

Kings Breeder 341

Sold As The Alpha King's Breeder Chapter 341

Who's That Man?

Rowan

Mom ran her fingers across Selene's head, admiring her fine white hair. She looked every ounce the doting grandmother instead of a ball of uncertainty, like Maeve. Maeve was pacing back and forth near the fall wall of my bedroom, her arms folded across her chest and her head bent as she tried to organize her shock.

Everyone else had cleared out to give us some privacy. Just Mom, Hanna, Maeve, the baby, and I remained, and Mom had just finished feeding the baby a bottle. Hanna awoke, but she was still groggy from sleeping so much.

"She's beautiful, Hanna," Mom said softly, smiling down at the baby in her arms. "What's the meaning of her name?"

"I-I don't know. She told me her name, in a dream."

"We could think of a nickname for her," I added, chewing on the side of my cheek as I narrowed my eyes on Maeve. Her pacing was heightening my anxiety.

Hanna had described the birth, which had been about as easy and peaceful as it could possibly be. But the midwife had been frantic, and fearful, as a lunar eclipse sent a shadow over the castle and then bathed all of Mirage in an eerie red glow just as Selene was born.

Hanna looked up, meeting Mom's eyes, and whispered, "She was conceived on a full moon, Rosalie. And then... and then

born on a lunar eclipse. You know... you have to know what this means."

Mom nodded, resting her hand on Hanna's leg.

"Your daughter is the Moon Goddess?" Maeve's words weren't said like a question. We all already knew the answer.

"Whatever she is," Mom said, smiling down at the baby with nothing but love behind her eyes, "she is a White Queen. The twenty-first White Queen. And my granddaughter. And that's enough, for now."

Hanna took a deep breath and then smiled softly to herself. I

could feel the tension leaving her body, and she closed her eyes. But then, she started to cry.

Maeve was at her side in an instant, taking Hanna's hands in her own. "Oh, Hanna. It's going to be okay. We don't know what this means, for her, for youll for any of us."

"I'm scared of her, Maeve." Hanna's words cut so deeply into my heart I found it hard to breathe. I knew she had been

struggling. I knew she was hurting.

But I hadn't known that.

"She's just a baby!" Maeve laughed, reaching out to take Selene from Mom. "Look, see? She looks like you, Hanna. Just lighter. She has your eye shape, and your chin. I think she has Rowan's nose, though, and that crazy cowlick is definitely from our side of the family—"

Maeve went on and on, her enthusiasm breaking up the heavy emotion that had been crippling Hanna since Selene's birth.

"She could grow up to be a warrior or a poet. Maybe she'll want to be a baker and make cookies for a living. That prophecy... it's over. It doesn't matter. What matters is that she's here, and she's safe. And she needs you, Hanna. She... she loves you."

Maeve handed Selene to Hanna and rested her hand over Selene's head. "She's the best, Hanna. The only girl in the family so far. Troy and I are done, as you know. Gemma and Ernest might have another. But for now, Lena is our baby girl.

"And a few years from now, she'll be bossing the boys around and making Rowan and Dad play tea parties with her," Maeve smiled. Hanna smiled too, her eyes glistening with tears.

"We'll be there for her, Hanna. No matter what." The words felt heavy in my mouth. It was an oath. Hanna met my eyes and nodded, swallowing back a relieved sob.

"Ethan wants to see her, Hanna. Would it be alright if he came in?" Mom asked, but Hanna shook her head.

"Rowan should take her down to see everyone. I'll—I'll take a shower and change first. I've been in bed for... well, since she was born. I didn't know what else to do. I should have had you here, Rosalie. I'm sorry."

"Oh, goodness Hanna. You have nothing to be sorry for, alright? Come, I'll run you a bath" Maeve lifted Selene out of Hanna's arms as Mom helped her out of the bed. Maeve turned, handing the baby to me as we began to walk toward the door.

I looked over my shoulder, watching as Hanna and Rosalie disappeared behind the bathroom door.

"She's going to be okay, Rowan."

"There's more Maeve. You know there's more."

I held the door open for Maeve as we walked into the hallway.

"About Hanna... about her visions from last year?"

I nodded, my throat tightening.

"So much was wrong, Rowan. Even Hanna said so. How could she possibly still believe she's going to die before Selene grows up?"

"I don't know. She hasn't said anything to me about it for months. She's not dream dancing anymore. She refuses to shift. She's just... existing. I feel like I've already lost her."

“I feel like I should stay for a while-”

“No, Maeve. It’s fine. You’re the Luna of Poldesse. You’re needed there.”

“You’re my brother, Rowan,” she said, resting her hand on my arm. “Just tell me what you need me to do, and I’ll do it.”

I thanked my sister for her kindness, and then the two of us headed downstairs to see what everyone else had been doing while my mother and sister tried to help Hanna gain the courage to emerge from our room.

The entire family had gathered in the dining room and was chatting amiably over a very impressive spread that had been laid out by the kitchen—two prime rib roasts, a honeyed ham, and three roast ducks were the centerpieces of the table, all of which were being enjoyed liberally by everyone.

George was fast asleep in Ernest’s lap, his face dappled with

gravy. Maeve’s sons were being passed around the table in an effort to keep them entertained. Hanna sat at the head of the table, flushed with pride as Georgia and Vicky gushed over Selene.

Georgia and Talon had settled in Winter Forest and had built a house there. Vicky had come from Breles with her now seventeen-year-old daughter Caroline, who would be moving to Mirage next spring to attend the University of Mirage.

The last time this many people had been in the castle had been before everyone took their leave after the family defeated Tasia and put an end to the nearly year-long quest to find, and understand, the significance of the moonstones that were now returned to their rightful home in Winter Forest.

Dad was at the other end of the table feeding tidbits of cake to Oliver. He caught my gaze and smiled.

“What now?” I wondered, breaking from Dad’s gaze as I looked at my wife and daughter at the other end of the table. Hanna was running her fingers through Selene’s fine hair, her beautiful brown eyes creased with pleasure.

Maeve—7 Years Later

“And now, they kiss-” Selene tilted her doll toward Oliver, who seemed reluctant to allow his cherished action figure, who harbored the likeness of a hero from a very popular children’s novel, to continue to be assaulted in such a manner. He clutched his action figure to his chest, his lower lip quivering

for a moment before he took a deep breath and relented.

“Yuck,” he murmured, looking down at his toy with a look of sheer disgust on his ruddy face. I smirked, flipping the page of the book I was pretending to read as I watched the two of them play their game in the sand on the beach below the castle of Poldesse.

Hanna had warned me of Selene’s new fixation on playing “wedding” with all of her dolls since the wedding of her uncle Aaron last year. Rowan and Hanna arrived only a day ago for a long visit, and

Selene had already taken over the playroom and had been keeping Oliver very busy. They were two peas in a pod, despite Oliver's reluctance to bend the knee to her girlish games.

After a few minutes of bickering, they went back to building their sandcastle in relative peace. I looked down the beach in the opposite direction, watching as Will and George dragged a long piece of seaweed out of the water. Troy and Charlie were asleep on two beach towels in front me, laying in identical positions with their legs splayed and their hands knitted over their chests.

It was the calm before the storm that had become our annual Winter Solstice celebration. The entire family descended on Avondale every year for an entire month, and the number of children seemed to grow by at least two each year.

It was absolute chaos.

Thad never been happier.

"Who is the man that looks like grandpa?"

I squinted up at Rowan's daughter, who was suddenly standing over me, the sun creating a halo of brilliant light around her head and soft white hair that was cut into a short, curly bob around her ears.

"Who?" I asked, wondering if I had heard her correctly.

"The man who's coming. He said he's coming home. He looks like grandpa! He said his name is. I don't remember. Can I have a snack?"

I arched my brow, propping myself up on my elbows as the lounge chair squeaked under my weight..

"What man? Ernest looks a lot like your grandpa-"

"No, Aunt Maeve. The man isn't here yet! He's older than Uncle Ernest. His name is...is Black."

I was genuinely confused as I scanned her face, trying to understand. A wave of unease prickled over my skin as I looked into the young girl's eyes.

"Did you dream about him? Or is he here now?"

"I saw him in my head," she answered shortly, turning away as her short attention span deviated towards something more interesting than our strange conversation.

"Selene, honey, who are you talking about?"

She was already gone, and I watched her sprint down the beach towards the ocean without even looking over her

shoulder at me in response.

"Maeve? Is she talking about who I think she's talking about?"

Troy asked, rolling over onto his belly. He gave me a knowing look, which confirmed my suspicions.

There was only one man who looked remotely like my father, who would be older than our generation of cousins who shared his likeness. Only one man that age shared the last name Black

And it was someone I hadn't seen in a long, long time.

End of Season 2 – Breeder to the White Queen.

Thank you so much for reading Breeder for the White Queen! Hope that you enjoyed Maeve's story and will stick around for Runaway Breeder of the Dark King, coming soon! This season will take us to new exciting lands, with intriguing new characters, and a sizzling romance you won't want to miss! You never know who might pop up, so be sure to read every chapter of Runaway Breeder of the Dark King, coming soon!

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Fire. Smoke. Howls of desperation.

Thousands of bodies were under me, and I could sense no hope in the air.

And there he was, standing on top of the pile of corpses, coated in blood.

His body was as still as a statue; his face was emotionless, almost no different than those of the dead on the ground below him.

Then he saw me.

I watched light gather in his dark eyes and life seemed to return to him. Slowly, his lips parted into a stunning smile that outshined the starry night sky.

He reached out his hand. "Come to me," he whispered.

My legs moved toward him as if they had a will of their own.

But I was well aware that every step I took was one step closer to my own eternal death.

"You seem awfully cheerful for someone who just woke up." Brook grabbed my outfit for me. "But let's hurry. We can't be late!"

"Thank Goddess you're here!" I barely had time to yawn before I jumped up and started shoving myself into my clothes.

We had arrived at the royal palace late last night. I was still exhausted from traveling, and looking around, I could tell that I wasn't the only one who felt this way.

Eighty of us, all girls between the ages of twenty to twenty one from different packs throughout the country, had been summoned and rushed to the royal palace within the past three days.

The order said we'd be there to serve the royal court and would return to our packs with glory when we had fulfilled our duties.

The royal court praised us for our diligence and commitment to the kingdom, but we all knew that the only reason we were here was because we had no choice.

It was the only way to keep our packs alive.

No one would voluntarily come to the palace. Alpha King Sebastian Crimson wasn't known for being kind, and his favorite son, Prince Theo, was even more dangerous and ruthless than his father.

But regardless of their fearful reputations, they were both worshiped. The royal bloodline descended from the Dark Moon, and their power to reign was blessed by the Moon Goddess herself.

"I was honestly jealous that you were able to fall asleep. I've been worrying the whole night," said Brook as we followed the head maid down the hall.

Sleep was never difficult for me; I'd been trained since I was young to seize every opportunity to rest, ensuring that I was physically and mentally prepared to handle anything unexpected that came my way.

"Worrying won't help." I gave her a small grin. "The more concerning the situation, the more important it is to have a well-rested mind."

"Easier said than d-" Brook didn't finish her sentence as she gasped, "What is this place?!"

I followed her gaze and immediately understood her fear.

We were in a large, dimly lit room, with most of the space still hidden in darkness.

All we could see in front of us was a huge painting of a wolf with a lifeless forest behind him; a menacing look covered its face as blood dripped from his teeth.

The shadowy light in the room made the bloody wolf look even more vivid, as if it would jump out of the wall at any moment to claim us as its prey.

A chill went down my spine, and all I wanted to do was to run for my life... yet the painting seemed to possess some sort of power that drew me in. I couldn't look away.

Then my gaze turned to the wolf's eyes; they were the most breathtaking I'd ever seen on any creature. However, they were cold, bloodthirsty, and yet... filled with pain.

"Wait here, ladies," the head maid said, and then, giving a terse bow, she headed out a side door, leaving all eighty of us

Upea Vouches

standing in the middle of the enormous, frightening room.

We were surrounded by similar works of art; the eerie atmosphere made us feel like we were lambs waiting to be slaughtered and sacrificed.

I'd taken a deep breath and pulled my eyes away from the painting when I noticed that some girls had started to sob, and others had nearly passed out and had to be caught by those standing next to them.

I considered myself brave, but even for me, it was hard work to calm my pounding heart.

I reached out to give Brook's hand a gentle squeeze. "Brook, look at me. Take a deep breath."

Hearing what I said, she snapped out of her trance and let out a sigh of relief after a couple of seconds. Looking away from the painting had definitely helped calm her fears. "What do they want from us?" she asked in a murmur.

I shook my head. "I don't know. But think about something else. You'll feel better; I promise," I said.

She swallowed hard and looked like she was trying to do just that. "Something else..." she said quietly, as if thinking it over, then she leaned over to my ear and whispered, "How about this-were you dreaming of your secret boyfriend again?"

I almost choked at her words. On our train ride to the royal palace, Brook and I had become good friends. Her father was the Alpha of Elmorn pack.

Thad mentioned to Brook that I'd met someone special when I was young. Ever since then, she'd been calling him my "secret boyfriend."

I lowered my voice. "Hey! I'm trying to help you and you're making fun of me?" I smiled a little and decided to play along. "He's called a secret boyfriend because he's a SECRET!"

She chuckled, and that finally lifted her mood. We exchanged a grin. At least part of this trip had been worth it so far; at least I'd made a good friend.

"What are we, slaves now?" An annoyed comment broke the silence in the room. Brook and I turned to see who had spoken.

Sophia Chambers of Pomeni pack, one of the most beautiful women I'd ever seen, raised her voice and began to grumble

about her mistreatment. "Really, they're treating us like slaves, like cattle."

While I agreed with her to an extent, I wasn't about to draw attention to myself like that. Our fates were in the hands of the royals, and I didn't come from a powerful pack like hers, which even the Alpha King would think twice before challenging.

I lowered my head to avoid eye contact with her, trying my best to stay out of trouble. But it was too late; she'd already spotted us.

"What the fuck are you so happy about?" Sophia pointed at me; her eyes narrowed as if my grin was a direct insult to her

gloomy mood.

I pretended that I didn't know she was talking to me, but that

1288 Vouchers only irritated her more. "How dare you? I'm speaking to you!"

The crowd parted, and Sophia placed her long fingers on her hips as she looked me over. Her dark hair was done up on top of her head, showing off the length of her elegant neck. Her long, flowing white gown brushed the floor as she stuck out her hip.

I turned my back to her and grabbed Brook's arm, trying to get away, but Sophia wouldn't give up.

Since she couldn't seem to get a reaction out of me, she pointed to Brook instead. "You, redhead! Come with me to get my hair fixed. Now."

This wasn't the first time Sophia had acted out. She was barking orders at the other girls on the train as well. Even when we'd gotten in late last night, she'd told one of the other girls to carry her overnight bag to her room.

Brook hesitated for a moment. Not wanting to cause more conflicts, she took a step in Sophia's direction, but I didn't let go of her arm.

"No," I said, my voice not loud or harsh, but determined.

"What's that?" Sophia moved toward me, taking long steps to get closer.

I sent a sharp look right back at her. "I said no," I told her. "Listen, Sophia. We're all Alphas' daughters here. There's no need for any of us to be bossing the others around. Besides, if you leave now, you might not be back in time. Feel free to get yourself in trouble, but Brook is not going anywhere with you."

"Well, who fucking died and left you the queen of the world?" Sophia glared at me and raised her hand.

I narrowed my eyes. If she dared to strike first, I would make her regret it.

At that moment, a door across the room opened. Sophia gave me an 'I'm-not-done-with-you' look and stepped away to see who was there.

In came a tall man about my father's age. His uniform conveyed that he was important. "Ladies, ladies!" the man said, raising his hand to get our attention and to welcome us. We all moved in around him so that we could hear.

"Thank you for being here. I am Beta Xavier, Alpha King Sebastian's loyal servant, and it is my duty and honor to address you today."

No one said a word as we stared at him, holding our breath, praying to the Moon Goddess that we would finally find out what all this was about.

"Now, I've heard that some of you believe you are here to be maids in the palace." With that, I heard murmurs around me as others tried to confirm the source of the news.

Beta Xavier paused for a moment and chuckled. "Well, no. You're not here to be maids. You are actually here because it is time for our most esteemed and respected prince to finally settle down and... produce an heir."

"An heir?" Sophia blurted, and then, the other girls reacted as well, some of them rather loudly.

"That's right, an heir!" Beta Xavier's voice was deeper and louder than any of ours, so when he spoke, everyone grew quiet. "If any of you is able to produce an heir for our prince, you shall become a noble lady and live in the palace for the rest of your life! Think of all of the honor that will rain down upon your family for being the woman who has mothered a prince, potentially the next Alpha King of our great land!"

He spoke with grandeur, his deep voice echoing through the room, and once again, he paused to wait for the girls to react.

Almost immediately, the tense cloud of gloom that hovered over the crowd was replaced with excitement. Even Sophia looked pleasantly surprised.

"I see that you are delighted to hear the news," Xavier said with a satisfied smile. "It may please you even more to know that it isn't impossible that the young lady who is capable of birthing the heir may actually become... Prince Theo's Luna!"

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"What? The prince's Luna?!"

"Prince Theo is the King's favorite son, and it's most likely he'll be the next king."

"Then that makes his wife..."

The crowd buzzed with excitement at Beta Xavier's words. The girls seemed overjoyed to think of themselves living in the palace as nobles, maybe even as a Luna Queen someday.

Some of them were so excited that they started clapping their hands.

Sophia glanced at them and sneered. "Foolish! They think they even have a chance!"

"Of course not! Miss Chambers, they are nothing compared to you!" Sophia's followers flattered her, which brought a proud smile to her face.

"What if the prince doesn't need our... our service?" one of the more composed voices asked Beta Xavier.

"Oh, yes, an important question," he said, raising a finger in the air. Everyone quieted to hear him.

"Those of you who are not successful in securing the prince's favor will return to your packs after three years, with your payment of riches beyond measure."

As he clapped his hands together, the girls cheered once again.

Doubt rolled over me as I looked at Beta Xavier's face. I didn't believe him. People couldn't just come and go from the royal palace. In fact, many rumors had arisen over the years regarding the disappearance of palace visitors... or their untimely deaths.

I was sure the truth wasn't as glamorous as he was trying to make it sound.

As expected, he added, "However, His Majesty, our King Sebastian, would love to see you all try your very best, or-" He smirked, and the glee in his tone suddenly was replaced by an ominous warning. "Not only will you be thrown in prison for your negligence, but also you'll bring shame and disgrace to your pack!"

My eyes widened. Beta Xavier was threatening us with our own packs! He was implying that if we failed to please the royals, we would bring destruction to our packs!

Yet most of the girls didn't seem to be bothered by his latest comment and were simply glad that they weren't sent to the palace to work on their hands and knees as servants.

I kept my reaction locked inside. Brook did the same.

“Now come with me!” Beta Xavier declared. “Let us go meet the man himself, Prince Theo!”

A ripple of delighted laughter went through the crowd as we all began to move again. I exchanged a look with Brook. We had no choice but to follow along.

As we moved through an exterior door, we were greeted with the fragrance of flowers. Oohs and aahs serenaded me as we took in the beautiful roses, gardenias, lilacs, hibiscus, and many other blooms I knew well from tending my own garden back home.

Large marble fountains and ponds lined the walkway. Elegant sculptures decorated every few steps of the royal garden. It truly was a gorgeous outdoor space.

Ever since Beta Xavier’s announcement, the crowd had been much more lighthearted. Being away from that intimidating

room and getting into the beautiful courtyard certainly eased most of the girls’ worries.

People around me started to chat about how grand it would be to stay here, and their conversations carried onto the subject of Prince Theo. His ruthless reputation somehow seemed to be forgotten, and all of a sudden, he turned from a monster to a prince charming.

I heard Sophia behind me declaring herself the winner again. “No one else is nearly as qualified as I am. Especially not that mouthy little bitch in front of me.”

I didn’t need to turn around to know she was talking about me, but i’d decided that she was the least of my concern at that moment.

The morning sunshine coated the royal garden in gold, which made the palace seem warm and welcoming, but I just knew that was only an illusion.

No matter how glorious the Beta had made it sound, the palace was nothing more than a prison to me. Being trapped

here was absolutely the last thing I wanted to do with my life.

Not only that-but now we were required to get intimate with the most terrifying man in the country?!

No way! I had to come up with a way out.

“What are you looking at? You’ve been so quiet.” Brook caught up to me and asked, “What do you think about the news? What do you think about... Prince Theo?”

I shook my head. “I don’t know, Brook,” was all that I could say.

I just had this knot in my stomach, a feeling like something was going to happen, but I wasn’t sure whether it would be good or bad. I didn’t want to make my already worried friend even more concerned,

so I kept it to myself.

Beta Xavier stopped in front of us and reminded the crowd, "We're about to enter the courtyard next to the living quarters. Make sure you are on your best behavior. From this point on, no noise, no mistakes. Understand?"

He gave us a stern look, and we all nodded in unison. At this point, I was used to this Beta's quickly changing mood.

The low murmuring died down as we stepped into a smaller garden. It was even more luxuriously decorated, and the flowers were more brilliant.

While the others were quietly admiring the variety of rare and expensive plants, I was paying attention to the layout of my surroundings. The importance of knowing all of my options where I was, and what obstacles I might confront-was ingrained in my mind as a small child by my adventurous yet cautious father.

When we went around the corner, my eyes were on the tall walls in the distance, and I tried to see if there was a gate nearby. At that moment, I felt a sharp shove in my back, and the next thing I knew, I lost my balance and flew forward.

From the corner of my eye, I saw a vicious smirk on Sophia's face. She'd pushed me! For Goddess's sake, why couldn't she just leave me alone?!

My face was about to collide with the pavement, and I anticipated the sharp pain I'd feel hitting my nose on the ground. However, that wasn't my worst problem. My biggest fear was that... hadn't Beta Xavier just said no noise, no mistakes?

My brain had already started to come up with a plan to explain myself to Beta Xavier.

But... the pain I'd expected never came.

Strong arms came around my waist as my face brushed soft velvet; the scent of pine and morning grass filled my lungs.

Come on, really? Was this some sort of corny romance story where the beautiful heroine bumped into the handsome hero, and he fell in love with her at first sight?

I knew myself well enough. I liked who I was, but I wasn't that arrogant to think all men would desire me as soon as they saw me. So that kind of old-fashioned trope couldn't possibly happen to me, right?

"What are you doing?!" the loud voice of Beta Xavier growled

at me from behind. He was furious. "How dare you touch him!"

Gasps filled the air and murmuring spread quickly. I heard bits and pieces of words. "She offended... last person I heard... sentenced to death..."

My heart sank. Who on earth was this guy?!

I lifted my gaze. Then I found myself locking eyes with a pair of dark, familiar orbs.

A shudder went through me. That was the same pair of eyes | d seen so many times in my dreams!

I felt my heart catch in my throat as loud beats pounded against my eardrums.

It was... him!

“Guards!” Xavier yelled, pulling me out of my thoughts. “Take her! Beg your pardon, Your Highness!”

I caught my breath.

Your Highness?

My eyes widened in disbelief.

His strong hand grabbed my upper arm to set me back on my feet. It took all of my strength to rip my gaze away from his eyes.

But how could it be possible? The person who had just helped me, the mysterious young man from my youth... was really

Prince Theo?!

Chapter 344: Unwanted Attention

Regardless of how shocked I was, I realized that I needed to say something, or do something before I was severely punished for falling into the prince.

Based on the royals’ reputation, it probably didn’t matter that it was Sophia’s fault. I’d messed up, and that was it.

“Miss Black, I had thought that you were better than that. Now, as punishment for your unruly behavior...” As expected, it certainly didn’t matter to the unforgiving Beta.

I could sense danger in Xavier’s tone, but it was even more frightening that he actually knew who I was.

I’d assumed that Xavier, being the Beta of the Alpha King, wasn’t someone who could easily be fooled. But I hadn’t expected him to have already learned everything about us.

I heard Sophia’s voice as she snickered behind me. “Serves her right.”

My heart sank even more. For the first time in a long time, I started to panic. All I could do was pray that I hadn’t brought disaster to my pack.

But before my sentence was announced, I heard a calm yet authoritative voice say, “All is well. No need to overreact, Beta Xavier.”

“Thank goodness you’re unharmed, Prince Warren!”

“Prince... Warren?” | shouldn’t have spoken aloud when I was still standing right next to him, but he acknowledged my question with a slight nod.

“I believe the ground is a bit uneven here.” He looked at me. “Are you all right?”

I finally got the chance to fully appreciate how handsome he was, and my heart stopped beating for just a moment.

My voice was trapped somewhere in the back of my throat, but I managed to nod and then forced myself to say, "Yes, Your Highness. Thank you, and I apologize."

"No need." The prince had a faint smile on his face. Then he turned to Beta Xavier. "Carry on."

Beta Xavier bowed deeply. "Yes, Your Highness."

The crowd of girls continued along the path, and I was swept up in it. I reminded myself to pay better attention and turned to face the front, while I was still pondering the entire incident.

Prince Warren! Thank the Goddess he wasn't the cruel Prince Theo! I almost felt happy tears began to form in the corners of my eyes.

But then, how could the enchanting young man I'd met long ago be a prince? It was in a forest so far away from the capital... I couldn't have possibly encountered a royal there, could I?

However... what if there was the slightest chance that it really was him? Then what should I do? Should I approach him and find a chance to explain myself, or should I just pretend that nothing had ever happened between us?

"Prince Warren is such an incredibly handsome man. And he seems to be very kind!" Brook whispered. "You're lucky. Imagine if that had been Prince Theo you'd bumped into!"

"I can't," I admitted. Yes, I was lucky this time. But if I made another mistake, it could be the end of my journey in the most permanent way possible.

I cast a glance toward Sophia and saw her give me a scornful sneer. "Just wait. Your luck will run out," she uttered under her breath.

I clenched my fists, but I knew I couldn't afford to take any action at that moment.

We headed through another door into a separate wing of the palace, and I pushed all of my anger toward Sophia and my unanswered questions about Prince Warren to the back of my mind, so I could concentrate on what I needed to do.

The announcement had said that we'd be there for three years, collect our riches, and then return to our families... but had a feeling the real situation would be much more dangerous.

This part of the palace was just as luxurious as the rest, with priceless artwork in gold frames lining the walls above the black marble floors. Despite its beauty, I managed to keep my eyes straight ahead so I wouldn't be distracted again.

We came to a stop in front of a group of rooms with thick mahogany doors. A man dressed in a uniform similar to Xavier's was waiting for us.

He looked much younger, with broader shoulders and a mop of curly black hair atop his head. He was handsome in an

unassuming sort of way, and his eyes were scrutinizing but not unkind.

“Ladies, you have arrived!” Xavier said with a flourish of his arm. A shout arose from the crowd as giggles and clapping filled my ears. I forced a smile onto my lips so I wouldn’t stand out in the crowd.

This was where Prince Theo lived? It felt different from the rest of the palace. I couldn’t quite put my finger on the reason why.

We waited for the door to be opened, but the other man stopped us. “Actually, Prince Theo isn’t available.”

Beta Xavier’s smile faded. “What’s this now, Beta Jake? || was told-”

“You heard me, sir. I’ve been asked to look after the young ladies until the prince is ready. He wanted me to tell you he’d get back to the king with his thoughts later.”

“But-” Xavier began.

Beta Jake cut him off with a harsh whisper. “You wouldn’t want to disobey His Highness’ order, would you, sir?”

Although reluctant, Xavier cleared his throat. “Very well,” he said, “I shall report to the king that it is all in your hands now... Beta.” He said the last word like it was a curse. Then, he cut between us, heading back down the hall the way we’d come.

Interesting.

Beta Xavier served the king, and that should’ve made him

the most powerful Beta in the entire country... but it seemed that Beta Jake had easily defied him.

The rumor must be true. Prince Theo was favored by the king, and that was why his Beta was able to overrule someone of higher rank.

“Hello, ladies,” Beta Jake said. His tone was much less formal, almost as if he wasn’t trying to fool us. “It’s a pleasure to see all of you. Prince Theo is quite busy with other tasks at the moment, but I assure you that you will be meeting him shortly.”

The deeper into the prince’s quarters we went, the stranger I felt. Finally, I figured out the reason.

People.

Or, to be more precise, a lack of people.

It was eerily quiet in this wing of the palace, because other than Jake, I didn’t see anyone else.

Unlike the rest of the palace, where guards and servants were available every few steps, there wasn’t anyone else here.

Everything here just seemed so... lifeless.

Eventually, Beta Jake led us outside into an open area facing a large door that seemed to lead to an office. Then he divided us into groups of eight, and we waited.

As time went by, the gentle morning sun started to burn even brighter, beating down on us as we stood in line. After a while, the back of my dress was soaking wet. Other girls were in no better shape than me, yet oddly, no one complained, not

even Sophia.

Perhaps everyone was trying their best to make a good first impression on the man they were competing over.

How long had it been? Two hours, or maybe three?

I couldn't believe this was how Prince Theo treated his prospective Luna on the very first day.

Not that I would ever want to be selected by him, I just couldn't understand why this was necessary. Why did he have to be mean to a group of girls for no reason whatsoever?

To my surprise, Beta Jake stood in the hot sun with us, and there was not a hint of resentment on his face.

During this time, my mind went back to Prince Warren a few times, and I had to work hard to press down the upcurl of my lips. That helped a lot as we waited.

Finally, after what seemed like centuries, Jake's expression changed slightly. I figured he was communicating with someone using the mind-link.

"Thank you for your patience," he said simply. "Now, group one, please follow me."

Thank the Goddess we were finally moving this along!

Eight nervous ladies followed the Beta through the door, and in less than two minutes, they were back out and dismissed.

The same thing happened with the second group.

That was way faster than I'd thought, but it made me even

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oor het

more confused. What exactly did Prince Theo want from us then?

"Group five, please follow me." Jake instructed flatly. That was my group.

I took a deep breath, focused on my steps, and heard the door click closed behind us.

There he was.

Prince Theo was sitting behind a large desk with his head dipped down, a pen in one hand, and some files in another. He went about his work, not paying the eight of us any attention.

His hair was a bit darker than his brother's. I couldn't see his entire face, and his thick eyelashes blocked most of his eyes. It was difficult to tell at this angle, but it seemed that he was as good-looking as Prince Warren.

Beta Jake started introducing us one by one to the prince, and I watched in shock as he continued to write, not even sparing us a single glance.

Halfway through, his Beta paused and said helplessly, "Al pha... don't you think you might at least take a look at them?"

"No need to."

Those were the first words I'd heard from Prince Theo, and they sounded cold and distant. It didn't matter that his voice was actually deep and soothing; his tone had made it very clear that he had no interest in interacting with any of us.

"You continue," he said, giving his command to his Beta.

Jake sighed. "All right." Then, as his Alpha instructed him, he continued to announce our names.

"This is Miss Dyan Emstream from Zabra pack." He pointed to the girl next to me, and then to me.

"Lastly, this is Miss Ciana Black of Alvar pack."

As I let out a breath, thinking that it was finally over, the prince raised his head and looked in my direction.

Chapter 345: Blade of the Dark Prince

Oh, crap!

What was going on? What did I do? Why did he look at me like that?

Immediately, I lowered my head to look at the floor and murmured in my head, "Do not look up. Avoid eye contact. Goddess, please, just let me go unnoticed..."

I really, really wanted nothing to do with him.

Unfortunately, no matter how much I wished the opposite, I heard footsteps approaching. It only took a few seconds for a pair of high-end leather shoes to appear in front of me, and I could sense that I was enveloped in the prince's shadow.

My heart was racing as I held my breath.

And then I heard him ask, "Dyan Emstream of the Zabra pack?"

I blinked. Huh?

He didn't come for me, but the girl I was next to.

Phew!

I quietly let out a long breath of relief and almost laughed at myself. It was silly of me to scare myself to death like that.

"Ye... yes, Your Highness?" Dyan answered. She was beautiful, with straight black hair and beautiful amber eyes.

“Your pack name sounds familiar.”

Now that I wasn't the center of attention, I was able to sneak a peek at the prince up close. Lifting my head and gaze slightly, I got a glimpse of the profile of the legendary yet dreadful Prince Theo.

He was probably a couple of inches taller than Prince Warren, and while it was obvious they were related, Theo was more striking.

His eyes were darker with little flecks of gold in them. Along his strong jaw, I could see a bit of stubble the same color as his hair. His nose was perfectly shaped for his handsome face.

He was absolutely gorgeous even with that icy cold expression he wore. But I knew his reputation, and it was too bad it was a demon who lived under such an appealing exterior.

or.

In a lot of ways, he reminded me of the painting in the room where we'd met Beta Xavier. His presence gave me an ominous feeling, and even though he was well-built, with muscular shoulders, a flat stomach, and strong legs, I was able to stop myself from swooning over him, thanks to his aloof demeanor.

Dyan replied, “Of course, it sounds familiar...”

Her voice trembled, but something didn't feel right. It was as if she wasn't nervous. Instead, it was hatred.

“Because it was almost wiped out by you a year ago!” the amber-eyed girl yelled

Before I could process what was happening, she lunged forward in a flash, a sharp knife in her hand, and thrust it toward Theo with all of her might.

“Kill Theo, and we can take out Sebastian!”

He stood and grabbed her arm, snapping it in half as he snidely replied, “How ambitious.”

I expected to hear Dyan's shrieks of agony, but she continued to attack as if she didn't even feel the pain.

A hint of surprise flashed through Prince Theo's dark eyes. Just then, the other women in my group shifted, their dresses falling away in shreds as vicious wolves leaped at their enemies. Half of them were aiming for the prince while the other three went after his Beta.

Their size and speed were not what I'd ever seen in the wolves, and that was when I realized those were not ordinary girls, but well-trained assassins!

The prince and his Beta, both still in their human forms, made short work of the agitated wolves, slicing through them with the knives they had snatched from their attackers.

Prince Theo slammed the bloody blade into a large gray wolf before gutting another smaller, brown one. In just a few moments, the wolves had fallen, lying or bleeding on the carpet, draped across his desk, or in a pile at Beta Jake's feet.

Theo crouched down next to the girl who had started it all. "Who exactly are you?"

She didn't answer, but let out frantic laughs instead. "You ... monster!" she gritted through her teeth. Her voice was

filled with hatred that it almost didn't sound like a young girl any more. "We curse you... to be forever... fated to a dark life of loneliness and pain!" With that, her mouth stopped moving and her amber eyes froze.

"Loneliness and pain?" Prince Theo causally wiped the blood off his hands. "Don't bother. I'm used to it."

I froze in place.

The girls' blood had splashed on me, and I could still feel the warmth.

Just a moment ago, they were still talking, walking, just like the rest of us, but now.... My hands covered my mouth, and I dared not make any sound.

The prince's dark gaze landed on me. I could tell that he wasn't looking at me out of concern. It was then that I realized that I was trembling in terror.

"You." He stepped over the heap of fallen women. "What of you?"

My hands were shaking as I pointed at my chest. Immediately, I began to shake my head. "I... I don't know them."

Beta Jake's eyes didn't leave me. He was waiting for instructions from Prince Theo. I had no doubt that as soon as his Alpha gave him the signal to take my life, he would execute it without hesitation.

Prince Theo continued to look at me for a long moment before he tore his eyes away. "I think that's enough for one day."

"Yes, Alpha," Beta Jake answered respectfully.

"Get someone to clean this up." Prince Theo motioned at the bleeding bodies and then went out another door.

As soon as he was gone, I locked eyes with the Beta, and he gave me a softer look as he came over, handing me his own handkerchief. "You have a bit of blood on your cheek."

I took it from him, wiping at my face and hastily thanking him.

With a nod, he took it back, shoved it in his pocket, and gestured for me to open the doors.

The women standing outside knew something had happened, but they couldn't have seen much inside the room because I was in the way. "Ladies, the prince will meet the rest of you at a later time," he declared.

Some of the girls moaned, but the doors were closed behind the Beta, and he did not give them a chance to look inside.

I dutifully walked away with the others, but my legs were shaking, which slowed me down. I fell to the back of the crowd, alone.

Ahead of me, I heard guesses about what might have happened. I thought it best to keep it to myself. All of it was so horrific-I doubted anyone would believe me anyway.

"Where are the other girls?" someone asked.

"Maybe he formed a harem with them," another joked.

Other girls were comparing Theo to Warren. I trudged along, just wanting to lay down and get my thoughts back together.

No one asked me, and I was glad about it.

Finally, we arrived back in our rooms, and the whispering and chattering were so loud that it was giving me a headache. The girls who got to see Theo were talking about how handsome he was, while those that hadn't were wishing they'd been luckier.

I had been fairly unlucky in all of this so far, but at least I wasn't dead.

Sitting down on the end of my bed in a room shared with a few of the other girls, I tried to push the visions of what I'd just seen away.

Brook bounced in and sat down next to me. "Well, I guess Prince Theo must like you. He kept you in his office alone for a bit."

I looked over at her, seeing her silly grin, and immediately admonished her. "Don't even joke about that!"

The smile slid off of her face. "I'm sorry," she said. "Are you all right?"

Taking a deep breath, I realized I'd been rude. "Yes, I'm fine," I told her. "I didn't mean to snap at you. It's just... I don't think about the prince that way."

"I'm sorry," Brook seemed to feel bad.

"It's okay." I forced a smile to assure her. "I shouldn't have overreacted."

We sat in silence for a few moments before she asked, "So, what does he look like?"

Upon hearing her question, visions of Prince Theo scowling as he cut those wolves down filled my mind, and I just couldn't bring myself to even try to recall what his face looked like. I muttered, "I don't know."

"You don't know?" she asked with a chuckle. "You have a sweetheart back home and you can't tell me what he looks like?"

I blinked a couple of times before I realized that she wasn't asking about Prince Theo, but my alleged boyfriend. She was trying to cheer me up by switching the topic.

I looked at her gratefully. However, as much as I wanted to answer her question, the truth was, I had no idea what the teenager I'd met years ago looked like.

“Well, if you’re not willing to share that,” Brook raised a brow, “how about this question instead? What do you like about him?”

I thought for a moment, and I couldn’t help but smile. “He once brought me a beautiful flower.”

“A flower?” She laughed. “You’re so silly, Ciana.”

I managed a smile, but my heart wasn’t in it. More than ever, I wanted to go back to my own house, to my family, but I couldn’t.

I was a prisoner here. Until this was over in three years.

Or until I died.

Whichever came first.

I took a breath and made up my mind. “Brook,” I told her firmly, “I need to get out of here!”

Brook nodded in understanding and squeezed my arm. “Then you need to get your energy back. You look exhausted, and we’ll have another long day tomorrow. Get some rest.”

She quoted a book I’d read once before and said, “Sleep perchance to dream.”

just wished I could fall asleep and forget about the blood and agony. I wished that when I woke up, I would be at home... away from this nightmare.

But had I known what I would dream about that night, would’ve done everything I could to stay awake.

Sold As The Alpha King’s Breeder Chapter 346

Do You Want to Die?

I was in that dream again.

Grass wet with dew brushed against my bare legs as I glided quickly through the meadow, barely feeling the ground beneath my feet. My eyes were scanning for another glimpse of the majestic creature I’d just gained sight of a moment ago before it bound between two large pine trees.

I knew if I followed the gorgeous white pony further into the woods, I would run into him again.

“Don’t touch me!” He raised his voice, but he didn’t sit up, and his arms lay limp at his side. He wore a mask over his face. Only his onyx black eyes were visible to me.

“Do you want to die?” I retorted as I inspected his body for wounds.

“...I don’t care,” he replied quietly.

My hands paused. For some reason, his words broke my heart a little, even though he’d almost killed me just now.

I lifted my gaze to meet his. His eyes were so deep, so dark, like infinite wells, and I feared that if I spent too much time looking into them, I might not be able to extricate myself from their depths.

“Well, I do, okay?” I said. “My father would yell at me if he finds out I left someone bleeding to death in the wild! Relax. I’

m just going to bandage up these wounds.”

He grunted a bit when I lifted him off of the ground, but he didn’t fight back anymore.

Silence filled the air, and I felt I had to say something, so I started with the basic question. “What’s your name?”

He looked at me with those dark eyes and answered, “I don’t have one.”

“Really? That’s strange, because I don’t have one either.”

He cocked his head to the side and gave me a look that was a cross between confused and annoyed.

“It’s true. People just call me girl.”

“Girl?” he repeated.

“That’s right. Girl,” I gave him a big smile. My father had told me that smiles were one of the most effective ways to make friends.

But instead of returning a smile back to me, he almost seemed a bit uncomfortable and moved his gaze away from mine. “And what are you doing out here in the woods all alone?” he asked.

“Um...” | tapped on my chin. “Have you heard of the Sun Blossom flower?”

His eyes widened slightly, and I could see that he had heard of it.

I continued, “You know, the flower that grows on the side of the mountains. I’ve heard they’re beautiful, and smell won

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derful. That’s why I came. My friend was leading me there...”

“Your friend?” he glanced around immediately, his tone

wary.

“Yes, my new friend. A little white pony...”

He let out a breath of relief, and then said matter-of-factly. “Those flowers, they’re not easy to get.”

“My mother also said it was a fool’s errand.” | rested my hands in my lap. “But I love flowers. Don’t you?”

He shrugged and looked down at the ground.

But then, the fire was suddenly extinguished. His whole body was taken by the blackness.

It turned unnervingly silent, and I started to get scared.

“Are... are you still here?” | couldn’t stop the trembling in my voice.

“Is something the matter?”

The sound of his voice startled me. I looked up in shock, my mouth agape as he stood in front of me again.

“Wh-what just happened?” I asked him.

He thrust his hand at me. In it was a beautiful Sun Blossom flower in full bloom, its delicate purple petals speckled with gold flakes that sparkled in the sun.

“You said you wanted one,” he said, handing the flower to me. “So I got one for you.”

Speechless, I stared at the flower. “How did you-?”

He didn’t answer me, and the darkness seemed to seep in all around me again until it was nearly pitch black. I could barely see him.

“Hey!” I shouted, wishing I knew his name.

I tried to reach out to grab him, and that was when I noticed the blood.

It was everywhere, dripping from my hand, sinking into the fabric of my pants, and the smell of it, rusty with aluminum, filled my lungs.

The blood was coming from him!

“Boy?” I shouted. “Are you all right? Boy?”

He looked at me. I could see the whites of the eyes behind his mask, but in that stare, I saw no traces of life.

His breathing had stopped, but the blood continued to pour from him.

A shrill scream escaped from me-I realized he was dead and that the darkness was about to consume me.

My lungs were heaving and my heart was pounding out of my chest as my eyes flew open and the blackness faded away.

It took me a moment to remember where I was. Brushing my hand over my face, I sat up in bed and looked at the figures of the other girls sleeping in twin beds across the room.

Right. The palace.

My mind went to what had happened yesterday in the prince’s office. It was no wonder I’d had such a bloody version of my recurring dream after that.

The first rays of dawn filtered in beneath the curtains, and a glance at the clock told me that it was still quite early. It was unlikely that anyone else would be up, except for the servants.

But I couldn’t go back to sleep. Not after that.

Quietly, I got out of bed and decided to head to the garden for a bit of fresh air. Being outside always lifted my spirits.

The morning air was crisp so I inhaled deeply, feeling more optimistic and peaceful with every breath.

Nothing about being here would be easy. I wished that my father were here so he could give me advice about how to proceed. Luckily, his lessons had been engraved in my heart. I would find a way to make it through this trial to get back to my home.

Beside me was a particularly beautiful rosebush. The blooms were a soft pink with traces of white, and they smelled divine. I paused to breathe them in, looking at the glorious pink and gold sunrise in the distance.

Everything was going to be all right. I just knew it. Peacefulness settled around me, and I found a measure of contentment in the solace of the morning.

And then... noises caught my attention and they quickly ushered my resolve away.

The sound of something crashing hard to the pavement

echoed through the rose bushes, and then I heard what I thought were growls, followed by muttered curse words and grunts of pain.

Looking around, I saw the shapes of two people fighting one another, and I immediately recognized one of them. He was the last person I wanted to see right now.

Prince Theo. He was being attacked... again. Really, how hated was he that this kept happening?

Seeing that the Prince was clearly gaining an upper hand, I decided it would be best to get back inside. But as I began to move, I stepped on some dry leaves that rustled noisily.

Shoot!

Dropping to my knees behind the bushes, I tried to hide myself, praying neither of them noticed me, but it was too late.

The combat seemed to be interrupted by me and ended shortly. Just then, I heard a familiar voice order, "Come out now, or I'll kill you!"

I had no choice but to show myself. But as one last attempt at self-preservation, I grabbed some dirt and smeared it on my face, messing up my hair and putting leaves and sticks in it before I stood and walked to the opening, where he was already standing.

I prayed that I was messy enough that he wouldn't want to look at me. That way, he wouldn't recognize me as the sole survivor of the bloody event in his office yesterday.

Prince Theo's expression was hard. His dark eyes nar

rowed, and his white shirt was open about halfway. My eyes immediately went to his chest, but then I dropped my head so that I wasn't staring at places that I shouldn't.

The sound of approaching footsteps on the path behind him gave me a bit of hope that maybe someone would come along and spare me from certain death.

“Alpha, I’m sorry I couldn’t make it on time. Are you okay?” The footsteps finished in quick succession as Jake, the Beta, stopped next to the prince, but Prince Theo raised a hand to stop him.

“What are you doing here?” Instead of replying to his Beta, Theo questioned me.

“I was only passing by, Your Highness,” I said in a quiet voice.

“Oh, really?” Obviously, he didn’t buy it. “You may look a mess, but I remember you.”

Swallowing hard, I tried to come up with an excuse he might like for being outside. “Yes, that’s true. I was... on my way to the kitchen... to learn how to cook for you... but I got lost.....” I lifted my eyes only slightly to try to read his face.

“Enough,” he interrupted me. “You’re the eighth woman who has tried to approach me since last night.” His voice was a low rumble, and with every syllable, a new tremor of fear passed over me. “Let me make this clear. Leave me alone unless you want to die.”

“Alpha,” Jake tried to remind him, “But the king’s order says-”

“Do you realize that she caused him to get away?” | asumed he was referring to the attacker just now.

“Yes, Alpha.” Beta Jake glanced at me and dared not to say more.

Prince Theo’s eyes locked on me again. I felt fear coursing through my body. He took a step closer to me, and I cowered, but my feet remained planted for worry of what would happen if I backed away.

“The next time you interrupt me, I will end you. Do you hear me?” His words were as cold as ice and chilled me to the bone.

“Y-yes, Your Highness,” I managed to get out, and finally he lifted his gaze off me, and walked away with his Beta.

Once I saw him turn the corner out of my sight, I muttered under my breath, “Do you really think everyone wants to marry you?! So arrogant! If it wasn’t for my pack, I’d never set foot in the royal palace....”

It was just a whisper, merely more than a thought, but my eyes widened as I saw Prince Theo had reappeared from the corner, staring at me.

Every hair of my body stood up, and my instinct told me I was in grave danger as the prince paced back toward me. His face was still cold as ice, but I could sense a hint of anger from it.

Oh. My. Heavens. He’d heard me.

I forgot he was one of the most prestigious Alphas in the world and was blessed with extraordinary sight and hearing.

He flew back at me, getting right in my face.

“Say that again?” he said through gritted teeth.

I was already dead. I might as well be honest. So I shouted out loud, "Do you really think everyone wants to marry you?! So arrogant! If it wasn't for my pack, I'd never set foot in the royal palace!"

It was the truth.

He took a step back. He stared at me and seemed to be at a loss for words. His chest moved slightly faster than usual, as if he was trying to keep pace with his breath. "You...."

"You're the one who asked me to say it again!" I blurted out. Whatever! I was doomed anyway. What could be worse? I'd had enough of this damn place!

Theo said nothing more, but I could see him clenching his jaw. I knew my time was up.

Tears threatened to spill down my cheeks, but I held them back. I thought of my family, my mother, my father. They would miss me.

"Take her to my backyard, Jake," he ordered coldly.

My eyebrows furrowed as I considered what that meant. I knew he wasn't asking his Beta to take me on a friendly outing.

"Alpha?" Jake asked. "Are you sure? You know"

"Take her!"

The temperature around us seemed to have dropped dra

matically, and I couldn't control the chill that kept climbing up my spine. What was he going to do to me?

"Yes, Alpha," Beta Jake replied, and then he gestured for me to come with him, that look of sympathy even more evi

dent on his face now.

Jake led me through the gardens and I obediently walked near him, but I could hear the footfalls of the prince behind us.

It didn't take long for us to come to a large gated area. My instincts told me there was great danger on the other side of the walls.

Beta Jake sighed and opened the gate. I didn't need any one to shove me inside. I'd been ordered to enter, so I did.

"They haven't been fed breakfast yet." Prince Theo came up behind us. "But that's about to change."

One corner of his mouth pulled back in a snarl. It was the most evil smile I'd ever

seen. "They're all about to have... breakfast."

I turned around and looked at the inhabitants of the courtyard.

Lion.

Tiger.

All fierce predators.

I didn't need an explanation.

Breakfast was me.

"It'll open when they're done eating."

Then, Prince Theo locked the gate himself, leaving me facing the animals.

And they were all waiting for me... waiting for their break fast.

Sold As The Alpha King's Breeder Chapter 347

My Prince Charming

Theo

My eyes were focused on the files in front of me, but my thoughts were elsewhere. The scent of blood lingered in my office even after the cleaners had spent hours scrubbing my office upside down, and after all the furniture was replaced.

There was a knock on the door and I looked up to see Jake standing there. I was expecting him. "Any luck tracking down the assassins?" | started with my question.

He shook his head as he crossed the room to stand in front of my desk. "Nothing yet. I've got a team working on it."

I nodded. I had figured as much. "Their entrance and exit was quick... too quick."

"I agree. I believe they knew the palace quite well. We haven't found a single trace of them anywhere. This was definitely a professional job," my Beta said.

I considered his words and found them to be in line with what I had experienced. This was a crafty enemy. Not just anyone could've pulled it off. "What did Father have to say about the whole thing?"

"I haven't spoken to him about it yet. I doubt he knows."

"Very well. Leave it to me."

"Alpha, you want to-"

"Father doesn't trust anyone," I reminded him. "Even me."

"Of course, Alpha." He paused and then asked, "So... why did you spare the girl?"

The girl.

A streak of anger flared up inside of me thinking about her. How dare she speak to me like that?

After taking a deep breath, I replied, "If she's smart, she won't say a word to anyone, especially not now." She was in the zoo, after all, and that should teach her a lesson.

"Uhm, about that."

“Yes?” My eyes went back to Jake’s face, wondering what he wanted to say about her.

He inhaled deeply, held it for a second, and then in a timid voice not matching his girth, he replied, “I think you may have underestimated this girl.”

| raised a brow and studied him for a moment before seeking clarification. “Underestimated her how? Are you saying she’s one of them?” That wasn’t possible, a tiny thing like her, covered in dirt....

“No, no. I’ve done a thorough background check on her. She’s definitely not one of them. That’s not what I meant, Alpha.”

“Well, then what is it, Jake?” | asked, growing more irritated by the second. “Unless...” | paused for a second, and frowned, “they have disobeyed my orders and actually harmed her?”

“They” meaning my animals. But how could that be possible? They had never done anything against my orders.

Then again, that girl just seemed to be a magnet for trouble. What if they really...

“No, not that either.”

I let out a breath that I’d just realized I’d been holding a bit longer than I should have.

“I let her out,” Jake said. He leaned back away and looked at me a bit surprised. “Alpha, are you okay? You seemed worried.”

“I’m fine.” I relaxed my body. “You let her out already? She fainted that quickly?” | smirked. “Good! She needs to learn. When you see her again, tell her that next time she won’t be so lucky, and that my animals would be happy to break her brittle bones,”

“Alpha,” Jake cleared his throat, not meeting my gaze, “she didn’t faint. You said that once the animals were all fed, she could be released. So,”

I was surprised. “So... she figured out that I meant to have her literally feed the animals?”

She was smarter than I’d thought then.

“Yes, she did, very quickly. She fed them. Every single one of them, and when I went to check on her, she was... she was petting Linus’s head.”

“What?” My eyes widened in shock. Linus was my lion.

1978. I knew my displeasure was clearly written on my face, so

Jake quickly concluded, “That’s right. She got along with all of the animals quite well. Since she completed the task you assigned her, I let her out.”

Instead of being scared to death by my friends, she’d had a grand time playing with them?!

“Alpha...?”

It took me a few seconds to digest this news. Eventually, I narrowed my eyes and scoffed, "Did she really think she could get out of this so easily? You said she likes animals? Good, she can take care of them from now on!"

"But, Alpha, you do remember that she's here to be part of your father's attempt at finding you a wife, right? I worry that if the king finds out that you treat her like a servant..."

"You heard what I said."

Jake lowered his head. "Yes, Alpha. I will make it happen."

* Ciana*

Yellow scales shimmered in the sun as I gave Prince Theo's pet python the last of his treats. We were warming up to one another, and I thought the last few days I'd spent bringing him his tasty meals might be enough for him to finally concede that he liked me, but he was still keeping his distance.

I had no doubt I'd win him over, though. The other animals and I were already good friends. I'd grown up acclimating myself to wild beasts, so this menagerie was perfect for me. Even the lions and tigers enjoyed a good belly rub every

day after they'd had their slabs of meat.

To anyone else, this new assignment might be terrifying. They probably would've assumed that the uncaged animals would eat them alive, but it was a dream job for me.

If I was going to live in the palace for the next three years, I'd much rather spend my time with these wild creatures than the one that occupied the wing where I'd witnessed a slaughter just a few days ago.

The animals' food was kept in a shed on the other end of the palace, and every day, I had to make multiple trips hauling it out to the courtyard where the animals lived. That was the only complaint I had about this task-the buckets were heavy, the smell of flesh always made my stomach turn, and there was also the waste involved.

But even if it wasn't the most glamorous job I'd ever done, I was still much happier here than I'd been with the group of complacent girls, listening to their ambitions of how to become a queen someday.

I heard voices nearby as I was dragging a large pile of meat on the way back to the zoo. My stomach turned even more at the sight of Sophia and some of her friends standing

at the other end of the pathway, staring down at me.

I rolled my eyes at those girls, who were from smaller packs, flocking around Sophia like she was already the queen and they wanted to ensure her favor. They might as well have bent down and kissed her feet.

I had to move the bucket past where they were standing, so I heard their nasty comments as I came by.

"It's sad really, in a pathetic way," Sophia was saying in her snooty voice. "She tried to seduce the prince, sneak into his room early in the morning and have her way with him, and now she's here, picking up lion shit." All of the girls laughed, but Sophia's high-pitched giggle was the most grating to my ears

I didn't even bother to look over at her. She wasn't worth my time. Instead, I continued to move my bucket of food to ward my work zone.

"Really," Sophia continued, "someone so desperate deserves to be eaten by the wild beasts... not that they'd find much meat on her scrawny bones!"

Again, they were all laughing. I stood up straight and turned to face her. While I didn't want to cause trouble, I also wasn't going to just take the verbal beating without doing anything about it. But before I was able to say anything, a cordial voice rang out behind us.

"Pardon me?"

I looked toward the speaker and caught my breath. The morning sun radiated off of his dark hair. His dark eyes deep with concern stared down at Sophia, and I couldn't move. All I could do was stand there and gaze at him in silence.

"Prince Warren?" Sophia said, and all of the girls quickly curtsied to the prince.

He didn't acknowledge that effort. "Listen, I don't know why you think it's becoming of a young lady of your standing to waste her time name calling out and poking fun at another young lady, but I do think it's quite disappointing to see Alphas' daughters acting in such an ugly fashion."

"Your Highness..." Sophia and the other girls mumbled.

"Now, go on about your business before I find some chores for you to do." He gestured for them to leave the area, and all of the girls gathered up their long skirts and hastened away.

I continued to stare at him for a moment, wanting to thank him but unable to find my voice. He moved closer and stopped right in front of me, his smile kind and inviting.

Was he really who I had been looking for? One way or another, I had to verify this.

"I'm very sorry for the trouble," he said in an apologetic tone, even though there was nothing he should have been apologizing for.

I shook my head, and when I finally forced a response out, it was a bit hoarse. "N-no, thank you kindly, Your Highness."

His smile softened even more. "Ah, it's you again. Tell me, how did you get to be in such a situation, taking care of my brother's pets?"

I laughed at his use of the word "pets" as they would seem like anything but to most people.

I didn't want to repeat the whole story, so I told him the same thing I had told Brook. "I couldn't sleep the other night. I'd left my room without permission, which is against the rules, and this is the result."

A chuckle escaped his perfect lips. "Well, I suppose you have committed a crime and must serve your time."

He was teasing me. I could tell. "I don't mind," I said, speaking from my heart. "I enjoy the animals. In my experience, they're better behaved than some of the girls I'm meant to spend my days with."

"Yes, indeed," Warren agreed, looking back over his shoulder in the direction in which the other girls had left. "And you're very brave," he praised.

I felt my face start to heat up.

"Hold on just a moment, won't you?" he asked.

I nodded, not sure why he had asked, and he jogged over to the far side of the pathway toward a tree with beautiful pink blossoms on it.

I watched him reach up to pick a flower, and when he did so, his shirt sleeve moved back just a bit.

A gleam of sunlight caught an object there on his arm, and my breath caught in my throat.

Was it possible? Could it really be...?

I was still in shock when he returned to me. "Give me your hand." He placed it on my open palm. When our fingertips touched, I felt a slight tingle. "This flower will help."

Flower... he was picking a flower for me again! Did he remember that he had picked one for a girl in the woods years ago?

"What is it?" I asked him, pulling my hand away and trying to hide my reaction by sniffing the flower. It smelled lovely, and I felt myself relaxing and just inhaling the floral bouquet.

"It's lavender." His white teeth were dazzling in the sun's rays as he smiled down at me. "It has calming properties that will help you to sleep well, dream deeply, and awaken well rested. You said you couldn't sleep? So put it on your pillow at night, and I promise you'll have sweet dreams."

"Thank you..."

"I must be off. It was nice speaking to you. By the way, what's your name?"

"Ciana."

"Ciana Black..." he said, "Beautiful name!"

"How do you know my last name?"

"Because... I have a good memory!" He winked at me, and then I remembered that Beta Xavier called out my last name when I tripped and fell on Prince Warren the first time we met.

I blushed, and he let out a hearty laugh. Then he waved at me. "See you around, Ciana!"

I lifted my hand, but I was so entranced that I couldn't speak because all I could think about was what I'd seen on the arm of Prince Warren.

It was... my bracelet.

So he must truly be the same man I'd met in the woods all of those years ago... but it was too good to be true that I would have had such a memorable encounter with a prince?

“Ciana!” Brook’s voice carried over the bridge, snapping me out of my trance. “There you are. Hurry! We’re being summoned by the king!”

Sold As The Alpha King’s Breeder Chapter 348

: Prince Theo’s Challenge

“The king?” I repeated.

“Yes, the king! C’mon, let’s hurry.”

I stashed the flower Prince Warren had given me in a pocket in my dress and thought about what Brook was telling me.

The king was summoning all of the girls, and we were meant to make an appearance, and a good impression on him.

However, I was in no position to do that in my current state-not that it really mattered to me. If I had my way, I wouldn’t be interacting with any of them at all, except for maybe Prince Warren. I’d rather they didn’t notice I was there. Or not there, as the case may be.

“I don’t know whether I should go...” I murmured.

“You don’t know?” Brook repeated. “Ciana! It’s the king!”

I thought up some excuses. “But... I have to feed the animals. You see, I still needed to feed the tiger, and there were other chores that needed to be done for the animals. If I were to leave now, my work wouldn’t be completed, and this was a task the prince had assigned to me....”

“You do know that it’s important to make a good impression on the king whether or not you win Prince Theo’s hand, don’t you? I mean... he’s the king! He can just as easily decide the fate of our packs as the prince.”

“I know, I know. You go ahead,” I told her. “I’ll see what I can do.”

“But Ciana,” she pleaded.

“Brook, you shouldn’t be late on my account. Go! Take care of yourself and your pack, and make sure the king sees how wonderful you are. I’ll be there as soon as I can.”

She hesitated, but her eyes flashed between me and the palace, and I understood that she was struggling with the burden of trying to be a good friend while not disobeying the king and missing her opportunity. “Please hurry,” she urged me.

I gave her an encouraging smile. “Of course. Now, go! Don’t be late!”

“All right,” Brook said, and with a sigh, she turned and ran back toward the castle doors.

I couldn’t help but smile after her. She was such a kind hearted person to even come out here to tell me, and I felt very lucky to call her my friend.

But I didn’t intend to go. Knowing Brook, she should be able to navigate the scenario on her own.

Enough girls would doll themselves up and do their best to look beautiful and elegant in front of the king. I had intentionally put myself in a position where anyone who looked at me would think I was a mess. It was the best way to stay out of the royals' way and survive these three years so I could go home.

I'd never been one for entertaining dignitaries anyway. Let

the other girls bat their eyelashes, show off their gowns, and fluff their curls at His Majesty. I would be out here with those | trusted most-the animals.

If anyone asked, I'd simply tell them the prince had given me an order, and as his servant, I was fulfilling my duties.

With my mind made up, I picked up the handle of the bucket holding the tiger's food and headed back to the "zoo," certain he'd be starving by now. I would need to give him extra belly rubs to make up for my tardiness.

"Here you go, Samson!" I called the tiger, tossing the meat to him. He was keeping his distance today, possibly because he was irritated that I was late. Once he'd nibbled on a few morsels of raw meat, he was up for some petting, and I spent

some extra time with him to make up for being late.

Then, I had headed to a shed to return the bucket I'd been carrying and see what else needed to be done when I heard a familiar slithering sound.

"Well, if it isn't my dear friend the python!" I said as he grew closer to me. "Now, what are you up to today?"

He made a circle around me on the ground, and I thought | saw a gleam in his eyes as if he really wished he could tell me something.

| sat down on the grass, and soon enough, he was slithering across my lap, letting me run my hand along his bright yellow scales.

"You are such a handsome fellow," I told him. "I know an other handsome fellow." I felt a blush creep into my cheeks just thinking about Prince Warren. "To think, here I am sharing

my happy news with a snake. Well, of all of the snakes in the castle, you're the one I trust the most."

He seemed to appreciate that as his long, forked tongue darted from his lips and kissed the skin of my hand. I continued to pet him, giggling at his antics as he wound his way around my arm but never squeezed.

My mind continued to wander back to Prince Warren and that bracelet, which I had only caught a glimpse of. He seemed to have changed a bit since I'd given it to him. I recalled a withdrawn, melancholy boy, but now, he was outgoing and friendly.

"I'll have to confirm that it's him, you know?" | asked the python. He looked at me with an expression of understanding in his eyes.

"Time changes everyone, that's for certain. Besides that, I've dreamt of my mystery boy for so many years. It's possible my dreams and my memories have become intertwined and reality is now framed through a different lens, isn't it? Could it be him? Even though he's not so shy now?"

The snake hissed an agreement that made me smile. Then, he gave me a little nudge, and I got the impression he wanted to show me something.

Getting up off of the grass, smoothed my skirt. "What is it?" | asked him. He glided over the ground but didn't go far before he turned to look at me. "Do you want me to follow

you?"

His head rocked up and down just a bit, so I took that as a yes. And then, I was off with the python taking this opportunity to do a bit of exploring in the rest of the courtyard while

the others were with the king.

*Theo"

A sigh leaked from my lips as I watched the remaining women line up before my father. I'd done my best to keep it at bay, but it couldn't be helped.

My father walked slowly in front of them, staring through the crowd to catch a glimpse of each of them. He took his time, as if he were admiring a work of art, and then, when he'd gotten a solid enough first impression, he retreated to where I was standing quite a distance from them-but not far enough.

"Well, my son," he said in that deep voice of his. "What do you think of the young ladies?"

I managed to sound believable when I said, "They're just fine, Father."

"Fine?" he repeated, and I realized immediately I'd offended him. "Only fine?"

I didn't want to lie to him. If I gave him the impression / was overjoyed with this venture, who knew what he might pull next? "That's correct, Sire," I said with a bow of my head.

My father scoffed at me. "These are the most beautiful, elegant, well-bred ladies in all of the kingdom, Theodore! But to you, they're only 'fine'?"

The last thing I wanted to do was argue with him in public, but frustration was beginning to well up inside of me at his intrusion; the very fact that he'd decided to do this was irritat

ing beyond belief. Keeping my voice low, I repeated to him the same warning I had made when he'd first told me of the idea only a week ago. "You cannot force me."

"I cannot force you?" He had a gleam in his eye that told me he disagreed with my assessment. "Theo, I am ordering you to find a mate. There are eighty of them. At least one has to be to your liking!"

"Seventy-three." I corrected him.

My father's eyes snapped back to my face. "What's that now? Seventy-three?" He looked around the room, taking a moment to understand my meaning. Turning back to me with an air of disbelief, he said, "Are you telling me seven of them are dead already? It hasn't even been a week!"

All I could do was shake my head. "You shouldn't be surprised, Father. After all, I am related to you. Your blood runs through my veins."

He didn't find my comment amusing at all, and fury ignited within him. "I don't care if it's eighty, seventy-three, or a hundred and sixty! If these girls don't work, I will find more! You will choose one, Theo!"

His voice carried to the women, and I heard several shocked gasps. I really didn't want to have this conversation here, but since he was pressing the issue, I needed to be firm. "I do not want a child."

"You may not want a child, but I need you to have one. And I will not continue to waste time because you feel uninspired to find the right woman. If you still need some persuasion," he paused and warned me, "think about your mother."

I shook my head slowly as I thought about the audacity he was displaying. He was really going to try to play on what little sympathy I had by bringing Mother into this? "That sounds like a threat, Father."

My father sighed and placed both of his hands on my shoulders, and for a moment, he looked like a father, not the king, but my actual dad. But he and I both knew that I was nothing more than a pawn to him.

"Listen, I'm doing what's best for you. You are my son. This needs to be taken care of. So... if you don't want to deal with all eighty of them, select a few. Make them your personal attendants. Perhaps one or two will stand out to you then, when they're close to you."

I didn't want anyone close to me. Ever. But he wasn't going to let up.

"Fine."

"Good." He nodded. "Which ones would you like?" He turned and looked over his shoulder. "There are some beauties over there."

My eyes raked over them as well. I'd seen them all before, and I wasn't impressed. Most of them were far too weak in every way to be a match for me. "I do not want a timid mouse," I told my father. "She will never last."

"Some of them look fairly strong," he replied. "Like they've gone through warrior training."

That wasn't exactly what I meant, but as he spoke, an idea came to me.

"They can prove their toughness to me by paying a visit to my pavilion."

My father's eyes were back on me-wide with displeasure once more. "Your pavilion? You want to ask these girls to traverse your dangerous zoo to reach the center pavilion? Your animals will tear them apart."

A chuckle departed my lips as I reminded him, "If they can't outlast my pets, they will never make it more than a day with me, Father. You know that. I will not accept a weakling as my wife. They will have to prove themselves strong in every way."

The king lifted a finger to his chin as he considered my words, and then, much to my surprise, he nodded. "Very well, then. We shall give it a try."

He signaled to his Beta, who had been standing close enough to overhear our entire conversation.

Xavier stepped up in front of the women with my father and I looking on. "Ladies, I have some wonderful news! The prince has decided to take a few of you as his personal attendants!"

The women's faces lit up, and murmurs of excitement rippled through the crowd.

"In order to qualify for this extremely privileged task, all you will need to do is make your way to the pavilion within his private zoo. The ladies who arrive first will be assigned to take care of Prince Theo."

I watched as the girls' faces fell. Some of them were wide eyed with shock. I was sure that in the past few days, they'd learned enough about me to know about my animal pals.

W 228 Vouchere I turned around and smirked. This was exactly what I expected. They would never last in my courtyard. In fact, I doubted many of them would even think of trying.

And anyone who did... well, Perceval would take care of them. He wouldn't let anyone enter the pavilion without my approval.

I doubted any of these women had a desire to be swallowed whole by a python....

Sold As The Alpha King's Breeder Chapter 349

His New Personal Attendant

Ciana

"Wait for me!"

My new friend, the python, led me along winding paths, through beautiful trees with green, vibrant leaves, and enchanting gardens the likes of which I'd not seen closer to the main castle.

The colors were more vivid, the blooms in shades of purple and red that shimmered in the sun like gemstones, and the scents that filled my lungs were intoxicating. I felt like I was in a fairy tale.

It was so worth it to skip meeting the king. Instead of trying to please the two dreadful royals, I was able to experience this lovely place instead. I couldn't help but smile to myself-it was certainly the right decision.

After half an hour of meandering about, I began to see a structure in the distance, rising up out of the ground like a beacon of enchantment. Wooden and weathered, it appeared as if it had been standing there keeping careful watch over these parts for many years, and since the python was slithering right toward it, I began to understand that this was where we were headed.

"Do you want to show me what's hiding there?" I asked him.

He turned and looked at me, his eyes still gleaming, and his fork tongue flicked a response I had to assume was an

affirmative.

I continued to follow him toward the hexagon-shaped building, and before we arrived I realized it was a pavilion, a place where one was meant to sit and enjoy the beauty of nature that inhabited this place.

I wondered how many people had ever had a chance to visit here. With it nestled in the heart of the prince's private courtyard, it was not easily obtainable to just anyone.

The python glided up the stone path, right to the opening, and then lingered on the steps, waiting for me to come in.

I hesitated. Just because Prince Theo assigned me to care for his animals in his zoo, that didn't mean he'd approve of me taking liberties with the rest of his territory.

Yet, no one was around, and I couldn't see the harm in just peeking my head in. If someone did come near, I could always tell them that I'd followed the python inside and wanted to make sure he wasn't causing any problems.

Tentatively, I climbed the three steps that led to the open door. Inside, plenty of plush seating invited one to sit and relax while listening to the sounds of the birds chirping in the trees, the animals playing in the distance, and the soft buzz of

insects.

If the prince truly enjoyed visiting this place, perhaps he and I had more in common than I ever would've imagined.

I wasn't sure how to digest that thought. The Dark Prince was cold and cruel, and I had never thought of myself even a tiny bit as either of those things.

knew them.

The python seemed to be smiling as he peered up at me. I reached down and stroked his head. "Thank you for sharing this place with me. You're a kindhearted friend." He wrapped himself gently around my arm and then released me.

"You know, a friend like you deserves to be called something other than just 'the python.' Do you have a name?"

He seemed to nod at me again, but he had no way of communicating that name with me. Tapping my chin, wondered aloud, "What's a good name for a python? Is your name... Bill?"

Python couldn't laugh, but he did look amused at my first guess. "What about... Robert?" That didn't seem to suit him either. Studying his face, I thought, "You look like a Pete. Pete the Python!" His eyes lit up and his grin widened. "May I call you Pete then?"

Enthusiastically, the snake bobbed his head at me, and I decided from now on, that's what I would call him. "Pete it is."

I wandered around the pavilion for a moment, looking at the intricate carvings in the wood, but then, I noticed that Pete had nudged against a panel in the wall, and a door opened up. "What's that?"

Behind the door, there was a circular stairwell made of iron that led up in a tight spiral.

Glancing up at the ceiling, I noted that it was much lower inside than it appeared to be outside and thought there must

be a second story.

"You want me to go up?" I asked Pete, but by then, he was already slithering up the stairs.

I looked around to make sure that no one was nearby before I followed the snake up the stairs,

When I reached the top of the stairs, I gasped. What lay before me was a greenhouse built into the top of the pavilion. It was unrecognizable from the ground level, but up here, it was clear that this was where the prince's prized flowers and

other plants were grown.

Again, I hesitated to step inside, but I was so drawn in by the brightly colored plants, my feet started moving forward behind Pete as he crossed into the space. The scent of fresh earth filled my lungs, as well as the fragrance from the flowers and fruit that grew here.

Across the way, I saw a variety of berries and was immediately curious about them. They looked delicious, plump and dark purple, and they even had a pleasant fragrance.

I was just about to approach them when I heard something downstairs. Inhaling deeply, I held my breath and pressed my ear against the wooden floor, trying my best to listen and praying that it was just my imagination and I wasn't about to be caught in Prince Theo's private pavilion.

Voices hit my ears, and I closed my eyes, shaking my head in dread, because I recognized one of the voices.

"Your Majesty, you really do not need to come in here. I can protect you from my animals to a degree, but it is quite

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dangerous. Besides, this is a matter I can handle on my own."

Prince Theo! I would recognize that voice anywhere. And was he talking to the king?

"Nonsense!" I heard an older voice say. Yes, it had to be King Sebastian himself! "I'm not frightened of your animals. I might be older than I was when my wolf used to fight on the battlefield, but I can defend myself, I assure you. Besides, I want to meet the lucky girl who meets your challenge."

Challenge? What in the world was he talking about?

Pete, the python, slithered near my feet. I held a finger to my lips, silently begging him to be quiet.

"Where is Perceval anyway?" Prince Theo muttered just at the bottom of the stairs. "I haven't seen him anywhere."

As I heard the royal father and son begin to climb the stairs, my heart nearly ripped from my chest.

Oh, why did I have to be so curious? It always got me into trouble. And I already had so many strikes against me. What was more, I might have gotten our entire pack in danger!

Just then, the python, whose name was Perceval, apparently, and not Pete, though I thought Pete suited him better, slithered off toward the stairs.

Giving him a thumbs up, I encouraged him.

If he went down to meet his master, perhaps Prince Theo wouldn't feel the need to come up the stairs. I took a few deep breaths to calm myself and prayed that this would all work out after all.

L

"What are you doing here?" Prince Theo scolded Perceval, although his tone wasn't harsh at all, more like a spoiling father half-seriously reprimanding his naughty child, "Did you open the door again?"

I was hoping to hear his voice fade away, but it was actually growing closer. Then I heard a familiar hissing and realized what was happening.

Thad never cursed an animal before, but at that moment, was more upset with Pete-Perceval-than I had ever been with an animal in my life, including the bee that stung me when I was four and that mountain lion that had accidentally bit my finger when I was giving her some food once in the forest.

No, this was not going to work out in my favor after all.

"What do you want to show me?" Prince Theo asked the python, and I could tell that he was at the top of the stairs now, while I was still attempting to hide.

When Perceval slithered right over and wound himself around my feet, I knew it was all over. I looked down at him and sadly shook my head, wanting to thank him for killing me softly.

Prince Theo stared at me in disbelief.

I slowly stood, my legs shaking with fright as I averted my eyes from him. "Um...greetings, Your Highness," I bowed my head low. "I saw the snake enter the pavilion and wanted to make sure everything was okay..."

He still didn't say a word, but from his heavier breathing, I could tell he was furious.

It felt my heart freeze in my chest. It may as well cease to beat. I was a dead woman now anyway.

"Who is this?" King Sebastian's voice broke the scary silence. I could see his boots now and recognized that he was standing next to his son.

With a deep breath, I raised my eyes to look at him, expecting him to be just as angry and annoyed as the prince.

But the king was smiling. "This is one of your girls, isn't it?" He had his hand resting on Prince Theo's shoulder.

Prince Theo clenched his fists and gritted through his teeth. "Yes, I suppose you could say that."

A laugh left the king's throat as he began to clap. My eyebrows shot up in confusion. "Well, well, well!" he said. "Nicely done, young lady. Great job, indeed!"

My eyes went from the king to the prince. His expression hadn't changed much, though it might've grown a bit darker.

"Father, I think-" Prince Theo began, but the king cut him off.

"Now, now, son. This was your idea. All I did was agree to it. Come along. Let's go back to the palace, Prince Theo." He took a few steps toward the stairs before he turned back to look over his shoulder. "Oh, and don't forget to bring your new personal attendant."

Personal attendant?

My eyes met the dark orbs that were the mirror to Prince Theo's soul only briefly as I realized a new horror was just beginning for me.

His new personal attendant-was me!

Sold As The Alpha King's Breeder Chapter 350

Getting Personal with the Prince

What... just happened?

I followed along behind the king as he headed back toward the palace, seeing as though I seemed to have no choice.

I was still in shock anyway-I was to be Prince Theo's personal attendant?

The python slithered along but stayed back from the king as if he knew that the older gentleman wasn't a fan of his and didn't want to get in trouble.

Behind me, Prince Theo's demeanor was even colder. It was quite clear to me that he was not happy with this arrangement, but he seemed every bit as trapped as I was.

When I caught Prince Theo's eyes, he glared at me and then focused on his pet snake. Was he holding the python accountable for this particular situation?

Perceval slunk to the other side of me, placing my body between himself and his master. He could tell that the prince was angry with him. Poor snake, how was he supposed to know that his master loathed me?

Ahead of us, the king's Beta was waiting. Xavier looked at me with a questioning expression on his face. The king filled him in. "This girl is the prince's new personal attendant. See to it that she is moved into the small chambers next to Prince Theo's room by the end of the day."

"Of course, Your Majesty," the Beta said, and I could tell he was in shock. Perhaps it was my disheveled appearance that was causing him to be so flustered.

Then King Sebastian turned to look at me, and I lowered my eyes in respect. "If you serve your prince well, you can be rewarded, so do a fine job, young lady."

“Yes, Your Majesty,” I said without looking up at him, but I could tell he had walked away.

As we exited the courtyard, I couldn’t help but look back over my shoulder. I would miss the animals. Pete-I meant,

Perceval-slithered over to me, and I bent down to stroke his head, hoping I’d get to come back here someday.

Theo stormed off without another word to any of us, entering the castle through the closest door and slamming it behind him so violently, the glass in the panes near the top rattled.

My heart shook as well. I’d much rather spend my time with the wild beasts I understood than tend to the cold, callous prince.

Beta Xavier nodded to me. “Let’s return to the other ladies.”

I followed him back to our dormitory, and as we approached, I could hear chatter among the girls about a journey through perilous conditions.

“Ladies!” Beta Xavier intoned to get their attention. “May I have your attention?”

Everyone quieted, and those who had been sitting in the nearby lounge came out into the open space near our section

of the hallway; others were still spilling from their rooms.

“Miss Black has already completed the task assigned by King Sebastian just a short time ago, and she will now be in service to Prince Theo as his personal attendant. I should hope you will all see her as a role model for your behavior and do your best to emulate her admirable characteristics.”

With that, he turned and tipped his head to me. remember how to get to the prince’s chambers?”

I nodded.

“Do you

“Good. Be in the room next to his by the end of the day, and please... before you go... take a shower!”
With that, he walked away, leaving me with the rest of the girls.

A few of the young ladies had small smiles on their faces, as if they were congratulating me, but the majority of them looked jealous, their eyes cast down their noses at me or their chins in the air.

“Congratulations!” Brook said, running over to me. She started to wrap her arms around me, but I put a hand out to stop her.

“Thank you, but don’t hug me. I’ve been with the animals, and I smell awful. I wouldn’t want to get the stench on your clothes.”

She laughed but didn’t come any closer as per my request. “You’re so brave, Ciana. The other girls were just discussing how they might go about completing King Sebastian’s assigned task while you were already out there doing it.”

I lost my speech for a moment. So that was why? The king made a contest out of trying to get to the pavilion, DNU Tu jubl happened to already be there.

Why, why, why did I have to go there? I just wanted to slap myself in the face.

“You don’t look so happy,” Brook noted.

Letting out a sigh, I said, “I’ll make do.”

“But Ciana, now that you’re Prince Theo’s attendant, you’ll have more freedom in the castle. That should give you some comfort, even if you’re not particularly interested in becoming the prince’s mate”

Before she could finish or I could comment, a loud, rude voice filtered over Brook’s shoulder. “Well, if it isn’t that nasty bitch who always smells like shit,” Sophia said, coming over with her entourage. “I bet you cheated in some way to get ahead.”

I rolled my eyes at her but held myself back from doing anything else. I’d gotten myself into enough trouble today already.

But she wasn’t finished yet. “You know, with you living so close to the prince now, he’s sure to discover quickly you’re nothing but a slut who tries to sabotage other people. He’ll get rid of you right away.” Her friends chimed in, voicing their agreement.

Fury started to build up within me. I took a few deep breaths and warned her, “I’ll say this only once. Leave me alone!”

Sophia gave some of her followers a look, and those girls walked over to my assigned luggage slot and dumped out all

my belongings. Not only that, they then stepped on them.

Meanwhile, Sophia shouted out, “Cheater!” She raised her voice so that the whole room could hear. “Look at her! What a shame she is! I can’t believe I’m sharing the same roof with this ungraceful, despicable whore!”

I clenched my fist, and reminded myself over and over again to ignore her.

Brook rushed over and tried to collect my personal items on the ground, but Sophia’s followers blocked Brook and pushed her so hard that she fell on the floor.

“Brook, are you okay?” I immediately dashed over to check on Brook.

“I’m all right. Don’t worry.” Brook said softly. She was slightly scratched, but had no major injuries, fortunately.

That was it; Sophia really needed to stop her hideous behavior! Taunting me was one thing, but I wouldn’t just watch her bully my friend.

I stood up and walked toward her as she continued to taunt me. “So what now? Why don’t you tell us how disgusting you...” she paused, and pointed at Brook, “and your bitchy friend”

Slap!

A loud sound echoed in the room, and everyone was quiet.

Sophia looked at me in disbelief. It took her a couple of seconds to catch up with what had happened. Then her hand moved up to touch the pink fingerprints on her face.

“You...” her voice trembled.

“Me what?” I narrowed my eyes.

Sophia tried to fight back and I caught her striking arm.

I released her back to her group of followers and crossed my arms over my chest. Now that I was in this position, I might as well take advantage of it. I’d seen enough bullies in my day to know that they’d back off when someone stood up to them. To protect Brook, I knew what I had to do.

Pressing a smile to my face, I said in an overly sweet and intentionally irritating voice, “It must be very difficult for someone like you to accept that my actions have garnered me a position close to Prince Theo.” I shrugged and kept my smile on my face, trying to seem unperturbed.

“Whatever measure I used, it worked. I’m sure you’re jealous and unhappy that you weren’t picked. But... really, what can you do about it? By the way, I’m not that forgiving, and like you said, with someone despicable like me, you’ll never know what I might do to get back to you. So here’s what I have for you-keep your mouth shut and leave us alone!”

Fury and fear lighted Sophia’s eyes as she glared at me. “You...” Her whole body was trembling, and finally, I heard her shout, “You just wait, you cunt! You haven’t seen half of what I can do yet.”

“Uh, uh,” I said, wagging my finger and looking her in the eye. “You shouldn’t speak to Prince Theo’s personal attendant that way. It’s liable to get you in trouble. Oh, and Sophia, dear, if you try to take your anger out on Brook....”

I narrowed my eyes slightly at her, taking on the look a python might have before he struck. “I will make sure that Prince Theo never even gives you a sideways glance. And you know, in my position, that’s quite possible.”

Her mouth opened, but then she closed it. It snapped open again, looking a bit like a fish that’s been caught and lifted out of the water.

She was so angry, she didn’t even know what to say, and it was probably because she hadn’t expected me to fight back.

With Sophia’s face turning a bright crimson, I collected my belongings, grabbed Brook and headed off to take a shower.

Brook followed along behind me. “Ciana,” she said in a sharp whisper. “Wow... you were scary just now. I mean, good scary!”

I smiled at her. “If she should ever try to bully you, you let me know, all right?”

Her face lit up as she smiled back at me. “Thank you, Ciana,” she said, then she teased me by saying, “I feel like I know someone very important now.”

I couldn't help but laugh. If she knew how Prince Theo already felt about me, she would understand that I was likely to do her just as much harm as good in my new position, but there was no point making her concerned.

Fifteen minutes before the clock struck twelve, I took my belongings and headed down to Prince Theo's chambers, hoping that he was already asleep, so I didn't have to interact with him that day.

After all, the king had only said to report there by the end of the day. Technically, that was midnight, wasn't it? Why would I be in a hurry to bring myself closer to death?

I had no idea what sort of assignments Prince Theo would give to his personal attendant, but I had a feeling they wouldn't involve feeding him grapes or reading him poems from an old, well-used leather book. No, he was likely to ask me to do more vigorous activities.

A chill went down my spine as I pondered what that could mean. It had better be chores and not... bedroom activities.

I was a virgin, and I planned on staying that way until I met that very special person in my life.

It didn't take long for me to get to my destination. Two guards stood on either side of his door, and as I approached, one asked, "Are you the new assistant, m'lady?"

Not used to such formalities, it took me a moment to get a word out. "Uh... yes."

He nodded and stepped to the door next to the more ornate double doors he'd been guarding. "This is your room. Now that you're here, may we be excused?"

"Of course! Have a good night!" Those guards were probably sent by Beta Xavier to ensure that I arrived on time. I was glad I made it before midnight.

When the door opened, I was shocked at how nice it was. Walking inside, I set my bags down and had a quick look around.

The space was bigger than the room I'd shared with the other girls, and while it was clearly a servant's quarters, the four poster bed was large, and the emerald green linens looked inviting. They matched the curtains over the window that looked out onto the garden I'd just passed through.

On the other side of the room, another door was slightly ajar, and I had to think this was how I was to access the prince when he called for me.

Regardless of how unwilling I was to interact with him, I felt I should at least make an effort to check in with him if he was awake. Since the door was open, I hesitated for a moment, and finally decided to go in that way.

My breath caught in my throat as I knocked gently on the door.