



LETHBRIDGE-STEWART

MIND OF STONE

PREVIEW

‘**A**listair Lethbridge-Stewart, you have offered no plea to the court. Due to the severity of the charges brought against you, and your undeniable abilities as an officer in Her Majesty’s Forces, as well as the threat of flight posed by your training, this court feels that there is no option other than to deny you bail. You will be taken from this court and remanded in custody until your trial.’

The tall man in the dock stood stiff-backed, his face expressionless. He offered no reaction, and simply stared impassively ahead. He gave no reaction to anything that had been said.

The judge rapped his gavel sharply. ‘Take him away.’

The tall man allowed himself to be led down from the dock by two policemen and paid no attention to the cat-calls and jeers from the public gallery. He also ignored the row of what, had he paid them any heed, would have been very familiar faces. He gave the

appearance of a man who was completely and utterly alone.

Sitting in the gallery, Lance Corporal Sally Wright leaned forward and called to the man. 'Alistair. Alistair.'

Anne Travers also called to Lethbridge-Stewart but he was already gone, led through a side door which closed behind him. She put a reassuring hand on Sally's shoulder. 'It'll be all right.'

Sally's voice sounded hollow and brittle. 'The judge didn't even call him by his rank,' she said.

Lieutenant Colonel Walter Douglas sighed wearily. 'This is a civil court. If it had been a court martial he'd have been addressed by rank, but here he's just another prisoner.'

Anne flashed a warning look at Douglas. 'A bit more care in your words would be useful, Walter.'

'It's true, though,' Douglas said.

Anne nodded her head at Sally, who was staring at the door the police had just closed. 'It doesn't help, though, does it?'

'No,' Douglas admitted. 'I suppose not.' He turned to look at the door.

The two policemen guarding Alistair Lethbridge-Stewart had been warned that this prisoner was out of the ordinary. 'A special soldier,' the sarge had told them as he handed out assignments. The policemen had talked about that at some length. What did 'special soldier' actually mean?

Trevor, the older of the two coppers, hadn't liked it at all. 'Does that mean he's one of them SAS types?' he wondered.

'Could be,' Danny, his young partner, answered. 'Or some kind of spy maybe?'

Trevor shrugged. 'Keep an eye on him anyway. He looks like he could be tasty if it gets rough.'

Alistair Lethbridge-Stewart simply sat in his chair, staring at the wall directly ahead.

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