

EVEN | THE MOTTO

Aires

Indy, Henry, and I spent the rest of our night exploring the area around our hotel and sampling the food and drink. My sister was like a child at Christmas, so amazed by everything she saw and smelled; it was like she was seeing the world for the very first time.

I'd been to London more than a few times in my travels, but because it was also Henry's first time here, I went along with all of the touristy things they wanted to do and experience. When we boarded a double-decker bus, and Indy immediately ran to the top, I couldn't help but laugh; she was having the time of her life.

"This place is incredible. The exchange rate is killing my wallet, but I don't know if I really care all that much. So, tell me, what's it like to be a member of a wolf pack? Did you have to do some crazy kinky initiation?" she asked.

"Kinky? Why would it be kinky?" I replied.

"I don't know; I just heard wolves are super s****, so it makes sense to me."

"You worked in a brothel where vampires drank your blood then had crazy orgies; you sure you want to call wolves s****?" Henry countered.

"Oh, come on! You know what I mean. I'm not saying that vampires don't appreciate a good bit of kink regularly because we do; I'm just saying I know wolves do too. So, what was it?" Indy asked.

"The alpha cut his hand, then mine, and we shook," I simply answered.

"That's code for screwing, right? It has to be."

"No. It's code for 'Xander opened his hand and passed the pack link to me, through our blood.' We were fully clothed, and his wife was right there to witness it all, as was Mi Amor. There was no screwing, well not between me and the alpha wolfy."

"Hmm. That wasn't what I expected. What's the benefit of being in the pack? I've always wondered."

"Family. A pack shares an undeniable bond that's forever. There is acceptance, understanding, and respect. Plus the peace of mind in knowing that no matter what, you're safe because your family will go to war for you whenever, wherever," Henry said.

"Nice. I've never had that before, but I hope to build it with you guys. That's my new goal in life. That and finding a partner."

"A s*x partner or life partner?" I asked.

"Is there a difference?"

"Absolutely. When I met Henry, I was only looking for s*x. I hadn't had any, at least not good s*x, in months, and I wanted that release. That was all I wanted, but that night he gave me so much more. He changed every plan I'd made for my life; I had an idea of what I wanted to do and be, and he made me see that I was missing something.

I would never have chosen a life with a good guy; I was wild and carefree and had no desire to become domesticated. And I fought it in my mind, but my heart knew that I never wanted to be without this man. But he opened my eyes and made me see that what I wanted and what I needed were ultimately the same thing. And once I accepted that all I wanted was him and the life we'd create.

So yes, there's a big difference. One partner is for a night, and the other is for every single night for the rest of your life. One is eating and superficial, while the other is eternal and imperative to live. Pick one."

Henry flashed his beautiful smile at me, then raised my hand to his lips for a kiss. "I'm so happy to know that I started off as just a booty call and ended up your accidental happily ever after."

"It wasn't an accident, Mi Amor."

"That! I want that! I'm so tired of the meaningless s*x; it's not even good either. I want what you two have, even if it's sickening at times," Indy stated.

"You'll find it when you least expect it. I was preparing for a heavy day of training with a huntress who was going to show my men some specialized tactics. I wasn't looking for love; I was content with my life the way it was. Then my Sunower walked over the hill, swaying those sexy hips while pulling her hair up into a bun. She became everything at that moment, and I knew she was mine. From that moment on, I've been in a trance, hypnotized by her existence. And I've never been happier."

"Are all wolves so romantic? Vampires are assholes, or the ones I've met have been. Maybe I'll have better luck with a wolf," Indy thought.

"There are assholes in every species, even with werewolves. I know one in particular that I can't wait to punch," I replied, thinking of Efrain and what he'd say if he knew that I was bringing another vampire to the area.

"Don't do that, Aires. I already took care of him; that's over and done with."

I nodded, but I was still fuming. I needed to calm down.

"Hmm, this seems like an interesting topic, but we can save it for some other time when we're not in public. But I'm excited; I think that moving to the states is just what I need. I'm going to get my life on track nally; I just know it. Just as soon as we snuff out our sperm donor," she whispered in my direction. Indy followed the secret up with a wink, then turned her attention to the city as we made our way back to the hotel.

"Where should I send the bill? The fee for my services ranges around one hundred grand, but I'll give you the friends and family discount," Oso said when I answered.

"To the trash," I replied, brushing off the notion that he'd ever charge me for anything.

"I'll just tape it to your front door; it will be waiting when you make it home. Anyway, I think I found him."

"You think?"

"It's hard to be sure when you're dealing with someone who is constantly switching identities and on the move, but I'm 85% certain."

"85%? I can accept that; what did you find?"

"I sent you an email with everything; take your time and read through it all. Some of it's not pretty, and you'll likely want to kill him even more once you're done, but I care about you too much to hide the truth. Taylor is waiting on me so we can take the kids to the park, so give me a call later if you need anything, alright?"

I gured that whatever was in this email was going to be difficult to swallow. Oso never said that he cared about me before, and hearing it let me know that he wanted to offer comfort before the pain.

"Go. Enjoy your family time and give my babies some love for me. I'm sure I'll be ne," I replied.

"Read it with Henry. I mean it, Air. You'll need him."

"Aye, Oso! I'll be ne, now go play at the park."

I disconnected the call, immediately pulled up my emails, and found the one I was looking for. But when I tried to open it, I was met with an error.

"He put a password on it?! Why can't this man just let me do this my way?" I asked the empty room. The subject line to the email read: Wesley Grant-Allen. Our motto is the key.

"Our motto? What f*****g motto?! f*****g Oso!"

While I was having my tantrum, Henry walked out of the bathroom fresh from his shower and gave me a strange look.

"You and Tyson going at it again?"

"No! He's being unreasonable, and now is not the time," I replied.

"Unreasonable how, Sunower?"

"He found Wesley, but he won't give me the f*****g data," I said.

Henry gave me a look that said he didn't totally believe me, making me release a deep sigh.

"Oso thinks that I'll need support when I read what he found. But I know I can handle it. I'm not some helpless baby bird."

"No, but everyone needs a shoulder from time to time."

"Even so, I don't know the password."

Henry again frowned, then walked to my laptop and looked at the screen. "Our motto is the key? Huh, really?"

He then clicked on the attachment, and when the prompt popped up for the password, Henry entered a few words then hit enter. My screen was then filled with a multitude of documents and photos, all relating to Wesley.

"Of course, it would be a motto between the two of you. Why not?" I sighed. "What was it?"

"Bruised but never broken. We give our all with everything we do and often get knocked down, but we never break. I'm guessing that whatever this is is going to bruise you, baby. But remember that you're strong. Don't let it break you," Henry replied.

My heart began to beat quicker, and I took a few breaths to slow it. I didn't know if I was ready, but that wouldn't stop me. It was time for me to find out who Wesley really was. It was time to learn about the blood that owed in my veins and all the evil it carried. I prayed I was ready.