

## Chapter 11 Heavy is the Crown

They almost walked in a circle around the vampire territory. As they neared the royal garden, they saw some familiar figures waiting for them. Ashton, Colton, Joel, and one more person. Elena's eyes met with hers as she turned to face them. Their dark eyes connected and she felt her body tighten in response. Glancing back, she could see Aba's eyes were also on the exquisite beauty, Beryl.

"Lena! Nora!" Beryl yelled as she ran up to them. "How could you leave at a time like this? I would have come with you. I'm sorry I was so upset earlier that I didn't say anything to you two."

"We couldn't miss the opportunity. With Aba distracted, it was the perfect time." A crooked grin reached Lenore's lips as she looked at Aba.

"That's horrible to do to Aba, though. He was so distraught." Beryl moved closer to Aba, looking up at him with a frown. "How are you doing? Are you okay?"

"How do you think I am?" Aba snapped coldly.

"Hey, don't get an attitude with me." She folded her arms across her chest and looked at him

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pointedly.

Elena watched the exchange between the two. Aba's face softened and he murmured a gentle apology to Beryl. With each second passing between the two, she felt her heart shatter. This was more than a regular friendship. There was a connection between the two of them.

"I have a lot to talk to you two about." Beryl stayed next to Aba but turned to look at the two women. A kind smile rested on her face. "And of course, we have some girl chat that needs to happen."

Girl chat. How was Elena supposed to sit through that? Beryl was going to spill the truth about her relationship with Aba. It was a truth she needed to hear, but her whole body trembled inside. It was going to break her.

Suddenly, Aba's eyes turned black and he let out a growl. Before Elena could even turn around she was scooped into strong arms and spun around. A firm hand pulled her head to a hard chest.

"Elena." She heard Bernie's voice as he moved his nose into her hair, inhaling her scent. "I'm here. I'll always be here for you." She couldn't pull herself away from him like she usually would. This time, she stayed in his comforting embrace.

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"Easy," She heard Beryl's soft voice. "Calm down."

A quiet snarl sounded behind her, and then she felt Bernie move his head off of her. She lifted her head and looked between the two men. There was an unspoken challenge radiating between them. When Bernie gripped Elena's arm, pulling her towards him, Aba snapped. "GET AWAY FROM MY PRINCESS!"

"Aba, please!" Beryl cried as she placed her hand on his arm. "Calm down. It's okay."

"Stop it, you i\*\*\*t. Can't you see you are upsetting Elena?!" Bernard growled, before Elena shook her arm away from him. She stepped away from both men. She felt Lenore by her side and glanced back to see the elite guards also gathered next to her.

"Alright, that's enough," Joel said, stepping between the two men. "We have a real enemy out there. Focus on that."

Elena could hear her blood pounding in her ears. Her emotions were at a boiling point of confusion. She expected Bernie to act the way he did. But Aba confused her. And then Beryl trying to calm him down like a mate would, using her touch.

"What is this commotion?!"

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Instantly, Elena's blood froze as she looked at Lenore. They both turned their heads towards the voice of the grandfather. The royal guards had their heads lowered respectfully.

"Ladies, I have been waiting for you two for too long. In my office, NOW!"

Their grandfather very rarely raised his voice. It was very unlike him. This was not good. But the ladies didn't have a chance to respond or move. The ground shook with Aba's thunderous growl.

"Who do you think you're yelling at?!" Aba's eyes connected with the king's as he shook Beryl's hand off him, moving behind Elena. He gripped her shoulder possessively, pulling her into him. He hunkered over her like a wolf defending its claim.

Surprisingly, Alaric didn't react aggressively. Instead he just looked pointedly at Aba. "Don't act like they didn't make you angry. You have no business speaking to me that way. You'll calm down if you want to accompany her in my office." He glanced at his two granddaughters before turning. "Let's go. Oh, and Ryan, you might be my son's elite guards, but remember whose kingdom this is. I don't appreciate you intentionally taking a scenic tour on your way back to the palace."

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Another example of how the king had eyes everywhere. Ryan lowered his head, placing his hand over his chest. "Understood, my King."

As the ladies followed their grandfather, Elena reached out and touched Aba's arm. He was still trembling in anger and she was worried he would

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have another outburst. She gave him a small smile and patted him softly. "Calm down, Aba." His eyes looked at her sadly as they returned to their rich brown color. Right before they reached the office, he stopped her from entering. He waited for everyone to step inside before he turned her into

his chest, leaning his head into her neck.

"I'm so sorry, Elena. I'm such a horrible guardian for you. I can't control myself. I'm so so sorry." His voice sounded broken as his nose traced against her delicate skin. "What should I do?" His voice cracked, and she wasn't sure if he was talking to himself or asking her.

"You're going to stay by my side where you belong. My touch will give you the comfort you need. In a crowded room, I want my gaze to be the one you search for, because it will be the one already following you." She felt his body tense as he lifted his head away from her, his brown orbs staring into hers intently. "You are not a horrible guardian. You're an idiot." She smiled and quickly reached up to peck his lips with her own. Without looking at him she quickly turned and stepped into the office, almost in shock at what she just did. Yet, she was proud of herself.

Elena quickly took her spot next to Lenore, who was looking at her curiously, and then to the next figure who walked in slowly. Aba took his place standing behind Elena. His anger was long gone.

*What did you do to Aba? Did you yell at him?*

Lenore mind linked to her sister.

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No, why?

*Because his face is almost maroon and he seems to be in shock.*

*I kissed him.*

WHAT?!

"Ladies."

Alaric's voice brought their attention in front of them, though Lenore gave her sister one more quick glance. They would be talking about this later.

"It seems we have a lot to talk about, don't we? I know you know about being the descendant of a primordial. Mira told me. You have to understand—this was top secret. It was something we couldn't tell anyone. We weren't sure how your powers would develop. I know Silas told you a lot, but he doesn't understand the reasoning. At first, I thought this just meant that you would have the purest blood. After you were born, I knew you would have powers. I could sense it. I couldn't tell your parents about it then. Rogio ordered us not to say anything. He said it would be best to wait until you were older. I lost my opportunity to tell you first. I'm sorry. However, sneaking out and defying my orders is another thing. You went into the

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forbidden catacombs and—”

“Found tablets about the last shadow plague. Oh, and met the Demon Prince Taric.” Lenore watched as Alaric's gaze moved to her.

“You disobeyed an order. It doesn't matter the reason or what you found. You should have sought permission first. Going against an order is inexcusable. I know you went down there to help your sister, but—” He shook his head and looked at Elena. “Now you're both in trouble. Are you happy?”

“Wait a minute! Going into the catacombs was my idea!” Lenore raised her voice.

“It's fine, Nora. You can blame it on me if it's easier to do that. Put the whole blame on me. I'm responsible for the shadows too, since now you have someone to hold accountable. I dragged my sister down to the catacombs against her will. Now she's in the clear and I have the full target on me.”

“It's that attitude, Elena, that's the problem. Where's your respect for your king?”

“So you aren't my grandfather?” Elena snorted, he never talked like that. It was weird for him to say.



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"You disobeyed the king's orders, not your grandfather's!"

"I thought my grandfather was the king."

"Elena, I am your grandfather, and there are things we discuss as a family. THIS was an order for the whole kingdom. And you are not above my orders because you are my granddaughter."

"I should be your granddaughter first! I am with my other grandparents, so why not with you?!" Elena felt the hot tears sting her eyes.

"Werewolves are a hot tempered, emotional species. We're not werewolves. This is the vampire kingdom, and I expect you to act as such."

"So you're saying werewolves love their families more and vampires are assholes." The angry word vomit spewed out of her mouth. Alaric's gaze darkened, and Willa rushed to his side to calm his temper.

Aba moved in front of Elena, pulling her behind him. "Easy." He cooed to Elena, as he looked at her red, watery eyes.

"Take note of your sister, Elena. She doesn't let her feral nature take over. Even when she's angry, she

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looks calm. She assesses the situation. THAT is how a Vampire Princess should act!"

"I GET IT!" Elena screamed as the tears pooled down her cheeks. She hated how she cried when she was angry and hurt. But she couldn't control the burning in her eyes and stinging in her nose. "I am not the Vampire Princess you want. I know you want Lenore. I can't be anything but what I am. I can't sit quietly and allow my sister to be touched inappropriately. That will NEVER be me. My other grandparents would have kicked anyone's ass if they touched us inappropriately. My great grandparents would have done the same, and they are fairy royalty. Don't act like the vampires are some superior species, because they allow s\*\*t like that to happen. It's disgusting. And if THAT is what it takes to be part of this kingdom, then I want NOTHING to do with it!"

"Me either," Lenore said quietly, as Alaric snapped his head to look at her. "I might not be as outspoken as Elena, but I wish I was. I feel the same way she does. We will never be the type of leaders you want, and we won't be groomed to be one either. Perhaps it's time for a new time of rule. It doesn't have to be based entirely on emotions, but I don't think ignoring them is the answer. Besides, I've found my mate. And I want to be with

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him, which means that I can't be here to rule. My mate is Taric, the Demon Prince. I will have to live in the catacombs with him."

"You two can't possibly understand. You are too young to even grasp it. There is a reason vampires have survived like we have. We aren't hiding

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behind a barrier from our enemies, and we rarely fight amongst ourselves like the werewolves. We have learned that there is a proper way to handle things for the preservation of our species." His brows were knitted together as his nostrils flared. "And as for the Demon Prince, as your punishment

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for disobeying me, you two are confined to the castle grounds until further notice."

"But—" Lenore tried to protest.

"You both have a lot of growing up to do. Neither of you are fit to rule this kingdom, not with that state of mind. Such a disappointment." His eyes seemed to land on Elena as he uttered those words.

"WHO THE HELL ARE YOU CALLING A DISAPPOINTMENT!?"

The ladies would recognize the sound of their father's voice anywhere. Derek's amber eyes were dark as he stormed through the doorway. Their mother, Lucy, was right at his side. Following behind them was her guardian, Justice, and his mate Nita, Colton's parents.

"Girls, go to your room. Your father and I will handle things from here." Lucy smiled at her daughters, though flames were dancing in her eyes. "Go on," she said again, nodding her head at the door.

Lenore and Elena left obediently, sensing the growing tension in the room. As they passed through the doors, more of their relatives quickly entered, shutting the door behind them. It was

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Jasper and his mate Terra, followed by Jasper's parents. This was going to be a big blow out, and the ladies felt bad about what was about to go down.

They walked quietly through the halls until they reached where the royal hall was.

"My room," Aba said softly, as their other cousins came from around the bend. Elena glanced up at them and Beryl before shaking her head.

"I always knew I wasn't what he wanted. I knew I wasn't good enough, but somehow hearing it... It makes it that much worse." She grabbed Lenore's hand and pursed her lips together, fighting the hot tears that still burned her eyes. "I just want to go to our room." She looked up at Aba. "Please."

"I'll wait outside your door."

She nodded her head, walking away from everyone with Lenore. Aba would fill them in. She didn't want to relive it again right now, and she didn't want to see Aba with Beryl, especially not right now. The small kiss she gave Aba didn't matter now, because even that too was another pain to confront. Just like hearing the truth from her grandfather, hearing it from Aba would just make everything worse.

+5 Points

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They didn't look back as they shut the door to their room. There really wasn't anything to say. Lenore turned and smiled at Elena. "Come on. Let's get showered up and then we can talk it out. Mom and dad will let us know how things turned out."



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