

# Sold to the Night Lord

## Sold to the Night Lord

14:10 Sat, 9 Aug

### Chapter 161

601

My teeth clench together from how hard I'm grinding my jaw. I do the same with my fists and feel my nails digging into my skin. I take a step forward, intent on getting closer to him, until Ciro steps in my way. I know he doesn't mean harm—he genuinely doesn't want me to get hurt. What he doesn't know is that he shouldn't be worried about me. Not when fury is beginning to blind me.

I never thought any threat against Cassian could unhinge me this way.

"Lower the weapon," Aeron says in a soothing tone.

"No, I won't. We all think the same! It's time for Cassian to step aside and let us take over. The Diluted grow stronger every day, and we grow

fewer!"

Cassian is incapable of losing that arrogant smirk, even with a dagger at his throat. It would be easy for him to move his hand and end a life. But doing so would only confirm to the others how little he values them—how disposable they truly are to him.

"And you think killing me will fix the problem? You're an idiot, that's why you don't get to make decisions."

"You're a stone in the road."

"And you're a speck of dust. What was your last name again? Let me think..."

He puts on a thoughtful face, as if genuinely trying to recall.

"It must not be very important, because I remember all the surnames on the Council, and I don't recall any named 'Pathetic.'"

The Pureblood's face turns red—something I thought impossible—and in an act of rage and recklessness, he drags the dagger across Cassian's throat. The sight of blood pouring from

his neck with no restraint makes me open and close my fists. I feel a sting on my lower lip, and heat courses through my veins as if I had lava instead of blood.

“Get away from him!” I scream.

My hands are trembling, and I feel my self-control breaking apart piece by piece. Memories of that day—when so much was stolen from me—flood my mind, and a raw, visceral fear shakes me from head to toe at the thought of losing anything more. They say rage is red, but I see everything in white.

“Elara...”

My name escapes from Ciro’s lips like a sigh. If it’s possible, his face has gone even paler, and if I look closely at the others, I’d bet the same has happened to them. I don’t need a mirror to know what’s happened—I can feel my fangs pressing into my lip.

And yet, the panic I expected to feel doesn’t come.

No.

What I feel is a deep, utterly feral rage.

Even though I know he’s strong—probably the most powerful—I don’t want anyone touching him.

“Get. Your hands. Off him,” I say with a falsely calm voice.

I see the Pureblood’s Adam’s apple bob as he gulps, and the exact moment when the pressure of the dagger weakens. Cassian elbows him effortlessly and frees himself, brushing off imaginary dirt and adjusting the lapels of his jacket. The only sign of this altercation is the blood on his neck—calling to me at the worst possible moment.

In the blink of an eye, I feel his hand on my waist, pulling me toward him.

Everyone stares at us with varying expressions.

The most common one?

Fear.

“Your eyes turned white.” There’s amusement in his voice. “I never thought anyone else could make them look at her the way they look at me. That’s my girl.”

I’d love to laugh, but the tension in the air is starting to clog my throat. He senses it just as clearly as I do, and with that wicked smile etched on his lips, he tugs me toward the door. The silence is sepulchral, and for a moment, I can’t believe this is happening.

Am I leaving?

Just like that?

A hand wraps around my wrist and pulls me back.

Ciro.

“Where do you think you’re going?” he says, looking straight at Cassian. “You can’t take her.”

I hear the breath leave Cassian’s nose as he slowly turns to face the vampire. His irritation is perfectly masked under that grin that unsettles everyone and his glacial stare. But I can feel his fury, pounding fists inside my head like they’re looking for an exit. His grip on my hip tightens -more possessive. I’ll probably have his fingers imprinted on my skin, and there’s not a single part of me that minds.

“Your time playing house is over,” Cassian says in a cold, deadly tone. “She’s coming with me, and there’s nothing you can do to stop it.”

“The Treaties say-”

“I’m breaking the Treaties,” he cuts him off. “And I’ll break your face if you keep bringing them up. I don’t know if you’ve noticed, but I don’t give a damn.”

“You’re-”

Ciro doesn’t get the chance to finish his sentence.

The windows surrounding the room explode into shards, and before all the guests, enormous beasts step inside, shaking the floor with the stomp of their hooves.

Shapeshifters...

AD

Comment

Send gift

No Ads

## Sold to the Night Lord

Chapter 162

Cassian

One of the feelings only Elara ever manages to awaken in me takes hold of my body: fear.

I don't see the faces of the others—I can only focus on hers.

The instinct to place her behind me is stronger than any other.

I'm prepared to be her shield.

Screams echo in my ears; however, nothing escapes from Elara's lips.

For a moment, I have to check that it's really her hand I'm holding and not a corpse's.

The shapeshifters are feasting—tearing out throats and gutting every vampire they encounter.

I see the others' faces, their efforts as the few blessed ones try to use their powers to stop the attack. Nothing happens.

I try mine. No result.

“Did they steal your blood, Elara?”

Her face is far too pale, and for a few seconds, she seems lost in nothingness, until she blinks and snaps out of her trance.

She looks at me, panic drawn in every line of her features.

“Yes.” Her grip on my hand tightens. “When they had me in the dungeons.”

I mutter a curse.

I pull her until we're partially hidden behind a column.

I hold her face in my hands and force her to look only at me, because I know the horror unfolding around us will paralyze her.

“I need you to run,” I say. “As fast as you can—and don't look back.”

“No, I can't just run away.”

“You can—and you must.” I stroke her cheek in a steady rhythm to calm her amidst this chaos. “They want you. I can't let them have you, do you understand? You have to run—for you and for me—because I'll lose my mind if I lose you again.”

Her breath hitches against my lips and she nods with her eyes closed.

When she opens them again, I see only determination—and pride fills every cell in my body.

I brush my lips quickly against hers, and when I see her running off with her skirt clutched in her hands, I regret not kissing her deeper.

As I step out of our hiding spot, my foot hits the corpse of a Diluted.

I feel no pity, but each loss is a blow to our side.

Before, I didn't care much. But now Elara is part of this, and I won't let them reach her.

Abraxas is fighting one of those beasts. I'm about to jump in when the pink-eyed vampire appears from the side and stabs the creature's lung with what looks like a golden candelabrum torn from the wall. The brothers share a meaningful glance before Abraxas turns his eyes on me. As always, he's wearing a different face.

Ciro realizes what his brother is looking at and addresses me.

"Where is she?"

"I hope far from here."

I shrug off my jacket and let it fall to the ground, where blood flows like a river and quickly soaks it.

I roll up my sleeves, ready to fight.

"You left her alone?"

"I need to buy her time."

"Powers don't work on them. Several have tried, all in vain," Abraxas informs.

At that moment, one of the shapeshifters grabs one of the dancers who had remained on her ribbon, too afraid to set foot on the ground.

Unfortunately, height often doesn't stop these rabid animals.

I watch without blinking as the beast's jaws rip the woman in half, her screams silenced as fast as they began.

Abraxas raises his sword and spins it in a clean 360-degree arc before launching forward and driving it through the enemy's nape.

Just as the creature falls, it lets out a pitiful howl.

“Why now? Why, after all this time, have they declared war again?” Ciro looks at me closely, and my silence is all he needs.

“It’s Elara, isn’t it?”

“Don’t say her name,” I growl.

“What is she, Cassian?” he presses. “We all saw her eyes. They weren’t human.”

I clench and unclench my fists, barely holding back the urge to leave.

I never imagined Elara could make me this weak—and this strong.

“She’s not something that can be named,” I manage to say.

“That special, huh?”

“I hate to interrupt your moment of worship toward the human,” Abraxas cuts in, “but I have a plan. If I’m not wrong, they’re here for Elara, who, by the way, is currently out there running for her life, am I right?” He sees my expression and continues, “Ciro, go find her. Meanwhile, Cassian and I will draw them away so he can use his little earthquake trick.”

“It’s not a trick,” I hiss through my teeth. “And how do you know they’ll follow us?”

Ciro doesn’t wait—he bolts.

And I’m sure that just like me, he can sense Elara’s wild scent.

**Sat Aug**

When I focus again on Abraxas, I see an exact replica of her before me.

For a moment, I stop breathing—but the suffocating sensation passes when I focus on her eyes.

Elara’s **eyes** are gray—many would say sad and dull.

But when I look at them, I **see** life in its wildest form.

The sky just before it breaks with a storm.

The pair in front of me? Everything people say about her who don’t know her: empty eyes.

“Act like you’d die protecting me.”

Her voice is identical.

“I thought you could only change your face.”

“Not everyone goes around flaunting their powers.”

It’s astonishing how quickly he starts acting like he truly is Elara—he hides behind my body, and it takes me a few seconds too long to react and start running through the shattered hall, making sure we draw the enemies’ attention.

My boots crunch over the glass shards that once made a perfect window.

I extend my hand to Abraxas, whose hands are small and delicate like Elara’s.

I force myself to stop searching for flaws in the replica.

Some shapeshifters twist their necks toward us, jaws open and drooling blood onto the floor.

I see how desperate they are to reach their goal and leave.

I scoop up the false Elara in my arms, and for a moment, I think the illusion of her dress flickers between my hands.

“The clothes are complicated,” he informs me.

The only thing he hasn’t replicated is her weight—it’s like dense muscle mass is packed into that small, fake female body.

I make sure to hold him the way I would if it were really her and start running as fast as I can, feeling the furious strides of our enemies behind

1. us.

They howl, calling the rest of the pack, unaware they’re being led straight to their deaths.

AD

Comment

Send gift

## Sold to the Night Lord

## Chapter 163

I might not be able to crush them with my fists, but I can open the earth and let it swallow them one by one.

“Where are you?”.

“Hiding in a stable.”

Hearing her voice is immediate relief. I want to laugh at how vulnerable she’s made me.

“Is anyone with you?”

“No.”

I make sure we’re far enough from the party that what I’m about to do won’t put her at risk.

I skid to a stop, turn, and see the shapeshifters approaching, keeping a cautious distance.

I set Abraxas down. He doesn’t drop the illusion and stays hidden behind my back, just like a damsel in distress.

If only he knew how dangerous Elara truly is—how much chaos she could unleash if she lost her mind even slightly...

One of them—the leader—changes form, replacing animal limbs with human ones.

I immediately recognize the man with the scar on his face, and soon his blind companion joins him—Rhory. He lowers his chin in a mocking nod, and his smirk boils my blood as I remember what he did to me last time with his damned gift.

“Hand over the girl before it’s too late, Cassian Draven.”

Laughter bursts from my chest—there’s *no* need to fake it.

They’re fools if they think I’ll give in so easily.

“Too late for what?” I tilt my head, watching them with challenge. “Seems to me it’s already too late for you.”

“Your gift doesn’t work on us,” he assures.

“Are you sure?”

“Would you risk hurting her?”

“She can save herself,” I reply with an arrogant grin.

I don’t give them much time to rethink.

My hand closes into a fist and I stomp the ground hard.

The earth splits—and then the real fun begins

My hands mold the matter like a child’s toy. I create and destroy at will, feeding off their screams and gasps of panic.

They can’t hold their animal forms for long—not when they’re too busy trying not to fall into despair.

Rhory looks at me with those milk-colored, lightless eyes, trying to pull me into one of his nightmares.

My lips stretch into another unstoppable grin.

“You thought you were the only ones immune to gifts?” I raise a brow.

“What?” Abraxas asks in surprise, breaking his act for a second.

He has no idea how powerful—and valuable—Elara’s blood is.

And neither he nor our enemies know about our nighttime encounters, and the lack of bite marks on Elara’s neck thanks to her newfound ability to heal has kept this our best-kept secret.

The blind one, realizing his efforts are pointless, lunges at the fake Elara.

I run toward her, afraid the illusion will break and we’ll lose our advantage.

I don’t want them to know about his ability to take on others’ appearances.

It’s painful to see him writhing in agony from whatever Rhory is forcing him to see—because all I see is a small, terrified Elara.

“She’s no good to you dead,” I growl.

“If Ragna can’t have her, neither can you.”

Rage blinds me and makes me even more brutal.

I rip the earth open here and there, no longer thinking about consequences.

The scarred one watches in fury as the ground continues responding to my power, swallowing every one of his men.

When they resist, the roots take over—grabbing them and dragging them into the depths where sunlight will never touch them again.

There's a moment when our gazes meet, and the challenge between us becomes explicit.

"We'll come back—and when we do, we won't leave a drop of blood in your pretty little toy."

I growl, ready to hunt him down, tear his throat with my teeth, and savor the flow of his blood on my tongue.

But Elara's hand—false Elara—grabs my elbow and stops me from doing what my most primal instincts demand.

Hunting. Tearing. Devouring.

Their leader makes a beast-like sound, and the few survivors of my fury flee, kicking up dust with their hind legs.

Rhory is the last to leave—but not before parting words.

"*You* won't save her. It's not in your nature to be a hero. You couldn't do it for your parents—much less for her."

The blow lands hard.

"Who said I need to be a hero to save her?"

They have a moral code—I don't.

That makes me much more dangerous, Rhory.

I'd be careful how you threaten me.

He says nothing—just lets his blank gaze fall on me, then shifts and flees as fast as his legs allow.

Maybe he's not the leader, but he's certainly respected more than the scarred one.

I can smell Ragna on him. Their connection is close.

I don't take my eyes off them until I feel it in my bones that they're gone.

“Still in the stables?”

“Um... about that... I think you need to come right away, Cassian,” Elara replies.

“Who do I need to kill? Are you hurt?”

“I’m fine, but I stepped out of the stables when I heard a noise, thinking they’d found me—and I think I made things worse.”

“What do you mean?”

“I’m surrounded.”

“By shapeshifters?” I ask, a flicker of panic rising.

I thought I’d drawn them all away.

“Purebloods.”

Ca

The trace of fear and the hesitation in his voice don’t go unnoticed. I look at Abraxas, who has already returned to his usual appearance—that

is, the face of a stranger.

“I’ll only say this once, and only because I value your loyalty to the disaster you call your brother,” I throw. “Elara will not be going back with you. She won’t return to any place she doesn’t want to be. Any attempt on your part to retrieve her will be answered with blood.”

“Believe it or not, I won’t do anything Elara doesn’t want. If she feels her place is by your side, so be it. If it’s far from you, then I’ll make sure

that happens.”

Once again, laughter bursts from me on its own.

“Who do you think you are now? Her savior?”

“And you? Do you think you are?” he counters.

“Elara doesn’t need saviors. She needs to be left alone to be.”

“To be what?” he retorts.

“I’ve said it before—what she is doesn’t have a name. But I’ll make sure she can be it freely, without fear of anyone—least of all, you all.”

“You all?”

“There’s no time for this now.”

## Sold to the Night Lord

### Chapter 164

Before he can reply, I speed off toward Elara. I search for her scent—it’s impossible to lose that wild fragrance. I find her even faster than expected, though the sight freezes my blood. Several Purebloods surround her, their faces stricken with panic at the sight of the corpse lying at her feet. Her hands tremble, and when her eyes meet mine, I see a mix of determination and relief.

“I’m sorry, I didn’t have a choice. He got too close. I got scared, he wanted to take me...”

I take a step toward her, ignoring the horror around us. I quickly recognize the body as one of the Diluted security guards. His skin is ashen, his eyes open and blank. I step in front of her, using my body as a shield from the rest. I reach for her hand and grip it tightly, easing the tremble in her fingers.

“It’s been a difficult and turbulent night. I suggest everyone returns to their homes, gentlemen.”

My voice echoes through the dark night—not even the nocturnal creatures dare to break the silence. One of the Purebloods watching us closely inhales sharply and raises a finger accusingly.

“She’s a monster!”

I see the thought spread among the others, burning itself into their eyes. My entire body tenses like a drawn bow, and I feel a pressing need to pull Elara even closer. I don’t want a single inch of her body not pressed against mine.

“She’s a monster! Don’t you see it?” The Pure points his damn finger at the corpse lying at my feet, as if I’m too stupid to have noticed. “Look

what she did!”

Elara shrinks back, and I know without needing to probe that her fear is fueled by the thought of being locked up again, stripped of freedom, ignored. That won’t happen—not while my heart still wants to beat for her. Just as she can turn me into a merciful being,

when the threat tooms over her, I can become the most sadistic vampire ever to roam this earth.

The urge to set boundaries makes me act fast; I wrap my hand around the Pure's neck and squeeze just enough to feel the tendons shift beneath my palm. If he was scared before, it's nothing compared to what he feels now, seeing death etched in my eyes.

"She may be a monster, but she's my monster," I hiss between my teeth. "She's the thin thread of my sanity—and trust me, you don't want to see what happens when it snaps. If you thought I was dangerous before, I assure you—if you touch her, look at her, breathe near her—I won't even leave your memory alive."

"W—what is she?"

"Mine," I say, firm and absolute.

The word echoes in every bone of my body like a sacrament.

"That's enough! Everyone, go home!"

Aeron breaks the tension, followed closely by Ciro. Both begin to disperse the crowd, glaring with authority and making it clear that defying their orders will cost dearly. A few stragglers linger, hoping to catch some valuable bit of information. That won't happen—I have no intention

of sharing anything with anyone.

The white-haired vampire looks at me and nods in farewell; however, when I turn to take Elara and leave, I see Ciro has already stepped forward.

"I guess you've made your choice."

Sadness glimmers in Elara's eyes.

"I never had to choose, Ciro. It was always going to be him."

"I could make you stay. I have the right."

"Then you'd be forcing me." Elara's face softens. "And I know you're not that kind of man, Ciro."

"I suppose someone as special as you can't remain a mere feeder, right? Because you're clearly much more than human."

"Much more," she says, offering no further detail.

Ciro nods and gives her a sad smile.

“I’ve truly enjoyed your company these past weeks. I hope this is just the beginning of a friendship, and that you’ll be allowed to visit me sometime. I’m sure I’m not the only one who’ll miss you.” His gaze shifts to his brother. “You’re a very special woman. I’m sure you already know that. Thank you for always seeing me for who I am, **not** just what I seem.”

“It would’ve been impossible not to see you. I’m sure it’s only a matter of time before others see what you hide inside.”

The vampire steps forward with a sincere smile and hugs her. Jealousy claws at my chest. I could sharpen my senses and eavesdrop on what i know he’s whispering in her ear during that embrace that unsettles me, but I don’t think I have the right to interrupt. I hope she’ll share those words with me later, when she’s finally where she’s always belonged. In my castle, wandering the gardens, reading dusty books in my mother’s forgotten library, lingering in my wing as if I won’t notice her scent clinging to everything. I want Elara everywhere, at all times.

“Shall we go?” I ask, a few steps away from them.

The vampire steps back with a warm smile, and though I’d love to knock it off his face with a punch, I won’t—because Elara smiles back at him and looks more at ease.

“Wherever you say.”

She smiles and offers me her hand.

The pink-eyed Pure passes by me, brushing his shoulder against mine, and murmurs a few words.

“Take care of her. She’s the most special thing you have.”

He doesn’t need to tell me. I’ve always known there was something extraordinary about her, no matter how much I tried to convince myself she was just an annoying human. Even when she thought so herself, she always found a way to challenge me—and she has no idea how much I enjoyed it.

We’re finally alone. I squeeze her hand tightly.

“Let’s go home, Elara.”

“Aren’t you going to carry me?”

“If that’s what you want, I’d be glad to carry you in my arms. But I thought maybe you’d like to try one of your new abilities.”

“You mean...?” Her eyes **go** wide, and that ghostly pallor quickly gives way to a flush of excitement in her cheeks. “How? What do I do?”

“There’s no trick. Just run. It’s part of your nature now.”

She looks at me, confused, not believing it could be that easy. I smile and take off running, easily leaving her behind. I stop in the distance and see her small figure far away.

“Come on, little wildcat. There are people waiting to see you again.”

I know that’s the little incentive she needs. She takes a few hesitant steps, and before she knows it, her legs gain a speed far beyond that of any mortal. In a flash, she’s beside me, hair tousled, cheeks flushed. Most importantly? That tension and fear seem to have vanished.

“Let’s go.”

I nod forward, and soon we’re on the move again. I glance back more than once to make sure she’s still behind me. Sometimes she dashes ahead, her melodic, soft laugh filling the air and pulling a smile from my lips. The journey to the castle feels unreal. I’ve never been so glad to have someone by my side—to be willing to risk everything.

My men open the gates to the castle grounds the moment they sense us approaching. As we pass them, I can’t help but marvel at the **little** sounds slipping from Elara’s lips every time she’s surprised by her newfound ability.

We stop at the base of the stairs, and this time, I’m not the one seeking closeness—it’s she who presses her side against mine and reaches for my hand.

“Do you want to be here, Elara?”

“I can’t believe what I’m about to say.” She fidgets with my fingers, nervous as a child. “But I want to be with you.”

“Then let’s go. You’re home, Elara.”

Comment

AD

Send gift

## Sold to the Night Lord

Chapter 165

Elara

I climb the steps with his presence behind my back. Knowing he's there gives me a strange sense of relief. A couple of months ago, feeling him where my eyes couldn't reach would have frozen my blood. Another sign that everything has changed.

The doors open on their own and the first face I see hits like an arrow straight to the chest. Silas is in front of me, with watery eyes, his hair longer than the last time I saw him, and the fun brother look completely gone. In its place, huge dark circles stain the skin beneath his eyes. I don't know who throws themselves into the other's arms first, I just know that in the blink of an eye, I'm surrounded by the familiar scent *of* Silas, of my former home.

"I thought I'd never see you again. At least not really you."

I know exactly what he means and I could contradict him and say I'll never be the person he knew again. But I decide not to break this. moment with a conversation I don't want to have. I know it's impossible, but I swear I smell the soap Mom used.

She wasn't your mother, whispers the voice in my head.

Thinking of her or any of them as something other than my family is hard.

He buries his fingers in my hair, clinging to me while I feel Cassian Draven's temper boiling like water in a pot.

"It's my brother," I say through our connection.

"Silas is not your brother."

"I'm not going to argue."

"Good, because I prefer to spend our time on other things."

A wave of heat tiptoes down my spine. I slowly pull away from Silas and try to smile, though I'm not sure I succeed. He has pain carved into

his face.

"I wasn't going to let you lose me," I say.

"I couldn't bear it, Elara."

I let him hold me by the forearms and look at me as long as he needs, until the fact that I'm here, alive and well, fully sinks in. I have no idea what my absence has truly meant, I just know it almost cost Cassian his sanity.

Someone clears their throat, drawing both our attention.

“No hugs or sweet words for the rest of us?”

Drystan looks as handsome as always, with a half-smile that’s slightly roguish, his hair loose to his shoulders and his clothes matching the color of his eyes: an unfathomable black. Behind him, to my surprise, I see the unmistakable hair of Evanora. And I say surprise because she seems to be using the vampire’s body to hide, to protect herself. I could swear that before I left she claimed to hate him with passion.

I release Silas’s grip and walk toward the open arms of Cassian’s right-hand man.

“Forgive me for almost killing you.”

“You remember?” he asks with a mix of awe and amusement.

1411 Sat 9 Aug at 9 Aug

There are still some gaps

21

member losing control of myself, the bleed, the panicked faces, and how brystan tried to get the banshee to safety from my unleashes

have nothing to forgive.” He smiles, showing his fangs, so similar to mine. “In fact, i thank you for coming back” He lowers his mouth to my was and with the softness of butterfly wings he whispers words that brand my heart like a hot ken. “And for choosing him. He has no idee how much he needs you.”

Best notice the effect of his words because he lets go of me and steps aside, leaving me face to face with the closest thing i had to a friend here, along with Ank. Ankhiale! I’m dying to go down there and kill time with her, though ear be a white before things calm down ent be beading dusty books while the world wants to hunt me.

take a step toward her, ready for a new hug.

“Maybe you should think twice before hugging your little lying friend.”

Cassian’s voice is so cold it could freeze the very Pits. Drystan and I turn at the same time, throwing him a withering glare. His friend looks Ange chanlam

“we’ve discussed this many times.”

And i still think that if she had told us everything she knew, things would’ve turned out differently.”

m here, aren't I? That's what matters." I grab the banshee's hand, whose face doesn't stop showing guilt. "Maybe we took a longer path but what's important is that we're together."

Evanora squeezes my hand and strokes the back of it with her thumb. Her albino snake decides to make an appearance then, slithering **from** her hair and coiling part of its body around her neck. It stares at me with its tiny eyes as if weighing whether I'm a threat.

really sorry for how things happened," says the banshee.

The blue-eyed vampire lets out a snort behind me.

"Cassian, growl.

I don't know if it's the sudden movement of my neck or the exhaustion from so many emotions, but I feel the ground tilt a little beneath my feet. Or maybe it's me who tilts, because in the blink of an eye, Cassian has me in his hands and is looking at me with concern. His eyes scan every inch of my face like a madman.

What's wrong? Are you feeling unwell?"

Silas makes a move to approach too.

wave my hand to downplay it.

"I'm fine. I straighten up with his help and turn in his arms to continue the conversation with the banshee. "Don't worry about him, understand you. Though I'd like you to explain your reasons better."

Evanora opens her mouth to respond; however, the vampire silences her by picking me up and carrying me away from her.

\* glare at him.

"Hey! What are you doing?"

"It's time you rest, There'll be time to talk later"

213

1411 Sat 9 Aug

"That was very rude."

His lips are pressed tight. He turns his head slightly and looks over his shoulder at my friend.

“Do you mind if I take her to rest? The night has had too many emotions and I think she needs some sleep.”

To that, she can't say anything. I narrow my eyes a bit, suspicious and wary. I've never seen her so submissive. She usually has enough strength to send both vampires to the Underworld and back. Under everyone's watchful gaze, Cassian heads up the stairs effortlessly. He doesn't take me to my old quarters, but instead heads straight for his wing of the castle. He doesn't say a word and I just look at him.

“You don't have to be so hard on her, you know?”

He lowers his gaze to my face.

“While I thought you wouldn't wake up again, do you know how many times I asked myself if things would've been different had I known what you are?” I open my mouth to reply, but he's faster and keeps speaking. “I can't say I wouldn't have fucked it up; but maybe I wouldn't have thought I was the one putting you in danger.”

“What do you mean?”

“I pushed you away from me because you made me weak and I was a danger to you. I thought the shapeshifters wanted you just to hurt me, because they had realized you mattered to me. I'm a bastard, sadistic and cruel, but I couldn't bear them hurting you because of me, more than I already had.”

His eyes trace the fine scars left on my throat after the attack at Ciro's party. It wasn't that long ago, but it feels like another life. I tighten my

arms around his body to get closer to him.

“Let me decide who I want near me.”

Reluctantly, he makes the closest gesture to a nod I've ever seen from him. He taps the door of his room with the tip of his foot, and it

welcomes us immediately with the soft light of candles illuminating every corner. He gently places me on the floor and waits a few seconds to see if I get dizzy again. I seem pretty stable in my shoes, so he turns to close the door. Meanwhile, I look around the room and see it exactly as

it was during our encounters.

“There's a lot we need to talk about,” I say.

## Sold to the Night Lord

## Chapter 166

His hands land on my shoulders and his breath caresses the curve of my neck.

“Not now, little beast.” The scent of night-blooming jasmine and damp earth winds under my nose and surrounds me like a lover’s embrace. “Now I just want to be with you.”

The tips of his fingers brush my skin, tracing a path from my shoulder to my nape, where with a swift motion he unclasps the obsidian stone necklace. The pendant grazes the skin of my breasts before falling almost silently onto the carpeted floor.

“This neck was made to wear rubies.”

With every word from his mouth, his breath caresses me and makes my hair stand on end. I’m sure there are other parts of my anatomy even more aroused. I’m dying to finally feel him for real, not just in dreams. I want to be awake and have his hands touch me and his lips kiss me. I want to feel him everywhere, drown in him, go mad.

He plays with the fabric of my dress, slowly sliding it down my shoulders, leaving a trail of fire where his fingers touch as softly as butterfly wings.

“Please...” I whimper.

“I want to take my time with you, Elara.” He runs his nose along my spine and stops at the two dimples above my ass. I hear him inhale the scent of my skin. “I don’t even know where to start. Should I kiss you first? Or maybe kiss other lips that seem more desperate?” He hooks both index fingers into the waistband of my dress and pulls it down until it tangles around my ankles. “Or maybe I’ll explore other parts of

you.”

He helps me step out of the fabric and I’m left facing away from him in only a pair of tiny panties made of a material that leaves nothing to the imagination. He continues brushing his face against my skin until he reaches one of my buttocks, which receives a bite. The pain is fleeting, giving way to a tingling low in my belly. My legs give out, and before I hit the floor, Cassian catches me in his arms and leads us to the foot of the bed, where with trembling hands I lean and hold onto one of the bedposts.

He kneels again and slowly licks the mark his teeth left. I bring a hand to my chest and tug at my needy nipple, letting out a painful moan. That seems to excite him, because with a brutality that overshadows his elegance, he rips the material from between my legs.

“How much did you miss me?”

I can’t answer when I feel the tip of his tongue brushing my folds from behind. His hands cup and massage my buttocks while his mouth explores me mercilessly. The cold air in the

room sweeps over all my exposed parts, though the heat of his breath only melts me more with

each second that passes.

“I didn’t hear your answer, Elara.”

At the same time, he releases one of the lips he was sucking with an obscene sound. He spreads me even more with his thumbs and devours me ruthlessly. I try to close my knees to get some friction between my thighs. Without warning, he slides two fingers inside me, my channel tightens and my ability *to* speak crumbles into dust. I can’t think with the sounds of his fingers thrusting in and out, the growls coming from his throat and dying against my skin.

“I missed you so much,” I pant. “I need you.”

“You need me? Where?”

He drags the tip of his tongue from my swollen clit to my entrance, applies pressure as if wanting to enter me. He slides further back, tracing the line between my buttocks. A surprised sound escapes me when I feel him there.

“I’ll be here too, little beast,” he murmurs against my flesh. “There won’t be a single place where you won’t feel me.”

:60%0

I don’t know if it’s his declaration or the punishing rhythm of his tongue, but I can feel the ball of fire in my lower belly growing and growing nonstop. I dig my nails into the wooden post when he circles my clit and sucks it with just the right force to make my eyes roll back. A shiver runs through me from head to toe.

“Please, Cassian, make me...” I stop mid-sentence when I feel the intrusion of his thumb in a hole that has never been explored.

“What were you saying?”

I feel the thread of his saliva sliding between my buttocks as his finger moves in and out of me. The pain mixes with the pleasure his tongue gives me, parting me and circling my clitoris without pause. I feel the surge of climax rising over me. My nipples are so hard they ache, and my knuckles are white from gripping the pole tightly. I explode without warning, with Cassian’s name caught in my throat and my legs shaking as if they had no bones. Wetness soaks my thighs, and I have to bend almost *to* the floor to avoid falling flat on my face. When I catch my breath, I dare to glance over my shoulder and see him with swollen lips, covered in my fluids and with a triumphant smile tattooed on his face. He’s fully dressed while I’m as naked as the day I was born.

“This isn’t fair. You’re too dressed.”

I plant a foot on his chest as he’s about to lunge at me. He grabs me by the ankle and places a chaste kiss on the sensitive skin.

“If you want to see me naked, fix **it**.”

The mischief and challenge shine in his beautiful blue eyes, now darkened with lust. I get on my knees on the mattress, feeling the weight of my breasts and the lingering tremble in my legs. I trace a finger along his neck until I reach the first button of his shirt. I unbutton the first one with clumsy fingers, and by the time I reach the second, Cassian’s eyes are about to start a fire. He gently brushes my hands aside and tears the shirt, the fabric falling in shreds to the floor. I hold my breath but quickly react, trying to be more efficient in ridding him of his pants. His erection springs free the moment they loosen at his hips. He gives me a little push, laying me on my back on the mattress. I watch, fascinated, as he undresses before me, perfect like a sculpture carved in stone.

“You have no idea how much I love having you beneath me.”

“Only beneath?” I arch a brow.

A sensual laugh rumbles deep in his chest. He traps me with an arm on either side of my head. Our bodies brush in places that send shivers

down my spine.

“Beneath, on top, sideways...” He traces the edge of my jaw with his lips. “I love having you in every way, at every hour.”

The tip of his length settles between my legs. I expect him to slide into me; instead, he rubs against me so that his erection gets coated in my wetness and my clit keeps swelling from the friction. I dig my nails into his shoulders, and a soft masculine groan escapes his throat. The contact of every inch of his skin with mine is magnetic. The room has disappeared for me—I can only see and feel him. Nothing else matters. By the way his eyes drink me in, I know he feels the same. I’ve never felt more connected to another person.

“What are *you* looking at?” I whisper.

“You. I was wondering how I could have gone so long without knowing you.”

AD

Comment

## Sold to the Night Lord

## Chapter 167

His words aren't the only thing stealing my breath. He enters me in one deep thrust that makes me scream his name. My hands slide from his shoulders to the small of his back, urging him to keep moving. He brushes the edge of his fangs along my throat, arousing me even more. I look down and see the union of our bodies. The shine of my arousal coats his shaft, and I tremble from head to toe. Each thrust is slow and hard, making my breasts bounce against his chest and my nails leave marks on his back. He plants kisses along the curves of my breasts and nibbles my nipples with playful tugs.

Imoan his name over and over, and let out a surprised cry when he grabs my ass and shifts us until he's kneeling and I'm straddling his hips.

"Cassian... I..."

"Ride me like you still hate me."

I wrap my arms around his neck and start moving against him, chasing the friction of my clit against his pubic bone. I feel myself climbing the peak but can't reach it no matter how much I stretch toward it. Cassian runs his hands down my back in sensual strokes, massages my ass like it's the best thing he's ever held, and slips a finger inside. I gasp at the intrusion, but I can't say a word when it's followed by a bite to my chest. I close my eyes and see stars bursting behind my eyelids. I move on him with abandon, riding the wave of orgasm and refusing to come down. I lower my mouth to the crook of his neck, inhale his rich scent, and sink my teeth into him. The taste floods my tongue and intensifies my climax. It's not just me—Cassian's hoarse moan confirms it. His heat bursts inside me.

He withdraws his fangs; I do the same, and see a trickle of blood fall from his bite marks to my navel. He licks the trail, leaving flames in his wake.

"I can't wait to spend eternity with you," he purrs against my skin.

"I was destined to find you."

"I would've found you even if I wasn't meant to be yours, and you mine. Always. We're above fate's games and manipulations."

"Do you really believe that?"

He cups my sweaty cheeks between his hands.

"I trust completely that I would have chosen you in every life, in every place. You have no idea the power you hold over me, Elara. That's not easy to achieve. Of all the sins I've committed, loving you is my favorite."

“You love me?” I say, voice trembling.

No one, aside from the people I thought were my family, had ever told me they loved me—and even then, I always felt something didn’t quite fit. Their ‘I love you’s always came with pitiful glances. I used to think it was because I had a countdown over my head since birth; now I understand those looks hid something more.

“I thought I was clear enough.” He shifts us so I’m beneath him again, and he’s above me, drinking me in with his eyes. “There’s no other word for the will to live I feel with you.”

“Maybe you’re sick. Can vampires get fevers?”

I pretend to check his temperature, but he swats my hand playfully and lowers his face to my lips, kissing me softly at first, then deeper, ending with a tug on my lower lip.

“You’re in a playful mood today.”

“I’m happy.”

ALORSAL CHAUT

“My be wants to believe it’s bar ause you have me hide you, though I’m mist entirely sure, so it ack why are you happy, Elara?

“Because of you. Buscause I’m finally here. I feel like a completaty different person partly because I

am. I’m happy I met you. Thank you for

ferring me to be strong

“You already were strong

“No, I was resigned. I wanted to die. I wished for death.”

“Because of me, because of my kind.”

“And it’s only fair that you gave me back the desire to live a life I thought wasn’t mine.”

“How ironic.” He strokes my lips with his thumb. “You’ve done the same for me.”

“\_”

He presses his thumb harder against my lips to silence me.

“Your ‘I love you’ can’t come after mine. I want it when it hurts so much to hold it in that you have to let it *out* or die.”

“Did it hurt you?”

“you hurt me always, Elara.” He grabs my hand and places it over the heart that doesn’t beat. “I wish it could beat, because it would beat for you. Every pulse would carry your name, Elara.”

I’m so overwhelmed by his words, by the moment, by everything, that I let the tears fall. He wipes them with his fingers, and a slow, sincere smile spreads across his lips, making him look younger. I never thought I’d see him look anything but deadly, a weapon able to control every feeling and bend others to his will. But here he is, showing me that even villains were once children, and still keep a sliver of hope hidden

inside.

“Such beautiful and dangerous tears...”

He lies beside me, and I feel his release running down my thigh as he watches me for what seems like hours, until I break our gaze and curl into his arms. I breathe deeply, knowing this is one of the few moments of peace I have left, and still, I wouldn’t trade it for anything or anyone else. His heart doesn’t beat, but mine still does—and every beat carries his name.

AD

Comment

## Sold to the Night Lord

### Chapter 168

Elara

+29

I am exhausted. That is the first thing I think when I open my eyes in the morning, and immediately after I feel something heavy on top of me. I lower my gaze to Cassian, who has me surrounded with his whole body. His leg is between mine, one of his arms is across my hips, and his head has somehow ended up resting on my stomach. I can’t hide the small smile tugging at my lips. It is the first time I have truly slept with him, the first time I see his features so relaxed. He looks like a child lying on me, so delicate and peaceful...

I stroke his forehead with my fingers, brushing away the thick black of his hair. An invisible hand squeezes my heart at the sight. I think it would be impossible to wipe the happiness from my face in this moment. I feel life radiating from every *one* of my pores, warmth flooding every cell, even though it is really the opposite and my whole body is frozen for eternity. This is the effect he has on me—maybe it was strong before, but resignation had been a coat I couldn't take off. The meaning of living had been lost somewhere between my birth and my coming of age, and although I still don't know what my purpose in this life will be, I know I don't want to leave it without wringing it dry. And now it seems I will have many, many years to do so.

"If you keep looking at me like that, I think I'm going to get jealous of myself."

My naked body reacts instantly to the rough sound of his voice. I never imagined a sleepy voice could be so erotic.

"Your eyes are closed, how do you know I'm looking at you?"

He tightens his hold on my waist and buries his face even deeper into my stomach, brushing my skin with his lips and the tip of his nose.

"Let's just say I felt a bit of warmth on my face."

I manage to give him a little smack on the shoulder in reproach. He presses a kiss above my navel and, in the blink of an eye, is on top of me, his arms braced on either side of my head. His eyes are now a dark, intense blue.

"How are you feeling?" he asks, just a breath away from my mouth.

"Like I was run over by a horse-drawn cart."

"More like I tortured you with my p—"

"Overpowering personality?"

He laughs against my mouth before kissing me deeply. I can't resist his lips, and I moan into him. That seems to please him, as he lets out a deep groan in the middle of the kiss. Neither of us has had enough—our eager caresses and the friction of our bodies make that clear. Before we realize it, he is buried deep inside me, moving his hips against mine until he finds the perfect rhythm. I rake my nails down his back and he kisses my neck, delivering small bites that fan the fire in my stomach. Unlike the night before, our movements are more frantic, wild, and rushed. We are in a race to push each other to the climax, one neither of us is willing to lose. He thrusts deep enough to hit the furthest point inside me, almost painfully, and then I shatter, a cry of his name spilling from my lips.

Immediately, while Tam still falling from the peak, I feel him follow me, his release spilling between my thighs. He licks at the corners of my mouth, leaving a faint metallic taste there.

“I want to show you something,” he says.

“Now?”

“Well, as soon as you put some clothes on and get something to eat.” I can still feel him half-hard when he pulls out of me. “Call me a bad person, but I plan on depriving the world of this view.”

I roll my eyes as he stretches off of me. He shows me his magnificent form—he almost looks like a fallen angel, a work carved in marble, a

14:16 Sat, 9 **Aug**

man touched by divine hands. Any word of grandeur feels too small. He helps me to my feet and leads me to a bathtub steaming with heat.

“When did they prepare the bath?”

“I think Ank knows we need it.”

He winks at me and helps me sink into the hot water. I wish I could say the water dulls my need for him, but the truth is we end up tangled together again. We are like animals, unable to resist the most carnal call of nature.

Cassian gets out of the water before I do, and after a few minutes I follow, wrapping my body in a robe. I find him by a table I hadn’t noticed last night, buttoning his shirt with precision.

“I gave Naida and Clarissa some time off, so there’s new staff who will take care of whatever you need for now.”

I nod, and at that moment, as if she had been waiting for some kind of signal, a young red-haired woman appears. She approaches in silence, pushing a cart. She sets a plate covered with a cloche on the table, along with a chalice full of blood and a small bottle of brown liquid: The girl seems nervous, avoiding looking at either of us until I deliberately seek her gaze. For a brief moment I can see her eyes are green, and her face is so covered in freckles it’s as if someone had shaken a paintbrush over her skin.

“Do you need anything else, sir?”

“That’s all for now.”

Cassian sits at the head of the table, and I take the seat to his left. I uncover what I assume is my plate and find eggs, bacon, and cubes of

cheese among other things. The sound of the bottle being uncorked catches my attention.

“To prevent more Vitalle bastards from wandering around here,” he says upon seeing my curious expression.

“It doesn’t look pleasant.”

“I assure you it tastes even worse.” He brings it to his lips and downs it in one go. “In fact, I think it gets more disgusting every day.”

I wrinkle my nose just thinking of its possible taste. I pick up my utensils and begin cutting into breakfast, and when I take a bite, I realize I am

hungrier than I thought.

“Last night you said my tears are dangerous. Did you mean because seeing me sad is your weakness?” I ask with a smug smile.

He falls silent, watching me intently, though I know he’s really thinking, weighing his words.

“I suppose it’s only fair you know,” he replies. “Now part of you is like us—maybe what I’m about to say isn’t really a threat, but it won’t hurt for you to know it. Have you ever been told how to kill a Pure?” I shake my head, though he doesn’t really need my answer. The weakness of the Pures has always been a well-kept secret. “What gave us life can take it away.”

“I don’t think I follow...”

“Lilith.” He runs the tip of his fingers along the rim of the chalice in front of him. “Her tears are like poison to us.”

“But Lilith isn’t here.”

“No, but several times throughout history, humans have managed to make pacts with demons, and they’ve taken care of stealing them. Your mother is in the Pits, I know that now. And in a place like that, I doubt it would be hard to make her cry—especially if she’s constantly being tortured.” He lifts his gaze to meet mine. “I think your tears could have the same effect.”

## Sold to the Night Lord

## Chapter 169

“You’ve licked my tears and nothing happened.” I think for a few seconds. “Wait, Atarothz told me we... counteract each other or something. That’s why I was able to come back after...”

“I broke you and you came back, I licked your tears and survived. It doesn’t seem far-fetched if Lilith truly thought of us as the perfect union- two halves of a whole.”

A remain silent, trying to process this information and turning his theory over in my mind. He could be right-it makes sense.

“If the Pures weren’t terrified before, imagine if they found this out,” I say.

“I won’t let them find out.” He reaches out to take my hand. “Besides, we’re not sure yet.”

“Yet?”

“At some point, we’ll have to settle the doubt.”

“By killing a Pure?”

“You think you won’t have to do it at some point? I think we both know it’s too naive to believe that.”

“I don’t need tears for that, Cassian. I take souls.”

“Then let’s just call it an experiment to confirm our theory.”

“I’m not sure if I should be scared by how easily you talk about killing one of your own.”

“I won’t hesitate to eliminate anyone who poses a threat to you-you should know that by now.”

I take another bite of my breakfast, knowing full well that the possibility of his kind wanting to harm me is very real. However, thinking about it would only drag me into a spiral of worry I don’t want to fall into today-not after the wonderful night we’ve spent together. Cassian must think the same, because he finishes the contents of his chalice without adding anything more. Just as I finish my plate, he wipes the corner of

his mouth with his thumb and stands, offering me his hand.

I take it, intertwining my fingers with his.

“Where are we going?”

He doesn't answer right away, too focused on leading us through the castle and later through the gardens. I look around in recognition- nothing has changed since I left. Everything is still full of that dark, dangerous beauty.

"Earlier I told you I wanted to show you something."

"The gardens?"

He steps closer, never breaking my gaze, until we reach what looks like a wall of vines. He pushes them aside with his hand and helps me step through without catching my feet on any of the scattered roots. While the rest of the gardens, despite their gloomy appearance, are perfectly maintained, this side seems to have been forgotten. That doesn't take away from its majesty-the view chills the blood but also steals the breath. I quickly realize this looks like a cemetery. There are only five graves, and I know for sure to whom two of them belong.

I walk with his presence at my back, and when I pass one of the headstones, I can clearly read the surname Vitalle, though the first name is less legible.

"Blyana Vitalle, my mother," he murmurs. "And that is my father, Alastor Vitalle."

**14:16**

**Sat, 9 Aug**

I say nothing, instead, I reach out to brush his hand and give it a squeeze, letting him know I share his pain. A breeze lifts my hair and stirs the leaves in its path. The scent of flowers fills my lungs.

"I know it's painful and I don't know if you're ready," he begins to say as he guides me a few steps forward, "I just wanted you to know that! didn't abandon them. I know they're important to you, and what matters to you matters to me too."

I know what he's talking about before my eyes see it. Three tombstones, side by side, with the surname Ruggiero on each and my family's names freshly carved. There are fresh flowers, and I don't know what detail makes my eyes fill with tears. Not a single one falls down my cheeks, as if Cassian's confession had scared me enough to keep them from spilling. He wraps his arms around me while I break silently. He places a kiss on my hair and I dig my nails into his shirt to stop myself from screaming or losing control. I can no longer be the person who couldn't master her temper; losing control could unleash something serious that I would regret.

"Darling, you can cry with me," he whispers in my ear.

I shake my head, with a lump in my throat that keeps me from speaking. So, since my tears have frozen on the edge of my eyes and the words refuse to come, I do the only thing

left to me. I kneel on the ground and caress the letters of my sister's name, closing my eyes to push away the cruel images that assault my mind. Cassian doesn't move away from me, warming my body with his presence. He is patient; he doesn't seem to mind that I stay here on the ground for so long that the damp earth begins to seep into my bones.

"Your brother comes almost every day."

He knows perfectly well that hearing that gives my soul some comfort. Every time my mind turned toward them, I selfishly closed the door and tried to forget them, because it was too painful for me.

"Maybe you'd prefer their bodies to rest in Ravka..."

I lift my gaze toward him, standing there watching me.

"Can they stay here?"

"Of course. They're your family and you..." I catch the slight movement of his Adam's apple as he swallows. "You are mine."

"You hate humans."

"True. But not you."

I get to my feet, aware that my dress is ruined with dirt stains and leaves stuck to it. I move forward to take shelter in his arms and wrap my own around his waist to be closer to him. I inhale the scent embedded in his clothes.

"Thank you, Cassian."

"Anything for you, Elara."

## Sold to the Night Lord

### Chapter 170

At no moment does he make me feel that what he said isn't serious. I don't see a trace of annoyance on his face—not even when I spend more than an hour talking alone to the tombstones while he remains by my side every second. We return to the castle, and I don't miss the glances from the staff and the *saciadoras* who watch me from the top of the stairs, thinking they're doing a good job hiding. He follows the direction of my gaze and gestures to one of his workers.

"Please see to finding the homes of each one and returning them to their place of origin. Their services are *no* longer required."

The young man's eyes widen in astonishment; however, he says nothing.

"Of course, sir."

He withdraws without turning his back, and we continue on our way to the abandoned library I used to escape to so often in my first weeks here. We descend the stairs, our shoulders brushing.

"Why did you do that?" I ask in a low voice.

"I haven't touched any of them since I met you. It's a waste of resources to keep them here."

"You're only doing it for the resources?"

I make a face and raise my eyebrows, not quite believing it. I feel him everywhere when he manages to trap me against the wall of the staircase. I place one hand on his chest while the other is caught by his, just inches above my head.

"Do you want me to tell you I want them gone because just looking at them bothers me? That I feel like an idiot for having so many women

under my roof when I only care about one living and sleeping by my side? Do you want me to tell you that just thinking about tasting them makes my stomach turn?" He rests his forehead against mine and brushes my lips. "Because all of that is true."

My stomach tightens under the intensity of his gaze.

"Keep your hands to yourselves and get down here already!" a familiar voice shouts.

I can't hide my smile. I slip away from Cassian's prison and descend the remaining steps toward my little corner, which looks exactly as I remember it. On the table, a candle is burning low, and on it, sitting, is the cheerful salamander. Ank bounces on the wax that melts under

her fiery feet. I approach quickly until I'm close enough to crouch and put my face at her level.

"You have no idea how much I've missed you, girl," Ank exclaims with a strangled voice, as if she's about to cry. "I was worried sick about

you."

"Ank, I couldn't see you through the fire these last few weeks. We think Ciro has protective spells over the whole villa."

The fire fairy nods emphatically, as if sniffing back her nose. Her tears evaporate as quickly as they spring from her flaming eyes.

“Thank you, Ank.” I give her head a gentle tap as a caress. “I really appreciate your concern.”

I take one of the chairs around the table, and Cassian follows suit. For a while, we just look at each other, unsure what to say, until the salamander breaks the silence.

“So, how are we going to protect her?”

“By fighting, as always.”

“You’re strong, but you can’t fight the shapeshifters alone, and you can’t kill the Pure; you’ll need them.”

“I’ll kill them if they try to hurt Elara.”

“Are you aware you’d need me for that?” 1 reply.

“I can always break them,” he answers with an arrogant smile.

“Do they know what it is?”

“No. And I’d like to keep it that way.”

“If they find out she can keep perpetuating the race...” Ank warns.

“No one is going to use me as if I were just a womb to bear children,” I interrupt.

“Of course not,” Cassian agrees, taking my hand and caressing my knuckles. “We’ll kill them before that idea even crosses their minds.”

He forces a smile, though Ank doesn’t seem very convinced. I think they keep talking, but my mind has already drifted far away. I start looking for possible solutions and escapes to this tragedy that could happen at any moment. **If** I let my mind wander down the darkest paths, I see myself used, humiliated, abused. All to perpetuate a race that supposedly is also part of me and that would very likely have no qualms about committing the worst horrors against me.

A risky idea—one might even say a crazy one—crosses my mind. I don’t give myself much time to think it through. I suddenly stand up, drawing both their attention.

“I’ll be right back.”

Cassian makes a move to follow me, but I gesture for him to stay. I climb the stairs, leave the library, and head for the room of the only person

I think can help me, the one who has shown she's willing to support me in my most horrible and reckless ideas.

Evanora...