

Blood Will Tell

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Olek

MITCHELL CALLED BACK WHILE THE WOMAN WAS STILL INSIDE.
“Her name’s Sasha Tolman, an on-again-off-again goth with a somewhat irregular web presence and eclectic musical interests,” the *avci* reported. “Husband, Jeremy Tolman, deceased. She has a condo in Clinton, 273B Brandywine Street, but she’s been staying with her parents the last three months since he’s been gone.”

Three months? That was rough. She was a widow. Not terribly relevant, but at least he knew there would be no husband to contend with if he was noticed. Of course, that meant no husband to watch over her either, something that would have been handy if it came down to actually guarding her. Olek found it curious that Mitchell hadn’t said anything about the pregnancy. Perhaps there was no official record yet. The address he mentally filed away should it at some point come in handy. Who knew, she might stay where she was until the child was born. He got an uneasy feeling thinking in those terms. If the rebels discovered her condition she and her child would be at risk.

“Anything else?” Olek asked, just in case.

“No, not really,” was the quick reply. “Well, except her job. She’s technically a freelance designer. Works from home on a semi-permanent basis for both Venus’s Bower and MilSciFi.com, a couple of mid-level publishers specializing in books the big houses consider too risky.”

A half smile quirked Olek’s lips. Yeah, he could see that. “You mean too original, don’t you? Anyway, thanks. Flag her name for the daily search protocol. I want to know if anything new comes up.”

“Hey,” Mitchell added, “do you want her blog address? It’s pretty active.”

Blog. Why didn’t Olek think of that? What better way to keep tabs on the woman, assuming she was as religious about maintaining it as many of the web-savvy people out there were. “Yeah, text it to me, I’ll check it

out later. Do you have an email?"

"No," Mitchell answered. "But there is a way to send her private messages through the blog site, if you need to."

"Thanks, Mitchell." Olek disconnected the call without mentioning the pregnancy himself. If it wasn't common knowledge, he didn't want it getting out. Not that it would be secret for very long once she started to show, but he'd discovered something important when rescuing her.

Sasha Tolman was a Mare.

There was nothing derogatory about the term. It was an honorific, actually, applied to those women who bore the genetic trait that could result in a *Kantasi* birth. Those Mares within the community were revered, those discovered in the general population, watched over in the eventuality that they might one day increase the Nation. In Sasha's case, the trait was dormant, which meant she would never bear a *Kantasi* child by natural occurrence. It was Olek's job to ensure she didn't by unnatural intervention, either.