

The Alpha King's Hated Slave

Chapter 251

His eyes took on the gentlest light. "Alright, I will not. But, you understand my message right?"

"The only t-thing I understand is that you're touching me willingly. And you're hunching in front of me with a d-dirty scarred part of me in your kingly hands. And you're sending me away."

"No part of you is dirty, Vetta. Not to me." Done with her legs, he let them go.

She wiped her tears, staring at her ugly legs. "I can't be Anarieveta ever again. Cone made sure of that. You don't know half of the things I've done, My King. Or what it's like, leaving in a head like mine."

"I have a good idea, because I know what it's like leaving in a head like mine. You can always be Anarieveta again, you know why? The things you did do not define you." He took her hand and placed it on her chest, "What defines you is your here. Your heart defines you."

"What is left of my heart is ugly."

"It does not have to be so. That is why you have to give yourself chance to heal."

"King Cone took me from me. His daughter took you from me." Red teary eyes met his filled with anger, hate and bitterness. "I hate Danika. I will always hate her."

He shook his head firmly, "It was not her fault, Vetta. It's time you give her a chance too. I hated her, you can remember. I didn't give her a chance, and yet, I saw her for who she really is. Danika is not her father."

"But she's nowhere to be seen. I heard she is Mombana now." She snorted, "she chose her crown, power and riches."

He averted his eyes, his chest tightening. "No, she did not. I did something that was foolish and noble at the same time. I pushed her away. Even when she held on, I pushed her away."

"Like you're doing to me now." She rose when he rose, and crutched his Kingly garment, "Please, don't do this to me, Lucien. I don't want to go."

But, even as she pleaded, she saw the unmoving resolve from his eyes. He has made his decision, and will not go back on it.

Defeated, she left go of his robe. More tears filled her eyes.

He palmed her cheek, "You are always allowed in the palace, you know that, right? And, I will come and visit once in a long blue moon. This is not me letting my mistress go, this is me letting my friend heal. My family."

"Am I? Y-Your friend? F-Family?" She asked in a small thin voice....like a child who's scared to hope.

"You are. You, Baski, Chad... You all will always be my family, my friends. You are."

A tiny bit of the bitterness and hatred in her heart left her. She felt better. Not all good, but better.

Vetta nodded her head at last, wiping her tears. "Okay."

"Okay." He nodded too and let go of her cheek.

She was still crying as she headed for the door, her world crumbled at her feet.

With each step she took, memories of her from filled him. Raped. Beaten. Mocked. Whipped. The woman that always went to extremes to protect him.

"Vetta?"

She turned and glanced at him.

He walked towards her, pulled her close and kissed her. It wasn't a k**s of hunger, but a sweet gesture for her to hold onto while she finds herself in the world.

A k**s was uncharted territory for her, she has no idea how to go about it, but she did respond. Pouring in her ugly heart and disfigured soul into that single action. Into that rope he's giving her which she's sure he will never give her again. She stood and poured everything into that memory he was creating for her.

"Thank you for giving me this memory." She whispered when he pulled back. More burden left her heart. She felt like a stitch was weaving together her battered heart.

"Take care of yourself, Anarieveta." He g*****d, then he stepped back. "Dargak."

The door opened and the guard entered. The King nodded his head.

Dargak bobbed his too, before he turned and led the mistress out of her bedroom. Out of the palace.

King Lucien stood afterwards. Alone.

Late at night, Queen Danika couldn't sleep. She wet her bed with tears, missing the King so much it was like a physical ache. And it hurts more than the pain in her back that refused to go away.

The door opened and Sally entered the bedroom. Seeing her Princess crying, she walked towards her bed and sat on it.

"Please, stop crying, my Queen."

"I can't sleep. I miss him so much, Sally." She whispered tearfully.

"I know you do, My Queen." She patted her back in consolation.

"And I can't help but worry about him. Will he be able to go to sleep? Is he taking care of himself?" She shook her head, "I just don't know, Sally."

"I understand that you're so worry, My Queen, but you wouldn't be able to do something about it... at least not this night. All you can do is to take care of yourself and his child. Get enough sleep. And tomorrow? We will think again."

"But I c-can't sleep, the bed is so cold because he's not in it!" She cried like a child. "My child has turned my belly to a football field, he's kicking the devil out of me. I w-want my King, I want his arms around me. It's so p-pathetic, but I want to sleep snuggled up in his arms, Sally. This bed is so c-cold!"

"Alright. How about I lie down with you? I'll hold you, My Queen. I'll cuddle you, so you can sleep?" Sally asked hopefully.

It only made her cry harder. "You're all s-soft and small and feminine, and you don't have his scent. I love you, Sally, but you're not him!"

Sally didn't go, instead, she laid down on the bed beside her. And she was smiling. "I know I'm not him, but here, I'll still lend you myself, My Princess."

Danika snorted, but she let Sally laid down on the bed.

Sally reached for a story book at her bed cabinet and withdrew it. Opening the book, she began reading stories to her...just like she always did when Danika was still a princess and she, her personal maid.

The pregnant Queen listened to the story...to the sound of her beloved friend's voice. It took a long time but eventually the tiredness overwhelmed her and she began feeling dizzy.

"Sally?" She called drowsily.

"Yes, My Queen."

"What next? What happens next...?"

Sally watched her Princes—Queen fall asleep. The question keep revolving on her head. Indeed, what happens next?

Only the future will answer that. She, herself, is curious to know the answer the future has for her Queen... for her... for all of them.

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Chapter 252

Eight Weeks Later....

"You have to be in court, Your Highness, everyone is waiting for you." Baski announced as she entered Queen Danika's bedroom.

The thirty-three weeks pregnant Queen was standing in front of the mirror in her expensive, extravagant royal gown made by the finest lace and silk, rich in velvet. The red and gold-colored luxurious tunic gown also contained embroidered lace and gems. Her long blond hair was wavy and styled, it pulled down behind her back.

The Queen looks so devastatingly beautiful—even in her condition—but she isn't happy.

She misses King Lucien with an intensity that is so terrifying, it remains indescribable.

As days go by, she misses him so badly that she has to cry herself to sleep in her cold empty bed most of the nights, unless Sally comes with her story-parchments. She regrets running away from him that night they had a misunderstanding.

She should have stayed and talked more sense into that hard-headed man. She should have tried to hold on to him more. To convince him more. She should have allowed him to touch her when he reached for her....

Two months without his touch is like being in hell without salvation. She has no idea how addicted she has become to his touch until it was no longer there. And now, her people want her to marry. To allow the touch of another man.

Revulsion. Repulsive. Just the thought of it. And yet it's about to happen.

"I don't want to be forced to take a husband, Baski. You know that is what this meeting is all about." She g****d miserably, still staring at her reflection in the long mirror.

"I also know that you've avoided this meeting at all cost for the past two months, and what else I DO know...is that it can no longer be avoided, My Queen." Baski was sad.

"How can they push an eight-month pregnant woman into marriage!? This is ridiculous! Are they even thinking at all?" She wants no other man. And yet the one she wants is so out of reach now...

"They are, My Queen. It would have been ridiculous if the woman wasn't a Queen, but unfortunately, she is."

Danika shook her head helplessly. "I've requested countless times that they wait for me to put to bed, but since this child is not Mombana's, they do not want to wait that long. They need a King to rule alongside me, according to the Minister of Justice."

Baski couldn't conceal her sadness. She doesn't want Danika to be forced to take another husband either, but the choices are thin at this point.

In the past two months, Queen Danika had surprised the whole of Mombana with the way she went about righting her father's wrong, she succeeded in doing so much more than a King that has been on the throne for years.

She distributed food items and foodstuffs from the palace to the people. In the market, she opened up more trading businesses for lowborn that had nothing before. She has done so much, it'll make a list. And because of all these, her people have accepted her all the more.

The only thing that remains is to give her people a King that will rule with her, and she will be accepted fully not just by the people, but by all the laws and customs of Mombana.

Another main purpose of having a King—apart from ruling with her—is to secure an heir for the throne of Mombana. The fact that the Queen is pregnant does not matter.

According to the laws, customs, and traditions of all Kingdoms, the child in the Queen's belly does not count because the child does not belong to the King of that Kingdom, and also the child is produced outside—and before—her marriage with her King...whoever her King will be.

But, all this doesn't really matter because even if the child in her belly does not have a place in the throne of Mombana once the Queen takes a King, the child will always have a place in the throne of Salem. The sole heir to the throne of Salem.

King Lucien must have thought all these through before he freed Danika, Baski thought with an inward sad smile as she led Danika out of her bedroom towards the Court.

As Queen Danika went to court, her heart was heavy and her mind was filled with thoughts.

How is King Lucien? According to Chad who is always in Salem or Mombana, the King is fine. And yet, she cannot help worrying so much for him.

Apart from the worry for his health, she can't help the continuous painful thoughts in her mind. Is he thinking of me? Does he miss me as much as I miss him? Does he worry about our child? Does he miss having me in his bed?

Does he miss me in the cold darkness of the night?

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Chapter 253

Kamara is desperate. She can no longer sleep in peace, nor can she eat without indigestion... especially since she has no appetite at all. Not since she overheard her father's conversation with his General about Callan.

It has been two months since Callan was put in that godforsaken dungeon, her father only ordered that he shouldn't be fed, but he has not ordered any torture session or any verdict about what will happen to Callan.

That had gotten her worried as hell because she knows her father. His feigned ignorance doesn't mean he forgot at all, it only means he is planning something much more worse.

Her worries was confirmed last week, when she overheard his conversation with his General when he was angrily telling the General that he's been waiting for King Lucien to come calling for her, but the King was determined to shame him after ruining his daughter. He proceeded to state that he plans to order Callan's execution.

It was devastating to hear her father planning to execute Callan, it had taken everything in her to stop herself from letting out an alarmed scream at the door of his study, but she'd been able to control herself, determined to hear much more details.

More came when he also told the General that the reason he hasn't touched Callan was because he'd been planning something much more for him. He'd been planning to hand him over to her future husband, King Lucien to punish Callan if he'd come calling.

Then, he'd angrily hissed and spat out that he was losing hope if King Lucien will come and he was starting to consider declaring war with the Kingdom of Salem.

After she'd overheard all that, Princess Kamara was overwhelmed.

She'd reached a desperate decision to write to King Lucien to come for her hand in marriage...to save her. But, all her letters sent to Salem remained unanswered. Indeed, King Lucien had no plans to come for her hand in marriage.

As days goes by, her unanswered messages were making her more desperate and agitated, since she has no idea when her father will declare his decision in Court. She always makes sure to send food to Callan in jail, and she uses every means possible including bribing the jail-guards.

But, just feeding Callan to keep him alive wouldn't work for long. Not when her father is planning to kill him. It made her send more messages that remained unanswered.

Now, one week of overhearing the conversation, she is at her wit's end. She finally decided that just sending a message to the King to plead with him to come and save her will not cut it—he has no care at all what happens to her.

It's time she narrates it all to King Lucien in her letter...time to be more detailed.

"Henna!" She called after thinking for hours in her bedroom.

A few seconds later, the door opened and her personal maid hurried inside, "You called me, My Princess."

"Get me a new scroll, two fresh feathers and a box of ink."

The maid stared at her pitifully. "Can't you see it's not working, My Princess? You've sent letters countless of times. The King declines."

Kamara sprang up from the bed and paced in agitation. "I can't just do nothing! Get me what I asked for. This time around, I will be more detailed and explain everything. That King might be so powerful, scary and looks dangerous, but he has a good heart, Henna. I have to believe that he will help me. I have to!" She enunciated desperately, "If not, I'm doomed. And he's doomed too because my father will declare a war."

"You'll tell him?" Henna asked, wide-eyed.

"I will. I have no choice. At this rate, I don't might marrying him at all, I just want to save Callan's life!" She cried in intense despair.

"Alright, My Princess. I'll get scrolls, feathers and ink! I hope it works this time around!" She hurried out of the room.

Alone, Kemere hoped the same thing too. She hopes that it works out too. If he marries her, Callan will be sent to him by her father (she hopes) then, she will beg King Lucien to spare his life.

She stands more chance pleading with him than her father.

The door opened and Henna hurried in with everything she asked for. Kemere murmured her thanks, took them all from her maid and sent the girl off.

Alone, she set on her reading chair, placed everything on the table before her. Taking one fresh feather, she dipped it in ink. Then, she began writing.

In this letter, she wrote about her love for the 'present' called Callan. How her father wanted to marry her off to him so she will stop loving Callan. How her relationship with Callan improved after she came back from Courting Week. How they got caught and captured. And how Callan's life is in danger.

She wrote about the conversation she overheard. How her father feels about her 'ruined' virtue and what he plans to do. His plans for Callan. Then, she began pleading with him to come and ask for her hand in marriage.

She knows he has no merit or lover's feelings towards her, she wrote, but she pleads with him to come to her rescue by marrying her to help save her lover's life and also pretend to be from happening between the two Kingdoms.

Having casualties from such war will be devastating because none of the people deserves to be a victim of such circumstances.

Princess Kemere ends her letter with more desperate pleas. Then, she walked out of her bedroom and secretly called the Royal Messenger.

No way is she using the messenger birds again. This time, she will be sure that her message really did get to King Lucien's hands.

Alone, Kamara hoped the same thing too. She hopes that it works out too. If he marries her, Callan will be sent to him by her father (she hopes) then, she will beg King Lucien to spare his life.

She stands more chance pleading with him than her father.

The door opened and Henna hurried in with everything she asked for. Kamara murmured her thanks, took them all from her maid and sent the girl off.

Alone, she sat on her reading chair, placed everything on the table before her. Taking one fresh feathers, she dipped it in ink. Then, she began writing.

In this letter, she wrote about her love for a 'peasant' called Callan. How her father wanted to marry her off to him so she will stop loving Callan. How her relationship with Callan improved after she came back from Courting Week. How they got caught and captured. And how Callan's life is in danger.

She wrote about the conversation she overheard. How her father feels about her 'ruined' virtue and what he plans to do. His plans for Callan. Then, she began pleading with him to come and ask for her hand in marriage.

She knows he has no marital or lover's feelings towards her, she wrote, but she pleads with him to come to her rescue by marrying her to help save her lover's life and also pretend a war from happening between the two Kingdoms.

Having casualties from such war will be devastating because none of the people deserves to be a victim of such circumstances.

Princess Kamara ends her letter with more desperate pleas. Then, she walked out of her bedroom and secretly called the Royal Messenger.

No way is she using the messenger birds again. This time, she will be sure that her message really did get to King Lucien's hands.

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Chapter 254

Two months has not changed the fact that Vetta knows nothing to do with her life.

These past two months have not been easy, as she always finds herself resisting the constant urge to go back to the Palace.

But, she'd promised King Lucien that she will 'heal', she was determined not to let him down...whatever 'healing' means. The wounds she has cannot heal.

But since she already made a promise like that, she was determined to try and live as a free woman, and she set her mind to keep that promise.

In the past two months, she has tried to do everything normal women of the Kingdom of Salem would do. She goes to the market to get groceries for food, she goes to the fair whenever she hears there will be a carnival entertainment, she keeps her big house and even goes out back to pick fruits that fall in the garden.

It has been good, Vetta admitted within her as she sets her table for early dinner in the silence of her big house. It hasn't been easy, but it has been good. The life of a free woman was boring but fascinating.

More of the things that kept her going was her former maid, Kaya, that always comes from the palace bearing fruits and food.

"From the King!" She will always announce at her door. Vetta will always see herself abandoning whatever she's doing and rushing headfirst for the door to open it. Those times were always the best times.

The King sends her a lot through Kaya, it makes her happy. Those moments keep her going the most, along with the memories of the last day she had in the palace before her department. Her heart was...lighter.

She finished setting her table and lowered herself down on the chair. As she reached for her food, she heard a knock on the door.

"From the King!" Came the familiar announcement.

Excitement filled Vetta, she was already out of her chair in a flash and at the next flash, she was unbolting the locks and throwing the door open.

Kaya entered as usual with a huge smile on her face. The two trays on each of her hands contained a covered food and fruits. "The best evenings, Mistress."

"How is the King?" She asked as Kaya walked to the dining hall and placed the trays at the table.

"The King is fine, but very busy." She beamed.

"He is always busy. What's in the second tray?"

"Oh, it's a new dish tried out in the palace by Noma, the Palace cook." Kaya grinned at her, "You will love it, Mistress!"

Vetta cocked her head to the side as she glanced at the strange food that's unlike other foods she's seen in the palace. "Okay. I hope it tastes great."

Kaya nodded emphatically.

Vetta picked up her spoon and took a bite. It was indeed a delicious meal. She focused on it and devoured the meal ravenously.

As she reached for other meals, something happened.

She began feeling dizzy. Her eyes blurred.

“Kaya?”

The last thing she saw before she lost conscience, is the smile on Kaya’s face.

In Court, all the Ministers were seated in their various chairs at both sides of the huge Courtroom. They all stood at the opening of the gigantic Royal Court door made out of layers of oak planks.

The Queen entered with her head held high, her shoulders higher, and her steps regal as she marched towards her throne which is a bit smaller than a King’s throne but just as magnificent looking.

They all bowed their heads as they greeted her. At her response, they bowed again before they lowered themselves to their seats.

At first, they started with matters of the Court, bringing reports from various parts of their works. For a moment, the main topics became the royal farmlands and the water construction they were working on.

They all discussed and deliberated on it for so long, Danika’s back began aching her for sitting so long again. But she didn’t say a word or move a muscle, instead, she waited for the discussion and the final question she knows will be directed towards her.

“So, how do we make these water pipes to make sure a lot of farmlands will be able to make use of it, Your Highness?” The Minister of Personnel finally directed towards her. The others were looking hopefully at her.

“We will not have to make more water pipes, instead, we will gather more resources to construct more water boreholes or passages so that it can reach more lands.” She stated authoritatively, beginning to feel relaxed.

Maybe...just maybe... today’s Court will not be about her getting a King.

They all nodded their heads at the sense of her words. “This is a very good idea, Your Majesty. But, wouldn’t it be more expensive?” The Minister of Military Affairs asked thoughtfully from the left side of the Court.

She turned to him, “It will be. But when it’s e matter of greet course end impotence, we heve to forget about the cost end focus on producing the best results, don’t you egree Minister Regeh?”

“Mmm...” The Minister was nodding his heed in approvel, alongside other ministers. “I absolutely egree, Your Highness.”

“You’re indeed e wise women, Your Mejesty.” The Minister of Texetion complimented with e smile.

Queen Denike allowed her own lips to stretch into e smile too, “You fletter me, Minister Dento.”

“He only speeks the truth, Your Grecious.” The Minister of Public Works seconded. The other nodded too.

Queen Denike wes heppy. In the world of Royalties end Ruling, compliments come et e high price. At leest now they wouldn’t be discussing her merr—

“Which reminds me, Your Highness, that I heve compiled the list of ell the eligible noblemen in our Kingdom,” the Minister of Texetion begen, “end with your blessings end approvel, we will send out the informetion ecross the Kingdom for eligibles Princes that will be interested in esking for your hend in merriege end ettending the royel bell.”

The Queen breethed deeply in defeet. Heevens.

“Exectly the wey the Minister of Texetion hes seid it, Your Mejesty.” the Minister of Defense continued, “We heve compiled e list of greet men from the most privileged families in the Kingdom. With your order end ecceptence, we will throw e Royel bell end benquet where you cen be eble to select the best eligible men that will be the King of this greet Kingdom end rule alongside you.”

“Pleese give the order for this, Your Mejesty. It is long overdue. The people need e King.” Minister of Public Works bowed his heed in request.

The rest bowed their heeds end shouted, “Pleese give the order, Your Mejesty! Pleese give the order, Your Mejesty! Pleese give the order, your Mejesty!”

As they shouted over end over egein, Queen Denike closed her eyes in defeet with e heevy heert.

“Alright. I...” she swallowed tightly, her heert eching bedly.

“I give the order.” She let out in a hoarse voice, sealing her fate.

She turned to him, “It will be. But when it’s a matter of great course and importance, we have to forget about the cost and focus on producing the best results, don’t you agree Minister Regah?”

“Mmm...” The Minister was nodding his head in approval, alongside other ministers. “I absolutely agree, Your Highness.”

“You’re indeed a wise woman, Your Majesty.” The Minister of Taxation complimented with a smile.

Queen Danika allowed her own lips to stretch into a smile too, “You flatter me, Minister Dento.”

“He only speaks the truth, Your Gracious.” The Minister of Public Works seconded. The other nodded too.

Queen Danika was happy. In the world of Royalties and Ruling, compliments come at a high price. At least now they wouldn’t be discussing her marr—

“Which reminds me, Your Highness, that I have compiled the list of all the eligible noblemen in our Kingdom,” the Minister of Taxation began, “and with your blessings and approval, we will send out the information across the Kingdom for eligibles Princes that will be interested in asking for your hand in marriage and attending the royal ball.”

The Queen breathed deeply in defeat. Heavens.

“Exactly the way the Minister of Taxation has said it, Your Majesty.” the Minister of Defense continued, “We have compiled a list of great men from the most privileged families in the Kingdom. With your order and acceptance, we will throw a Royal ball and banquet where you can be able to select the best eligible man that will be the King of this great Kingdom and rule alongside you.”

“Please give the order for this, Your Majesty. It is long overdue. The people need a King.” Minister of Public Works bowed his head in request.

The rest bowed their heads and shouted, “Please give the order, Your Majesty! Please give the order, Your Majesty! Please give the order, your Majesty!”

As they shouted over and over again, Queen Danika closed her eyes in defeat with a heavy heart.

“Alright. I...” she swallowed tightly, her heart aching badly.

“I give the order.” She let out in a hoarse voice, sealing her fate.

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Chapter 255

King Lucien just returned from the Royal Court, very tired with a pounding headache nagging his head. He walked with a slight limp that comes with standing on his feet for so long. It was a very busy day like it has been for the past two months.

Earlier in the day, he got Princess Kamara's letter, and he was forced to open it.

Other letters, he did not bother to open because frankly, he does not care whatever its content might be. He has no intentions of marrying the Princess.

But, when it came from a messenger, he deduced that there must be more to the letter—there has to be for the messenger to be sent all the way from Navia to Salem.

So, he'd opened and read it.

Indeed there was more to the letter. It finally made sense, the Princess's behavior here in Salem. Her heart already belongs to another. Like his does.

He walked to his desk and lowered himself at his chair, his hand palming his banging head. He is just so tired.

The busyness of his days does nothing to alleviate the pains in his chest, the agony in his head, the torments of his mind, and the tortures of his night.

He thought he'd thought it through. Those two weeks it had taken for him to decide to let her go, he thought he had really thought it through.

Apparently, he thought wrong.

He never counted on waking up in the morning after a two hours sleepless sleep and she's the first thought in his mind. He never counted on being unable to have a clear thought for more than a few hours without the thought of her clouding his head. He never counted on the bad ache in his chest worse than a wound from a bad fall that refused to go away.

The nights are the worse.

The memories of her—of them—haunts his dreams. His waking moments. His sleepless moments of the night. His dreamless state. His working hours. His lonely hours. Everything.

He loves her. He did not realize how much he loves her until he turned around and could not see her anymore.

After he let her go, as days turned to weeks, he realized that he loves her with an intensity that is not normal. An intensity that is terrifying. Indescribable. Dominating.

The feeling did not make him take a step forward. Instead, it made him take a step back.

For a man like him, control was everything. Having control saved his life over and over again when nothing else did.

Years in slavery he spent building up that control only to watch it shake when Danika entered his life and crumble when he let her go. Knowing that a woman has that power over him was alarming, terrifying.

He stayed away these past two months thinking it will go away. If anything, it gets worse....these feelings for her. And his child? He misses his child so much it is an ache in his b***d.

“Dargak.” He g*****d, his head pounding greatly.

The door opened and the guard entered. He ordered the guard to get the headache portions Angie made for him earlier in the day from the Court.

Several minutes later, the guard returned with the portion he downed in one drink. The portion wouldn’t work none, but it is still better than nothing at all.

The door opened and Zariel entered. “The messenger from the Kingdom of Navia is about to journey back to his Kingdom. He requests to know the reply he is going with regarding the letter.”

The letter.

The King reached for a new scroll and an inked feather and wrote down his response to the princess.

Blurs was all she saw when her eyes opened. She closed it.

Opened it again.

Closed it.

Opened it again.

Vetta shook her head to clear the remaining fog from her eyes as she rose from the uncomfortable hard bed. She's in a cave, that much she can make out.

"Look who joined us again." Came the deep voice.

That voice...

The haze cleared from her eyes instantly, and her grayish-black eyes found the owner of that voice that has always been in her nightmare for the past five years.

It is really him. It is really him!

"I thought you died...!" She gasped in shock as she sprang up from the bed.

Coza's lips split into that monstrous smile she never really forgot. "Wouldn't you just like that, pet?"

Vetta can't believe this! Fierce anger, fear, rage, and pain mixed together.

Adrenaline pumped inside her as she rushed towards him and pushed him with all her might. "Monster! You monster!! What did you do to me!? Monster!!"

Two steps back under the force of her shove, he stood. "Oh, pet. You have not changed at all, have you? I thought being a mistress must have done some few changes." He was still grinning, "Guess it hasn't done much. You're still my same fierce angry vixen."

"I'm your NOTHING!" she shouted at him, "You monster!" Her blazing eyes caught the feminine figure that stood at the other side of the cave.

Her anger skyrocketed, "You bítch!" She hissed.

Kaya raised her chin proudly. "I only did what the Master asked me to do."

"The Master!? You work for this worm!? After everything, he did to us!? To Salem!? To the King!? To us!?" Vetta balled her fingers into a fist, her body shaking with the force of her anger.

"Pet, pet. Always the dramatic one. Whoever told you that Talia is from Salem?" Coza drawled, amused. He crossed his arms together, obviously enjoying himself.

Vetta reared back. Of course, that will be the only explanation why the traitorous bítch will be doing something like this.

Suddenly, pain overweighted anger. “All those meals... All those fruits...”

“They really did come from the King except for today’s meal.” Kaya—or is it Talia?—responded.

The pain receded as fast as it rose. “You bítch.” she whipped her head to Coza, “Why did you bring me into this godforsaken place!? Whatever it is, I want NO part in it! Keep living in this cave like the rat you are, Coza. You will still die a rat!”

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Chapter 256

“Your good wishes for me are quite overwhelming, Whóre Slave.” He was still amused.

Vetta whirled towards the entrance of the cave, ignoring the blow to her chest by that name.

“You truly don’t think you can just walk out of here, do you?” His amused voice came again.

“You only have to watch my back as I leave, Monster!” She spat without turning back.

“I need your help.”

Vetta whirled around so fast, it was a spin. She took two deep breaths, forcing herself to calm down.

When she got a semblance of control, she pinned him with eyes filled with so much hate it would have staggered a lesser human...or a lesser monster.

“I will rather die than help you with anything.” She stated matter-of-factly.

He clutched his chest in mock shock. “Oh, pet. You are so predictable.”

“I’m done here.” She turned again.

“If you help me, you will get so much money in return, you will be a rich woman.”

“You can rot in hell.” She has fifteen steps to reach the entrance.

“I will give you power, Vetta. So much power that even the noblemen and women of the Kingdom will fear, respect, and obey you.”

“I will rather die a peasant.” Ten steps to reach the entrance.

“Wow. Now, I am truly surprised. My pet rejects power.” He did sound surprised.

She kept walking. Seven steps to reach the door.

“If you walk out of here I will make sure the King of Salem finds out that you are the one that delivered the final blow that killed his beloved little cousin. What’s that his name?...uhm... Declan?”

Her steps faltered. Silence descended.

Then, she turned and faced him.

The venom on her face DID make him cringe this time around.

.

King Lucien began writing on the scroll.

Yes, he will help her. Not only because he wants to stop a war, but also because he is willing to save her lover too.

On the noon of the morrow, he will send out his Royal Messenger to deliver to her father that he is coming for her hand in marriage, he wrote. He would have given the message to Navia’s Royal Messenger but it will be suspicious, so Salem’s Messenger will arrive on the morrow instead.

At the end of his letter, he wrote that she should take care of herself. Then, he dropped the inked feather, folded the letter, and handed it to Zariel.

Zariel bowed to him before he turned and departed.

Alone with Dargak again, he leaned back on his chair and closed his eyes.

Why is he willing to save the Princess’s lover? The thought breezed through his mind.

He has no answer for that. Maybe because he finally knows what it is like for a person’s heart to belong to another.

He dismissed Dargak, wanting to be alone. The sound of the door closing filled the air. It was followed by silence. That eerily silence he has come to know on a personal level these past long weeks.

Alone. Always alone. Cold sizzled through him.

Then, Zariel announced himself again.

“This better be important, Zariel.” He g*****d without opening his eyes.

The guard entered and cleared his throat, “The Minister for Public Affairs is in the palace again, Your Majesty. It is about your permission for a few Personnels to visit the Rain Checker.”

The King already knows why the Minister came even before Dargak stated the reasons.

Years ago, a man named Sonmo was rumored to be a Rain Checker. A man who can draw down rain from the sky.

The rainless state of Salem for almost three years now has put his people in a desperate state, to the extent they’re requesting for his permission to journey out of Salem to the man’s Kingdom to seek his audience. This is in hope that the man might have a solution to what Salem will do for rain to bless the land again.

The rumors say Sunmo lives in Mombana. A day’s journey from Salem. Danika’s Kingdom.

Danika...

“Your Highness,” Zariel called nervously when the silence has stretched longer than usual.

He didn’t move a muscle, neither did he open his eyes, as he gave his usual response. “Tell him I decline to that request and my reason still remains the same.”

“Yes, Your Highness.” He bowed his head even though the King can’t see, and walked out of the door.

There will be no seeking out Sunmo, because it is all a rumor. It’s not worth the trouble chasing shadows because of rumors.

The headache that pounds his head will not let go, the pain from his left leg only keeps getting worse. He remained in his position, not moving a muscle.

A hesitant knock on the door.

“Your H-Highness?” Zariel sounded hesitant this time around.

“Get out of that door, Zariel.” He g*****d calmly.

The King’s voice was calm but a shiver worked down Zariel’s back. “Uhm, My King? I think you n-need to read this.”

“I have no intentions of reading anything, Zariel. Get out and stay out.”

Silence.

“It’s about Q-Queen Danika.”

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Chapter 257

Vetta’s steps faltered. Silence descended.

Then, she turned and faced him.

The venom on her face DID make him cringe this time around.

“You despicable sneaky monster.” She hissed, “it’s always about threats is that it? Always threats. Blackmail. Always.”

He shrugged, unperturbed. “It does the work better than anything else. Mostly because you know that I am a man of my words.”

“While other men’s words are gold, your own word is aluminum.” She crossed her arms, “I will still work out of this door, and let me tell you what will happen. I will go to the King and I will tell him everything. The rat he thinks is dead is not dead. Instead, he’s in a dirty cave craving power.”

“Poor Vetta. You are so so so pathetic. I heard he gave his love to another? After all the sacrificing and everything you did for him, what did you get?”

He was grinning, “He threw you away like discarded clothes while his heart longs after your sworn enemy. King Cone told you didn’t he? Bet he will be rolling in laughter in his grave. Tsk tsk tsk, pathetic.”

Her steps faltered. Pain filled her, her chest felt like it will suffocate. She balled her hands into fists so tight.

“Why do you keep protecting a man like that, pet? He does not care what happens to you, you know. Why not work for me? I will give you that power you crave so much. At least, if you can’t have the man you want more than anything in the world, you can have power.” He came up behind her, “In that way, you will not loose from all rounds. That will be very unfair to you, pet. I want to help you.”

Vetta went so quiet for so long, Coza began feeling victory in his grasp.

Then, she turned and faced him. Rage masked her always expressive face, along with tears swimming in her eyes.

“Mark my words today, Coza. You will die by my hands.” she vowed. “I will kill you by my own hands.”

The amuseeness disappeared from his face. Apart from the whóre Vetta, he knows the murderer Vetta really well. “I am offering you a salvation here. You wouldn’t.”

She let out an empty laugh, a year slipping from her eyes. “If you truly think I will not, then you do not know me at all, Monster.”

“What if I kill you. Here and now?”

She raised her chin. “Since when do you think I fear death? You of all people can remember how many times I pleaded with you and your monster King to kill me! Get lost, Coza, your threats on my life do not work on me. Never did, never will.” She turned towards the entrance.

“Not even the King finding out you killed his brother?”

“You, your monster King, and this bitch here killed Declan. Since she’s working for you, I do not need to think hard to know that she is the hooded figure that slashed Declan with a sword.”

“And you delivered the final blow that killed him. Do not think I joke, Vetta. I will make sure Lucien finds out about it. It is a better death for you than anyone you will die by my hands.”

Her steps faltered. Another tear dropped from her eyes.

He walked closer to her from behind. “Can you imagine his reaction? What he will do? A woman he cares about is the one that took the life of the man he protected with his life.

Silence. Tensed silence.

“Did I tell you that I will kill you, Coza?”

“You said it before.”

She nodded. “I will kill you anyway. And I don’t care what you do, I’m still out.” She took three more steps to the door.

Coza threw in the last card up his sleeve. His ultimate card.

“How about Killing Danika?” He g*****d.

Vetta stopped. Completely.

She turned from the entrance of the cave and walked towards Coza.

Slowly. Steadily. “Do you know that I hate you more than I will ever hate Danika?”

He shrugged. “But you still hate her anyway. Don’t tell me you haven’t fantasized about Killing her. Now, I’m giving you a chance to cleanly wipe her off the surface of the earth without anybody tracing her death to you. She is all that stands between you and the King.”

Vetta cocked her head to the side and regarded him. “She is heavily pregnant for him. I know how much he wants that child.”

“He is a healthy man, he can always birth one with you.” He observed her reaction to know if she has an idea that there’s a chance that the King is a sterile King.

Vetta was thinking about herself being a barren woman. But, she wouldn’t mind another woman birthing the King’s child if he belongs to her. “You’re right. He can always birth another.”

Coza smiled inwardly. She has no idea. This is his opportunity.

He will use her to eliminate Lucien’s succession so that when he kills Lucien, there will be no one in his way. It’s also a ‘killing two birds with one stone’ because Mombana’s throne will be empty too.

The day was suddenly looking too bright to him. “So, you’re in?”

“To kill that monster’s daughter.” She stated, “But, let us get a few things straight, Coza. I will still kill you anyway, and If I perceive that you plan to harm so much as a hair on King Lucien’s head, I will make sure you die the most horrible death ever. Mark my words.”

“Deal.” He flashed teeth, “Let it be done soon. When will you be able to do it?”

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Chapter 258

Baski urged the tired Queen Danika out for a walk to exercise herself. The Queen was grumpy and reluctant to go.

After being in court for half of the day, she just wants to lie down on the bed and sleep the whole night away...if the sleep will come. But, Baski dragged her out of the palace.

When the night's air hit Danika, most of her grumpiness disappeared and as their walk progressed, she admitted that an evening walk isn't a bad idea.

"You have a lot on your mind, My Queen," Baski observed as they walked towards the palace garden.

"I do have a lot on my mind. I tell myself to stop worrying always, like you always tell me, but sometimes I can't help myself, Baski."

"Is it because of the impending marriage?"

"Yes. It has become foremost in my mind since those nagging ministers manicured the order out of me two days ago." She took a deep breath, one hand going to her waist to support own weight. She feels so heavy.

"I heard that words are out already and the royal marital invitation is already sent out to Mombana's noblemen and across the Kingdom. Careful." She added glancing pointedly at the stone on her part.

"Thank you," she crossed over the stone, "The news must have reached Salem. I cannot help but wonder how the King will take that news."

Even Baski wonders how he will take the news too. Will he get hurt thinking that Danika has indeed moved on? Will he think she's eager to marry another man?

"The King can be so unpredictable. Nobody can be sure what goes on in that head of his." Baski answered.

"You're right. I miss him so much, Baski, and I know our son misses him too." She caressed her belly tenderly.

"I know he misses you both too. When is the royal banquet?"

“In three days, according to the Minister of Taxation and Public Works. So many eligible noblemen will be in Court, they will go through procedures and answer some questions. I’ll have to choose the one I want the most from the noblemen that passed all tests and gave best answers to questions.”

“Mmh,” the older woman nodded her head thoughtfully, “You might never know, the King might be there on that day.”

Danika’s cheeks stretched into a sad smile. “That is the best wishful thinking I have heard in a long time. The King Lucien I know will never be seen in Mombana or in Court on that day. I am sure of it.”

“What makes you so sure? He might want to come and see you.”

Queen Danika gathered her thoughts. In slow steady movements, they walked past the garden and began approaching the river. Shooting stars traveled among other stars in the sky. The night’s sky was beautiful.

“For one, King Lucien will never want to be seen in a crowd as part of the crowd—he tends to stand out a lot amidst the crowd. Secondly, he will not want to be there too while I choose another man for my life and my bed. Thirdly and the most likely...” She faced Baski.

“...the King Lucien I know will never leave his throne empty and vulnerable to journey to Mombana just to see me, because he has no one to look after the throne and his people. He will never want to endanger his people. No king wants that.” She finished in a sad whispered undertone.

Sadness crossed Baski’s features because she knows that Danika is right. She said nothing.

“I miss him so badly. Do you know what I wish?” Danika whispered.

“What is it?”

“I wish a miracle will happen and I will see him again.” She let out softly, her heart aching.

Baski wishes so too. “I miss him too.”

Danika turned to the older woman and took her hand into hers. “I’m so sorry, Baski. It’s because of me that you’re separated from him. It must be so hard for you. You can go back to Salem whenever you want, Baski. I know you’ll always come back.”

Baski smiled at her, shaking her head. “No. I will wait for you to give birth before I step an inch away from your side.”

Her eyes watered emotionally. She hugged Baski as she whispered again, “I wish a miracle will happen, and he will come to me.”

“It’s about Q-Queen Danika.”

His eyes sprang open. He sat up, glancing at the door. “Come in.”

The door opened, Zariel entered hurriedly. He walked towards the King’s desk and handed a red wrapped parchment to the King. “This is the invitation sent out by Mombana across the Kingdoms.”

King Lucien took the parchment from him and rolled it open.

Zariel watched his King carefully as he read calmly through the parchment. He remained calm as he read through the sheepskin, but Zariel picked up some reactions he was not able to hide.

A muscle ticked in his jaw. His fingers clenched and unclenched on the parchment. His eyes flared. His tensed muscles.

Finally, he raised his head. “A Royal marital invitation. She will be getting married soon.”

“Yes, Your Majesty.”

“They are in such a hurry to give her to another man. She is carrying my child. Mine.” He spoke through gritted teeth.

“Apparently, Mombana wants a King desperately, they are in a hurry to crown one. The royal banquet is in three days time when she chooses her King, the marriage will follow just as quickly, then, the coronation. Everything is rushed.” Zariel explained.

Danika will be married soon. She will belong to another man. She will be by his side. He will lay with her at night. She will carry his child.

His head was whirling—and not from headache this time around. An ugly feeling rose inside him he cannot tap down. His shoulder was so tensed. He has to put in a lot of effort not to ball his hands into a fist and slam it to the nearest wall.

Zariel shifted uncomfortably at the look on his King’s face. Now will be a good time to get out of his sight.

“Uhm, I know you might w-want to see the invitation, that is w-why I brought it to you. Have a good night’s rest, Your Majesty.” He bowed his head, turning towards the door.

In two steps, he reached the door and grabbed the doorknob.

“Zariel?” His eyes were on the sheepskin.

The guard turned back to him, “Yes, Your Highness.”

“Send a guard to the home of the Minister for Public Works, tell him that I changed my mind.” Then, he pinned Zariel with deep blue eyes, “Tell the Minister of Public Works that Salem will seek out Sonma, the rain checker to know if there is any solution for our rainless state.”

“As you wish, Your Majesty! The Minister will be very happy at your change of mind!” Zariel bowed his head in a little bit of enthusiasm that is rare for the big-muscled guard.

He turned to leave. Stopped. Glanced back at the King. “Which Minister will I tell him is in charge of going to Mombana to make this positive inquiries, Your Majesty?”

Silence.

Then, “I will make the inquiries, Zariel. I will journey to Mombana myself.”

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Chapter 259

Kamara woke to the news of King Lucien’s letter, her happiness has been unsurmountable.

It skyrocketed the more when Henna rushed to her bedroom to tell her that the Royal Messenger from Salem has arrived and he’s with King Valendy.

Kamara has been dancing all to herself since then, wearing a heart-warming smile on her face as she attended to her princess duties.

She’d made out time, as usual, to take food to Callan’s dungeon. They don’t let her get past the boundary, because her father made sure of it, but she already has a few guards working for her to ensure that Callan gets food.

The food she brought today, she handed it over to one of the guards as usual before she walked back to the Royal Quarters.

From afar, she saw Donna's eyes pinned on her, the mistress was frowning in thought. Obviously, she wonders why there's a smile on Kamara's face on this day. It has become a rare feature on her face since her lover was imprisoned.

Princess Kamara only grinned smugly at the bitch and walked past her.

Donna remained in worry as she walked to the Mistress Quarters while the Princess was giddy with excitement.

It does not matter if this happiness of hers is fleeting. It does not matter if she has to marry a man she does not love.

It is a small sacrifice to pay for Callan's life.

"Are you awake, Your Highness?" Came the deep voice of a guard.

Queen Danika has been awake for a few minutes but her body was hurting—from her back to her h*p and her belly. Everywhere hurts.

It has been this way these past few weeks especially when she wakes in the morning. Her only hope is that there's a light at the end of her tunnel, like Baski will always tell her.

Very soon, she will be carrying her child in her arms. A bright loving smile spread across her face. She caresses her swollen belly tenderly.

"I'm awake." She managed to g***n, her eyes closed. "You can come in, Omna."

The door opens and the Guard, Omna, hurried in. He bowed his head to her, "Words are moving around the Kingdom, Your Majesty. It's about the King of Salem."

Her eyes sprang open, her heart thudding. "King Lucien?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

With a g***n, she managed to push herself up from the bed. Her eyes found Guard Sonma, "What about the King of Salem?"

"Words are, he has finally honored his treaty to the Kingdom of Navia. He has officially asked for the hand of Princess Kamara in marriage."

Her heart stopped.

The world tilted around her, it is a blessing that she was sitting down on the bed because if she was standing, she might have lost her balance.

King Lucien is marrying Princess Kamar. Lucien is marrying Kamara.

“W-What?” Her heart is hurting, the physical pains in her body momentarily forgotten.

The guard nodded his head. “That is the words going around, Your Majesty. I thought you might want to know, that is why I came to you with the news.”

“Thank you. You can go now.” She managed. Her mind was whirling around. He’s marrying Kamara. He asked for her hand.

It is painful. So painful she dragged her chest tightly to try and relieve the pain there, but her attempt was futile.

When Baski entered the Queen’s bedroom, she took one look at Danika and her heart sank. She has heard the news already.

Queen Danika stood in front of the mirror in her nightdress, her face wet with tears. She whirled around when Baski entered, shaking her head miserably. “It’s true, isn’t it?”

Baski walked towards her, she nodded her head sadly.

More tears left the Queen’s eyes, she lowered her head. “It must be the news about my marital invitation being out. He gave up on us, Baski.”

“No.” The older woman shook her head repeatedly, taking Danika’s small hands into hers. She squeezed reassuringly, “You shouldn’t think like this, My Queen.”

“But, it’s the truth. He’s g-getting married... married, Baski.” shaking her head, she added, “Kamara will be his Queen. She will be beside him...be in his arms... it hurts badly.”

“Oh, Queen, you have to get hold of yourself. Don’t forget your condition. Here, come and sit down, I’ll get you water to drink.” Baski took hold of her arm, led her to the bed, and urged her to sit.

Danika sat gently, looking up at Baski with sad eyes. “So much for hoping a miracle will happen and he’ll come for me, right?”

“You have always been a woman of faith. You told Sally to have faith, didn’t you? You don’t have enough of that, Queen Danika. The King is an unpredictable man, no one knows what is going through in that head of his, but you have to have faith. Do you hear me?” Baski chided softly.

Just then, the door opened and Sally entered. She wasn't looking happy too. "The Ministers have assembled to make preparations for the Royal Banquet, My Queen. They are requesting for your presence."

Baski hated any news about that godforsaken banquet. "Tell them that she is not feeling well. They can go ahead and make their prepara—"

"It is okay, I'll be there." She whispered, cutting Baski off.

Sally and Baski looked at her with surprise and sadness.

One shoulder lifted and fell in defeat, she smiled through her tears. "If I'm going to get married, I might as well be there for the preparations and make some decisions myself. I don't want to be saddled with a wild forest cat if I can help it."

The words were the most miserably painful words Baski and Sally has ever heard.

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Chapter 260

Two days later...

Sonma is in his late seventies, his gray hair held in a small bond behind his head. But, unlike his agemates, he is strong and capable for his age.

He did his best to ignore his visitor while he concentrates on the spells he's trying to wove together but it is proofing to be an impossible feat. Who can ignore a man like this one?

His visitor dominated his sitting room. Dressed in the most expensive leather he has ever seen in a long time, everything about him screamed 'power' even without a crown on his head. A long scar slashed his left cheek, giving him a savage look he would have done without—the man will look scary either way.

Leaned back against the wall behind him, his visitor has his arms crossed together, looking too relaxed and tensed at the same time. Has he mentioned that his visitor is not smiling?

In fact, there are almost visible frown lines to his chiseled face that told Sonma that his visitor frowns more than most. A very serious, scary King, this one.

"Are you done?" The King asked after an infinite time of silence.

“No, Your Majesty. I’ve cooked up the last spell, it will boil well in a little while.” He explained.

The King nodded curtly in a way that loudly says, ‘I do not like to be kept waiting.’

Sonma cleared his throat and faced his spells. How did their Queen manage to serve this man for fourteen months? Their Queen is indeed a strong woman.

Time passed.

Then, the King finally took the nearest chair “So, I heard that there’s an important occasion going on tonight in Mombana’s Court.”

“Oh, it is late evening now, Your Highness, it goes without saying that the Royal Banquet already started. Our Queen will be choosing a deserving man who will rule our Kingdom with her.” the old man allowed his excitement to show through his smile, “We can hardly wait.”

“Mmmh.” King Lucien gritted his teeth, “I heard there are some...special rules to this banquet?”

Sonma thought about it as he snuffs out the fire and opened his pot of spell. “Oh? I don’t really know much, Your Highness, but a visitor I had yesterday who is a nobleman said a few things.”

“A few things?” The King inquired with a calmness that belied his curiosity.

The poor man pondered on how much to say and not to say, even as he wondered on the King’s curiosity. It is not a secret how much this King hates their Queen and with good reasons too.

They also know that their Queen’s child belongs to this King too, but the cub is not one made out of love or any good feeling at all, as there is none between the two people involved. It is only a given that a child was made from their time together because their Queen was his slave for more than a year.

So, Sonma cleared his throat, “Well, according to my visitor, there are some procedures they have to go through to pick out the most deserving. There are also some questions to be asked. The Queen will dance with some of the noblemen, and if she chooses anyone, she is allowed to go to bed with him tonight if she chooses.”

Silence.

“What!?” One word so calmly spoken still sounded like a bomb in the small house.

Sonma missed his reaction. The old man was mixing his hot liquid together in all concentration he would have seen the way his visitor's fingers balled into tight fists...and the fact that he sat up in the squeaky old chair.

The older man continued his tale cluelessly, "Well, personally, I do not think it should be done because the lass is heavy with a young cub, and it'll be too much of a job, ye' see. But them Ministers made it a possibility 'cause our Queen has been in collar for ages. Ain't easy to be there, ye' see." he picked up his pot and began stirring the hot liquid, "So, if our Queen has developed some unusual...urges, she needs to know her new King can...uhm...satisfy her that way, ye' know."

"I see."

Sonma nodded as he stirred his hot liquid, "Yeah, yeah. Them noblemen don't mind her heavy state, ye' see. In fact, my visitor looked as eager as a night guard dog for meat. Said he'd just pretend the belly ain't there 'cause the Queen is very attractive."

He takes, reaching for a new bottle, "Them lads are in fact lookin forward to gettin under the Queen's petticoat, ye' see. Our Queen is beautiful. Aye, good reason too—" CLAAAAAANG!!!!

The old man jerked at the unexpected sound, his head whipped towards his visitor.

King Lucien had banged his hand loudly on the table, his eyes glaring daggers at the old man.

Sonma is suddenly reminded of a wild anger lion. Fear filled his system. "I-Is it what I s-said, Your Highness?"

King Lucien was breathing hard. He tried his damnest to calm himself but it is proving to be an impossible feat.

Cold eyes sliced the rain checker. "Your visitor. What. Is. His. Name.?" He spoke through gritted teeth.

"Nobleman S-Scott, Your Highness." The words rushed out of Sonma's lips. "The eldest son of the Riverdale family."

The King knows that family distinctively. Very rich. Powerful.

A perfect candidate that can win a Queen, his mind whispered.

His hand fisted tighter.

His eyes looks....murderous. The poor old man shrank away from him, blatantly fearful.

He fixed the old man with his eyes, “Are we done here, Sonma. I need to be somewhere else.”

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