

## Chapter 24 Yin

Lenore rolled out of Taric's arms and stood to her feet. Her mate had ravaged her with his tongue with insatiable hunger. Wave after crashing wave of overwhelming ecstasy, until she surrendered to euphoric exhaustion. She woke up, not knowing how long it had been, but she was finally able to move. However, Elena still wasn't there. She should have been here by now.

"Nora." Taric was at her side, standing in front of her. "You should still be resting."

"She should be here by now."

"You don't know that. What if Aba decided to have a little taste before—"

"Taric." Lenore sighed as she looked up at him. "I need to find my sister."

"You aren't strong enough to leave. Just because you can walk doesn't mean you can fight."

"Are you going to keep me here against my will?!" She narrowed her eyes at him angrily.

"Yes," he said unapologetically.

"I'll fight you."

"Good." His lips curled up over his face. "I have a feeling that a fight between us will just end up with us in bed." He growled, pressing his fingers against her waist.

"I can't feel her." She pulled away from him, placing her hand on her chest. She shook her head, closing her eyes. "I don't like this feeling. What if she's hurt? And—"

"Hey..." Taric cooed softly as he reached out, rubbing her arms. "Easy. This doesn't help anything." His voice was almost unnaturally tender. A side of him that no one had ever seen before, not even himself. But trying to comfort Lenore came naturally to him.

"What if they have her—"

"They don't. They haven't found her yet." He pulled her head against his chest, smoothing her hair with his hand. "I have people watching the castle. Those who are loyal to me that I trust. Your sister hasn't been caught, or they would have informed me. I told them I want her brought to me unharmed."

"What if they betray you?"



"No, none of them would ever betray me. Just like you feel Elena would never betray you... I know they would never betray me. Besides, they can't." He chuckled. "It's a type of oath. The one my father tried to get me to do. I refused, and that was when he knew. I think he already knew. That's why he suddenly demanded the demon oath." He then sighed and his brows knitted together. "There is something I should tell you, though."

Lenore looked up at him, pursing her lips together. "What is it?"

"The kelpie that was here earlier is dead. Aba is fine, and he left to find Elena."

"Wait, what?!" Lenore gasped, shaking her head.

"Something foul is at work. The nycrops is at work here, but she isn't working alone. I had my suspicions about the barrier before, but I'm not sure how it's possible. The mimic created the barrier. I'm almost certain of it. How did Vladimir get the mimic to do it? Who is aiding Vladimir? Is it possible he is working with the nycrops? Were the shadows all staged by him to cause a commotion? To get everyone to look another way while he took control of the other royals. Everyone would think they are being protected instead of locked away. This would give him the perfect

opportunity to take you and Elena and—" He clenched his jaw. "I should just kill him."

"You can't! That is my grandfather's body. Besides, you can't leave here. We can't risk your father finding you."

"I can fight him too."

"But he has too many allies. It isn't time for that now." Lenore placed her hand on his chest, thinking about what he had just said. "You think he knew about the shadows before? Maybe that's why he didn't accept your father's fake deal. He already knew and that is how he knew to use them now. Which is why he made sure the books about the shadow plague were never preserved. He didn't want there to be extensive knowledge on it."

"Maybe... but there are too many maybes here." He rubbed his thumb over her cheek. "Something is missing. The connection. Where the hell is your deity when all of this is going on?" He growled in annoyance.

"We haven't seen him much. He was dormant for a long time, and now I guess he is playing catch-up with a harem of women. At least that's what my relatives have said. You spoke about the mimic. Isn't he like an adult, stuck in a child's body and with a child's mind?"



"He looks like a child. And seems to comprehend like a child but he isn't stupid. However, he is easily bribed and manipulated. Plus, I think he's lonely, so anyone who gives him attention—" He sighed. "I don't know who has him now, but someone is manipulating him into doing these things. He isn't good or bad. But he can be dangerous. He needs someone to watch over him."

"Shiva and Reapus want him. They've been searching for him."

"Let's hope they find him."

Lenore sighed and turned her head to look at the door. "When was that put up?"

"I had them put it up while you were sleeping. We're going to want more privacy," he said with a wry grin.

"Would you really have prevented me from leaving?"

"Yes."

"You're not my boss. I am my own person."

"No, you are not. You are MY person. I don't care if you're angry or end up hating me—all I care about is keeping you safe. I'm going to do that, no

matter what."

"I see, so you think I would just obediently wait here because you told me to?" Lenore scoffed, listening to his low chuckle. He leaned his head down, biting her earlobe and tugging the skin softly.

"I'm not a tame and obedient mate. I'm dominant, possessive, a bit obsessive, and territorial. I'm going to piss you off, and I'm going to be controlling, but baby—I'm going to love you. You will fall asleep listening to your own screams of pleasure every night. I'll worship your body and belong only to you. Just like you will only belong to me." His tongue moved over her neck as he whispered against her skin. "I need you. But not like this. Not while you are worrying about your family." He kissed her neck lightly before moving his hand down to grasp hers. "Come on. Let's look around down here. We can get to work renovating this place and turning it into our kingdom. I already have workers here waiting for your command."

"Workers?" Lenore asked as he opened the door. They walked down the corridor until they reached a room that had food prepared in it. A gray skinned creature placed a plate on the table before backing away and lowering its head. Sitting



at the table was Misha, who was helping herself to a bowl of cherries. "Is that a—"

"Cave dwarf. Not all of them choose the fairies."

He shrugged as he led her to the table. "From now on we won't be eating food sent from the vampires. Only what I know is safe." He grabbed a large rolled up paper and unraveled it. "This is a map of the underground kingdom. I am having this expanded over here." He pointed to a far edge of the map. "This will be our new chambers. And here will be the rooms for our children. Then this will be where—"

"No, I think further down here for our children's rooms." She watched as he looked at her. "We don't need them hearing their father's screams at night."

A smirk crawled over his face. "That won't be a problem. We will be soundproofing the rooms. The imps are very good at creating magical barriers." He watched as she kept a smile on her face, but her eyes drifted to the floor. He knew she was worried about her sister and family. That was why he was trying to distract her with underground plans.

Lenore was trying to feel her sister's light but couldn't. Her powers were still fluctuating. How

long until they came back on their own? Once the barrier was down, she should be able to bring Elena to her, right?

"Taric, can you destroy the barrier that's placed here?"

"Yes, I can do it instantly, but it would cause a cave in. If I strip it layer by layer, slowly, it won't cause any damage. You want me to remove the barrier now?"

"I was just thinking. If you mark me, my powers will return, right?" She watched as his eyes darkened as he inhaled sharply.

"Yes, but once you're marked, you can never leave here. I don't think I will let you leave here again, though," he said thoughtfully.

"Mark me and take this barrier down. I can bring Elena to me." She felt his ragged breath as his fingers trembled slightly.

"Lenore, a mark from me isn't like anything you've ever heard about. It isn't a simple mark on the neck."

"You place a mark on me that binds us together, right?"

"I most certainly do."



"You haven't changed your mind about it—"

"Hell no, but I'm not sure this is the time for that."

"Why not?" He leaned down so that his lips brushed over her ear, sending sweet tingles through her body as his hot air sizzled her skin.

"Because, my beautiful mate, I mark all of you. It spreads over your body, giving you my aura. But I place my first mark... on your cervix." He felt her body shudder against his.

"You mean—"

"Yes, my d\*ck places the mark inside of you. A burning pleasure that claims you as mine eternally. I want it to be special, Nora. I want you completely focused on what's happening. I'm going to claim you, and you will become my demon princess. You'll be the future ruler of the demons. Vampires will now have a choice, Lenore. They can follow the dark or the light. You might control the light, but you're going to belong to the dark." He brushed his lips over her neck. "Soon, your light will be forever connected to me. We will be the start of a whole new beginning."

Trembling with anticipation, Lenore turned to gaze into her lover's mesmerizing eyes, their depths swirling with a fusion of images of both darkness

and light. A wave of exhilaration washed over her, as if she were standing on the precipice of a new world, no longer able to turn back.

She had always been drawn to the darkness, its allure captivating her in ways she couldn't explain. And now, standing before her mate, the embodiment of all that darkness, Lenore felt an undeniable pull towards her destiny.

"Lenore," he whispered, his voice a seductive melody that resonated deep within her being. "Together, we will rewrite the rules of this world. We will change how demons are ruled, and their role. Everything will be balanced out perfectly. But what makes all of this perfect is you. I never knew—I never felt this." He motioned to himself. "A raging inferno burns within me, willing to sacrifice everything for you. I couldn't comprehend it at first, but I've heard the name before. This all-consuming emotion that continues to grow, pulsing through my veins and quickening my heart, this electric thrill that surges when I gaze upon you. There is only one explanation. I am consumed by love for you. The demon prince is in love. This is the first time demon royalty has ever known love. This is why my reign will be different, because I have what they never did. I love you, Lenore, for always."



Lenore's eyes watered as she wrapped her arms around his neck. "I don't have to pretend with you. I don't have to be what I'm not. I'm not the perfect obedient vampire princess who follows the rules. I want to embrace the dark, and that's why I was given you. So that I can embrace it forever. I love you, Taric, and I'm not ever leaving your side, I promise."

Loud growls filled Lenore's ears, causing her to grab her head. Eerie howls filled her head as a burning pain attacked her. In her mind, a dark wolf came forward. Its eyes fixated on her as it bared its fangs. In a low growl, she spoke. "Hello, Lenore, I am your wolf, Yin."



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