

32 | The Visarian Way

Lighting the fireplace, I watch the flames burst from the tinder. Dim orange light flickers on the walls, parting the darkness like the Red Sea. I sit cross legged on the floor, staring into the fire as if it would somehow bring peace. My eyes go out of focus, the colors of the room blurring together.

The Exiled Alpha: so famous, yet so unknown. So feared and hated, yet simultaneously respected. He toppled an entire pack single handedly. He cut them o from the world and kept it that way for three years until they finally exiled him.

"How did he do it?"Is what every werewolf across the globe has asked at least once. I'm mated to him and even I still don't know. Although I have some theories.

Having witnessed his rampage through the pack of Khopeski, the terrible screams are still stuck in my ears. Never have I felt the same terror and dread as I do when catching glimpse of those ruby red eyes.

A dire descendent. That's the biggest mystery about him. There's no doubt that it ties closely into his personality; his impulsivity, the reasoning behind what makes him tick.

What does make him tick?

He was born a rogue and remains one at heart. Rebellion is in his blood as much as his feral ancestors are. Any type of control is a massive set o just asking for a consequence, the only question being how many.

So what drove him to overtake a pack if he hates them so much?

The answer is simple: because he could. He felt controlled in Khopeski, judged and su ocated. He felt betrayed by his family for taking him out of the woods and throwing him into a cesspool of rules and laws and expecting him to lie down. So that was his statement: he makes the rules.

Two legs wrap around mine from either side, joined by a pair of arms wrapping around my torso from behind. My back is pulled close against a solid chest, fitting into the contour of another body.

My skin prickles at the warming sensation of his touch and the inviting sense of his embrace.

Riot's forehead comes to lay on my shoulder, his nose nuzzling into my neck. The hot breath and scolding mouth make me shiver as if it were the dead of winter.

I lean into him, dreading the thought of running damage control for the nth time.

"Is your wolf coming up again?" I ask with a tone that's trained for the occasion, sweet-tempered but firm. A flare-up is the last thing I need right now. I'm too exhausted to put up with another episode from him and his wolf. If only he would stop fighting.

"No," he murmurs into my neck.

Realization hits like a cold mist. He stopped resisting his instincts a long time ago. There are no more tormented fits or internal turmoil. It must be something about being back in this house that made my mind go back to before.

I remember the first time I met Riot— when he crashed a narcissist's plans for a blackmailed wedding— and how awfully we got along. A pang of giddiness shoots through me at realizing how di erent it is now. How he's draped over me like a protective blanket instead of tying me up like a prisoner.

Life does get better.

Hot tears spring to my eyes. I quickly blink them away, silently laughing at myself for being so absurdly sappy. I'm so ecstatic that pressure is building in my chest, ready to burst into a laughing hysteria any moment.

I lay back, resting my head on Riot's shoulder. I look over at him. His warm copper eyes hold something bright and entrancing.

"I want to mark you." His voice is husky.

My stomach tightens. It sounds so final. So serious. But I break out into a grin anyway. "So mark me."

Razor sharp canines graze my skin, starting to pinch down.

"Wait!" I shout, a little too abruptly, as I jerk away from him. His eyes immediately darken, the rare copper color disappearing under an evading oil spill. Quickly, I put out the fire before it can start. "Not the neck."

His spark of premature rage fizzles into confusion, brows furrowing. "Then where?"

"The Visarian way."

This only confuses him more. "I thought they were dead to you?" He asks, tilting his head slightly.

"The people are. My culture isn't," I answer simply. The green metallic ring in my ear holds true as my birthright. No matter what Nathan does to that pack, I know who I am.

"I'll show you." I spin around, positioning myself to face him at an intimately close proximity.

I reach over and take hold of the collar of his shirt, gently tugging it upward. With a devilish smirk he takes the hint. In a matter of seconds the shirt is o and, coincidentally, thrown on top of my head. Even at such a crucial moment he still has to be a pain.

With a playful growl, the shirt gets tossed aside.

"We mark below the neck, not quite on the shoulder; here at the upper trapezius," I run my finger tip over the raised and sculpted muscle connecting his neck to his shoulder.

"We both mark?"

I nod and wait for his reaction. A lot of wolves hate the idea of a two way marking because it's not "traditional." Even in the tribal packs' ancestry, there's evidence of two way markings having taken place. But some people choose to stay ignorant. People like Agatha.

Riot's expression, however, doesn't change. It's as if the di erence doesn't phase him in the slightest.

His large hands take my sides and pull me into his lap. I compensate by wrapping my legs around his abdomen.

He then leans his head to the side and stretches his neck out, allowing me better access. His skin all but glows in the firelight, like a god presenting himself to a mortal. He looks as though he were cast from a one-of-a-kind mold, built to demolish an opposer with one swing. What irks me even further is that even his flaws are attractive. It's damn near impossible to focus on the task at hand.

With an extreme burst of willpower, I rip my eyes away long enough to press my lips against his trapezius. My canines protrude out from my gums, my wolf already aware of what's happening.

I place my palms his biceps in order to stabilize him. And then, pulling my lips back, my lengthened teeth slowly sink into his flesh and muscle.

His hot blood fills my mouth and I'm immediately filled with remorse. I try to ignore it, to push the guilty thoughts that result from hurting my mate out of my head. I close my eyes, trying to focus on how so his skin is to my tongue, but instead find myself making notes of my how sinewy it is to sink my teeth into.

He lets out a deep, throaty moan in my ear. His fingers dig into me, holding me tighter and taking fistfuls of my shirt in his hands. It's like a heatwave flashes through the entire room. Or maybe it's the fire from the fireplace spreading and we're just too preoccupied to notice.

A er I'm certain it's deep enough to scar, I retract my canines pull away. I make a move to sit back and I'm instantly slammed against him, as if I were going to leave and never come back.

I giggle curly at how possessive the mark has already made him. On the bright side, at least he doesn't act in pain.

"Did it hurt?"

"Is that a serious question?"

A drop of his blood trickles down my chin. I wipe it away with my sleeve, feeling somewhat ashamed to have harmed him, even though for a moment.

Without saying anything else, I reach up to pull my shirt o. Once it's over my head I hesitate, remembering what sullies my stomach. Nervously, I keep the piece of white fabric in my lap, trying as casually as possible to keep the hideous burn marks covered.

He reaches over and silently plucks the shirt away, tossing it to land in a pile with his.

The razor sharp tips of his canines graze my shoulder in the same spot as mine did his. They linger around for bit, as if trying to find the exact placement.

Then, burning pain shoots through me, running all the way to my toes and stemming from where his teeth dig into the flesh. I drag my claws over his arms, fighting the urge to sink them into him as a reaction toward the pain.

Within a millisecond, agony changes into pure pleasure. My entire body comes alive as if an I.V. just got inserted in my wrist and is pumping me full of artificial adrenaline and feel-good drugs. Every nerve ending buzzes and there's a swirling mixture of hot and cold inside me.

It feels like it's over just as quickly as it started, at least a full minute of his teeth biting through my skin and muscle. I know he's gone far enough when the area pulses strongly even a er he's pulled away.

He looks just as dazed as I feel. Crimson is smeared across his lips, his tongue darting out to lick them clean.

"Now you're stuck with me for good," I joke, giving him a small shove.

"Lucky me," he replies, overly sarcastic, as he leans forward to plant a kiss on my lips.

We sit in the floor for a while longer, staring blearily into the dancing flames of our cozy little fire.

I yawn loudly, which makes him yawn, which makes me yawn again, which makes him yawn again, which creates a vicious cycle of yawning and burning, blinking eyes.

Finally, he li s us both to our feet. With his hand on the small of my back, I'm gently nudged in the direction of the stairs.

"Go to bed. I'll put the fire out."

I don't object. I can barely keep my eyelids open at this point and dragging my worn out body up the stairs is hard enough as it is. I enter Riot's room and all but throw myself into the bed. I pull the covers up to my neck and wrap them tightly around me.

Despite the pleasure while getting it, the new mark is insanelly tender. I jerk when my hand accidentally hits it, but it doesn't stop me from getting comfortable.

I don't think it's even a full minute before my eyelids become too heavy to stay awake. They close again and this time I don't have the will power to open them back up.

The dip of the bed stirs me into a half-alert awareness when Riot crawls in. He gathers my seemingly lifeless body up in one arm and pulls me against his broad chest, keeping the comforter wrapped tightly around me as I had fixed it.

A kiss is planted on my ear; a silent 'goodnight.'

Subconsciously, I burrow further into him, finding the sense of safe and sound there that I didn't know I've been craving.



Continue reading next part [▶](#)