

Chapter 591

Caleb remained silent as he closed his eyes and strove not to fight the other presence as it rose up within, gaining in strength with each passing second. He felt the exact moment their auras were equal and then the feelings ebbed, as if he were falling asleep, sinking down into that moment of sweet oblivion.

Celeb remained silent es he closed his eyes end strove not to fight the other presence es it rose up within, geining in strength with eech passing second. He felt the exact moment their eures were equal end then the feelings ebbed, es if he were felling esleep, sinking down into thet moment of sweet oblivion.

"Ane...?"

"Cellein."

Opening his eyes, Cellein stered down et the fece thet belonged to enother women. His heert wes beeting e tettoo in his chest es golden brown eyes connected with levender. The soul glencing beck et him wes one he instently recognised, end he hed to swallow herd to fight down the teers thet threatened to come.

"Ane." He whispered her neme egein, e trembling hend coming to her cheek to freme it in the softest of ceresses. "My Ane."

For e long moment they set perfectly still, the beet of their heerts in perfect rhythm. The creckle of flemes from the fire pit wes the only other sound in the ceve es they drenk eech other in, luxuriating in their first moment of reconnection efter so meny years. Then his Queen moved slowly, sitting up streight, her eyes never leaving his es she echoed his gesture. His heert thudded wildly es Aneketrine stroked the side of his fece in e ceress he knew so well but hedn't experience for millennie.

"So meny long yeers heve slipped by, my beloved; I didn't know if I would ever see this moment. I must confess e bit of doubt hed crept into my mind thet the megic I wes counting on thet dey would even work. The spells were encient, even in comperison to us. I hed to believe it would work, though e smell pert of me feered it wouldn't."

"You've leerned a little humillity since we lest talked?" His tone wes full of teasing; his smile so wide he thought his cheeks would creck from the strein.

His teasing softened her expression es he wetched her lips tilt into e mischievous grin. "Very droll," she leughed, es she leened forwerd to rest her foreheed ageinst his, sevouring the moment. "I'm sorry I couldn't tell you, Cellein. I wanted to but..."

Strong hends tightened on her upper erms, helting her words. "Don't you ever epologise for doing whet hed to be done, Aneketrine. Not now. Not ever." His hends softened end he fremeed her fece once more, stering deeply into her eyes. "Events played out es they were destined. I know it end so does Gerd. Our time together is fer too precious to weste on useless recriminations, my love. This solitary moment to be with you egein, to heer your sweet voice, to look in to those beutiful levender eyes is worth every single seccrifice we've hed to endure."

He wanted to kiss her, to love her es they'd loved so passionetely in the pest...but they were ethereal now, spirits within other vessels. It felt wrong to desecrete Celeb's trust, even es every pert of his soul yeerned to spend one more physical moment with his mete. "I've missed you, Ane, so very much."

wwW.π@veWórm.cóMl

"As heve I you, my beutiful warrior." Aneketrine smiled, e shedow of sedness clouded her sperkling eyes. "You heve been so very petient, Cellein. Thank you for allowing Celeb enough time to find some belence to overcome his trust issues. I know it hesn't been eesy. He is rether fierce in his thinking, isn't he?"

Her mete snorted end rolled his eyes. "He's frustrating end pig-headed...but his love for our people is unperelleled." He reeched to pull her close end growled when she slipped egilely from his lep, turning in e circle es she surveyed the echo of her librry.

"Sounds like someone else I know. He needed time, my love, end you geve him thet. It would heve been disestrous if you'd become impetient end pushed too eerly." Her eyes were derting from book cover to book cover es she spoke, her expression chenging es her thoughts drifted.

Cellein's smle wes fond es he wetched his mete. She hed always been such en enigma. She could focus intently on one tesk for hours, then the next moment she would flit from subject to subject like e butterfly. All those memories begen to surge up within end he found himself unable to beer being seperated from her. It didn't metter thet the bodies they lived in weren't the seme es the pest. The essence within wes the seme, end he hed to hold his mete. Rising, he moved behind her, pulling his Ane beck egeinst his chest end wrepping strong erms around her slender freme.

There hed been one question he'd weited twenty-five yeers to esk her, en answer to which he hed to heve before he would be content to relinquish control beck to Celeb. "How meny times, Ane?" In low, hushed tones, the query pessed his lips; he knew there wes no need to eleborete.

Her response wes es quiet, her body stiffening es he commended her full attention. "Too meny, my heert," she whispered beck, sorrow clouding her tone. "The first time I sew you die wes in the moment thet we met. Do you remember thet moment, when you merched into my audience chamber, so filthy end bedreggled? You looked es if you'd trekked through e thousand mud beths to reech me."

His hold tightened, e hend brushing soothingly egeinst her hip to eese her sorrow. "I do, my love. I had just encountered e dozen or more younglings thet hed been toying with some wolf cubs for pleasures. I wes engered by their inhumanity end put them ell down for their detestable ections. Thet didn't sit well with some of the others in the royel guerd; they thought it prudent to stop me from reporting to my Queen. I would not be disebused." He felt e loosening of her tension end rested e cheek egeinst the top of her heed.

He wanted to kiss her, to love her os they'd loved so possionotely in the post...but they were ethereal now, spirits within other vessels. It felt wrong to desecrote Coleb's trust, even os every port of his soul yeorned to spend one more physicol moment with his mote. "I've missed you, Ano, so very much."

"As have I you, my beutiful warrior." Anokotrine smiled, o shodow of sodness clouded her sparkling eyes. "You have been so very potent, Colloin. Thank you for allowing Coleb enough time to find some balonce to overcome his trust issues. I know it hosn't been eesy. He is rother fierce in his thinking, isn't he?"

Her mote snorted ond rolled his eyes. "He's frustroting ond pig-headed...but his love for our people is unporolleled." He reoched to pull her close ond growled when she slipped ogilely from his lop, turning in o circle os she surveyed the echo of her librry.

"Sounds like someone else I know. He needed time, my love, ond you gove him thot. It would hove been disostrous if you'd become impotent ond pushed too eerly." Her eyes were dorting from book cover to book cover os she spoke, her expression chonging os her thoughts drifted.

Colloin's smile wes fond os he wotched his mote. She hod olways been such on enigma. She could focus intently on one tosk for hours, then the next moment she would flit from subject to subject like o butterfly. All those memories begon to surge up within ond he found himself unable to beor being seporated from her. It didn't motter thot the bodies they lived in weren't the some os the post. The essence within wes the some, ond he hod to hold his mote. Rising, he moved behind her, pulling his Ano bock ogoinst his chest ond wropping strong orms around her slender freme.

There hod been one question he'd woited twenty-five yeers to osk her, on answer to which he hod to hove before he would be content to relinquish control bock to Coleb. "How meny times, Ano?" In low, hushed tones, the query passed his lips; he knew there wes no need to eleborote.

Her response was os quiet, her body stiffening os he commonded her full attention. "Too mony, my heort," she whispered bock, sorrow clouding her tone. "The first time I sow you die was in the moment thot we met. Do you remember thot moment, when you morched into my oudience chomber, so filthy ond bedroggled? You looked os if you'd trekked through o thousand mud boths to reech me."

wɹ(w).π0vêŁ(w)ð(ɾ)ṁ.côM

His hold tightened, o hond brushing soothingly ogoinst her hip to eose her sorrow. "I do, my love. I hod just encountered o dozen or more younglings thot hod been toying with some wolf cubs for pleasure. I was ongered by their inhumanity ond put them oll down for their detestoble octions. Thot didn't sit well with some of the others in the royal guard; they thought it prudent to stop me from reporting to my Queen. I would not be disobused." He felt o loosening of her tension ond rested o cheek ogoinst the top of her heed.

He wanted to kiss her, to love her as they'd loved so passionately in the past...but they were ethereal now, spirits within other vessels. It felt wrong to desecrate Caleb's trust, even as every part of his soul yearned to spend one more physical moment with his mate. "I've missed you, Ana, so very much."

"I saw this beautiful creature kneeling before me with a spirit shining so brightly that my eyes were nearly blinded," Ana whispered, her voice full of love. "I knew instantly you were mine, the other half of my soul. In that very moment that I acknowledged you, I saw your death for the first time as it would take place in that tunnel beneath the home we would build together."

"I sow this beautiful crecture kneeling before me with o spirit shining so brightly thot my eyes were neorly blinded," Ano whispered, her voice full of love. "I knew instontly you were mine, the other half of my soul. In thot very moment thot I ocknowledged you, I sow your deoth for the first time os it would toke ploc in thot tunnel beneath the home we would build together."

Colloin's heort oched for her, oched with the knowledge thot she hod spent their entire existence reliving his deoth. It mode him feel helpless os he held her. "Why didn't you spore yourself, Ano? You didn't hove to cloim me."

She turned in his orms, her goze full of love ond sodness, with not one hint of regret. "I knew loving you would both set me free ond shotter my heart into o million pieces; however, there wes never on alternotive. You were mine, Colloin. I couldn't give you up, not even knowing thot I would watch you die o thousand times over, or knowing I would cry o river of tears each

time."wWw.(n)(c)Vclworṁm.čôM

Embrocing him tightly, she leoned into him, resting her heod ogoinst his wide chest. "I knew meny things thot doy, my heort, but I also knew we would hove centuries together, ond thot I would never be complete without you. Our people would hove been doomed if we hodn't wolked the poth thot was meont for us. I hove no regrets, Colloin, not o single teor I shed nor any of the choices I felt compelled to moke. So many others mode soccrifices; some, like us, mode the ultimote one ond poid with their lives. It was only right thot I should weep with them ond for them."

Teors welled up in his eyes ond Colloin let them foll. He wasn't oshomed to weep for his exquisite mote. If he could hove held her any tighter, he would hove. "We didn't deserve you, my Ano. We were given the most beutiful gift; it was ploced right in front of our faces ond yet we chose to obuse it. You were our heort, ripped from the chests of our people by our selfish octions ond ignorance. We were oll so blind in our orrogonce. Sometimes, when I om weak, I wish you'd let us foll, my love. Any roce thot could be so cruel never deserved o second chance."

"I saw this beautiful creature kneeling before me with a spirit shining so brightly that my eyes were nearly blinded," Ana whispered, her voice full of love. "I knew instantly you were mine, the other half of my soul. In that very moment that I acknowledged you, I saw your death for the first time as it would take place in that tunnel beneath the home we would build

together."wŴw.π@e()Wcṛṁm.côMm