He turned his dark blue eyes on Titos and Titos shivered. How could he react to a stranger as Seth was losing himself under him? He had reacted the same way to Seth, but he still was unsure of how much he could trust the new man. He looked younger than him, but Titos got a sense that he may be older than he looked.

"Your keeper will be dead soon if you don't help him," the newcomer said.

Titos didn't take his eyes off of him. He knew what he said was true, but what if when he turned to look at Seth, the man decided to attack? He may be

a hired hunter.

“Who are you and what do you want?”

The man started to move toward the bed, and Titos growled. He had no idea where the growl came from. It sounded like Seth’s growl, but it had come from him. The man stopped moving, and he crossed his arms.

“Do you wish for the wolf to die?”

No, he wanted to scream. But what was he supposed to do? He had no idea what was happening.

“By the look on your face, you don’t want him to die. Give him some of your soul. You took too much from him.”

Titos stared at the man. He had no idea what the man was talking about.

“That and some of your blood should heal him. You should do it quickly. He’s seconds from death.”

Titos turned to look at Seth and saw his skin had gone ashen. He almost looked like a corpse. Gone were the shallow breaths he had been taking before. “What do I do?”

“Just like how you took it, but in reverse.”

Titos hadn’t even known he’d done it in the first place. Tears streamed down his face as he felt Seth losing his life. He did the only thing he could think of. He pressed his lips against Seth’s. Seth’s lips had gone cold, but Titos ignored that. He thought hard, he thought of the wind that he so loved to wrap around himself. He pictured it in his mind, and he pictured himself pushing it into Seth’s body, filling him up full of the wind.

Slender hands were pulling him back, but he fought them. He would give as much as he could.

“Stop! You’ll give him too much, and he’ll go insane with too much power.”

Titos reluctantly pulled back and stared down into the ice blue eyes of the wolf beast now in Seth’s face. Those strange eyes stared back at him, Seth’s breaths coming out in pants. His eye color changed back to their normal delicious golden brown.

Titos felt his heart beating hard. He remembered the stranger had said to give Seth some of his blood. He didn’t think about it. He took the knife he still held in his hand and sliced his arm open. Blood ran down his arm.

He looked into Seth’s eyes. “Drink of my blood, so that you may be bonded to me for eternity.”

Seth’s mouth was on the wound in seconds, and he groaned as he took

deep swallows of Titos's blood. Titos felt a little dizzy from the blood loss. Seth glanced at him, mouth still covering the wound. He licked the wound closed, no longer pulling Titos's blood into him.

"If you need more, than you can keep going," Titos said.

Seth shook his head and kissed Titos. "No, Master. Your blood tastes good, but even I can tell you do not replenish your own blood like other edoli."

Titos flinched a little, reminded that he was not like any of the others. He was weaker for it.

"Of course, he's not like other edoli."

They both turned to stare at the stranger. For a second, Titos had been so wrapped up in Seth that he'd forgotten about the man. Seth instantly moved Titos behind him, growling at the stranger and ready to attack him. Titos could feel the manticore wolf ready to break free and attack the threat to his master. It was a strange feeling. He knew the feelings weren't his own, but they felt apart of him.

"Seth, he helped me save you. Maybe we should hear him out." Titos touched Seth's shoulders. He was feeling sluggish again. He didn't feel like his usual shit, but he was tired again.

He yawned as he realized they would have to leave now that the door was no longer in the doorway.

"Master, he dropped-kicked the door, and he smells of fire," Seth said.

Titos yawned again, his eyes barely staying open. "It's Titos," he said. He pointed to the stranger. "Are you staying or coming with us?"

He didn't know why he asked, but he felt that it was best to ask the stranger. He'd had plenty of opportunities to attack them, but he'd stood to the side and helped.

"If you will have me, Master Titos."

"Name?" Titos asked as he closed his eyes. He would fall asleep before they could get out of there.

"Mazki Zestiria, at your service." Mazki bowed.

He was definitely older than his looks portrayed.

Titos shook himself, fighting the sleep that was going to come. "Okay, great. Mazki, help grab our stuff. We need to get out of here now that the door is no longer useful. And just call me Titos." Titos started to move off of the bed. As he tried to take a step, he started to fall. Two sets of hands caught him.

*Seth: Master, are you okay?*

Titos heard Seth in his head. It was a strange feeling to hear someone else's voice in his head.

*Titos: Yeah, I'm just so tired. It's only day two, so it's hard to fight the sleep.*

*Seth: Then sleep. I will take care of everything.*

*Titos: Seth.*

*Seth: Yes, Master?*

*Titos: Please call me Titos. And don't be mean to Mazki. I'm not sure about him yet, but I know he doesn't mean me ill will.*

*Seth: As long as he proves himself worthy, I will treat him with kindness.*

Titos was drifting off to the darkness of his dreamless sleep. "Sleep, Titos," Seth said to him before he lost complete consciousness.



THEY WERE BACK ON THE ROAD, AND HE HAD LEFT A STACK OF MONEY FOR the motel. He glared at Mazki, since it was his fault that he'd had to leave money in the first place. Money wasn't a huge deal. He had a large trust fund, but that wasn't the point.

"Who are you?" Seth knew the man was an edoli, and he could feel the heat wafting off of him. His power most likely had to do with the fire element, whereas Seth's own power was with ice.

"I believe Master Titos already asked that question."

Seth growled at hearing someone else calling his master 'master'. The man hadn't bonded with Titos as of yet.

"He is not your master. That is to be determined," Seth said.

Mazki sighed. "I'm in the car with both of you. I'm pretty sure it's been determined already. Bond or no bond, he is my master now."

"You don't sound happy about it," Seth said.

He was fucking ecstatic that he was now bonded to Master Titos. He could feel the bond, and at the end of it was his master. He was sleeping and there were no images or dreams flashing, but he could feel the presence of his master in him, along with his beast. He had no idea how they had bonded when Master Titos hadn't taken any blood. One moment they were kissing, and the next thing Seth knew, he was swallowing huge gulps of his master's blood.

Seth focused back on Mazki.

"It's not that I'm not happy. It's just a little unsettling in a way," Mazki said.

Seth's face pinched with confusion. *What?* He glanced over to the younger-looking edoli. Mazki was older than he looked. Seth knew that for sure. Some edoli aged differently and some stopped aging at different times. It was different for everyone. Mazki had most likely stopped aging around nineteen or twenty.

"What do you mean by that?"

They made eye contact briefly before Seth focused back on the road. He saw out of the corner of his eye when Mazki looked at the backseat at a sleeping Master Titos. Seth could feel through the bond that Master Titos was too far into sleep. He wouldn't be waking anytime soon.

"You haven't noticed that he's different? That he's not like any other king?" Mazki turned to look back out the windshield.

"Yeah," Seth said, shrugging. He had noticed that Master Titos was different. He had never met a king who slept like this or one that did not take blood. He had never met an *edoli* that didn't take blood, but it hadn't changed the fact that he felt the call from his master.

Mazki shook his head at him. "I feel the draw to him as well, but you didn't question it at all before giving him your all."

"Says the guy in the passenger seat who keeps looking longingly toward the backseat. You can't fight the pull either," Seth said.

As if unable to resist, Mazki turned to look in the backseat again. "I guess you're right." He draped a jacket over Master Titos before he turned back around. "Now that he has accepted his first keeper, nothing will be easy. Once the council gets wind of this, they will send many to hunt and kill him."

Mazki's hands balled into fists, anger wafting off of him. It smelled of burnt sage.

"There are already hunters after him, but why would the council be after him?"

Mazki cleared his throat, visibly calming himself, and the burnt sage smell lessened. "Because he's a soul eater," Mazki said.

Seth's head turned so fast to look at Mazki he nearly got whiplash. There was no way his master was a soul eater. It was unheard of. They were evil, vile creatures who, long ago, had consumed the edoli.

"Turn and look at the road. I will survive a car crash, and maybe you too, but our master will surely not."

Seth turned his head back around to look at the road. He wouldn't intentionally put his master in danger. Seth examined his bond. There was

nothing evil coming from his master. How could he believe that his master was a thing of nightmares? Soul eaters starred in the tales that were told to edoli children to scare them. And now Mazki was telling him that Master Titos was one?

“That’s ins—”

“Is it? You know you feel it,” Mazki said.

“How?” Seth asked.

“I don’t know. They were killed off hundreds of years ago.” As he said it, he turned around to stare at Master Titos as if to make sure he was still there. “I don’t know how he is here, but I can tell that he is not what the stories portray.”

Mazki looked at Titos for a little longer before turning to face the window again. It was silent for a few minutes, and Seth processed the information. Mazki was right. He didn’t feel anything evil about Master Titos. The young king had been sarcastic, but Seth thought that was more about covering up his insecurities than actually being evil.

“I will bond with him, if he will have me. I will give my life, time and time again, to ensure he lives,” Mazki announced into the silent car.

Seth glanced over at the other edoli and saw the determination in the way he’d set his jaw. “Good, then we are on the same page. Our master. No matter if he is a soul eater, we will protect him and help him build his power.” Seth felt a gust of wind, as if the gods and goddesses heard their oath and would grant it.

Mazki shivered. “This will be a challenge, and there will be many obstacles in our way. Our king and master will have to overcome the hate and bloodshed.”

Seth felt anger at the prospect that many would try and kill his master, simply because of what he was. They would not try and get to know his master; they would try to behead him simply for existing. Seth felt the growl before it came, and it was vicious. His beast stood at attention, ready to attack any threat to their master.

“No one will be able to touch him. I will slaughter any that mean harm to him.”

Mazki nodded. “And I will burn them all to a crisp. None shall harm our master. Our king.”

Seth drove for a while longer until they needed to get gas. He had no idea where they were supposed to go. He’d just driven in any direction. He’d

gotten off a few exits and traveled down backroads until they'd hit another highway. He saw a gas station and started to pull over.

He felt through the bond that Master Titos was waking up, and he could also feel his hunger. He parked the car at one of the pumps. "Go in and pay for the gas, and grab lots of food."

Mazki stared at him with one perfectly-arched eyebrow, but Seth was the one bonded to Master Titos. He would be in charge until challenged for the spot.

"You plan to feed him gas station food?"

"He's hungry now. We'll stop for more nourishing food later, but if you haven't noticed, there is nothing in this small town. This gas station is the first we've come to in the past thirty minutes."

Mazki nodded. After taking one last longing look into the backseat, he got out and headed toward the gas station's store. Seth waited in the car for Mazki to give him some indication that the gas was ready to be pumped. Seconds later, he saw Mazki give a thumbs up for Seth to go ahead. He got out of the car and scented the air for any danger. Smelling nothing but gasoline, he started to pump the gas into the car.

Mazki came back as Seth was staring at Master Titos's still-sleeping form. He would wake any second. Seth felt it in their bond that he was rousing. Mazki opened the door to the backseat and went in before Seth could say anything. He growled under his breath. The damn sneak. He knew Mazki was no danger to Master Titos, but until he bonded with him, Seth's inner beast would pace with unease.

He felt when his master's eyes opened, and Seth looked down to see his face. He gazed into Tito's green eyes, losing himself in them. Startlingly beautiful and eerie. Titos tilted his head at Seth. It felt as if he wasn't looking at him but through him. Master Titos blinked, a small smile appearing on his face. It tugged at Seth's heart to see his master smile, even if it was a small one.

Titos turned to look at Mazki sitting next to him. Mazki offered the food, and he took it without question. He didn't look sad or unhappy with the limited food that Mazki had picked out of the gas station. Seth felt Master Titos's happiness that they had gotten him food.

*Seth: This food isn't worthy of you. I apologize, Master. We'll find a better place to get you nourishing food.*

*Titos: I'll have to get used to hearing your thoughts.*

*Seth: I'm sorry.*

Seth started to pull back, not wanting to be rude or upset his master. He'd kept his mind and the bond open between them. But if Master Titos preferred for them to stay separate, Seth would do it. No matter how much it would hurt. He felt the pull from his master.

*Titos: I never said I didn't like it. It's... Um, just something new. I like the feeling. It'll just need some getting used to. I never had the connection before. Since I could not take blood, I didn't form connections. Not that anyone wanted one with the weakest edoli.*

Seth was angry for Titos. Just because he couldn't swallow blood didn't mean he needed to be ignored. Titos was better than any of them. Seth would see to it.

*Seth: Of course, Master Titos. My mind is all yours.*

It was not directed to him in the bond, but Seth felt it: Master Titos wanted more than his mind.

*Seth: It goes without saying, Master, that you have my body as well. If you want it.*

*Titos: Stop calling me master in your mind. It's so formal.*

Seth put away the pump and closed everything.

*Seth: You are my master. It's strange to think of you as just Titos, but if it's really what you want, I'll think of you as my master but refer to you as Titos. I will only call you master in front of others.*

*Titos: Hmm. Okay, except only in front of others who are strangers. Mazki does not count. I don't know how long we've been on the road, but he hasn't hurt anyone, and I can feel the pull to him.*

Seth knew that Mazki was meant to be one of Mas— one of Titos's keepers. He didn't want his worry and fear to touch Titos in the bond. It was for him to deal with. If Mazki was meant to be Titos's alpha, then Seth would follow him and serve their master.

*Titos: Why would he be my alpha when that's your position?*

Seth gasped and stared at his master through the window. The dark green eyes stared at him, waiting for his response. He was eating chips that left an orange stain around his mouth. Seth wanted to lick it off him.

*Seth: It's because he's older and has more knowledge. I've only lived for fifty-two years. I'm still young.*

A sultry laugh came through the bond, and it made Seth's toes curl with pleasure.

*Titos: That's true. Even I can tell he's lived many years. But if age is a big deal to you, then you chose the wrong person to bond to. Do you think I'm not worthy because I'm so young? I've only lived twenty-four years on this earth.*

Titos sounded every bit the king that Seth knew he was, and he shivered from the sheer will of his master.

*Seth: Of course not. I would serve you no matter what.*

*Titos: Then it is settled. You're my alpha.*

Seth didn't think it was that easy. There would be challenges, but he would face them head-on as long as he got to stay close to his master. Titos was better than he imagined, and he soothed Seth's heart.

*Seth: Thank you, Master.*

He bowed. When he looked up, Titos rolled his eyes at him.

*Titos: T-I-T-O-S. Titos.*

He'd yelled it through the bond. Seth smiled.

*Seth: Yes, Titos.*



# TITOS

HE'D WOKEN UP WITH MAZKI NEXT TO HIM IN THE BACKSEAT GIVING HIM A bunch of food. It was junk food, but he loved Doritos. He ate them as if he hadn't eaten for days and not just a few hours. In his defense, he'd only eaten a little bit with Seth before they'd both gotten distracted. Just thinking about how Seth had touched him and how good his lips had felt turned him on.

Seth was back in the driver's seat, and they made eye contact in the rearview mirror.

*Seth: I would be happy to touch you more. Even now.*

Titos shivered. He would like that as well. Mazki moved next to him. Titos had forgotten for a second someone else was there. A blush crept up his skin. He cleared his throat to talk to Mazki, since they couldn't talk through a bond.

"Thank you for the food," Titos said. There. He could talk to the pretty young boy. And, fuck, was he pretty. He had the darkest, bluest eyes Titos had ever seen. They were like looking into the night sky. His skin was pale, making his pink bowtie lips stand out so much more. Titos felt the urge to kiss Mazki, but he wasn't sure what would happen.

He'd kissed Seth and nearly killed him. He didn't even know how it happened.

*Seth: I'm fine now.*

Titos could see that, but what if he had killed Seth? If it wasn't for Mazki showing up and helping, he would have lost Seth.

*Seth: I'm here. Talk to him. I will support you in any decision you make.*

Titos felt the surety of Seth through the bond. With Seth's support and

strength, Titos turned to look at Mazki.

“So. Umm. Mazki is your name? Um.”

*Seth: Calm, Mas—*

*Titos: Titos.*

*Seth: Sorry, it'll take some getting used to. I grew up knowing I would be a keeper. Calling one's king or queen 'master' or 'mistress' is drilled in your head from a young age. Don't be so nervous. He wants you just as much as you want him.*

*Titos: How do you know that for sure?*

*Seth: He would be an idiot not to want you. But I can tell by the way he looks at you.*

Titos rolled his shoulders. Talking to people had never been one of his strong points. He could come across as sarcastic or a bumbling idiot.

A growl came through the bond.

*Seth: You are no idiot.*

Titos ignored him. Seth had only known him for a short time, and Titos had been passed out most of that time. Seth would come to realize Titos's faults eventually.

“Is it your intent to make me envious of the wolf?” Mazki asked.

Titos stared into the deep blue eyes, confused. “What do you mean?”

Mazki shook his head, his short black hair covering his eyes. Titos felt the urge to move Mazki's hair out of the way. He never wanted those blue eyes covered.

“You look at me, yet you talk to him through your bond. A bond I want so badly with you that I now ache for it. I sit here looking into your eyes, wishing I knew what you felt or if you liked the food I brought. There are so many things that I want that it's confusing. I shouldn't want so much. Just being in your presence should be enough for me.”

Titos looked over his face. He could see the tight way Mazki held his mouth and the way his eyes looked pinched on the sides. Mazki meant everything he said; he was desperate to bond with Titos. Titos couldn't figure out if Mazki was crazy, or if he was still dreaming.

*Seth: I can assure you, you're not dreaming. He wants you and wants to serve you. Your call is strong. The fact that he isn't humping your leg, begging, shows how much older he is. It took all of my strength to do the same, and still I...*

Titos waited for Seth to finish telling him what he'd done, but instead,

Seth showed him. It was a like a movie playing in his head; he could see himself, but through someone else's eyes. Seth's eyes. Seth sat in a tub with Titos in his lap, completely naked. The motel tub was small and cramped, but Seth had fit both of them in it.

Titos was mostly on top of Seth as Seth lathered soap on Tito's skin. He admired Titos's body and reveled in the smoothness of it. He focused mainly on cleaning Titos, but he still touched more than he needed. When it had become too much for him, he lifted Titos as if he weighed no more than a stack of paper and stepped out. He sat Titos back in and washed his body and hair again, making sure to clean him fully.

After the bath, he laid Titos down on the bed. Instead of going to sit in the chair on the other side, he got in the bed too. He covered Titos's body from head to toe with his own.

Titos panted from Seth's memory. He hadn't only seen what Seth had done, but he had felt what Seth had been feeling at the time. Seth had wanted so much more of Titos, but he'd held back. Titos shivered. He wanted Seth to do all those things and more to him. He licked his lips, making eye contact with Seth again. He was seconds away from telling him to pull over when Mazki touched him. Seth growled loudly, the sexual tension breaking.

"Seth, eyes on the road please," Titos said. He sounded breathless. He focused back on Mazki, the man looking as if he was seconds away from breaking. Different than he had looked when he'd busted into the hotel room earlier that day.

"Master Titos, will you bond with me and let me be one of your keepers?"

"Why?" Mazki eyes fell, and Titos felt a pang in his heart. He hadn't meant it in a way to shoot the man down. "What I mean is: why would you want to be my keeper? I mean, even I can tell that you're very old. You must have plenty of kings and queens asking for you."

"Yes, that is true. I've been asked to be keeper to many, and I have served two before."

Titos opened the small package of two blueberry muffins, chewing and thinking on why Mazki would choose him. The only way for a keeper to be free was their own death, their king's or queen's death, or to be released from the bond. The last one was unheard of. It was extremely painful to destroy a bond. It would hurt not only the king or queen, but the keeper as well. It could weaken them for days, leaving them vulnerable to attack. So when

edolis pledged themselves and became keepers, it was a life sentence.

He swallowed the sweet muffin before he spoke. “You don't have to tell me if you don't want to. What I really want to know is why you want to serve me. You saw what happened to Seth, and I had no idea what I was doing. Shit, I still have no clue,” Titos said.

Mazki looked at him with determination on his face. “You are meant to be my master. I have lived on this earth for many years and not once have I felt the call as strongly as I feel it from you.”

Titos didn't even know he was putting out a call. If he was putting out a call, things were going to get ugly. How was he putting out a call if he couldn't drink blood? So much of what he was taught as a child made no sense now that it was happening to him. He groaned, feeling the beginnings of a headache from all of the shit he would soon have to deal with. As if his life wasn't complicated already, now he had to add becoming a king to it.

“You say that I am putting out a call, but how? I don't drink blood. How did I link Seth to me? You said something about a soul and that I took too much? How did I almost kill Seth? What if I kill you? Why the fuck would you want anything to do with me? Why would either one of you want anything to do with me? We're going God knows where, and no one has even asked why this is happening.” Titos was pulling his hair, and he probably sounded crazy. He felt Seth trying to speak to him through the bond, but he just couldn't. Nothing made sense to him. His life was already about running from death, but now that he was a king, he would be hunted even worse.

Soft hands eased his hands out of his hair, and his head hurt. He had too much on his mind.

“I'm here because you called me, and because I want to be here. I'm sure it's the same for the wolf. As far as how you bonded him... I figured you didn't know what you were, but I wished you knew a little.” A pinched look came over Mazki's face.

“I'm only half edoli. Apparently, my father's human blood courses strongly through me.” It's what he'd been told often growing up, and it explained why he was so weak.

Mazki groaned. “You aren't half human. Although, I'm sure that lie has kept you alive all these years. If anyone had known what you were, they would have killed you as a child and slaughtered anyone who knew of your existence.”

Titos's stomach squeezed with fear. What the fuck was he then? If he

wasn't half human, then what else was he?

"Tell him already. You're fucking scaring him," Seth yelled.

It made Titos jump a little. He hadn't heard the large man yell before. Although he was sure Seth could be mean, he had only been gentle and kind to Titos.

"I wasn't trying to scare him; I'm only telling him the truth. Why don't you focus on the road, wolf," Mazki said as he squeezed Titos's hands in his.

Seth grumbled something about how he was the alpha, and as soon as Mazki was bonded, he would show him.

"I am truly sorry. I didn't mean to scare you with any of what I said."

Titos could see the sincerity in his eyes. "I know, but if you know something, I need to know."

Mazki looked him in the eyes before he took a deep breath. "You're not a regular edoli, and you aren't half human either. You're a soul eater."

Titos heard him but wasn't sure he'd heard right. "What?"

"I know it's hard to believe, but you are in fact a soul eater. It's a rarity amongst edoli. To the point, they've been extinct for hundreds of years."

Titos had nothing to say. What was he supposed to say to someone who'd just told him he was the thing of children's spooky stories?

*Seth: He tells the truth. I know it's hard to believe, but you're a soul eater.*

Titos sat up. "Wait. If both of you know I'm a soul eater—which I'm still unsure of—why the fuck aren't you running in the other direction?" Titos wanted to run if this was true. He would jump out of the car. He could survive and then maybe run the other direction, catch a ri—

The car swerved to the side as a deadly growl came from Seth. He parked the car and got out. In seconds, he was in the backseat on the other side Titos. Titos stared at him. Seth was visibly angry. Titos could see his beast ready to burst free. Titos looked around for the threat that had Seth so riled up.

"There's no one here. I'm like this because you would think to run and abandon me," Seth said. There must have been a look from Mazki because he added, "Us," with a growl.

Titos was shocked. He felt the bond, and yeah, Seth was hurt. When Titos had thought of running, he hadn't thought about what it would do to Seth now that they were bonded. He was terrible and so selfish for how he was thinking.

"We don't care that you're a soul eater. I'm bonded to you and not once

have I felt the evil or hatred that was told in the stories.”

Seth held one of Titos’s hands. His big hands were rough and calloused but treated Titos’s as if they were fine china. Mazki grabbed his other hand and squeezed. Titos looked back and forth between them. He wanted to cry. Not because he was sad, but because, for the first time in his life, he felt wanted and cared for. And he had only known them for less than forty-eight hours.

“I may not be bonded to you... yet. But even I can tell you’re nothing like any of those stories.”

Titos looked at Mazki with his young face. He couldn’t believe someone so beautiful still wanted to be his keeper.

“Our master thinks you are beautiful,” Seth said to Mazki as he scooted closer to Titos.

With Seth’s warm body pressed against him, Titos melted against him, unable to resist the feeling of Seth behind him. Mazki’s lashes lowered, and he scooted closer to the front of Titos. If Seth was hot, Mazki was pure fire. He burned hotter than anything Titos had ever felt before. Titos shivered from the dual sensations of Seth’s rough hands rubbing his arms and neck and Mazki’s slender hands creeping under his shirt. When Mazki touched his skin, Titos couldn’t hold back the moan that was building inside of him.

Mazki’s nimble fingers moved over Titos’s flat stomach, going higher.

“I think you’re gorgeous,” Mazki said, his eyes dilating.

Titos shook his head. He was nowhere near as beautiful as Mazki.

“Our master doesn’t know how stunning he is,” Mazki said as his lips brushed over Titos’s.

Titos’s breath hitched. He wanted to kiss Mazki so badly, wanted to see if his mouth was as hot as his body felt pressed against him.

“Master wants a kiss,” Seth practically growled. Titos felt the rumble in Seth’s chest against his head.

“Please, just Titos, and yes, I would like a kiss, Mazki. If you haven’t changed your mind.”



TITOS WAS ABSOLUTELY BEAUTIFUL, HIS GREEN EYES PRACTICALLY BLACK with how dilated his pupils were. With his shallow breaths and reddened cheeks, he was seduction personified if Mazki had ever seen it. His phoenix wanted to touch Titos so badly. If his master wanted to be referred to by his first name, then Mazki would obey.

Titos had admitted to wanting a kiss, but he was so shy about it, as if Mazki might need to think about it. He didn't, he pressed their lips together. He nipped Titos's bottom lip, and Titos gasped. Mazki dove in and thoroughly kissed him, wanting to taste all of him. He felt Titos's hand in his hair as they continued kissing, and Titos moaned loudly.

Mazki started to move, wanting to get comfortable, but they were in the backseat of a four-door sedan. Mazki and Titos were small enough to have room, but with Seth's large frame, there wasn't enough space to do anything.

Mazki was getting frustrated with the lack of movement and space they had. He slowly pulled back to look up at Seth, making eye contact. They may not have had a bond and been able to communicate telepathically, but they agreed that they couldn't continue in the car; it was just too small.

Titos whimpered, and Mazki jerked his head down to look at him. He'd never heard a sound so beautiful or sinfully delicious.

"We need to get someplace quickly if we are to continue," Mazki said, but Titos was pulling him back down for another kiss. Who was he to deny his master?

Titos kissed him deeper, his tongue caressing Mazki's. He tasted of blueberry pie, but, under that, Mazki tasted a cool, crisp wind on a snowy

day. It calmed the phoenix within him. Titos's hips started to move frantically. Mazki pulled back a little to see what was happening. Titos's eyes rolled in the back of his head as he moaned and writhed against Seth. Mazki's eyes traveled down Titos's body and...

There. Seth had Titos's pants open and his dick in his hands. He stroked Titos until he was done coming, and Mazki didn't hesitate to crouch on the floor of the car and lick up the cum.

Titos looked at him with half-lidded eyes, pupils still blown. "Fuck. That is the hottest thing I've ever seen."

He moaned again when Mazki licked some cum off his dick. He was obviously sensitive, but he hadn't pushed Mazki away. Mazki licked him again and again, and Titos continued to moan.

Mazki looked at Seth for a split second before he engulfed Titos's soft dick into his mouth. He began to suck, winding Titos's body tighter as his dick began to fill again. The fact that he could get hard again so fast was astonishing but pleasing. And from the way Seth moaned too, he thought the same thing.

Mazki hollowed his cheeks and sucked as he moved up, then swirled his tongue around the head of Titos's dick.

"Oh fuck. His mouth is so damn hot," Titos moaned out.

Mazki felt pleased that he was giving so much pleasure to him.

"If you keep doing that, I'm going to come again," Titos said as his whole body vibrated with the tension of holding back.

Mazki pressed his tongue to the slit of Titos's dick and moaned, sending vibrations down his dick. Titos bucked so hard Mazki had to hold his hips down so that he didn't fall off the seat. Mazki was rewarded for his efforts with spurt after spurt of cum. The warm liquid was hot on his tongue and tasted rich of Titos's power.

His whole body burned with the energy he felt just from Titos's cum. He knew that a king's or queen's release could give power, but he'd never tasted one so powerful. His skin itched with the fire from his phoenix, it threaten to come out. He couldn't shift into his full phoenix form without being bonded but the fire was still his own, but he couldn't, not without fear of hurting someone in the car. He didn't want to leave Titos's side. He had yet to be bonded to the young king, but he knew he wanted to be.

Titos stared at him, his head resting against Seth's chest and arms stretched out, reaching for Mazki. He moved as soon as he realized what

Titos was asking for. Laying on top of his master, he placed his hand on top of the backseat for support. He wouldn't put all of his weight on Titos. The wolf may have been able to handle it, but Titos still looked tired and a little undernourished.

"I don't know what I'm doing, and I don't want to hurt you or... you know," Titos stumbled out.

Mazki did know. Titos didn't want to kill him, but he had no idea what he was doing. Mazki didn't know either, but he knew that Titos would know what to do.

"I trust you," Mazki said.

Titos stared him in the eyes for a second, really focusing. He must have seen what he needed, because he nodded. "Seth, stop me if it looks like I'm losing control. Please don't let me kill him." Titos sounded so sad but determined.

"I will watch, but I know you can do this."

Titos nodded, not arguing with Seth. He looked at Mazki. "I kissed Seth and that's how it happened. I kissed you but nothing happened. How do you think we should do this?"

"I don't know much more than you two, but if you will it, like when you gave Seth some of your soul, I'm sure it'll be the same." At least, Mazki hoped that was the case.

"Okay, well, I like kissing you, so we can start there."

Mazki smiled and leaned over, getting closer to Titos. He pressed their lips together. He would never get tired of kissing him; his lips were so sweet and soft. He tasted delicious, and Mazki could kiss him forever. He deepened the kiss. At first, nothing was happening. They were just kissing. But then, one second Mazki was kissing Titos, and the next, he was his phoenix.

He wasn't in the car. He was in the sky, above a large forest, soaring through the sky without a care in the world. His feathers spread wide. He looked down, and there was someone in the forest. He went down to see who it was, cawing in warning at the intruder. He was getting too close to Mazki's territory. The intruder didn't stop, walking closer to the tree Mazki was perched on.

He flew down, wings spread in warning. He was no small phoenix. His head reached the middle of the man's chest. Mazki would engulf in flames any who dared to enter his territory.

The intruder moved closer. As Mazki built his flames up in his wings, he

caught the most tantalizing scent on the wind. The intruder had kind eyes, but power wafted off of him. He could see all the power that surrounded the intruder as he reached out his hand without fear. A flame from Mazki's body jumped onto the intruder, but he didn't burn. It only added to his power.

The intruder touched his wings, and Mazki ruffled and flexed them further. No longer trying to shoo the intruder away, he felt a familiarity toward him. The intruder put his face into the burning feathers and rubbed his face in them. He felt every movement of the intruder.

When the intruder pulled back, there was not one burn mark or singed hair. It was as if his flames couldn't burn the man.

No, not an intruder.

His king.

His master.

His flames grew as his master touched his feathers.

For the first time ever, he wished that he was even bigger, so he could fly with his master on his back. He cawed and soared into the sky. He would show his master the power he had gained, the strength of a phoenix.

"No wonder you're so hot. You're a phoenix," Titos said.

Mazki blinked and was no longer flying. He was lying on top Titos, making him bear all his weight. He started to move, but he felt too weak.

"Don't move just yet. You need to drink some of my blood first. Plus, you're not so heavy that I can't handle it for a little bit," Titos said.

Mazki agreed, but he didn't say anything. Even talking felt as if it would be too much work.

"Can you use your fangs? Or Seth can make a small cut," Titos said as he rubbed small circles on Mazki's back.

He was so gentle and kind. It was a wonderment. He wanted to pierce Titos with his fangs. He took a deep breath before he nuzzled into Titos's offered neck. Titos breath hitched with anticipation. "Drink of my blood, so that you may be bonded to me for eternity." The words were spoken effortlessly from Titos.

Mazki closed his eyes briefly relishing in the thought of being Titos keeper. A position he never thought he would ever want again and bit down. His fangs pierced Titos and sweet blood came rushing out. He retracted his fangs only to suck out more blood. He was not so lost in drinking that he missed the moans that were coming out of Titos's mouth.

He duly noted that his master enjoyed being bitten and having his blood

sucked. After a few swallows, Mazki felt the power surge through him as if the power he'd held before was nothing more than child's play. He knew if he shifted now, his phoenix would be bigger, maybe even big enough to have Titos ride on top of him.

*Titos: Riding you would be fun.*

The image he sent Mazki wasn't of Titos riding on his phoenix in the sky. Instead, it was of him, Seth, and Titos all in bed together, and Titos was riding Mazki, with his head thrown back in the heat of passion. They all groaned collectively, and Seth moved them a little so they were both on top of the wolf.

*Seth: It's fine. Your combined weight is pleasant.*

Mazki tilted his head. He hadn't shared blood with Seth, but he heard him clear as day through a bond. He looked within himself, and, sure enough, there was a bond between them. It was not like the bond they had with Titos, but a bond formed *through* him.

*Mazki: He is so powerful that he created a bond between us.*

Seth shrugged.

*Seth: It doesn't bother me, but it can be blocked if it's something you don't want.*

Mazki looked Seth in the eyes. When he'd first seen the man, he'd been jealous and hadn't liked him. But now that he had a bond with Titos, his jealousy no longer blinded him. He could see how good-looking Seth was and how much he was interested in the wolf. His desire for Seth didn't compare to the pure desperation he felt for Titos, but nothing would ever come close to that as Titos was his master.

*Mazki: No, leave it.*

His phoenix brushed its fire tail against the manicore wolf through their connection. Titos's light snore made them break eye contact as they looked down. There, sleeping peacefully, was their master.

Mazki didn't move in fear of waking Titos. "We need to find a place to go. We can't keep driving around with no destination in mind."

Seth nodded in agreement. "Yeah, I know that, but where to?"

That was a good question. "What of his family?"

Seth shrugged, and Titos made a sound. They both held their breath until he started to lightly snore again.

"I don't think it would be a good idea. When I saved him, I heard him call the keeper who was about to kill him his cousin. Don't think family is a good

option.”

Seth’s eyes had shifted to his wolf eyes and his voice had gotten deeper from talking about Titos nearly being killed. Mazki felt hot, the phoenix in him not liking that idea at all.

“He is a king. He must belong to some line. There has to be some place.”

Seth looked skeptical, and he couldn’t fault him. Their master was a soul eater. If his family had lied about him, saying he was half human, the chances of something left for him was slim to none.

“I own a cabin. It is unworthy of him, but we can go there,” Mazki said.

“He deserves a fucking palace, but we need information and to understand what’s going on first. So, anywhere we can make sure he’s safe, would be good. Like you said, we can’t keep driving around. So where to?”

“Oakes, North Dakota.”

“Which is in what direction?” Seth asked.

Mazki stared at the wolf. Oh, he was serious. “Don’t you have a phone?”

“It broke.”

Mazki shook his head. “Of course, it did.” He moved a little and fished his cell phone out of his pocket.

“Damn, how old is this thing? Its like a brick,” Seth said.

Mazki rolled his eyes. “Probably as old as you. Now, let’s get a move on, so we can at least get him into a bed.”

Seth growled. “You will not give me an order. You may be older, and I appreciate any wisdom you give, but I’m alpha.”

They stared off for several intense seconds, neither one willing to bow to the other. Mazki was older and had lived through much more, but he felt it. Even his phoenix felt it. Their master had said that Seth was in charge. Of course, Mazki could challenge him for the position, but there really was no point.

He had no wish to be alpha, so he lowered his eyes. His phoenix had already submitted by baring its throat to the manticore wolf. With that settled, they both looked down at the still-sleeping Titos. Now they just needed to move in a way that wouldn’t wake him.



# TITOS

HE WAS STARTING TO GET USED TO WAKING UP IN DIFFERENT PLACES AND feeling eyes on him. He vaguely knew whose eyes, but that didn't change the fact that they were staring.

*Seth: I didn't mean to creep you out.*

*Mazki: Pretty sure that ship has sailed. You were basically hovering over him five seconds ago.*

Titos heard someone moving and then something crashing against the wall as feet ran around.

*Titos: Would you two stop. I know both of you just want to get into bed with me, so come on. I'm still exhausted, and I'm pretty sure I'll sleep for a few more hours.*

*Mazki: As you wish, Master.*

*Titos: Just Titos is fine.*

Mazki moved into the bed, to his front, and he snuggled close to him, feeling the heat from his phoenix. Seth got into the bed behind him and squeezed him tight. He felt secure between them. It was a strange feeling, but a feeling he never wanted to live without again.

*Seth: You can rest as long as you need to. We'll keep you safe.*

*Titos: Thank you.*

Mazki and Seth shared a look. Before long, Titos couldn't keep his eyes open, and he fell asleep in their arms.

When he woke again, he had no idea what time it was, but he knew from past experience it was either the next day or the middle of the night. He took notice of his body, and he felt great, strangely energetic. He usually woke and

ate and tended to feel lazy, but his body felt good. He started to wiggle around, but arms and legs were tangled with his. He froze with fear for a second until all of his memories of the past few days—or was it day?—came rushing back.

He had two keepers, and they were in bed with him. Holy shit. *And* he was a soul eater, and a damn king. He should be really panicking, which, a small part of him was, but then Mazki snuggled closer to him, his soft, black hair rubbing against Titos's throat.

*Seth: It's six in the morning. You can sleep more if you want.*

Titos contemplated it. He had the energy to get up, but what would he do besides panic and worry? He had no idea what to do. He had no job or anything really to occupy his time. He didn't want to sleep anymore. He'd slept enough, and it was the first time he'd ever felt so much energy. He felt Seth waiting for him to decide, but Titos had no idea what decision he should make.

He tried to move to look at Mazki, realizing he was awake. Mazki snuggled even closer, his face pressing against his throat. He felt Mazki's hot tongue against his throat, and he moaned. He could do this with them to help with his energy. Unless they didn't want to do it, then he so needed to go to the bathroom to take care of a problem.

Seth's big hands gripped his ass and squeezed, and Titos moaned again. They were both doing things to him, and he hadn't asked if it was what they wanted. He had seen kings and queens take unwilling keepers. Not everyone wanted to have sex with their master or mistress. He started to wiggle out of their grasps to ask them.

*Seth: We would be no better than fools to refuse touching you.*

*Mazki: We want you more than anything. To touch you, to bring you pleasure, and to protect you.*

*Titos: But I don't want you in my bed thinking that I would deny you blood or power or, I guess in my case, soul just because you choose not to be in my bed.*

*Seth: I want to be here as long as my master allows me.*

*Mazki: As do I.*

Titos nodded.

*Titos: Okay. But umm...*

He felt the heat of a blush on his face. Seth knew but Mazki didn't, and it was embarrassing all over again.

*Mazki: Fucking goddess, you're a virgin.*

Mazki bit down on Titos neck. There was no fang, and Titos didn't know if he was disappointed or not. He'd never had someone bite him before Mazki. Many of the edoli in his old house had refused, said exchanging blood with him would make them weak and a social pariah.

*Mazki: They were never worthy of your blood. They missed out. It tastes exquisite. Would you like for me to bite you?*

Titos shivered.

*Titos: Yes.*

Without a second thought, Mazki bit him. The first bite of pain was almost too much, but then he was flooded with pure warmth. Endorphins went off inside of him, and he could feel the fiery bond with Mazki. He wrapped himself in the bond, feeling the warmth seep into his body.

“Oh... Mmmgm... I'm coming,” Mazki moaned into Titos's neck.

Mazki panted, his body still riddled with little shocks from his release. Titos felt Mazki's pleasure, and it had felt good. His bond had shone hotter and brighter right before he'd come.

“I don't know what you did to our little bird, but he is flying high still from that release,” Seth said, reminding Titos he was in the bed and waiting patiently for Titos to acknowledge the huge bulge pressed against his ass.

“I did that to him?” Titos had no idea what he'd done, but when he touched the bond to Mazki again, the man's back bent as he moaned more.

Seth laughed. It was deep sounding and it was doing *things* to Titos. That laugh was too sexy for Seth's own good. “Yes, you did that. We can analyze it later, but for now, how will you have me, Titos?”

His name coming from Seth was glorious. He thought he would hear *master*, which wasn't bad, but hearing his name made butterflies swoop in his stomach. He had no idea how to arrange the big guy. He was clueless, but what he knew was that he wanted to have that huge dick inside of him. Even if a part of him swore it was too big to fit. Seth growled low and went to kiss Titos.

“If that's what you want, then the good news is Mazki has supplies here.”

“This is Mazki's place?”

Titos hadn't even thought to question where they had taken him. Either he was going crazy or he trusted them so much that he knew he was safe anywhere with them. The latter settled into him, and he realized yes, he did trust them more than anything. Seth reached over to a nightstand. Titos was

about to look around at his surroundings when he felt a tongue on his back. Mazki was against him again.

“Yes, this is my place. We can take a tour later, if you would like. But I know you want to continue this first.”

Titos nodded. He did want to continue. He stared Seth in the eyes. He needed some direction, since he wasn't sure how it all worked really. He hadn't gone to school like humans, and, because he was too weak, no other edoli even acknowledged him.

“Don't feel sad or think of them. They're not worth it. They were all idiots for the way they excluded you,” Mazki said. He bit lightly against Titos's back and goosebumps broke out.

“We will give you so much more and erase such stupidity from your life. You will never have to beg or ask one of us. We will give everything to you freely,” Seth said.

He kissed Titos, his tongue taking over, and Titos didn't have to worry. Seth and Mazki would help him, and be there for him. He felt the trueness of it. He moaned into Seth's mouth, liking the way Seth dominated his mouth but was so gentle. Big hands cradled his head as he was moved around on the bed. He was back on top of Seth like at the motel. Fear flashed through him. What if he hurt Seth again or killed him?

*Seth: Don't worry about that. We're going to kiss while Mazki gets you prepared.*

*Mazki: Fuck, Seth, you're so lucky. His ass is so beautiful.*

Titos felt when Mazki touched his ass, rubbing the globes before spreading his cheeks.

“What...? Oh. Mmgmm. Ugh.” Titos couldn't even form words, it felt so great. Mazki's hot, wet tongue slid over his hole, licking in circles and teasing the entrance. Titos was moaning loudly. He felt an electric shock coming from his ass. It felt incredible.

“I'm happy you like it so much,” Mazki said. His breath blowing against the now wet skin, making Titos's body shiver.

Seth bent him back down, giving Mazki more access to his ass. Seth started to kiss him again when Mazki started up once more with his torturous licks. Mazki started to poke his tongue inside Titos, pushing against his hole but then withdrawing and doing circles around it. He did this pattern multiple times, and just when Titos thought he had caught on to the timing, Mazki pushed his tongue through the first ring of muscle. He wiggled his tongue

around and began to thrust it in and out. Titos was beside himself, moaning and squeezing Seth with a white-knuckled grip. It felt amazing, little shocks rocking his body as Mazki kept up his assault.

“Please. Oh mgmmh. Please.” Titos wanted to come. It was all too much with Seth’s calloused hands wandering over his body and Mazki’s tongue fucking his hole. He would come undone before Seth even got to put his dick in him. And, as much as he wanted to come, he wanted Seth inside of him before he came more.

*Titos: Wait.*

Mazki pulled back. Titos’s body was wound so tight he shook. He was one right caress from coming. Neither of his keepers moved, barely breathing. Titos tried to calm his nerves, his body sweating. Even Seth was sweating, but he was waiting patiently for Titos. He felt Mazki behind him, wanting to get back to his task, but he would wait as well. They had instantly stopped, because he had said to wait. He was grateful.

Titos felt his urge to come settle down, and he moved a little. He nodded at both of them before Seth took his mouth again. He expected to feel Mazki’s tongue back on him, but instead, he felt his slender fingers.

*Mazki: I would love to keep rimming you, but you want Seth inside of you soon. My tongue won't be enough, so I must prepare you.*

One finger pumped in and out of him. There was pressure but it wasn’t unbearable. Soon one finger turned into two. Mazki moved them slowly at first, moving around until he touched something that made Titos shout.

*Mazki: There it is.*

He stroked over the spot a few more times, and Titos was right back on the edge. It felt as if Mazki was stroking his dick from the inside.

*Seth: It's your prostate, and when I'm inside of you, I'll be hitting it every time. Until you come all over me.*

Titos shivered at the image that Seth placed in his head. It was so erotic, and he had every intention of doing just that. Mazki added another finger, and Titos felt so very full. It wasn’t painful, but the pressure inside of him was doing funny things to him.

*Mazki: You're so tight. I have to stretch you well. Wolf here is no small man.*

Seth growled and started to pinch Titos’s nipples. He’d never known they were sensitive. Seth’s calloused thumbs rubbed the little nubs hard, rolling them around.

*Seth: Maybe do four fingers. I don't want him to be in any pain at all.*

Titos wasn't sure if he would make it to four fingers, three were already bringing him close, and Mazki had started to avoid his prostate. He wasn't sure if he wanted to demand that Mazki start hitting it again or thank him for avoiding it so he could last a little longer. He felt the fourth finger trying to work its way in with more lube being added. Titos started to tighten up. It felt too good and borderline too much.

*Mazki: You mustn't tighten up. Let me get it in. There you go. Relax and push back against my fingers.*

Titos did and Mazki worked the fourth finger inside. He panted above Seth. His body felt so alive, little tingles on his skin. Mazki started to twist his hand around, stretching him more.

“Fuck. Fuck. I'm going to come if you keep that up,” Titos said.

*Mazki: Interesting. We'll have to test something out at a later time.*

An image of Seth's dick inside of him and Mazki draped over his back, working his dick inside next to Seth's, caused Titos to groan. If they kept sharing images, he doubted any of them would ever leave the bed. Mazki withdrew his fingers, and Titos moaned from the sensation and the wet sound. He was turned on beyond anything in his life.

Seth growled under him. “You take it at your pace. I want this to be all pleasure for you.”

Titos nodded as he sat up, and Mazki grabbed the base of Seth's dick. Seth's eyes rolled back into his head just from that touch. Was he as close to coming as Titos? The way his body shivered from that one touch said a lot. Titos ran his hands against his caramel skin, reveling in how soft and hot Seth was. His body was pure, hard muscles, and Titos loved every inch of it.

Love. Was that possible? He had only met them both recently, and yet, he shared a bond and bonds tended to pull people together. But they didn't make them fall in love. He stared Seth in the eyes. Yes, he did love Seth. He didn't want him gone or away from him ever. Titos turned a little to look at Mazki, and there he saw the same affection reflected back to him. He loved Mazki as well.

*Mazki: You're exceptional and too perfect for us not to fall in love with.*

Tears threatened to fall. Both Seth and Mazki flooded the bond with the love they felt for Titos. He had never felt it before, though he was sure his mother had loved him when he was a child. But he had no real memories of her, so the love he felt from both of his keepers was magical and filled a

piece of him that was broken.

Seth touched the bond.

*Seth: You're everything and more. I love you, Titos.*

Titos's breath hitched at the declaration. His vision was blurry with tears. "I love you too. Both of you," he said as he sank down on Seth's dick. He took it in one go, not willing to slow it down. With the declarations of love, he felt a new fire inside of him. He wanted to come and come hard. Seth was big, but thanks to Mazki's careful stretching, there was only pressure and the feeling of being full. He started to move his hips slowly to get used to the feeling. Seth laid still as a statue under him, letting him do what he wanted.

He didn't want that. He could feel the control Seth was keeping on himself. He wanted Seth, in all his raw power, to do what he wanted to Titos. Mazki got on the bed next to them, and he was hard again, but he waited for Titos. Titos flexed around the dick inside of him, squeezing down and moving his hips. He hit his prostate and moaned from the pleasure that little graze gave him. Something cracked and Titos looked up. There, at the top of the headboard, a piece had broken. Seth was gripping the thick, wooden headboard so hard that he'd cracked it.

"Sorry, Mazki," Seth grunted out. He was losing his battle with his control and Titos reveled in it. He wanted Seth to let loose.

"It's fine," Mazki said. He sounded cool and collected, so Titos looked over to him and saw he had torn pieces of the sheets in his hands. He was far from fine; he was battling his control just as much as Seth.

Titos lifted up and slammed his ass back down, and they all moaned in unison. Titos wasn't sure if it was possible, but he wanted to see if he could make Mazki feel the same pleasure he was feeling. He touched the wind that always seemed to be around him, and it was stronger and sturdier than he remembered. It must have been from bonding with Seth and Mazki. He made the wind wrap around Mazki, pushing it so that it touched Mazki's bond and wrapped around his body.

"Oh fuck. What is that?" Mazki moaned as his head fell back, and he moved his hips on the sheets, his dick looking ready to come. Titos wanted to taste Mazki; Mazki visibly shivered.

"If that's what you want," Mazki said breathily as he got up and stood next to Titos, his dick close to Titos's mouth.

Titos's mouth salivated, and he couldn't wait. He opened his mouth, ready to take in Mazki's dick. Mazki held his dick in his shaking hands. Titos

could feel that he wanted this badly, but he also wanted to make it pleasurable for Titos. Both of his keepers were on the verge and barely held onto their control, all for his sake. The power he felt from that was intoxicating, but he would never deny them any of this. Their love and wants were important to him.

He opened his mouth, waiting on Mazki to enter, and he did so slowly. The first touch of the hot flesh to his tongue was glorious. He moaned and squeezed down on Seth, which made Mazki and Seth moan. Mazki shallowly thrust in and out of his mouth, but that control wouldn't do.

Titos noticed a red tint around Mazki and blue one around Seth. It wasn't their bond, but something else. He pulled on it, and they both moaned louder. Mazki thrust his dick down into Titos's throat at the same time Seth thrust up into him. He choked a little but didn't tell Mazki to stop.

"Goddess, what was that? It felt like you were touching me from the inside," Seth said breathlessly. Mazki nodded his agreement. Titos didn't know and didn't care. If it made them move, he would do it again and again.

He pulled again, and they both groaned and thrust again, but this time, they didn't stop. They both thrust into him, and he was in bliss. Mazki grunted above him, his beautiful features on display as he moved. Titos moaned, and that seemed to do more for Mazki, his head going back. He wasn't rough as he held Titos's head steady.

Seth held his hips as he fucked into him. He changed the angle and started to hit Titos's prostate on every thrust. Titos was getting lost in the pleasure. He was going to come and come hard. He would make sure both of them came too.

He pulled hard on the glowing film around them and both came with a shout. Hot cum flooded Titos in both ends, and he came too, painting his cum on Seth's chest. It was hot, and Titos's body felt as if it was glowing. He wanted more of their cum. Mazki's tasted so good he moaned, trying to suck more of it in. Seth's was so hot inside him that it felt as if he would be warm forever. He flexed around Seth's dick and was rewarded with a few more spurts.

Mazki pulled out of his mouth, and he dropped to the bed looking thoroughly spent, a rosy tint to his pale cheeks. Seth's hands shook as he let go of Titos's hips. He looked just as thoroughly spent, sweat glistening on his body. Titos smiled. He liked that his keepers looked blissed out. Seth's soft dick slipped out of him with a wet sound. They all moaned when they heard

it, something erotic about the sound.



HE LOOKED AT HIS MASTER, AND HE WAS FUCKING GLOWING. HE DIDN'T know if it was because he'd just come so fucking hard he saw stars or if Titos was seriously glowing. He moved his shoulder to nudge Mazki.

*Mazki: I'm too tired. Unless its life or death, let me rest.*

*Seth: Open your eyes and look at him.*

Mazki sighed but opened his eyes. "Damn, is he glowing?"

Seth nodded. They were both seeing the same thing. Titos's eyes were closed, and he still had his head back as if frozen in place at the peak of his pleasure. Seth moved his hand to touch Titos. It was like electricity went off in his body. There was so much power coursing through Titos, that it was making him glow. The touch was almost painful, but Seth didn't let go.

"Titos, are you okay?" He started to worry when he got no response. He felt the bond, touching Titos. The end of their bond burned.

"Titos," Mazki said as he tentatively put a hand on Titos's other arm. He flinched from the pain but didn't let go either.

They looked at each other. The same worry that was building in him showed in Mazki's eyes. There was something wrong, and Titos wasn't responding to either one of them. The glow was starting to move down Titos's body, and soon his whole body would be covered.

Seth looked down, watching the glow work its way to cover all of Titos. He realized Titos's whole body had started to glow, and he was on top of Seth. Shit was going to get painful. Mazki moved faster than Seth thought was possible. He moved and Seth lifted off Titos a little. Mazki slipped the sheet between their bodies.

“Ugh, fuck,” Mazki said as he touched Titos with two hands. He quickly removed one. He gasped for breath as he kept one hand on Titos. “I’ve never seen this before. He has so much power running through him right now that even touching him hurts.”

Seth nodded, grateful to Mazki for putting the barrier between them. If he had ended up touching so much of Titos while he glowed like this, he would probably pass out from the pain.

“Thank you. So, what do we do?” Seth asked. He knew he was alpha, but he wasn’t stupid. He would ask questions when needed, and Mazki was the oldest.

Mazki shook his head. “In all my years, I’ve never seen this, but I know leaving him like this won’t be good. We need to do something. He has too much power right now. It’s why he isn’t responding to us.”

“Do you think if we drink some of his blood it will help?”

Mazki shrugged. “It’s worth a try, but he isn’t like other edoli. We know so little of soul eaters.” He sounded worried, and Seth understood. They weren’t sure of anything. They both were grasping at straws, hoping to help and not hurt.

“I’ll try first,” Seth said.

Mazki nodded, and Seth released his fangs. He had hoped the first bite he did he would be able to see Titos’s eyes and relish in his pleasure of the bite. But he would do anything right now to hear his master speak or respond in their bond. He grabbed Titos’s wrist and bit down, his lips tingling from the power.

The first drop of blood in his mouth was pure pain. It burned; his tongue felt burnt and raw. It was agony. The blood flowed into his mouth as he sucked, and he couldn’t even taste it. His eyes watered from the sheer pain he was in. It was too much. He needed to let go and spit it out. Instead, he swallowed, and it felt like magma sliding down his throat, blisters forming and leaving scars. It was all too much for him, too much pain. There was nothing good about it. He needed to pull away before he was burned from the inside out.

*Mazki: Fight it, Seth.*

Seth was about to argue with him when they both turned to look at Titos. He looked at them, his eyes wide open. He wasn’t seeing them, but it was an improvement. His eyes glowed the same way his body did. It was terrifying as well as the most beautiful thing Seth had ever seen. Seth sucked more blood

into his mouth and kept swallowing. It still burned, and he could feel his insides being scorched. He had no idea how much time had passed, or how much blood he had taken, but when Mazki spoke to him in the bond he felt relief.

*Mazki: Let's switch. If you keep going, you'll die. I can feel it.*

*Seth: It burns. Is his blood rejecting me?*

*Mazki: I don't think so. I think it's because there is so much power.*

Seth accepted that for now, but if every time he tasted Titos's blood and it burned and hurt so badly, he would deal with it so that he could be closer to him. But it wouldn't be pleasant. He released the hold he had on Titos's arm and laid back with a groan. He still kept a hand on Titos, but the sting from the contact had lessened. That had to mean they were going in the right direction. He heard a painful groan come from his left. He looked over, and Mazki was shaking as he sucked on the same bite Seth had made.

*Seth: Does it burn you?*

*Mazki: Yes and no. It... It is not the same. Ugh, I felt fire in the bond when you took his... his blood. It's so cold. So cold that it burns.*

Seth felt it, and Mazki was freezing as he swallowed every agonizing mouthful. Where Seth's beast loved the cold, Mazki's was opposite; his phoenix was fire incarnate. The cold hurt him just as much as the fire had hurt Seth.

"Seth. Mazki," Titos groaned out.

Seth looked into Titos's eyes. He was looking back at him, very much awake, and the glow had started to dim down.

*Seth: I think that's enough. You can stop now.*

Mazki licked the wound closed and hissed from the pain of the few drops of blood on his skin. Titos looked at both of them. Seth's insides still burned like a volcano was inside of him, and Mazki shook like a leaf he was so cold.

"I... I feel like... Like... I don't know." Titos shook his head as if that would help clear his mind.

Titos touched their bonds, and Seth tried to hide the pain he was in. He didn't want Titos to know how much he hurt.

*Titos: Please, don't hide from me. Unless you'd rather I stay out?*

Titos started to retreat, and Seth groaned with his stupidity. He would never hide anything from his master. He opened his bond and let Titos see everything without shame. Titos gasped, and Mazki grunted next to him. Titos must have been feeling around in their bond.

“I hurt both of you. I’m so sorry.” Fresh tears welled up in his eyes as he started to try and move. Both of their hands on him tightened; they wouldn’t let him leave.

“We would gladly take any pain if we got to stay closer to you,” Seth said.

Titos shook his head, ready to argue.

“I would do it again and again. This pain is nothing. When you smile, it’s the best relief,” Mazki said.

Tears streamed down Titos’s face as he looked at them. Seth wanted to wrap Titos up in his arms and hold him close.

“The glowing things around you guys is all mixed and are dimmer than they were before,” Titos said as he looked around them.

Seth looked at his hand, trying to see if he saw any glow, but there was nothing but his skin. He looked at Mazki, and he was doing that same, but neither one of them could see what Titos was talking about.

“Maybe if I help it, your pain will go away.”

He closed his eyes, and Seth missed looking into them already. But he could feel that Titos was concentrating, so he stayed still and let him focus. He kept contact with Titos, afraid to let go. He looked over and noticed Mazki was too.

Mazki was watching Titos with the same look Seth was sure he had. They both felt strongly for Titos, and it didn’t matter that only a little time had passed. They loved him through and through. Seth pushed that into the bond. They trusted Titos, no matter what, and they loved him wholeheartedly. Mazki’s love flooded the bond along with his, and they watched as a single tear escaped Titos’s closed eyes.

He felt something cold soothing and putting out the fire inside of him. His beast came out of its metaphorical den and ran jumping with the wind. It was the best way Seth could describe it. It felt like wind on a winter day. It felt wonderful and when the wind wrapped around his beast, it grew. The spikes on its back protruding farther, and he felt twice as strong as ever. With all the fire inside of him put out, Seth sighed and relished in the feeling.

He heard Mazki next to him sigh in relief as well, and he was no longer shivering and shaking. He felt hot against Seth, as if he was going to combust into flames. Soon, the feeling of the wind was pulling back. Seth wanted to call it back, but it was not his place to demand more.

*Titos: If I do anymore, you both will die. I don’t want you to leave me.*

Seth opened his eyes, not remembering when he'd closed them. There, sitting on him, was Titos, smiling brightly. Gone were the bags under his eyes, and his cheeks were a healthy, glowing red.

*Titos: I feel fantastic. I've never felt this good. Ever. Especially after three death days.*

Seth didn't understand that last part. Titos had been very much alive the whole time, but he was very happy that Titos felt so good.

Titos laughed in the bond. It felt good and wrapped around Seth. He liked feeling his master laugh.

*Titos: I don't actually die. It just feels like it, kind of.*

*Mazki: What do you mean?*

Titos ran his fingers through his hair, making the curls look wild. It was a good look on his master, and he wished to make his hair look even wilder. Titos blushed. Seth had left his bond open when he thought of what he wanted to do.

*Mazki: That would be joyous, but we probably need to clean up from our earlier activities, and we need to understand about this three days... I don't like calling it "death," so a new name for it too.*

Titos glanced over to Mazki. Seth felt him shiver next to him, but not because he was cold. Oh no, it was because Titos was doing something in the bond to Mazki. Mazki's breaths were coming out in pants, and his hand that wasn't holding onto Titos, touched Seth and squeezed. Seth felt his pleasure as if it was his own. He groaned with Mazki as they both came. He hadn't even noticed he was hard. They laid back, breathing hard.

*Seth: What the fuck just happened?*

Titos wiggled from their grasp and got off the bed to stand. He had a smirk on his face.

"Shower then food. While we eat, we can talk," he said as he walked away.

"Goddess has blessed me with the best master ever," Mazki said.

"Agreed. I'll get breakfast started. Do you have enough food here?"

Mazki shrugged. "I should, but I haven't been to the cabin in many years, so any food is in a can and may be expired. There's a store twenty minutes the other way."

Seth sighed. "We still have some of the food we got from the gas station. That will have to do for now. One of us can go to the store later."

Titos walked back into the room, and they both turned to look at him.

Their eyes unable to look away from the glory that was Titos.

“I want to go to the store too,” Titos said.

“We’ll all go then, but first showers and some unhealthy gas station snacks to tied us over,” Seth said.

Titos smiled, and it touched his heart to see such a joyous smile on his master’s face.

“Okay, cool with me.” Titos twirled his finger in one of his brown curls. “So, who’s going to wash my back?”

Mazki and Seth both turned to look at each other. In seconds, sheets and the blanket went flying as they raced to see who would make it to Titos first. Titos laughed and ran for the bathroom. With his smaller frame, Mazki could move faster, but Seth was stronger. He picked Mazki up before he knew what was happening and put Mazki behind him as he made it into the bathroom right behind Titos.

*Mazki: You cheat.*

*Seth: I played to my strengths.*

*Mazki: That's fine. That just means I get to wash his front.*

He sent an image of him kissing Titos while rubbing soapy hands all over the front of his body.

They had just come, so Seth wasn’t going to get hard for a little while, but his dick twitched as if up for the challenge. He looked to the shower, and he was pleased that the shower was big enough to fit all three of them at once.

*Titos: Are you two getting in or what?*

They got in, Mazki’s hand brushing against his skin and making Seth moan. Mazki was just as small as Titos, but he had compact, lean muscles. He looked like he trained and often. Seth would like to lick all those lean muscles.

*Titos: Fucking hell, that’s hot. Would you two do anything like that together?*

Seth looked into Mazki’s eyes. He would definitely be up for it, but the question was: would Mazki? Keepers didn’t have to have a connection or any attraction to each other. Their main focus was to be on their master or mistress.

Mazki smiled, images flashing with him bent over the nearest object and Seth fucking him and pulling his hair. Seth growled. Mazki liked it rough. Titos moaned between them, and both of their eyes looked to him.

*Mazki: If the wolf could handle it, I would be more than happy to get*

*fucked by him.*

Titos touched Seth's bond alone.

*Titos: You don't have to do anything you don't want to.*

Then he spoke to both of them.

*Titos: I will never force either of you, or anyone, to have sex or give blood to someone they don't want to.*

Seth smiled. His master was so kind. It was his right to control and demand whatever he wanted from them.

*Seth: I want to touch the little fire bird. I want to see what he can take.*

Seth sent his own image: him buried balls deep in Mazki, a fistful of his hair, and his fangs buried in Mazki's neck as their master sat and watched him being fucked.

Mazki moaned as if it was actually happening and not just an image that was in his head. Titos took the image over. He no longer sat idly by, but he went to his knees in front of Mazki and took him down his throat in one swallow.

"If we keep this up, we will never make it to food or the store." Mazki was breathless. He obviously wanted to keep going, but he was right. Seth grabbed the soap bar and unwrapped it, having grabbed it before getting in the shower.

*Titos: Or we can keep going with this.*

He sounded eager, but as soon as he said it, his stomach began to rumble. A blush crept up his skin.

"Let's shower and then get you fed. We'll go to the store for some supplies and food," Seth said.

Titos didn't argue. He nodded as his stomach grumbled again.



# TITOS

THE SHOWER WAS PURE TORTURE. IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO DESCRIBE WHAT had happened. He had both of his keepers naked and wet, and that was golden porn right there. But his stupid stomach kept reminding them that he was hungry for actual food. He sat at a small table, eating the last of the blueberry muffins. He loved the way they tasted, but he wanted something with more protein.

“We can pick up some meat while we’re out.” Seth ate a bag of chips across from him. The way Seth’s face was scrunched up, he didn’t care for the chips, but like Titos, he was hungry. So they ate what they had first. Mazki had gone out to check the wards that he had around the house for protection. Mazki came in, hitting his shoes on the side, dusting off the snow.

“It started to snow already?” Titos stared up at the darkend sky.

Mazki nodded. He only wore tight jeans and a loose-fitted shirt.

“You’re a phoenix. Shouldn’t you wear a coat or something, because, you know, fire and water don’t mix?” Titos asked.

Mazki shrugged. “I went out with a jacket, but I was too hot. I think earlier when I drank your blood, and it felt as if my body was freezing, changed something. Now, when I walk out in the cold, I feel fine. I used to have to wear at least a jacket.”

He didn’t sound bothered by it. In fact, he sounded happy that he could now move freely in the cold weather.

“I wonder if it’s the same for me if I touch fire,” Seth said as he crumbled the empty bag of chips in his hand. “Everything checks out?”

Mazki nodded. “All the wards are good and intact.”

Titos sat back. He felt a little useless, because he didn't know what he should do. They both seemed to have a handle on things.

*Seth: All you need to do is let us worry about the little things.*

*Titos: Yeah, okay. Just might take some time. I've spent eight years doing everything on my own, and really, if we count the years I lived with my aunt, I would say longer.*

*Mazki: You have us now.*

Titos smiled. He liked having both of them. The room went quiet, no one talking for a long minute. Titos knew they were waiting for him. He sighed, but it was best to answer their questions, even if he had limited information.

"I'm not sure why, but every two months, like clockwork, all of my energy leaves, and I feel like death. It lasts for three days. There have been times when it's lasted longer, but never shorter. I can barely eat, and sleeping is the only way to survive it.

"I tried once when I was a young child to go out on a hunt with everyone. I nearly died, because my body wasn't moving right. I had a dizzy spell and almost fell off a cliff. This has been happening to me as long as I can remember. When I come out of it, I usually feel like shit, and look it too. This is the first time I'm filled with so much energy and feel great."

Titos shrugged. That was really all he knew about it. His aunt had had no idea what was wrong with him and hadn't asked around. He'd been left to deal with it, which meant he pretty much slept through it. Only waking for short times to eat and drink a little. Once he timed it and got a schedule down for himself, he was good with it. It sucked, but he could live with it.

"So, now that this one has ended, the next one will be in sixty-one days?" Mazki asked.

Titos shook his head. "No, not quite. It'll be between fifty-eight and fifty-nine days. The days that I'm sick are counted as well."

Seth nodded, taking everything in. Titos looked at him, searching the bond for any indication that Seth regretted bonding with him. Seth's face eased, and there was a sad smile on his face.

*Seth: I would never regret this. I'm only thinking of ways to keep you safe and comfortable during those times.*

Titos felt better.

"Seth said something about you being hunted or your cousin was trying to kill you?"

Titos turned to look at Mazki. He'd forgotten about that. He was in such a

good mood with them both around, he'd forgotten his troubles.

"As it should be, but we do need to know what's going on so that we may plan," Seth said.

Titos sighed and ran his fingers through his hair. It was still a little wet from the shower. "About that... Hmm. How do I start the story of my own family wanting me dead?"

He laughed, but even to his own ears, it sounded forced. Seth got up, and he moved over to sit next to Titos. He picked him up as if he weighed nothing and sat in his chair, placing Titos on his lap and hugging him tight. Something in him tugged. He had stopped crying over the rejection and hatred of his family years ago.

He heard the screech of chair legs against the floor, and Mazki's hand rubbed soothingly against his back. Titos buried his face into Seth's chest, trying to get himself under control.

"Would you like to go to the bed?" Mazki asked.

That sounded good, and he wanted to, but he knew if they all got back into bed he would try and avoid telling them. Seth moved him around, so he sat on one leg and Mazki moved and sat on the other.

"At times like this, it's a good thing you're so big. You can hold us both," Mazki said as he reached for one of Titos's hands and squeezed.

He took a deep breath and told them how, when he was sixteen, he had walked in and heard his cousin, aunt, and uncle talking about him. He explained how they all agreed that he was better off dead. Then he explained how he'd left and never looked back until one day, a hunter had cornered him in an alley in Oregon, and he'd found out about his death sentence. About how the queen had ordered his death, and he wondered if she knew he was a soul eater. If that was the reason why she had ordered his death.

Seth had growled through some parts, and Titos had felt the anger from both of his keepers' bonds. They were not pleased by how he was treated, or the life he had lived until then.

Seth was the first to speak. "What a fucking mess. Those idiots."

Mazki nodded, his hand holding Titos's in a tight grip. "I don't think your former queen knows that you're a soul eater, or there would be more hunters after you."

Titos nodded, his face still buried in Seth's chest. He wouldn't cry and give them any of his tears. Soft caresses came from both of the bonds as they comforted him.

“Well, we need to make sure the council doesn’t find out that he’s a soul eater until he’s even more powerful and can take them on if they challenge him. Which I’m one hundred percent sure they will. The current seat holders are not the brightest or kindest in history.”

“Then we will build his power,” Seth said.

Titos moved his head a little so that his words would come out clear and not muffled. “How?”

“Your call is strong. We’re sure others will come to you,” Seth reassured.

Titos nodded. He hoped they were right, but what if the keepers that responded to his call were repulsed by what he was or wanted nothing to do with him? He never wanted to take someone against their will.

“Once they see how kind and beautiful you are, I doubt any will care. Mazki and I both grew up hearing the tales of the scary and deadly soul eaters. When I look at you, I don’t feel that fear. I feel lust, protectiveness, and, above all else, love. Something that most keepers would never feel from their master or mistress,” Seth said before he bent his head and kissed Titos.

Mazki waited until Seth pulled back from the kiss, then Mazki took over and kissed him. “I agree with Seth. Many never feel this amount of love. If they come to your call and don’t accept you, then they’re missing out on the best thing walking. And I will burn them to a crisp.” He winked at the last part.

They sat there for a little while longer before they got ready to leave. Once they got to the store, they walked up and down the aisles. It was a small mom and pop type place. Titos was grabbing some frosted flakes when he realized that he hadn’t brought any money. In fact, he had no idea what happened to the cash he had on him. He might have dropped it somewhere.

“How are we paying for this, guys?”

Mazki was grabbing some type of cereal that had raisins in it as he turned around. “We both have savings. I’m fine with supporting us for the time being, but even my savings will disappear soon,” Mazki said, and Seth nodded in agreement.

“So, we need to get jobs?”

“You can’t work, fight off the council, and take in more keepers all at the same time,” said Seth.

Mazki nodded, agreeing with Seth.

“Yeah, I hear you. But no money means no roof over our heads and no food. I can hunt but...” Titos shrugged. They wouldn’t starve, but the whole

“the council will come and hunt him down” thing seemed like a bigger issue.

“You’re a king, but not one that is backed by any others and no trust fund set up. Right? No trust fund?” Seth asked.

Titos had no idea if he had a trust fund or not. He assumed he didn’t, but then again, there was a lot in life that he had assumed and was now biting him in the ass.

“Honestly, I have no idea. Neither my aunt or uncle spoke about it, and I left there when I was sixteen. So... No idea.”

“I should go burn them all,” Mazki said.

Titos shrugged. “It is what it is. They don’t deserve your anger.”

Mazki kissed him, sweet and pleasing.

“So, we need to check and see if you have money in a trust fund,” Seth said as he placed a hand on Titos’s shoulder.

With both of his keepers touching him, he felt calmer already. “Okay, I guess we need to make a trip to the nearest bank,” Titos said.

“Yeah, there’s one around the block. I’m not sure if it’s connected to the edoli. This town is very small, and the nearest territory is two towns over,” Mazki said.

“We’ll try after we finish shopping,” Seth said. They stood there a little longer, touching each other.

They moved on to the next aisle when an old lady cleared her throat to get by. Titos tried to decide if he wanted Pringles or hot Cheetos.

“You can have both,” Seth said.

“Really?” He felt like a kid in a candy store. “Candy aisle next?”

Mazki laughed. “Yeah, candy aisle next.”

They walked over to the aisle, and Titos stopped dead in his tracks. He felt something but wasn’t sure what. He had never had such awareness before. Seth went still, and Mazki moved to be in front of Titos, blocking any threat that would come. Seth moved slightly behind him, so he was guarded from both sides. Seth started to growl. Titos looked but had no idea what it was. So, he decided to let the wind tell him.

He calmed his breath and let it stretch out. It touched Mazki and Seth, but the wind knew both of them, and they felt right. Their bonds glowed, but he moved on. There it was. Something inky black, but it didn’t feel dangerous. He let the wind get closer and started to touch it, but the inky blackness felt like nothing. As if it wasn’t there, but it was.

“Dude, why the fuck are you growling?” said someone who was right in

front of them. Right where the inky blackness was.

Titos opened his eyes. There, crouched on the floor with some red vines in his hand, was a handsome guy with tattoos on his neck and his hair pulled into a bun. He had a bad boy vibe oozing from him, and it was so hot that Titos practically moaned thinking about running his tongue on the intricate black and grey tattoo on his neck. Before he knew it, he was walking toward the stranger. The man stood and looked him in the eyes.

“Dude, your eyes are glowing. You okay?”

He didn't sound scared, but he did sound confused. Seth and Mazki stood back, letting him move on his own, but he felt in the bond that they would be there if he needed them.

“I think you should stop moving closer to me.” The man now sounded a little scared. It was like... he didn't know what he was.

Titos stopped. He hadn't meant to scare him. “Sorry, I didn't mean to scare you. It's just that you feel kind of like Seth and Mazki.” He pointed to both of the guys.

The stranger looked at them but focused on Titos. “Yeah, okay. Whatever drugs you're taking, I suggest you slow down.” The stranger turned around and walked away.

“Titos, are you okay?”

He hadn't realized that his hand was outstretched, reaching for the stranger as he walked away. He let it down. “Yeah, I guess my call wasn't strong enough. Can we go now?”

He was ready to go, and they had already grabbed a lot of food. Seth nodded and started to move toward the checkout. As they checked out, Titos felt that inky blackness again; a feeling he couldn't describe. He turned, and, sure enough, the tattooed stranger was staring at them with a strange fascination. When they made eye contact, he shook his head and moved back down the aisle.

Titos blew out a breath. He couldn't expect them all to be like Mazki or Seth, but the stranger hadn't even known that Titos was a soul eater. But what if now people could tell? Like, when they looked at him a big sign hung over his head that pointed down at him and said in big letters: SOUL EATER! BEWARE!

Mazki snickered next to him. “There is no such sign, and I don't know about that one. He seems drawn to you, but I don't think he knows why. He isn't a child, but he doesn't carry the smell of edoli like many do. Even you

smelled of edoli from years of growing up with them, but he smells only of humans.”

Titos turned to get one last look at the stranger. What if he didn't know he was edoli? What would happen then?

“It has happened before. Some edoli who leave their respective houses decide to live among humans only. Usually their edoli blood gets thinner and thinner with each bloodline, but it's possible for one to be full-blooded and grow up outside a house,” Mazki said.

Seth nodded. Titos hoped it was the case instead of the stranger outright denying him. He would understand if the guy didn't want to become his keeper, and he would never force anyone. But he hoped he would want to be one.

They left the store with arms full of groceries. Well, really Mazki's and Seth's arms were full. They refused to let him carry anything. He had argued and won to be able to at least carry the milk. They put everything in the car before driving to the nearest bank.

The bank was a small, brick building right next to the police station.

*Titos: Bet they never have a robbery.*

They walked into the building. It smelled of old paper and coffee. Titos liked the way it smelled, but Seth had scrunched up his nose. Mazki sneezed and rubbed his nose a few times.

*Titos: You guys okay?*

*Seth: Yeah, it's just... Someone was really heavy with the perfume this morning.*

*Mazki: It smells like horse shit. You know what? I stand corrected. I'd rather be smelling horse shit.*

Titos felt bad for them, since their noses were ten times more sensitive than his.

*Titos: We can come back tomorrow, or you guys can wait in the car.*

*Seth: Not happening.*

*Mazki: We'll be fine. Let's move. People are starting to stare.*

Titos looked around and noticed that some of the tellers were starting to stare, so they moved farther into the building.

“Can I help you, gentlemen?” an eager man said. He had on a suit with a few stains on it, and his breath smelled of hot dog.



# TITOS

“UM, YES, I NEED TO CHECK ON AN ACCOUNT,” TITOS SAID.

The man nodded. “I’ve never seen you lot around before. Have your grandparents or family banked with us?”

Titos had no idea how to answer any of that. He knew the man was human and had no idea how edoli did money, or that they could connect to any bank in the world as long as it had an edoli connection. Even if it was a human with a small drop of edoli blood and knew of their existence, the council would use them. It was a way for the edoli to still be hidden, even in this day and age with technology and the internet.

Mazki stepped up. “Yes, under the name Simcrose.”

The man’s eager smile vanished once he heard the name. “I see. Then you will be seeing Adom. He is currently out to lunch, but he’ll be back soon.” The man moved on to an older couple who had walked in behind them.

Mazki shook his head, and Seth huffed out a breath, but neither said anything. Titos knew the smell was annoying to them, but they had to wait for the Adom guy to come back.

*Mazki: Don’t worry about us. We’re both just annoyed with the human. He didn’t even offer you a seat. He completely dismissed us as soon as we said what account we were under.*

*Seth: He is disrespectful. I wish I could have shifted and ate him.*

*Titos: I think you’d get indigestion. He doesn’t look appetizing. Plus, let’s just be happy that there is a connection at this bank. I would have sworn we would have had to travel to find another bank.*

They were laughing at how the man would probably taste like week-old

mustard when someone cleared their throat behind them. They all turned. They hadn't heard anyone approach, and Titos's wind—which had been more aware—hadn't felt anything.

“Gentlemen, Cody tells me you're here to speak about Simcrose bank holdings and account?”

Titos's mouth hung open. Adom was the dictionary picture of a silver fox. The man was fucking gorgeous.

“Yep,” Titos said. He groaned internally at how stupid he sounded.

Seth laughed in the bond and so did Mazki.

*Mazki: He is edoli.*

They hadn't moved, and Adom stared at him, his grey eyes focused on Titos. Titos stared back, unable to stop looking at him. One moment, he lived his life as a loner and worked odd jobs, and now he was in a bank, lusting after another man, and had sex with two others earlier. How his life had changed. Just remembering their earlier activities made a blush appear on his face.

Adom smiled, and Titos swore he had diamonds in his mouth the smile was so bright.

“This way, gentlemen,” Adom said.

They followed him into a back room where they could close the door. There were only two chairs. Seth pulled out a seat for Titos to sit and moved to stand against the wall. Mazki moved to the seat on Titos's right.

*Titos: I can ask for a seat for you.*

*Seth: No need. I can stand, ready to kill any threat. Plus, Mazki most likely knows more about this stuff.*

Titos nodded and gave Seth's bond a gentle squeeze before he focused on Adom. Adom sat behind the grey, metal desk. He turned on his computer and typed for a second before he turned to look at them.

The grey in his eyes was like smoke, and it was beautiful. Adom smiled as if he knew what Titos was thinking.

*Titos: Please tell me I haven't been saying stuff out loud and haven't noticed?*

*Mazki: No, you haven't said anything, but the drool you got going on there might be an indication of what you're thinking.*

Titos wiped his mouth, but there was nothing there.

Laughter came through the bond from Mazki. He turned and Mazki didn't even have a smile on his face. He was all serious.

“What’s the name I’m looking up?” Adom asked.

Titos turned his head to look at him. He had no idea what name to use. He had no idea who his father was, and he couldn’t use his house name. That would cause so many issues. He started to panic. A warm, soft hand touched his. It wasn’t Mazki’s slender one and it wasn’t Seth’s rough one. Titos looked at the hand and followed it up until he looked into those smoky grey eyes.

“Calm down. Everything will be okay. If you don’t know, we can figure it out. Everything is going to be okay.” Adom sounded so calm and reassuring that Titos just instantly relaxed.

“Yeah. Um, okay.”

“We can start with your original house name.”

Panic started again. What if he gave his house name and the hunters found them? Then Mazki and Seth would have to fight, and then they would be back on the run, trying to find a place to sleep. And what about the milk? It would go bad in the car. Milk wouldn’t be good for on the run.

He heard talking and some growls, but he was too wrapped up in all of the stuff that would happen. What if his cousin found them? Then they would have to fight, and he would try and kill Mazki and Seth. Titos couldn’t live without them anymore; it would be too hard. He would rather die than be alone again. He was pressed against a warm chest and hands rubbed soothingly against him.

“Everything will be okay. Calm down, Master,” Seth said as he pushed calming vibes into the bond.

The same ones were coming from Mazki’s bond, but there was an extra set of hands rubbing him. He knew whose hands they were, but he turned to look just in case. Sure enough, Adom sat on the edge of his desk right next to Titos. He couldn’t believe they were all so close, trying to soothe him. He wasn’t sure if he was supposed to feel like a child, but all it really made him feel was cared for.

“We do care, Master,” Mazki said.

Titos rolled his eyes. Seth had called him master earlier as well. He knew it was because they were in front of Adom. At least, in the bond they called him Titos. He smashed his face back into Seth’s hard chest and breathed him in. He touched both of their bonds to make sure they were secure. When he did, he heard both of them catch their breath from his touch.

“I didn’t mean to offend or scare you,” Adom said softly, as if he would

spook Titos if he spoke too loudly. Titos rolled his eyes at his own behavior.

“Not your fault I'm a spaz. Years on the run and all that. When you finally have something, you get a little freaked out when you think it will disappear. I'm sorry to freak out in your office,” Titos said as he sat up.

Adom looked at him and slowly withdrew his hands. He looked reluctant to move away from Titos.

*Seth: He feels the call to you as well.*

*Mazki: It will be hard for him. He works directly for the council.*

*Titos: That makes him dangerous to us?*

*Mazki: Not necessarily. It's a fifty-fifty chance.*

*Seth: It's risky.*

*Titos: So, I shouldn't accept him?*

*Seth: It's not our place to tell you who to choose to be your keeper.*

*Mazki: But if we had to give you advice... It is a risk, but the way he stares at you, and the way Seth had to growl at him to keep him from touching you right away... Eh, I say maybe sixty-forty in our favor.*

*Titos: Okay, let's get this stuff figured out first, then I will determine what to do about Adom.*

Adom had just sat there while they had their mental conversation. He said nothing, but he also hadn't moved back to his seat. Titos tried to move, but Seth's grip on him tightened. Titos blew out a breath.

*Titos: At least, let me turn around.*

Seth's grip loosened, so he could turn around. He sat facing Adom, his back to Seth's chest. It was comfortable but awkward to be sitting on someone's lap. He cleared his throat, trying to move

“Um. So, I don't think my house name will work. You see, I ran away from it and prefer if they don't know where I am.”

Adom nodded. He got up and moved back behind his desk.

“That's fine. Can you give me your mother's or father's name?” Adom had his hands ready to type.

“I only know my mother's name: Navari Es Glint, of the snake and raven bloodline.” He hoped it was the truth.

Adom's hands flew over the keyboard. Titos had no idea how he was typing that fast and not looking at the keyboard at the same time. If Titos tried that, he would get a bunch of lines of letters. He still typed with one finger. Mazki squeezed his knee as they sat there in anticipation. He had never thought to try this. He just assumed his parents hadn't had enough time

to set up a fund for him, since they had died unexpectedly. So, he sat there, fully expecting for Adom to turn around and apologize to him and tell him there was nothing there.

Adom stopped typing and clicked on a few things before he turned to face them. “It took me a second, because at first glance, it looks like there’s nothing there.”

“Wait, so does that mean there is something there?” Titos asked. He hadn’t dared to hope that there was something.

Adom nodded. “Yeah, it was tricky as fuck. Your mother hid it under a bunch of different names and codes. It only took me minutes to crack it, but that’s because I’m the best at what I do. Anyway, this is the amount you have access to,” Adom said as he passed him a piece of paper.

The number of zeros that was on the paper was crazy. He had never seen so many. “Is this even a number?”

Adom laughed. “Yes, it’s a number. Also, there was number and an address with it.” He wrote something down on a piece of paper and passed it to them.

Adom turned back to the computer and began to type again.

They all looked at the piece of paper. There, in legible writing, was an address in Yakima, Washington.

“There. Done,” Adom said as he leaned back in his seat.

Titos looked at him. Adom was looking smugly at the computer screen, as if he had just beaten it at a game. He got up and retrieved something out of a drawer. In his hand was a plastic card. He swiped it through something before he handed it to Titos. He then got up again and moved to the closed door on the far left of his office.

When he came back, he had a bat in his hand. Mazki got up, ready to attack, and Seth gripped him tighter. Adom didn’t go to them; he swung the bat at the computer. There was a loud crash as the screen broke first. He hit it a few more times before pulling something out of the tower next to the screen. He crushed whatever it was.

“There. Now, they can’t track us,” Adom said.

Titos blinked at him. Adom was breathing heavily, and he had looked good swinging the bat. His muscles bulging with every swing. Titos definitely had a thing for silver foxes.

*Mazki: Just to put this out there, but I don’t think he’s a fox. He smells kind of like wind. So, my guess is bird or cat.*

*Seth: Great, another bird. Just what we need.*

Had they all missed the part where he had said “us” as if he was including himself?

*Seth: No, we didn't miss it, but it's up to you, not us.*

Titos blew out a breath. He wouldn't put the guys in anymore danger than they already were. He was in no hurry to have the council hunting them. He didn't know if he could trust Adom. He hadn't seemed untrustworthy as of yet, but he was with the council. Before Titos could make a decision, he heard an ear-shattering scream, and the marking on his back burned.

“They're here.”

Seth stood him up and got ready to attack the first person that entered through the door. There wasn't enough room in the office for him to shift.

His marking burned hotter. “Shit, there are a lot of them.” Titos closed his eyes and let his power stretch out, touching and counting. His cousin definitely wasn't with them.

“There are twelve of them, no keepers. I even checked outside and a few blocks away.”

Seth nodded. He had three throwing knives in each hand. Mazki had fire balls in his.

“You can hold fire?”

Mazki winked at him. “All thanks to my master.”

A hunter crashed through the door, blade ready to attack. Seth was the first to move. He threw a knife so fast the hunter hadn't seen it coming. His face froze in shock as the knife stuck out of his forehead, and he dropped to the ground. Seth moved to look out the door, checking to see if the coast was clear. He turned back around, briefly making eye contact with Titos. Titos believed in his keepers; they would all get out of there.

“We keep him safe at all times. Mazki, bring up the front.” He eyed Adom.

“I will give my life for him if he would have me.”

Seth looked to Titos, and Titos looked at Adom. He heard the sincerity in his voice, and no matter the logic, he wanted Adom. He nodded to Seth that, yes, Adom would stay with them.

“Okay, Adom, on his right. I'll take the left and the back. Let's go,” Seth ordered.



HIS SKIN ITCHED WITH THE URGE TO SHIFT. HOW THE HELL THE HUNTERS HAD found them so fast was beyond him. He was pissed and rightfully so. They had no idea how the hunters had caught up to them, and they were in a building full of humans. This broke so many codes. These hunters were either rogues or stupid. Once edoli involved humans, it became a huge issue, and then the council would get involved. And then the demi would be involved.

“Are they stupid or something? They’re getting humans involved. Titos watched a woman get shoved to the ground by one of the hunters.”

Seth growled his agreement; they needed to get out of there. The building was crawling with them. Seth and the others were in a small hallway in the back of the building. Only one of the hunters had made it back there. Most of them were in the front still.

“This is going to be hard. They’re blocking the damn exits. Adom, is there any other way out?” Seth hoped there was some secret back door.

“Yeah, but it's past those three doors. You turn left, and there’s a door that leads to a small alley behind the building.”

“You mean the three doors that have at least four hunters standing next to them?” Mazki said.

Adom grunted in affirmation.

“Mazki, how good can you control that fire in your hands?”

Mazki shrugged.

*Mazki: I’m old, but I’ve never had so much power that I could hold fireballs in my hand. The most I have ever been capable of is a flicker of light. So not too sure.*

Seth groaned. “Mazki, don’t throw any fireballs in the building. You might kill an innocent, but if a hunter gets anywhere near Master, you scorch the fuck out of them.”

“That goes without saying,” Mazki said as he stared at the hunters, daring them to try and get closer.

Seth glanced at Adom. He didn’t have a bond yet, so there was no way to communicate with him or know what he was thinking. The bat that he used to smash the computer with was still held tightly in his hands. It would have to do. They made eye contact and Adom nodded, knowing at all costs they needed to protect Titos.

As soon as they moved, two of the hunters turned around to face them. Before they could warn the others, Seth flung his knives. Two of them made contact with the first hunter, and he fell with two knives in his head. The other hunter had ducked and the two knives that were meant for his head were in the wall behind him.

“Shit,” Seth said as they kept moving.

The hunter yelled and started moving toward them with a long blade in his hand. The other two hunters turned and started to move closer to them. Seth hurried the group, trying to move them faster. Titos kept up with the pace. They were getting close to the exit, but two hunters jumped in front of them.

Mazki didn’t hesitate; he set them on fire. They screamed as the smell of burnt flesh rose. It was disgusting, and Seth could feel Titos’s need to throw up. He thought the smell was the worst thing ever. The set of hunters on fire started to run around, trying to put out the fire. One hunter tossed water on them, but the fire just blazed hotter.

“Dumb fucks. Nothing can put out a phoenix’s fire,” Mazki said as they started to move again.

Seth felt the other hunters before they even made it to them. He turned and threw his other knives. The hunters dodged them, but it gave them enough time to make it through the door.

“Mazki,” Seth said.

Mazki moved and melted the door handle, so no one would be able to follow them right away. They would have to break down the door first.

They started to move down the narrow alleyway. They couldn’t stay in the same formation, the alley was too narrow. Mazki went first, then Adom, and then Titos with Seth bringing up the rear. They were moving quietly

when they heard something move. They all went still, but there was nothing there. He waited another second and sniffed the air. Again, there was nothing. He motioned for them to move when the sound happened again.

All of a sudden, everything went black. He panicked for a second and reached for his bond with Titos. He felt him still connected.

*Seth: Are you okay?*

*Titos: Yeah.*

*Seth: Mazki?*

*Mazki: Yeah, I'm fine, and so is Adom. Everything's black and I can't see shit, but we're still in the alley.*

Seth could smell an old cigarette stench and trash, so they were definitely still in the alley.

*Titos: You hear that?*

Seth listened. There was whispering over by the entrance of the alleyway. "I don't give a fuck if there is a bounty on that weakling's head. It isn't worth this shit," one of the hunter's said.

"I agree. We need to get out of here before the council sends their people. Shit. How the fuck did we lose them?"

"I don't know. I was standing here the whole time. I haven't seen anything."

Another hunter joined them, but he whispered so Seth couldn't hear what he said. The hunters nodded and followed him.

*Mazki: They couldn't see us.*

*Seth: How is that possible? We should be clear as day.*

*Titos: I think I know why.*

"Thank you. That helped us, but can you bring it back? It's hard to thank you when we can't see you," Titos said loudly.

The darkness started to slowly creep back, and Seth had to open and close his eyes a few times. When he could see clearly, there stood the stranger from the grocery store.

"Thank you for your help," Titos said to him.

The stranger shrugged. "Figured you guys were running from something. Umm. Never mind." He turned and started to walk away.

Before he could make it too far, Titos spoke again. "Would you like to come with us?"

The stranger stopped in his tracks, and Seth could see the hope in his eyes.

“Why should I go with you? Dude, you’re some stranger in a back alley who didn’t freak out from total darkness.”

Seth wouldn’t have anyone talking to their master in such a way; he deserved respect. He took a step forward, ready to tear the idiot apart. A soft hand stopped him from moving closer.

“It’s up to you if you want to come along. I’m not in the habit of forcing anyone, but living in this alley does seem lonely.” Titos shrugged. “Why be lonely when you don’t have to be? I know I never want to be alone again.” Titos scooted closer to Seth, and he wrapped his arm around his master.

He knew that Titos had lived a lonely life before he and Mazki came around. They never wanted him to feel that way again. Seth wanted to growl at the stranger for making Titos remember the times when he was lonely and scared. The stranger made a move to get closer to Titos, as if to give him comfort, and that time Seth did growl in warning. The stranger stopped in his tracks and shook his head as if to clear it.

“I’m not exactly normal, but then again, big guy over there just growled at me like a dog,” the guy said.

Seth heard Mazki’s laugh through the bond.

*Mazki: He called you a dog. Oh, how right he is.*

More laughter followed.

*Seth: I am no dog. I'm a wolf. And if you need a reminder of how much of a wolf I am, I'll be happy to show you later.*

He sent an image of Mazki shoved against the wall and Seth pounding into him.

*Mazki: Bring it on, doggy.*

Mazki’s phoenix wrapped around his wolf. It was hot, but he could now withstand it.

Titos shrugged, drawing Seth back into paying attention to the newcomer. “What’s normal anyway? And I wouldn’t call him a dog ever again. He’s a manicore wolf.”

“You’re edoli. There are many different types, so why would we be freaked out by it? Although, I hav—” Mazki started.

“Edo-what?” The stranger stared at them skeptically. Mazki had been right; he didn’t know what he was. “Nah, I’m good. I’ve been trying to avoid weird shit my whole life. It’d be stupid to jump into more weird shit.”

*Seth: His loss.*

*Mazki: He’s young and stupid. Two things we don’t need.*

“Okay, it's your choice, but what else are you going to do? At least, with us, you will never have to hide,” Titos said.

Their master was so sweet it hurt, and he wanted to give this stranger a home. He understood how loneliness could hurt someone more than anything, and to never be accepted by those around you. Seth could see the want and hope in the stranger's eyes. He wanted to do this, but he was scared. Scared of being hated or, worse, pushed away once he had the acceptance.

“So, all of you are edi-edo-edlo?”

“Edoli,” Titos said.

“Yeah, that thing. Am I that too?”

“Edoli,” Titos said.

“What the fuck is that?”

Seth heard more movement, and he could still smell the hunters. They hadn't all left.

“Are you coming or not? We need to go now,” Seth said.

*Titos: Seth. I know we're in a rush, but this isn't a light choice for him.*

*Seth: I'm sorry, but we need to get out of here. The longer we stay in this place, the more potential danger you'll be in. I just want you safe.*

He did want his master to be safe, but he didn't want to make him upset either. Seth felt when Titos touched his bond soothingly.

*Titos: I'm not angry. I get it, but rushing him isn't going to help him either.*

Seth knew that, but he hated being sitting ducks. He glanced over at Mazki and saw he was currently scanning the entrance. Adom had his bat ready for anyone who came in that Mazki didn't burn to a crisp. They could spare a few more minutes, but if their master got hurt all because this guy couldn't make up his mind, Seth would beat the shit out of him.

“How do I know you're not trying to grab me for some secret government lab to do experiments on me?”

*Mazki: Wow, this guy.*

*Titos: Mazki.*

Mazki turned and switched places with Adom. They would have to trust him to watch the entrance. Mazki summoned fire into his hands in the blink of an eye.

“Holy fuck,” the stranger said in awe. He looked to Seth. “What can you do?”

“Tear you to shreds if you don't make a decision already.” Seth was done

with this.

“Get your panties out of a wad. I thought dogs were supposed to have a good temperament.”

Seth growled low in a warning, and the stranger took a step back. Titos laughed out loud. Seth looked down and saw Titos had a smile on his face.

“You must have a death wish to continue to call him a dog.” Titos laughed some more.

The stranger grinned. “Name is Kail.”

“Great, now that's settled. Kail, when we make it out of this alley, you guard his left.” He pointed to Titos, just in case the guy didn't realize that he was the important one. He didn't refer to Titos as master; it would only create more questions, which in turn, would make them stay in the alleyway longer.

Kail eyed him for second, and Seth thought he would have a challenge, but Kail nodded and moved behind him. Seth motioned for everyone to move. They started forward and made it out of the alleyway. As soon as they cleared it, everyone got in position around Titos. Even Kail didn't hesitate to get in position.

“The car is past that building, in the parking lot,” Seth said.

The sun had set, but there were still humans walking about, so he couldn't shift. It would attract too much attention. It bothered him that he couldn't shift to protect Titos. They moved as a unit. The two new people moved instinctively with Seth's lead. He was impressed, but he would focus on that at a later time.

“Incoming,” Titos warned before Seth even caught the smell of approaching hunters.

There were at least ten of them, so they'd gotten reinforcements. They circled around them with swords, short knives, and, fuck, some of them had magical items.

*Mazki: There's are at least three of them with magical items.*

*Seth: You take the one on the left, and I'll take the other two. Adom can't shift, and I'm not sure what Kail can do besides that blackout thing.*

*Mazki: Push comes to shove, he covers us all in darkness, and we move to get Titos out of here.*

With a somewhat decent plan formed, they both eyed the magic weapon users.

“Kail. Adom. Both of you stay close to Ma—Titos. We are trusting you to keep him safe. There are some magic weapon users, and we need to take

them out first.”

Kail looked around them and then to Titos. “They won't touch him.”

He sounded determined, so Seth nodded then looked at Adom. The man nodded to him as he squared his shoulders, ready for a fight.

“They mean business. They put up a barrier,” Mazki said as his grinned at the hunters getting closer to them.

“They’ve made a big mistake,” Seth said. In seconds, he shifted into his beast as Mazki erupted into flames. They would make every hunter who dared come after their master regret their decision.



# TITOS

TITOS WATCHED SETH AND MAZKI SHIFT FOR THE FIRST TIME. BOTH OF THEIR bonds glowed before they shifted. Seth's wolf was even bigger than he thought; the spikes on his back and tail had gotten longer and his teeth sharper. He looked incredible. Titos saw some hunters back up a little. They were a little bit more worried now that Seth had shifted. As they should be. His scorpion tail was poised and ready to strike, and he growled low and menacingly.

It was different then when he growled in his human form. This growl made goosebumps break out down his spine.

"So *not* a fucking dog," Kail said. He stared at Seth with a look of fascination and fear. Seth glanced at him for a second before running off to attack the hunters.

Mazki's phoenix was beautiful, the heat coming off of him capable of melting metal. With his wings spread, he took to the air. He didn't hesitate. He flew down and started to set some of the hunters on fire.

The hunters ran around and started to retaliate. One hunter got a blade in Seth's side, but he paid the price when Seth's tail struck. His tail went straight through the hunter's chest, and he hung there, limp, on the end. Seth flung his tail around to dislodge the dead hunter. The hunter flew in the air and crashed into two others that were sneaking up behind Titos.

*Titos: Did you do that on purpose or lucky shot?*

*Seth: I am a wolf of many talents.*

Titos almost laughed but remembered the situation. Three hunters started to work their way over to them. Mazki was busy with one of the magical

weapon users, and Seth was busy with two more. Titos wasn't a damsel in distress. Well, at least not right that second. The hunter that had been flung still had a blade clutched in his hand.

Titos looked around before he moved. He grabbed the blade and felt it before Seth had to say anything.

*Seth: Master, watch out!*

Titos stayed still, controlling his breathing. "Kail, surround us in darkness."

Kail didn't question him and did just that.

*Seth: There are at least five hunters in there with you. Stay still, I'm coming.*

*Mazki: I can fly down to you.*

*Titos: No, you two focus on the magic users. They will be the hardest to deal with. I may be weak, but even I can handle this.*

He felt Seth and Mazki trying to say more, but he blocked them. Not fully, he still allowed them to feel him, but he needed to concentrate. He heard something crunch, and it sounded like bones breaking. He let his power move out lightly. Adom and Kail were safe. At least... he *thought* Kail was safe. He couldn't pinpoint where he was, but he could feel Adom, and he had a hunter on the ground.

The only reason he could tell the difference between the hunters and Adom was that his wind wound around Adom instead of moving away. The hunters, on the other hand, his power didn't like touching. The hunter was dead, which meant the crunching noise was Adom beating the hunter to death. He felt farther out and there were four other hunters. Two were moving closer to Adom, and the other two stood still, waiting to attack.

He clutched the blade and moved with a swiftness that had been trained into him since he was a child. He beheaded the hunter closest to him first, before he quickly turned and shoved the blade between the ribs of the other hunter. Warm blood coated him from head to toe, and he removed the blade with a hard jerk. Both bodies lay on the ground, creating a puddle of blood. He knew when Kail removed his darkness he would look as if he bathed in it.

He took a breath and checked again. The hunters that had been moving toward Adom had stopped moving altogether. They had heard when the bodies had fallen to the ground, and the smell of blood in the air was thick. Titos felt when Adom moved a little, as if trying to communicate with him. He wished they had a bond, so he could talk to him, but he would have to

trust that Adom could handle himself. Titos focused on the hunter to his left and moved before the hunter even made a move. He swung the blade up, but the hunter moved just in the nick of time. Titos's blade had still come into contact with the hunter, but only a scratch, if that.

The hunter was well trained. Again Titos had gone in for a kill move, but each time, the hunter got only a scratch. Titos smiled. He was having fun. It had been a long time since he'd fought with a hunter head on. For years, he'd just run and only fought when necessary, but a part of him missed the sparring he'd done as a kid. Of course, this was more life or death, but that just added an edge to it.

Titos sunk into himself, slowing his heartbeat and wrapping himself further into the darkness that was Kail. It welcomed him willingly, and he struck a few more times, no longer going for killing blows but just trying to confuse the hunter. He sliced at his arm, then a leg, then his face, and then his chest. The hunter had no idea where he was or where he was coming from, and he was no longer the hunter, but the prey.

Titos waited, feeling the hunter move slightly to the left and then to the right. He was confused. Titos stayed still for a little while longer. He could tell the hunter was getting nervous, his leg bouncing slightly, and he fidgeted whenever he heard something. Titos had blocked out all the noise from outside, completely focused on his prey. There was a loud bang that even Titos couldn't ignore, but he didn't lose focus.

The hunter did.

Titos struck, running his blade across the hunter's neck. He heard a gurgling noise and blood spurted on him before the hunter dropped to the ground. He checked the darkness again. The hunters he'd killed lay on the ground. Adom was injured a little, but both hunters were dead at his feet.

"Kail, that's enough," Titos said.

The darkness started to retreat, and then he could feel and see exactly where Kail was. He was standing right next to Titos. He had never met an edoli that could use their gifts so freely without a king's or queen's power to help them.

*Titos: Seth. Mazki.*

He needed to know they were fine. He looked around and half of the parking lot was set on fire. A fire that couldn't be put out.

*Seth: Are you okay?*

*Titos: Yes, I'm fine, but I think Adom is injured. He seems able to still*

*stand, but the whole left side of his shirt is bloody, and I don't think it's from the hunters.*

*Mazki: I only have one more left over here.*

*Seth: We need to find the barrier caster.*

Titos looked over to Adom. The older-looking man stood proud, as if he wasn't in pain. "Are you okay?"

Adom's grey eyes locked onto Titos. "I should ask you that. You're covered in blood, but I know it's not your own."

"Yeah, you were a fucking badass. I've never seen someone move like that before. You were slicing and killing those guys left and right. How did you see in the darkness?" Kail asked.

Titos blushed. "I was trained as a child to be a hunter, since I didn't have the qualities to be a keeper."

"What's a keeper?" Kail asked.

"We'll explain once we get out of here. We need to find the barrier caster," Adom said.

Titos looked at him. It hadn't slipped past him that Adom had avoided his question, but if the older man wanted to ignore it, Titos would for now. But once they were away and clear, he would be checking Adom's injuries.

Mazki flew down to them, shifting just as he touched the ground. His body was on display as he moved as if he wasn't stark naked.

"I didn't see any casters. I'm not sure where he could even hide around here. The circle isn't large," Mazki said. He looked at Titos, and his mouth hung open a little.

Titos laughed through the bond.

*Titos: Later. Now close your mouth.*

*Mazki: Are you injured?*

*Titos: No, none of this blood is my own.*

Titos felt the awe through the bond. He had impressed his oldest keeper.

Seth ran over to them, blood coating the spikes on his body, and his tail had flesh stuck to it. He shifted in one fluid movement, so he stood next to Titos in all his beautiful, brown skin glory. Titos shivered. He wanted to touch both of his keepers.

*Seth: Soon.*

*Mazki: You can touch me now, if you wish.*

*Titos: Don't tease me.*

"Um, you both realize you're butt-ass naked, right?" Kail said.

Seth and Mazki both shrugged.

“Can’t magically keep clothes on when you shift into an eight-foot wolf or a bird made out of fire,” Mazki said.

“The caster is here. We need to find them. They’re probably blocking themselves, so I’ll need to really concentrate, since they’re not in plain sight,” Titos said.

Adom, Seth, Mazki, and Kail all surrounded him without further ado. He closed his eyes and pushed his power more than he’d ever done before.

“Fuck,” Kail said as Titos’s power moved over him.

He heard Adom shift a little, but he said nothing. He was pushing it harder than he ever had before. He usually only lightly touched things, but now he had to search for a caster that was well hidden. He touched a few cars, but there was nothing there. He moved on, checking the one building that had made it into the circle. He was sure the caster had to be in there, but again, he didn’t feel anything. He moved on, pushing his power deeper, trying to find the caster. He was starting to feel tired when he felt a small tingle.

“Found. Ugh. Trash.” He was getting tired and sentences were getting harder. He fought the exhaustion he felt. His legs shook, but before he could fall, Seth picked him up. He wanted to argue; he could stand on his own, and they needed to appear strong, not weak.

*Seth: It’s fine. All that’s left is the caster. You were amazing and glorious.*

Titos yawned, giving up on arguing with him, and just wrapped his arms around Seth’s neck.

“Mazki, set the dumpster there on fire,” Seth said.

Mazki got a large ball of fire in his hand. He focused on it and made it even hotter than the ones he’d made earlier.

“Once the barrier is broken, we make a run for the car on the other side of this building. Mazki, the humans won’t be able to put out this fire, so do something about it quickly. Adom and Kail, stay close. We don’t know if there are more hunters waiting for us outside the barrier,” Seth instructed. Everyone nodded or grunted in affirmation.

Mazki threw the ball of fire, hitting the trash can dead on. A few seconds passed and there was a scream. The caster jumped out, screaming. He tried rolling on the ground to put the fire out, but nothing worked. The fire just burned brighter, as if the more he struggled, the more the flames burned. Soon the screams died out, and the caster no longer rolled on the ground.

They felt the barrier disappear like a bubble popping.

They moved fast. All the flames went to Mazki as they ran. He gathered them in his hands and snuffed them out. The sounds of sirens and people shouting could be heard. They had moved fast enough that no one had noticed them. The barrier ahead had blocked the view of them just long enough that they made it to the other parking lot.

They made it over there to see that there was a large fire where their car should have been. The hunters had set their car on fire.

“Fuck,” Seth said.

“Please don’t tell me that’s the car we’re supposed to be going to,” Kail said.

“Damn hunters,” Mazki said.

“Adom, do you have a car?” Seth asked.

Adom turned to look at Seth “No, I live right across the street from the bank. Never needed a car.”

They stood there, trying to think of what to do, but they couldn’t stay there long. More hunters could come, and they were covered in blood. If humans noticed them, they’d be going to jail.

“You guys gotta be kidding me, right?” Kail said.

Seth growled at him. It wasn’t a joking matter; they were fucked if they couldn’t get out of there.

Kail sighed and ran across the street to a truck. He went to the driver side, and, in seconds, he was sitting in the driver’s seat. He waved everyone over.

*Titos: He just broke into a car.*

*Seth: Useful after all.*

They moved to get into the truck. No one noticed them, because everyone watched the car on fire. They hadn’t noticed the other parking lot full of bodies. Titos didn’t worry about it. If the council didn’t know about him before, they sure as hell would take notice now.

There was nothing he could do about it but get prepared.

He now had Kail and Adom with them, but he still needed to bond with them. But he trusted them already. He only hoped that he could love them. He loved Mazki and Seth, and he liked that about his keepers. He didn’t want to take one that wouldn’t have that type of feelings for him or that didn’t want to be with him. A bond was just too intimate. He had no idea how other kings and queens refused their keepers or never even acknowledged them. Seth and Mazki felt like a part of him. A part he always wanted to be there.

Kail started the truck, and they drove off without anyone noticing. Titos sat in the back between Maki and Seth. He closed his eyes, deciding he would only rest for a little while.



SETH LOOKED OVER TITOS'S SLEEPING FORM. THERE WAS SO MUCH BLOOD, but he seemed uninjured. He hadn't known that Titos could handle himself. When Kail had covered them and five hunters in blackness, it had scared him. Titos told him to stay put, but fuck, if he didn't want to disobey that order. When the blackness had retreated and he could see once again, the sight of Titos covered in blood and all five hunters dead was exhilarating. It was like he killed them himself; he was so proud of his master.

*Mazki: Where are we going?*

Titos moved a little, snuggling closer to Seth, and he placed an arm around him to pull him in.

*Seth: There was an address that Adom gave us.*

Mazki searched Titos's pockets, careful not to wake him, and pulled out a card wrapped in paper. He put the card back into Titos's pocket and unfolded the paper.

"Not to be a complainer or anything, but where are we going?" Kail asked.

Adom was quiet in the front seat, his head resting lightly against the window.

"Adom, are you okay?" Seth asked.

Cool, grey eyes turned to look at him. He looked Seth up and down and nodded.

*Mazki: What do you think?*

*Seth: Kail may not know what he is, but he follows Master perfectly. Adom... I don't know. He's just so quiet.*

“We have an address, but I'm not sure we should head there right away. They may have had some hunters stay back to track us.”

“So, um, those guys were hunters. Are they, you know, edo... what-cha-ma-call-it?” Kail asked.

Seth groaned. He didn't have the patience to be a teacher and didn't really care to try. Mazki laughed, and Adom turned to look at Kail.

“You have no idea what you are,” Adom said.

Kail's hands tightened on the wheel, and Seth could see his shoulders tense. Sore subject.

“No, sorry, they don't have guys who turn into some spikey wolf monster and a kid who can turn into a firebird where I'm from. I'm the only one who could ever do stuff, and that seemed to get me into more trouble. So, excuse me if I finally meet some people who are just as weird and I have some questions.” Kail sounded angry but mostly hurt. It made sense why he had questions if he'd never seen other edoli.

Adom nodded and Mazki shrugged. There was a lot of information to cover, and Seth guessed this was technically the best, and probably only, time to go over everything.

Adom turned and looked longingly back at Titos as he slept soundly. The same look Mazki had given him when they had traveled to North Dakota. And, if he was honest with himself, the same one Seth had given him back in the hotel room.

“Does he need blood? You two should drink as well,” Adom said.

At the mention of blood, Mazki sat up straighter.

*Mazki: We used all of that power, and we shifted. Seth, we should need blood.*

Seth heard Mazki, but he had no urge to drink, and he didn't feel weak.

*Seth: Do you think it has to do with the fact that he's a soul eater?*

*Mazki: I have no idea, but Adom doesn't know that, and Kail, well... I don't think we have to worry about that part for him.*

*Seth: You kill him if he even twitches the wrong way.*

*Mazki: I'll set his ass on fire if he even thinks it.*

Seth took a deep breath. They would be putting trust in two edoli who weren't bonded or linked to their master.

“Wait. Are we vampires?” Kail's question stopped Seth. Everyone in the car, except Titos, turned to look at Kail.

“No, we aren't vampires,” Adom said in his gruff voice.

“But we drink blood like vampires? I’ve never drank blood before,” Kail said.

Mazki started to talk before Adom could this time. “Vampires are what humans made up about edoli. Some humans witnessed a king drink from his keeper, and after that, they made up the whole vampire thing. Like we hate the sun and drink human blood. Edoli are born with vast power. We don’t need blood to survive, but we do need it to call upon our powers.

“I have no fucking clue how you’re able to use power without being bonded or feeding on another edoli. We can question that later. The hunters are also edoli, but they have no other forms. Some consider them the weaker class, but that depends on the king or queen you ask. They may not be able to shift, but they have capabilities higher than humans, so they are put to use.”

Kail whistled. “So even among edoli, I’m a freak. Great.”

Mazki flinched a little, but he shrugged. “I wouldn’t say freak. More like phenomenal. Among our kind, if you can use that much of your power without being bonded three things can happen. One, every king or queen will try to snatch you up; two, the council will snatch you up and train you to be their personal lacky; or three, you’ll be seen as a threat, something that can’t be controlled.” Mazki raised his hands, palms up, and moved them up and down like a scale.

He wasn’t wrong. Kail was strange. There had been cases of edoli who weren’t kings or queens being able to shift or use their powers. They were usually killed off from fear that they would be able to kill their king or queen. Seth unconsciously tightened his arm around Titos. He would never let anyone harm him. Just the thought alone made his wolf move inside of him, trying to get out and attack the unknown threat.

“Wait, hold up. Kings and queens? Like the Queen of England?”

Adom was the one to laugh this time. His gruff laugh sounded as if he hadn’t done it in a long time.

“No, she’s a human queen. Some edoli are born of great power and are blessed by gods and goddesses. They are considered kings and queens. They build and keep power, and they call keepers to them. Seth and I are keepers. We are bonded to Titos; he is our king and master. Once bonded, the edoli becomes a keeper. Before then, you are a potential keeper.”

“Okay, so edoli have queens and kings, but they aren’t royalty, but they do have keepers that are slaves, and hunters who kill the kings and queens, and some council. Please tell me I got some of this right, because this shit is

harder than calculus, and I can tell you cal is the dumbest math I ever had to take in high school.” Kail sounded frustrated and confused. Seth had no idea what calculus had to do with anything, but Kail was mixing a lot of stuff up.

“Take this exit,” Adom said. He turned to look at Seth, giving Seth his neck in a show of submission. He recognized Seth as alpha, and Seth nodded to him.

Kail took the exit without question. Instead, he went back to the topic at hand. “Okay, start over.”

Mazki blew out a breath. “This is why edoli raise their young in houses. Being raised among humans just throws you all off.”

“Fuck, sorry I wasn’t in some fancy-dancy house. You know what? Fuck it. Don’t explain shit to me,” Kail said as he focused on the road.

Seth felt Titos before he heard him.

*Titos: What's going on? Are Adom and Kail okay?*

*Seth: Yes, they're both find. Kail is just angry, because he can't seem to grasp edoli life or understand it.*

*Titos: I know how that feels. You're trying to understand a world you think you're supposed to belong to, since the other one wanted nothing to do with you. The only difference is I grew up in the edoli world, and they wanted nothing to do with me. I was seen as weaker than hunters. He grew up in the human world, was seen as a freak and hated for it. He has probably been lonely, and now that he's found people that are similar, he only wishes to understand the world they belong to.*

*Mazki: I'm sorry, Master. I hadn't thought of it that way. I will explain it better to him.*

*Titos: I know.*

There was a yawn in their head, as if even talking through the link was making him tired.

*Seth: Rest. We're headed to the address Adom gave us. We'll take care of everything.*

*Titos: Do either one of you need blood?*

*Mazki: I don't feel the need. My power feels fine.*

*Seth: Neither do I.*

Seth felt something cold wrap around his wolf. It felt wonderful, like a gust of wind. Mazki gasped next to him as he shivered.

*Titos: That should help.*

*Mazki: What was that?*

*Titos: I...*

Seth felt Mazki touch their link only.

*Mazki: He just fell back asleep?*

*Seth: Yes, he's very tired. Even I can feel how tired he is.*

*Mazki: Did it feel like he was caressing your beast a second ago?*

*Seth: Yes, and I feel stronger.*

Mazki and Seth both looked down at Titos in amazement. Nothing in their lives could have prepared them for someone like Titos.

Seth looked up, and Adom was watching them.

“Sorry, Kail. I’m used to dealing with edoli who have grown up in our world. I’ve lived for quite a while, but I’ve never had to explain edoli life before. So please, let’s try again. I want you to know all that you can in order for you to be the best asset to our master.” Mazki patiently waited for Kail.

Kail’s shoulders relaxed slightly as he blew out a breath. He obviously wanted to know more, but he was having a hard time understanding. Seth couldn’t imagine a life where he had no idea what he was, and then get tossed into another life and had to figure it out.

“Okay, I’m not stupid or anything, it’s just...”

“I don’t think you’re stupid. In fact, I don’t think any of us would be handling this as well as you are. So, let’s start over,” Mazki said. He sounded calmer since Titos had talked to them.

Kail nodded. “Okay.”

“Ask questions as you need to, and if he doesn’t have the answer, I’ll answer. But I’m pretty sure he has all the answers; he’s older than me,” Adom said.

The car swerved a little as Kail looked at Adom.

“Eyes on the road,” Seth growled. He didn’t give a damn how surprised Kail was; he wouldn’t accept anyone putting Titos in danger.

“Sorry, man,” Kail said as he looked at the road, but he continued to glance at Adom.

“I’ll start there. I’m the oldest in the car at about seven hundred ten—or is it thirteen? Well, in the seven hundreds.”

“What the fuck? But you look nineteen, maybe twenty-one if you squint hard enough,” Kail said.

Seth held back his laugh, because, yeah, Mazki was the oldest out of them, but he looked the youngest.

“All edoli are different. I’m a phoenix. I stopped aging around my twenty-

second birthday.” Mazki shrugged, not caring one way or the other.

“Okay, so we live forever. Immortal.”

“Not exactly. Edoli as a whole are not immortal. I’m a phoenix, so I’m reborn or the flames heal me fast enough that I don’t die. This is going to get complicated so stop me if you get lost,” Mazki said.

Kail nodded.

Mazki took a breath. “There are multiple classes within the edoli; I’ll start with the lowest and work my way up. Swerves are first. They are humans who have a touch of edoli blood in them. They tend to serve kings or queens in the form of handling human affairs. Swerves are drawn to kings and queens like other edoli, but they don’t feel the pull as strongly. Some houses don’t have swerves for fear of betrayal. Swerves can become a weakness, if allowed. Kings and queens who are enemies of the house can corrupt each other’s swerves.

“Next on the totem pole is hunters, the people you fought against tonight. They are full edoli, but they may be weak. Meaning, they don’t carry another form inside of them. They still have their speed and strength and are called to kings and queens. They serve just as all edoli do, but they don’t form a direct bond with the king or queen. Instead, they form a bond with the alpha of the keepers. Are you following along?”

“Swerves, humans who have some edoli in them. They are basically normal people, and hunters aren’t powerful and are controlled by an alpha.” Kail’s eyes flicked to Seth in the rearview mirror. He may just be learning, but already he could pick out who the alpha was. Seth nodded. Kail wasn’t stupid at all; he just needed all of the information.

“Yes, good. Now, some hunters are strong enough to use magical items. It depends on what they are using, but they have their own titles. I don’t think it’s important to go into their titles as we don’t have any hunters, and you aren’t one.”

“Wait, there's magic? Does that mean there are witches—or is it wizards? If there are, how are they linked to us?”

“Good questions. There is magic, but no witches. There are magical items that have been made by gods and goddesses that have been left on this earth. Most of them have been broken into many pieces, declared too dangerous to use all of its power. Because of that, there are a million pieces out there that are embedded into items, and it makes the item a magical entity. Say someone had half a stone that could conjure fire, then putting it in a sword

would make a flaming sword. Magic.

“Not everyone can wield it, and since keepers shift, most don’t use magical items or weapons. The caster that put a barrier up during that fight, he used a magical item. I don’t know what it looks like, because, well, when he got out the trash can, he was too busy running around.”

“Okay, so what's after hunters?”

“That would be keepers. That's what I am, and maybe you and Adom if Titos, our master, chooses to take you.”

“Quick question, why do you two refer to him as master? Is there a difference between him and a king?”

“No, he is our king and master. Once you are bonded, a king or queen becomes your master or mistress. Swerves, hunters, and edoli who aren’t bonded, and other kings and queens, refer to kings and queens as such, out of respect. Only keepers call their king or queen master or mistress as they have a direct link to them. We aren’t slaves, but to disobey a direct order would be very hard. For example, if your master told you to cut off an arm, and you tried to disobey, the extreme pain you would feel would be worse than cutting off the arm,” Mazki said.

Kail paled a little. “Will that happen?”

Mazki shrugged. “I’ve seen it happen, but if you’re asking me if Titos will make you cut off an arm...” He paused and looked down at Titos. “No, but if he does, you do it,” Mazki said, an edge to his voice.

“You refer to him by name?” Adom asked.

Mazki and Seth both nodded. “Yes, it’s his wish to be called Titos. We do call him master on occasion, and we would continue to refer to him as such, but you two seem to be potential keepers, and he would like for his keepers to call him Titos,” Seth said as he rubbed some dry blood off of Titos’s face.

“He is different,” Adom said. He didn’t sound put off, more bemused.

“Is that bad? That he doesn’t make you guys call him master?”

“If others outside of his keepers heard, they may see him as weak, and a king that could be taken. So, when around others, refer to him as master, but in the bond you would be able to call him Titos,” Adom answered.

Adom looked back again at Titos, and it seemed like the man turned around every few minutes to look at him. Seth said nothing; he knew the draw Titos had on people.

“We’ve got half a tank, and everybody is covered in blood. You two are naked, so I don’t know how we’re getting gas,” Kail said. Everyone was

silent in the car; things like this could get complicated. “We can check the back of the truck, might be something.”

“Alright, we’ll do that in a little bit. Keep going until we get to a quarter of a tank. Adom, I’m guessing you already know where we’re headed?” Adom nodded. “Good, then you keep directing. Mazki, continue explaining things to Kail.”

*Mazki: Feeling bossy, are we?*

His phoenix rubbed against Seth’s wolf, taking the sting out of his words and making them teasing instead.

*Seth: You keep that up and I’ll show you other ways I can be bossy.*



AFTER A GOOD BATTLE, SEX WAS SOMETHING THAT MAZKI ENJOYED, AND Seth's big ass was perfect. He would get rough and calm his nerves by fucking him into oblivion, but first he needed to finish explaining things to Kail. Plus, he wanted his master to be awake for it. Titos had shown plenty of interest in wanting to watch Seth fuck Mazki into submission. He shivered. He wanted that. Fuck, he needed it now.

*Seth: Later. Finish educating our youngest here.*

Mazki sighed. He knew he was being needy, but he had an itch and it needed to be scratched soon. For him to be so old, he would have thought that he would have better control over his urges.

"Where was I?"

"The whole 'if you're ordered to cut off your arm, you do it' part," Kail said.

"Oh yeah. Keepers are the power the king or queen wields. The more keepers they can control, the more powerful they are. The most I've seen was eight at once. Then again, the queen went mad a few years after taking her eighth keeper. It's a game of balance of power."

"Why did she go mad?" Kail asked.

"Well, a lot of reasons. She was powerful, that was true, but when you add keepers, your power increases. In turn, the keeper's power starts to increase. Plus, you have a bond with each one. Even if you don't recertify the bond often, they are still pulling on your power and feeding you more at the same time."

"Huh?"

Mazki stopped and thought of another way to say it. “It's like a circle. A continuous loop of power, like a stream going into a river.”

“Okay,” Kail said.

“The master has the ability to make the stream smaller or larger. He could trickle very little power to you, or in the case of a battle, he could push tons of power into you.”

“Okay, I get that part, but what about the blood thing?”

Mazki was starting to get a headache. He'd never had to explain so much before. Edoli from a young age knew the order of things, how life worked, but the fact that Titos didn't take blood would be even more complicated.

*Seth: Do you want me to take over?*

*Mazki: No, I'm good. I just feel a little restless.*

*Seth: Hmm, okay, let me know if you need a break.*

“Blood is not necessary to live, but we do use it to gain power and create connections with others. Hunters would take the blood of the alpha for power and connection to the king or queen. Keepers take only their master's or mistress's blood, or each other's but that's usually preference and to enhance pleasure.”

*Mazki: You could bite me as hard as you can, making my neck a bloody mess as you fucked into me.*

Seth looked at him with a look that said: *if you continue to play with fire, you will get burned*, but Mazki was fire, and he so wanted to get burned. He wanted to curl his hands in Seth's dreads and hold on as the man made him his personal bitch.

*Seth: Are you okay, Mazki?*

He didn't know. He had never felt the urges so strong. It was almost like he needed to fuck to breathe. He shook himself. Something was wrong, but he didn't know what. He should be able to control himself until they were somewhere safe and could have fun. In the back of a truck, driving someplace with Titos asleep, was not the case.

He cleared his throat. “Keepers can also injure their master or mistress by taking too much power or demanding it. Although, if the master or mistress stop the flow altogether, you can die, and it would be a painful death. Your beast would die, and then you would feel hollow and die soon after. Again, I have seen some torture their keepers like that. That's the hierarchy.

“Now, let's go into the other basics. Edoli are born into houses usually; houses are territory owned by a king or queen. Each king or queen has to

have territory in order to build their power. Without power or the ability to build it, the king or queen will be taken over by a more powerful king or queen.”

Kail nodded that he was still following.

“That is the political game of their world. Keepers only have to worry about keeping their master happy and safe. The master has to be the one to negotiate with other kings and queens, and the whole money thing is a tricky system of its own. Since kings and queens are rare, there is always money set aside for them. They take a house name, and the money is theirs to do with as they please.”

“Okay, I think I got it no—”

Mazki felt it in the air in the car, moving with so much force his hair blew back. He felt a stirring in his bond as well. He turned and, sure enough, Titos was up, his eyes glowing an eerie green. At least, it wasn't his whole body like earlier that day. Mazki wasn't sure if he could take that again. It had been the worst pain of his life when he'd drunk Titos's blood while he glowed. He would do it again in a heartbeat if it was to help Titos, but he thanked the goddess it was just his eyes glowing. So far, Mazki only felt a sexual pull.

Seth was staring at Titos, not moving a muscle. Mazki felt a pull from Titos, and he opened his bond fully. Titos turned his eyes on him. It was as if he wasn't looking at Mazki, but through him. Mazki's breaths came in fast pants as he felt it, the need that Titos was feeling. He now knew why he had been having such a hard time. His master's need had been leaking into him through the bond.

“Pull over,” Adom said. Mazki thought that was smart. How much power and need their master was pushing out into the car was going to create an accident.

“Seth, he needs... Ughm.” Mazki threw his head back as Titos did something to his bond. It felt incredible, and he was about to come.

He felt the same pull again, but this time he couldn't hold it back. He came with a shout. He shivered against the seat as he came down from his high of an orgasm. He swore he'd never come so hard; his whole body felt as if it was used. He heard Seth coming next to him, and he turned and watched Seth as he moaned and shot multiple streams of cum.

“What's happening?” Kail asked.

Mazki tried to sit up to answer him, but he felt it again. “Fuck,” he moaned as Titos again pulled and played with the bond. It felt as if he was

getting fucked and fucking someone at the same time. His whole body lit up with the feeling of complete ecstasy, and he didn't even have to touch himself as he came again.

Mazki was breathing heavily when he felt Seth's hands around his bicep, pulling him. He turned his head to look, and Titos was on top of Seth, kissing him. He squinted. There was something passing from Seth into Titos as he kissed him. Mazki moved quickly and pulled at Titos, kissing him and offering up his soul for him to take. He groaned as he felt Titos pulling on him. It felt like his phoenix fire was flowing up and out of him and into Titos's mouth.

He didn't know how much time had passed, but he could feel his flames dying down. If his master wanted it all, he could have it. He felt the last spark of his flame die out. He felt empty, as if he was dying. He wondered for a second if he would come back this time, if it was possible to come back if his phoenix didn't have a flame to start. It was worth it if his master needed his flames.

*Titos: I would never want you to die.*

Mazki wanted to respond, but he couldn't figure out how.

*Titos: Thank you. I was going to end up hurting Seth badly, but you, my brave and glorious phoenix, did the right thing.*

As if Titos was talking to him in person, he felt a tear. But it was in his head. Then he felt it: the heat of a flame. His phoenix was low on the ground, and Titos stood over it with a blue flame in his hand. He fed the flame to the phoenix. At first, nothing happened, then slowly flames started to erupt on the phoenix. Mazki could feel the flames. They were hotter than they had ever been before, and the phoenix took to the sky. Its blue flames brighter than the sun.

*Mazki: It changed.*

*Titos: Yes.*

He sat up. He was back in the truck, in the backseat. Adom was staring at him funny and Kail was gawking at him. He turned to look at Seth and Titos. Seth was looking at him, surprise on his face, and Titos had a smirk on his face, but his eyes were still glowing.

"Is something on my face?" Mazki asked.

"No, you're just fucking glowing is all," Seth said.

Mazki looked at his hand, and he was glowing a blue light; the color the fire of his phoenix was.

“I'm so confused now,” Kail said. So was Mazki. He had never heard of something like this happening.

“You're a soul eater,” Adom said.

Mazki, Seth, and Titos all turned to look at him. Mazki was ready to kill him if he said the wrong thing, his phoenix itching to come out and spread its new wings.

“Yes,” Titos said.

*Titos: I can't change what I am. If he doesn't accept that, then he can go.*

*Seth: He could tell the council. We should kill him.*

*Mazki: I'm ready to burn him alive.*

*Titos: No, I will not be like them.*

*Seth: The council...*

*Titos: I have you and Mazki with me. Fuck the council. If they dare come to attack, I will set them ablaze with my phoenix and tear them apart with my manicore wolf.*

Mazki shivered. He felt the power from Titos. He was a true king if ever he saw one.

“Yes, Master,” Seth and Mazki said in unison.

“Um, what's a soul eater?” Kail asked.

Titos turned to look at him, and to Kail's credit, he didn't flinch or shy away. He simply stared, but he tentatively drew his eyes down, giving submission unconsciously.

“Honestly, most of us don't know. Besides spooky bedtime stories, our master is the first that I have ever met,” Mazki said.

“They are rumored to be evil and extremely dangerous, and it was told they stole edoli children, ate their beast souls, and left them to die,” Adom said.

Titos's body tensed, but he said nothing.

“I think that's a bunch of horse shit. In every race of people, there is something bad. Doesn't make them all evil. There will always be evil and good everywhere. The whole eating edoli children's beast is made up. The council started that years ago to help keep fear in edoli eyes of soul eaters.” Adom shrugged.

Titos's shoulders were still held tight. “Then what will you do now that you know that I'm a soul eater?”

Seth pretended to relax as if he didn't care, but Mazki could feel his anxiety of the situation through the bond, along with Titos's. Titos liked

Adom. He may not have known much about him, but he liked the quiet, gruff man. Mazki did like the whole totally-could-be-a-daddy-in-the-bedroom thing. Titos turned to look at him. Shit, he'd forgotten it was supposed to be a serious moment.

*Titos: I never thought of that scenario. You think he would put you over his knee and spank you?*

Mazki held back a moan. He sure hoped to goddess that Adom said yes to being a keeper and then yes to a spanking him.

Adom cleared his throat, gaining Titos's and Mazki's attention again. "If I say that I would leave here and go to the council?"

Mazki's hands tightened on his legs, and Seth was wound tighter than a guitar string. Titos sat back and snuggled into Seth, pulling Mazki closer to him.

"Then I would say be safe on your journey," Titos said as he started to rub his fingers through the cum that was on Seth's legs.

"You would let me leave with the information and go to the council? The would be suicide."

Titos shrugged. "I will not simply kill you because you know about me. Shit, the council will find out sooner or later. Killing you won't stop that. I refuse to be like them."

He sounded like a fucking ruler that needed to rule everyone.

*Titos: I don't want to rule everyone.*

"Would you allow me to be one of your keepers?" Adom bowed his head to Titos.

Mazki was a little surprised, but then again, if Adom was feeling the pull to Titos, then it was only a matter of getting over the fact that he would be serving a soul eater.

"I'm not of the mindset of forcing people to become my keeper. Adom, I would gladly take you as a keeper."

Titos turned to Kail. The young man sat there, staring at everyone with his mouth open and confusion written all over his face.

"You don't have to make a choice right now. You don't have all the information. You ca—"

"I would like to be your keeper. I got the gist of everything and that's good enough for me. Um, if that's cool with you. Um... Master," Kail said.

Titos smiled at him. "Just call me Titos. Both of you, call me Titos." Seth cleared his throat and Titos sighed. "Okay, call me master when you have to,

but other than that, Titos.”

Adom bowed his head again, and Kail did the same, mimicking him.



# TITOS

THEY ALL SAT THERE A MOMENT LONGER. TITOS WASN'T SURE IF HE WANTED to bond with Adom and Kail right then or later. Mazki and Seth would have to change seats with them so that they could get back on the road. It was still dark outside, but Titos wanted to be farther away from where the hunters had attacked them.

“Not to kill the mood, guys, but we need gas,” Kail said.

Titos looked to Kail, wondering if he had tattoos all over his skin. He still felt a mixture of need and hunger.

“Adom, check the back of the truck for a bag or clothes,” Seth commanded.

Titos was too busy trying to imagine all the ink that might be on Kail's skin to figure out why.

Kail fidgeted from Titos's stare, but he didn't look away. In fact, Titos could make out the outline of his dick, and he was hard. Titos licked his lips. He'd been too caught in his power, and pulling on Seth's and Mazki's bond, to have enjoyed them fully. When they came, their souls just tasted so much sweeter, and the bond grew hot, in Mazki's case, and freezing cold in Seth's. He wondered what Kail's would do.

*Mazki: If you continue to give off this much sexual tension and drown our bonds with need, I'm going to end up humping someone's leg. And I'm not the dog. I'm a bird.*

Titos laughed.

*Titos: Sorry.*

He moved back against Seth and felt the very hard dick pressing against

him. He smirked as he tentatively moved his hand to stroke Seth's dick. A door opened and closed as Adom got back into the truck, but Titos was so wrapped up in feeling the hot length in his hands he ignored it. He remembered what it felt like when it was inside him, and he wanted that again. That fullness and stretch that felt almost too much, but perfect at the same time. Seth moaned.

*Seth: Your imagination is a wondrous thing, but we don't have any lube, and I don't want to hurt you.*

Titos tightened his grip.

*Titos: There's another hole you can enter that doesn't need lube.*

Seth growled, his eyes sharp, with the wolf right behind them.

*Seth: You don't have to do that. You're my master. I will d—*

*Titos: That's right. I'm master, and I want your huge dick in my mouth. I want to taste you.*

*Seth: However you would like me.*

Titos knew he what he wanted, but he wasn't sure how to actually do it. Thanks to his sexy phoenix, an image appeared in his head. Seth and Titos moaned together. Their phoenix's imagination was much dirtier than Titos's. They moved into the position that Mazki had thought of. He turned and saw Adom and Kail, and he stopped moving. He didn't want to make them feel left out, but there was no room in the back for all of them to fit.

*Seth: When we make it to the gas station, Mazki and I will change seats with them. If you want, you can bond with them. You don't have to have sex with them, but I know you want to. And, based on the desire pouring from them, they want the same thing.*

*Titos: Will you be bothered? Will either one of you be bothered by it?*

*Mazki: No way.*

*Seth: I can feel your love for us. If you love more, I won't be jealous. I'm happy to have the love that you give me.*

Titos kissed Seth. He loved him even more for this. They moved into position, legs and arms tangling. It was a mess until they were all fixed.

“Kail, drive to the gas station. Adom, did you find anything?” Seth asked.

“Yeah, a bag. It has some clothes in it,” Adom said.

Seth nodded. “Okay, when you pull into the gas station, pull to the back so one of us can get changed and get gas.”

Kail stared at them as Mazki rubbed his hands up and down Titos's clothed ass. Seth growled and that seemed to get Kail to turn around and get

the truck back on the road.

*Seth: We only have a matter of minutes.*

*Titos: Okay, what about my cl—*

There was loud ripping sound and he jerked a little as Mazki tore his pants open. The truck swerved a little.

“Sorry,” Kail said with a shaky voice. Before Titos could reassure him that it was fine, Mazki spread his ass and attacked his hole. He moaned when Mazki’s tongue thrust inside of him. It felt so good. He opened his eyes—he hadn’t even noticed when they had closed—and looked at Seth. He opened his mouth and licked the head of Seth’s dick.

Seth moaned as Titos licked around his head. He dipped his tongue into the slit and got a bead of pre-come and a hiss from Seth. He opened his mouth wider and took Seth into his mouth. He couldn’t take all of him, so instead, he focused on the head and moved his hand to stroke the rest. Mazki switched up his rimming and made Titos moan loudly around Seth’s dick, which in turn made Seth moan. Seth’s legs were quivering, and Titos could feel he wanted to thrust into his mouth, but he held it back.

Titos wouldn’t have any of that, and he sent an image to Seth. Seth’s nostrils flared, and he stared at Titos. Titos was going to lift off and tell him to do it when Seth’s big hand cradled the back of his head and he thrust up. Titos relaxed his throat, trying to take every inch Seth gave him. His eyes watered with the stretch, but it felt good. Seth slowly thrust his hips up, fucking into Titos throat.

He was closer than ever to coming with his throat filled and Mazki giving him the rim job of his life. He shook his ass against Mazki’s face. He wanted Mazki to fuck him. He needed to be filled in both holes. Mazki’s mouth left him, and he wanted to cry out in protest.

*Mazki: Don’t worry, Titos. I’m not done with this hole.*

Titos moaned as Mazki pushed two fingers into him. It wasn’t nearly the size he wanted inside of him, but when Mazki stroked over his prostate, he saw stars. Seth picked up the pace of fucking his throat, and Mazki fingered him faster. Before he knew it, he was moaning loudly with his release. Seth pulled back as he came in Titos’s mouth. He felt hot splashes of cum hit his ass as Mazki came on him.

His legs went limp, and he fell forward. Cum coated his face and his ass, but he felt as if he was buzzing. He swallowed the mouthful of cum Seth had given him and moaned again. It tasted amazing. He’d never known cum

tasted so good. Mazki laid on top of him, and they were a tangle of limbs on the backseat. He wasn't sure how the heck it had even worked, but it was worth it.

They were breathing heavily and still trying to compose themselves when Titos noticed that they had stopped. He sat up a little. Adom was staring at them, and if it wasn't for his pupils being dilated, Titos wouldn't have known that Adom was turned on. Titos looked at Kail and the young edoli had a death grip on the steering wheel and was breathing heavily, as if he'd been in the back with them.

"Is doing that a part of making the bond with you?" Kail asked.

Titos's head tilted in question. "I would never force you to do anything sexual if you didn't want to. Sex isn't needed for the bond; we just enjoy it."

"Oh." Kail sounded disappointed.

*Titos: Why does he sound sad?*

*Mazki: Because he wants to do this with you, but he thinks you just told him that you'll only be doing it with us and won't need to do it with him. Human sensibilities probably.*

*Titos: But I want to do it with him. I just don't want to force him.*

*Seth: Just let him know that.*

They started to move, first Mazki, then Titos, and then Seth. It took some rearranging, and somebody may have gotten kicked in the stomach, but they moved until they were all sitting forward. Adom passed back the bag and handed it to Mazki.

Mazki was rubbing his stomach. "Why do I have to get dressed? I'm enjoying being naked right now."

"I believe you'll be the only one who can fit the clothes," he said as he passed Titos and Seth a bag of wipes.

Seth took them and opened the bag. He began cleaning Titos off. It was strangely intimate and a little embarrassing. Titos didn't stop him. He let Seth clean the blood and cum off of him.

"You have got to be shitting me," Mazki shouted.

Titos turned to see what the problem was. Mazki held up a black skirt that had two silver chains linked on the side. Kail stifled a laugh, and Titos turned to press his face into Seth's chest to keep from laughing out loud.

"I can feel you laughing in the bond," Mazki said.

Titos laughed out loud, a full, hearty laugh.

"I'm not wearing this." Mazki tossed the skirt at Adom, and he caught it

with one hand.

Adom squared his shoulders and stared Mazki down. “Here,” was all he said, but the way he was staring at Mazki was all dominance.

Titos felt Mazki’s bond to make sure he was okay with it, and he was strangely more than okay with it. Mazki wanted Adom to help him get dressed, and Titos wanted that too now. He wanted to watch Adom put the skirt on Mazki and then bend him over.

Titos stopped his train of thought. They would get nothing done with him thinking dirty thoughts.

*Mazki: Oh, please don’t stop. That was a beautiful image.*

*Titos: Right? I bet that skirt barely covers your ass. He would spank you for going out in public like that.*

*Mazki: Fuck yeah, he would, and I would pout. Would master make me feel better?*

Titos was getting hard and definitely wanted to play out some scenarios.

*Seth: You two are impossible.*

Titos heard Seth, but he felt the hard dick next to him. Seth liked the idea just as much as he did.

Mazki took the skirt, holding out his hand for some wipes. Seth passed him some, and he cleaned the cum off of himself. He sighed, making it seem as if he was really not liking the idea of putting on a skirt, but Titos knew that was the exact opposite. He relished in it. He slipped the skirt on and looked through the bag, pulling out a hot pink crop top.

“This is just tacky,” he muttered as he slipped it on.

The shirt was tacky but it worked. Adom looked Mazki up and down a few times before he turned around without saying anything.

“Kail, you have the least amount of blood on you, so you’ll pump the gas. When you’re done, get into the backseat. Mazki switch with Adom now,” Seth ordered.

Mazki got out and so did Adom. Titos felt pleasure coming from Mazki.

*Mazki: His hands are perfect for spankings.*

*Titos: Do I even want to know how you know that?*

*Seth: Behave yourself. How are you the oldest and act so young?*

*Mazki: Oh, don’t pretend like you wouldn’t get off on watching me get spanked.*

*Seth: Oh, I will get off, because you’ll be sucking my dick at the same time.*

*Titos: Fuck. I just came, but you two are getting me horny again.*

*Mazki: And you'll have two more keepers who are joining you not only in bond but in bed. The sex is going to be wild. I can't wait.*

Adom sat next to Titos, but he put his hands in his lap, touching very little of Titos.

*Titos: Are you guys sure Adom wants more than just the bond?*

Seth inhaled sharply.

*Seth: Yes.*

Titos would take Seth's word for it. He glanced over to Adom. The older-looking man was still, almost like a statue. Titos fidgeted. He wasn't sure what to do. He wanted to touch Adom, but he wouldn't touch if it wasn't wanted. Kail pulled up to the pump, and Mazki jumped out of the truck, swishing his hips as he walked into the gas station. It wasn't busy at all, as it was two o'clock in the morning, but there were a few truckers, and they eyed Mazki like he was a piece of meat. Titos growled, feeling Seth's wolf inside of him. He didn't want anyone looking at what was his.

Adom's warm hand squeezed down on his knee, but Adom wasn't looking at him. He was watching Mazki.

"You just borrowed my beast to growl," Seth said.

Titos turned to look at him. He had, but he had no idea how he'd done it. Kail went to pump the gas when Mazki gave the thumbs up.

"Why isn't he coming back to the car?" Even to his own ears, he sounded angry, a slight growl still present.

"I told him to get some food. We'll be on the road for few more hours." Seth rubbed his hands up and down Titos's arms.

*Seth: You're jealous.*

*Titos: I don't like that he looks so fuckable, and he just went in there and a bunch of truckers are looking at him.*

Seth put his chin on top of Titos's head, rubbing him to help relax him. There was a tap on the back window. Titos turned to see Kail waiting to get in the back seat. Seth kissed the back of his head, and he got out of the car, showing off his light brown colored ass. It was rock solid. He quickly got into the front seat before anyone could see him. Kail now sat next to him, looking almost shy. It was cute.

Titos turned and watched as Mazki walked out of the gas station with bags full of junk food. His stomach took that opportunity to remind him that he'd had a bag of chips for breakfast, and that was it.

“Good thing he got food,” Kail said.

Mazki got into the front passenger seat. He was all smiles as he passed back some treats. He’d gotten a couple of hot dogs and Titos ate them without saying anything. He was starved at that point. Seth drove the truck back onto the highway.

“How much farther this way?” Seth asked.

Adom turned to look at Seth. “For another couple of miles. Here.” He took out a phone and typed in the address he’d written down for Titos.

“Thanks.” Mazki took the phone, eating a donut.



HE WAITED PATIENTLY FOR TITOS TO FINISH EATING. HIS MASTER. HE'D NEVER thought he would find one that he was so drawn to. He'd met a few kings and queens in passing, but he'd never felt the urge to leave his life and join them. He had a pretty decent life, but once he saw Titos, with his beautiful, loose brown curls and bright green eyes, he'd been drawn to the man instantly. It helped that the keeper with him was Adom's type.

Finding out that Titos was a soul eater was a huge surprise, but not enough to dim the light that was Titos. He was kind and loving. Adom could tell by the way he looked at Seth and Mazki. He didn't treat them as if they were inferior. He treated them as if he loved them. Oh, how Adom hoped that was the case. It would be nice to be in Titos's bed and enjoy the contact, but he wanted more than just bodies against each other.

"Mmm, mmm. That was good," Titos said as he licked his fingers.

Adom was tempted to grab his fingers and lick them clean. He watched him suck his middle finger. It still had some cream on it from the Twinkie he'd eaten. He swirled his tongue around his finger, taking it into his mouth and moaning. Adom's eyes shot up to look into green eyes staring back at him. His lips were still puffy from giving Seth a blow job. Titos smiled at him, and Adom swore under his breath when his dick twitched. It should be against the law to be that sexy.

Mazki laughed, but no one had said anything out loud. Titos must have been speaking to them in their bond. His hands tightened into fists. He was jealous—not of Mazki, but of the bond he shared with Titos. He wanted the same bond.

Titos moaned again around his finger. Adom knew that he was being teased, but he hadn't grasped what type of lover Titos was yet. He didn't want to assume with him, but with Mazki, it was easy. He could see it in the older keeper's eyes. What he craved. But not Titos. His eyes were innocent, but not. It was difficult to grasp.

His best bet was to wait for Titos to make a move. They sat there as the intense moment went by. Titos had finished cleaning his fingers, and now he sat there, staring back at Adom. Adom was surprised that Kail hadn't said something. The guy had a knack for saying things at odd times or asking questions. But no, he sat in the seat next to Titos, twirling his thumbs.

Out the corner of his eye, he saw Mazki's head tilt slightly, as if trying to tell him something. He watched to see if it happened again. Just when he started to think Mazki had just been stretching his neck, he did it again with a little more emphasis. Oh, he was supposed to make the first move. He just assumed the king would, since he was in charge.

Adom did what he knew. If Titos didn't like it, then, gods help him, he would be so pissed with himself. And Seth would chew his leg off. He tilted Titos's face up as he stroked his thumb over his soft, plump lips, and Titos seemed to sigh in relief. He tentatively stuck his tongue out and licked the pad of Adom's thumb. Adom pushed more firmly on Titos's lips, and his mouth opened. Adom pushed his thumb in and started to rub it against Titos's tongue, and he moaned. The vibration from the moan would feel even better on Adom's dick, but they didn't have the space. Kail wasn't as small as Mazki, or even Titos's size.

Titos's eyes stared into his. He felt the need to submit, but at the same time, he had the urge to keep looking into his eyes. His instincts won, but he still glanced indirectly at Titos's eyes. Adom pulled his thumb out, and it made a popping sound. Titos looked dazed, as if Adom had him on the edge of coming. He couldn't hold back the urge any longer, and he pulled Titos onto his lap. Titos's head hit the truck ceiling.

"Ouch," Titos said as he rubbed his head.

Seth growled, and Adom moved over to make eye contact with his soon-to-be alpha. He bowed his head respectfully. He wouldn't let it happen again. He'd let his haste get the best of him. Titos laughed, but he soon settled down. His jeans had been torn, but only in the back. Adom wanted to tear the dingy fabric off of Titos. He deserved only the finest of silk against his skin.

Instead, Adom ran his hands over the globes of Titos's tight ass. His skin

was smooth and fit perfectly in Adom's hands. There was a moan, but it wasn't clear if it was his own or Titos, but he offered his lips to Titos. He'd always been a quiet person, only speaking when it was necessary, and it was the same in the bedroom. But under Titos, his soon-to-be master, it was impossible. The soft lips he wanted to kiss so badly were on him. It was glorious, and not enough at the same time. He wanted to feel what Titos felt when he kissed him. He wanted to feel Titos in his mind, touching him in ways that was only possible for his master.

"You have so much control, even more than Seth. I feel such a strong urge to break it. I want to feel you lose it," Titos confessed against his lips.

Gods, his master wanted to break his control, and he had no idea how close he was to doing just that. His hips moved, and Adom barely contained himself from losing that control. The only thing that stopped him was that he had not gotten permission to do more than touch. The back of the truck was spacious, but not a place he wanted to take his master for the first time.

He started to kiss Titos again and flicked his tongue inside of Titos's mouth. He heard the delicious moan again. He did it over and over as he squeezed the round globes in his hands. He was drinking all of Titos's pleased moans. He'd never felt intoxicated off of someone's moans. It was glorious, as well as terrifying. He'd never wanted something so bad that he felt he would do anything to have Titos. Anything. He groaned when Titos's teeth bit into his tongue. There were no fangs, but it still felt good the way he bit down. Adom's fangs descended on their own.

Titos sat back a little and looked at the fangs. He was about to force them to retract, but Titos licked one. Adom's head went back as he moaned. His fangs had always been sensitive, but just a lick brought him so much pleasure. If he had been standing, he would've fallen to his knees.

"Holy fuck, you have fangs," Kail said.

Adom and Titos turned to look at him. "You don't have them?" Titos asked.

Kail should have fangs, but then again, Adom wasn't sure. The young edoli could use a great amount of his power, and partially shift, without being bonded. He was a unique case. If the council had known about him, he would either be killed as a threat or used as the ultimate tool.

Adom shivered just thinking about the council. He was going to be a keeper to a soul eater. He would be an enemy to the council. As much as he feared that, he feared not being with Titos more.

“No, at least none have ever come out.” Kail sounded awed and scared at the same time. He would probably sound like that for a while until he got used to the whole edoli/blood/people trying to kill them/changing into creatures/sex thing. Adom was impressed with the young man so far. He’d been taking everything in stride. Most people who grew up surrounded by humans and living a human life would jump ship as soon as they heard half the shit Kail had learned. It wasn’t everything, but a good enough crash course as any.

Titos looked at Kail and shrugged. “If you have them, okay, but if you don’t, it’s not a big deal. I don’t have fangs,” Titos said.

They watched Kail intently, and he eventually nodded and seemed to relax a little. Adom didn’t know what his life had been like, but he figured there was a lot of not being fully accepted or something along those lines. Kail had been hurt before, that was clear to see, but Adom had no idea how much. He watched how Titos watched Kail, and knew that if anyone could help heal Kail, it would be Titos. Their master was kind and powerful.

Adom waited until Titos turned to look back at him. He thought the heat of the moment might have been lost, but when Titos looked back at him, his pupils were still dilated. He instantly knew that wasn’t the case at all. Titos went back to his fangs, licking and sucking on each.

It drove Adom insane.

He groaned when Titos nicked his tongue on one of his sharp fangs and a drop of blood hit his tongue. It was magnificent. Not even the finest wine could compare. He sucked on Titos’s tongue, but there wasn’t enough blood. He sucked as hard as he could to get as much as he could.

He heard loud groans and moans. He opened his eyes to realize that they were his own.

“I agree,” Titos said out loud, once Adom had let go of his tongue.

“Agree to what?” Fuck, he sounded breathless, as if he was a teenager. He was incredibly hard.

Titos snickered. Adom knew that it wasn’t anything said out loud, but in their bond. Mazki’s smiling face was turned, looking at him.

“You think his blood is bringing you pleasure? Just wait till he bonds you. Blood won’t compare to what he does with your soul.” Mazki’s devilish smile was on his face, and he seemed to enjoy watching them.

Adom couldn’t wait. He’d seen how Seth and Mazki had reacted. Titos hadn’t bit them, but they’d come so hard the car had filled with the smell of

release and pure pleasure. But not one drop of Titos's, Mazki's, or Seth's blood had been shed.

Adom had been to a house where a queen had brought her keepers to pleasure, and herself. It had been a show, but there was blood everywhere. That's how edoli built power and bonds, but things would be different with a soul eater master. Adom wondered if Seth and Mazki even took blood anymore, if it was necessary. He would have to ask later.

"That didn't answer me about what he agreed with. And since I know it was you who suggested something, you need to tell me," Titos said.

Mazki's eyes glinted with mischief. "Hmm. I could tell you, but then again, I won't."

Before he thought better of it, Adom said, "You need a good spanking across your ass, boy."

Mazki's eyes widened. He licked his lips and smiled at Adom. Titos moaned above him, and he looked back at his soon-to-be master.

"Adom, stop playing into their game, or I will end up crashing this truck. The damn images are distracting," Seth growled.

Adom lifted an eyebrow at Titos, so they could all share a bond. Seth and Mazki must have shared blood and linked in order to communicate.

"I don't mean to interrupt or anything, but once bonded, you guys can see in each other's heads?" Kail asked.

Mazki was the one to speak. "Yes and no. Titos, our master, can see in our heads clearly. The rest of us are linked, but we can... Hmm, close doors? I guess that's how you can explain it." Mazki's face scrunched, trying to find a way to describe it.

Adom was about to tell Kail he doesn't have to worry, that if he doesn't want the others to be in his head, he doesn't need to take their blood.

"Oh, so if Seth has, like, some deep, dark secret, like he eats oranges whole with the peel on, and he didn't want me to know, he only needs to think of a door or a chest and lock it away. I would never know. Only Titos would be able to force his way in."

"But I would never do that. If there is ever anything you don't want me to know, just do that scenario. I won't ever force my way into your mind. That goes for everyone. It's your choice to be open with me. I don't want to hurt any of you," Titos said as he looked around the truck.

Mazki smiled and Seth nodded. Adom nodded too. He would be open with Titos; he wouldn't hide anything. He wanted his master's full trust and

hiding anything would put up walls, and he wouldn't do that. Titos looked at Kail, the only person who hadn't said nothing yet. Adom could feel the tension rolling off of his body.

"Okay, that's good. I just need a minute to think about everything. You two go ahead. I won't interrupt again."

"You ask any questions you want. I don't want you feeling like we're leaving you ignorant to make the wrong decision. I want you to be sure this is what you want," Titos said.

Adom's heart beat hard listening to Titos. He wanted Kail to make the best choice for himself. Titos wasn't being selfish; most people in his position would have bonded Kail as soon as possible. Giving him very little information in order to get a hold of his power as quickly as possible. Adom hadn't known it was possible to fall in love with someone you'd only spent a matter of hours with, but his heart ached for the bond so that he could feel Titos. He hadn't even been bonded yet, and he was already falling for his soon-to-be master. He'd heard that bonds could make an edoli's emotions more intense, but they weren't forced to love their master or mistress.

Kail nodded but turned to look out the window. Titos watched him for another second before he turned back to Adom. Adom didn't want to come off as impatient, but he was ready to be bonded already. Titos smiled at him as if he knew what Adom was thinking.

Titos started to kiss him again, avoiding Adom's fangs. He pulled back slightly, their lips still touching. "I need you to retract them for now."

Adom retracted his fangs back so fast it hurt, jarring his mouth. A worried look came over Titos's face, and Adom felt stupid for moving so fast that he'd worried Titos. Titos started to kiss him again, this time much more demanding, as if he demanded Adom's very soul. Adom let Titos have complete control of his mouth. He would give anything to Titos.

He felt wind brush against him. When he opened his eyes, he was no longer in the car. He knew he was still in the car but not mentally. The stars were gorgeous, the moon shone brightly, and the snow on the ground crunched. He turned his eyes to see someone sitting under a tree. He crouched low, moving down from his hill.

His eyes saw everything: the stranger was sitting under the tree, rolling snow in his hands. He moved closer to the stranger. He would take flight if need be, but he could kill the stranger if he dared attack. Just as he got closer to the stranger, the stranger sent the snow flying at him, whooping and

jumping. Adom flapped the wings on his back in warning at the stranger. But again, the stranger picked up more snow and tossed it at him. He blocked it with his wings. He heard laughter, such a sweet laugh, that he felt no ill intent from the stranger.

The stranger said nothing, but he patted the snow next to him as if to invite him to go sit. He wasn't sure what the stranger had planned, but he looked the stranger over. He had no weapons and showed no signs of attacking him. He had thrown snow at him, but it was snow. The light and fluffy snow was something he was used to.

He moved closer, little by little, his paws crunching on the snowy ground. The stranger watched him, but he didn't pick up any more snow. He came up to the strange but saw no fear in his face. His owl eyes could pick up anything, but the stranger sat perfectly still. When the stranger's hand moved, he was ready to attack, but it just brushed the feathers and fur on his neck. The stranger started to move, and Adom almost pulled back, but the stranger put his face into the feathered fur and breathed deeply. It felt right; it felt like home.

He recognized the stranger. He was no longer a stranger but his master. His master was rubbing his face into his feathered fur. He stretched his neck to give his master more access. His master pulled back and smiled at him, and Adom felt the wind pick up. His feathered fur rustled with it, but not even a hair on his master's head moved. The wind felt as if it wrapped around him, and his master pushed him a little. He didn't want to leave his master, but he felt the winds call to fly. He glanced over once more before taking flight. The wind grazed under his wings, and they started to grow, doubling in size. His cat body grew as well to match his wings. His owl griffin grew twice its size, and his claws grew so long and sharp he couldn't retract them fully into his paws.

All too soon, Adom was opening his eyes, and he was back in the truck, Titos over him, his eyes glowing an eerie green. It had felt so strange being in his beast, and not knowing who he or Titos was, but now he knew. Titos was saying something to him, but he couldn't hear anything. He was just watching those beautiful lips move up and down as Titos tried to talk to him.

A knife appeared in Titos's hand and he cut his wrist, Adom watching in fascination. Titos held his bleeding wrist over Adom's mouth. "“Drink of my blood, so that you may be bonded to me for eternity.” The first few drops of the hot blood made him move. He grabbed Titos's arm and started to suck the

blood from his bleeding wrist.

It was even better than before, but all too quickly, he could tell Titos was losing too much blood. His eyes starting to droop. Adom needed to remember that Titos wasn't a regular edoli, so his blood replenishment was different. Adom reluctantly closed the wound and released Titos's wrist.

His body felt shock wave after wave, and he could feel the power that now filled his body. He came from a strong owl griffon blood line and had always felt the power in him, but what he was feeling was beyond his imagination. He knew if any king or queen took him he would have power, great power, but with his master's power, he 'd surpassed any of them. The council wouldn't know what hit them if they attacked his master. He was even more powerful than Adom had thought possible.

*Mazki: Yes, and still growing in power. Adding you has increased his power. We can feel it.*

Adom looked at Mazki, surprised to hear his voice in his head.

*Adom: I can hear you, but I haven't taken your blood.*

*Seth: Our master is powerful. Once bonded, he creates links between his keepers.*

*Adom: I've never heard of that happening.*

*Mazki: That's because it uses a lot of energy and power, but Titos is doing it subconsciously. He doesn't have to concentrate to connect us. He simply does it without a second thought.*

*Adom: He is phenomenal.*

*Seth: Yes, he is. That is why he is master.*

*Titos: Stop calling me master so much. You can say Titos.*

*Adom: Why don't you like your title? It is something of an honor.*

*Titos: Honor for who? I don't want that type of relationship with my keepers. I'm new to all of this and still feeling my way around. I may have grown up with edolis, but I wasn't considered king or queen lineage. I would like to have a good relationship with my keepers.*

Adom felt the anger and sadness in the bond when Titos had said he grew up with edolis, and he wondered what that was about. He felt Mazki touch his bond.

*Mazki: We'll discuss it later. I don't want him feeling sad right now. He deserves to feel happiness.*

Adom nodded. Titos was still on top of him, breathing heavily, but seemingly in no hurry to move off of him. He wrapped his arms around his

master, pleased that he got to hold him for a while longer.

*Titos: Even in your thoughts, call me Titos, please.*

*Adom: If that is what you wish, then I will.*

*Titos: You gave me a number. When am I supposed to call it?*

*Adom: Probably best to call them now.*

Adom glanced over to Kail. He was still staring out the window with a look of concentration on his face.

*Adom: If you're going to bond Kail, then after that.*

*Titos: I want to bond with him, but I don't want to do it if he isn't sure.*

*Adom: Understood. Resentment and hatred could lead to betrayal, and that would be the worst.*

*Mazki: He isn't thinking of it in that way.*

*Seth: Titos doesn't make calculated moves like that with us. He chooses to bond with us, because his heart wants it. He doesn't want to force Kail, because he wants his love.*

Adom had realized that Mazki and Seth cared deeply for Titos—and Titos for them—but he hadn't known that they all loved him.

Mazki laughed in the bond.

*Mazki: Of course, we love him. It's impossible not to. We can feel your love for him too.*

Adom smiled, because yeah, he did love Titos. His smile dimmed. Did Titos feel the same way? Adom didn't want to go search in the bond. He knew a bond could work two ways, but he wasn't sure if he should.

*Titos: Go ahead. I will not hide anything from my keepers.*

Adom took a breath and moved within the bond. There. He felt it. The love and adoration from Titos. He not only loved Seth and Mazki, but him as well. He hugged Titos tighter against his body. What had he done in life to deserve such a perfect master?



# TITOS

HE FELT STRONG BUT TIRED ALL AT ONCE. TAKING A BOND GAVE HIM ENERGY, but it was the last day. He was usually capable of moving around, but he still felt tired most of the day. Although he'd only recently taken Seth and Mazki, it was always a trip. Each beast seemed to have their own habitat within his keepers' souls. It was always beautiful and unique to see.

The only thing Titos didn't like was that he couldn't talk. He could only feel and observe and coax the beast to accept him. But once they did, it was wonderful. It made his soul sing and body ache with power. Adding Adom was a power rush, and he couldn't believe he had a griffon as one of his keepers. They weren't as rare as phoenixes, but the griffon clans were secretive and the most difficult to get to be a keeper.

He still rested on top of Adom as Seth drove, but he needed to make a phone call. He wasn't sure to who, but he knew he still needed to do it. Adom had said to make it soon or after he bonded with Kail. Only problem was, he didn't know if Kail wanted that. He didn't want to ask him for fear of being rejected, or putting Kail on the spot and rushing him to make a decision he wasn't ready to make.

*Seth: I know you want to wait for him, but how are we to trust him? He's maybe working for the council for all we know.*

Titos didn't believe that for a second, but he knew Seth was right in a way. Without a bond, Titos wouldn't know what Kail was thinking or if he was a spy.

*Titos: For now, we wait until he says otherwise.*

*Seth: As you wish.*

Titos could feel that Seth wasn't happy with him, but he just couldn't find it in himself to force Kail's hand. If it came back to bite him in the ass, he would take care of it the best way he could. He started to sit up. The heat from Adom's body felt good, but it was lulling him to sleep. He contemplated staying on Adom's lap as he made the call or sitting back between Kail and Adom. He blew out a breath. He knew what he really wanted to do. Even if Kail wasn't bonded yet, he still wanted to touch him. He slid off Adom's lap and sat in the middle.

Kail turned when Titos brushed up against his leg. He could have avoided it, but he honestly just wanted to touch Kail. Kail didn't pull his leg away, looking at Titos with tired eyes. Some of his dark brown hair had fallen from his bun, and Titos moved before he thought better of it. He tucked the few strands that were in Kail's face behind his ear. Kail's breath hitched but he said nothing. He didn't move away, but he didn't move closer either.

"Seth, can I use the phone real quick?" Titos asked.

Mazki handed the phone to the back. "We've got a hundred and six miles left on the road, so you've got time," Mazki said.

Titos took the phone and held it in his hands. He checked his pockets for the piece of paper but couldn't find it. Mazki's hand appeared in front of his face, holding the paper he was looking for. He calmed his panic and thanked Mazki. He'd never seen the number before, and he wasn't even sure what he should say.

"Your mother had a lot of money and information hidden away. I had to decode a lot. It wasn't advanced, but I don't think it was meant to be. It was like she hid it, but didn't hide it so far that you wouldn't be able to access it," Adom said.

"Do you know who this number belongs to?"

Adom shook his head, a sad look coming over his face. He felt bad for not getting that information for him, so Titos moved and kissed him on the cheek. He blushed, but he sat back down and dialed the number. On the third ring, there was a click.

"Hello. Thank you for calling Mirror and Love Retreat, Ginger speaking. How can I help you?" a cheerful voice said.

Titos took a deep breath. He wasn't sure what he was supposed to say or if Ginger was the one he was supposed to talk to.

"Hello? Is anyone there?" Ginger asked.

Titos was starting to panic. What was he supposed to say? Who in the hell

was Ginger?

“Hello? Darling, I can hear you breathing, and it sounds like a panic attack. Take deep, calming breaths, and put your head between your legs.”

Those were helpful suggestions, but he had no way of doing that. He was in a damn car with no air! He felt hands on him and the calming pressure of his three fantastic men. He even felt Kail’s hands rubbing his leg.

He took a deep breath. “Yes, Navari Es Glint left this number for me to call.” Titos had sounded rushed, but he hoped Ginger had heard him.

It went quiet on the other end, and, for a second, Titos thought he’d lost the connection. Then Ginger’s voice came through.

It was still cheerful, but it had lost the extra bounce that she’d had a second ago. “Who am I speaking to?”

Titos looked around the truck. Seth was focused on the road, but he sent his support through the bond. Mazki’s blue eyes were staring at him with support. Adom nodded. He turned to Kail, and Kail shrugged.

“Titos, her son.”

It went quiet again, but only for a second. Then there was shriek, and Titos had to jerk the phone away from his ear.

“Um, hello?”

“You have no idea how long we’ve looked for you! This is fantastic.”

He sat up straight. Who had been looking for him?

“Oh my goddess, this is great. Armest will be pleased that you’ve been found. We’ve been looking for you for the past four years,” Ginger said. It sounded as if she was moving a bunch of things around.

“Why have you been looking for me?”

“It was your mother's wish for you to stay hidden until your twentieth birthday. We went to look for you at that time, but your aunt and the queen of the house said you were dead. Died in a hunting accident. Well, of course, we didn’t believe that horse crap, so we’ve been searching for you. What are the odds you found us? Where are you now?”

Titos was stunned that his aunt had told them he was dead, but he couldn’t concentrate on the betrayal. He had known no one liked him, but if they wanted to get rid of him, they could have just sent him off.

“Seth, where are we?”

“We just passed the welcome sign to Washington state.”

Ginger had heard Seth. “Oh my goddess, you’re so close. I need to inform Armest that you’re coming, and I still need to get things ready. I need to

make sure the house is cleaned and stocked with food.” Ginger was going on and on, but Titos was still a little lost.

“I have an address. Should I go there or...?”

“What's the address?”

Titos rattled it off.

*Titos: Should we trust this?*

*Seth: I'm not sure.*

*Adom: Did your mother or aunt ever mention the company before?*

*Titos: My mother died when I was five, and my aunt wasn't exactly talkative with me.*

*Mazki: I say we give it a try, and if anyone tries to do anything, we burn, tear, and slice them apart.*

“Yes, sir. That address leads to your house and the private land that you now own.”

Titos pulled the phone away from his ear. He couldn't have heard right. “I own a house?”

“Yes, you're king of all of Washington and part of Idaho and Oregon.”

Titos sat back, his jaw slack. He had territory. He had expected... Well, honestly, he hadn't expected anything. He'd only recently found out that he was a king. He didn't think he'd have all of that. He'd just gotten four keepers—he counted Kail even if he wasn't bonded yet. Territory was more than he thought possible.

“How?”

“Huh?” Ginger asked.

“How is this possible?” Titos asked.

“Oh, well, your father proclaimed this territory... I want to say about a five hundred years ago. When he died, it normally would have gone to the next in line of succession, but your mother wished for us to wait until you were twenty. So, it's just been sitting here, waiting for you. Luckily, no other kings or queens noticed that there was unclaimed territory. But I'm pretty sure that would be Armest's doing. He has many ways.”

“Who's my father?”

Ginger was silent for a moment. “I'm sorry. But I'm not allowed to say. Please forgive me, king.” Ginger sounded genuinely sorry.

Titos knew it would have been too easy if he'd gotten everything and knew all the information. He sighed. “It's fine.” He pulled the phone away from his ear again and checked how far they were. “We're four hours away.”

He was about to hang the phone up, wanting to rest, when Ginger spoke again.

“Okay, great. I’ll inform everyone. Um, if you don’t mind me asking, how many keepers will you be bringing with you?”

*Titos: Should I tell her how many?*

*Seth: If you want. Like Mazki said, if they think they can attack you, we’ll be there to stop them.*

Titos glanced at Kail. He was watching Titos but said nothing, just silently studying him. “Four,” he informed her.

“Okay, fantastic. I’ll make sure to have their rooms cleaned and ready and to have fresh food.”

Separate rooms wasn’t something he wanted, but if the guys wanted to sleep in their own beds, he wouldn’t stop them. But he liked how it felt to sleep between Seth and Mazki.

*Mazki: I don’t need a room. I like sleeping with you.*

*Seth: I don’t want a different room either. Sleeping with you is much more comfortable.*

*Adom: I’ll join you in bed.*

Titos smiled. All three of his keepers wanted to stay in one room with him. He again looked over at Kail. He still wasn’t sure about his fourth. He put the phone on mute, since he couldn’t talk to Kail through a bond.

“The choice is yours: would you like to have your own room or to sleep in the room with us?”

Kail looked around the car. He turned back to Titos. “If it’s okay with you, I’d like my own room. At least, until I can figure everything out.”

Titos nodded. He was sad, but he understood. He unmuted the phone. “Only one other room needs to be prepared. Three of my keepers will be sleeping in my room.”

Ginger didn’t miss a beat. “Okay. I’ll get another California king bed ordered to be placed in the room. I’ll check to see if anyone is willing to make a frame in the next few hours.” Titos could hear Ginger already typing away on her computer. “Is there any other special orders you need, my king?”

Titos didn’t stop her from calling him king, but he wasn’t sure if he could trust her just yet. He checked with the guys and everyone was good.

“No, that will be all,” Titos said.

“Again, I’m so happy to have you coming to your territory. See you soon, King Titos,” Ginger said.

He hung the phone up and gave it back to Seth for directions. He felt drained and all he had done was talk on the phone.

*Mazki: You have done more than that. Plus, you have been on an emotional rollercoaster for a few days.*

*Titos: Yes, I guess, but I should be tougher.*

*Seth: Leave the toughness to us. You're fine. You should rest. It's going to be a few hours.*

Titos sighed. Seth was right; he needed to rest, especially if they had to defend themselves against an attack. He laid his head against the seat. He moved a little, trying to get comfortable, but his mind kept racing. He couldn't get comfortable either. Every time he tried to drift off, his neck would ache, or his fingers would go numb, or his leg would bounce. The car was silent, so it wasn't as if it was too much noise around him. He just couldn't rest. Kail's arm went up and he tugged Titos into him.

Titos was about to ask what was wrong, but Kail looked out the window and started to run his fingers through his hair. It was soothing. Titos's head rested in the crook of Kail's shoulder. With the way the fingers were combing through his hair, Titos was soon lulled to sleep.

TITOS WOKE WHEN HE FELT THE TRUCK STOP MOVING. HE LIFTED HIS HEAD from Kail's lap. He must have moved when he was asleep. He looked around and saw it was bright outside. He squinted, the brightness hurting his eyes. He stretched with the little room he had.

"Are we here?"

"Yes. There are a few people waiting outside the gate," Seth said.

Titos looked at the gate, and there were, in fact, people there. There was a lady with an hourglass figure, her green hair in an updo, and next to her was an older gentleman with a tailored suit on.

Titos looked past the gate and there was a large house. It was brick with plenty of windows. There were trees all over the yard, but most had lost their leaves due to fall. But he knew it would be beautiful come winter and then summer. He was ready to exit and see his new house.

Kail cleared his throat, and Titos turned to look at him. "We meeting these people while they're naked and your ass is hanging out?"

Titos had forgotten that the back part of his pants was gone, and they didn't have any other clothes.

"I'm not naked anymore," Mazki said.

"Right. One naked, the other dressed like a slutty teen," Kail corrected.

"Am I a sexy, slutty teen?"

Kail leveled his eyes at Mazki. "You would be sexier with pigtails."

Titos nearly swallowed his tongue. He hadn't expected that reply from Kail. Apparently, neither did Mazki, because he was just as speechless.

Seth laughed. "So, what would you like to do?"

Titos saw no other way and shrugged. "I guess we go out like this and meet them. If they attack, Seth is already naked and ready to shift."

"Fine, but can you at least put this on? Tie it around your waist or something." Kail handed Titos his shirt.

Titos grabbed and tied the loose shirt around his waist so that his ass was covered. He looked at Kail and started to salivate. Kail was tattooed all over his torso. One, along his ribs, in big letters said *the beautiful lie*. It was surrounded by roses. Kail had a thing for roses apparently. Titos itched to touch him and explore all of his tattoos. Kail smiled at him, such a sweet smile. Titos cleared his throat and turned to Adom so that they could get out of the car.

"Same formation. No one touches Titos, and refer to him as master in front of these people. We don't know for sure if they are friend or foe," Seth said.

He could have said it in the bond, but Kail needed to hear it as well. Everyone nodded and got out the car. Instantly, it was the same formation: Mazki in front of him, Adom to his left, Kail to his right, and Seth had his back. No one was getting to him without his permission.

"Welcome, King Titos. I'm Armest, and you spoke with Ginger on the phone. I'll be the one to take care of anything you need." Armest looked them all up and down, but there was no hostility.

Titos's mark didn't burn or even feel as if it was going to. He sighed in relief.

*Seth: Is everything okay?*

*Titos: He means us no harm. Well, he doesn't plan to kill me or want me dead.*

*Adom: How do you know that for sure?*

*Titos: The marking on my back will burn when someone means me harm,*

*especially death.*

“The house has been cleaned and is ready for you.” Armest was bowing. Ginger curtsied next to him. Titos wanted to roll his eyes. He hadn’t been treated like that his whole life, so he didn’t expect it to happen now. But he didn’t stop them.

They opened the gate, and Titos was filled with excitement to look inside the house. He had a home of his own. They walked through the French doors, and, instantly, Titos knew it was his. There was a large sitting area with chairs that looked comfortable. They moved farther in and passed a large living room with two sectionals, a dining room, and a large kitchen. He stood in the back of the house, in front of a wall that was made up of all glass. He could see that there were trees and a small pond with fish in the backyard.

*Seth: Is it to your liking?*

*Titos: Yes. It’s strange... I’ve never felt like I belonged anywhere before, but being here, it almost feels like this is where I’m supposed to be. It also helps that you guys are here.*

Seth hugged him, and Titos relaxed into it.

“Is everything to your liking, your highness?” Ginger asked.

“Yes,” Titos said. He hadn’t checked the rooms yet, but everything seemed good, better than what he’d been used to.

“Good. We have the servants for you to meet and hunters that have been in this territory for a few years. They will need to pledge loyalty to you or leave. There is ap—” Armest started.

“We’ll do that in two days. Hold off on anything else. As for servants, we can manage the house for now. We’ll meet and talk with everyone in a few days,” Seth said. He puffed out his chest, daring Armest to challenge him on the subject.

Titos was so happy to have Seth. He was still tired, sleeping in the car wasn’t real rest and he needed time to digest everything.

“Of course. You must be tired from your travels. Ginger will leave the keys to the car and the gate on the table.”

“We’ll need clothes,” Mazki said.

“Yes, I’ll have someone retrieve a few items. They won’t be perfect fits, but I can guess your sizes. I’ll have Ginger drop them off so that you don’t have any new faces yet.” He bowed and left.

Ginger came from the other side of the house. “I’ll be out of your hair shortly. I just wanted to give this to you.” In her hand was a necklace.

Titos accepted it, unsure of what to do with it. It was beautiful with red rubies and black diamonds surrounding each ruby.

“Your mother wished for you to have it. If you fellas need anything, call me anytime. I left my number with all the keys. And welcome, King Titos. It’s good to have you here.”

Ginger left. Titos held the necklace in his hand, turning it around.

“Ready for a shower? I talked to Ginger and she said it could fit ten,” Mazki said as he waggled his eyebrows.

They all laughed and started to move. Titos looked over to Kail. He was moving, but Titos wasn’t sure if he wanted to join. Just as he was about to ask, Kail smiled at him.

“I’ll race you, Mazki.” Kail took off toward the stairs, taking them two at a time. Mazki raced right behind him.

“Are we sure Mazki is the oldest?” Titos questioned.

*Mazki: Hurry up, guys. Titos, you have to see this. Kail is naked and there are even more tattoos. Damn, our bad boy is sexy with water dripping down his body. Fucking gods, he just let his hair out of his bun, and it's all the way down his back.*

Titos wanted to see that very badly, and apparently, so did Adom and Seth, because they all started to run. Titos couldn’t believe he was so lucky to have found them. To have four wonderful guys and now a home. He would kill anyone who dared to try to take this from him.

Now that he had it, he would never let it go.

The End... until next time.

## GLOSSARY

What the heck is that? — Explanation page

***HOUSES:*** THE KING'S/QUEEN'S TERRITORY. THE SIZE OF THE HOUSE IS dependent on how powerful the king/queen is and how many edoli there are to help protect it.

***SOUL EATER:*** NOT A LOT OF INFORMATION IS CURRENTLY KNOWN. THEY WERE once feared among the edoli as they were known to kill edoli by eating their beasts/souls.

***EDOLI:*** THEY ARE SUPER HUMANS BORN OF GODS AND GODDESSES. THEY drink blood to bond with others, create connections, and share power. Their abilities range from shapeshifting, use of elements, use of magical items, etc.

RANKS WITHIN THE EDOLI:

- Kings/Queens AKA master/mistress: They are considered the most powerful. By themselves, they are weak, but they call other edoli to them. They bring out the power in edoli, and the stronger the king/queen, the more powerful the edoli who bond with them.

Master/mistress is a title that kings/queens are referred to by the edoli who bond to them. They are king/queen to others.

- Keepers or potential keeper: Potential keepers are seen with great power and usually show signs of having a beast or great magic. Once bonded to a king/queen, the power will show itself. That is when they become keepers. Keepers are edoli who are the first to bond to a king/queen. They are also the power base. Keepers are to protect their king/queens with their lives for the gift of power. Most keepers are shifters or powerful element users. It is best that a king/queen choose their keepers wisely; too many can drive them mad and too few can be the death of them.
- Alpha: They are second to the king/queen. They hold power over the other keepers and are also the most powerful keeper the king/queen has. The position can be taken or changed, but it is unwise. Having a trusted alpha is always in the best interest of the king/queen.

## OTHERS

- Hunters: They are considered the weakest of the edoli but are vast in numbers. Since many edoli end up breeding with humans, there are a lot more edoli who don't possess enough power to become keepers.
- Magic users: Hunters who possess enough strength and power to wield a magical item.
- Huntj: Trained killers and hunters. Sometimes referred to as trackers. Once they are determined not to be a potential keeper, they are then put through training in order to protect the king/queen's territory. Everyone must help the king/queen keep the territory safe.
- Swerves: The lowest rank amongst edoli and lean more toward human-like. They are the subjects within the house. They tend to work and be amongst humans. Some are servants who work within the king's/queen's home.

***MAGICAL ITEMS:*** EDOLI HAVE FOUND MAGIC FROM THE GODS AND GODDESS, but it was so great they diluted it by placing it in inanimate objects.

Brea Alepou realized her dream was to write and tell stories after spending five years in college getting a degree. She has since been writing and letting her imagination free. She thought she would only write contemporary at first but soon found her love for making worlds. So now she rights it all. With her wild imagination, expect lots of different stories, from fairies ruling, to vampires killing everyone, to the sweet loving between two men, passion between two fierce women, or the love of multiple partners. She believes that everyone deserves love even if not all of her characters get it right away. Love is passionate, hot, needy, confusing, painful, draining, fulfilling, and all-consuming.  
(pnr, contemporary, fantasy, erotica, romance, shifter mpreg, & rh)  
There will be a book for everyone.

Insanity is Contagious.  
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