

The Alpha King's Hated Slave

Chapter 221

The fresh breath of the evening air surrounded them. Birds flew overhead. The sound of the soft turbulence of water. The caress of the wind on their skin as refreshing.

Two lovers were walking along the beach, towards the forest that leads to the Palace.

A big, powerful man in gold and red coloured garment, his dark hair held in a small clip at the back of his head. And a woman in plain but well-ironed grey gown that dented at her middle because of her swollen belly, before pulling down to her ankle.

They walked together, their steps measured and even, they walked like aristocrats. But all is not as it seems, because one is a King and the other is a Slave.

King Lucien was too quiet again. Silence has always been his motto, but these days, his silence made her uncomfortable.

“So, how was your day in court today, Your Highness?” She asked, trying to make a conversation.

“It is nothing special, just the usual minor cases. Two privileged fighting for a piece of land, and two couples who were having problems in their marriage. I was mostly a judge today, instead of a King.” He responded, taking another step forward and into the forest.

She matched his steps, a smile ghosting her face. “Being a judge is so nice. Your people loves you so much, My King. That is why they are able to come to their King with any problem at all. If not, there will be so much bloodshed for a lot of people because they take laws to their hands.”

“I agree too.”

“Isn't the whether so nice?” She asked, a wane smile on her face.

He looked up and around. It must be beautiful, if she says it is, the King thought. To him, the world looks so bleak. Too bleak.

He nodded his head reluctantly and continued walking.

The rest of the way, they walked in silence until they arrived at Palace. They got in front of the hallway that leads to the storage and the dungeon, and he stopped.

Her feet automatically stopped moving too. He stood staring at the empty space. The dungeon. The mistress.

Can she be the reason why he's been in that unidentifiable mood for the past two weeks?

People have been pleading with him to bring the Mistress out of the dungeon because it's a traumatizing place for her. Having spent most time in that enclosed space for ten years, most people of Salem has a deep aversion for the dungeon.

Baski has pleaded with the King several times to let Vetta out. He can keep her under house arrest in her bedroom while he decides what punishment to give her for her offense, the older woman had pleaded.

But the King only remained silent on the issue, and dismissed Baski. Even Chad has pleaded too. He'd refused.

Is she the reason he looks so bleak.

He turned away and began walking away. He said nothing.

Danika matched his steps. She didn't try to start a conversation again because she knows he really isn't in the mood.

King Lucien gave the order that Danika's dinner should be brought to his bedroom, just like he does every evening. He knows she has loss of appetite, so, he wants to make sure she eats properly.

They ate in silence. Afterwards, the maids came in and took the plates away.

"Is your back still hurting?" He asked with a furrowed brow when he saw her hitting her upper back continuously.

She nodded, still hitting her upper back with her fist, but it's a futile attempt, because her fist can't reach the spots that were hurting.

He got up from his dinning chair, walked towards her and urged her to her feet with his hand on her shoulder.

He led her to the bed, "I will call Angie to come and apply acupuncture again—"

"It's already late at night, My King. He needn't make such journey at this time of the night because of a backache that only relieves occasionally. I'll be fine." She responded, sitting down obediently at the spot he wants her to.

“Zariel.” His hand held her fist to stop her from beating her back.

The door opened and the guard rushed inside. “Yes, Your Highness.”

“Tell the cook to boil water and have the maids bring it to my Chambers once it’s hot. Tell Baski to go out to the stream—I do not say the river, she should go down to the stream and fetch me a bowl of cold water from the side of it that faces North.” He commanded without taking his eyes away from Danika.

“As you wish, Your Majesty!” The guard turned and hurried out of the door.

“Undress.” He directed to her.

She doesn’t understand why he’d give those commands but she did as he asked anyway. Pulling to her feet, she took off her clothes.

He helped her get rid of the corset. He untied the rope that held her petticoat together and pulled the clothing down her shoulders but he didn’t take it off completely.

He freed her breasts, her back, and allowed the clothing to bunch in her middle. He urged her to climb the bed, then, he got in behind her.

“I read from one of the parchments that hot and cold water can help alleviate back pains.” He revealed, his eyes inspecting her back.

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Chapter 222

Danika was barely able to follow the conversation because of the insistent pain in her back....and the feel of his hands on him.

He was looming over her from behind, his hand touched and probed some areas of her back, searching for the focus zones.

She winced when he touched a part at the center of her back, and winced again at another part...and another and another.

Then, she felt his mouth on her back. “I read in one of the parchments that back aches occurs when the baby is developing healthily,” his hand circled her belly, he rubbed

softly, “when the baby is developing, the uterus is expanding which puts pressure on your b***d vessels, the nerves in the pelvis and your back.”

She practically melted into him, her hand resting on top of his, on her belly. She listened to his words, more than surprised that he has taken enough time to read so much about her condition.

No wonder he always knows the things to do. He was always suggesting new types of food to Baski, saying that it will be good for her.

Her cheeks flamed. No wonder he knows the positions to lay her whenever he wants to make love to her.

“What is going through your mind?” His deep g***n reverberated on her shoulder where his head was pressed.

“N-Nothing.” She snapped her mouth shut.

“Mmh.”

Silence descended afterwards. She pulled closer to him, her eyes closed to revel in his moment.

It was beautiful. Apart from when he was making love to her, this is the most intimate he has held her in the past two weeks. It was almost like he was trying to withdraw himself from her.

As if he heard her thoughts, he pulled away from her, severing all contact completely. He got up from the bed, his face stoic.

Danika suddenly felt bereft. Empty. Vulnerable.

She reached for the straps of her petticoat to slid her arms into them when a knock came at the door. It caused her to pause.

The King glanced at her state of undress, and at the door. He walked to the door, and pulled it open. A pause.

Then, he steps away from the door and allowed whoever that’s there entrance into his Chambers.

Baski hurried in carrying a bowl of water and a towel. Following the King’s instructions, she dropped it on the bedside table before she left the room.

That was when he moved away from his position. Going towards the bedside table, he climb in behind her again. The ruffles of clothes made her look behind her.

He was folding his evening garment to bare his arms. He folded them up to his shoulders before he reached for the towel and dipped it inside the cold water.

“Your hair, Danika.” He said, breaking the silence.

Reaching for the wild mess that is her hair, she pushed them all out through her right shoulder, causing the mass to cover her right breast completely and fall to her belly.

At the first press of cold water, she gasped at the unexpected chilling feeling. But a few seconds later, she was enjoying the ministrations because it diverted her mind from the pains those spots produced before.

By the time he was done pressing the cold water, the hot water arrived too. He repeated the same process. Indeed, the pains began abating slowly.

She reveled at the intimacy of having King Lucien take care of her like this.

But, even as her pains were abating, the sinking dreadful feeling in her gut would not abate.

He is withdrawing from her. Without a single change at all in his demure or his attitude towards her, he is withdrawing from her.

And she has no idea what to do about it. The helplessness will be the death of her.

“Tell me about it.”

King Lucien was lost in thoughts—thoughts of the past—when that soft satin word pulled him back to reality. Her voice took him aback.

His hands paused on his scroll, the word he was writing, unfinished. King Lucien raised his head and looked at the woman sitting up on the bed.

He must have been so deep in his thoughts, that he completely lost track of reality. He has no idea when she woke, or even when she pulled herself up in a sitting position.

“Go back to sleep, Danika.” His hand resumed scribbling. He has to finish writing this message tonight. The messenger will be delivering it to the twelve Kingdoms tomorrow.

But, instead of doing that, he heard the ruffles of the bedsheet that indicated that she must be getting out of bed. He also knows that she’s naked under that bedsheet. He knows because he’s the one that put her there.

She’d fallen asleep in his arms in the middle of his administration.

He was massaging the left side of her back with hot water when her body went lax, and her head fell against his chest.

He was almost done with the towel anyway, so he'd dropped it. And, kept holding her.

He lost track of time. He had no idea how long passed while he stared at her sleeping body...while the same kind of thoughts kept running through his head.

Now, she came up beside him wrapping the bedsheet tightly around herself. He stopped writing and folded the scroll methodically.

What was he writing? Danika wondered, but only for a fleeting moment. Something else was more important.

"Tell me about it, My King." She asked softly.

"There is nothing to tell." But there was so much to tell. He did not bother asking who she's talking about because he knows.

"No," she shook her head "There is so much to tell." If there wasn't, it will not be weighing him down so much, Danika thought sadly.

Silence.

"You will never understand, Danika." He g*****d at last. A muscle ticked in his jaw.

"I might not, Your Highness, but I will surely listen. It will ease you. It will clear your mind." She whispered.

He shook his head. He said nothing.

"I watched you for long minutes. You weren't writing. You were lost in thoughts. Please, tell me what it is." She placed her hand on his shoulder. He flinched.

It did not get past her that it's the first time in a long time he flinched away from her touch. She didn't take her hand back.

"Don't let it eat at you any longer. It will, if you keep it all bottled for too much." She added.

Her voice only met silence.

Time passed.

Her feet began hurting.

Finally, she sighed in defeat. Slowly, she let go of his shoulder, and turned towards the bed.

“I have failed someone.” His deep voice stopped her.

“D-Declan, your cousin?” She asked, because that’s the person he believed he had failed.

But, he shook his head. “No.”

She turned and walked back to him. “Who did you fail...?”

A deep breath he took. Then, deep-blue eyes looked up at her, “Aneriaveta.”

The name does not ring a bell.

Danika’s brows furrowed in confusion. “Who is she?”

“That’s her full name. The name she would rather die than bear.” He deadpanned.

“Who?” She was getting more confused.

“Vetta.” he let out softly, “Vetta is short for Aneriaveta.”

That wasn’t a name she expected to hear, but she took it leisurely. All that matters was for him to take it all off his chest...whatever it is that has burdened him this badly.

“How did you fail the Mistress?” Danika asked curiously.

He let out a deep breath, and got up from his seat. “I will tell you a story, Danika...”

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Chapter 223

ELEVEN YEARS AGO

He was half-dead. Again.

He can almost see himself drifting away, moving right out of this body that has become the embodiment of pain. He can almost see himself floating...

Maybe, it wasn’t such a bad thing. Whoever said that he wants to keep living?

He'd been beaten. Starved. Mocked. King Cone stood by the corner while they used him as a playing ground. His laughter and snickers of enjoyment alone cause prince Lucien's heart to rage.

His manly parts alone they started a brand new hellfire right there. The burns...the pain...coming from that part of him, will be the death of him.

But, who will save his people while he's gone? Who will protect Declan...? Vetta...? Baski...? Chad...? Remeta...?

He is so tired. He is just so tired.

"Look who's staggering her way in again." Coza's voice rose in the air, "It's the whore slave, My Lord."

"One of his shadows." Cardel, another head trainer g****d, amusingly, "I wonder what she is doing here."

"I don't need to wonder. I know. The same thing she does, always." Kanaris, one of the slave training guards stated, and the monstrous Coza snickered.

"This will be fun. She has nobody to trade again this time around. Not after what Coza did to her two nights ago after she interrupted his training session with the Prince." Another familiar voice, but in his hurting head he couldn't make out who has that one.

"The bitch is sweet, I wouldn't lie about that. I've lost count how many times I've fûcked her, and yet, I don't get tired of her." Coza, "Sometimes, I start an unordered session with the Prince because—"

"—you know she will come." Cardel chuckled, "Me too."

"My King, what do you want us to do?" kanaris voice.

"Let her come. This will be entertaining." King Cone finally g****d, he sounded amused too.

Unsteady footsteps. Followed by Vetta's voice, "Please, let him go..."

Sound of laughter filled the air. "The same words always. Every. Single. Time." That was Coza.

"You have nothing else to give this time around, Whóre-slave." Cardel, "You're already a one huge giant bruise. You can't even walk properly."

"P-Please, I'll do a-anything you want, just let him go." She was crying. And wincing, with each hop on her feet.

Coza, that monster slave trainer guard had whipped those legs of hers mercilessly two nights ago, before he took advantage of her body.

“Go away, whóre. At this rate, you’ll die in a very horrible way.” Kanaris, “even I draw the lines at a bîtch dying beneath me. I ain’t fūcking no dead body.”

King Cone spoke at last, “Why do you care so much about a man that will not give a damn about you if he has his freedom? His freewill? I know a lot of you all are protecting each other, but I do not understand how you will go to extremes to keep this man alive.

You are nothing to him but a low-born, a born-slave. He is a Prince. You will be forgotten. In fact, he will get rid of you immediately he is able to. You keep saving him and ruining yourself. Every guard in this High Dungeon has fūcked you up in the most brutal way for a man who does not give a crack that you exist.”

“Do not pretend you know him. You know NOTHING about him!” Vetta stated vehemently, sniffing angrily.

“I know us.” Cone corrected smoothly, “I know aristocrats. We do not give a damn about low-borns, and we most definitely will never marry one. So, dear child, stop killing yourself over a Royalty because he will always see you like a trash. In your case, it is worst. You are the worst kind of whóre and trash, all because of him. But he will still throw you away, anyway.”

“My prince w-will always be a better man than you can ever be, King Cone!” She’d stated loathingly.

“For a woman that wants me to grant her a request and a favor. You sure are insulting.” Cone snarled, “Maybe, I will take everything you’re offering...and still kill your prince anyway.”

“No!” Vetta’s knees hit the ground, she began crying and pleading. She begged and she begged and she cried.

****BACK TO THE PRESENT****

“I can still remember that day—and every other day she saved me—like it was yesterday.” King Lucien’s voice was hoarse.

Danika couldn’t still his face because he was facing away from her, his arms crossed behind him. Tears filled her eyes and overflowed. Uncontrollable tears.

“What happened...after?” She asked when he went silent.

“She struck another deal with him. She is always ‘dealing’ with anyone harming me. I try to prevent it whenever I can, but most times, I am always in a state where I can do nothing about it.”

“I woke up three days later,” he continued, “In a nice bed for the first time in ages, my body was still a giant bruise, but I looked down myself to see that I’d been treated by the Royal Healers. My heart shattered in my very chest because that does not come with a small prize. It never does.” He lowered his head.

“I searched for her with my eyes, for I couldn’t move..I asked all the maids that brought in food or pills to help me find Vetta. But no one ever does a thing for me.” He swallowed hoarsely, “Whatever they do to her will be unbearable, but I just needed to see her alive.”

“They brought her in, in the evening. She was covered in b***d. They’d all used her; Cone, Cardel, Kanaris and Coza. This was barely two weeks after she had her second miscarriage.”

“Oh, my goodness...” Danika cried.

“Her condition was critical. They laid her beside me and the healers began treating her. All that time, she cried. She was bawling her eyes out because of what they made her do, even before they did what they did to her.”

“What did they make her do?” She dreaded the question, but she had to ask.

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Chapter 224

“It was the first time Cone gave such a mission. She killed a person. An innocent woman.”

Danika lowered her head in shame. How did that monster father her?

“Cone gave her a mission to sneak into the home of a Privileged and kill his wife. I don’t have any idea why he would want the woman dead, but Cone had a lot of enemies.

She couldn’t get past that kill, because the woman she was sent to kill was a woman she knows. A woman she cared for.” He revealed in a low voice.

That was unexpected. “What...!?”

He turned and faced her then, standing in the middle of the room, while she was seated behind his desk to alleviate her hurting legs.

“Vetta’s parents were slaves owned by the Raskin family. Her mother died at childbirth, her father fell sick and dropped dead while working the mines one-day. In her teens, she...fancied the master of the Raskin household.”

Fancying a master is never a good idea for any slave, but who is she to cast the first stone? She thought remorsefully. “And the master?”

“Gedony Raskin. He was in his early twenties and newly married to Yeaha who’s very older than him, but very powerful in the society. She was a Princess. There were rumors among the aristocrats that Gedony Raskin developed feelings for Vetta too, but it was unfounded rumors. I have no idea what happened, but one-day, Gedony Raskin came to my father and offered to sell Anarieveta. My father never wanted to have more slaves but he bought her anyway.”

“Why?” She asked in a hoarse voice.

“My father keeps slaves closer. He said he cannot help all slaves for they are many, but he will help those he is able to. That is all he is capable of doing for them, at least until he is able to eradicate the laws of Introduction of slaves, and the Unjust Killing of slaves.”

“Your father is a good man.” She let out softly.

He acknowledged with a nod, pain flashing in his eyes. He blinked it away and continued, “Anyway, that was how Anarieveta began working in the palace. She was this bright girl. So bright, so innocent, always happy.” He raised his hands and stared at them, “She was just like your Sally. If not more.”

“Really?” Somehow, Danika can’t see the bitter mistress being like her Sally, once upon a time.

“She was.” He confirmed, “I always watched her after trainings with my father. I will go out on a walk, and there she is, with other slaves...playing. Laughing. She taught the Slaves how to play a lot of outdoor games.” His eyes glazed over in memory, “It was always fascinating watching her because she is a happy slave. It is hard to see a happy slave.”

“It is.” She seconded, thoughts of her lovely Sally filling her mind.

“I got close to her. I asked my father to put her directly under me, so she will serve me alone, and she will not have to work the mines. He granted my request. We had three years together. She was seventeen and I was twenty when Cone struck.”

So sad. So alone. So pained. That was how he looked. His face stoic and inscrutable, and yet, she saw the raw pain behind that expressionless mask.

“At first, when she kept offering herself in place of me, in slavery, I thought it was because of the love she has for me as her Master...just like Baski and Chad did.” he swallowed, “But she kept going to extremes. More extremes, just to make sure I do not suffer. It didn’t take long for me to realize that she had feelings for me. Womanly feelings.”

“Slavery broke her to pieces, Danika. After she killed Yeaha Raskin, she cried for several days. That woman was good to her when she was still under their family, and Cone made her kill the woman. She never recovered from that. But, it didn’t take long before Cone announced that he has found the perfect weapon for murder. Vetta was beautiful, and she had someone she wanted to protect at all cost...that made her the perfect weapon.”

“Vetta stood in that podium and swore that she would rather die, than kill another person for him. Cone only laughed.” Rage darkened his eyes at the memory.

Danika shifted uncomfortably at her chair. This will be bad.

“They prepared another torture session for me and in the middle of it, she hopped in on one feet, and screamed at them. “I agree!” “I will do it!! Just leave him alone, please!” She screamed repeatedly.”

The King’s eyes found Danika’s, “I...I know she let go of her humanity then, like I did mine, a long time ago. She began killing for Cone. Anybody who opposes him in court, he will send out Vetta to seduce and kill the aristocrat. Her deal with him kept me off tortures for four months. The longest of it’s kind, since we came to slavery. Time enough for my body to recover from all the past tortures.”

She’d promised herself that she will be strong, but this was too much for her. Danika began crying. Soft weepings she can no longer contain.

This is too much. This is more than she expected.

“I...more than anybody, knows that Vetta went to extremes to keep me alive. I can tell you so many more, but we will stay here all night if I do that. I was so selfish because I know, she loved me in her own way. And I cared for her in my own way. But, I have been so selfish, Danika.” His voice broke.

He's on the verge of tears. The thought of a strong and powerful man like him reduced to tears hurts her so much. More tears slipped from her eyes.

She wished she can go hold him, but she was almost sure that he wouldn't appreciate at this moment. But, even as she felt so much for him...for Anarieveta, she needed to know something.

"Because you...care for me? Is that why you feel you have been so selfish?" The answer will hurt like a knife to her heart, but she needed to know.

He shook his head. It made her relieved.

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Chapter 225

He shook his head. It made her relieved.

"I have been so selfish because I was so engrossed in my own pain, I forgot that she went through so much like me...if not worse. She was broken to pieces, and yet she was so strong even after slavery, because she made me the center of her world.

She buried all the memories of her life, and channeled all her energy and her whole life to being with me. That was the reality she used to escaped her past, and that was also why she held onto that reality for so long because she knows that if it goes, she has nothing else to hold on to. Nothing else to escape to. I didn't realize this one time."

"Oh, Lucien...."

"I was so engrossed in myself, I did not see what was happening beneath my nose. If I didn't neglect her so much, I would have realized what she was doing on time and try to stop her...to help her.

If I didn't neglect her so much, I would know that she is extremely broken and hiding from it all. I would have known that she has gone toxic on time. I would have realized that Anarieveta has become so bitter that she will go to extremes too just to hold on to her reality."

"It is not your fault, Lucien. Please, do not blame yourself for that...."

"You have no idea the extent she has gone, Danika. You have no idea how much bitterness she has inside her now. The look in her eyes as she vented out her anger..." When he looked at her, Danika saw knowledge.

There was so much he wasn't telling her. He knows so much.

"Do you know what it hurts most?" He g*****d.

Danika shook her head.

"That everything Cone told her the day she staggered in to save me, turned out to be true."

She lowered her head, and wiped her tears. Where does she start trying to make this better? This is too much.

He finished, "And now, I ask myself.... What am I going to do about her? Is it too late to help her?" A tear slipped from his eyes.

IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE*

Coza lives in a cave. He has been here for so long, waiting for the perfect opportunity.

This night, he sat and waited for her to arrive. She has not reported to him and it's well past time. He was getting angry and anxious.

It is unlike her to be late.

The Prince thought he killed him five years ago. But he is not so easy to kill.

He was almost giving up hope when he heard movements outside his cave. Then, she entered the cave.

"You are late." Coza spat accusingly. He was angry.

"I am so sorry, Master. It's hard getting out of the palace this days." She said.

"Update me on what is happening now. I heard the Vetta is in the dungeon?"

"Yes. The King has not decided her fate."

"The b!tch made her mistake years ago. I offered her heaven and she declined because of the Prince. Now, look where she is." He snickered.

"Update me on everything." He ordered.

The girl did. Going over all the details she knows.

"Alright. Keep me updated." He stated after several minutes.

“I will, Master. I have to go back now before someone notices my absence.”

He nodded. “That will be a bad thing. The Prince will kill you for being a traitor. Especially if he digs into your case and realize that you have a hand in cousin’s death.”

The girl shuddered just at the thought of that. She knows she can easily lay the accusations on the Mistress, but she hopes she can be able to avoid such encounter.

“I have to go.” She repeated.

“Keep me updated.” He stated firmly.

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Chapter 226

“And now I ask myself...what can I do to help her? Is it too late to help her...?” A tear slipped from his eyes.

“Yes. Yes, you can still help her, My King. We can still help her. We cannot give up on her.” She stated firmly, sniffing to keep the tears at bay.

Danika closed her eyes miserably. She cannot even imagine being in the mistress’s shoes. It was frightening. It’s a horrible place to be in.

She can’t imagine going through all that, and still having to live everyday while knowing that the King’s heart is not with you. Knowing that the King cares for the daughter of the man that put you through so much pain.

Poor Mistress. No wonder the woman hated her so much. In her shoes, Danika fears that she would have done so much worse than the Mistress did. Right?

“Yes, we can still help her!” She repeated vehemently.

“I have been so selfish, Danika. I have no idea how to begin making amends. How to help Vetta. She has drifted so far... I saw it in her eyes.” Voice hoarse like gravel, he intoned.

Danika forgot all about leaving him all alone because he might not appreciate her touch at such a vulnerable moment of a trip down the memory lane. She got up from the chair, and walked towards him.

His back is to her, so she walked towards him and placed her hand on the broadness of his back. He flinched.

“No one is beyond redemption, My King. No one is beyond a second chance.”

“Second chances....” Guilt assailed him. Of course, no one is above second chances. Most of all, him.

And yet, the heavens gave it to him in form of a child. Something so unattainable. Something so impossible. Something he thought he can never have again.

“Can I make a suggestion?” She whispered uncertainly.

“Yes, you can.”

“She shouldn’t be in that dungeon, My King. That is the first thing you can do for her. That place is a very horrible place for her.” She whispered.

Silence. The sound that remained in the night is the chirps of cricket, and the howling of the wind some distance away.

When he spoke, he took his words in steady calm tone that belied his pain.

“I know more than anybody how horrible the dungeon is for a woman like Vetta. I left her there because I wanted her to remember the past. It’s bad. It’s cruel. But, I wanted her to remember the woman she was.

Not as a slave, or the horrors we went through, but the kinder woman. The fearless Vetta who stood up to Cone more times than I can imagine. The woman that gave herself up in my stead several times than. The woman that went to extremes to protect something. Most especially, I want her to remember the girl she was before Cone.” He swallowed.

She listened attentively, knowing that there’s more.

“I fear that she buried it all as an escape to keep surviving. Burying the past...something I have always craved to do but haven’t been able to achieve, she was able to do it. As she stood that morning and vented all her anger out on me, I found out exactly what burying it all can do to us. The monster it can create.

I learnt that morning that burying the past is not the answer. Treating it like it never happened, is not the solution. Without the past, we don’t really have anything. It is the past that shaped the present. It is the past that shaped us into the people we are today. So, instead of trying to bury it like it never happened, we should overcome it.” He turned then and faced her. Her eyes met his chest at the close proximity between them.

He continued, "Overcome it. Heal from it. And grow more stronger than it. After my visit to Vetta, it made me realize a lot of things. I never forgot the past, but I can overcome it...healing from it. And, it's all because of you."

"Me...?" Pulling back, she stated up at him.

His head bobbed once. Then, his hand rose and rested on her cheek. "You. It was all because of you." A pause, "Thank you so much, Danika."

She has no idea why he's thanking her so much, but she smiled up at him and nodded her head. "You're welcome, My King."

"You have been up for so long. It is unhealthy. It's not good for you or the baby. Go back to bed, Danika." He g*****d.

She'll have to admit that she's been feeling sleepy in the last few minutes. Stiffing a yawn, she stared at the bed few feet behind her. "Come to bed with me..."

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Chapter 227

"Come to bed with me..."

His eyes found his table. Danika didn't think it was possible but he looked sadder as his eyes rested on the unfinished scroll lying at one part of the table.

Then, he shook his head, "I have to finish up with work. It's a message, I need the messenger to send it out to the several kingdoms on the morrow."

"What is the message all about?" She asked softly.

Jaws locked, he looked away. "Nothing of great importance. Go and sleep, I will join you later."

The stubborn lock of his jaw told her that he wouldn't be saying anything else about the 'work', so, she accepted his words with a nod. "Alright, My King."

She has no idea when she grew accustomed to that k**s in the forehead and the belly, which he always gave her in private whenever they are about to part ways, but as she

waited for that small little gesture and it wasn't forthcoming, she swallowed her disappointment.

If he wouldn't reach for her, she will reach for him.

So, she took a step closer and kissed his chest lingeringly. It was almost not visible, but she felt him recoil.

"Good night, Lucien." She whispered as she pulled back, her heart heavy for him. For herself. For the Mistress. "I'll be waiting for you in bed."

"Okay."

She pulled back then, and walked to the bed.

"Danika?"

"Yes, My King?" She turned.

"Thank you for tonight. For listening to me, and allowing me get it all out."

It didn't get past her notice that he's thanking her alot lately. "You needed it. I truly hope that the Mistress gets all the help she needs."

Her head bobbed in acknowledgement.

At the foot of the bed, she unwrapped the bedsheet from her body until she stood gloriously naked at the foot of the bed. She can feel his eyes burning holes to her body, but she didn't turn back to confirm if he was looking at her.

She got into bed and wrapped the bedsheet over her body. "Good night." she repeated impulsively.

King Lucien knew the time she settled into sleep. He turned away from the window, and watched the even rise and fall of her body in breathing.

Then, he walked back to his table and lowered himself behind it. Picking up the unfinished scroll, he stared at it. His heart tightened in his chest, he was also having a little difficulty breathing as he read the wordings again.

Vetta's words banged at the back of his mind.

***"As a slave master who has been a slave before, you forgot the most important thing. A slave will do ANYTHING at all to come out of slavery. Including...faking kindness.

Faking to be good. And the most important...? Pretending to love your master. You know what I say is the truth. No, you FEAR what I say will be the truth. That is why you're so hesitant to uncollar her."

"What else is holding you? You and I know it's no longer about her father or about revenge. Uncollar her then, and give her back her freewill. Then, we will see if she will still choose you. If she will still choose to be with you. Let's see if she doesn't run away and NEVER come back!"***

His eyes closed to keep the words away.

The ruffling of papers filled the air as he unwrapped a new scroll, spread it out in front of him and continued his writings.

Several hours later, he stood exhausted, but he was done writing. Silent footsteps walked to the bed, he got in behind her, careful not to wake her from sleep.

He gathered her into his arms, and she sighed in her sleep, melting against him. He stayed awake most of the night, watching her sleep.

IN THE KINGDOM OF NAVIA

The next evening....

King Valerie g*****d angrily at the persistent knock that kept coming at the door of his study.

"What is it?" He asked angrily, not bothering to ask who it is that dares to disturb him when he's working. Only one person dares to do that.

The door burst open and Mistress Donna strode inside, "Kamara is gone again."

"Since when did you become her bodyguard, Donna? She is a grown princess with duties to fulfill. She has every right to leave the palace whenever she wants." King Valeria chided impatiently, ready to get back to the journal he was filling.

"No, My King, I do not think she went out to do her duties. In fact, I am sure she went out to see that peasant of hers."

"No, she has not. Kamara made me a promise and she does not break her words." He stated vehemently, "Leave, Donna and stop disturbing me."

The mistress does not like the way he's dismissing her, especially when she has a tangible case. She walked closer to him, "I'm very sure she breaks her word in this case, My King. She considers herself in love with this peasant. People tend to do foolish things for love."

His hand paused in the middle of writing, and he cocked his head to the side in thought. Donna let him, her leg tapping impatiently.

“No. I find this hard to believe.” He maintained.

“There’s no harm in trying to be sure anyway.”

“Alright.” he agreed reluctantly, “Send out the guards to go to that boy’s hut to look for her.”

A smile ghosted Donna’s face. Just the command she has been waiting for. “As you wish, My King.”

He spared her a glance, “You have better things to do with your time than this, Donna, but if this is what you wish to do, you can go ahead with it. Leave now, for I need to work.”

“Of course.” She was still smiling as she inclined her head, before walking out of his study and closing the door.

Such faith he has for his daughter. She’s going to prove him wrong.

“Jayreh!”, She called immediately she stepped out of the palace building. Her eyes found the guard at the training field even before she was done calling his name.

“Yes, Mistress.” The head guard ran towards her and knelt before her.

“Gather two of your men here right now. We head out to town now!”

“As you command, Your Highness!”

The messenger stood in front of the King Lucien and waited nervously. He has been standing for several long minutes.

The King stood with the message in his hands. He has not released it, and the messenger wondered why. Instead, he kept going over it over and over and over again.

Finally, he released the two scrolls to him. “Take this message to the ten Kingdoms. Make sure every King gets my message.”

Thank Heavens. “Yes, Your Majesty.” The messenger responded immediately.

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Chapter 228

The next evening, Danika stood in front of Vetta's dungeon. The guard hurried past her, the sound of keys opening a lock filled the air, followed by the sound of deadbolt opening.

She nodded her gratitude, the guard acknowledged her before he hurried out of the cell. She looked around sadly, holding the wrapped food tightly in her hand.

She can't believe that it has been four months she got out of this place. It feels like ages ago.

Her eyes took in the familiar stone walls. There was a light coming in from inside the dungeon, which shows that someone is in there. Other times, the light bulb is off.

For a moment, she relished the first time she was in this place. Her hand touched her collar absently...

He'd collared her and kept her here for over a week. She can still remember clearly, the look of pure and raw hatred in his eyes whenever he was addressing her.

Chasing the memories away with a shake of her head, she strode forward and entered through the heavy metal door. Vetta laid facing the wall, her back was to her.

Danika doesn't need to go close to Baski before she knows that the woman has been taking care of the Mistress, like she did her when she was here. Tears filled her eyes as she took in the woman in front of her.

She looked nothing like the smug, angry Mistress she has always known. Instead, she looks like an insane person.

Her clothes were torn, as if she ripped them with her own hands, and her hair was dirty and in disarray on her head, like she spend ages running her fingers through it.

The Mistress didn't move an inch when she entered, but the tensed rigidity of her back told her that she's awake. Danika walked further into the room. She cleared her throat.

Vetta drew taut at the feminine sound. Then, she uncurled her body and turned to glare at Danika so hard, it hit her like a stone...seeing the bone-deep hatred in the older woman's expression.

"What are you doing here?" She hissed, narrowing her eyes angrily, "Let me guess, you came to laugh at me? Vetta, the pathetic...? Vetta, the whore Mistress!?"

The mistress's voice had gone hoarse, Danika imagined that it must have been from screaming too loud some nights to be let out. The maids' rooms are close to the dungeon, and they rumor that some nights, the Mistress screams loudly repeatedly.

"No, I came to do no such thing." She defended.

"Then, what did you come here to do!?" She spat. "Get out! Get away from me now!"

"Mistress..."

"Stay away from me. If you have an idea how much I hate you, you wouldn't be in here at all. Stay away from me, Danika. Stay. Far. Away From. Me." Each words she emphasized angrily that Danika flinched.

Then, she laid back on the ground and turned away.

Vetta hates that Danika is seeing her this way...this pathetic. The woman must be here to celebrate her victory. Wicked bitch.

Angry tears filled her eyes and she wrapped her arms protectively around herself, curling into a ball. These walls...this place is driving her insane. How can Lucien do this to her?

Does he really want to kill her in the most horrible way? Does he hate her that much..? Is that why he left her in this wretched room for so long?

Danika. It's all because of Danika. All because of King Cone's daughter...!

"I brought food for you." Danika announced, but her voice was stern this time around.

"Came to poison me?" She was very hungry. The pie Baski snuck in for her was barely enough for her sick deprived body. But, hearing the bane of her existence tell her about food, made her laugh.

The laugh came out cold and empty. "You must be stupid if you think I'll eat whatever you brought."

"You're right, I must be stupid." Danika walked to the other side of the empty room. Sounds of hands dusting a spot was heard for a few seconds. She dropped the pie there. "You can take it whenever you're hungry."

Silence descended. Vetta curled more protectively to the ground, her head tethering the very edge of insanity.

She hasn't been beaten, or raped, or whipped, or given heavy labors, and yet she feels like she'll lose her mind from the 'tortures' of just being inside this dungeon.

“I will still plead with the King again to get you out of here.” Came the soft voice of Danika.

How dare her!

“Keep your pretence to yourself, Slave!” Head whipped back, she glared at Danika with fire in her eyes.

“Those pretence might work on the King because he enjoys putting his phallus inside you, but it will never work on me! I will still kill you if I get the chance anyway!” She hissed.

“He went to court...left very urgently this morning.” Danika continued like she was never interrupted, “When he gets back, I’ll try again. You needn’t be here... You have been very wicked and mean to me, Mistress, and yet I can’t bear it that you’re in here.”

Vetta began laughing. The empty sound of it grated. She laughed and laughed like an insane woman, but Danika didn’t say a word.

At the end of the laugh, tears filled her eyes.

She sank back, drained. “Do you know what I can’t bear? Apart from these walls I despise so much, do you know what else that hurts like a living stake in my chest?”

Her baby kicked inside her, she winced slightly. Danika can guess a lot of things that makes this bitter woman hurt, but she crossed her arms to her chest and shook her head.

“I can’t bear it that you’re so close to me, and yet I can’t kill you the way I want. Giving the best opportunity, Danika, I’ll wipe you from the surface of this wretched earth. You can go to hell and say hello to your father for me.” The Mistress faced the wall again, and laid her head back on the ground.

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Chapter 229

It was like a blow to Danika’s cheeks. Tears stung her eyes, but she blinked hard to keep it away.

“You know how impossible that is. If you love him so much, why will you wish such great pain on him by killing his only child? Knowing fully well that he can’t sire another?”

Silence. For a few seconds, the silence was deafening.

Then, Vetta uncoiled from the ground, sitting up with her back to the cold wall, her hate-filled held Danika’s. “What do you mean by that!? What do you mean that he can’t sire another...?”

At the clear confusion in her voice, it dawned on Danika that the Mistress doesn’t know of the King’s condition.

She snapped her mouth shut. It wasn’t her place to reveal it, but the King’s.

And even if she does reveal that the King can’t bear a child because of his roasted phallus that scarred him and killed most of the nerves in his loins, the Mistress will practically spit fire. After all, it was still her father’s doing.

“I will come back more often to check on you, and bring you more food.” She responded, instead.

“That will be very foolish of you.” Vetta’s eyes narrowed.

” We already established a long time ago that I am foolish.” Danika turned towards the door, “Eat your pies, Mistress, so the bugs will not eat it for you. I will be back with more.”

Footsteps silent in the rough ground of the dungeon, she opened the heavy door and walked past it.

The sound of the deadbolt locking and the chains rattling back into their place was heard as the guard locked up. Then, the sound of footsteps fading followed.

Pretence. All pretence. She will still leave him. He will free her and she will leave him. She will hurt him.

Vetta glanced at the pie on the other end of the room, and to the door, and back at the pie again.

She turned and laid back on the ground, facing the wall. Her anger receded because she’s alone once again, replaced by confusion.

She’s here loosing her sanity everyday, and Cone’s daughter is outside there with her freedom and the King in her beck n’ call, yet she is loosing her sanity too.

The woman has gone mad.

“So, tell me about the wooden spikes! I haven’t seen you make that before, but you did today!” Kamara drew happily, holding Declan’s arm secured to hers as they walked through the woods back to his home.

“Well, it’s owned by the blind woman down the road. People call her a witch but she isn’t. I told you that three women saved my life, right?” Callan held her tightly. He was having the best time of his life because she’s by his side.

“Yes, you did. The one who gave you water to drink when you were left for death. The one who carted you all the way here. And…” she smiled prettily, “…the one who nursed you back to life.”

“That was you, my lady.” He confirmed again, and she giggled, clinging to his arm. “You nursed me back to health, and the blind woman down the street…? She was the woman that drove me all the way here.”

“Woah! I guessed because you were so good to her, and you didn’t take any money from her after your services, but hearing you confirm it…it’s fascinating.”

He smiled in remembrance. “I was injured and on the road, begging for a lift from anybody. Everyone that drove past me drove fast away. You know, people are scared… Seeing a dirty, half-dead man all beaten and bruised, not so far from the palace.”

“They’d think you were a runaway prisoner and they’ll get in trouble for helping you.” She added.

“Exactly.” He took a very long step forward, crossing a gutter. He whirled around and offered his hand, which Kamara held onto and crossed over too. She smiled in gratitude. He smiled back in acceptance.

They continued walking. “They all drove away. I was beginning to lose hope like I was losing so much b***d. I was about to die. But, this old woman stood and drove me. She hid me in her cart, and we drove all the way here.”

“One of the reasons people call her a witch is because she’s able to drive anywhere, even though, she’s as blind as a bat.”

“That baffles me too, but,” he shrugged, “I consider it a blessing for her. She’s doing so fine on her own.”

“And, she has a hefty man now that will fight off anyone that tries to make her life miserably again.”

“And she also has a princess too.” He added.

Kamara bobbed her head, smiling radiantly. “A princess who will fight her battles too, because she’s in love with her hefty man.”

Callan’s cheeks turned ruby and his steps faltered. He’d never get used to her saying those things to him. “I love you too.”

Her steps drew to a stop too. She leaned up and kissed him pleasantly. But, as always Callan takes the k**s to the next level.

His hand around her neck, holding her to him, he kissed her with the fervor of a starving man. His lips devoured hers, his tongue stroking into her mouth with the same methodology of love making.

By the time he pulled back, they were shivering with desire for each other. Their breaths erratic.

“I hunger for you badly, my lady. I think it will drive me insane.” He admitted as he pulled back.

“Me too. Oh, Callan, if only we’re able to consumate this love we have for each other...”

“Yes. Sadly, we aren’t able to. I can’t keep it together long enough...” His voice was filled with sadness.

She shook her head, “Not to worry. I am most happy just seeing you and being with you whenever I can. One day, we will be able to.”

They resumed walking, almost in front of his home. “What if I’m not able to...? What if I never regain my memories? What if my mind is never able to let go of the traumas of my suffering in the palace...”

“I’ll still be here, Callan. I will still be with you because I will still love you.” She responded with a smile.

“Pathetic! So so pathetic.” Came the new voice as they walked into the vicinity of Callan’s home.

Kamara gasped as she saw the Mistress Donna smiling with evil intent. There were guards with her.

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Read Chapter 230

Chapter 230

“I told your father, but he wouldn’t listen. His daughter is still messing around with the peasant, he wouldn’t listen.”

Automatically, Kamara got in front of Callan in a protective stance. “Why are you being this way? You think my father will finally crown you the Head Concubine with this?”

“Oh, I know he will. Because I just proved that I’m looking out for him yet again. He will make me the Head Concubine, then, I’ll birth him a child and my son will be a prince.” She smirked.

Kamara’s heart thudded in her chest because she’s been caught and she put Callan in trouble, not because of Donna’s claims that she will stop being the Head Mistress and be crowned the Head Concubine. That isn’t a problem to her.

Kings has NOT made Head Concubines in centuries for a good reason. They don’t even think about it.

“Leave us alone, Donna. I never did anything wrong to you, and yet you follow me around like a thorn in the flesh!” She hissed.

“Guards! Seize them!” Donna shouted instead. She folded her arms and grinned.

King Valendy was raging. Pure, unadulterated rage.

In his Chambers, Kamara was kneeling at the floor with her heart in her throat. Donna stood by the side, her breathing unable to setting correctly after all the trouble Callan gave.

He’d made it really had for them to be captured and brought back to the palace. The way he fought the guards was unbelievable.

Swift and lethal. So uncommon for a PEASANT, Donna thought.

King Valendy stood a few feet from his daughter his eyes glaring. “How could you, Kamara. You gave me your word!” He shouted at his daughter.

“Please, father... I am sorry that I have disappointed you so much, it wasn’t my intention.” She pleaded.

“You’re right. You disappointed me so badly, Kamara. You are a princess, and I have always treated your word as gold I thought they were.”

“You know they are, father. I have always kept my words! I do not go back on my word! It’s just that....” She cut off, her eyes willing him to understand.

“It’s just that your better sense of duty and reasoning has taken to rest since you met this peasant of yours. Whatever charm is he using to hold my daughter!” He raged.

Oh, no! “No, he isn’t using any—“

“I plan to find out!” He continued like she never spoke, “and I will do everything in my power to rid you from this man, Kamara. Including killing him!”

She dived for his leg, clutching it tightly. Tears filled her eyes. “Please, father! No! It was my mistake, I should be the one getting punished, not Callan! He didn’t do anything wrong!”

“He’s obviously the one luring you. That in itself is a capital offense! How dare he...!” Eyes filled with fire glared at his daughter, “How dare YOU, Kamara! How dare you abandon your duties for a PEASANT!”

“I didn’t abandon my duties, I swear it! I’ve been doing everything I’m supposed to do.”

“Except marrying your betrothed! Except the most important which is securing the prosperity and more power of our kingdom!” He barked.

“K-King Lucien hasn’t come calling, father! You know he hasn’t!”

“Is that enough reason for you to stray!? To give yourself and your body to a dirty peasant who does not deserve you!?”

“We haven’t been intimate, father! I swear it!” She pleaded desperately.

He stepped back, causing her to lose the grip she has on his leg. “Do not make the mistake of thinking I will believe a word that comes out of your mouth anytime soon.”

“Father, p-please... I love him.” She shook her head miserably.

He reared back, like the words were a slap to his cheek. Then, silence descended.

“I am so disappointed in you, Kamara.” He g*****d at last.

She lowered her head in shame. “Please, forgive me, father. It wasn’t my intention to disappoint you...!”

The door opened and a guard rushed into his bedroom. He bowed his head, "My King, you're needed in court. The council adviser said it was urgent."

He nodded curtly, "Zaya, I want you to take your men to the general dungeon and extract the peasant. Bring him inside the palace dungeon. I will decide what to do with him later."

"No! Father—"

"And as for you, Kamara." Head whipped towards her, he stated, "You're under house arrest until I say otherwise. Guards!"

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IN THE KINGDOM OF SALEM

Danika has spent half of the day in worry and agitation. No matter how Remeta and Corna tried to distract her by playing with her and around her in the garden, it wasn't working much.

She hasn't seen the King all day, because he has been so busy. The letter...

That letter keeps worrying her, she has no idea why.

"Stop worrying, My Queen! Come and catch the football with Corna and I!" Remeta shrieked in happiness, interrupting her thoughts.

Danika stared at the happy girl, she couldn't help smiling back. "I'll be there in a minute..."

Remeta left the ball for Corna and walked closer to her. The girl took her wrist and began making efforts to urge her to her feet. Danika rose reluctantly, allowing Remeta to drag her to her feet.

"Everything will be fine, My Queen. Everything will be fine." Remeta lectured.

She needed to talk to, and Baski is very busy with the maids. "There's a message the King wrote the night before... I have never seen him more sad than the moments it took him to scribble down on that scroll. It makes me worry, what the content of that letter might be.

Is he having a problem in the court? Is it a problem with the petitions... about the slaves? Or..." She couldn't bring herself to talk about the uneasy feelings she has been having in the past few weeks. "I'm just uneasy..." She finished in a low breath.

Remeta knows nothing about this message. She only smiled at her Queen, "Do not worry yourselves unnecessarily, My Queen. You're so good for the King, but he can take care of himself too."

"You're right."

"Yes. So, let go of the worry and allow us play with the Prince! He is very unhappy that you're not letting him play!" She giggled.

As if on cue, a kick shot against her rib. She gasped and palmed her belly. Remeta only laughed harder.

Corna came closer, laughing too. He took Danika's other wrist, and they began urging her to the spot they called the playing field.

"Alright. Alright." Danika conceded defeat, her worry disappearing and replaced with happiness.

Everything will be fine. She took comfort in Remeta's words.

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