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An hour earlier...

Аего

'Prepare for a bloodbath! The King of Ehnrelil had robbed us of our queen and therefore his kingdom deserved our wrath! Are you with me, my people?!'

My people didn't hesitate when they answered me with the strongest, ear-splitting howl Phanteon has ever heard. They felt my anger. They felt my desperation. They felt my will for bloodshed. They wanted their queen back too and so they were very cooperative with me when I called for battle.

There was only one way to retrieve our queen and it was through the nearest border of Ehnrelil: the Baltic Meadows.

The Alphas in their respective territories and together with their subjects paused whatever it was they were doing and started their way into that very location. From the throne room's arched window, I leaped and my battle-hungry claws landed with perfect ease on the rocky ground, acquiring no wounds or broken bones during the process. Elijah and Farryl followed in their wolf forms, able to keep up with my strength and speed.

I led the run. Phanteon's army of wolves followed behind me. The rest of my people—mostly men and women without pup responsibilities—followed behind them. In the history of Phanteon, there hasn't been any recorded battle against another kingdom, only now.

Well, soon.

And I was planning to make it a glorious fight to the death, one that would chill the bones of the other realms.

By the time we arrived in the Baltic Meadows, almost all of the werewolf and lycan population gathered; claws retracted, mouth deformed into a ferocious snarl, all attention directed to me for my instruction.

Under the full moon's light, a rocky ledge caught my eyes so I ran and climbed up there with my enormous lycan form. That classic lion movie on Earth could go fuck itself. It paled in comparison to the show we presented.

'It is time to show the fae kingdom that they chose the wrong opponent!' I started through my mind-link. 'It is time for them to know that it is a grand mistake messing with us werewolves and lycans. Their fucked-up assess will pay! And they will pay with their deaths! Break down their stronghold my people.

Leave no sorry-ass fae alive. I will find our queen myself. Leave that shitty vampire lord and the foolhardy fae king to me!'

I howled again and my people howled back. Our noise probably reached the very heart of Ehnrelil, informing their High Elders of a looming danger, but that didn't worry me. That fired me up even. I could use a good challenge after all.

The invisible wall of the fae kingdom stretched kilometers away but my army and Alphas concentrated on one particular section, using their brute strength and their special abilities to their advantage. I knew though it wasn't that easy to break a realm's stronghold. It would probably take a few minutes to hours before they breach it. It was designed that way.

So, while that was happening, I focused my attention on Serena's presence, trying to pick up even just a smidgen of a clue where she was right now and how she fared. It took me a number of tries, honing in on her life essence and our connection, until someone interrupted my focus, his armored frame standing warily behind me.

"Your Majesty," General Halcynos stated. "Can I have a moment of your time?"

Peeling my eyes open, I then summoned my human form and shifted, wearing just black pants to cover up my essentials.

"What do you want to report?" I asked, scrutinizing his profile.

He still sported the same serious expression on his face, but I picked up a certain sense of concern behind his hard-set eyes.

"I wanted to seek your forgiveness," he started and I immediately raised my brow.

"For what?" I told him, definitely clueless about what he was rambling about.

"Can I answer your question in the form of a story-telling, Your Majesty?" His sullen expression lightened.

I didn't have the time for such activity, but seeing the sincerity in his eyes, I agreed. "Make it short if possible, General. I can't afford to be distracted when my queen is still in enemy territory."

"Of course, Your Majesty," he lowered his head and took a deep breath.

"It started when your father ordered me to scout this very place we stand now."

He gestured to all of the Baltic Meadows with pride and longing.

"Here I met her... Oueen Serena's mother."

At the mention of my wife's name, my ears perked up. All of my attention was quickly directed to him.

"She was a beautiful fae. A rising High Priestess. She loved spending time in the lake beyond those trees." He pointed to where Salviste Lake was located and gave me a half-smile. "It wasn't glowing gold back then." He chuckled slightly as if this memory brought him happiness.

"As you may know, I was your father's Beta then. He ordered me to head the surveillance of the Baltic Meadows after hearing a fae trespassing the territory. That particular fae is Lady Cyrena, Queen Serena's mother. Her presence didn't pose any danger to Phanteon, so I allowed her to continue visiting the lake and meadows, and somehow, over the course of time, we became friends."

The beating of my heart suddenly increased, having an inkling as to where this was going. Was I actually looking at Serena's father? A handsome, powerful man like General Halcynos and a beautiful fae woman longing for companionship were recipes for a forbidden romance.

We both exchanged stares: mine in sudden realization while he still seeking forgiveness.

"And you're apologizing now because?"

"Because I knew Queen Serena is my daughter the very moment I saw her in your wedding," he finally confessed.

Something inside me then sparked; not of anger because he kept this very important fact from me but of happiness. Extreme happiness. It meant she wasn't iust a human. She was half-fae and half-wolf.

My wolf.

My true luna.

"I held this information to you because I needed to understand why she didn't recognize me immediately as her father," General Halcynos stated. "With the strong wolf blood she had, she should have recognized me then, but she didn't."

I wanted to know too and I bet this was one of the many things that would be uncovered once we reunite.

"I must admit, numerous unfortunate circumstances stopped me from being present when she was born and I wasn't also there in her growing years, but I knew for certain we are family. I could feel my blood inside her and that of her mother's."

This didn't surprise me. Since their union was forbidden, it was bound to experience obstacles in the form of shitty fae traditions.

"Know that I am beyond happy knowing my daughter found you, Your Majesty, her true mate. I could rest at ease now. Cyrena too. Wherever she is right now."

Extreme sadness painted his face then. I wanted to know more about their story, but suddenly, I sensed Serena's strong presence. She was in Viacronis. What the hell.

"General, knowing Serena is half-wolf now is indeed wonderful news, and you as her father brings me great joy too. There is no father figure I want more than you. I just wished this revelation could have been done in a much better circumstance, not now when we are at the brink of war. Still, I accept your apology. As her mate and husband, I will try my best to protect her from all danger, starting now...so if you will excuse me, General, I must be on my way to Viacronis."

The general's brows arched up.

"She's there? How come she's in the vampire realm?"

I shrugged my shoulders before disappearing in his front.

"Your daughter sure is a treasure trove full of mysteries."

With us bonded, I didn't need to interrogate Serena why she was in Viacronis. I knew her reason without her explaining it and I knew also why I didn't need to be jealous of the fucking vampire lord.

Nothing happened to both of them, good. Still though, my anger for this pesky fanged being thrummed on the surface. I was ready to turn my threat into a reality, ready to tear his head apart, but Serena mind-linked me explaining how Hale helped her escape.

A life for a life, I reminded myself, and since Hale saved her from certain death, then I was bound to spare his life in return.

I refocused my attention on my queen instead, happy and contented now that she was back in my arms once again.

With nothing but desire burning our bodies and minds, we hit it off right away. I gave her the premium VIP treatment she deserved, and she gave back the same to me.

In the middle of our lovemaking, she happily revealed her true identity as half-fae and half-wolf. Although I already knew it from General Halcynos, still I was surprised. There was no better way to hear this wonderful news than from her directly.

Through our thoughts, she let me see her wolf form. She was a real beauty. A perfect balance between delicate grace and power. Perfect for me and perfect for my kingdom as its luna.

I couldn't wait for her to transform into her wolf form in the physical world, but this here, spending time with her in our own special world, was enough. It reconnected us. It made our bond even stronger.

Now with our reunion, a fuck-fest was in order, but as leaders of our kingdom, we couldn't be insensitive with the current situation in the Baltic Meadows.

While Serena was in the bathroom freshening up, I walked outside my balcony and mind-linked my brother.

'Elijah,' I said. He was quick to answer me with a, 'Yes?'

'Serena is now with me,' I informed. 'Put the attack on hold, but order my army not to leave just yet. The war is just beginning.'

'It's good to hear that Serena is now safe, brother,' he answered. 'And of course, yes, I'll relay your message to General Halcynos and our people.'

'Wait for us there,' I told him with the thrill of Geraden's heart beating on the palm of my hand still lingering inside me.

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Serena

Wrapped in nothing but a bedsheet, I approached my husband who was standing near the balustrade. He seemed to be watching the cloudy sky above us but I knew better. I knew he was communicating with Elijah, probably barking out orders for him and his army.

Aero hadn't told me about the werewolves and lycans waiting near the border of Ehnrelil and he didn't need to. I could still sense it from him the thrill of bloodshed, of needing retribution and of revenge. I wanted the same too, directed towards Geraden specifically. I wanted us to travel to the Baltic Meadows and start the war, but I also wanted to do something before that.

Though I know we didn't need any help from the other realms, I figured we had to reach out to Lady Yllana and Lord Hale. Their people probably would love to join in the fun, especially when they had their own dead comrades to avenge.

Plus, I also needed to fulfill my promise: to tell Aero what truly happened before I magically appeared in his bed on day one.

"Ready to hear my story?" I asked him when he accepted me on his spot with arms wide open.

"This is the only thing our bond couldn't solve, Serena. The only thing that remains under the shadows," he stated, putting me in his front, my back to his chest, and enveloped me in his tight embrace. "I am frustrated to be left in the dark, but I know you'll soon give me light."

I chuckled at how poetic he was with his words.

"Hmm, where do I begin?" I asked, wondering how to piece together my story.

"You can start with those headaches of yours," he suggested, nuzzling his nose against the crown of my head. "I always wondered why you get them."

I arranged my head against his shoulder and sighed.

"Well, the occasional headaches I get in the past were the moments my memories start to slip. I get flashes with the aches, very hazy pictures that immediately disappear when the bout is over. They weren't enough to make me remember though. The stone I gave you did the trick."

"I see..." he muttered, accepting my explanation. "What about that day when you promised to meet me again? You really did break my heart at that time."

I gripped his wrists in response and eyed his pensive profile with longing. "Oh Aero..." My heart sank when the memory of that day came to the surface of my consciousness. I knew he was heartbroken since that day. I was devastated too.

"That day... the day when I was supposed to meet you again to receive my gift, King Alduin died," I started, recollecting the memory and linking those pictures for Aero to witness telepathically. "The fae kingdom was in instant turmoil at that time. Queen Adna immediately decided to block all portals to and from the other realms. With my powers, I didn't need to use these portals. I could have met you still, but I was afraid for your life. I heard rumors that my uncle was killed by a wolf, but they didn't have proof. However, the Elders and the queen were still very wary with anyone associated with the werewolves. I didn't want to give them any ideas by just simply meeting you. I had been bullied and discriminated many times. As my friend, royalty or not, they wouldn't hesitate to place the blame on you. I wanted to save you by cutting all my ties with you. It really pained me you know. Every day, I thought of you. I wondered how you were coping. I wondered if you now really hated me. I broke my promise and that was unforgivable."

Aero was quiet, so I decided to continue.

"To ease my worries, I watched you in secret. Many times. For the first two years, you went to the Baltic Forest and to the lake, just staring at the water. I knew though you were waiting for me, but I couldn't show myself to you. I couldn't break my spell, else the Elders would know and I would risk your life. I couldn't have that. I couldn't bear the thought of you dying because of my carelessness. I

was willing for you to think I broke my promise than to see you get tangled up with the drama of my family."

I watched as the cloudy sky turned even darker; the very same weather Ehnrelil had back then when I turned my back on my fae life.

"That day, when Geraden influenced my Aunt to attack your kingdom, I realized I had to intervene," I explained. "I escaped Ehnrelil and hid on Earth, but before I did that, I turned the whole army of faes under my command to stone. That way, Queen Adna wouldn't be able to continue with the war. With the army in eternal sleep, she wouldn't be able to assure the fae people's safety, thus the portals would continue to be blocked. Their life would be in a standstill. They would forever think that a bullied High Priestess caused them great suffering."

Aero made a low throaty sound before expressing his observation, "Was that the reason why the fae kingdom had little males? I noticed that when I went there."

"Yes," I answered with pride. "I spared Adamar and Adaen though. It's the least I could do for the kindness they showed on me."

"That explains a lot," he remarked, chuckling a little at the thought of the twins getting surrounded by multiple female faes.

"I enlisted the help of Marius and have him put me in one of his relatives living in America," I continued, capturing Aero's attention again. "I erased all my memories, all of them including ours. It was painful, Aero, but it had to be done. I replaced them with a false memory of a father and a mother, art lovers who died in an accident, added a memory of being an orphan and accepted by the McAllister family. They knew I came from another realm, that I am fae, but they never breathe a word of it. They are probably taking care of my dog, Akita, now and probably took care of my apartment, just waiting for my return. That is if I wanted to."

"You have a dog? Is it a male or a female?" he asked quickly. I saw this as his cute way of showing his jealousy.

"A female," I answered, smiling at him, "don't worry."

He returned to his composed self and allowed me to continue.

"All my powers, I locked it in the stone I gave you that you still kept despite your heartache. It was the best place to hide it and although you didn't exactly have a clue I did this, you were the best person to keep my powers."

Then, I stepped out of his embrace and faced him. "I'm sorry, Aero, I really am, for all the pain and trickery I caused you."

I touched his cheek and ran my palm along his perfectly shaped jaw.

"It seems destiny really is working to reunite us again. If the Goddess really is real, then I need to thank her for finding a way for us to be together again."

I thought of that old woman in the street, the one selling antiques and old paintings. Maybe she was the Goddess in the form of a disguise.

"Whether the Goddess is real or not, you are mine, Serena. You were destined to be my mate. You will eventually return to me in one way or another," he stated, so sure of himself.

My heart warmed up, my insides tickled. I closed the space between us and we then shared a very long, Earth-shattering kiss. Aero's lips, they were like my drug. I will always be on a high whenever I taste them.

Minutes later, we withdrew. I was breathless then but felt satisfied.

"Let's dress up. I want to bring you to Salviste Lake and I want to show you something," he told me.

It was a secret it seems because he deliberately blocked me from reading his thoughts. I nodded anyway and went back inside his bedroom.

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Serena

Aero said to dress up so I did, going straight to my closet and rummaged its contents. Expecting a fight soon, I figured I needed to wear appropriate clothing. Luckily, I was able to find one in my wardrobe: a three-toned, gray, black, and red, leather-like coat-dress that looked nothing formal or fancy.

It had a pirate-ty vibe to it with the big buttons and wide waist strap, but it certainly wasn't meant to be worn by a sword-swinging buccaneer. It was more similar to the suits in Assassin's Creed, only that it was a female version of it. I paired it with black leggings and wore knee-length boots to finalize my outfit. I may not know if this was what the other she-wolves wear in their human form during a fight, but I was pretty sure this was totally the best ensemble to kick that bitch Sofia's butt.

Rhea, after Aero ordered a servant to summon her, helped me prepare. She was very worried about what was happening in the kingdom and I could also pick up the concern in her eyes for me. Confident of my plan, I reassured her that everything would end up...well, less bloody. She gave me a big sisterly hug and wished me safety before I left her.

When I went back to my husband's chamber, Aero was already standing in his receiving room's balcony. It seemed we had the same idea in mind because he wore a battle suit of the same leather-like material, paired it with black gloves that would have been a BDSM tool under different circumstances, a heavy-looking dark blue coat, and a pair of black combat boots. His overall aura made him look deliciously dangerous, for me at least.

He lifted his hand palm up and invited me to take it.

I did and before I knew it, we were in the Salviste Lake, under the gloomy morning sky.

Aero took me to the spot where we used to stay when we were but forming our innocent friendship in the past. He motioned for me to sit on one of the big roots jutting out from the ground near the tree trunk while he stood in front of me, spearing me with his deep gaze.

"Wait here," he said just as he took his coat off and tossed it onto another jutting root nearby.

I lifted a confused brow at him while he turned around and strode to the shoreline. To my surprise, he didn't stop there. He moved forward until the lower half of his body was covered in the glowing water.

"Aero!" I cried out whilst standing up, unable to understand his actions.

He didn't reply. He just continued with whatever he had in mind and dove into the water.

'Wait here,' he said earlier and like an obedient mate, I did, but I counted down the seconds—all seventy seconds of it—until he resurfaced and dragged his wet form into the land.

The first thing I noticed when he was partly out of the water was the piece of flat wood he held on his right hand. It was three rulers long and two rulers wide. I furrowed my brows in additional confusion, but as I stared at it more and as he moved closer to me and lifted it up, it became clear what it was.

"The painting!" I gasped, my eyes turning to saucers. I couldn't believe I was looking at the mirror image of that painting I bought on Earth, the one where it transported me to Phanteon, in Aero's bed to be exact.

It looked the same: from the mixture of colors, the vividness of the mountains, trees, and castle, down to the complexity of the brush strokes. The fact that he hauled it from the depths of the lake and it still remained unspoiled blew my mind. There must have been some magic imbued in it for it to be immune to the elements.

Dripping wet, my husband flashed a coy smile at me and confessed, "I made this myself. This was supposed to be my gift to you that day, but when it became clear you weren't going to show up, I decided to throw this painting into the lake."

"Oh Aero..." I cried out, suddenly feeling teary-eyed again.

I stepped closer to him, touched the painting first giving it idle strokes, then directed my attention on my husband's handsome profile, and palmed his cheek.

"I would have cherished this with all my heart," I said, slightly sobbing.

He cupped my hand and pressed his face more against my palm, relishing the warmth it had emitted.

"Honestly, I had Lord Mage Aizen put a spell on this, a spell that would allow you to leave that damn tower with just a touch of the painting and be in my arms. I would have confessed my feelings to you that day. This painting would have allowed us to be together always."

"And create a whirlwind forbidden romance between a werewolf prince and a priestess in training?" I added, giving him an understanding smile, "That would have been one hell of a story."

"I was desperate for your love, Serena," he fired back making my heart do somersaults as a result. Who could have expected a cold prince who basically expressed hatred with the female race would fall helplessly in love with one in the end.

"I hadn't known love until you came," he went on, putting the painting down just as he half knelt in front of me. I was partly worried for him since he was still drenched and all, but at the same time, I didn't want to interrupt his confession.

"Women for me were evil creatures. My mother never once spared me any attention or love. She was too preoccupied with her self, her greed, and lust. When she did spare me some attention, it was to force me into her fetish. I was six when she started locking me up in a room where her handmaidens would fuck in front of me. They'd give me an orgy show. Since I was royalty, of course, they couldn't touch me, but they waited until I would cave in. They waited until I would join in with their salacious games. Hell, I never did. They saw me as an innocent boy, but they were wrong. Their actions only sparked a hatred within me. Their wicked laughter, their repulsive moans, and disgusting bodies fueled my anger. I thought I would never see a woman past all those evil images in my head, but then, I met you...and you brought me into the light. Maybe, that early in our relationship, I had sensed you to be my true mate. I just didn't want to admit it yet."

I felt a lump in my throat whilst hearing his words. I wasn't there when he was mentally abused, but I sure felt his pain and suffering now. It was raw and real and understandable. Those bitches, her mother included, deserved to go to hell. I hope they did. Damn them for hurting my mate.

Aero traced the frame of the painting and stopped when his fingers reached the middle bottom part. A clicking sound was heard and then he opened a small hidden compartment.

To my surprise, he pulled out a ring with a platinum-looking band and a diamond-encrusted middle and held it out in front of me.

"I...uh...went to Earth to buy this for you back then. I didn't want to give you just a painting. I wanted something to encompass my devotion to you, so...here it is."

The Alpha King of Phanteon who showed me his rude, icy attitude in the past, now looked sheepish and unsure. Huh, what a milestone indeed.

Trying to contain my giddy self, I lifted my right hand up and stretched my fingers. "I'll gladly accept your gift this time Aero."

The expression on his face thereafter was priceless. Like a boy who was allowed his first car drive, he flashed me the biggest, heart-stopping smile. He took my hand and inserted the precious ring on my finger all in just three seconds.

Our mouths crashed quickly. Our hands cupped each other's faces. He pressed me against the massive trunk all the while arranging me so that my legs would spread for him. As expected, his unmistakable bulge caught my attention then.

"My wife, my queen, my luna, my everything..." he enumerated between kisses. "My forever. I love you."

I didn't mind him acting so cheesy now. It was worth hearing such words especially when we were about to head to battle.

"Aero, my husband, my king, my Alpha, my eternity..." I replied, taking in all of his amazing, hypnotic scent. "I love you too."

Then I felt his cock move, trying to fight his pants for freedom. I chuckled.

"I'm unsure whether to cringe or laugh at this distraction, but we really should address this concern of yours before we kick some ass," I told him with a cheeky grin.

He moved his hips upward in reply and gave me a smirk. "I always wanted to take you under this blasted tree. Do I have your permission to fulfill that long-craved fantasy now, my queen?"

"Of course," I slurred and tipped my head up so that he could access my mate mark. I badly wanted him to lick me there again.

He read my mind and so without delay, he lapped the crook of my neck with abandon. His tongue...oh, it really gave me divine chills when it contacted the edges of my mate mark.

I closed my eyes and began chanting hallelujah in my head due to the wonderful sensations he was giving me.

My hands, deciding to be useful, worked to unzip his pants—meeting a bit of resistance because of the thick material—but nevertheless, got to free his erection successfully.

While that was happening, he ungloved his right hand and thereafter became busy with accessing my sex, with difficulty might I add. As the Alpha King, there was no way in hell he was going to be denied entry by a piece of clothing, so he took the shortcut. The ripping sound of success told me he had found a way nearest my folds.

"Goodness, yes," I moaned when he inserted his fingers directly to my channel; my underwear shoved to the side for easier access.

He released a delighted groan when three of his fingers were immediately saturated with my juices. "You're so ready," he murmured on my ear.

"Yes, I am," I whimpered.

He poised his erection at my entrance, the blunt tip hitting my quivering folds, then staring deeply into each other's soul, he pierced me deeply.

"Oh! Ohhh..." I mewled at the fullness of the contact.

I grabbed both of his shoulders, seeing them as good support when he pulled his cock out and rammed it back in.

"Aero...yes!" I exclaimed in a ragged voice.

His warm breath met mine before I knew he was once again claiming my mouth. In a flurry of passion, we shared another fiery French-kissing.

He continued to pump up, elevating me to new heights with each insertion. I rocked my hips too, tossed my head, and arched my back when the feeling became too much.

Undergoing the same thing, I saw his jaw tense. His grip on my waist tightened, probably reddening my skin there. His thrusts became harder, his balls hitting my inner skin faster.

"I'm almost there, Aero! Oh, yes..I'm going to cu...ahhh!"

I took a sharp breath when rapture hit me; my clit throbbing like crazy and my inner walls shaking like a fucking 9.0 earthquake. Aero followed me no less than a second and got his own powerful release. I felt his seed filling me fully; my uterus accepting them with a hundred percent enthusiasm.

Partly dizzy, I planted a kiss on his jaw. He kissed me back but on my forehead.

"Fucking exactly what I envisioned in my boyish fantasy," he announced.

"Glad I fulfilled that wish," I chuckled lightly.

"Ohhhh...damnn..." we both mumbled when he pulled his semi-solid cock out.

I bit my bottom lip and stared at it with longing when he housed it back under his pants.

"You'll see it again later," he teasingly stated, "Are you ready for another surprise now, my queen?"

"What? There's more?" my eyelids fluttered.

"Of course," he answered and grabbed my wrist. "Come. I'm sure you'd love to meet them."

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Аего

Chris, who I specifically gave an important mission, waited in the camp set up near the Ehnrelil border. Once Serena and I exited the hidden lake, I mind-linked him, instructing to welcome us in the forest edge bringing along a certain bundle of joy. My third surprise.

That said bundle of joy was already leaping when it saw my wife.

"Sprint!" she cried out when her long lost pet hopped out of my Omega's arms and ran towards her.

Serena had the brightest smile when it leaped onto her chest. She hugged it tight and petted the top of its head all the while awarding me a grateful look.

I showed her a pleased smile whilst hiding my guilt when I remembered how I tossed the damn creature from the footbridge when I was in Ehnrelil and got it trapped in some random realm using my teleportation ability.

If I knew then that the owner was with me all this time, I wouldn't have done so, but lucky me it was trapped in Palmeeya, in my own realm, so Chris didn't have a hard time retrieving it.

"Thank you Aero!" she stated just as she approached me and planted a chaste kiss on my lips.

"All for you, Serena," I told her, my happiness swelling in my chest. I thought of my fourth surprise—meeting her father and aunt—and felt pretty much sure she was going to be more teary-eyed.

While she and Sprint reacquainted, I signaled Chris to return to the camp and have General Halcynos and now Alpha Margaret prepare. They were waiting in one of the big tents, in the makeshift war room to be exact.

"Let's go?" I asked, turning back to look at Serena. This time, a number of bugs had already surrounded her, making her look exactly like an ethereal fae rather than a luna. This doesn't concern me. In fact, I already accepted her living a double life just as she accepted me in my most stingy attitude.

Yes, as her mate, I couldn't wait to see her transform into her wolf form, but at the same time, I was contended for now. I wasn't in a hurry. Forever was on our side. She could undergo the transformation process anytime, anywhere she likes as soon as this idiotic war ends, or maybe, she could transform while kicking fae assess.

"You're very secretive, Aero, you're making me feel nervous," she told me.

A faint smile ghosted my lips.

"Hmm, my queen? Nervous?"

She jabbed my ribs in response thus eliciting a sharp 'oof' from me.

"Seriously, who do you mean when you said I'd love to meet the—"

She abruptly stopped both from walking and talking and directed her complete attention on the campsite not far ahead. I watched silently as tears started streaming down her cheeks. I wanted to hold her right then and there, but at the same time, I was aware it wasn't me she wanted to embrace at the moment.

"Aero..." she gazed at me with her very wet eyes and sobbed. "My father... I could feel him inside one of those tents."

"Go on, find him," I urged without letting her know the general's exact location.

She bobbed her head up and down and then ran towards the campsite. Sprint followed her while the bugs flew not far behind.

I watched as she honed in the makeshift war room—its tent a mixture of blue and gold colors—and without hesitation, went inside.

It would have been great to witness their family reunion; however, I decided to give them some privacy. When I reached the entrance of the tent, I paused, crossed my arms over my chest, and waited until my wife's heartbeat normalized...

Serena

All those times I was bullied. All those times the High Elders told me I was a freak of nature, I always asked why, why would they say such a thing, why would they mentally hurt me and ostracize me. It sure made me sad, but that didn't break my will. It never dawned on me to question my true identity. I was satisfied with who or whatever I was.

My mother never told me I was half-wolf, but she did give me hints, hints that my little brain that time couldn't quite process yet. I couldn't blame her. Being in the fae realm and getting surrounded by twisted High Fae Elders, she had a good reason why she had to keep the truth away from me.

Maybe my wolf sensed this too, cooperated with my mother, and decided to stay dormant or...it was just waiting for me to fully acknowledge it.

And now that I have, a newfound connection brought me in tears.

Aero and I were walking towards the campsite when I felt it—a very strong bond that was at par with my mate bond. I could describe it as soothing, gentle...almost maternal-like but I knew it came not from my mother.

"Aero, my father...I could feel him inside one of those tents," I told him, my tears now unstoppable.

He urged me forward and so I did, using that fatherly bond in my quest to find him. In one of the big tents past the small ones, I noticed a pulsating heat inside. It was beckoning me to come, attracting me with its tender warmth.

My heart leaped and I cried again.

Swiftly, I went inside the tent and from there, I saw General Halcynos stand near a wide table. He was wearing his battle armor—a representation of strength and destruction, but I saw past that. I saw safety and protection. I saw my long-lost father.

Our eyes met; the gentleness in his got me sobbing some more.

"Father!" I cried out whilst running to him like a lost puppy.

His arms spread wide, willing to take me in for a tight embrace.

"Serena, child..." he patted my head and kissed my forehead, "I have always dreamed for this day to come."

All my hidden frustrations, all my pent up fears and anxiety, I poured it all while we embraced. Memories of my childhood—of asking myself why I didn't have a father figure, of wishing to have one someday, of pushing myself to be strong for

my mother, and of wondering whether she was also pushing herself to be strong for me—everything, they flowed together with my tears.

God, I wasn't this much of a crier...but maybe today, I would have to consider it as an exemption.

"You never told me it was you all along," I croaked, still relishing his embrace. The platinum armor he wore was cold, yes, but I didn't mind. Our bond was warm enough to soothe all my pains away.

"I'm sorry," he stated, leaning forward to press his cheek against the crown of my head.

"I'm going to kill Aero for keeping this secret from me," I half-sobbed, half-grumbled.

"Sweety, he found out the truth just last night. Spare him your wrath," he advised and I picked up the loyalty in his voice towards his Alpha King.

"Right..." I chewed, "Okay, I'll accept that."

"What's this?" Suddenly, a woman's voice filled the tent, "You're having a reunion without me?"

Withdrawing from my father's embrace, I glanced towards an opening to another area of the tent and saw Margaret flashing a relieved smile. I knew right then and there we were related.

"Auntie!" I cried out.

She crossed the room and joined us in another heartwarming embrace.

"At last, I didn't have to act anymore," she stated just as she cupped my face.
"Your father here was adamant to keep this a secret until the right time comes. I guess this is the right time."

I chuckled when she winked at me.

"The best time Margaret especially when we are headed to war with Ehnrelil," my father chimed in, his gentle expression gone and now replaced with a full mask of stern commitment.

"Sweety, we will have to catch up some other time," he told me.

I nodded at him, understanding what he meant. There was so much I wanted to tell him, but with us sharing a familial bond, I bet he already read my thoughts about what became of my mother.

Wiping my tears dry, I kissed my father on the cheek and gave one to Aunt Margaret too. "I think I'll need to go out. I'm feeling my husband's temper rising," I said, suddenly concerned. I was aware he was standing in front of the tent's opening, staying patient and calm, until just a minute ago when his alertness increased.

"Aero," I called as soon as I opened the flaps.

His back was to me, as ramrod straight as it usually was, but I sensed the tension in his shoulders.

"Hey," I neared him, looking directly at his tight jawline.

"Stay with me, Serena. We just got an unwelcomed guest," he stated grimly, tossing an arm on my way in an attempt to barricade me.

I was supposed to share his wariness, supposed to dislike the said guest's appearance, but I didn't. Instead, I was happy to see Lord Hale stand some meters away from us, alone but no doubt here to answer my call.

Before I could explain, a spark of yellowish light appeared just a stone's throw away from our right and once that light disappeared, Lady Yllana and two other Elemental Witches together with Rhea revealed themselves.

"Rhea!" I shouted, smiling at her. She gave me a wave before gesturing the witches to approach me.

I heard Aero grumble before asking my attention with a confused eye.

"Don't worry, I invited Lord Hale and Lady Yllana here," I explained. "I asked Rhea to do it earlier."

"Serena, we are a proud, strong race. We don't need help from the other realms."

I nodded at him and cupped his face. "I know, but they deserved to avenge their dead comrades, Aero. Grant them at least that."

Releasing a long sigh, his hard expression eased a little. "Alright, for you, I will grant that, but I want that bat out of our kingdom once this is all over."

I gifted him with a short but meaningful kiss on the lips. "Thank you," I said, then faced my guests as they neared us.

"Lord Hale, Lady Yllana, Lady Shea and Lady Rosella," I enumerated, looking at them in the eye one by one, "thank you for answering my call."

"Queen Serena," Lady Yllana tipped her chin down towards me, "we should be the one thanking you for inviting us in this grand occasion."

"It's about time somebody pays for causing trouble on the realms," Lord Hale expressed.

From my periphery, I noticed Aero's brow arch. "Oh really?" he said, directing his attention to the vampire lord. "You might as well spit out the truth, Hale. What personal benefits do you get from joining in this war?"

I squeezed Aero's hand and gave him a pointed look. 'Be nice,' I mind-linked him.

"I'm not an insensitive vampire master, Your Majesty. I care for my subjects too," was Lord Hale's answer. "Plus, I want to support your queen."

Aero answered him with a steady glare.

"Okay, let's get inside the tent please," I exclaimed, trying to ease the awkwardness of the moment.

Hand in hand, Aero and I entered the makeshift war room while the others followed. Inside, I was greeted with my father's pleased nod and the rest of the Alphas lowered heads.

Lord Hale chose to stand on my right, near Elijah while Lady Yllana and her fellow witches picked the spot at Aero's left beside my father.

As the Alpha King and Luna, we stood at the head part of the table which by now had a spread of maps of the Baltic Meadows and surprisingly, the inside of Ehnrelil.

I squeezed Aero's hand, hinting him it was his turn to speak, but he squeezed back, throwing me a slow smile.

"You lead my army, my queen. Guide us in this battle that promises a less bloody outcome."

With my fired up determination, I nodded at him and faced Viacronis, Agotta, and Phanteon's finest.

"Alright, this is how we bring down the King of Ehnrelil."

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Serena

Stories of an Elemental Witch's prowess had reached my years while I was still training to become a priestess. I had never seen one up close nor had I actually witnessed their powers. Good thing, today, I was going to finally see it and even experience it first-hand.

There was no limit to what Lady Yllana could see when her hands touch an object both living, dead, or otherwise. Knowing this, I had Lord Hale bring an object that belonged to my beast friend Sofia and he produced a brassiere, no surprise in that, but still, I tossed him an incredulous look.

"Really, of all the things you could have brought, you chose this?" I complained whilst holding the garment up high for Aero and Lady Yllana, my father, and Elijah to see.

Lord Hale just gave me a shrug. "Aside from her underwear, Your Highness, she keeps on leaving that in my room, so I chose what was convenient."

I rolled my eyes heavenward and released a sigh of surrender.

"Alright, whatever, as long as it really belonged to Sofia, otherwise, our plan won't work."

I handed it to Lady Yllana who was already sitting on a stool and she took it.

"You may lie down now, Your Highness," she instructed, pointing to the leather chaise lounge near her.

I obliged, snatching a look at my husband before I fully spread my back on the furniture.

Aero underwent this kind of insertion spell back when he wanted the truth out about the witch murders. It was taxing as per his words, but I was ready for it. My plan would only work if I could witness first-hand what Sofia and Geraden did to King Alduin. It was my trump card against the lies he had spun all these centuries. It was my ticket to helping Queen Adna realize she had a traitor beside her.

Lady Yllana gestured for me to close my eyes and I did. I felt her wrinkly but warm hand on my forehead thereafter, followed by her chanting of some witch spell. The next thing I knew, I was in Ehnrelil, in the royal garden to be specific. I was see-through, almost like a ghost. I instantly felt like a spy.

I heard male voices first, two of them and they were arguing. With my brows furrowed, I followed the noise until it led me to a modestly sized pavilion covered in snow-green vines. Aware that I was only watching a memory of the past, I confidently walked inside and quickly found the first king of Ehnrelil, King Alduin, and his twisted brother, High Elder Geraden.

'Geraden, stop. I forbid you to do anything to Lady Cyrena. Let her be. She is happy now. Let her be free,' King Alduin announced just as he grabbed Geraden's elbow to stop him from exiting the edifice.

The latter looked at his brother with displeasure.

'No, I can't allow that wolf to take her away from me!' I heard Geraden say and silently, I cringed. 'They don't belong to each other. She's fae! She can't possibly mate with a beast!'

'Beta Halcynos is no beast, brother. He is one of the good men I know. I'm confident he can take care of her and make her happy.'

'Cyrena is our High Priestess! She can't be with a man in the first place! Why do you allow this kind of relationship? This is blasphemous!'

Blasphemous my ass, I thought out loud. The rule of being chaste and unmated when being priestess was only created by hypocritical elders who made sure she couldn't be ruled over by a man. My mother knew that. I knew that. No one, not even the king or gueen could hinder us, priestesses, from finding our true mate.

'I allow it because I know it is the right thing to do,' King Alduin stated confidently. 'You can't go against whom the Universe has bound, Geraden. Accept defeat for now. I'm sure you'll find your destined mate soon.'

'Accept? Huh!' I watched as Geraden shook his head and scoffed.

Then, his eyes flitted past the King and into a distortion in space. A hand, much like a teenager's, materialized bringing with it a long bejeweled sword which I was quite familiar with. A body followed, then a face and just as I expected, it was from a younger version of my beast friend.

Her eyes were glazed over. I couldn't find any emotion in them as swiftly she plunged the sword straight to King Alduin's back, exactly where the heart lay. As soon as I saw this, I reacted with a shout and a quick block of my hand actually momentarily forgetting I was just a ghost from the future. Not surprising, the tip of the sword just passed through my palm.

'Accept 'this', brother,' Geraden stated just as King Alduin staggered to the floor; his hands nursing the penetrating wound that housed a long tip of the sword. Blood oozed profusely from it and it consequently dirtied his Legolas-inspired golden-brown hair.

'Ge—raden...?' he rasped whilst looking up at his brother.

Despite lacking a body, I felt my eyes water as I saw the terrible scene.

'You're not fit to rule, brother,' Geraden grinned wickedly. He went behind King Alduin and without hesitation, took Sofia's sword from the king's chest and poised it directly at his nape. 'You're too lenient. You're too kind!'

Smirking, he pierced King Alduin's neck in one thrust, spilling more blood onto his kingly garb.

'It would be better if you're gone,' Geraden continued. From the sidelines, Sofia watched with no hint of remorse or concern for her king. Damn her.

'Gera—den, no...' King Alduin managed to say in a weak voice. From what I could gather, he tried to summon his magic to save his life, but with the enchanted sword still lodged in his throat and with Sofia chanting a nullifying spell, he was overpowered.

'Once I control Adna, I'll become king, and you know what would be my first order?' Geraden moved closer to his brother, directed his mouth close to his ear and said, "I'll make sure those werewolves and lycans become extinct.'

Upon hearing it, my anger reignited. I clenched my hands and gave Geraden's snickering profile the sharpest glare I could make. Damn him to hell. Damn him to hell!

He'll pay, I told myself. He'll pay greatly for his sins!

The scene before me blurred not because of the wetness of my eyes but because my time has reached its limit. It was enough a memory for me to use though. It was the exact scene I wanted to show to the people of Ehnrelil and to Queen Adna. Surely, this was proof enough for her.

As my ghostly body disappeared in the pavilion, I could feel Lady Yllana's spell on me transitioning to reality, but instead of me returning to the tent with Aero, I found myself materializing in the least place I expected.

"Fuck, how did I get here?" I asked myself whilst gazing at a cavernous geode-like cave.

This place was totally familiar. Why? Because this cave was exactly where I placed the fae army in eternal sleep and in front of me, oh yes, six feet below were the said army. They lined up like Terracotta figures in a tomb in China; all four hundred fifty thousand of them, complete in their selected weapons and their forest green and metallic red armor and helm. I almost forgot about their grandeur and their potential to cause chaos in a realm.

For the first time in a long time, I was glad they were under my spell.

"Hello Priestess," Out-of-the-blue, I heard someone say. But of course, it wasn't just someone. I turned around to find the ever-wise guardian of Ehnrelil sitting on one of the flat rocks.

"Nevannir," I muttered; my voice cool but cautious.

"It's been a long time. I'm happy to see you again," he stated just as he stood up and neared me.

"You changed your hair, I see," I pointed out the obvious. It sure looked like King Alduin's hair color and hairstyle.

"I'm preparing for a future grand occasion," he flashed his pearly whites.

He stood close to me but feeling uncomfortable, I moved a step back.

"Are you the one who brought me here?" I asked quickly, remembering just how much he possessed unique powers that were beyond allowable as a guardian.

He tossed a small smile on my way before replying, "Only in spirit, Priestess Serena. Your body is still in the tent with Lady Yllana and the others who are clueless."

Upon hearing it, I was stupefied for a moment. If he said 'in spirit', then it meant he interjected himself during Lady Yllana's insertion spell and pulled me out without her knowing?! Did Nevannir actually have that kind of ability? I asked myself, but then again, I recalled, my intel about him had always been limited from the start.

I checked my hands, my arms, and legs, and true to his word, I was still see-through.

"Honestly, I was having a difficult time planning on how to bring you here when you are so well-guarded by King Aero. When I sensed your soul outside of your body, that's when I realized I had to take advantage," he continued.

"Why did you bring me here?" I asked, knotting my brows. "Don't tell me you're under Geraden's order? I thought you hated the man?"

"Affirmative," he nodded. "I still hate him, Priestess, but I saw him as a means to an end too. A pawn shall I say."

"Pawn?" I parroted and that's when all red flags in my head stood up. "Don't tell me you've gone roque too."

"What I can I say? I was inspired by you," he cracked a grin.

"Guardians are supposed to be loyal to their kingdom and to the people who rule it," I reminded him, clenching my hands.

"Not when the king and gueen are unfit to rule," he corrected.

He was definitely referring to Queen Adna and Geraden.

"I want a glorious fae kingdom, Priestess," he announced, facing the fae army and tossing his hands up in the air, "And I want you to become its queen." He lowered his arms and this time, faced me with a proud grin, "With me as king of course."

I recoiled inside. Ah, fuck. Now, I got myself an obsessed fan.

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Serena

"You're biting off more than you can chew, Nevannir," I hurriedly said. "I've always thought of you as an intelligent man. I never expected you to be delusional too."

"I'm a visionary, Priestess Serena, and my visions see you by my side as my queen," he finalized.

"Return me to my body, now," I ordered, my ears done with hearing his delusions.

He tsked and shook his head slowly, "I'm afraid I can't."

His eyes became hooded, finally showing the darkness in his soul. Instant chills crept up my nape. I expected him to be righteous, but it seemed his definition of righteousness differed from the normal. Fuck.

"You will have to stay here until King Aero butchers Geraden, Queen Adna, and the rest of the High Elders," he went on. "He'll do the dirty work for me."

I hauled in a deep, confident breath.

"Yes, he would kill them, make no mistake in that," I said sharply, "but he'll also figure out I'm trapped in this plane. He'll come to rescue me and your pathetic little charade will be over."

He scoffed in response.

"I wouldn't be too confident, Serena. To address your mate bond with that wolf, I already created a plan. The fae army will slaughter him and all of Phanteon. Once he's dead, you will be free and I can undoubtedly possess you."

This time, my anger really did spike up.

"Hmf, you're not only delusional but psychotic too," I lashed, my knuckles turning white. First, Geraden. Second, Sofia. Now, him. Great.

"Release the fae army from their eternal sleep, Priestess," he stated, pointing to the live statues spread as much as my eyes could see.

I sneered at him. "You honestly think I'll do that?"

"Hm-hmmm," the sudden sing-song sound he produced caused my brow to arch. "I figured you'd say such," he continued, smiling, just as he pulled out something under his clothing.

"Remember this?" He lifted the object in the air for me to see. My eyes immediately rounded.

"My bracelet!" I exclaimed. At the back of my head, I recalled how I left that said jewelry in my bedroom the evening of the masquerade ball and actually never got to wear it again. It had slipped my mind and now I understood why.

"Since your memory has returned, of course, you know what this is for," he stated and I knew it to be true. I remembered how the High Elders used that God-forsaken jewelry to force out the truth from their subjects, exactly like Wonder Woman's lasso of truth.

"However, King Aero doesn't know that I tweaked this bracelet a bit," he confessed.

I narrowed my eyes at him. What a fucking sly pest.

"When King Aero talked about you and when he showed me the filliyaens, I quickly deduced the facts. There was no question you were Ehnrelil's lost rogue priestess. Your quardian spirits never make a mistake."

Effortlessly, he plucked one gem out of the bracelet. If my memory serves me well, those gems were supposed to be a beautiful sapphire blue, now it had turned to a blood red.

"These gems contain some of your life energy and blood, Serena," he explained, granting me the answer right away. "While you wore them, it was able to harvest enough," he grinned and turned to face the sleeping figures below. "Enough to release this army from your spell."

"Oh really?" I haughtily laughed. "You forget, only a priestess can do the incantation," I reminded.

"Of course," he then clucked his tongue, "I'm highly aware of that. That's why Athyllane is here to do it for you."

The mere mention of her name heated my belly and boiled my blood. Nevannir tipped his head to the side and looked past me.

On instinct, I turned around and stepped backward.

My beast friend and I exchanged gazes. She gave me a wicked smile as she waltzed her way to Nevannir, brushing my ghostly shoulder. She wore a skin-tight maroon jumpsuit in fae design, same-colored ankle boots, and a black trench-coat looking garment. Her hair was in a tight high ponytail and as I glared at it, my fingers itched to pull them out of her scalp.

"Bitch, I'm going to kill you..." I seethed, sending her my burning aura.

She puffed and rolled her eyes. "Oh please, spare me the threat, Serena. As you are right now, you are powerless and worthless."

"Wait until I get back to my body and then I'll make you squeal in pain," I lashed, curling my mouth into a hiss. I felt my wolf inside and it was snarling too, totally ready to redecorate this woman's skin like waffles.

To my...well, disgust, I watched as Nevannir and her lip-locked. Oh, figures. It was the most cliché, most predictable development I had ever encountered, but yeah, they suit each other perfectly. A bitch for a bastard, I should say.

After minutes of torture, they finally stopped. Nevannir gave her the gems and she brought them, palm up, in front of the motionless army.

If I could, I would have stopped her by now. I would have already kicked her ass and brought her down just so I could stop her from chanting the ancient incantation, but she was right, I was powerless in my form. I couldn't do anything but stare in fuming rage as she started spilling the resurrecting words.

An energy glow appeared from her hands first. It was yellowish, almost neon-like. Then, a shimmer of red-probably from my blood-enveloped her whole arm. It traveled down to her legs and into the crystallized ground. Unfortunately, it didn't stop there. It continued and doubled in size when it reached the first few statues of fae knights.

Once these red shimmers entered their nostrils, one by one their eyes opened.

I clenched my jaw and narrowed my eyes as minutes later the whole army woke up from their deep slumber. They looked initially lost, clueless, but then Nevannir stepped forward, lifted his hands up in the air, and captured their attention.

"Welcome back, proud knights of Ehnrelil!" he cried out.

Sofia cast me a haughty look, trying to slap her achievement on my face, but I lifted my chin up and sneered at her.

"I, Nevannir, guardian of Ehnrelil, stand before you to guide you. Centuries may have passed but you are as strong as ever. I can feel the concentrated energy flowing inside all of you. You have become even more invincible. Our king, King Alduin, still yearns for his death to be avenged."

At the mention of it, the knights started bobbing their heads. Nevannir surely knew the sins of Geraden, but I already anticipated he'd lie straight on the warrior's faces.

"Remember your hatred for the werewolf and lycan race!"

There. Fuck. Right on the dot.

"Remember the ultimate order of Queen Adna! Attack the Kingdom of Phanteon! A King for a King!" His voice, full of drama, boomed all over the cave.

The knights, sold by his theatrical performance, erupted in a thunderous battle cry.

My heart leaped at the awesome sight. Part of me was proud of the fae's military power, but another part of me also felt confident that my werewolf and lycan people could defend themselves. I was sure they would win.

I aimed for a less bloody outcome in this battle thinking that the fae army would still be sleeping, but since now they have awakened, I realized that would be close to impossible.

Unless of course, I escape in this spiritual cage Nevannir had placed me on, but how?

"Lead the army to their new king. I'm sure Geraden would be ecstatic to see this," he instructed to my beast friend.

She enthusiastically nodded. "Of course, he would." She cupped his chin, tiptoed, and planted a tongue-thrusting kiss on him. I almost gagged upon witnessing the sight.

"I'll see you later," she added thereafter with a suggestive smile.

Like what I learned in the past using ancient fae magic, she hovered above the warrior's heads and opened up a number of portals for them to cross.

While this was happening, Nevannir neared me and acted like he was about to caress my face. With a frown, I didn't move knowing he couldn't touch me. Being a temporary phantasm sure has its advantages.

"Does Bitch Sofia know you are two-timing?" I asked.

Nevannir simply shrugged his shoulders and said, "She thinks I'm merely toying with you."

"She's a dumb woman then," I spewed, my voice like poison. Directing my eyes again at the scene behind him, I saw the one mentioned disappear into the portal. I internally promised myself to hunt her down the moment I get out of this plane.

"Serena, you were like a little mouse in the past. So frail. So easily emotional. So easily bullied," Nevannir started, taking back my attention. "But you suddenly became confident, strong-willed, determined, and I like that about you. In good time, you'll see that we complement each other. We make for the best couple to become King and Queen of Ehnrelil."

"Even in your dreams, Nevannir, that wouldn't happen," I told him.

"Hmm, I don't dream, Precious. I'm a guardian remember?" he cracked another grin at me before turning around and stopping near a new portal he created. "Get cozy in this cave for the meantime."

"Where are you going? Let's chat some more!" I mocked.

"I'm afraid I can't miss the battle of the century, Serena. I must see it, but don't worry, I'll bring your body when I get back."

I hissed again. His threat hit a nerve, yes, but I was more than confident Aero wouldn't allow that to happen.

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Аего

"It is done," Lady Yllana announced and glanced at me. She tossed the brassiere on Hale's way like it had cum on it, but the vampire lord just gladly caught it mid-air and stuffed it back in his coat pocket.

When he showed the garment earlier to Serena, I caught a whiff of the murderer's scent. She was right to tell me this fae woman and the murderer-arsonist were the same. We shared the same anger and we shared the same desire to kill her, but I was pretty sure Serena wanted a one-on-one with this woman.

Returning my attention to the elder witch, she had already placed her hands on her lap and took a long, cleansing breath.

"When will she wake up, Lady Yllana?" I asked whilst sitting down on Serena's side. She looked peaceful, almost having a death-like sleep. If her carotid pulse wasn't visibly bounding then I would have thought her to be dead.

"Minutes from now, I reckon. Probably as fast as you. Queen Serena is your mate after all. Not to mention a hybrid," she answered matter-of-a-factly.

Tenderly, I brushed my wife's cheek.

"Then, I'll stay here until she wakes up."

Without peeling my eyes off of her, I turned my attention to Serena's father who was still standing near the threshold.

"General, escort our guests to the other room," I instructed, still feeling anxious with Hale's presence. I knew I had nothing to worry about when it came to Serena's attention. My anxiety was simply because Hale was my natural enemy. I still didn't think it was a wise idea to include him in this war, but I trusted and respected Serena's decision, so I allowed this in the end.

"Yes, Your Majesty," General Halcynos lowered his head. Hale and Lady Yllana followed him to the war room while Elijah tossed me a short nod before following their footsteps.

Now that I was alone with my wife, I caressed her face more leisurely. I waited for her to stir and waited for her eyes to open, however, ten minutes passed, and still, she showed no signs of waking.

I decided to connect with her telepathically, my wolf to her wolf, but I received no response. That's when I realized something was greatly wrong.

"Lady Yllana!" my voice quickly boomed. "Inside, now!"

Not a second long, she entered with Elijah behind her.

"Something is not right. She is still not waking up," I pointed out whilst holding her still-warm hand.

The witch's forehead wrinkled.

"Let me check her," she said and neared us. First, she touched Serena's head, then she checked her wrists. My eyes were glued to whatever the witch was doing, but then William's voice resounded in my head.

'Your Majesty! The walls of Ehnrelil are lowering!'

'Lowering?' I mind-linked back.

'Hundreds of thousands of fae army are visible, Your Majesty,' General Halcynos inserted, surprisingly already standing in the front line with Hale.

I smiled, the feeling of excitement and malice flooding inside me.

'Geraden, is he with them?' I asked.

'Yes, Your Majesty,' both of them replied.

'Good,' I nodded whilst my eyes fell on Elijah who was already looking at me with the same excited grin.

'Ready for battle,' I declared to them. 'Hold our lines until our queen wakes up. Leave Geraden to me.'

On impulse, my legs brought me up. Lady Yllana gave me a confident look.

"Queen Serena just needs a little more rest, Your Majesty. She'll wake up soon. In the meantime, I'll take care of her. Now, go," she assured.

God knows I didn't want to leave my wife under such circumstances, but I was also needed in battle. If I needed to leave Serena to someone with more than capable hands, then it would be with the most-trusted witch in Agotta, Lady Yllana.

I nodded and with a puffed up chest, I marched to the opening. Elijah was already way ahead of me, already shifting to his werewolf form and already joining the front line, obviously itching for some exercise.

I was just about to step outside the tent when suddenly I was blocked by a dark form. This unexpected visitor stood a couple of feet away from me, hovering and naturally bringing with him his favorite intimidating weapon: the scythe.

"This is a surprise, Your Highness, are you here to join the fun?" I asked, giving the King of Sattus a grin.

His head shook ever so slightly. "You know I can't take sides, King Aero. I'm neutral.' His voice still gave out a lulling echo. It was unnerving.

"Of course," I nodded, "So why are you here? You want to watch the battle in HD?"

"Hmm," a rumbling sound of affirmation was heard before his boots hit the grass and neared me, "Yes that, and I have a second reason why I'm here."

From the blade of his weapon, a string materialized, but it wasn't just a normal string. I had seen these many times in my random visits to Sattus. It was the string of life. All living things be it werewolves, faes, witches, humans, vampires—yes, even them—and many more have this kind of string, and only the King of Sattus has rule over them.

"I want to show you this," he stretched the lack-luster string so that it was taut in front of me.

I stared at it, initially lost until I realized whose fucking string it was.

"Damn it," I cursed, quickly retreating inside the tent.

'General Halcynos, my Alphas!' I mind-linked as I strode back to the inner tent. 'I'll be back. In the meantime, get busy,' I told them.

'Yes, Your Majesty,' all of them chorused.

"Lady Yllana," I called, finding her still holding Serena's hand.

"I don't understand," she cried out, confusion clear in her eyes, "She's still not waking and she's not responding to any of my spells, Your Majesty."

I approached them and directly picked up Serena from the chaise lounge.

"That is because her spirit is trapped elsewhere. Her body now is just a shell," I explained.

Her eyes flitted to the King of Sattus who nonchalantly entered the room. With his presence, she didn't need to ask me further.

"Right, I see..." she stated. "Then, let me accompany you."

"No," I replied, shaking my head. "Lady Yllana, I want you to do something for me. Would you be open to it?"

She didn't hesitate to answer, "Tell me and I'll make sure to deliver it."

Holding my sleeping wife close to me, the King of Sattus and I left the Baltic Meadows and transported to his shadow castle. Everywhere I look, I was reminded of just how gloomy this place was. The dull gray and black color just dominated the interior design of his castle. There was a little red here and a little brown there, but never white and green.

However, as he guided me to another room with an arched double door, I was taken aback. Silver and gold were all over the walls and flooring. It perfectly contrasted with the earlier room we just materialized in.

This particular room had an open roof that showed the eternal lightning bolts of Sattus and right overhead, a magical inlet of water caught my eye. The glowing liquid fell down like a waterfall towards a large pool. Its size almost consumed the space of the room.

The King of Sattus, still holding his beloved scythe, pointed to the glowing blue pool and said, "You want to save her right, then soak her there."

"I thought you are neutral," I cocked a brow. I was happy he was helping us, but still, this left me wondering why.

"Someone has violated my rules in the spirit realm using dark magic. I can't just idly stand by and watch," he simply answered.

I accepted this as a good answer. If I were in his shoes, I'd probably do the same thing.

"This water came from the River Enyd. This is the closest the living and the dead can make contact. Queen Serena may not be dead, but she's close to the real deal with her soul trapped in the spiritual plane."

I didn't bother to ask who did this to her and how. I ignored these details as the only thing that mattered to me in the present was her and getting her precious life back.

Entering the pool slowly, I found that the water was conveniently warm and soothing. Its glow reminded me of Salviste Lake. I didn't think they were connected, but their beauty and soothing effect sure were similar.

Just like the King of Sattus instructed, I submerged Serena in the water, but not satisfied, I decided to dive too. I found instantly I could breathe.

I embraced Serena and buried my face on the crook of her neck. As we both floated underwater, I reached out to her inner thoughts hoping that maybe she could hear me wherever she was.

'Serena, love, if you can hear me, come back to me,' I started, focusing on our powerful bond. I embraced her tightly as my anxiety started chewing my confidence. What if she couldn't come back? What if she's trapped forever in the spiritual plane? I'd be forever empty. No laughter or happiness would color my life. I'd forever stay in darkness, hatred, and anger where I truly belonged. I'd forever wallow in grief.

'I don't need to use any cheesy lines,' I continued, shoving the negative thoughts in my head. 'I know you know my love for you is endless. Just come back to me and we will crush all our enemies together. Afterward, you and I will make lots of babies. We are going to name them with exotic names like Snape and Shera, Quincy, and Zelda. You like that would you?'

Like a miracle, her body began to glow. I watched, astonished, as the first phase of her shift began to take shape. Her hands changed into claws, her limbs started to grow that beautiful white fur, her body brightened even more and this time, I quickly hugged her tighter and pressed my forehead against hers.

I decided I shift in time with her, so as the bright light enveloped us, my body transformed into my werewolf form. Black against white, a perfect contrast, and a perfect match.

Serena

The silence of the cave was deafening. It was mocking me as I failed again and again in trying to communicate with my husband. I tried everything I could think of. From telepathically calling him, focusing on my wrist mark and mate mark on the neck, to even looking for a way out of the cave.

Nevannir must have redesigned the whole crystal cave over the centuries that I was away. I was certain there was an opening on the north side of the cave, but now, I discovered it had turned into a wall.

Worthless, powerless... Sofia's words kept on harassing my conscience. Yes, I admit, it hit me real good, but I didn't let it pull me down. I was certain Aero would save me. I just needed to be patient. Needed to stay sane...

In one of my wanderings too, I happened to discover an inner room. It didn't take me long to realize Nevannir had made a home in this cave. The sprawled parchments, stacks of books, light pillars, and writing materials were all over the place. He had an overly decorated four-poster bed on one side and a study table on the other.

This study table I decided to check and true enough, my hunch was right. He had been researching dark magic and even practicing them. This was exactly the reason why he was able to trap me in this spiritual plane. Huh, what a sicko.

An idea suddenly formed in my head and with this, I hastened to flip the books and open the parchments in the hopes of finding an answer to my predicament. Minutes later, I was able to find one but it entailed the conjurer—namely Nevannir—to lift my spiritual cage.

Urgh. Figures.

Seeing as I had no other way out of this problem, I sank to the floor and decided to reevaluate my situation. I tried my luck again in communicating with my husband; really, really focused on our bond and used my fond memories with him to heighten up my call.

And this time, I suddenly felt like I was submerged in water. I stretched my fingers and noticed them actually dripping with the transparent liquid.

'Serena, love,' out of the blue, Aero's voice rang inside my head, 'if you can hear me, come back to me.' I quickly balled my eyes out. There was no better sound than to hear his voice inside my head.

'I don't need to use any cheesy lines,' he continued as spiritual tears fell down my cheeks. 'I know you know my love for you is endless. Just come back to me and we will crush all our enemies together.'

Oh, yes, I'd like that, I thought.

'Afterwards, you and I will make lots of babies.'

I half-laughed and half-sobbed.

'We are going to name them with exotic names like Snape and Shera, Quincy and Zelda. You like that would you?'

Oh hell no! My mind cried out just as I cringed at the thought of our little angels actually called with those names. He was joking right?! I was sure he was joking!

My spiritual body then glowed and right before I knew it, I was waking up underwater with Aero close to me, in our full wolf form. I was beautiful and he was handsome, and we, as wolves, were perfect together.

'Your speech is very enticing, Aero,' I mind-linked him. 'But ditch those names please.'

He chuckled at this. 'Of course,' he answered.

He caressed me with his snout and licked my mate mark with passion. 'Welcome back, my queen, care for a run?'

I hummed an affirmative. 'You lead, my king.'

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Serena

Running with Aero in my wolf form was the most exhilarating thing I had done in my life. Well, second really if I count our many, many bed actions together, but that was beside the point.

This was ever my first time shifting into my wolf. I had always wondered when I would transform into one and actually doing it in the spiritual realm and under the central point of the River Enyd was mind-blowing.

Now, Aero and I decided to take advantage of the situation. Side by side we ran towards the nearest portal going back to Phanteon. Apparently, his teleportation ability doesn't work normally in Sattus. Like many others, he had to go through portals to be able to enter and leave the realm.

With my spacial magic, I could have transported us back to the Baltic Meadows in a snap, but I honored my king's lead. Plus, there was no harm in wanting to steal a bit of fun, right?

Once we arrived in our destination, Aero paused for a moment, gazed at me, and mind-linked, 'Are you ready, Serena?'

'Yes, I am,' I answered, which in wolf form were grunts and growls.

His snout bobbed up and down in response to my answer before jumping into the portal. I followed a second later.

When I was back in Phanteon, I found that we were in a different part of the kingdom. We were practically at the top of a mountain range where there were

little vegetation and snow covered the soil. Aero was poised towards the east side, where the Baltic Meadows was located. He stretched his limbs, tipped his head, and howled beyond the limit of his lungs.

Smirking inside, I joined him, and together, we made the loudest, meaningful howl ever. This was to inform our people that we were back and with certain targets in our minds.

After the howl, Aero shifted back into his human form wearing the same clothing he wore earlier before Lady Yllana did her insertion spell. As to why he did so, I found the answer through our linked thoughts. It seemed his teleportation ability only worked in his human form. He didn't find this a disadvantage. In fact, this didn't bother him at all.

I shifted back too, although I would have wanted to stay longer as a wolf.

He chuckled whilst he stretched a hand to me, "Don't worry. You can always shift back whenever you want to. When this war ends, I'll teach you all there is to know about being a werewolf and a lycan."

"I'd like that, Aero," I told him, now in my human form and wearing the same kick-ass clothing as before.

We held hands and together our bodies vanished, reappearing in a raised rocky ground that overlooked the whole of the Meadows.

The picture of werewolves and faes clashing welcomed us. It was so far a bearable sight. There were some knights hurt and some werewolves wounded, but overall, the death toll was zero, and I wanted it to remain that way. As queen and priestess of Phanteon and Ehnrelil respectively, my duty was their safety. I couldn't stand by and allow their lives get wasted, especially when this was started just because of greed and hatred.

Aero looked at me and that look was enough a signal. Plan A, it said.

Silently and with burning eyes, I nodded.

I stepped forward. He stepped back. He allowed me enough room where I can focus whilst he provided protection for me.

Closing my eyes, I recollected the memory I witnessed in the past where Geraden took King Alduin's life. Like I was the projector of this motion picture, I looked up into the sky, raised my hands, and softly chanted my spell. Neon purple and green replaced the gloom of the clouds thereafter. It was the start of the show.

'This would be good,' I thought to myself.

I could smell Geraden and Queen Adna's scent somewhere in the Meadows, and definitely my beast friend too. They would all watch as the murder scene gets played in front of them. My aunt would finally know who took her mate's life.

However, my expectations were met with disappointment. I frowned when the sky continued to stay blank; no picture of Geraden or King Alduin at all. This unexpected complication, I quickly connected to Sofia.

It turned out I got myself an attention seeker. A wannabe.

She may have learned some few tricks as the next priestess of Ehnrelil but she could never contend with me.

I stopped my projection spell, allowing the sky to turn gloomy again. Turning around, I gave Aero a hard look as I said, "Don't stop me from beating this woman to a pulp."

He grinned and raised his hands up. "I wouldn't dream of it, Serena. Do whatever you want with her, but be careful."

I neared him and cupped his face.

"I will," I said. "You too. You're itching to find Nevannir, right?"

"I want to settle the score with him," he answered, his eyes changing to golden.

"And Geraden too?"

He scoffed. "Elijah and your father volunteered to teach him a lesson."

"Right," I chuckled, the thought of them partnering up filled me with happiness. "Geraden sure is lucky."

After exchanging nods and a quick peck on the lips, I vanished in front of him and materialized to where the sour odor of Sofia exuded. It was in the fields of Salviste Lake. Fuck. She really had to go and taint this beautiful place's memory.

Or, she was probably hiding here, making sure no lycan warrior could find her.

"So, you know a blocking spell, huh? Is it to block the Elemental Witches' spells against the fae army?" I asked whilst standing behind her sorry ass. I was sure this was her reason. It was just unlucky for me she also inadvertently blocked my projection spell.

I was mere inches away from her; so, so close to wrangling her neck from behind, but I opted not to. It wouldn't be fun that way.

The moment she heard my voice though, she turned around with a start and jumped away from me.

"You're alive!" she cried out whilst showing a confused look.

I arched a brow. "Of course, I am. What made you think I was dead?"

"How did you escape Nevannir's spiritual cage? You weren't supposed to be here!"

I rolled my eyes at her. "Oh please, Sofia, spare me that drama. Let's move on to business, shall we? Remember what I told you in the cave?"

The look on her face turned stony then. "Try if you can kill me. I am certainly more skilled than you." She pulled her favorite weapon—that same one she used to kill King Alduin and the witches—and glared at me.

I chuckled at her remark. "You're delusional like your boyfriend." I placed myself into a fighting stance, making sure just in case she suddenly attacks, I would be ready to counter it. "What did he promise you, huh? Queen Adna's crown?"

"And rule with him, yes," she continued.

I almost felt sorry for her for being such a dumb woman. Clearly, Nevannir was also using her as a pawn.

"I couldn't be my father's lackey forever. It is time I take on what's rightfully promised to me," she explained.

'Father?' My head immediately highlighted. Hell no... She actually admitted Geraden was her father?! No wonder she was obedient with his every whim.

"I'm afraid you'll only end up in disappointment, Sofia," I remarked.

"Really now?" she slowly laughed. "Try me."

With that, she vanished.

I honed in on her life energy and found that she was flying towards me.

Just in time, I blocked her death thrust with a weapon of my own: twin claymores that were freshly sharpened. In the many trainings the elders had made me undergo, I was able to master the use of short-range weapons. The twin claymores were always my first pick, summoning them on command with my creation spell.

I figured they needed to make their debut in this fight to the death with Sofia. They would pair best with her long, curved sword.

She appeared very close to my face with a proud snicker just before she sprinted away from me again.

"Good start. Now, it's my turn," I stated, leaping into her way without using my spacial magic. I didn't need to vanish. I was no copy-cat. I just needed to be quicker than her to be able to land a bone-crushing blow.

A hairsbreadth away, that was the distance of my blade to her neck before she could spring out of my reach.

"Retreating now are we?" I mocked just as I advanced my attack.

True, we were both quick on our feet and almost at the same speed, but I knew I was the better priestess between us. I was wiser. I was more experienced. I didn't harbor any hatred or greed. I was surrounded by many people who loved me. Plus, I had the upper-hand. An ace.

Moving forward and around the lake, our blades clashed in a dance of death. She was able to wound me with a slash on my left arm, but in return, I was able to thrust one of my blades through her left flank. Blood oozed from our broken skin but hers was faster.

Despite the deep wound, she groaned only briefly as she laughed at me then like a crazy hyena.

Charging forward, she aimed at my chest. I was able to deflect it with my double blades and pushed her backward, but suddenly, a sharp pain speared through to my right leg.

My eyes widened at the situation.

"My baby has a twin too, you know," she haughtily confessed.

'Fucking wannabe bitch!' My mind cried out.

I groaned hard as she pulled the blade off of my muscle, but this didn't distract me from her continued attack. Sprinting backward, I was able to escape another deadly blow from her blades.

"This is getting boring!" she cried out, suddenly pausing from her tracks and tossing her swords into the shoreline. "Let's take this fight up a notch, Serena."

Disc-shaped, yellowish energy started materializing behind her. It was more than twenty I reckon and it was all ready to hit me.

I would have loved to stay in close combat but if she liked an exchange of our powers too then I could oblige.

As if my leg wasn't badly hurt, I straightened up, released the twin blades on the ground, and summoned my own set of highly charged electrical shards. They were the color light blue, glowing in the palm of my hands and ready to strike.

These two powers were taught by the elders during my training and I was sure this was also taught to her. Surely, if my mother was alive, she would have hated seeing these abilities get used against a fellow priestess.

The grass swayed haphazardly in response to our energy. The lake, from placid, developed wild waves. These were concrete responses of the burgeoning energy around them.

"A taste of our own medicine, huh?!" I scoffed and thereafter flew towards her just as the disc-shaped energy torpedoed towards me.

I blocked them right on time with my electrical shards, but some still managed to hurt me.

"There is only one priestess in Ehnrelil, Serena, and that would be me!"

Vanishing from my site, she continued throwing me the energy discs in almost all directions.

Due to this, I couldn't find where she was exactly using my naked eye and her life energy, and this really was a disadvantage. Still, I knew I had the upper-hand.

"This is fun," I stated, suddenly appearing behind her. I heard her sharp gasp before I hugged her tight and injected the highest electrical current into all of her nerves.

"Ahhhh!" she cried out on top of her lungs and thereafter fell face flat onto the ground.

"H—ow?" she rasped, turning her face slightly to me. "H—ow could yo—u be so fa—st? Ho—w could you have fou—nd me so ea—sily?"

"I'm part-wolf, remember?" I answered, smiling. "I'm a hybrid. Plus, I have a good sense of smell. Your disgusting odor just couldn't be ignored."

Then, I shifted in front of her, showing my majestic, blood-thirsty wolf.

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Аего

As soon as Serena disappeared, I concentrated on finding Nevannir. He was the one man I wanted to crush at the moment. He was the true threat to my peaceful life with Serena. Geraden sure deserved my wrath too, but Elijah and General Halcynos could take care of him.

And speaking of which, as I raced back in my werewolf form to the tent where I left Lady Yllana, I saw both of them already fighting with him. Or, rather, it was

only the General since Elijah just stood a short distance away, probably allowing the old man the first strike.

General Halcynos was right to spar with Geraden. He held some personal grudges with this fae king in the form of Lady Cyrena. In my shared thoughts with my wife, I found that her mother had died purely of natural causes, but this wouldn't have escalated fast if she was allowed to live with her mate.

Geraden, judging from his angry look, had welcomed his opponent wholeheartedly. If anything, this fight they were about to enter into was the culmination of all those centuries of accumulated hatred and rage.

It would have been interesting to watch their match, but I had my own demon to confront too.

Heading straight inside the makeshift war room, I found that Lady Yllana's Elemental Witch companions had been knocked down. Both of them were conscious, good, but were nursing their laceration injuries with their healing spell.

"Your Majesty," Lady Shea, the Elemental Witch of Water, looked up and called my attention before I could advance into the inner room, "The guardian took her."

I knew already who she was talking about.

I clenched my hands and released a long sigh. "So predictable of him," I remarked. Sniffing his invisible trail, I immediately located where he hid. It was in a cave formation kilometers away from the Meadows, inside Ehnrelil in fact. Since now the border was left open, I would be able to poof directly into that location.

"Will you be fine here, ladies?" I asked before leaving them. They nodded in unison, quite taken aback that I actually showed kindness towards their gender.

Huh. Maybe the old me would have thought this impossible. I had come a long way and it was all possible because Serena was with me.

Once I left the tent, I hunted for Nevannir's scent again. It was easy despite the smell of blood permeating the surroundings. The Royal Fae Army still stood tall and strong and so were my people.

'General Halcynos, Elijah, my Alphas,' I mind-linked at them, 'Continue to stall time. Continue to fight. As much as possible only wound the faes, but if your life is threatened, then you know what to do.'

Serena was half-fae and she cared for that half despite the troubles it had given her. It was only right of me to stick to her plan and respect her goal of less death—zero even, except for these three persons we wanted to be erased in this realm.

After a second of honing on Nevannir's scent, I teleported. Inside the said cave, I shifted to my lycan form and switched on my camouflage ability. I was a monster covered in obsidian black fur while this crystal cave mostly exhibited a dark violet. Camouflaging into that shade was effortless to me.

"So, so beautiful," I heard someone say. It was faint and echoic but I could still delineate to whose voice it came from.

Nevannir.

Following the echo, I found myself inside a small cavern that was desperately renovated into a livable bed and study space. It was a pitiful sight.

"So perfect for me," Nevannir stated again.

A few meters away, I saw him inside his four-poster bed, sitting next to a seemingly sleeping body of Serena. He was caressing her face, his expression a picture of veneration. Not lust. Not love. Just pure adoration.

On a different day, I would have already attacked him in a jealous rage, but this right here was perfect. It was fun to watch, especially when he had no clue whatsoever of the situation in front of him.

"Priestess!" he called out to the wind, raising his head up, "Come out of your hiding place, I got a present for you."

I continued to observe him, relishing this show of stupidity.

"You'll surely love to reunite with your body again," he went on. His hands waved in the air and instantly, glittering dust appeared of different colors. It formed into one silvery-white long dress, quite the exact size for Serena. Nevannir formed a pleased smile and with a wave downward of his hands, the gown replaced Serena's combat ensemble.

Even if this Serena was a fake, I had to intervene. It was getting pathetic.

"How about I reunite your face with my claws, Nevannir?" I asked, shifting back into my human form and lifting my camouflage ability.

He jumped up from the bed and turned to me with a surprised face. "King Aero!"

Frantically, he created slender, pointed crystals around Serena's body; each one capable of stabbing her flesh.

Nevannir cracked a proud grin at me then.

"Harm me and you'll be kissing Serena's body goodbye. She'll be forever trapped in the spiritual realm. Wouldn't that be sweet?"

I gave him a bitter look. "Such a cowardly move, Nevannir, but I actually expected that from you," I said. "Inviting you into my castle, showing you the bugs, and allowing you to fool me with the bracelet was stupid of me, I know, but this time, I'm a hundred steps ahead of you. The moment I caught your smell in that woman's garment, I knew you were part of this fae mess."

"Hmf, what an amazing speech you have there, but that doesn't erase the fact that I hold your queen hostage," he fired back.

"Really now?" I cocked a brow and nonchalantly crossed my arms.

"Lady Yllana, if you may," I said, my attention directed to the presumed body of Serena.

On my signal, the fake Serena transformed into another person: the Elemental Witch. She appeared with some dramatic swirling smoke around her. It destroyed every pointed crystal in its path, ultimately freeing herself of the threat.

"Nevannir," she spoke as she floated above the mattress, "I have great respect for you, guardians, but you definitely hit an all-time low."

The one addressed frowned and staggered backward.

"How...how is this possible?" he muttered, severely shaking his head, "Serena? She's—"

"She's in the Baltic Meadows taking care of your woman," I finished, showing a triumphant grin.

He gazed at me, trying to process what I was saying, and by the time he did, he raised one hand up and vanished in our midst.

"Ughh..." I let out a disappointed groan, "We're playing cat and mouse, huh?"

Lady Yllana neared me, still floating, and asked, "You want help?"

"No," I shook my head, "I got it all covered, but I could use someone to give a message to the Council of Guardians."

"I'll be happy to relay it," she stated.

"Tell them that their Golden Boy had gone rogue," I said.

She dipped her head, "Of course," and disappeared thereafter.

Now alone, I decided to join Nevannir to where he went. Traces of his portal were still visible. It was either he intentionally did so or he was just careless this way, I couldn't decide. Either way, it didn't matter. I would still come out victorious in the end.

"Don't look too smug, Your Majesty," his voice echoed all around me once I entered his suspended world of black and emptiness. I couldn't see him anywhere. He was still hiding. Everywhere I look, I only saw drifting debris of what looked like torn pieces of scrolls and book pages. The ground was present, but it seemingly assimilated to the rest of the dark surroundings.

"This is just a minor set back for me," he added, sounding so sure.

I merely scoffed at his remark, finding it funny, but I didn't lower my guard. I circled around, checking every angle just in case he'd suddenly materialize close to me. This world of his had no specific direction and it was immune to the senses. I couldn't tell which was North, which was South. I couldn't pick up his scent nor could I specify where he was just by his aura.

Overall, it was a challenge and I was pumped up to know this.

"I knew you were delusional, Nevannir," I replied, my amber eyes shifting in every direction, "I just didn't think you'd be this dumb to actually act on it."

"The fae kingdom is desperate for a grand change," he answered from somewhere behind me, "And it is my calling to fulfill it!"

Spears as sharp as knives suddenly hit my back. It burrowed deep into my flesh making me groan, making my blood ooze, but despite this, the pain felt only minimal.

My lycan senses acted up, honing in on a distortion in space. I advanced towards that area just as another batch of spears appeared and targeted me.

"And dragging Serena is a part of it?!" I cried out loud whilst blocking and batting every spear with my bare arms.

The many contacts made some lacerations on my skin, but still, I thought little of it.

"Dragging Serena is the key to fulfilling my goal!" he answered, this time transferring to another area of his plane. I figured he was on my left, roughly ten meters away from me.

"That's where you made a mistake," I pointed out and punched his direction with enough force.

Seconds later, his body materialized, gaining air time for a moment before falling hard with his chest and chin first. Blood streamed down the corner of his mouth and his nose. He looked taken aback whilst gazing at me, but then he quickly composed himself, half knelt on the ground, and disappeared again.

"You will not be the one to stop me from taking my destiny, Your Highness," he expressed and then chuckled. "Or should I just call you, Aero? Like Geraden, you too don't deserve my respect."

Arrows, thousands of them, this time materialized and their sharp tips were aimed at every inch of me.

I stood my ground, not at all worried about this.

Nevannir chuckled again before all arrows flew in unison towards me.

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Aero

"I know you can't change into your beast form in this plane!" he added. "You are weak when in your human form!"

I smirked at this.

"And that's where you're wrong again, Nevannir. There's a reason why I'm called the Alpha King," I said, just as I shifted into my lycan form.

During my shift, some arrows melted due to the mere energy I had released. The remaining ones bent, broke and turned to dust as it contacted my lethal fur.

I honed in on Nevannir's presence again. Like a coward, he was still a safe distance away from me. Still invisible. I decided instead to give him a spook.

In just two strides, I was instantly in his front with my claws perfectly secured around his neck.

"Aeyaahh!" he actually cried like a banshee. His body, in response to the contact of my claws, lost its ability of invisibility.

Taken by surprise, he scratched my muscled arms, trying to free himself, but seeing as this wasn't enough, swords of different shapes and sizes materialized and skewered me.

Blood further oozed from my wounds. It added more pain all over my body. However, I felt perfectly within my full strength.

'You know what, Nevannir? I heal fast,' I confessed through telepathy. 'Surely, you know that right? Or was it that you have forgotten? Too preoccupied with your delusions of grandeur?'

I squeezed his neck tighter and he struggled to gain air into his lungs. His nose bled further, his eyes splurt out a pinkish fluid and his face generally turned red as he gave me a scathing look. "Also, you must know. I'm fucking immune to magic."

I released him just as I returned us to his chamber.

His body dropped hard on the floor. He coughed up blood and coughed again, and then wheezed, trying his best to oxygenate his lungs.

Now thirsty for more, I grabbed his golden hair to the root and kicked him down so that the rest of his body would be kissing the floor.

'I told you already I don't share what's mine. Serena is my mate and for threatening her life, you get my fangs,' I told him in his mind.

The red in his face drained and for the first time, I saw fear in his eyes. That smug expression of his was finally gone.

"Yo—u ca—n't kill m—e," he rasped, "I'm a guar—dian!"

Speaking of which, two guardians I know by name appeared in our midst.

Kerus and Farryl.

"Yes!" Nevannir quickly shouted, his face a picture of hope. "My fel—low guard—ians, take me a—way!" He grabbed his hair and tried to free himself, but I kept my grip tight. "Yes! Let—me be judg—ed by our co—uncil. Our law sta—tes that on—ly the council can pa—ss judgment on a guar—dian. Sure—ly the King of Phanteon has vio—lated this!"

He fucking had a point. Farryl experienced this once, when she was suspected to have killed the female vampire decades ago. She escaped the council's judgment when she proved herself innocent.

Nevannir here was a different story.

I growled at them, giving them a definite warning. They'd probably receive my wrath if they take my prisoner away.

"What do you think, Kerus?" Farryl turned to her companion and asked, acting mildly interested. "Should we uhm...stop King Aero?"

Kerus quickly gave her an arched brow.

"Are you crazy? I'm having fun watching Nevannir's pretty face get fucked up," he exclaimed.

"Yeah," Farryl sighed. "I'm pretty much enjoying this scene too."

"No... no!" My guardian fae complained and started thrashing under my grasp. "Our coun—cil will know that you have tur—ned your back on me! You will be pu—nished!"

Inside, I was considerably laughing at his desperation.

"Well...we could always say that the King of Sattus punished you for trying out dark magic," Farryl answered lazily.

Kerus chuckled at this and then vanished. Farryl followed not a second later, giving me a brief nod before disappearing.

'Done with your begging, Nevannir?' I asked him through our minds.

"No... no..." he started thrashing again and pulled at my fur. "You can't do this to me! You can't kill me!"

'Oh, I most certainly can,' I answered, showing him a murderous glare.

In one swift move, I bit his head off clean. I then tossed it across the floor and it bounced with a sickening wet sound when it hit the crystal ground. The rest of his body fell limply below me.

Even his blood wasn't worthy to touch my fangs, but there was something deeply satisfying in taking out his life through this.

Crouching down, I dug deep into his chest with my claw and pulled out his still-beating heart.

"Fucking fae," I blurted out just as I transformed back into my human form and squeezed the muscle until it burst out like a rotten tomato.

Quite a macabre sight, I know, but better him than me.

I certainly didn't want to leave my wife as a widow. I still had a mission to fulfill and that was to give her many pups.

Now that my fight was over, I focused on returning to the central action.

In the Baltic Meadows, I found Geraden and General Halcynos still fighting.

Both were already injured, but certainly, my general had the upper-hand.

Elijah was not standing anymore just watching them. He was preoccupied with fighting a number of fae soldiers alongside Hale. This sight here was certainly a change. Never in my life had I thought of a werewolf and a vampire actually fighting together against one common enemy.

Maybe I was judging Hale wrong? Or was it that this vampire lord turned out to be the only exception.

'You all good, my queen?' I mind-linked at Serena. She didn't reply which was odd, but it was understandable since she was preoccupied with her fight. I could feel her heart throbbing fast, most likely of excitement, and I could feel her wolf's thirst for blood.

Queen Adna, unlike my luna, just sat on her makeshift throne nestled at the very border of Ehnrelil and Phanteon. She was surrounded by ten fae knights holding golden spears and heavy-looking swords.

I decided to give her a visit.

"Your Majesty, how long will you keep on blinding yourself?" I asked her just as I appeared on her left.

As a reflex, she stood up, throwing me a surprised look. Her knights noticed my presence and quickly directed their spears towards me. I could feel anger in their eyes, but I could also feel their wariness.

"Lower your weapons, men. I only wish to speak peacefully with your queen," I stated, giving them my best-contained glare. Not a surprise, they didn't take my words to heart.

Queen Adna, still cautious, laughed with bitterness. "They don't accept orders from you, werewolf king." Her beauty was tainted with a scowl, but I was used to it ever since our first meeting in Ehnrelil.

"My name is Alpha King Aero, Queen Adna. Your niece's husband and mate. You should know that I respect your kind all because Serena is half-fae."

"She's a traitor!" she cried out, her eyes glowing with hatred. "She'll never be a fae."

I sensed her sorrow, it was so visible in her aura.

"Because of your grief, you have turned blind to what is in front of you. Serena is trying to save you and your people from destruction. She cares for this part of her identity too."

I stepped forward disregarding the spears still directed at me.

"Look at Geraden. Who is he fighting?" I gestured to the two who, even miles away, were still visible.

"The scum werewolf who killed my husband!" she answered, tears wetting her eyes.

"No," I shook my head, "you're wrong, Queen Adna. That man is your sister's mate. Serena's father. General Halcynos never killed King Alduin. It was made to look that way by the very man you crowned king now. Geraden is the one who killed your husband. He has been controlling you all this time."

"That is a lie!" she gnashed her teeth and cried out. Her eyes shifted to the two again. Geraden was throwing energy blasts at General Halcynos. In retaliation, the latter jumped towards him and gave him a flurry of punches and kicks. I grimaced inwardly. He sure was going easy on him. If I was in his shoes, I would have already torn this pest of a fae's limbs one by one and gouge out his eyes.

"No, it's the truth," I declared, managing to cool my voice, "and we have the very evidence to prove it."