

The Alpha King's Hated Slave

Chapter 281

"Thank you for saving my life, Anarieveta." Declan rasped at her hair.

"Thank you f-for staying alive." Vetta cried, "You have no idea h-how... how you have helped m-me now."

He continued, "All these years, I get flashes of our time in that cage...and my last moments. I felt so much hatred towards you," he admitted, "my memories were all jumbled up. I remember a betrayal from a woman that has taken punishments for the King. I remember the woman stabbing me."

Declan pulled back then and looked at her, "But as I stepped into the boundaries of Salem and my memories welcomed me, my heart set you free. I remembered fully then that it was the maid—Talia—who owns that rage and hatred."

"It would have been a disaster for me if your memories didn't return..." It was a joke, but it came out tearfully.

"It would have been. Because you would not have explained." He stepped back.

"There was nothing to explain. I stabbed you. You died." She shook her head, "There was nothing to explain."

"Now, you can allow that guilt to let you go. You stabbed me to save my life. Here I am today... Alive." Declan gave her a small smile.

She returned with a wobbly one. "Yes, now I can let everything go."

Declan found that word strange.

Then, Vetta faced the King again, this time Declan has laid her bare in front of him. So, she can only stand and wait for his decision.

It came when he closed the distance between them and enclosed her into his arms.

She went willingly, letting the tears flow. For the second time for as long as she can remember, he was holding her so close, so tight.

And yet, it doesn't feel like a lover's embrace like it would have felt like to her before. Why? Does it have something to do with the fact that she is starting to see things more clearly for the first time in sixteen years?

“Nothing has scared me in a long time than these those three minutes I thought you really did have a hand in Declan’s dead.” King Lucien grunted softly.

“It was the second hardest command the Monster King had ever given me... right next to killing Yeaha.” her breath quivered, as she referred to Lord Gedony’s wife which was her first kill, “I couldn’t do it, it was t-too painful. L-Living with the thought that he died all these years has not b-been easy.”

The King pulled back then, he turned and stared at his younger cousin who he’d thought was gone... who’s return has freed his heart and gladdened it immediately. “I’m glad he is back too.”

Declan grinned at him. That boyish grin that is always so familiar lights up his face and reveals identical dimples on either of his cheeks.

King Lucien returned with a smile of his own. It was a full-blown smile. The first of its kind.

Vetta’s jaw slackened at the very sight of that transformation. King Lucien is smiling. Really smiling.

Searching her memories, she tried to remember the last time she has ever seen this look on him.

Her head came out blank. He is happy. Truly happy for the first time in sixteen years.

Words of Declan’s return spread like wildfire. In Mombana, they were happy tears and jubilation in the palace.

Baski, Queen Danika, and Sally were in tears in the Queen’s bedroom. It was happy tears.

“Heavens, I can’t believe this!” Baski kept saying for the umpteenth time.

“Me too!” Sally, “To actually think that he’s Princess Kamara’s lover back at home...!”

Queen Danika remained speechless in her happiness. The pain in her waist was very forgotten under the onslaught of the news she’d heard. It has her too happy!

Thank the Gods... At least, one of Lucien’s family survived her father’s cruelty. Less pain in her heart, in her conscience. More happiness for King Lucien.

Her King deserves to be happy. “Thank heavens, he is alive... Oh, thank heavens...!” She cried in happiness, voicing it out at last.

Sally hurried to her and hugged her tight. The both of them held each other. Baski walked closer and wrapped her motherly arms around the two women.

It is a happy day in Mombana.

In the hours that followed, King Lucien and his brother remained in his Chambers, talking. Vetta had gone back home.

Declan told him everything that happened right from the moment an old woman drove him out of Mombana to the Kingdom of Navia. He told his brother everything about his relationship with Princess Kamara.

And in turn, King Lucien told him bit by bit the things that happened in the last six years. Starting from the feud they raided in Mombana and escaped. How he built up Salem. How he took Mombana's princess in as a Slave.

Then, he told his brother everything about Danika. Right from her time of being enslaved, to the status of his relationship with the Queen of Mombana now.

"You love her?" He finally voiced out, his throat too dry. It was so unbelievable for Declan. He was too shocked.

"Yes. Wholeheartedly." King Lucien admitted.

Declan can only stare at his brother with a jaw slackened by shock. His brother fell in love with King Cone's daughter. He set her free from Slavery. She is carrying his child.

"Woah." He has no words.

King Lucien shrugged, staring out of the window. Night has fallen. "I find it hard to believe too, but you know the truth, Deck?"

"What is it, big brother?"

"I do not think I can live without that woman." He stated bluntly, "I do not want to. When you see her...when you spend a little bit of time with her, you will understand why everyone loves her. Baski. Remeta. The guards. The people. Chad. Z—"

"Woah, Chad likes her too?" That was a surprise. The guard Chad hates people in general. The Chad he remembers will never love any product of Cone.

The King's lips curved to one side of his cheek, "He protects her with his life. And he does it wholeheartedly."

“Woah. And Remeta too? It is all so hard to believe.” He g*****d truthfully. He tried to imagine himself liking Cone’s daughter.

The impossibility of it is too much to even consider. It’ll take a miracle.

King Lucien saw the look on his face, and he knows it for what it is. “You do not like her.”

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Chapter 282

FIFTH TO THE FINAL EPISODE; Part 2.

Declan raised his hands’ palms out. “I do not mean any offense, brother. I do not judge you or hold a grudge against you for loving her, I trust you. I know you. I will not get between you two.” he paused, “But indeed, I do not see myself liking her now, or in the future. Her father... That monster...”

King Lucien only got up and patted his shoulder in reassurance. “It is okay, Deck. I will not force you to. I will not impose it on you either. I respect your decision.”

His uneasiness dissolved. “Thank you, brother.” His usual smile crossed his face, “One great thing is that you’re not in love with my woman. And you do not want to marry her.”

“The Princess Kamara.” The King nodded, “I still can’t believe that you’re the peasant..., That woman loves you immensely.”

“Yes. I...I feel that way for her too,” a blush colored his cheeks, “Her father almost killed me for it. You saved my life.”

“Valendy will be shocked when the words of who you really eventually get to him. I don’t even want to imagine what it’ll feel like if I’d realized who you are, only to hear that he’d killed you for being a ‘peasant’ that compromises his daughter.” A muscle ticked in his jaw, “That would have meant unstoppable war.”

“I’m glad everything worked out in the—”

The door suddenly burst open. Princess Kamara hurried into the King’s Chambers, her eyes when wide when she saw the King conversing comfortably with her Callan.

“Oh heavens, it’s true!” She gasped. The rumors were unbelievable when she heard them. That the prince of Salem who was thought died arrived as Navia’s Prisoner today.

The people were talking about it. Words were traveling fast. She’d found it hard to believe. It was just too unbelievable. But as she saw her Callan and the King...

“The rumors are true...!” She cried as she pushed further into the King’s Chambers.

Declan is already halfway across the room to get to her first. They met in the middle of the bedroom, Declan took her up into his arms. Princess Kamara hugged him tightly.

The princess began rambling on how it is all impossible to believe, Declan went ahead to ensure her that it’s really true.

He is no peasant at all, instead, he is King Lucien’s cousin brother. Royalty.

“Heavens, I should have known... Your eyes...” Her eyes turned towards the King and back at her Callan. The deep blue eyes were almost identical.

Then, they were hugging again. The princess was so emotional.

The Heavens are with her! No more marrying the King of Salem!

The love of her life is not a peasant! He is not even a privileged, but someone more..!
He’s Royalty. Full-fledged. He’s the cousin brother of the King of Salem himself..!

She was crying. The words rambling from her mouth as she hugged him as tight as she can. Oh, how she can’t wait for her father to hear this! For his useless mistress, Donna, to hear!

Oh, how she can’t wait to see her father anytime soon so, she can rub it to his face!

Indeed, heaven is with her. She can have happiness and perform her duties in the future.

Coza was sheathing in rage. His anger and furious state know no comparison.

Everything is going down the drains! Everything!

Not only did Talia not succeed in killing anybody, she got exposed and killed by the King!

Vetta did not kill the Queen of Mombana. No, the his former Master’s daughter is still alive, doing heaven knows what!

And the worst?

Prince Declan! Prince Declan is alive!

Picking up his favorite wooden chair, he throws it across the cave-wall and watched it break to pieces. "Aaaargh!" He shouted in rage!

"Everything is falling apart! Everything!!!" He raged, kicking the table repeatedly.

It did nothing to alleviate his anger! Nothing! Another Royalty is back, so Salem is not safe to attack for now.

No, he knows what will alleviate his anger. Time is running out. His patience has run too thin.

No, it is time he goes all out!

With that thought in mind, he drafted out a message in a scroll, walked outside his cage, and sent it out using the messenger bird.

The message is for his troops. His army he has kept hidden for the past six years.

His captain will know that message for what it is. It is a signal.

Tomorrow morning, they will attack Mombana.

No more hiding.

No more waiting.

It is war.

His greatest advantage is that Mombana will never see it coming. Like Salem never did, fifteen years ago.

It is almost midnight, King Lucien just got out of the shower.

His heart is less heavy, for the first time in years. The joy in his heart was immeasurable. He stayed with Declan since he came back. Even after his reunion with his princess, he'd remained with him in his Chambers.

Now, he'd finally left to go, either to catch some sleep or to go spend more time with his princess.

King Lucien finished toweling his body when a hesitant knock came at his door.

“Who is there?” Taking out his nightclothes, he surveyed the garment carefully.

“Remeta, Your Highness.” Came the familiar voice. But it wasn’t small and tiny like Remeta’s normal voice. It was bold. Too bold.

The voice of the seer.

King Lucien abandoned his nightclothes, with his towel firmly around his waist, he walked to the door and pulled it open.

Remeta stood there. She was staring right at him, but he could tell that her eyes aren’t seeing him. It was dazed.

“The prince awaits his father, but he is ready to come forth. He cannot wait any longer.” Her eyes finally pinned him, “Go. Now. Your Queen, your son is in danger already. Not one danger, but two. They need you.”

King Lucien tries to grab her words, “I do not—”

“Who the Queen do not expect will give her life for hers. The Heaven will cry, for she has suffered. Who your Queen do not expect, will give her life for hers. The Heaven will cry, for she has suffered.” She repeated.

Then, she added, “Go. Now. The Prince awaits his father, but he is ready to come forth.”

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Chapter 283

FOURTH TO FINAL EPISODE; Part 1.

Name: Night For Lovers.

Bathed and dressed in her nighties, Princess Kamara laid down in bed, her heart filled with elation and peace, for the first time in a long time.

Her Callan—no, Declan—is no peasant after all, but a Prince. The knowledge is going to take some time getting used to.

At the sound of her door opening, her eyes slipped open. Declan stood at her door. He was dressed in a white coif robe with the rope tied into knots at the front.

Her heart fluttered. The temperature of her bedroom seems to have dropped as her eyes met his.

“Declan...” She has no idea what she wanted to say, only that he was too far.

“I think I’m finally ready to take what belongs to me, My Lady. I’m ready to make you mine,” His cheeks went ruby, but his eyes held hers, “If you are ready...”

Her hand stretched out in beckoning of him, “I have been ready for a long time, My Prince,” a small almost-shy smile followed the pronunciation of his entitlement.

“No, please call me Declan, My Lady.” he responded with a smile of his own as he closed the distance between them, “I like hearing my name on your lips.”

“Declan. But, I want you to call me by my name. Not My Lady, not Princess Kamara...I do not have a status higher than yours.”

He reached closer to her, his eyes landed on her small pink lips, “I love calling you My Lady...” he lowered his head and kissed her neck.

Her eyes slid close. “Declan...” She breathed out.

He pulled back. She opened her mouth to say a word, he simply bent and covered it with his own. At that moment, everything else fell away.

Nothing else mattered but him and his k****s. It was unlike all the other k****s they’ve shared before. It was scorching and it was raw. It ignited like the flame she was.

His tongue pushed into her mouth, sweet and demanding, the hot slide of it making her gasp. Princess Kamara tipped her head back against the wall to deepen the angle, letting him take whatever he wanted, then taking in return. Exploring the heady, alcoholic flavor of him as the rest of the world fell away.

He climbed the bed without breaking the k**s, and undressed her out of her nighties—pulling back a bit, just the get the flimsy gown above her head and out of the way.

In turn, she undressed him too. Untying the knots that held his robe together until everything came undone. Slipping it from his shoulders to reveal hard muscles and smooth skin.

Declan bit off a curse as her soft dainty fingers caressed him. His mouth crushed back on hers, this time the k**s was harder and deeper.

“Declan...” She m****d against his mouth, unable to keep the need inside, “Declan... Please...”

His fingers trailed down her neck over the achingly sensitive tip of her nipple, sending electricity jolts through the Princess’s body. Then, he pinched them, and she g****d aloud because it hurts and yet it feels so good.

He laid her down on the bed, breaking the k**s to get a really good look at her naked form. “You are beautiful, My Lady.”

The Princess’s cheeks turned the deepest shades of red at his hungry eyes looking at her everywhere. When her eyes which were on his incredibly masculine body slid even lower, a gasp tore from her lips.

Her eyes flew back to his face, her cheeks hotter than ever. “Oh...”

Declan chuckled hoarsely at her reaction. “Worry not, my beautiful princess, I will not hurt you.”

It isn’t the first time she is seeing him naked, but it is the first time their intimacy will become more...intimate. Will he fit? She swallowed tightly.

Seeing the fear that almost clouded the hunger in her eyes, Declan proceeded to do something about it. Kissing her passionately, he began touching her breasts again.

He stroked her, squeezed her aching flesh, pinching her nipples, his mouth leaving hers to trail down her neck in a series of small, precise bites that made her shudder and shake, a tree blown by the hurricane that was surrounding them. She was moaning now, everything else forgotten apart from what he’s doing to her.

Then, he lowered his head and replaced his hands with his mouth. Kamara cried out, her hands up to his shoulders, her nails digging in, clutching him as suckled from her in hard tugs she felt blatantly in the secret place in between her legs.

“Yesss.... y-yessss, oh Declan...!” Her head thrashed on the bedding, her eyes squeezed shut.

His hand slid lower, trailing down from her breast lower.... much lower...until he cupped her womanhood. Then, he began touching her intimately.

Someone was panting. Her. And she was moving helplessly, grinding herself against his searching finger, wanting more friction, wanting to ease the terrible, relentless ache that gripped her.

“Heavens, I need you so much. I can’t wait any longer...!” Declan rose over her as let out between his teeth.

She parted her legs for him, he settled in between her soft thighs, his hands holding one creamy thigh while the other one guided his thick length to the entrance of her body. Then, he stiffened.

The instant he tense, her eyes opened filled with desire, love and hunger for him. She saw the horrible memories in his past right there in his glazed eyes, in the stiffness of his shoulders.

“It’s okay, Declan. I’m right here...” She whispered, her arms going around his head to pull him down for a passionate k**s filled with her love for him.

“Kamara...” His voice hoarse. Pained. Uncertain.

“Yes, it’s Kamara. It’s Your Lady right here with you. Not Mombana. Not those monsters. It’s me... And we’re in Salem. In the palace. In my bedroom...” She kissed every corner of his face she could get her lips on, “You’re in my bedroom... On top of me... And, I can’t wait to f-feel you inside me.”

Her words did it. With a g***n, he plunged into her.

The princess cried out as the blunt head of his shaft breeched into her body, pushing through the tight sensitive folds, hard, hot and big. Heavens, so big.

“The Gods, you’re...tight...!” He g*****d in a strangled voice, pleasure oozing through his body in overwhelming waves.

“It burns,” The words tore from her, so uncomfortable, she feels on fire. She breathed through her nose—short, shallow, breaths. “It hurts,” she managed out.

“I’m sorry, so sorry, heavens...you feel so good, dearling.” Declan gathered all the control he could muster and held himself still to give her time to adjust to him. It was his turn to k**s all over her face, down to her neck. “So sorry...”

His hand went in between them, he started rubbing the bundle of nerves there. He didn’t stop until the stiffness left her body and she was moaning low on her throat.

“Okay?” He kissed her sweaty forehead.

“Yes,” she let out a m**n, “Yes, my love...”

He began moving inside her. Slow, sensual movements that drew low throaty m***s from her throat.

They were touching, kissing. He kept pushing, stretching her, making her feel the burn of it, making her internal muscles clutch around him as if she were ready for more and not lying there overwhelmed by the most intense feeling of her life.

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Chapter 284

FOURTH TO FINAL EPISODE; Part 2.

Name; Lifetime Decisions.

And then he made everything even more intense, gripping her h**s and tilting them, sliding deeper, drawing wordless sound from her, until she was could feel him everywhere.

“My lovely lady...” His breathing was hoarse, his skin shone with sweat, the feral look on his face doing things to her, making her own hunger ache hotter.

And when he began to move, pulling out, then driving into her, hard and deep, and with fierce intent, the pull of an intense climax got even stronger.

“Callan,” she whispered raggedly. “Oh my God....”

He said nothing, but the look on his face was savage as if he were determined to wreck her, to love her, to destroy her, and nothing was going to stop him.

He began to thrust harder, and she found herself arching up into him, moving with him, her nails digging into the hard muscle of his shoulders. Relishing the slick slide of his thick maleness inside her body.

Sounds escaped her, raw animal noises of pleasure as sensation wound like a clock spring inside her. It wounded so tight—oh, heavens—she knows that when it released she was going to come apart.

She was babbling, she could hear herself, helpless words spilling from her mouth under his and running together in a long stream.

PleaseCallanohGodpleasehardermorefasterdeeperHelpmeOhHeavensyespleaseharder
.

She couldn't stop them, an earthquake beginning to tear her apart. And then he took his lips from hers and his hand slid between their straining, slippery bodies, his fingers finding her sensitive nub again, circling, then pressing down at the same time as he thrust up.

“Come, Kamara,” he growled, his voice hot and rough, the voice of a stranger. “Effing come for me.”

And like her body had been holding out for precisely that command, the pressure released and she screamed, torn apart just like she thought she'd be. “Caaaaaallan!”

And as the pieces of her scattered in the air, she was dimly aware of him moving faster, and then came the sound of his own release, the guttural roar of it echoing in the room around them, his whole body stiffening under hers.

But she didn't have the strength to do anything more than wrap her arms around him and hold him tight as he came to pieces. Just like she did.

He was shaking. Just like she is.

An hour later, the Princess has settled into an exhausted sleep. Declan got out of the door just in time to see King Lucien dressed up in his ceremonial wear.

His big cousin glanced at the door he came out from, then, pinned him with a stare with his eyebrow raised.

Knowing why he was getting that look, Declan lowered his eyes, almost turning red at the hairlines.

“Sleeping with my intended, huh?” King Lucien said without heat, “I wonder what her father will think about that.”

Declan snorted, glancing back into the bedroom to make sure his Princess is sleeping well before he closed the door shut. “Her father can k**s my behind. I intend to marry her.”

“You'd better. You have compromised her already as I can see, and half the Kingdom has heard.” The King wasn't smiling, but the glint in his eyes shows that he was amused.

Declan did turn ruby then. He cleared his throat, changing the subject. “You are all dressed up,”

The King tensed as if he just remembered something. “Yes. I need to be in Mombana.”

In the next few minutes that followed, he stayed discussing his journey with his younger cousin, who listened attentively. The King made life-changing decisions.

In the end, Declan didn't only listen. He supported the King wholeheartedly.

“Instead of the third night, I was saying, we should do hold the Fire Festival in the very first night of the paleozoic moonlight, Your Majesty. That will work really well into our favors.” Minister of Taxation stated.

“No. The third night will always be better.” Minister for Public Works countered.

It was early in the morning, the Queen isn't really up to this at the moment, but she had no choice than to sit down and listen to her Ministers.

Queen Danika was in pain. Every single part of her. Is this another false labor? Her water hasn't broken yet.

The world went on without her. The ministers kept arguing as usual. Her court is always an argue-to-agree Royal Court. The argument first before they reach an agreement.

When she couldn't sit still any longer, she rose from her throne and began pacing.

The Court went silent. They all glanced at their Queen in concern.

“No, go on, go on.” She urged them, “Do not worry about me.”

They nodded and continued their argument.

Heavens, she needs to use the bathroom. So, as they went about their business, she made her way to the nearest toilet and made use of it.

It was harder this time, the pain in her pelvis worse, causing her to cry out and breath through her nose as she eased some of the pressure in her bladder. Heavens, it feels as if her son is pressing down on her there.

But after using the bathroom, she felt a little better. When she got back to Court, they seem to be waiting for her to come and make a contribution. Either that or they have a new topic to discuss.

“Right on time, Your Majesty. So, we were talking about the next royal banquet for your marital procedures, and we agreed that it will be done on the next four nights to come.” Minister for Defense informed her.

“Are we back to my Marital Procedures?” She g*****d tiredly. Gods, these old men are persistent.

“Unfortunately, yes, our dearest Queen. I'm afraid that we cannot put it off anymore.” Minister for Military Affairs got up in emphasis, “We are happy to let you know that we have the most perfect candidate in mind already.”

“We do?” Queen Danika arched her brow.

“Yes, Your Highness. Unfortunately, Lord Riverdale seems to have taken to his heels, he is out of the Kingdom and he did not tell anybody why. He was our best choice.”

Queen Danika was doing everything within her power to hold her amused smile. Oh, she knows the reason why the Lord ran.

Minister for Taxation continued, “Anyway, we have Lord Korningham. He is the next most eligible noblemen who will lead this Kingdom to the next level. He will—”

“No Lord Cunninghen is going to go anywhere near my woman and my child, Taxation.” Came the deep voice of authority.

All heads turned towards the entrance of the official entrance of the Court. Gasps of surprise filled the Court.

The King of Salem stood there in his elegant ceremonial attire and a sword in it's scabbard behind his back.

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Chapter 285

THIRD TO LAST EPISODE; Part 1.

Name: My Woman. My Possession.

“So, let me get something very straight. You, My King, almost executed the long-lost brother of the King of Salem?” Queen Izia, Princess Kamara’s mother arched her brows at her King.

They are in his Chambers. King Valendy, behind his desk, while the Queen sat on the bed giving him a look that managed to be both smug and elegant at the same time.

King Valendy cleared his throat sheepishly. “Well, how was I supposed to know that the peasant is no peasant after all, but a Prince?”

“Maybe, if you had let your daughter follow her heart, we might at least notice some little little details that hints that the man does NOT behave like a peasant at all.” she paused, letting that one sink in.

Flapping her folding feather fan open she began fanning herself, "Maybe if you had stopped listening to your mistress for a second and disregarding your daughter's feelings, you would have noticed a few things too."

"So now, I take all the blame?" King Valendy arched his brow at his Queen.

"Not at all, My King. You can share some with your Mistress. There is enough blame to reach you both in massive quantity." She provided in the most respectable tone ever.

The King paused in his writing and glanced at his wife. He noticed the lines on her very beautiful face that indicated that she was trying to hold back her laughter.

"You are enjoying this too much, Izia." He crossed his arms, his gaze boring down at her.

The Queen did smile then. A beautiful smile which he hasn't seen on her face for a very long time. "I'm sure the Princess will enjoy it more than I do, My King."

He has missed that smile, King Valendy admitted to himself. "You are a very beautiful woman, Izia." The words left his mouth before he even gave it a thought.

The Queen flushed like a young schoolgirl. She cannot remember the last time her husband complimented her in all her twenty-five years of marriage to him.

"You f-flatter me..." She was flustered. That compliment has thrown her off balance. Made feelings long buried to start waking from the dead.

"You know me well enough to know I do not flatter, My Queen. You are an exquisite woman." And she is. His body reacted to her.

King Valendy tried to remember the last time he has taken his wife to bed. Was it five years ago? Six?

She smiled at him again. "Thank you, My King." Butterflies spread inside her lower belly. Time to go.

She rose to her feet. "I'm afraid that I have to get back to—"

"No, don't leave." He was quick to interrupt, "Please." He added at her bewildered look.

"Oh..." She looks clearly uneasy. And relieved at the same time.

I must have been blind all these years, King Valendy taught to himself.

"Can I ask something of you, My Queen?"

“Okay...?”

“Can you come and give me a shoulder massage?” She used to give him that whenever he works too much, and his back begins aching. The last time was when? Fifteen years ago?

“Please?” He added. What had happened to them?

The uneasiness dissolved. She gave him that smile again. “As you wish, My King.”

Minister for Taxation continued, “Anyway, we have Lord Korningham. He is the next most eligible nobleman who will lead this Kingdom to the next level. He will—”

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Queen Danika’s eyes widened, her heart filled with excitement as she saw him. he is here...! King Lucien is here for her...! But what is he doing in court...?

King Lucien walked straight through the aisle of the Court looking powerful and formidable as always. The two guards the King came with, Zariel and Chad remained at the door’s entrance.

They all bowed down to him in greeting. He nodded his head curtly, but his eyes weren’t them. No, they were at the Queen seated on the golden throne, whose eyes have gone wide, zeroed in on him.

When he got to the very end of the pathway, he stood in front of Danika. For a few seconds, the world fell away. They looked at each other like they are the only people in the world—maybe they are.

He reached out his hand to her.

She took it without hesitation.

He helped her rise from her throne, holding her in the cushion of his strong arms. “How are you feeling today?”

“Achy,” she whispered, her pain-filled eyes searching his, her breath shallow, “I ache all over.”

His eyes lowered to her swollen belly, the harsh lines on his face dissolved. When his eyes met hers again, it was filled with tenderness. “I’m so sorry, dearling. We will be having our baby today.”

“Today?”

“According to the seer.” He leaned in and kissed her forehead.

Her eyes slid close as his lips touched her forehead, “Oh. I hope so too... I think I’m going to die at this rate.”

“No, no, don’t ever say something like that again.” He patted her hair.

She clung to him, tears burning the back of her eyes. This new emotional and caring King Lucien melts her like a puddle. She threw her arms around his neck, “I missed you so much.”

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Chapter 286

THIRD TO FINAL CHAPTER; Part 2.

Name: The Declaration Of Love.

He barely resisted the urge to lift her off her feet, instead, he had to remind himself that they are not alone. They are in court.

His hands linger for a few more seconds before he pulled back from her completely.

Finally, when King Lucien can no longer ignore the shocked gasps, whispers of bewilderment, and hushed murmurings, he turned and faced the Mombana Court.

Everywhere went silent immediately. No sound was heard. No even a harsh breath.

“I know you all wonder why I am here today. Not only in Mombana, but in the Royal Court.” He stated firmly.

“Yes, Your Majesty.” The Ministers responded uniformly, bowing their heads.

“I am here to ask for Queen Danika’s hand in marriage.”

The announcement produced the expected reaction. Gasps of shock echoes everywhere. Everyone began talking at once.

“...But that isn’t possible!?”

“How is it possible...!?”

“A king cannot marry a Queen!”

“...what will happen to their Kingdoms!?”

“But the King hates our Queen and our Kingdom...!”

King Lucien raised his hand in a silent command.

Everyone stopped talking. Silence descended.

“I know you all have lots of questions. I do believe that they are also necessary questions you think will explain what is happening here on this day. I do not have a lot of words to satisfy you all, but I do know a few things.” He paused.

They all looked at him expectantly.

He continued, “I hated Queen Danika for a long time. After what Salem went through, I hated her with a passion that was indescribable. At first, the thoughts of her filled me with rage. Her name makes me boil in anger and revenge. The sight of her raises—and not in a good way—those monsters her father created in me.”

“Then, a lot changed. I am not a man of so many words, so I do not have any idea how to explain how a lot changed. But then, the thoughts of her fills me with possession. Her makes bring me the best kind of peace.” He stared at her, softer light in his eyes. “And, the very sight of her gladdens my heart and sets my monsters to sleep.”

Queen Danika was too dumbfounded to say a word, but the tears that overflowed from her eyes were loud. Loud and filled with love.

He turned back to the shocked ministers, “I love your Queen. She is my woman. My possession. I love her and my child she is carrying inside her. So, I am here today to ask for her hand in marriage.”

Letting the Minister stew over that, he turned back to Danika. Using his finger, he collected a tear running down her eyes.

Then, he lowered himself to his knees in front of her, completely ignoring the shocked gasps of people around them. For the second time since he got out of Slavery, he knelt down for another human being. For the same woman.

“Will you accept my marriage proposal, Queen Danika?” He g*****d, staring her in the eyes.

“Yes,” there was no hesitation, she nodded her head vigorously, “Yes, yes. Yes, I accept your marriage p-proposal...! Yes, I want to be your wife...! Your Queen...! I want to be y-yours....! Now, forever...!”

That was all he needed, he rose then and lowered his lips to hers. They kissed passionately. Beautifully.

“Well, at least now we understand why our Queen avoided her marital discussions like the very devil.” The Minister of Taxation’s grumpy voice carried towards the royal couples.

They pulled away and faced the Court. The Queen was smiling through her tears. It is the happiest day of her life.

“Now you know, Taxation. Trying to marry off my woman and child to all the Lords in Mombana was not a good move.” King Lucien said calmly.

But the poor Minister heard the subtle anger and threat behind those calm words. He raised his hands in surrender. “Not my fault, Your Highness. All the Ministers in this court made the decision together.”

“Keep us out of this, Minister Dento.” The other Ministers raised their hands in surrender.

The Minister for Taxation glared at all of them.

Then, the Minister for Military Affairs cleared his throat to get the King’s attention. “But, what is going to happen to our Kingdoms?”

“You all have heard about my cousin, am I right?”

They nodded their heads.

“We are very happy that he did not die. He came back to life, Prince Declan. We are happy for you, Your Highness.” Minister for Defense said the others seconded with nods.

King Lucien continued, "Thank you. In the last six years, I have ruled Salem and Mombana together by merging the both Kingdoms. Today, I will suggest another merge of the Kingdoms."

So many mouths opened at the same time in protest.

The King raised his hand.

They snapped their mouths shut.

"If the Queen permits," he glanced at Danika for a few seconds before he faced the Ministers again, "I will merge the Kingdoms together, we rule over them while I teach my brother—who has been gone for long—how to take over, how to rule. I decided that I will leave Salem for my cousin brother, Declan. I will rule Mombana with my woman."

The doubt and protests were still clear and blatant in the eyes of the Ministers.

Apart from the fact that they do not want another merge. There's another thing to consider.

While they know that the King is a great ruler, and a powerful one who can rule Mombana so well, they also know that there's a King that has all the reasons in the world to hate Mombana. And he does.

Loving their Queen is different than loving the Kingdom and its people. Will he rule the Kingdom like Salem? Will he rule the Kingdom wholeheartedly? Will he fight for the Kingdom if need be, like he will fight for Salem?

They were about to voice out their protests when a loud noise crashed outside. A very loud noise.

That disrupted the people. Fear and agitation filled the Ministers.

"What is that...?"

"What's going on...!?"

"What's that noise....!?"

Another loud crash came again. This time louder than before.

Followed by the sound of the Warning Bell.

King Lucien froze. He knows this for what it is. Those loud crashes were familiar...too familiar.

He heard the same loud crashes that night, sixteen years ago, when Salem was attacked by Cone. That night his whole family was killed.

A guard rushed into the Royal Court and shouted. "THE KINGDOM IS UNDER ATTACK!!!"

Just then, Queen Danika cried out loudly in pain, holding her waist.

Her water broke.

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Chapter 287

Just then, Queen Danika cried out loudly in pain, holding her waist. Her water broke.

Chaos broke out in the Royal Court. The Ministers were filled with fear. The guards ran into the Royal Court to await a command from their Queen.

"Shit!!" The word tore from King Lucien's throat. He turned towards Danika, "What's going on?"

"My waist! It hurts!" The Queen cried. Holding her waist like a lifeline, she bent over, trying to find a position that'll relieve the pain. There was none.

"The Kingdom is under attack!!" Another guard shouted, raising his voice about the loud crashes outside and the chaotic noises of the people inside the Court.

"Heavens!" King Lucien lowered down to become eye level with her belly, he placed his hand on the bump and caressed it, "Not now, son. It's not safe. Please, you have to help your mother and I. Hold on for a little while, will you?"

"Go..! Please," Danika breathed, staring at her King, her eyes a cloud of pain and love. "Please, go and protect our King. Fight f-for our Kingdom. I'm fine, I'm fine..."

"No. No, I can't leave you alone like this, dammit!" His hand in her waist tightened.

For the first time, Danika heard the desperation in that voice of his that is always as calm as the waters.

She placed her hand over his on her belly, "No, our Kingdom will be lost, My King. You h-have to fight for us... For our future..." It was getting harder to talk, her body feeling like it has been lit on fire.

She pulled on, “The people are already losing their lives! They need a leader to lead them through this war, so—” A cry tore from her throat.

“Dammit! CHAAAD!” The King shouted, catching his Queen as the pain threatened to bring her to her knees.

Chad ran forward, “Your Highness.”

“Take her to her bedroom! Find Baski and your wife! Send out a few guards to go and get the royal medicine man for her!”

“With immediate effect.” Chad bent and lifted a panting Queen Danika into his arms. She clung to him, crying out as another wave of pain hit her.

King Lucien dabbed the sweat on her forehead with his knuckles. “I will be back, Danika. Please, hang in there. You have always been strong... Today, I need you to keep being strong for me, and for our son.”

She nodded her head vigorously, “Okay, okay.”

He turned to leave—

She grabbed hold of his arm.

He whirled around, giving her his attention again.

“Please, be safe. Don’t die...on me...” Each word was a hard breath.

“I promise.” His eyes were filled with concern for her and his child. His attention is divided. It’s in his face and his composure.

Chad has never seen his King, his friend, like that before. And, it’s a bad way to be in the face of war.

So, he spoke up to his friend, “This is when you have to be most calm, Lucien. You have to keep it all together, that is the only way we can win this war.”

“Yes... He is right...” Danika smiled above the pain, “Do not...worry...about me. I will be...fine.”

King Lucien breathed out then, releasing some tension. He was able to hold himself again. Then, he turned towards the guards and began instructing them.

He gave them orders. Commands.

They responded like warriors.

Chad carried the Queen out of Court. Doing his best to curb the adrenaline pumping through his head about the danger they face, he ran at a shorter pace than the one he would have used if he wasn't holding a pregnant woman in labor.

"The bathroom...! I want...to use...the bathroom." She cried.

He was almost in her Chambers, for a moment, he wondered if it's safe to let her use the bathroom when she's in labor. But, she was crying out in earnest now, looking like she's in agony. Tears raining out her face.

So, he carried her to the bathroom and helped her to her feet.

"Go! Go and get... Baski and Sally...! Go...!" She cried, holding the toilet rails so tightly, it would have snapped if it wasn't a hard rod.

"But, I can't leave you now. I will get you to—"

The Queen was already shaking her head, "I need them, Chad! I...can't do this...alone! I will wait...here! Go! Now!"

"Shit!" Chad thought fast, his head whirling, "Alright, I'll be right back! I'll go and look for them, I'll bring them here. Wait here, okay!?"

"Okay, I'll be...waiting." she panted.

"I'll be as fast as I can!" With that, he took off in a dead run, out of the bathroom.

Alone, Queen Danika kept breathing through her nose, doing her best to steady herself. "Please, please... son, have mercy...on me." She cried when the pain became too much.

Desperately, she tried to remember all the teachings Baski has her about this day—and the older woman had taught her a lot—but her head can't seem to remember those teachings now.

So, she focused on releasing the pressure in her bladder. But, no matter how much she tried, urination was impossible.

In the end, she gave up and let down her clothes. Then, she grabbed the rails again, panting out her pain as she waited for Chad's return with Baski and Sally.

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The Queen had waited and waited and waited, but Chad hasn't come back. She didn't see Baski and Sally either.

Her son must have heard her pleads and decided to have a little bit of mercy on her. Oh, the pain is still there—so much—but Danika was feeling just a little bit better.

So, she made her way out of the bathroom. In short, steady steps—the best she could muster—she walked down what remained of the long hallway that leads to her bedroom. Her hand clutching her aching waist, her belly hurting.

She can hear the war-cries, but it sounded so far away from the Royal Chambers.

Worry gnawed at her, adding to her pains. Worry about her Kingdom. Her Lucien. Baski. Chad. Sally. Her people. The ministers...

How are they doing? Why hasn't Chad come back? Has something happened to Sally? To Baski? Terror gripped her throat.

That is the only explanation to why none of them is already crowding her personal space, fussing over her, making sure she's alright, and trying to protect her with their lives.

She had no idea how she was able to manage it, but she got to her bedroom. There were no guards to be seen anywhere. Everyone is out on the battlefield. Everyone is fighting for the Kingdom.

Opening the door, she walked herself into her bedroom and closed the door. Leaning against it, she panted out her pains.

"Why am I not surprised?" A familiar feminine voice filled the bedroom, "The coward Queen. She is hiding in her bedroom while everyone puts their life on the line to protect her Kingdom."

Danika opened her eyes, glancing at Vetta through blurry eyes. The woman's voice in her bedroom and the sight of her sitting down on her bed would have scared her if she wasn't hurting so much.

What feels like a punch or a stomp in her lower belly caused her to cry out again. "Ooooh...!"

Vetta's eyes narrowed as she caught a better look at the heavily pregnant woman sweating profusely, and panting in front of her.

“Hell, you are in labor!” It dawned on her. Most of her antagonism disappearing like the wind as she watched Danika carefully.

She looks nothing like the woman that always managed to look so elegant and sophisticated, even when she was a slave.

No, she looked wrecked. In pain. Streaks of tears outlined her cheeks.

“What...are you...doing here?” Danika let out in a pained m**n.

Vetta kept silent. How does she answer that when she doesn't even know the answer to that? She has no idea why she is here.

But she'd seen the messenger bird and its message last night because it had come to her first before going to the Coza's General.

She was supposed to be happy—in fact, she was, at first—after all, she hated Mombana so much. Finally, Mombana will go down.

So, what is she doing here? It surely isn't about the King. She is not worried about him—Lucien is a big bad wolf in the face of war, he can take care of himself.

So, why is she here?

“I did tell you that I'll be back, didn't I?” Vetta cocked her head to the side, replying at last.

“Why? Are you here...to kill me?” Danika breathed out.

“Depends.” she paused, “Where is my knife?” That was her gift from Cone. A constant reminder of what he made her to be.

Coza did not expect the counter-attack. He most definitely did not expect the hard defense.

The fight was becoming too tough, he thought angrily as he slayed another guard that came onto him.

How the hell did he choose such a bad time to attack? Hell, how could he have known that the King of Salem will be here on this day?

Damn Vetta for going rogue!

Damn, Talia, for dying on him!

If the damned maid hadn't died, he would have gotten this information earlier. But, he didn't, now, the battlefield is on fire.

Gritting his teeth, he looked around. Most of his men are dead, their corpses lying around under the hot sun.

"To withdraw!?" Cator, his general shouted to him again.

"No withdrawing! Fight to the death!" Coza shouted back angrily. There is no way he is leaving this battlefield today without a tangible head on the ground.

"We are outnumbered, Coza! We can't get them all! Let's withdraw, regroup and come back!!" Cator shot back as he slayed another head.

He didn't think about it. Withdrawing is defeat! And regroup when? In ten years time?

His eyes traveled so far ahead and landed on the King of Salem. He fought ruthlessly. Slaying heads efficiently. The man even kills three men that came on to him with one slay of the sword through the air and a flip of his body.

He made moves Coza has seen before, but just like before, they left him speechless. Ruthless moves he used in fighting. He was just as ruthless the day he'd taken down the late King Cone and took over Mombana.

One of his formidable warriors rushed towards the King. Coza watched as the King let go of his sword and grabbed the warrior with both hands; one hand to his head and the other to his jaw. And then, he twisted the warrior's head so fast, so hard, the head went to an odd angle. The warrior laid dead on the King's feet.

No, the King is not only a fierce warrior but a butcher. How do they win a fight like this!?

Then, a thought came to him. A very wonderful thought.

"To withdraw!?" Cator shouted again behind him above the war-cries, sounds of swords slaying and screams of guards dying.

"Never!" He shouted right back. Not without a tangible head on the land of Mombana.

To win this fight, the Queen has to die.

To amputate King Lucien's arm, Danika's head has to be on this land.

And if he is lucky, her head wouldn't be the only head but that heir inside her will also die. That very important heir...

A smile of victory crossed his features. Why didn't he think of this before now?

Seething his sword back to its scabbard, he turned and took off in a dead run from the battlefield.

His destination is the Royal Quarters.

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“Depends.” she paused, “Where is my knife?” That was her gift from Cone. A constant reminder of what he made her to be.

“Safe...” Danika felt better when that wave of agony passed. So, she pushed away from the door and started deeper into the bedroom.

Vetta was most surprised when she walked towards her and lowered herself on the bed beside her.

“Uhm, what do you think you’re doing?” Vetta asked her, bewildered. The woman was sitting too close to her.

“I need to rest...my feet. They hurt so bad.”

Vetta looked at the said feet in question. Her huge elegant gown covered her feet, stopping her from seeing anything. Not that she wanted to see anything.

“Your hurting feet, your business. Give me my knife, let me get out of here.” Swiveling her head, she spared Danika a glance, “I’ll go to the battlefield first. Maybe, I’ll come back later.”

“To kill me?” Queen Danika snorted, “You might stand a chance if I don’t die...from this pain...first.” she cried out at the ache in her back. Feels like her back is being stomped on by horses.

Vetta’s brows arched. She glanced at the woman again.

“Are you even supposed to be alone? The men are on the battlefield, I understand. But what about the female sheep that follow you around like flocks of goats.” She asked flippantly.

Startled laughter bubbled from Queen Danika’s throat, forgetting the pain for a second. “There is nothing...like flocks of goat. Just sheep. Flock of sheep.”

Vetta shrugged. "You would know. After all, you're the educated one."

"Makes no difference... We are both human beings." Danika hit her shoulder repeatedly in an effort to reach her aching back.

"Nope. You are Royalty; the daughter of the great monster Cone. And I'm a slave; a product created by the great monster Cone." She flashed Danika some teeth, "Poetic, isn't it?"

Even through her own pains, Danika still saw the stark pain in the Mistress's eyes. So, she stopped hitting her back and reached out with her hand, taking Vetta's hand into hers.

"You are the only one that sees...yourself like that. To the world, you were a mistress to the most...powerful man in Salem. And now? You are a cared friend of the most powerful man...in Salem."

Vetta stared at their hands together. A hysterical laugh bubbled from her throat, "I am nothing but a woman that lost everything."

Danika opened her mouth to say something else, but Vetta snatched her hand away from hers.

She got up from the bed, "Just come and give me my knife, will you? Save me the sermons."

Queen Danika rose from the bed then. Walking steadily, she reached her wardrobe, opened it, and took out the knife from where she kept it. Then, she walked back and handed it to Vetta.

She took it. Then, crossed her arms, "You are not afraid that I will stab you with it?"

"No, I'm not. Not anymore." Danika shrugged.

Vetta opened her mouth to say a word but Danika cried out.

It was more painful this time, the Queen grabbed her waist with both hands and screamed out.

Just then, her door burst open. Coza stormed into the bedroom, clutching tightly a sword that dripped with b***d.

Vetta's eyes widened at the sight of him. She said nothing.

Coza on the other hand smiled at the sight in front of him. Vetta stood with a knife beside the Queen.

“Well, well, you should have told me that you planned to carry out your mission today.” the smile wiped from his face and he glared at her, “I wouldn’t have bothered attacking!”

“As I told you before, I carry out my revenge in my own convenient time. Not when you choose.” She shrugged.

Coza looked at the Queen who already looked like she’ll die from agony. “What is wrong with her? You stabbed her yet?” his eyes searched for b***d.

“She is in labor.” Vetta answered simply.

“No way is she giving birth to that child. Well, what are you waiting for? Kill her now, let’s get out of here!”

Vetta turned and glanced at Danika. Tears were raining down the Queen’s cheek as she returned her stare. Time passed.

“What is wrong with you!?” Coza barked, “Get over yourself and kill the woman who is the reason why your life is ruined! She is the reason why you will never have the man you died over and over again to protect!”

Vetta stiffened at the reminder. Pain crossed her features.

Danika saw the change. “Don’t d-do it...please,” She whispered brokenly.

Coza laughed evilly. The woman is hesitating, but he knows how to demolish her restraint.

“Do you know that he has proposed to her today?” He drawled, “In the Royal Court. He came here today to marry her. Cone’s daughter gets to live happily ever after, while you have nothing! End her life and get your revenge. Not only your revenge, but you also get your man too!”

Tears filled Vetta’s eyes. She palmed the knife in her hand more tightly, gripping it hard.

“Please...Vetta... please, don’t d-do it.” Danika cried, holding her belly protectively and taking a step back.

Coza’s patience ran out. “Shit! Get out, I’ll do it for you. You’re wasting too much time.”

Then, he rushed towards Danika and raised his sword to her belly.

It happened so fast, it was so unexpected.

Vetta got in front of Danika before he could get too close to her. The sword slid into her own belly, coming out from behind her.

Danika screamed behind Vetta at the sight of that sword coming out from her lower back.

“Shit! What did you do!?” Coza shouted. He attempted to pull his sword out, but Vetta held it in a dead grip.

Then, she raised the knife in her hand and stabbed him dead center in the chest. She buried the knife deep inside into her heart.

Coza didn't see it coming. His eyes widened in shock.

Vetta g*****d in pain, but her eyes held his. “I did tell...you that you will...die by my...hands.”

The knife that pierced his heart sucked the life out of him rapidly, he got no chance to talk. His eyes was still wide with shock and pain as he fell to the floor.

“You...bitch!” He managed with his last breath.

Vetta was bleeding. But, she grinned at him, even as tear ran down her face. “May your soul...rot in hell...Monster.”

The light left his eyes.

Coza died.

Vetta could no longer hold it in. She fell into Danika's arms.

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Chapter 290

IN THE KINGDOM OF SALEM

Remeta stayed in her mother's bedroom, rubbing her arms methodically as she stared up to the sky. Her gray eyes were dazed and bold. The eyes of the seer.

Corna was beside him. The little boy offering her support, while staring out of the window with her.

The clouds gather in the sky. The sky had been postcard-perfect, but it was changing. It has been changing for a while now.

The beautiful cocktail-blue shade was beginning to darken into gravel-grey. Large pillows of cloud were forming, blotting out the old-gold color of the sun. The sky wants to turn tar-black. The sign of heavy rain about to fall.

People ran around helter-skelter seeking shelter while they stared up to the sky in wonder and bewilderment all at once. It is the sign of rain about to fall. But how can this be? There has been no rain in Salem for ages.

“The arrival of the great prince is here.” Remeta stated in that monotone that belongs solely to the Great Ones.

“Yes. I can feel it too. But his mother is not weady...” Corna reasoned in that tiny voice of his, “Poor woman. The stubborn pwince wants out. Now.”

“The Queen is strong.” Dazed eyes watching the clouds, she added, “The Heavens are so happy here, but so angry in Mombana. The heaven is so angry in Mombana. They shout out in form of thunders, for she has suffered so much.”

“I know. I felt her pain before... one day, in the marketplace. I was with my mama so far away, but I felt her pain, anger, and bitterness. It was so overwhelming that I left Mama and ran to her. I dwagged her legs to soothe her, but she pushed me away,” Corna remembered in a sad tone, “I wanted to hug her so badly. I wanted to twy and heal her so badly...”

“But she pushed you away. She is not yours to heal, Little Corna.”

The boy nodded vigorously. “I know that now. No, she was not mine to heal, I was not sure if I could have done anything, anyway. Her hate was too deep.”

“You couldn’t have. Her anger and bitterness were deep-rooted.” Remeta paused, “There was a greater healer waiting for her, and that healer has found her.”

Cornna glanced up again, “It will wain here. Heavily.” he smiled. “The Pwince is coming. Pwince of Wain.”

****IN THE KINGDOM OF MOMBANA****

Vetta could no longer hold it in. She fell into Danika’s arms.

Queen Danika saw the fall coming, she caught Vetta in her arms and lowered the both of them to the floor. At that moment, her own pain was forgotten as her eyes darted all over the Mistress’s body, down to the long sword that was embedded deep into her belly. The b***d...

“No...no... P-Please,” Danika cried, her hands shook badly. Tears running down her face.

Vetta stared at the ceiling, tears in her own eyes. Her breathing was shallow, short. "So, this day...came eventually."

"Why!?" Danika sobbed, "Why did y-you do it! Why...?"

A small pained smile crossed her features, "I told him that...I will...kill him. Monster didn't...believe me."

Frantically, Danika covered the wound with her hands, trying to stop the b***d from coming out of her. There is just too much b***d...!

"Oh, Vetta... W-Why? Why did you save m-me? Why did you throw yourself...in front of me!?" Her voice broke repeatedly, her words jumbled up.

"He was going to stab...you. I had to...stop him." More tears left her eyes, "I-Ironic, isn't it? I am about to...die for Cone's d-daughter. Who knows? Maybe now...I can find peace... This world has been...so cruel..to me."

Vetta's head cushioned on her breasts, Danika hugged the older woman tighter. "I'm so sorry... So sorry, for e-everything."

"It was your f-father's sins...not yours. It took me...a long time to...realize that. I was...hurting too much...to allow myself to think of that." She made a sound of pain, "I was so afraid...the hate I had for you was...an anchor. It was not...your fault."

"I'm so sorry," Danika shook her head, unable to stop apologizing, "I'm sorry for what my father did...to you. I'm sorry that the King fell in...love with me."

Vetta blinked slowly. Tears poured like rain. "Your father killed him...Lucien. I watched him...die over and over...again, over the years. Like he watched me. The t-torture was too...much for us, Danika."

"I'm sorry. So sorry..." Queen Danika cried, gritting her teeth as she felt another contraction coming up.

"We were more...like dead people when we got...free again. But, you...made him alive again." It was becoming really painful to talk, but Vetta pushed on, "You came into his life...and a new light entered his...eyes. It was hate...before, but even then, I knew...that something was wrong. I did...everything I could...to stop it." She began coughing.

"No... pleeeeeease!" Danika sobbed, panting harshly as waves of pain washed through her body. It was excruciating, this pain.

Swiveling her head slowly, Vetta glanced at her sweaty face. "Poor woman... You must b-be hurting like...hell. Your baby...wants out."

“Don’t die...please. I am hurting...but, It will hurt more...if you die.” She cried.

Vetta was bewildered at the tears that wouldn’t stop pouring from Danika’s eyes. “You are c-crying for me. Why? Why do...you care if I live or...die?”

“I care,” her voice broke.

“I am the woman...that tried to kill you...to ruin your life. Repeatedly...”

“I forgave you a long time ago...for that.” She couldn’t stop patting the dying woman’s hair, “Please, d-don’t die... You cannot die...”

Vetta winced in pain, her corset stained with her own b***d. “You have...any idea...how long I have cheated...death?” A smile feathered her swollen face, “I’m an expert...in cheating that idiot, you can...ask the King. But today...” She cried out.

“No, no, no...” Danika held her closer to her heart, above her aching belly. Above her child. “No, there are no buts. Please, you have...to cheat that...idiot again. You cannot die.”

“Why...?”

“It will hurt L-Lucien so badly. It will hurt B-Baski. Chad... It will hurt me s-so much.” Her voice broke at the extent of her pain.

Frowning softly, Vetta bit her cold lips. “So many people... I do not realize that there...were so m-many people who care...”

“Yes, so many!” Danika’s heart ached. Her body aching. “It will be too bad...for my child. He was not able...to meet the strong-est wom-an I know.”

“I’m not st-rong, Danika.” She let out pain-filled body-shaking coughs that made Danika cry harder, holding her so closely. “He broke me... King Cone, he broke me.”

Few words that hurt more than thousands of words would have.

“Pull the sw-ord out.” Vetta panted, her blurry eyes began looking dull.

“No!” Danika shook her head vigorously, “No, I’ll never. If I...pull it o-ut you will bleed to d-d-death!”

“I’m dying ahead-y.” She whispered, breath heavy, “It hurts m-ore like this... Pull it out, and p-put me...out of my misery. Please.”

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