

# Darkness Mate Cheated Versus Fated by Victory Done

## Chapter 91

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Zora

I planned on managing the condition until I got back to the north.

“That went well; too well, I must say,” Kara linked me, trying to be cautious, and I smiled at her.

“He believed Casey when he told him but still felt insulted until I showed up,” I linked her back, explaining my deduction.

“Alpha Jake Brighton is an old-fashioned man. He expected word to have gone to Darius’s ears of the atrocity in Brighton, and he expected Darius to apologise personally even though he had no hand in it. It is an ego thing for the old man, nothing more.” I linked Kara, and she laughed.

“What do you think about Councilwoman Pamela? The woman reeks of treachery,” Kara said aloud, and I laughed. It would be unwise for us to remain silent all through the room.

Being former Lunas of top packs, we understood the politics. Alpha Brighton wanted to keep an eye on us and our activities in his territory, so he offered we stay in his house; I was sure people were listening to our conversation.

We had dinner with Alpha Jake, Mikail, his nephew, Iris, his daughter and Donald, his son. His son and nephew were about my age, and I figured Donald would succeed his father soon. His daughter, Iris, kept staring at us during dinner, and I was a bit uncomfortable, but I let it be.

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**We** ate in silence and returned to our room.

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“Donald did not seem to like us. I do not know what his deal is. Jake’s nephew, Mikail, was worse. He kept staring at us. Honestly, I can’t wait to be out of this place,” Kara said, lying next to me, and I smiled. The feeling was mutual.

“I am missing Marcel,” She said and sighed.

“He didn’t want me to come, but I insisted. Right now, I just want to head back to the north and never leave his side. It has just been a few hours, and I am missing him so badly,” She said, and I smiled because I felt the same way.

I wondered what Darius was doing. As much as I wanted to place a call, it was best I didn’t.

I was about to fall asleep when my phone rang. I did not need to guess who it was. I answered in a heartbeat.

“Miss me already, Green eyes?” he said, and I giggled on the phone.

“More than you can imagine. Would have returned in the morning, but Alpha Jake invited us to a festival tomorrow evening, so we will return after the festival,” I said, and he grumbled on the phone.

The phone to Kara to speak with Marcel. Apparently, she did not come with her phone.

We talked about his day, and I handed

We said good night and fell asleep.

We had breakfast in the morning with our host and his children, and it was a very uncomfortable one.

“When are you two leaving?” Donald asked with a very disrespectful tone, and his father cautioned him.

“You might choose to be silent, but I won’t. They are marrying the men that attacked their people and took them away from their husbands. If it isn’t shameless and a desperate act of social climbing, then I do not know what is. Yet we welcome them to **our** home, allow them to eat at our table and pretend everything is okay. Mikail doesn’t have a mother because of the Dark Lord Alpha; my mother was taken from me because of the Dark Lord Alpha. Yet we are here. I say these eastern whores should be ashamed of themselves,” He said, and I put down my cutlery and wiped my mouth.

His father was going to speak when I stopped him.

“It is easy to point fingers, call people names and judge them when you do not have the full picture. It is easy to speak about loyalty and moral values when you have not experienced certain things, and judging people looking from the outside is easy. You call us whores and wicked. You call my mate vile and evil, but he was our saviour. Where was your moral compass when my ex-husband broke his promises and forced me to live with his fated, and I lost my rights and standing as luna? Where was your moral compass when Kara’s husband abused her and her wolf day and night, forced her to live with his mistress and placed the bitch above her? No one was willing to help, knowing what she was going through. These monsters revived our faith in love and gave us the strength and courage to try again. Darius wiped away my tears and gave me hope when I thought all was lost. My husband did not give me up; I gave myself up to get away from him. As for your mother and aunt, I sympathise with you, but Darius is nothing like Collier. If you are too blind to see it, you need to look into the mirror and question your morals,” I

**said**, picking up my fork to continue the meal; I could not let it waste. No one said anything.

Alpha Brighton gave us a tour of the village. I saw many

things that needed improvement, and I made mental notes to relay to Darius when I got home.

“Alpha Casey has offered my people part-time work to help

with the income. He is truly a nice man.” Jake said, and I smiled at him. I had always known Casey to have a big heart. I was glad the things that happened didn’t take it from him.

“How is he?” I asked, eager to know how he was doing but reluctant to show my eagerness.

“He looks like he has seen better days; Alpha Corrigan said he is still hurting over you. I guess he needs closure,” He said, and I was hurt to learn that my letter did not give him the closure he needed.

“After what you told my son during breakfast, I figured he did it to himself. I think he is finding it hard to forgive himself. I doubt there is anything you can do to help him. Besides, you seem pretty happy. I believe you love Hand, or you would have used this opportunity to run away. He is a lucky man,” Jake said, and I thanked him.

“I hope Donald and Mikail will heal from what happened to them. Honestly, that is the reason I haven’t handed the pack over to Donald yet; he is about twenty—  
six and ready to take over, but I am afraid he would make a bad decision that would get him and our people into trouble.” He confessed, and I smiled at him.

“He will heal, Alpha. We all do,” I said, and he nodded.

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“I am sorry about the initial reception. Please tell his eminence that I truly feel honoured that he sent you,” he said, and I smiled. He sighed and looked at Kara and me.

“You women have been through a lot and are still holding firm. You need all the strength you can manage in that place. The north is a political jungle of people wrestling for power.

Your places as lunas are never secure, so you have to be careful. Too many people want to be affiliated with the north. With all that has happened, the council is only partially loyal to the Lord. He needs to be careful. Collier knew this, and that was why he was ruthless. Hence why I do not have a grudge against the old Lord. He needed to be a certain way so there would be peace in our world.

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I know Darius is trying to be kind, but someone has to be stern, keep an eye open, and ears to the ground. He might be suffering a spillover of something from his father's time. I am not sure, but some of us old Alphas know of the power

struggle between the six ruling houses of the north," He said, and I absorbed every word and then used that opportunity to ask him to elaborate.

"Do you mind telling me about the power struggle?" I asked, and he sighed.

"Let's start with Nellie Hand," He said, and my stomach

churned.

"She is a nice woman, wasn't treated well by her family and her mate, but she can be vindictive." He said, and he noticed

my countenance.

"Is there an issue?" he asked, and I shook my head

"Nothing, but I would like to know more about her, and you seem to be in the best position to tell me since you experienced when she was in power," I said, and he laughed.

“There is nothing special about her. She wasn’t so bright. That was why Collier preferred his fated to her,” he said, and I was in shock.

No one ever mentioned that Collier had a fated or that Nellie had to share him with his fated.

“A fated?” I asked the man, and he nodded.

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“It was a well-kept secret. Nellie is a member of the Belyaev family, so no one would dethrone her. His fated’s name was Lady Alissa Pavlishchev. She was from a small merchant family in Gad.

Nellie would not share her title even though the Lord was and still is allowed to have more than one Lady. So she always ensured the woman was presented as one of his whores.

Collier and Nellie fought about it often, but when the Belyaevs threatened to divide the north, Collier had to let comply. Hence, why Collier became power-hungry and a

monster.

I believe the man wanted to be so strong that no one would be able to threaten him as the Belyaevs did.

Collier was able to take over completely and subdue them by wiping out the Belyaevs and their supporters, which were the Babanins and the part of the Lawrence family, leaving Nellie powerless and defenceless. Unfortunately, Alissa had passed away before he completed his mission, so he decided to keep Nellie as his Lady and the only Lady of the north,” He said, and I was stunned.

“Nellie made sure no one ever spoke of Alissa or remembered her. I doubt Lord Darius and Abelardo even know her,” he said, and I could not believe how rotten the north was.

I kept all those names in mind and planned to start my investigation from there

The tour was educative, and I was pleased Jake took the time to show us around and give us some history lessons that we wouldn't have been privy to had we remained in our coon at the estate.

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1288 Vouchers I also realised that I needed to be extra careful where Nellie was concerned. She was the type to always get what she wanted.

Alphas started arriving, and Jake had to excuse us to attend to his guest.

I noticed Iris was excited about it. Hopefully, she would find her mate and not live her life afraid of fate.

Kara and I were sleeping when a bang on the door woke us.

Someone was sent to inform us that the festival was at full blast at the festival was at full blast, and we were needed at the high table to grace the event. We must have overslept.

Kara and

I dressed and decided to grace the occasion as special guests from the north. I suspected we would be representing the Lord and beta. The festival was a full blast, and there was a lot of merriment.

We stayed away from alcohol because we had to remain sharp. Alpha Jake sent Iris to bring us to the high table.

We moved through the crowd, and I admired the lights display and merriment.

Seeing how these people turned their misfortune into joy and bounced back was amazing.

They were strong, and I admired them for it. Women, children, and men played and danced. There were bright colours. everywhere, confetti and music. It was beautiful.

We headed to the high table, and then I caught his scent.

“Zora...” Monica said, nervous, excited and scared. What had

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just happened to us.

The scent called to me. It was a woody and musk, masculine and dominated me.

I was in a trance. My heart was thinking of Darius, but the thought this stranger that fate had tied

I left Kara's side and stopped for scent. The owner was elusive. He was somewhere with his scent.

I knew what I was doing was something I could not control myself. I kept wolf was giddy, and she wanted him.

I walked briskly into a garden, a dagger in his hand and fear in his eyes.

Tears formed immediately in my pounding, my hands were shaking over the place.

I now understood why. Why he everyone kept asking if there was

Images of him at the party where His attention, his boldness, his and began to cry.

“Why didn't you say anything?” he rolled down his cheek, and he

too.

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What a joke.

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Zora

Typically people are elated over something like this, but my heart was conflicted.

Every fibre of my being wanted him.

I wanted to throw away my love and promises and accept fate.

It was overwhelming and euphoric.

All that existed at that moment was him. Monica wanted to jump and let him take us. I wanted to let her.

Hardy looked up at me and came close to me.

His teary eyes searched mine, and I could see he was desperate. Desperate to have me and make me his. His eyes flashed golden, and I knew his wolf was in control.

Monica wanted him. He touched my cheek with his palm, and I closed my eyes to feel his touch caressing my skin, enveloping me in his intoxicating scent.

“Mate,” His wolf said, and Monica wanted to respond, but I held my lips. I searched his eyes, and they were expectant.

“Why didn’t you say anything that night?” I asked angrily that he had let the moment slip. If he had, I would be in the south and would have never gone to the north.

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I was angry not because I went to the north, but because he knew I was suffering with Casey and didn't make a move to take me from him.

"You sent me back to his house. You let me go back!" I yelled at him, tears streaming down my face, and he bowed.

"You knew I was suffering. You knew I was in pain. You had the power to take it away. You are Alpha, and you let me go," I said and stepped back.

"Now you hold a rose and say, Mate?" I said, and Monica pleaded with me to take it easy, but I was mad.

"Why Hardy? Why didn't you save me? Why didn't you claim me? When I wanted my fate to come and rescue me, to take my pain away. I prayed so hard that the goddess answered, but you weren't willing.

"Why now? Do you hate Darius so much that you want to hurt him the worst way ever!" I said, and he shook his head, tears streaming down his face, looking misunderstood.

"No, Zora," he said, looking at me, and I stepped back.

"Then tell me why now? Why!" I yelled at him; my heart was beating so fast. I was fighting myself.

"I thought we had time. I wanted Casey to let you go before I stepped in," he said, and I began to laugh,

"Casey would have never let me go! I had to give myself up as a tribute to get away from him," I said, and he nodded.

“You didn’t want me then; why now?” I asked him, and he shook his head.

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“I always wanted you. From the moment your apple and cinnamon scent filled my senses, I had wanted you. But I wanted to wait for the right moment, the perfect moment to make you mine. I wanted to do it properly. We had allied, and I did not want to have issues with Casey. I wanted to reason with him first,” he said.

“If you cared, you wouldn’t have waited for perfect conditions. You would have taken me from him that night. You would have made me yours,” I told him angrily.

“I wrote letters to alphas, pleading with them to let me join their pack, so I won’t go rogue when I leave Casey. Meanwhile, you were there all along, waiting for the perfect moment that would never come because the world doesn’t work that way, Hardy. There is no such thing as perfect. It is an illusion, a lie we tell ourselves, and you gambled me away with that decision. You left me to rot with Casey and Lori.”

mine. Kissing me. He reached for me and crashed his lips on mine. Kissing me.

I wanted to push him away, but my body responded. He was tugging on the bond, and Monica let him.

He moved to my sweet spot and sucked it grazing his teeth over it desperately,

“Green—eyes“, I heard Darius in my head, giving me the strength to push Hardy away.

“That is dubious,” I said, shaking my head.

“Please, Zora, you do not have to return to him. Come with me. I will protect you. I will fight him,” He said, and I laughed.

“You didn’t want to fight Casey for my sake, but you are

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**willing** to fight Darius?” I said, and he nodded.

“I won’t let you use me as bait for your Wolf Lord agenda. I refuse to be used,” I told him, and he pulled me close and shook his head.

“I do not want to be wolf lord anymore; I just want my mate.” He pleaded with me.

“All my life, I waited for you. Never made promises to anyone, and hoping to find you. Do you know how heartbroken I was when I saw Casey’s mark on your neck? I was broken,” he said, and I shook my head.

“Not enough to challenge him for me. Not enough to break the rules for my sake. Not enough..” I said, and he bowed his head.

“I did not want a war. I did not want our love to be built on war. I wanted to do it amicably. The east is your home, and you have people there. I did not want to ruin the place. I swear, Zora. I just wanted to do it amicably. I did not know. Darius would take you away and that you would end up with him,” he said, and I smiled with hurt in my heart.

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Zora

“We do not know what the future holds, Hardy; that is why we seize the moment and do all we can. Love the people we love, appreciate them, tell them, and show them how we feel. Do

all that we want for them because the future isn't guaranteed. Tomorrow isn't guaranteed. So we become a bit impulsive, so we don't look back on it with regrets. Things change, feelings, time, and conditions; they all change, so we always seize the moment and live in it because tomorrow isn't guaranteed. I know this and live by it daily, which you should have. If you had, we would be together. I wouldn't have met Darius, known him, and fallen in love with him. I wouldn't be torn and fighting our bond right now; my heart and yours wouldn't be breaking. Everything would be as it should be,” I said and looked at the sky.

“When Casey found Lori, I ran away from the party and shifted. The pain was incredible, and I prayed that my mate would come and take it away. The goddess answered, she answered, but when you came, you weren't willing. You weren't ready, so I had to face it alone, and someone else had to help me through the healing process. What you feel for me is a bond ordained by the goddess and fate; what I have with Darius is destiny made from choice,” I said, and his eyes widened.

“I love him, Hardy. My heart beats for him. He was there. He held my hand to make me smile, gave me a reason to try again, fixed me, and made me hope and love again. He was

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there. Now you hold a rose in your hand and want me to just forget about the one person who loved me through my pain and suffering. The one person that went against tradition, his values, his family, his people, for my sake. The one person willing to seize the moment and live in it.” I said and looked at him.

“I can’t. I promised him I would be home tomorrow. I promised him I would never leave him. I promised I wouldn’t break his heart. I am not letting you go because of my promises; I am letting you go because I have already given my heart to him,” I said, and he nodded, tears streaming down his face.

“When Casey told me you were in love with Darius Hand, I thought it was a lie. When I heard of your marriage, I thought you only did it to survive. But seeing you here made me realise I was wrong. He let you come this far unaccompanied, and you’re not willing to come with me. I see you love him,” He said and bowed his head.

“And I know the bond can not take that away. The human and the wolf would always be conflicted. Casey loved you, still loves you, and because of that, he hasn’t been able to be happy with Lori. I see him die more every time, and I do not wish that on you, Zora. I do not want to be the source of your pain. You were right when you said I had lost my opportunity. Even if I take you and claim you, just like Casey, your heart will always beat for Darius. I can see it in your eyes. I care about you enough to want you to be truly happy. I do not want my love or our bond to be a source of pain and regret for you. Whatever you do, I will accept and wish you the best,” He said, letting the rose drop into his hand.

I looked at him and did not know what to do.

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A part of me wanted to reject him and walk away.

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Another told me to consider it. I wasn't fated to Darius; what if he finds his fate and betrays me? Then I will be left with

nothing.

If I let Hardy go, I might never have a fated again. Second- chance mates are rare. I looked at him, and my heart thumped in my chest.

He pulled me close to him and began to kiss me again, Pleading his case.

He was trying to influence my decision with my body, and my body let him.

I could understand what Casey went through that night.

My mind was trying to seize control, but my wolf and body wanted him. Musk and wood scent engulfed me, and a light moan escaped my lips. He pulled me to his body, and I wrapped my arms around him.

"Mate," I heard myself say, and he growled. My body was shaking in his arms.

He travelled with his kiss to my neck. Licking and sucking the skin. My vision was a blur; he was erupting desire in me, none like I had felt before. Intoxicating.

I knew I shouldn't be doing this, but I could no longer remember why.

Our kiss became more hungry and vicious, and he took full possession of my body and laid me on the grass.

"Mine," He said, and just like that, I snapped out of my trans

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and moved away from under him. He stared at me in disbelief, and I moved backwards, staring at him in disbelief.

Cremin's voice echoed in my head.

“Mine,” He said, and I felt my claws and teeth retract. Realising what had happened, he did the same.

Not wanting him to claim me, I decided to do the only thing I could.

“I Zora Riverstorm..” I started, and he bowed in shame, kneeling in the grass.

“Reject you, Hardy Corrigan, as my fated mate. I pray the goddess blesses you with one worthy to be yours and you have the wisdom to seize the moment,” I said, and he accepted in tears and heartache.

We waited for the wrenching pain that accompanies a rejection, but it never came.

I looked at myself and then at him for the pain and weakness, but it did not come.

He looked at me, surprised.

His scent was no longer intoxicating, which meant the bond was no more, but there was no pain or weakness.

We sat on the grass looking at each other, waiting for the pain to come, but it never did.

This was unheard of.

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Zora

We sat on the grass for thirty minutes, and nothing.

“Do you feel anything? Is your wolf weak?” I asked, and he shook his head.

“Wow,” I said, and he chuckled lightly.

“Darius is lucky to have you,” he confessed, and I bowed my head.

“You were right, Zora. I should have seized that moment, but I didn’t. It is my loss,” he said, and I smiled at him.



“I know you will find someone that will love you genuinely, Hardy, but please stop fighting Darius. He isn’t a bad guy,” I said, and he laughed.

“It’s funny you ask me not to fight the guy you rejected me for,” he said, and I knew I sounded a bit stupid.

“But I understand. Because there was no love between us, all my longing for you is gone, and I am sure the same for you. I guess the bond is only a guide to help us build a relationship and fall in love, hence why Casey has been unable to get over you,” he said and touched my hand and kissed it gently.

“I liked you from the moment I saw you, and I still do. I won’t attack Darius because of you, Zora, but if he looks for my trouble, I will give it to him,” He said, and I could feel pain and heartbreak in his eyes, even though he was trying to hide it.

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“You will find someone worthy,” I said to him, and he **nodded** and stood up.

“I doubt she will be anything like you, Zora. You are one of a kind,” He said, and I smiled.

He stretched his hands and helped me stand up. Then pulled me close and kissed me. I let him, and he broke the kiss.

“I will remember this, Zora and I will always seize my moment so I do not lose out. If he ever hurts you, you can call on me, Zora,” He said and caressed my cheek longingly.

“I will always answer you whenever you call me. I promise you. I do not know why this rejection did not hurt or weaken us, but I am glad that other than the heartache, we did not lose much,” he said, and I kissed his palm, hoping I hadn’t made a mistake and condemned myself for nothing.

He held my hand, and I could see he was reluctant to let go.

“Bond aside, just like Darius, I too would have fallen in love with you, and maybe I had a little bit that night,” He said.

We both chuckled lightly.

He patted my cheek and left me in the gardens, and as he walked away, my heart was overcome with fear. Fear of the unknown. This was my chance to be with my fated, and I had thrown it away. I prayed to the goddess that I had not made a wrong choice and that this would not end up hurting me.

I returned to the party and sat on the high table next to Kara.

“Goddess, Zora, you looked ravaged,” She said, and I felt tears wanting to fall.

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I felt I had wronged Darius and cheated on him by letting Hardy kiss me and touch me. Tears began to fall, and Kara quickly made them excuse us, so they wouldn't see my tears.

We returned to the room, and I began to cry.

“What happened? You reek of someone else, Zora. What did you do? Were you attacked?” she asked, and I shook my head.

“I found my fated tonight,” I told her, and she gasped.

“Fuck!!!” she yelled and sat beside me.

“Fuck fuck fuck!!!” She exclaimed.

“I let him kiss me; he almost claimed me, and I liked it,” I said, crying. She held me.

“This is not good for you and Darius, Zora,” she said, and I shook my head.

“I rejected him, and he accepted, but I still feel like shit. I feel like I have cheated on Darius,” I said, and she hugged me.

“You have done the bravest thing that no alpha has been able to do. I am sure a kiss will be better than running off with your fated. Besides, nothing happened between you two; it was just a kiss. Wash his scent off your body and forget about it. You don’t have to tell Darius about it if a reason doesn’t exist. Telling him about it means that it meant something, and from how you are behaving, I know it meant nothing, so let it go,” she said, and I nodded.

“Who was it?” She asked me, and I looked at her.

“Hardy Corrigan,” I said, and her eyes looked like they were going to pop out of the sockets,

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“No way!” she exclaimed, and I nodded.

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“That explains a lot. The way he behaved at the dinner was weird. You couldn’t sense him because of Casey’s mark,” S he said, then stood up and began to pace.

“No wonder he attacked the Hand estate for you. No wonder people were asking if anything was

etween you two. Why didn’t he claim you as his at the party?” She asked the same question that I asked him.

“He said he wanted the moment to be perfect,” I said, and she chuckled.

“His loss. Did the man ever hear of the saying Seize the Moment?” she said, and I did not know what to say.

“I guess not,” she concluded.

“Look, darling, dust yourself and move on,” She said, and I nodded,

“What if Darius finds his fated and makes me share?” I asked her, and she realised what was truly troubling me.

“I am sure you did not sacrifice for the wrong man, but if that ever happens, I know you are strong to handle it,” She said and came to sit with me and rub my hand gently.

“I do not think you should worry about things like that. All we can know is the moment, and we must live in it. Tomorrow is beyond our control. Let it take care of itself,” she said and lifted my chin gently.

“Today and now, Darius loves you; I doubt anything will ever change that,” She said and kissed the top of my head.

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“Come on, **we** need to shower and pack our bags. I want to see my man tomorrow morning, and you need Darius’s comfort, after which you will have to see the doctor because you do not seem fine,” she said, and I laughed a bit.

She led me to the shower, and I had a warm bath, after which food was brought to our room by Iris, and we thanked her for her kindness.

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Zora

Alpha Jake came to check on us, and Kara told him my illness had worsened, and I needed to rest.

We also told him we would like to leave as early as five in the morning.

He thanked us for staying and attending the festival and hoped we would see each other soon.

I assured him the party would not be far, and he promised to attend.

I was restless most of the night, and it took a while before sleep came.

Contrary to what we said would happen, we woke around six- in the morning, and I was too sick to do much.

I wondered if it was the rejection that made my sickness worse.

Denis drove us to Gad, where we got into the jet to return to the north.

I heaved most of the time in the car, and my skin was burning.

I wanted to know if Hardy was affected too, but somehow I doubted it. I believe **it** was mainly because of my sickness.

The flight **felt** like **forever**, and when we landed in the north,

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Brian Wilson, whom I did not like much for slapping me when they brought us to the north, was there to receive us.

He saluted us and treated us with the utmost respect.

I thought he would want to slap me again, and I wanted to tease him about it, but my physical health and sadness did not let me tease him.

We arrived at the estate, and I was eager to see Darius, but none of them was home; neither he nor Marcel nor Raphael.

Eloise came to receive us, and we went to my room. By then, it was evident that I was ill.

“What happened to her?” I heard Eloise ask Kara while she used a cold towel to bring down my temperature.

“She was sick before we left, but it took a turn for the worse last night,” Kara said, and Eloise was worried.

“Please, get better because Nellie is back, and she is a terrible bitch now. She has taken over the estate, and Darius does not even care,” she said, and I heaved.

I was in no physical condition to banter with anyone.

“Call Darius on the phone, tell him to send a doctor,” Kara ordered Eloise, and Eloise took out her phone and placed a call to Darius. It seemed like he did not pick so she called another number.

“Darling,” She said, and I knew it was Raphael.

“Kara and Zora are back. Please tell alpha to send a doctor; Zora isn’t feeling well,” She said, and he said something and hung up.

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“Darius is in a meeting, so he said he would send a doctor instead and tell Darius once he is through with the meeting.

“He should tell him now. She needs him,” Kara yelled at Eloise, and, Eloise shook, wondering why the urgency.

She called back and insisted that he tell Darius immediately that it was a serious matter.

“He said okay,” She said, and Kara and Eloise led me to the bathroom and made me get into the bathtub filled with cold

water.

“I will add ice to it now to crash your temperature; the doctor is on the way,” She said, and I nodded.

I could pick up every scent in the room. It was nauseating.

Soon, the doctor arrived, and I was carried to the room and placed on the bed. Darius came immediately and ran to my bedside.

He looked worried and scared.

“What is going on?” he asked, and I could hear the fear in his voice. I wish I could speak, but I was too sick to talk. He kissed my lips, then my cheek and my palm. I heard Cremin growl, and I tried to smile so he would be at peace.

“The doctor just arrived. We hope he will tell us,” Kara said, and Darius looked at me.

“Zora, please stay with me,” he said, and I nodded. So he would know I was still ill awake and okay, just feverish and

nauseous.

touched his hands and squeezed weakly.

## **Chapter 96**

1288 Vouchers

He kissed me on the lips and forehead, and the doctor took some blood samples.

“How long has she been feeling this way?” The doctor asked, and Kara was too afraid to say how long in the presence of Darius so he would not be pissed, but she had no choice.

“Five days now,” She said, and Darius exclaimed.

“She has been throwing up her food and eating much. She has also been burning up.” Kara said, and the doctor nodded.

“Mood swings?” He asked, and Kara could not answer.

“I will need a sample of her urine for a quick test,” he said, and Darius carried me to the toilet to pee into a cup so it could be used.

He was gentle and handled me with care. I knew he was afraid and was only trying to be strong.

I managed to pee, and he carried me back to bed.

He returned to the toilet to get my urine sample for the doctor.

I noticed the doctor put a strip in the cup and took it out.

He held the strip in his hands and waited, and soon the confusion in his eyes turned into a broad smile.

He looked at Darius and smiled,

“Congratulations, my Lord. Lady Zora is pregnant.”

## **Content**

4/4

## **Chapter 97**

288 Vouchers

Chapter 97

Darius

When Raphael interrupted my speech at the northern council conference, I knew something serious had happened.

I politely excused myself. I went to him.

I could hear people murmuring, but soon, Marcel took over, and they were silent.

That was why it was best I wrote my speeches. He just picked up from where I left off.

Raphael stood when I approached him.



“They are back,” He said, and I smiled, glad that Zora had returned.

I was worried she might see Casey or Hardy, and they would convince her to leave with them.

The painful part of that fear was that I wouldn’t have gone after her if she had willingly followed. Otherwise, I would have given my mother, Abelardo and the entire council the war they had longed for and burned the south or east to the ground.

“Zora is ill. Eloise asked that I send a doctor, which I did, but then she insisted I tell you. I think it is serious,” He said, and images of her being poisoned by Jake Brighton just to get at me flooded my mind.

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Chapter 97

288 Vouchers

I was out the door before Raphael could finish the sentence.

People were looking at me weirdly.

The moment I stepped out, I hopped into the first car I saw. It wasn’t mine, but I was lord, and the driver was already behind the wheel.

“Hand estate now!” I ordered him, and he started his vehicle.

I did not know who he worked for; I will have to apologise later.

We arrived at the estate, and I rushed into the building and went straight to my room.

Kara and Eloise were with her. She looked pale and sweaty but seemed a bit calm. The doctor was examining her, and I went to hold her hands. Cremin was afraid, so I had to try and control myself.

When the doctor congratulated me that she was pregnant, I was shocked. Knowing that Eloise did not feel the same way made me still worried that Jake did something.

“Eloise is pregnant, and she isn’t ill?” I asked the doctor.

“People experience pregnancy differently, but I will still take her blood sample to test for other things. If there is anything, she is already recovering from it. I will give her a mild sedative to help her relax and sleep it off, but there is no cause for alarm here. She will be alright when she wakes up; she just needs to rest,” he said, administered the sedative, and packed his things to leave.

I watched Zora’s eyes close gradually until she fell asleep.

## **Chapter 97**

288 Vouchers

Eloise and Kara excused themselves, and I stayed with her.

There was a knock on my door thirty minutes later, and I rushed to open it so the person did not bang too hard and wake Zora up. I knew it was my mother. She was the only one

that dared to do that.

I opened the door, and she frowned at me. Not wanting her in my room, I stepped outside.

“What is wrong with her?” She asked, and I knew she must have heard.

“What do you care?” I said, and she sighed and bowed her head.

“I know I misbehaved the last time, and I am sorry. It was just that treason is a serious crime, and I knew they would want to kill Abelardo. Zora threatened to deal with Abelardo if he caused you trouble. You are a fool for her. I was angry, but I don’t hate her. I just went to my family home to calm down and think things through.” She said, and I knew she was being honest, but Zora wasn’t comfortable with her anymore, and that was a relationship she would have to fix alone.

“Your words and actions hurt her, mother. Even though she didn’t say it, I could see it. You called her a whore, among other things; words like that don’t get forgotten,” I said, and she bowed.

“Do you know she was the only one that believed Abelardo didn’t do it? She was the one that urged me to dig instead of passing judgment. Abelardo has been a problem for me, so it was easy to think he would pull off that stunt. It was Zora that made me question the enforcer. She was the one that made me look at other factors, yet you were busy antagonising her

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Chapter 97

288 Vouchers

“Doctor said she will be fine,” I said, and she looked at me.

“Do you mind if I examine her?” She asked, and I did not know how Zora would feel about it, but since I was there, I decided it wouldn’t be any harm.

She touched Zora’s forehead and palm and checked her nails; Zora stirred in her sleep but did not wake up.

**5/5**

O

**Content**

Chapter 98

Darius

“Did the doctor take a blood sample?” She asked, and I nodded.

“I think she ingested a small amount of poison, and I also think she is pregnant,” she said, and I was panicked because she could be right.

“No need for alarm; her system is fighting whatever was introduced into it,” She said and patted her hair gently

“She is pregnant,” I confirmed, and she gasped. A wide grin spread across her face.

“Congratulations,” she said softly and looked at Zora lovingly.

“I hope she will give me another chance.” She said, and I doubted Zora would be that nice again, but I kept it to myself.

“You were going to tell me something about Donald Brighton, mother,” I said, and she nodded. We moved to the couch area, and she sat.

“Yes, Ava Brighton. A bitch...” she said scornfully.

“She and Gretchen were brought as trophies. Gretchen was Jake’s younger sister. She was stunning and a looker. Your father eagerly drafted her to join his harem and reluctantly drafted Ava. He favoured Gretchen of all his bedmates, and Ava got jealous. Gretchen thought she was being nice when she pleaded with Collier to send her sister In-law back to her husband, and Collier considered it. I hated that bitch because she almost took my husband from me. Ava did not see it as an act of kindness on her part. She saw it as a **way** of reducing her competition. The bitch thought Collier liked her too, and Gretchen was only trying to get rid of her. So

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40 (Vouchers

she pleaded with Collier to remain in his service and continue to warm his bed,” She said and wiped away her tears.

It was clear that my mother’s selective memory was her coping mechanism.

Sometimes she would say he had to sleep with those women to learn their husband's secrets and be ahead of them, but here she was admitting that his method was fucked up, but I held my tongue.

"Ava murdered Gretchen in cold blood, driving a silver blade through her heart in this room," she said, looking around.

"She had come to plead with Collier to let her say, and instead of finding Collier, she found Gretchen in his bed naked, looking freshly fucked, and she snapped. You see, Collier had stopped touching Ava, and it bothered her," she said and bowed her head.

"Collier had her locked up in the dungeon, and one drunken night, he went to her cell and took her life," she said, and I was stunned.

"What he did was against the law. Ava was supposed to stand trial for her crime, slave or not. But he acted on impulse, and we swept it under the carpet. No one knew this, but Donald hates the Hands because of it. He thinks his mother was brought here as a slave and killed unjustly. I doubt Jake knows the truth," She said, and I looked at Zora.

"Our family has many enemies, hence why the rest of the Hand bloodline are quiet and not bearing our last name. It was wrong to send her to Brighton. I am sure they wanted to kill her. She just didn't ingest enough," she said, and I hoped for Jake's sake there was nothing in Zora's blood or I would destroy Brighton.

"Is there a record of this?" I asked her, and she nodded.

The recordkeeper kept a record," She told me, and I nodded, hoping to use it when the time comes.

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40 Vouchers

"The council have sent enforcers for Abelardo's hearing. They want to move him and Bryce to the council prison," Raphael said through the mind link, and I got up immediately.

“What is the matter, son?” My mother asked, and I shook my head. I dared not tell her what was happening.

“Council matters,” I said, and she nodded.

“I will take my leave. Zora likes yoghurt and fruits. She also likes smoked salmon in her salad. I will have the kitchen staff prepare her favorite so she can eat when she wakes up; she has lost some weight.” My mother said, and I thanked her.

We both left the room.

Although I knew she meant no harm, I did not want her to be the first person Zora would see when she woke up.

I linked Kara and Eloise to go to my room and be with Zora, then headed to the dungeons where the enforcers were waiting.

Marcel was there, and Abelardo stood in chains with fear in his eyes.

“What is the meaning of this?” I asked, and the leader bowed his head.

“Your Eminence, Councilwoman Pamela asked us to transfer the suspects to the council prison so they can stand trial tomorrow,” He said, and I nodded.

“They will stand trial tomorrow; tell her I will be presiding over the case, and the prisoners will remain in my custody until then. Now leave,” I said. I knew it wasn’t my place, but I was going to bend the rules for Abelardo’s sake. Someone wanted him to be the fall guy, and I wasn’t going to allow it.

“With all due respect, my lord, the council decides on criminal matters,”

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he said, and I nodded.

“Then tell them I am overriding the decision this time. If they have an issue, they should face me directly on the matter,” I said, and the man nodded, saluted me with respect and left.

“What is with the council? Why are they quick and eager to convict Abelardo,” Marcel said, and I looked at my brother.

“Someone is desperate to cover their tracks by making him the fall guy,” I said, and there was hope in Abelardo’s eyes.

“What?” Marcel said.

“Zora and I have been digging, and we found some really troubling things. They were hoping I wouldn’t investigate because of the friction between Abelardo and me. They were right, had Zora not insisted, I would have let them deal with him,” I said and looked at Abelardo, who

looked ashamed of himself.

“You did this to yourself, big brother. Always working against me and trying to prove that I am incompetent. You would have been the fall guy for nothing.” I said, and he remained ashamed.

“Double Bryce and Abelardo’s security. I do not want a mishap,” I linked Marcel and Raphael, and they nodded.

I returned to my room to be with Zora

## **Content**

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**11:42**

Chapter 99

Zora

Everyone was elated by the news except for Darius. I could see he was happy, but he squeezed my hand gently.

“Thank you, doctor, but why is she ill? Eloise is pregnant, and she isn’t ill,” He said, and I could understand his reaction to the news.

“People experience pregnancy differently, but I will still take her blood sample to test for other things. If there is anything, she is already recovering from it. I will give her a mild sedative to help her relax and sleep it off, but there is no cause for alarm here. She will be alright when she wakes up; she just needs to rest,” He said.

“I will administer a mild sedative to help her rest“, he added.

The doctor administered the medication and left. Leaving Darius, Kara and me in the bedroom.

My eyes became heavy, and I fell asleep.

I woke up to see Darius lying beside me in bed and working on his computer. I groaned, and he looked at me and smiled.

He put his computer on the nightstand and kissed my forehead.

“If you were a child, I would have said you were grounded,” He said with a tinge of anger, and I understood.

His eyes were teary, and he was fighting his emotions.

“Anything could have happened to you out there, Zora. Anything. Why would you keep something so significant from me?” He asked, and I

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gradually sat up:

“Had I told you I was throwing up and feeling feverish, you would not have allowed me to go, and I did not trust the council to do your bidding in the west,” I said, and he bowed his head and then looked at me.

“How are you feeling now?” He asked and placed his hand gently on my belly.

His touch felt good against my skin, and I wanted his hand to linger.



Monica was silent because she was ashamed of what we did and what she almost allowed to happen. I understood her shame.

“Don’t do this again. Always tell me what you are going through, Zora. We will get through it together no matter how terrible it is,” He said, and I nodded.

“So we will be parents soon,” he said with a broad grin, and I smiled at him.

I felt like shit.

How would I tell him I saw Hardy and we made out? How would I tell him he was my fated, but I rejected him? How?

“Please don’t,” Monica pleaded with me, afraid.

I understood her fear because making out with Hardy and almost allowing him to claim us felt like a great betrayal.

“How were things over there?” he asked, and I told him everything Alpha Jake told me about the attack.

He took off his shirt and snuggled into bed beside me to hold me.

I felt at peace when he wrapped his arms around me and enveloped me with his scent. I held him resting my head on his chest, and looked up at

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Chapter **99**

him.

140 Vouchers

“I love you, Darius. Please don’t break my heart,” I said in tears, and he frowned. He **was** surprised at my sudden mood.

“I can never hurt you, Zora,” He said and placed my hand on his chest to feel his heartbeat.

“I cannot live without you.” He said.

“If your fated shows up, what would you do?” I asked, and he sat up gently. I gently sat up, too, and he looked at me.

“I make my destiny, Zora, and I choose you and our baby. She would have shown up late. I have given everything to you, Zora; I have nothing to give her,” he said, and I bowed my head, knowing how strong the pull was and how Casey failed.

Hardy was a gentleman, unlike Lori, who was persistent. Hardy respects my wishes; what if his fated is like Lori, persistent?

“What if the pull is so strong and you can’t say no?” I asked him, tears streaming down my face.

“I will prove that my love is stronger than the legendary pull of the mate bond. I will choose you over and over again. You have nothing to worry about. Soon we will be married and welcome our baby into the world. My fated has no room in my life,” he said with conviction.

“Your mother hates me, Darius. What if she interferes?” I said, and he shook his head.

“My mother doesn’t hate you, and she can never make me do anything I do not want to do,” He said and lifted my hand and kissed it.

“This is it,” he said, pulling me close to kiss him.

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40 Vouchers

His **lips** felt so good on mine, and I opened up to receive the goodness he **was** giving. Erasing Hardy’s kiss.

I kissed him hungrily, wanting to feel every bit of him, knowing this was it for me.

My heart was beating fast. A mixture of joy and uncertainty.

He travelled with his lips to my neck and sucked.

I wanted him to sink his teeth in and seal the deal.

I wanted to disregard tradition and just go for it. I held his head tightly, and he growled and groaned. He was fighting Cremin, and I did not want him to.

Monica gave me strength, and I straddled him and opened my robe.

He went for my breasts with his lips, and I looked up, pushing my chest to give him access.

He worshipped them and paid attention. I felt his bulge, and I wanted him to seal the deal.

He gently flipped our positions and got off the bed, leaving me gasping for air and disappointed.

“You need to rest, Zora. I want you so badly that if I go ahead now, I will claim you,” He confessed, and I took off my robe completely.

“I do not care, Darius. I am already yours,” I said, and his eyes went completely dark.

He had entered a battle he would lose because Cremin charged back to the bed and kissed me hungrily; he moved down my body fast and went between my **legs**.

“Mine,” he growled his famous words.

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The words that brought **me** back from the trance.

The words that helped me keep my promise and gave me control.

I welcomed the words and opened wider for him.

He teased my knob with his tongue and then looked at me to be sure I was seeing what he was doing. He sucked gently, and I moaned. He looked at me again.

“I won’t be able to control myself,” He told me, and I shook my head.

“Then don’t,” I said, and he knelt between my legs and drove his cock into

1. me.

He growled and began to pump fast and hard.

I welcomed it, but a part of me said I was wrong.

He should know...

He should know, and just like that, my body went cold, and I began to cry.

Darius gently pulled out and lifted my face to look at him.

“What is the matter, green eyes?” He said with concern, and my tears fell freely.

“I did something bad, Darius, and I am afraid you will hate me for it,” I said, and he froze.

“What did you do, Zora?” He asked gently. I knew he was controlling himself.

He stood up from the bed, and I looked at him, afraid.

“What happened?” He said, and my tears fell freely

**Content**

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Chapter 100

Zora

"I...I...I...", I said, stuttering between sobs.

"I saw Hardy at the festival," I said. He clenched his fists, and his hands began to shake. His eyes darkened instantly, and I could see anger rise in them. There was no going back from this.

"He was my Fated," I said, and Cremin began to growl. I could feel the pressure of his presence.

"I did not know until last night, Darius. I swear. I did not know. He said it was because of Casey's mark," I said, rushing through the words, but his growls became louder.

"The pull was strong and intoxicating, and we made out," I confessed, and he roared. I wiped away my tears.

"He almost claimed me, but I rejected him. I rejected him. It took a lot of effort, but I rejected him," I said and looked at him.

"I had nothing to give him. He accepted because he realised that my heart belonged to you. It was hard, but he accepted it." I said and began to weep.

He approached me on the bed, and my heart was pounding from fear. I thought he would do something crazy, but he hugged me tightly and kissed my neck.

"It's okay, darling. It's okay. You didn't do anything wrong. You did not betray me. You did something most people are incapable of; you honoured me and kept your promise," He said and sucked the soft spot of

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my neck.

40 Vouchers

“You have nothing to be ashamed of. You and Monica have nothing to be ashamed of,” he said, looking at me with his S age wolf eyes.

“Thank you, Zora, thank you for coming back to me,” he said, tears streaming down his face. He was afraid.

“Your sacrifice will not be in vain, Zora. I promise I will never do anything to make you regret choosing me instead of your fated. I promise you.” He said, and I nodded; tears of fear and uncertainty streamed down my face, and he hugged me and kissed my neck.

“I am yours, Zora. My heart, body and soul. You will never have to share me with anyone. I will never hurt or betray you. I will never touch anyone else until I die. It will only be you now and always. Just you, Zora and no one else. I love you,” he said and arrested my lips with his.

He laid me down gently on the bed and gradually used his tongue to leave a trail of pleasure on my skin. Tracing from my neck to my core. He sucked on my mound gently, and all the fear I felt was replaced with pleasure; the load was lifted, and I felt light.

I came immediately, and he placed himself in me and pumped. His eyes were dark, and Monica took over.

He pumped and pumped, and I came several times. Even though we weren't fated, I hoped this was it.

We lay in the bed naked, and Darius cracked many jokes about what his mother did when she returned.

According to him, she was hurt he didn't come after her. She wanted to go missing, and he would come and beg her, and then she will make her demands as her condition to return. When that didn't happen, she returned and accused him of abandoning her and choosing me over her. The woman was just unbelievably petty. Darius wanted me to forgive her,

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Chapter 100

40 Vouchers

but I bore no grudge against her, to begin with. I had just decided that I would be careful around her.

Nellie had said hurtful and mean things to me. It wasn't okay. It wasn't okay for her to switch and insult my friends and me because she was hurt. It wasn't okay.

I could understand Darius's willingness to forgive her; she was his mother, but I couldn't.

After what Jake had told me, I planned on investigating her too.

I knew the woman was hiding something and was determined to find it out.

"Abelardo and Bryce will be tried tomorrow. Do you think you can join me?" He asked, and I searched his eyes.

"With Nellie around?" I asked him, and he laughed.

"She won't trouble you. She knows what you did for Abelardo.." He said, and I interrupted him.

"I didn't do it for her. I did it for you and the love of truth. She shouldn't get it twisted. The things she said to me still hunts me. Calling me and my friends social climbers and eastern whores.." I said, and Darius touched my hand and kissed it.

"You aren't any of those things.." he said, and I nodded.

"I know I am none of those things, Darius, but it isn't alright that she calls us names. It isn't easy being here. If it weren't for the love we found with

you, Marcel and Raphael, Kara, Eloise and me would not have it easy mentally. It isn't okay," I said, and he pulled me close.

1511 okay."

"I am sorry about the condition in which you were brought here, Zora. I will never take prisoners again. It is a tradition that I am ready to abolish,

Chapter 100

but I will want you with me tomorrow," He said, and I nodded.

"With pleasure," I said, and we both smiled.

40 Vouchers

I knew the trial would be tedious because I suspected the culprit of being in the council. If not, the entire panel and Vino was too weak and scared to do their job.

"That went well," Monica said, purring in my head as Darius walked to the bathroom naked.

I stared at his chiselled body, and it made me groan. How could someone be carved so perfectly? Tight butt cheeks, define calves. His muscles flexed, and his tattoo was masterfully done.

"How did we end up with such a hottie?" Monica said, and I had to shut my horny wolf up because Casey was hot too but not this hot.

Monica was a complete contrast from a few hours ago when she was panicking about our make-out session with Hardy.

**Content**