

# STRIPPED BARE

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## EXCERPT

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He was distracted from his thoughts as he heard a loud noise at the entrance. Matthew watched curiously as a man came flying into the waiting area. The man moved over to the reception desk. The whole waiting room could hear his rambling words, delivered in a voice reminiscent of Richard Armitage, one of Matthew's favourite actors. It went well with his persona. He was dressed in a very expensive and dapper grey business suit and had an air of panache that, despite his concern, seemed to ooze off him like he was born to the good life. He'd obviously been running. He was slightly out of breath and there was the sheen of sweat on his face. His dark blonde hair fell over his forehead in loose swathes.

"You had a friend of mine brought in earlier," the man said. "His name is David Debussy. Is he all right? Can I see him?"

Matthew's next thought was, *God he has a sexy voice*, followed by a certain sense of envy. *From the way he was carrying on, this man is a good friend of David's. David is a very lucky man.*

He could see the receptionist trying to explain to the man that David was in recovery and only family were able to see him. The more she explained, the more the man got agitated.

"You don't understand. I could have fucking stopped him. I knew something was wrong when I couldn't get hold of him. I shouldn't have let him go back home to his fucking father-"

Matthew's ears pricked up at that last sentence even as he winced at the foul language coming out of the younger man's mouth in a public waiting room full of sick people. Matthew

wasn't averse to bad language when used in private or in the bedroom, but frowned on it in public. There was just no need to subject everyone else in earshot to profanity.

If Matthew was being employed to do damage control, he'd better bloody do it before this man made any more rather inflammatory statements.

He glided over to the reception window, seeing the young woman's look of relief as he tapped the agitated man on the shoulder. The man turned, and Matthew was pierced by the most incredible blue gaze he'd ever seen. The man's eyes were clear, bright lapis lazuli blue, and at the moment, angry and frustrated. He blinked, seeming taken aback at seeing Matthew standing behind him. A strange expression flitted over his face and then he scowled.

"Yes?" he growled. "I'm having a bloody conversation here; can you wait your turn?"

He turned back to the receptionist and Matthew sighed.

"I'm the Debussy family lawyer. I think I might be able to help you, Mister...?" He raised a quizzical eyebrow at the man who'd now turned back and was watching him suspiciously.

"Templar. Shane Templar." His face tensed. "Lawyer? Are you here to try and clean up after the old bugger then? Shove it all under the fucking carpet?"

Matthew took hold of the man's arm, smiled at the receptionist and pulled Shane over to the corner of the waiting room. The man's muscles tensed under his jacket, and Matthew braced for a possible punch.

"Leave me the fuck alone," Shane hissed, wrenching his arm out of Matthew's hold. "I don't remember agreeing that you could touch me."