

Darkness Mate Cheated Versus Fated by Victory Done

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Zora's POV

Darius kept going in and out with his tongue as he repeated what he did to me before. Not only that, he did it at the right pace. It was just the way I loved it.

"Ah... oh ... ah!" I kept moaning loudly before he paused and hit my pussy again.

It made me lose my patience.

"I won't make you reach your climax until you stop betraying me, Green Eyes. Who do you belong to?" he asked.

"I only belong to me," I answered, which made him hit my pussy again as he entered his finger inside of me.

"Can you do it this good?" he asked me as I nodded.

"Yeah," I weakly replied, causing him to laugh before he went down on me once more.

The man immediately licked me with his wet, warm tongue and sucked the right bud.

'Can you do it this good?' he asked me through the mind-link, but I realized that I couldn't do this well

So, I just moaned.

"I do know that you love it, Green Eyes, but I'll stop if you don't answer me," he told me teasingly.

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I did wish to stay like this for a while because I could feel that I would cum soon. After that, he paused and then started to hit my clit.

'No,.I can't,' Monica moaned eagerly to get myself cummed.

Darius

managed to make both of us go nuts. I could feel everything many times more than I did when I could see everything. It felt so fucking good, but I hated him to stop.

After that, he then dug into my flower to suck it fast until I cummed. Still, he continued. He kept sucking my

oversensitive clit that made me shake my head as I wiggled. When I tried to push his head off, I couldn't do it because my hands weren't running free.

"Who did you belong to?" he asked me for the third time, but I couldn't hold this time because another peak was coming for

1. me.

"You! You!" I moaned the answer as he put his fingers inside of me to ease up my tightening walls.

It felt very good. I couldn't help but be relieved. Slowly but surely, another wave of orgasm was starting to build up.

"The next time someone is flirting with you, you'd better remember how good I made you feel tonight. Don't you ever make me jealous again," he warned me as he led his length to

enter me.

Darius quickly took off my blindfolds and my cuffs as well. After that, the man put my legs over his shoulders as he pumped his seed inside of me. My eyes were quickly adjusting to the surroundings. Then, I saw this man. His hair was hanging loose. Not only that, he was partially in his wolf form. His teeth were long and his eyes were dark like his wolf,

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Cremin. Meanwhile, my juices were overflowing from his lips. As he looked at me, he put himself even deeper inside of me.

'Mine,' Cremin said, which made me realize who was in control right now.

There were waves coming inside of my head. Soon enough, my vision went in to blur. As multiple peaks hit me, my body was shaking violently. Those orgasms really drained my energy due to pleasure. It felt very awesome. After all, I had never made love this good before. I was so thankful that I sacrificed myself to the north.

'Cremin,' I called Darius' wolf out and he growled in turn as he pumped viciously inside of me

'Keep cumming, Green Eyes,' Cremin asked me as I was wriggling under him as I turned to keep the orgasms that washed me out.

was confident that the entire hallway could hear us, but I could care less. After all, I was so excited and I truly loved this. Soon, he shot his load of cum inside of me before he slowly stopped pumping inside of me. I passed out quickly. My sleep this time was a deep and peaceful one. I could feel that my body, mind and soul were fully satisfied. When I woke up the next morning, I had a huge smile on my face.

Last night, Darius was a total beast. I loved every second of it. Every time I remembered last night now, I would want to experience that level of love ever again. After all, the man didn't hold back at all yesterday night. Besides, I was sure that everyone could hear us. I did realize that I said some pretty wild gibberish stuff as he took me out back and forth. When I looked at Darius who stood by the window, the man was

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naked as a baby. The curtain had covered the window, but he was peeking through the side to see what was on the outside.

"Have you slept well, Green Eyes?" he asked me as he smiled.

His hair was hanging nicely on his shoulders. This man looked very handsome. He was so handsome that I wanted him to join me in bed to cuddle with me.

“Come back to bed. It’s still too early,” I told him, to which he responded with a smile as he joined me in the bed.

After that, I hugged his arms as I rested my head on his chest.

“Last night, I had fun,” I said to him as I closed my eyes to recall the feeling.

Meanwhile, the Dark Lord just laughed as he gently stroked my hair.

“I do love making love to you, Zora,” he blatantly confessed, making me look at him.

“Were you envious yesternight?” I asked him.

“Well, you looked so gorgeous last night. Besides, you let Vino make you smile,” he calmly replied.

His response made me laugh as I caressed his nose tip with my finger.

“I’m yours, no matter who I was smiling with,” I told him as he held me even closer.

“I realized that, but I still couldn’t help it,” he retorted, which caused me to chuckle.

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“If that’s how you punish me, I guess I’ll offend you more and more,” I responded to him as I recalled what we did yesternight.

Darius just caressed my hand as he kissed it gently.

“I can’t wait to have a family with you, Zora. I’m a bit envious of Raphael and Eloise,” he frankly confessed to me that made me smile because I also felt the same way.

“Me too. I felt a tinge of jealousy. I wish that we can be like that as fast as possible. Although it wasn’t a problem with Casey, I do wish for us to be a family real quick, Darius. I love you so much that I want to be the mother of your pups and have a

mini version of us running around in our estate. I truly wish for it and I hope that it'll happen quickly. It's a part of a journey that I'm looking forward to having with you," I told my feelings as the Dark Lord kissed me in my hand again.

"Yeah, me too, Zora. Me too," the man uttered gently as he kissed my forehead before he stroked my hair.

I did wish that we would hear the news soon. After all, it would be good to hear that.

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Zora's POV

For a while, both Darius and I stayed in our bed. After that, the two of us took a shower together and dressed ourselves in order to follow the rest of the guests for breakfast. When I noticed that our driver walked past us, I immediately knew that we wouldn't return to the room. As they placed our stuff in that room, my Alpha already went to pack our clothes to get them out from the room we had been sleeping in.

As soon as we arrived at the dining room, two chairs at the head of the table were left empty as our host, Vino, and the rest of the guests had already sat on the remaining seats. This seating arrangement was decided based on how important you were. It gave me the idea that both Darius and I would sit at the head because Raphael and Eloise were on the side with Marcel and Kara sat on the other side. Then, there were Abel and Glenda who sat next to Marcel and Kara. Meanwhile, Vino himself sat next to Raphael and Eloise. Surprisingly, Lily was also here. I couldn't help but wonder when she had arrived.

The moment

both Darius and I continued to sit at the head of the table, people immediately saluted on us. Based on how some of them looked at the two of us, it was pretty obvious that they heard what Darius and I did yesterday night. However, only some of last night's dinner par

ty's attendants were here for breakfast. It seemed to me that only some of us were invited here. In total, there were about 26 people. Not only that, there was also lots of food spread on the dining table.

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'When would—Cindy come?' I asked Darius through the mind link.

'She already arrived with Abel and Glenda. Since she really wished to come here, I asked Vino to take her as his plus one. Besides, he didn't have any date. That's why he obeyed me. Still, they're only friends. There's nothing else between them. I just wanted her to enjoy some fun before she's confined in the mansion,' the Dark Lord explained to me, which made me understand quickly.

'When

you've said that now, I guess we have to let some of the women live in the town. Besides, they did nothing in the mansion. While I know that they're your trophies... 'I tried to talk to him through the mind-link, but the man himself then stopped by cutting me off.

'You're the Luna, so you're free to do whatever you wish. I'll never take any trophies. If you don't want them in the mansion, I can get it. I'm okay with anything you've chosen. Besides, I've never had any relations with those she-wolves who currently live in the mansion. I'll never have anything with them,' he told me firmly, prompting me to smile at him. After that, we savored our breakfast peacefully. Then, we were asked to converse with the other guests for a while before we returned. Moments later, Larry approached Darius. Obviously, my soon-to-be husband didn't like this old man. That old man came with a pretty brunette who looked at Darius with burning desire. It seemed to me that Larry knew who she was. So, what was his problem then?

"Hello, Alpha Darius Hand," the woman greeted Darius flirtatiously, but the Dark Lord himself wasn't amused by it.

Nevertheless, she didn't do anything wrong.

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“Hi, errr,” the woman then continued as if she tried to talk to me diminishingly.

“Is this woman an addition to your new harem? She totally reminds me of my past self which was charmed by you,” she kept saying as she showed her smirk before she extended her hand.

“Hi, I’m Arya Micheals. I’m Darius’ ex-lover. I’m sure that I’m the best woman he could ever have,” Arya Micheals introduced herself as she smiled coquettishly at Darius.

“You were the one who said that, remember?” she kept talking as she winked at my mate.

Darius seemed as if he wanted to speak for himself, but I immediately stopped him as I shook my hand.

“Nice to meet you, Arya. I’ve already heard about you from the other women in the harem. My name is Zora Rohan, I’m Darius’ fiancée and future Luna,” I introduced myself to her which made her stop smiling.

Immediately, I could see that she looked at me in disbelief. In fact, her eyes were twitching on their own. Seeing that made me want to chuckle.

“How could you do this?” the woman asked Darius as tears streaming down from her eyes.

“What does this woman have that I don’t have?” she asked my mate again, but Darius just smiled at the woman as he grabbed me by the waist so that I could be closer to his body.

“Isn’t it already clear?” he retorted, which made Arya look back

at me.

'He moves on from women very **fast**,' she told me through a mind-link, making me realize that this woman was still our **pack's** member.

"Well, I think I'll have to enjoy it while he still loves me," I

calmly responded to her as I touched my chest with my left hand to show my emerald engagement ring in my left hand to

her.

Arya then looked at Larry. That was when I realized that it was this old man who purposefully brought her here. It was clear to me that Larry wanted to cause a problem between Darius and me

While Arya quickly walked away with her feelings hurt, Darius quickly grabbed Larry by his collar to get closer to this old man. However, I acted fast by touching the Dark Lord's hand to release this evil old man.

"It meant nothing at all. I enjoyed my time talking to her, Darius. Please, let Larry go," I tried to plead with Darius so that he would realize that this didn't trouble me at all.

"If you try to do this shitty trick again, I'll beat you up. In fact, I'll show how far I can go to show my point," Darius warned Larry as he let the old man go.

Moments later, Raphael approached us. The young man then hit Larry on his face. Soon enough, that conniving old man fell. Everything happened so quick that the time was stopped in that room. Clearly, the Gamma was pissed. It made me wonder what Larry did to Raphael for the Gamma to act like

this to him.

"Who the hell do you think you are? Did you try to bring all the women from our harem to come for breakfast? Did you really

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wish to break

my relationship apart? Your actions made Eloise angry," **the** Gamma angrily told Larry as he tried to lift that old man up, but Darius quickly stopped his Gamma.

“You must let me do this to this old asshole, Darius. Beatrice really pissed Eloise off. We don’t need to be like that right now,” Raphael continued to talk, which made me look at Eloise.

Indeed, my friend looked pissed.

“Just leave Larry alone,” Darius sternly told Raphael.

If I ever had the chance to mistake Raphael as an Alpha, this time was the example. His rage was influencing me that made me hold onto my mate.

“You must keep your head cool,” Darius then ordered Raphael with his Alpha command.

Meanwhile, the old Larry just brushed the blood coming from his mouth off as he looked around. Just then, Abel quickly supported that evil man.

“He’s done nothing wrong. Why did you try to beat this old man together with our friends, Darius? You’re totally a bully. First, you dared to increase tax rates on those poor people in the west. Then, you attacked them with your warriors. Now, you’re hitting a council member just because he invited the she-wolves that you and your friends had worn, exploited, and discarded. Where will your mercilessness and

incompetence stop?” Abel asked as he then turned to look at the other guests.

“Look at your Dark Lord and his cronies,” he mockingly continued, which pissed Darius off.

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My mate then grabbed Abel by the collar. This time, I let him because I knew that Abel had gone way too far.

“If I ever find out that you were the one who set me up by increasing the tax rate and attacking the people from the west like when you attacked Hardy in the south, I promise that I’ll never say that you’re my sibling ever again. In fact, I’ll

finish you off, Abel. Your ambition is making you try to pull a coup behind me. I promise that I'll never let this one go. Mother won't even stop me from handling you," Darius angrily declared to flip the narrative that Abel had made.

Meanwhile, Abel just started to laugh as he let Darius go.

"Good try. You're trying to play innocent because you realize that your time is limited. Of all people, you should've known that this isn't my style. I know that you did it, Darius. I'll show the proof," he continued to say.

"What will he gain from this then?" I angrily asked him as I was enraged from the way he spoke to my mate.

"Shut the fuck up, you whore from the east! No-"

Then, Darius sent Abel flying by punching his brother before Abel could even finish his sentence. After that, my mate put his knees over Abel before he started to punch Abel.

"Haven't I warned you before?" Darius asked as he was enraged, but I tried to refrain him from hurting Abel even

more.

As for the Beta and Gamma, they quickly tried to pull Darius off as well. Meanwhile, Abel still looked shocked on the floor. It seemed that this idiot didn't expect that his brother would lose his temper just like that.

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"If you **dare** to disregard my Luna like that ever again, I'll do much worse things to you!" Darius then shouted at Abel.

At this point, I was so embarrassed by how people were looking at us.

"I did nothing wrong, I just called you out because of your cruelty?" Abel retorted cynically.

“What would he gain from this then?” I asked as I cried when I saw how determined t his asshole was to crush his brother’s reputation.

“What will he benefit from, Abel? Why would Darius increase tax rates and the n kill people in the west? Why? Please tell us what he will gain from all of that?” I asked him non stop as he became quiet.

“Don’t you ever let your jealousy for your brother ruin the family’s reputation and the family itse lf. It’s only the two of you. If you keep doing this, you’ll end up alone, Abel. Do you think that Larry truly cared about you? He doesn’t give a fuck- about you,” I angrily told him as I held Darius’ hand.

“Let’s go home,” I spoke to Darius.

Meanwhile, the Dark Lord seemed to be shocked. Still, he pulled me closer as he held me and then kissed my forehead to make me calm. In moments like t hese, I could care less about everyone who looked at us.

After all, Darius was the one who mattered to me. Then, Vino quickly apologiz ed to us. Both Darius and I quietly left his place.

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Casey’s POV

When Dustin rushed to enter my office, I was sitting on my chair. It seemed th at he ran from his home to the office. Since I already asked him to take a week o ff because his mate just gave birth to his pup, I realized that whatever issue h e might bring with him to my office was definitely very important.

“The north had already dispatched their delegates. They already passed Hill Valley. Now, they’re coming here, Alpha. Those delegates told us that it w as the Dark Lord who dispatched them,” Dustin reported to me in

an anxious tone, making me know the reason why he rushed to enter my office.

Ever since Darius managed to overtake our pack and took most of our she-wolves as his trophies, we had been waiting for the Dark Lord to bring his people. Initially, I thought that he already thought again because nothing had happened as the time went by. It seemed I was wrong to believe in that.

“Are they officials?” I asked Dustin who quickly nodded as a response.

“Marlo told us that these officials looked as if they were prepared to fight. It seems that the north is thinking that we’re probably going against whatever news they’ll bring here. That’s why they’re ready to use violence if they have to,” Dustin continued on his report, sounding clearly anxious about what he said.

I couldn’t help but wonder what Darius wanted more from me.

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After all, that man already took everything from me. So, what else did he want to get from me? As I sat in my office, I asked Dustin to go home just in case my encounter with the delegates from the north had turned into a battle. This way, my Beta wouldn’t be involved in it.

“I’ll never leave you to face those assholes alone. Cruz’s action to us is obviously inexcusable. It was him who sparked Darius’ interest in the east,” my Beta complained angrily.

Both of us were sitting there as we couldn’t help but fear what would happen to us. Not long after, those delegates from the north eventually came to my office. Immediately, I tried to offer them to sit down in my office. However, they didn’t look

like they wanted to stay for long. It made me not even try to ask them. Instead, I just let them talk to the point.

“Alpha Casey, my name is Bryce Golubev. I’m the lead enforcer for the Northern Council. In fact, I was chosen and approved by the Dark Lord, Darius Hand, himself,” Bryce Golubev proudly introduced himself.

When I heard him, I just nodded and greeted that man respectfully. Still, I wondered why a lead enforcer would be dispatched to me. The fact really disturbed me.

“We’re here under the order of the Northern Council led by the Dark Lord himself to get the expanding tax from the east region,” he told the reason he was here.

The moment I heard him, I couldn’t help but frown. After all, I had no idea what he was talking about.

“What taxes are you talking about?” I asked Bryce, he then showed me a document that had the Dark Lord’s seal on it. “Why do we have to pay these taxes?” I asked this man again.

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“This tax is imposed on the regions that are under the Dark Lord now. Well, the east has been defeated by the north,” he calmly replied as he rose from his seat.

“I’m not here to have some sweet talk, Alpha Casey. I’ll go back in a week to get the taxes. Please give us what’s available here,” the man then said before he and the other delegates excused themselves.

Obviously, I felt offended. Darius seemed to test how patient I could be. While I might be unresisting and hated war, this was still too much. First, that man took my wife from me. Now, he imposed this tax on me. There was only so much a man could actually bear. Even though I was still broken hearted over how I lost my Luna, the Dark Lord dared to do this to

me. How much further he wanted to destroy me? It seemed that Hardy was in deed right about Darius who acted like a bully.

“What should we do, Alpha?” Dustin asked me, but I could only sigh.

“We must hold a meeting. It seems that it’s time to have a serious discussion with our people to get their opinions about what I should do. There’s no way I’m paying that goddamn expanding tax to give to the north,” I responded, making my Beta sigh.

“I propose to you that you’d better talk to the Dark Lord, Alpha, before you make a hurried decision. I don’t want us to make any mistake,” Dustin told me, which made me frown at

him

“After all, the Dark Lord didn’t attack us when both Hardy and Shepherd attacked the north. It might be that the Northern council was the one who tried to abuse their power. Let’s be

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more careful. Instead of sending a letter, I think you should talk to the Dark Lord directly this time. Then, we can choose what we must do from his response,” my Beta explained to me that made me know that he was right.

I couldn’t help but hit my head for being too rash. It seemed that I was still troubled over the fact that Darius was now in a relationship with Zora. That fact made me respond rashly

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“Excellent, get me his office number. Tomorrow, I’ll call him to ask him directly from him or anyone in charge,” I informed Dustin who quickly nodded.

The one thing that made me thankful was the fact that Bryce who became the lead enforcer didn't choose to attack me immediately. If that happened, it would be terrible. That man looked as if he munched silver for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. It made me wonder what they give the Northern warriors.

When I returned home, I found out that Lori was cleaning Zora's room off. It made me enraged.

"What the fuck do you think you're doing in there?" I angrily asked her.

After that, I rushed to enter Zora's room before I checked the closet to make sure that my former wife's scent was still there. The moment I left the room, Lori was in tears. Her hands were also shaking hard.

"I just wanted to clean and air the room," she tried to explain herself, but I couldn't care less.

"Didn't I just warn you to not enter this room? Why did you enter Zora's room?" I questioned Lori as I closed the door and

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locked it with a key.

"This room will always be hers, so you're not permitted to enter!" I shouted as the woman started to cry.

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"Zora's not coming back, Casey. I'm sure she has already moved forward with her life, so why can't we do the same as well?" she angrily questioned me, but I just shook my head.

"If she didn't sacrifice herself, we would never have a life to move forward with," I gloomily responded as I took a seat on the couch in the room.

"I despise you, Casey. Ever since they took Zora, all you did was sulking! Not only that, you've been distant to me. It'

s not my fault that they brought her. It's also not my fault that we were fated to be mates!" Lori angrily yelled, which made me angry at her in turn.

"But you also lied to your father so that he could bring you into my home by force. There's no way I can forgive myself because I've hurt my wife," I firmly told Lori who immediately shook her head.

"Don't put the blame on me for hurting Zora, Casey. You should've rejected me instead of frolicking with me on the balcony at that time. You should've shown her how much you've loved her and rejected me. Yet, you kept making out with me. The lack of rejection from me gave me hope which made me force my way in. It caused me to believe that you craved for me and she was the one who made you hesitate. You can say what you want, but you must know that it was your actions that gave me hope to fight for what's mine. Don't you dare blame me for her grief or what you did to her. It's your fault, Casey. All of that is on you, so I don't want to pay for

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your crimes," she angrily spoke as she brushed away her tears.

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Casey's POV

"No matter what I did, the North would have taken her away," she said, her voice filled with a mix of resignation and accusation. Her words struck me deeply, and tears welled up in my eyes as I realized the truth in what she was saying.

I had lacked the courage to stand up for our love, and it had cost us dearly. I had brought this upon myself.

Her observation hit me like a wave of regret, washing over me with its undeniable truth. I couldn't deny that I was the one responsible for all the pain and heartache we had endured. It wasn't fate that forced me to accept Lori into my life; it was my own choice, my own weakness that led me down this path.

Desperation seeped into my voice as I tried to defend myself, "If only she had fought alongside me, we might have had a fighting chance. But the moment she discovered your pregnancy, she gave up on us."

To my surprise, she burst into laughter, her tears still streaming down her cheeks.

With a mix of amusement and frustration, she responded, "I didn't impregnate myself, you know. That was your doing. So, stop painting me as the villain here. Besides the lie I told about her, which you didn't even believe, I haven't done

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anything wrong. Zora had already left you emotionally before she physically left, and deep down, you know it.

So don't put the blame solely on me. I never planned to live in another woman's shadow, but fate had other plans for me. I'm sorry for trying to find some semblance of happiness amidst the misery fate has thrown at us she concluded, wiping away her tears with a sense of finality.

"I wasn't supposed to stay in the east. My plan was to visit my father and then return to my original home on Kanesh Island in the north. You see, I had a job and a fulfilling life there. But everything changed in an instant, Casey. Don't twist it and make it seem like I'm the one at fault here," she sobbed, grabbing the mop stick from my hands.

Overwhelmed with guilt, I sank into the couch and hung my head in shame. I couldn't deny the truth in Lori's words. I had been selfish and weak. My actions were driven solely by my own desires, as I foolishly believed I could have the best of both worlds.

I had wanted to keep my wife and pursue my true mate, thinking I could outsmart the situation. But I had broken my promises to Zora and foolishly expected her to accept it without any repercussions. Lori was right, and it hit me like a punch in the gut.

Tears welled up in my eyes as I realized the gravity of the situation. It was all a cruel joke. No matter how hard I tried to find happiness, it eluded me. Lori had been a good Luna,

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dutifully fulfilling her role, but deep down, I knew it would never be enough. Even with the mate bond between us, my heart belonged to Zora, and Zora alone.

Zora had been going through something, and it troubled me deeply. She was not the type to fit into the traditional role of a harem, and I couldn't help but worry if Darius Hand, the one in charge, would recognize her true worth and give her the respect she deserved. Thoughts of Zora consumed my mind, and all I could do was let my tears flow freely.

In an attempt to give both of us some much-needed space, I made the decision to sleep on the couch in the living room that night. Surprisingly, Lori, my usual source of disturbance, didn't come to bother me. It was a relief, as we both required some time apart to sort out our own emotions and thoughts.

The next morning arrived, and without checking on Lori, I headed straight to the office. Deep down, I knew it was a mistake and vowed to make it up to her later. However, I had an urgent matter to attend to regarding our taxes. I

couldn't afford to delay it any further, fearing that Enforcer Bryce might change his mind and demand the collection sooner than his initial announcement.

Once I reached my office, I dialed the number that Dustin had sent me. The phone rang, and after a moment, a deep voice answered on the other end. My heart skipped a beat, and a lump formed in my throat.

"Who is this?" the man inquired, his voice carrying an air of

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authority. My nerves got the better of me, and I swallowed hard before mustering the courage to respond.

In the Eastern region, I, Alpha Casey Grady, made a polite request to speak with either The Lord or the beta, as there was an important matter I needed to discuss. The man on the other end of the line kept me waiting for a moment before responding. He informed me that they had attended a dinner party the previous night and had yet to return. Nevertheless, he assured me that he would attempt to connect me with the beta. I let out a sigh of relief, grateful for the opportunity to converse with someone in a position of power.

I patiently waited. Nearly two minutes passed before another voice, deeper in tone, resonated through the phone. It was the beta himself. His jovial demeanor gave me a boost of confidence, emboldening me to address the issue at hand. Summoning my courage, I began to speak.

"An Enforcer named Bryce Golubev arrived, armed with a council order signed by The Lord, demanding payment for development taxes. He made it clear that he would return in a week to collect. I must admit, his approach lacked

friendliness," I explained, the concern evident in my voice. Little did I know that my words would stir up a storm.

In the background, I could hear the man curse angrily, a sign that my revelation had caused quite a commotion. Sensing my impact, I worried momentarily if I had unknowingly

provoked a volatile situation. However, the beta's response alleviated my fears.

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"Apologies for the confusion, Alpha Casey. The Lord did not authorize any such tax. I will personally address this matter and ensure it is resolved," he assured me. I let out a relieved breath, grateful that I had refrained from taking impulsive action and instead trusted in the wisdom of my beta.

Before we concluded our conversation, the beta mentioned that he was attending a breakfast party and ideally shouldn't have been accepting calls. Grateful for his time and attention, I expressed my gratitude.

"That will be all, sir. I sincerely appreciate your valuable time," I conveyed, as the sounds of a heated argument permeated through the background noise.

I couldn't help but ponder why people would engage in a breakfast brawl. As I was about to end the call, I caught a faint voice resembling Zora's, though it seemed too surreal to believe it was truly her.

I settled onto my couch, allowing my mind to unwind. There was absolutely no need for alarm or frenzy.

Curiosity sparked within me as I contemplated the true events unfolding in the Northern region.

Recollections of the village Hardy had mentioned also flooded my thoughts.

Was it possible that a powerful figure up there was

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intentionally inciting trouble against the Dark Lord Alpha? I became acutely aware of the need to exercise caution from this point onward. Things were certainly not as they

appeared

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Zora's POV

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Leaning against Darius in the luxurious limousine, I sought solace in his strong embrace. Eloise found comfort in Raphael's arms as well, and together, we embarked on a silent journey. The questions swirled in my mind, wondering why Vito would allow Larry to bring their exes to such an intimate gathering. Did he have ulterior motives? Perhaps he aimed to sabotage our relationship. However, I also considered the possibility that the council members, who had a history of bullying Vito, had forced his hand. It was clear that Vito needed to assert himself and stand up against those who walked all over him.

Our journey led us to the Hand estate, a place that promised tranquility and seclusion. Darius and I headed straight to our bedroom, seeking refuge from the tumultuous events that had unfolded. Despite having recently showered at Vito's mansion, I felt an overwhelming urge to cleanse myself of the lingering tensions and negative energies that clung to my skin. Determined to wash away the weight of the evening, I stepped into the shower and turned on the soothing water.

At that moment, Darius joined me, his bare form standing beside mine. As the droplets cascaded over our bodies, a silent understanding filled the air. Breaking the silence, Darius finally voiced his concern, asking how I was truly feeling. I nodded, appreciating his genuine care and the effort he made

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to mend **any** emotional rifts between us.

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“I’m sorry for my actions earlier,” he began, his voice tinged with regret. In response, I pulled him closer, seeking reassurance in his warm embrace. Our eyes met, and in that intimate exchange, I could see the sincerity behind his words.

“You didn’t do anything wrong,” I reassured him, finding comfort in resting my head against his chest. “I am genuinely impressed by your incredible self-control. It’s remarkable, you know. Being the lord, you possess the power to arrest them without question.”

As his arms enveloped me, he expressed his pride, but I couldn’t help but feel sorry for him. The fact that his own brother would conspire against him weighed heavily on my heart.

Leaving the refreshing embrace of the shower, we swiftly dressed ourselves. It was evident that he had an urgent need to head to his office, undoubtedly driven by the importance of his seal and signature.

“Darius,” I called out to him as he made his way towards the door, seeking his permission to share a suggestion. He nodded in agreement, allowing me to proceed.

“I can’t say for certain who is behind all of this, but I strongly believe that the individual responsible either resides within this estate or has connections within it,” I proposed. Realizing the gravity of the situation, I continued, “To safeguard your

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signature, I suggest that you consider having a custom-made ink specifically designed for you.”

His face

broke into a smile as he acknowledged my suggestion, but I sensed there was more I needed to convey. Determined, I stepped closer to him, placing my hand gently on his chest, my voice tinged with concern.

“I understand that I haven’t become Luna yet, and I’m not familiar with the laws of the north, but I really want you to consider letting me assist you in investigating this matter discreetly. There’s a chance that I might uncover valuable information,” I earnestly requested, hoping he would be open to the idea.

As I reflected on my past experiences helping Casey with various investigations in the East, I realized that although they were never as serious as this, I did have some knowledge about how these things were done. I was no stranger to the process.

“Absolutely, Luna,” he responded warmly, leaning in to give me a kiss on the lips. He then folded his hands and raised an eyebrow, clearly interested in hearing my plan.

“Let’s assume you were to proceed with this investigation, where would you begin?” he inquired, prompting a mischievous giggle to escape from me.

“Well,” I began, “I would start by following the trail of the so-called tax increment document. We need to track down the

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individuals involved in its delivery and trace it back to its origin. If we can unravel **its** journey and find its true source, we might just uncover the culprit or at least their accomplice. It’s possible that we may even have to venture undercover in the West to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the situation. Furthermore, I can’t help but feel that it was rather deceitful of Alpha Brighton not to inform you about the attack himself. That’s something we should definitely look into,” I suggested, accompanied by a weary sigh.

"I've got quite a lengthy list," I informed him, causing his eyes to widen in amazement.

"Wow, Zora," he exclaimed, his voice filled with genuine admiration.

"Would you be open to collaborating with me, Marcel, and Raphael on this?" he inquired, and I couldn't help but smile back at him.

"I'll consider it," I replied, and his face lit up as he tenderly caressed my cheek with his hands.

"Try to get some rest," he advised before walking away.

Rest was the last thing on my mind. My sole focus was ensuring that he encountered no opposition during the council hall hearing scheduled for the following day. As soon as he departed, I began my search for Nellie.

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I positioned myself outside her door and gently tapped on it.

"Come on in," her voice beckoned, and I entered her domain.

She was reclining on the couch, holding a glass of wine in her hand. When she caught sight of me, a warm smile graced her features.

"I've been waiting for you to pay me a visit, Zora," she said, gesturing for me to join her on the couch. She attempted to pour me a glass of wine, but I politely declined. It was a bit too early in the day to start drinking.

"How did the party go?" she inquired, and I nodded in response.

"Everything was going fine until Abelardo decided to embarrass Darius this morning," I replied, causing a frown to form on her face.

I gazed at her with a serious expression.

“Who exactly is Larry to Abelardo?” I asked curiously, which only deepened the frown on her face.

“Why are you asking me about this?” she questioned, and I let out a sigh.

“Because I can’t comprehend why Abelardo always seems to

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be

working with Larry against Darius. Today, he accused Darius **of** doing something dishonorable in the eyes of the elites,” I explained, leaving her astonished.

“He accused Darius of raising taxes for the less fortunate and sending soldiers to attack those who couldn’t pay. How could he do such a thing to his own family? Doesn’t he realize that the entire Hand family will lose their position if Darius falls?” I inquired, leaving her still in a state of shock.

“Abelardo, your own flesh and blood, supposedly owes his presence here to your influence, according to Darius. While I can let many things slide, I draw the line when it comes to tarnishing my mate’s reputation. I have no desire to engage in underhanded tactics, but you must rein in your son. If I discover he is orchestrating a scheme against Darius, I will not take it lightly,” I expressed, my voice tinged with determination.

In response to my words, Nellie’s eyes revealed a flicker of fear. She was a woman just like me, fully aware of the depths women were capable of sinking to. I didn’t need to hold the title of Luna to cause significant harm. Tears streamed down her face, and she wrapped her arms around me, seeking solace.

Grateful for my love and concern for Darius, she mustered her courage to speak. “Zora, I truly appreciate your affection for Darius. I promise to have a serious conversation with Abelardo, but please, don’t completely give up on him. I understand that you will soon become the Luna, and I don’t

want Abelardo to be on your bad side,” she pleaded,

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reluctantly releasing me from our embrace.

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She

went on to provide some context, attempting to shed light on Abelardo's behavior. "Abelardo was always his father's favorite, and Larry was a close friend of Collier's. They're all simply enraged that Darius didn't receive justice. For Collier's sake. Even I am furious about it," Nellie explained, her voice tinged with frustration. Shaking my head, I expressed my disagreement with her reasoning.

"It's

absolutely unjustifiable for him to have done what he did this morning. Under no circumstances should he take the side of an outsider over his own brother.

The

council has summoned Darius for questioning tomorrow. I need you to prevent Abelardo from attending and further complicating matters for Darius. Do you think you can manage that?" I inquired, and she nodded, wiping away her tears.

"Thank you," I replied with a serious expression.

"Now, would you like to have that glass of wine?" she asked, and I smiled at her, shaking my head.

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didn't feel like drinking, and I explained my reasons to her. In return, she shared some details about her life with her husband, and I was appalled to hear about the abuse she endured. What perplexed me even more was that she didn't perceive it as such, so I chose to keep my thoughts to myself.

Later in

the evening, I returned to the bedroom to find Darius sitting on the bed, gazing up at the ceiling. He sat up and

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smiled, but I could **see** through his **facade**. I knew he was troubled.

Approaching him, he drew me close for a kiss.

“I can sense your anxiety, Darius. You need to confide in me about the true consequences of tomorrow’s questioning,” I urged him, and he let out a sigh.

He placed his hands in mine and smiled warmly at me.

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Zora’s POV

As Darius expressed his concerns about the upcoming day, a heavy burden seemed to weigh upon his shoulders. “If I fail tomorrow,” he confided, his voice laced with apprehension, “Abelardo will attain his desires, and I’ll be compelled to step down from my position. Surprisingly, both Marcel and Raphael have expressed their willingness to stand beside me and relinquish their roles as well.” A deep sigh escaped his lips, carrying with it the weight of uncertainty.

His words echoed in my mind, and I empathetically acknowledged his distress. “I don’t want it to come to that,” I replied, attempting to offer solace, “but we’re in the dark about their plans. If there are individuals conspiring against me, their intentions remain shrouded in mystery.”

Feeling the tension in the air, I instinctively reached out and gently rubbed his back, hoping to ease his worries. “You must try to remain calm, my dear Darius,” I reassured him, squeezing his hand gently in mine. “You’re innocent in this matter, and together we will uncover the true culprit.”

The following morning, we set off for the council hall. Marcel and Raphael awaited us in their jeeps, and we joined their convoy, departing from the estate together.

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After our passionate encounter in the shower, Darius seemed noticeably more composed.

In that moment, I couldn't help but hope that Nellie had kept her promise, ensuring Abelardo's absence from the upcoming hearing. If Abelardo were to stay away, it would mean that Larry would have to face the proceedings all on his own, without any support.

Indeed, only Abelardo possessed the ability to challenge Darius, and with him out of the picture, the questioning would proceed in a more straightforward manner. The silver lining in this situation was that such a challenge could only occur once, sparing us any future turmoil.

As we made our way to the council, we were escorted to the same box where we had previously been seated. It appeared that everyone had been eagerly awaiting our arrival, as all eyes were upon us. A woman, rising from her seat, greeted us with great reverence.

"Welcome, Lord Hand," she spoke, her voice filled with a mixture of admiration and respect. "We are truly honored to have you grace us with your presence."

I glanced at Larry, and he remained unusually silent. Casting my gaze towards Abelardo's box, a sense of relief washed over me as I noticed it was empty. I couldn't help but feel grateful that he had chosen not to attend the hearing, sparing us from any potential confrontations or complications.

"I must express my respect, your eminence, but let us remember that this is merely a hearing. There is truly no

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necessity for your fiancé to be present. Once she assumes the role of Luna, she can partake in these meetings," she calmly explained, her words carefully chosen.

Darius remained composed and confident as he asserted himself. "Pamela Reeves, my Luna accompanies me by my own request, and she shall not only observe but also pose questions, as I have specifically asked her to do so. It would be in your best interest, as well as that of this council, to accord her the respect befitting her position. Be aware that I stand firm in my decision concerning her. Therefore, it would be wise for this council to become accustomed to treating her as the Lady of the north and my Luna."

The woman nodded in understanding, acknowledging his position.

The tense atmosphere grew heavier as the discussion shifted to a matter of grave concern. "We have been made aware of your command to send soldiers to attack the Brighton Pack at the western borders due to their failure to meet the imposed tax requirements. It is important to note that these individuals are primarily farmers, struggling to make ends meet. Yet, you chose to launch an assault against them," she expressed, raising a document that seemingly bore Darius's unmistakable signature.

"The consequence of your actions forced them to seek refuge with Elbert," she added before taking a seat.

Darius was about to reply, but I intervened, stopping him in

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his tracks. Instead, I rose from my seat, seething with anger at the council's intentions.

"Before Lord Hand addresses your accusations," I interjected, "I would like to pose some questions." The council members exchanged hushed whispers among themselves.

"Let her speak," Vino, the council leader, interjected, and I couldn't help but smile at his support.

"Thank you, council leader," I expressed my gratitude to Vino, genuinely appreciating his understanding.

“I was under the impression that this was meant to be a question—and-answer session, not a platform for judgment,” I calmly stated, provoking murmurs from the council members.

“I kindly request that you use the term ‘alleged’ when referring to the crimes in question, Councilwoman Pamela,” I assertively suggested, causing them to fall into silence.

“First and foremost, I would like to inquire whether this council has investigated the actions of the officers who led this battle,” I posed my question, and a heavy silence hung in the air.

“Can someone tell me where this order originated from? Who was responsible for delivering this letter, and where did they obtain it? Who handed it to them? And who directly received it from the lord? I kindly request answers to these questions,

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and in return, his eminence will gladly address yours,” I calmly stated, causing murmurs to ripple through the room.

“Let me assure you, I am not here to stir up trouble. I simply wish to ascertain whether that piece of paper indeed came from my companion. Once we establish its authenticity, we can proceed accordingly. Otherwise, I will request this council to investigate who stands to benefit from this act, who might wish to frame his Lordship, and who is likely to succeed,” I explained before taking a seat.

“Bravo, Zora,” Marcel’s voice resonated within my mind through our telepathic bond.

“Well done,” Raphael’s voice chimed in, and Darius gave my thigh a gentle squeeze, showing his support.

Larry looked around, his eyes searching for Abelardo Hand. But there was no response from the room, just eerie silence. Frustration welled up within him, and he confronted Darius with a tinge of anger, demanding answers about his brother's whereabouts. "What have you done to your brother?" Larry's voice resonated with accusation.

Darius, sensing Larry's fury, issued a warning, his voice laced with a hint of menace. "I will not tolerate your disrespect, old man!" However, as the tension diffused, Darius managed to regain composure.

A flicker of suspicion ignited within Larry's mind. He narrowed his gaze at Darius and Abelardo, contemplating their

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involvement in the mysterious disappearance. With conviction in his voice, Larry made a solemn vow. "If I discover your hand in this, I will take matters into my own hands. Mark my words, councilman Larry."

At that moment, Vino rose from his seat. It was evident that he held reservations about summoning Darius for questioning without sufficient evidence. Respectfully bowing, Vino addressed Darius, seeking forgiveness on behalf of the council. "We owe your Lordship an apology for our hasty summons. We failed to conduct proper research beforehand." Vino's words conveyed both regret and acknowledgment of their mistake.

Vino continued, assuring Darius that appropriate aid would be dispatched to Brighton, while ensuring that the blame would not fall upon him. "I apologize for the council's actions, and I promise we won't repeat this misstep. Brighton shall be informed of your innocence, your eminence," he assured, his tone sincere.

Although relieved by the turn of events, I couldn't help but maintain a cautious stance towards the council. Vino Lawrence appeared to be the sole ally of Darius within their ranks, but we knew very little about him. To ensure our safety, reaching out to Brighton and taking necessary precautions seemed imperative. Trust in the council was a fragile notion.

Subsequently, the conversation shifted to other matters, primarily concerning Elbert's plans to amass an army in the north. The people were insistent that Darius should dispatch Marcel or Raphael to counter this threat. However, I couldn't

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shake **off the** realization that Casey's involvement was **a result of** my own presence in this situation.

The council's incessant focus on targeting Casey served as a test of my loyalty. They were trying to ascertain if I still harbored feelings for my ex-husband and was merely using Darius as a means to an end. It was crucial for me to remain silent, lest they misconstrue my intentions.

Recognizing the mounting pressure on Casey, both Raphael and Marcel intervened, silencing those who advocated for aggression. We were all aware that Casey was a peaceful man, someone who would never initiate harm or pose a threat to anyone. In the aftermath of the hearing, I concluded that a thorough investigation of the council was necessary, for the truth needed to be unveiled.

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III

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Chapter 77

Darius' POV

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Zora's actions completely blew my mind! She fearlessly stood up for me and put those council members in their rightful place. It was like a divine intervention.

I glanced at Abelardo's empty seat and couldn't help but feel grateful that he didn't show up. If he had been there, the hearing would have been a real challenge. Out of everyone, he was the only one who could disrespect me without facing any consequences. It's not that I couldn't handle him, but I had to consider my mother's feelings and not cause her pain by hurting him.

Larry appeared disappointed, and it made me suspect that he had some kind of plan with Abelardo. I knew I had to dig deeper into that man. While we all knew Abelardo wasn't clever enough to orchestrate something of such magnitude, I couldn't say the same about Larry.

Zora hit the nail on the head when she asked them if they had traced the documents. Even though they desperately tried to divert the conversation towards attacking Elbert and Casey, I couldn't agree to their request to end the meeting. I had to decline because there was more to uncover.

Pamela, fueled by her own agenda, actively pursued Casey's

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matter, strategically selecting her words to provoke a reaction from Zora. Deep down, I understood her intentions, yet I was confident that Zora's affections were exclusively reserved for me, **and** her heart beat solely in sync with mine.

After a period of Pamela's incessant remarks, the room fell silent, waiting for someone to break the tension. Finally, I decided to speak, sensing the need to address the issue at hand. As my voice resonated through the room,

m, a hush settled over the gathering. Vino, one of the attendees, rose from his seat, assuming that I intended to conclude the meeting.

“No, we haven’t concluded, Your Lordship,” Vino stated respectfully, his assumption proven incorrect as I shook my head in disagreement. The room buzzed with curiosity as they wondered about the reason for my divergence from the expected path.

“Today is not a day for silence,” I declared with a sense of purpose, emphasizing the significance of the moment. Vino, visibly surprised by my statement, sank back into his chair, understanding that there were further matters to be addressed.

My gaze shifted towards Pamela, conveying a mix of curiosity and challenge. I aimed to understand the claims she had made against alpha Casey Grady, knowing that her words carried weight within the room.

“Could you enlighten me on the alleged crimes of alpha Casey

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Grady?” I inquired, my tone composed yet eager for clarification.

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Pamela proceeded to recount the rumors circulating about Casey’s collaboration with Elbert, which involved aiding the latter in the establishment of an army. The purpose behind their alliance was nothing short of audacious—to march north, seeking to overthrow my rule and seize power for themselves.

Pamela’s conviction only fueled my amusement. A faint smile appeared on my face, as I silently acknowledged the audacity of their aspirations and the unfounded confidence they held in their abilities.

“And where did you come across such intriguing tidings?” I inquired, causing her confidence to waver.

“We must remain vigilant, attuned to whispers that carry the potential to dismantle our foundation,” she expounded, and I couldn’t help but flash a knowing grin.

“In essence, you’re suggesting it’s nothing more than an unsubstantiated rumor,” I remarked, leaving her momentarily

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speechless.

“So, you expect me to initiate an assault based on mere hearsay, lacking any credible source or evidence?” I reiterated, hoping to make her comprehend the foolishness of her plea.

“I also couldn’t help but notice your constant glances at my

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mate while making this demand,” I added, my smile growing wider.

“Let this serve as a stern admonition to this assembly, never again to employ Zora’s former spouse as bait. It is an act of utter disrespect, displaying a shameful lack of intelligence, and I am profoundly dismayed by all of you,” I admonished with a tinge of disappointment.

“You gathered me here solely for a question—and–answer session rooted in groundless accusations. I would have been impressed if you had conducted your due diligence, but alas, you fell short,” I declared.

“While you’re all busy blowing things out of proportion, there’s actually an important matter we need to address,” I declared, capturing everyone’s attention.

“Can anyone tell me who authorized Enforcer Bryce Golubev to head east yesterday morning and demand development taxes from Alpha Casey-nardo? Despite clearly stating to Vino that I didn’t issue such

an order, why wasn't he recalled? Why did he go as far as threatening the alpha?" I questioned, leaving them in stunned silence.

Zora, visibly taken aback, had just returned to our room last night, but I didn't inform her. My anger towards the council consumed me, and I worried about the lengths they were willing to go to keep secrets from her.

It's regrettable that Casey and I can never truly be friends

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because I took away something he valued greatly. Nevertheless, I have deep respect for the alpha's mature response in reaching out instead of reacting with hostility.

"I'm in need of an answer," I declared, and Councilwoman, Joan Clayman, rose to address me.

"With utmost respect, your Lordship, how did you stumble upon this information?" she inquired, and a smile graced my face.

"

"Alpha Casey possessed the courage to approach us and inquire about the so-called development tax. I'm relieved he didn't rebel," I responded, determined not to divert from the topic at hand.

"Allow me to reiterate my question," I reminded them, but silence engulfed the room. I turned my gaze towards Marcel, who nodded in agreement.

Brian William escorted the enforcer into the room, rendering the council members speechless.

"Bryce," Marcel called out, prompting the man to kneel with his head bowed. He understood his place and refrained from meeting our eyes.

"Who issued the command for your journey eastward

yesterday morning? Who funded your flight and assigned you the task?" Marcel inquired, and the enforcer remained silent.

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“Should you choose to remain tight-lipped, you and your family will face charges of treason. Spreading false news in the name of the Wolf lord is a treasonous act,” Marcel cautioned him, and the man lowered his head in acknowledgment.

“I genuinely believed the order to be authentic. Lord Abelardo presented it to me,” he confessed, causing murmurs to ripple through the room.

“When did he deliver this to you?” I pressed further.

“Three nights ago. It bore your seal, and I had no reason to doubt it originated from your office,” he explained, eliciting more murmurs from the crowd.

Outrage and disappointment echoed through the chamber, reaching my ears.

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Darius' POV

I couldn't help but wonder if that was the reason why Abelardo didn't show up. Did he have an inkling that we were about to uncover the truth? Was he somehow evading

capture?

“We need to track down Abelardo and apprehend him. He's got a lot of explaining to do,” I declared, reaching out to Marcel and Raphael for assistance. They assured me they were already on the case.

“Abelardo deserves to be arrested,” Pamela chimed in, and I noticed Vino’s stunned silence.

Turning to Larry, who seemed equally taken aback, I couldn’t fathom his reaction. They might have conspired. He could have been the mastermind behind it all, plotting with my brother to make him the scapegoat. I gazed into his eyes, holding his gaze.

“I had no involvement in this, Lord Hand,” he claimed, and a smile crept onto my face.

“That decision isn’t yours to make,” I asserted, causing his eyes to widen.

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Brian William and his men swiftly moved to apprehend Larry, making their way towards him.

“You’re presumed guilty until proven innocent. Everything Abelardo does reflects on you,” I declared, asserting my position. Many of the council members opposed my stance, but their disagreement didn’t bother me. After all, I held the title of lord, and it was high time they understood who truly held the power.

Having addressed that matter, I took the opportunity to emphasize the autonomy of the eastern region. “Let it be known that the east is an independent territory, and we shall not impose taxes upon their leader, the alpha. Although I may bear the title of Dark Lord Alpha, the alpha of the East governs the east, just as the alpha of the South governs the south. As long as they don’t provoke hostilities, I have no intention of launching an attack. I am not willing to sacrifice lives, tear apart families, or devastate communities. War may grant our council wealth, influence, and an expansion of our territories, but it also inflicts suffering, obliterates homes, and brings about immense pain and grief for countless individuals.”

In the days of old, my father was a controversial figure, stirring up trouble and making enemies left and right, not just for himself but also for our family name. Unfo

Unfortunately, his actions eventually led to his untimely demise and left behind a trail of grudges that extended far and wide. But I, unlike my father, have no desire to follow in his footsteps. I have a different vision for my time here – one that revolves around healing, peace, and prosperity.

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Addressing the room filled with people who had gathered, I spoke firmly, “None of you should attempt to manipulate me in to taking sides against anyone, be it in secret or out in the open. Such actions will not be taken lightly, as I consider them acts of treason.” The weight of my words hung heavy in the air, leaving them all speechless and contemplative.

Having expressed my stance, I felt it was time to bring the discussion to a close. With a decisive nod, I signaled the end of the conversation. There was an air of tension as we all dispersed, seeking solace in our thoughts.

As Vino and I left the room together, I couldn’t help but notice the uneasiness that had settled upon Zora, who sat silently in the passenger seat of our Jeep. It was evident that something was troubling her, and I decided it would be best to wait until we arrived home to delve into her concerns.

But amidst all the seriousness and turmoil, I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge Zora’s bravery and the unwavering support she had shown me. She truly was an exceptional person, and I wanted to express my gratitude in a meaningful way. Her presence by my side brought me comfort and

reassurance.

Each passing day brought forth a battle within myself, as I struggled not to defy tradition and claim her as my own. Two months **still** remained until we could officially be together, but it felt like an eternity. My heart longed to be united with hers, to share every moment in an unbreakable bond.

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Feeling a surge of affection, I reached out and gently touched Zora's lap, causing her to look at me with a radiant smile.

"I'm so glad that went well," she said with a smile, and I nodded in agreement.

"Thanks to you, darling. You really deserve a reward for it," I replied, running my hand up her thigh. Her legs opened willingly, and the scent of her arousal filled the air. Cremin growled in my mind, causing me to lose my balance for a moment.

"Stay focused," she teased, and I reluctantly tore my gaze away from the car in front of us, contemplating whether I should park and have some fun with her. Ultimately, I decided against it at the last minute and overtook Raphael and Marcel's Jeep. We needed to hurry home.

We pulled up at the entrance of our estate, and I urged Zora to quickly exit the Jeep so we could rush inside. I maintained my silence as we made our way through, which seemed to amuse her.

As soon as we entered our bedroom, I crashed my lips against hers, ready to delve into passionate intimacy. However, our passionate moment was abruptly interrupted by loud banging on the door.

"Darius, how could you!" I heard my mother's voice; and I instantly knew the reason behind her anger.

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I grumbled in annoyance, lowering Zora to the ground and hastily zipping up my fly. She giggled, sharing my annoyance at my mother's disruptive intrusion.

Without hesitation, I opened the door, allowing my mother to storm into the bedroom and slap me across the face.

Silence filled the room as the shock settled in.

While I could tolerate her outburst to some extent, I had warned her before not to lay a hand on me. She attempted to strike me again, but I grabbed her hand and let out a fierce roar. Zora, sensing the tension, held onto me from behind, trying to calm me down. Tears streamed down my mother's face as she stood there, overwhelmed by her emotions.

"Why did you have your brother arrested? I did as Zora instructed and prevented him from attending the hearing. Why would you lock him up?" she sobbed, her words piercing through the room.

I turned to Zora, surprised to discover that she had orchestrated the whole ordeal without informing me. Her eyes pleaded with me, silently begging for understanding and forgiveness.

"Zora," I began, my voice tinged with a mix of curiosity and frustration, "did you tell my mother to prevent Abelardo from attending?" I awaited her response, and her nod confirmed my suspicion.

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"I did it for you," she explained, her eyes reflecting a genuine concern. "I knew you were anxious about him and Larry plotting against you. Abelardo was the only one who posed a real challenge, so I asked your mother to intervene."

Despite the misguided nature of her actions, I could sense her good intentions shining through. It was evident in her eyes, which held a glimmer of sincerity.

Although I was raging inside, infuriated by the implications of what Zora had done, I knew I couldn't reprimand her in front of everyone. I turned my attention back to my weeping mother, trying to find the right words to comfort her.

“Zora,” my mother sobbed, her vo

ice choked with tears, “you threatened my son. That’s why I held him back. Bu
t why did it come to this? The soldiers came and dragged him away, treating h
im like a common criminal.”

I was at a loss for words, unable to offer any immediate
comfort. I gla

I at Zora, who remained silent—
a clear indication that some sort of conversation had taken place.

“He forged my signature and seal,” I interjected, desperation
lacing my voice, “and then he sent Bryce to threaten Alpha Caseynardo.”

However, my mother shook her head, refusing to entertain my explanation. Sh
e was too deeply hurt to comprehend the gravity of what I had just revealed. I
nstead, her tears

continued to flow, painting a picture of her anguish.

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Zorà

I was afraid of the outcome of the confrontation.

How can everything switch suddenly?

The woman claimed I threatened
her; I did not remember doing that. I just warned her that Abelardo shouldn’t b
e in my bad books.

From the look in Darius's eyes, I knew I had overstepped, and I was worried because Nellie was his mother, and she was trying to make it seem as if I had instigated the arrest.

”

Where is the proof?” Nellie asked Darius sounding hysterical.

“So you arrest your brother based on what her ex-husband told you?” she said, pointing at me, and it hurt. Why did they always have to link anything that happened in the east to me?

#

Not based on what Casey told me, mother; head Enforcer Bryce said Abelardo sent him to the east to try and collect developmental tax. The same taxes that caused the Brighton attack.

Bryce claimed the order was given to him with my seal and signature, and he said it was Abelardo. He even called him Lord Abelardo, a title meant **for** me alone,” Darius said, and his mother searched his eyes for deception but couldn't find any and then looked at me.

There was mistrust in her eyes, and slowly I began to suspect

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our friendship was over.

“**If**

I find out that you set him up to help Darius as you threatened, then you will have me to contend with. You might have Darius in knots, but he is still my son. Two months is enough to prove you are unworthy,” she said, and I fought back my tears.

I was mad that she could turn on me so quickly.

“Why are you trying to blame Zora for this? How does she have a hand in this? What would she gain from this?” Darius asked her, and she shook her head.

“You promised to play dirty if he poses a threat to Darius. You promised to do anything to help Darius. You might not have used those words, Zora, but you implied it,” She said, and I was stunned by how her mind could twist my words.

Darius looked at me with disbelief but tried to hide it. I did not know what damage this woman’s rage and fear would cost me, but I needed to speak.

“I did not set him up, Nellie. I do not know Bryce,” I said, defending myself.

“Yet it is your ex—husband, who did not want to give you up, who has teamed up with Elbert, that pointed Bryce out as the culprit.” She said, and I knew what she was trying to imply.

“I suggest you speak plainly, Nellie. You are trying to say Casey and I set Abelardo up using Bryce so we can get whatever you feel we are after,” I said, and she was silent.

Darius gently touched my hand, a plea to ask me to calm down.

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“**As** much **as** all this hurts me, I will let it pass because you are hurting, and people say a lot of things they regret when they are hurting, but I will not accept your accusationS,” I said, and she growled at me and looked at Darius.

“Even if he was accused of such, you should have investigated instead of humiliating him like this. You have wounded his pride with your actions. Taking the lordship from him was a hard blow; you shouldn’t have done this, Darius. This is low,” she said in tears, and I felt Darius’s rage emerging.

“And let him force me into a war because his feelings are hurt?” he yelled at her.

“Do you know the implications of his action? I would have chosen to push back if Casey had not reached out but revolted instead. There will be a war. People will die because of his hurt. Is your son’s feelings more important than people’s lives? Is it more important than the peace we are enjoying right now? Answer me, mother. You say Zora threatened you; why wouldn’t she? She saw him for what he was. A threat to me, a threat to the north and our world, so she did the only thing she knew she could by asking you to force him to remain so he won’t complicate things for me at the hearing as he and Larry had planned. Did she force him to get involved with Larry and actively work against me?” He said, his hands shaking.

“I would have lost the seat today. If they could prove that I committed those crimes, the Hand family would no longer be in charge. Are his feelings worth all that?” He asked her, and she began to weep and went to her knees.

“You know he didn’t do this. He is not smart enough to pull something like this. He will not do this, Darius; please, Let him

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go,” she pleaded on her knees, weeping.

“If the investigation proves he is innocent, then I will let him go, but his name has been mentioned as the main culprit, so he will remain in custody until proven otherwise,” Darius said, and she began to cry. She looked at me with anger.

“They had different views and did not see eye to eye on many things, but they were getting along before you, Zora. I know you did this. I know you think you are doing this for love. I know you think you are protecting Darius by removing Abelardo from the picture, but you will live to regret this.” She said in tears, and I could not believe why this woman wanted to drag me into this.

“All

I can see is that you need to blame someone other than yourself for not raisin

g your first son properly. So you picked the easy target, which is me. I did nothing to Abelardo; I won't feel sorry, I won't regret it, and I won't hurt over it," I said, a bit annoyed.

"I hope you will be a mother one day.." she said, and Darius shut her down.

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Chapter 80

Zora

"Enough, mother, leave my room now!" he said, and she was in shock and disbelief, but soon she realised he was serious and stood up. She looked at me scornfully and then looked at Darius.

"She is desperate, Darius, making her a dangerous woman. You need to be there when she was talking about Abelardo," She said, referring to me.

"I hope you know what you are doing, son. Abelardo is the only family you have. He is your only sibling. Just like she left her husband, she can leave you, move on and won't have anything to do with you, but Abelardo and I will always be your family. I know you haven't felt this way about anyone since Shanon left, but do not let your feelings blind and control you, Darius..." she said, and he shut her up.

"Get out," he yelled at her, enraged.

"Sometimes I question if you are my mother," he confessed.

"You let him disrespect me and work against me, and then you expect me to be understanding and forgiving towards him, but you are quick to point fingers whenever he is hurting. I do not care if he is your favourite, but if I find out he is guilty, I will have him tried and executed for treason," Darius said finally, and Nellie and I both gasped.

She hurried out of the room while I remained. She had messed

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up Darius's mood and left me to deal with it. I did not know how he would react, but I braced myself for it.

"Did you order her to keep him at home for my sake?" he asked me with a low voice, and I knew there was no use lying.

"I meant well, Darius," I tried to explain, but before I could say anything, he crashed his lips on mine and pulled me close to his body.

His kiss was fierce and demanding, and I let him take me.

I knew he needed the tranquillity that love brings, and I was willing to give it. I needed it, too

Nellie had come to stir up shit, and I hoped she calmed down

soon and came to her sense.

Darius

tore my clothes and my underwear. I did the same to him. He hoisted me up with my back against the wall and rammed himself into me. He was growling and pumping viciously. The pleasure he gave coursed through my veins, taking away the anger, fear, anxiety and pain Nellie had brought and replacing it with pure love and a need for the release he offered. I held on tightly, digging my claws into his skin, and Monica growled and moaned simultaneously.

I wished he would sink his teeth into my flesh at that moment and claim me.

I wanted to be his forever and prove Nellie was wrong.

He did not just have them, he had me, too, and the children **we** would have in future... He had my love, heart and my life, and **I know** it was enough, just as he was enough for me.

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I came viciously, and he pumped through it, forcing my orgasm to linger. And soon, he came and gently let me down. With my back against the wall, he placed his forehead against mine.

“Thank you for forcing her hand, Zora. Everything she said shows how far you are willing to go for my sake, something even she has been incapable of doing. I am not mad at you, my love; I am surprised and grateful,” he said, and tears began to roll down my cheek, and I held on to him. I was relieved.

“Darius, I was scared you were mad at me,” I confessed, and he wrapped his arms around me and let me cry my tears of relief.

He led me to the bed and made me lie down.

“Before we got home, I knew something was troubling you. Do you mind sharing?” he asked, sitting on the bed by my side. I realised he would be stepping out soon.

I nodded and sat up.

“Something didn’t sit well with me about how easy it was to catch Abelardo. He might be stupid, but I doubt he is that stupid,” I said, and he frowned at me.

“What are you implying?” He asked, and I sighed.

“We still need to trace the paper trail for the first order. The one that was done without mistake, the one that you couldn’t find out about until the deed was done.” I said, and he stroked my hair.

“Larry must have done it and framed Abelardo for it,” he said, and I shook my head.

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