

Celeste José: "You were supposed to be a friend, Walsh," the pain of losing a friend after discovering my mate's infidelity had rendered me emotionally numb. I believed I could lean on Walsh. It was as if fate were slapping me for my naivety. For years, I immersed myself in studio work, oblivious to the shady acquaintances surrounding me. "I never wanted to be your friend. I've always held you in high regard, but what did I receive in return? A hollow friendship!" His recollection of our relationship diverged from my perception. To me, those little outings with him and Mallory held great significance. I regarded him as an elder brother figure. Yet, now, I started to recollect certain inappropriate jokes he used to c***k, jokes I had dismissed as mere foolishness. I was beginning to realize that they were his way of trying to get closer to me. "You knew I was never interested in you. Why did you accompany Mallory if you didn't even wish to be with her?" I hissed, restraining my tone even though I wanted to shout until my voice gave out. "I had some feelings for her, but not in the way I held you in my heart. I longed to hold you close, and if you hadn't been so difficult last night, we might have already been over it and moved on," his unexpected desire to have a one-night stand with me had left me stunned. "Walsh!" I shut my eyes and drew a deep breath. "Please hand over those files. They hold immense significance for me, not only to escape this marriage but also to preserve my self-respect," I implored, even though I resented him intensely in that moment. I suddenly felt incredibly vulnerable. "Is that so?" his voice took on a dry tone, insinuating that he might be pondering something. "Tell me, how badly do you need these files?" he inquired. "Walsh! This is the sole proof I have against him. You're aware of that. You were the one who proposed I acquire these documents because supposedly, this is the sole method to wrangle a rejection from him without suffering any losses," I harked back to the time when he was eager to assist me before unveiling his true intentions. If only I'd known what a scoundrel he was, I would've personally headed home to install some recording devices. "Hmm! Then meet me in person and fulfill my wishes," he whispered as if he were right behind me. I stepped back a bit and closed my eyes in disgust. "Wishes?" I inquired, finding it hard to believe he was taking things to the next level. "Yeah! Spread your gorgeous legs for me, just once, and then we'll part ways forever. I won't breathe a word about what happened, and you'll have the chance to expose your bastard mate as well." His words left me hugging myself and rubbing my elbow. Hearing such repugnant words from him was excruciating. Goosebumps prickled my skin as my mind conjured up various disturbing scenarios. One of them involved Calix winning the case, tarnishing my reputation just to secure the pack's approval for his union with Casey. "I'm waiting," he whispered, his tone clicking impatiently. "I won't ever do this to Mallory," I mumbled, finally putting my foot down. There was no way I would subject myself to his vile and indecent demands again. "Hmm, well, since you don't want it that desperately, I don't see any reason to hand it over," I despised his voice at that moment. I swear I could detect a smugness in it, even if it were just a phone call. "But Mallory will be devastated," he whispered under his breath. Just as I was about to hang up on him, he managed to grab my attention. "Mallory? What do you mean by that?" I inquired, my brows furrowing in confusion. "Yeah! Don't you think she'll be devastated when she discovers that her closest friend showed up at her place, even though her mate had clearly informed her that he was drunk?"

At first, his words just washed over me. Everything seemed incomprehensible, and I found myself lost in space until he unveiled his sinister scheme. "I have pictures of us, Celeste. Pictures where we're kissing and pictures where you're biting me." My heart flipped inside my chest, and the world around me fell into a silent abyss for what felt like an eternity. I didn't even know how to react, but a flood of thoughts began to overwhelm me as I revisited the events of the previous night and contemplated what could be used against me. "I have evidence in the form of pictures and text messages that clearly indicate I was intoxicated when you came to my house. I can't help but wonder if your mate has experienced the same pain in his heart. Perhaps I should inform him of the

source of that pain. Should I reveal that you took advantage of me, attempting to force yourself on me when you were well aware of my intoxicated state and inability to defend myself?" Each word he uttered felt like a piercing silver dagger, striking my chest with its weight. "I can only imagine how others will perceive this situation. Mallory may be devastated to learn the truth about her friend's actions, making it difficult for me to accept her. And your alpha mate will undoubtedly exploit this information to have you expelled from the pack," his voice dripped with malice as he described the potential consequences of his deceit. Whatever scheme Calix had concocted, intertwined with this fabricated tale, would spell my doom. And what about Mallory? This vile individual planned to reject her, causing her more anguish while pinning the blame on me. "Now, either you comply with my demands, or you face utter destruction," he asserted with a grave tone before abruptly ending the call. My head throbbed, and my body quivered. I yearned to cry and scream, but I couldn't unleash my emotions here. Calix must never acquire those pictures or whatever tale Walsh is attempting to peddle. I sat on the bed, tears of frustration streaming from my eyes, when I received another text from Walsh. It seemed as if he had an insatiable appetite for my suffering, and he was hell-bent on ensuring I'd comply with his demands by any means necessary. Walsh: Oh! I overheard your conversation with Mallory. Why did you engage in an intimate encounter in your car? How could you betray your mate in such a way? If he inquires, I won't conceal the truth and I'll assist him in obtaining the footage from the security camera near the woods. I was taken aback in disbelief, my skin prickling with goosebumps. If he continued to uncover evidence against me, he would tarnish my reputation completely. It was clear that he had carefully crafted the text message, avoiding any direct threats or coercion to sleep with him. Instead, he portrayed himself as someone opposed to my infidelity and disloyalty towards his alpha.