

Rebirth: Fated to the Lycan King #Revival 151 -160

Read Rebirth: Fated to the Lycan King Revival 151

Chapter 151

Darius pov

"Now that I think about it, I do not know the true identity of that boy, Kieran. He came to my pack one day, claiming his parents was dead and asking if we could accept him into the Emberfang," Ethan, the girl's father, explained with a frown as I held the coin in my hand, staring at it without a word.

"At first, I thought he was a rogue trying to infiltrate the pack. Since rogues are known for taking Ashvein, I ordered a drug test to confirm if he was truly one. No matter what, Ashvein is a substance that, once taken will always remain in your blood. But..." He paused, voice gruffer. "He passed the test. Kieran came out completely clean that day, and since it seemed unlikely he was a rogue, I took him in."

I tilted my head, my cold eyes fixed on the head side of the coin, still saying nothing, watching it carefully.

"I had thought at the time that even if he was a rogue, it would be safer to keep him close, watch him and if he did anything stupid, I wouldn't hesitate to end his life. That was my original plan. But after a year had passed since his arrival, and he did nothing suspicious during that period, my guard began to lessen, especially..." He cleared his throat, as though unsure if he should continue.

Silence filled the room at his hesitation, and I could feel everyone's gazes on me—Cassian, Drake, and the Emberfang beta and gammas.

They all stared at me as if expecting me to speak, but I didn't. I had no intention of speaking.

Instead, I turned the coin over, my expression cold and unchanging as my eyes lingered on the other side. Ethan seemed to realize I wasn't going to say anything, but the next second, he sighed and continued without being asked.

"I lessened my guard, especially when Nyssa started liking that bastard. He was all she could talk about, and whenever she did, she was happier and more cheerful than usual."

Ethan straightened in his seat, his eyes locked on me.

"Alpha Darius, my daughter had always believed that, being wolfless, she would never find her mate and no one would ever accept her. But then that bastard deceived her,

and she fell hopelessly in love with him so much so that she couldn't even bear to see him hurt. She would rather be the one suffering in his place."

His voice was firm, but before I could stop myself, the corner of my lips curved into a humorless smirk as the words from yesterday echoed in my mind:

"Okay! I don't mind giving you my body if it means you'll help me find him. Alive or dead, it doesn't matter, I just want to see him. Or his corpse. With my own eyes. You can use force to drag him here if he's alive, or dig up his grave if he's not. I really don't care."

"And her best friend, Aria... my daughter must have felt deeply betrayed by her. She truly loved her."

"You know Aria? My ex-best friend? If you could also find her body, I'd be thrilled. In fact, I'd be really glad if you brought Kieran to me alive and found Aria's body too. But if you can't manage both, then just Kieran will do."

A small scoff escaped me at his words. I rested my head on one hand, idly toying with the coin before finally speaking, my voice a deep hum.

"Cut to the chase. What do you want to say?" I asked, emotionless. Out of the corner of my eye, I caught the visible stiffening of everyone present at my voice. But Ethan, perhaps knowing I didn't like repeating myself, finally spoke.

"W-what I am simply saying is that my daughter's servant, Serena, was also deceived. She didn't give the guard Ashvein on purpose, and if you can find it in your heart to forgive her, then I would be truly grateful to you, Your Majesty," he said respectfully, lowering his head slightly.

My gaze flickered away from the coin. I stared at nothing in particular for a brief moment before inhaling sharply, flipping the coin into the air and catching it in my palm, then finally turning to Ethan with a cold gaze, leaning forward on the desk.

"I see... so you want to beg for the life of the servant? Is that it?" I asked, and Ethan swallowed hard before nodding without hesitation.

"Yes, my king. That girl grew up with my daughter, and I also take her as my own child. Plus... I made a promise to someone to keep her safe."

He closed his eyes briefly before rising from the seat and dropping to the ground, his head bowed respectfully as he echoed,

"Please show the girl mercy. I beg of you, Your Highness. I will do whatever you want, but please return her to my daughter."

Almost immediately, the beta and gamma also dropped to their knees, bowing their heads as they repeated,

“We beg for your mercy, my king!”

The air grew thick with tension as I watched. Instead of speaking, I casually flipped the coin, as though I couldn’t see any of it.

Out of the corner of my eye, I caught Cassian and Drake exchanging a glance, clearly torn. It was *obvious* they wanted to plead for the servant as well, but they held back, perhaps afraid it might appear they were taking sides.

“I see,” I hummed nonchalantly, uncaring that these people had dropped to their knees.

It wasn’t something I would pay attention to. Just because they begged for forgiveness didn’t mean I would care—Alpha or not.

“Mercy? You want me to show mercy to a traitor? But why should I?”

As soon as I spoke, everyone stiffened. Ethan lifted his head and, as his gaze met mine, I watched him swallow hard, his breath shaky. My eyes flashed white, and the corner of my lips curved into a humorless smirk as I flipped the coin in my hand once again, catching **it** between two fingers. The words left my mouth in a low whisper.

“No matter the reason, that servant betrayed your daughter. She betrayed you, didn’t she?”

I tilted my head, my smirk widening. “It doesn’t matter what she did as long as she betrayed you, then she should die... shouldn’t **she**?”

Chapter 152

Darius pov

Death.

That was the punishment traitors deserved without a second thought. Those who betray others, no matter the reason must face **death for the** wound left by betrayal cuts as deep as any blade.

Back then, I had felt that very sting, betrayed by the man I trusted and loved... my own brother.

It was my blood brother who had deceived me, who had allied with the elders for the sake of a throne I didn’t even want, and who had taken my mate’s life. That day would

forever be carved into my memory, walking into her room to find her on the ground, blood pooling around her as she clutched at the foot of that man in disbelief.

I could still remember the shock that froze me in place as I stepped inside and took in the scene before me.

My brother, Dalton, stood over her with a sickening grin on his lips, a dagger dripping with her blood in his hand.

A dagger I knew too well, the moon dagger given to me by the diviner, who claimed the goddess herself had chosen it for me.

She had called it precious, a powerful symbol that the goddess had accepted me wholeheartedly as the Lycan King.

I had been proud to own it, treasured it and that bastard had known. That's why he had used it to kill her, to stain its silver edge with her blood.

That was his cruel revenge on me.

So it explained why I had stood at the door without moving for a brief moment as she gasped in pain, her teary eyes locked on him.

It was her words that had seemed to snap me out of my daze that day.

"Why—why would you betray him like this, Dalton...? I—if he finds out, he would never forgive you. He loved you. He trusted you!"

After those words, everything became a blur. All I knew was that a scream tore from the deepest parts of me as I threw him aside and cradled her in my arms, whispering and begging her to stay with me to stay alive, despite knowing she wouldn't survive the fatal wound caused by the moon dagger.

It was a dagger designed to kill werewolves, and it was no surprise when Dalton had tried to stab me with it. But in my rage, I had killed him without an ounce of emotion.

I tore him apart, and before I came back to my senses, I had killed the elders too, after discovering they were in cohorts with Dalton.

I frowned through the haze of my thoughts, my brows creasing together as I finally realized something that had slipped my mind for a long time.

The moon dagger.

I hadn't seen it since Dalton's death. When everything cleared, the dagger was gone, and I had searched for it for years after what happened but I could never find it

It was as though it had vanished into thin air.

“M—my **king**,” Ethan’s timid voice snapped me out of my daze, and I **lifted a** brow as my **gaze flickered to him, kneeling on the ground with his beta** and gamma.

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“Please... please, I’m begging you, free the servant. I—I know what she did was wrong, but I swear she didn’t mean to betray my daughter. She didn’t mean to interfere with the rogue’s matter.”

He pleaded, and I shifted my gaze away with a silent scoff before leaning back with the coin in my hand, no longer in the mood to **speak** with any of them. Instead of wasting time, I did what I always did whenever I couldn’t make a decision.

I flipped the coin once, then held it between my fingers, my voice dropping into a low hum.

“How about we let the coin decide?” I began, and everyone immediately looked up at me as I held it, staring at the glinting metal.

“You claim the girl didn’t mean harm and that I should pardon her, right? But I don’t want to do that. I want to torture her until she begs for death... and then grant it. Still, I will be fair.”

The air turned colder at my words, and I could feel the atmosphere shift. I turned the coin to show them one side.

“If it lands on heads, the girl lives. I’ll forget everything and pardon her. But...”

I rotated it slowly, revealing the other side.

“If it’s tails, she dies by my hands. As simple as that.”

As soon as I finished, a tense silence fell over the room. Everyone exchanged uneasy glances, everyone except Cassian and Drake.

Their gazes were different. A flicker of grief crossed their faces, as if they already knew the outcome, knew the coin would land in my favor.

Just like it always had.

But don’t get me wrong, I wasn’t the kind of man who cheated or rigged the coin. For some reason, it simply always landed on the side! chose whenever I flipped it. Cassian

called it an insane amount of luck, but I never thought much of it. It was just my way of deciding without really deciding or at least pretending to be fair.

Ethan didn't speak for a long moment, his eyes fixed on me, until they sharpened with determination. He gave a slow nod.

"I agree to this, *my* king. Thank you for your kindness."

I caught the quiet voice of someone behind him, his beta or gamma, I wasn't sure.

"Alpha..."

The man's words trailed off, as though he couldn't bring himself to finish. Judging from his expression, he'd been about to tell Ethan not to agree. But Ethan didn't even glance his way as he replied in a low murmur,

"This is the only way we can save Serena... her fate now depends on luck."

The corner of my lips twitched, and I couldn't help but commend him for being a smart man.

From what I had seen, he truly deserved the title of Alpha, he knew when to act and when to hold back.

That was... impressive.

"Okay then," I said flatly, gripping the coin tighter before flipping it into the air. As it spun, everyone held their **breath, the tension in the room** growing thicker with every second.

When it landed in my hand, my eyes flickered **to it.,,** and I smirked.

Chapter **153**

Chapter 153

Darius pov

Tails. I won.

"I will personally interrogate the girl tonight. I don't want to hear about this matter from you or anyone else again," I said, **my** voice low and devoid of emotion as I walked toward the door. I paused briefly, glancing over my shoulder to find Ethan and his men staring **at** the ground, their expressions heavy with sorrow.

"Do you understand?" I asked flatly.

Silence hung in the air until Ethan finally drew in a deep breath and replied,

“Understood, my king.”

Without another word, I turned back to the door and left the study, heading toward my room with my hands tucked into my pockets. Just as I expected, Silas’s voice broke the quiet.

“Darius, you-”

“I don’t want to hear it,” I cut him off before he could finish, my voice colder and sharper than I intended.

“If it were anyone else, I’d do the same without hesitation and you wouldn’t care. So why does she get special treatment?” I asked as I reached for the door, pushing it open and stepping inside. The moment I entered, I shut it behind me.

Standing in the quiet space, my eyes traced the entire room and for a moment, I couldn’t move, my legs felt glued to the ground and all I could hear was the rapid thump of my heartbeat as I took in the room where I had kept all her belongings.

All her memories.

Her paintings, her jewelry, her clothes, her shoes, everything that once belonged to her, everything that could remind me of her.

“Do you know what’s more upsetting about this, Silas?” I whispered under my breath, walking to a painting covered with a white cloth. As I pulled it away, the image of my Liana smiling brightly in a white dress met my eyes.

“That you seem to have forgotten about her... that you’ve let go of the past. Let go of her.”

I reached out to the painting and, almost in a daze, my fingers brushed against her cheek. For a brief moment, my vision blurred, and a heavy wave of sorrow crashed over me.

“Even though her memories will be forever imprinted in our minds for as long as we live... don’t you feel even a shred of guilt, knowing everything that happened was our fault? If we had paid more attention to her and those gossips... if we hadn’t felt so guilty about taking the throne from Dalton and looking away as he committed those little crimes, if we had just gotten there sooner, saved her then she would have lived. Our child would have lived.”

My fingers trembled against the painting, and for the first time in years, I felt the very emotions I had locked away, the ones I had sworn I didn't deserve to feel, the ones I promised myself I'd never let surface again.

Yet every day, I relive it—again and again. The goddess had been so cruel, ensuring I could never forget the pain I felt **or the blood** I had **shed** that day.

“Darius...”

Silas called my name, then paused. His voice was low, and I could hear the faint tremor behind it.

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“I **haven't forgotten** what happened that day to our mate, Liana. I haven't forgotten her... her memories still burn in **my**

mind, and over a find **myself** thinking about what we lost. That day, we lost everything our mate, our child... and the people we used to **be**

My fingers brushed lightly over the painting, as if I could truly feel her through the canvas.

“But we can't live like this forever, you know. I'm not certain but I think the Goddess is giving us a second chance, to finally be **happy. And** that happiness... is Nyssa, our second-chance mate. Can't we be selfish, just this once? Can't we choose happiness? Why are you **pushing** Nyssa away? Don't we deserve it?”

My fingers froze over the painting, and for a brief moment I said nothing. My eyes were vacant, my expression empty and hollow as I stared **at** Liana. Then, the next second, I frowned, reached forward to cover the cloth over the painting, and stood straight, tucking my hands into **my**

pockets.

Under my breath, I muttered,

“No, we don't deserve happiness. Our happiness died that very day. So I don't want to hear another word about that girl from you. Don't **test** me, Silas. Sure, I can't end her life, but that doesn't mean she can't suffer by my hands.”

Silas didn't respond, maybe because he knew I was serious. He simply huffed and cut off contact with me. In an instant, my eyes turned cold,

all emotion and vulnerability vanishing. At that exact moment, there was a knock on the door.

I shifted my gaze toward it, my frown deepening since no one was allowed near this room, not even Cassain. Still, I walked over and opened it to find Sandra standing before me, her blind white eyes narrowed on me and a smile etched across her face. She lowered her head respectfully and spoke.

“Greetings to the king. The lady has been given food and has settled down.”

I raised a brow, mild confusion flickering across my features before speaking.

“And why are you telling me this?” I asked, not caring what the she-wolf did. I didn’t remember asking her.

Sandra’s smile seemed to widen at my question, but she simply explained.

“My apologies, my king. I just thought you would like to know.”

Her eyes glistened with a certain glint as she looked straight at me, and for some reason, I didn’t like it. It reminded me of someone, a glint I had seen before but couldn’t quite place.

That reminded me.

Sandra. Who exactly was this woman? She was the head attendant, right? That was what Claude had told me. He had said she had been working in the pack for a long time but...

I narrowed my eyes at her, studying her carefully.

I didn’t seem to recall her or rather, my memory of her felt hazy.

However, before I could dwell on it, something/suddenly slammed into me, making me frown. A sharp, splitting pain shot through **my skull**, and I instinctively reached up, clutching my head with a grimace.

But just as quickly as it came, it was gone, leaving me blinking in confusion, only for Sandra’s voice to snap me out of **my d**

“I apologize for bothering you, my king. I will be taking my leave now,” she said with a respectful bow.

As *she* turned to leave, I caught the faint, amused smirk curling her lips, before she closed the door behind her.

I stood there for a moment, drawing in a slow, steady breath, before running a hand through **my hair** and turning **back** toward the paintings little bewildered that I had completely forgotten what I'd been thinking just moments ago.

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Chapter 154

Nyssa pov

“Serena will be interrogated by the Lycan King tonight, Nyssa. I'm sorry, but your father is weak, there's nothing I can **do**, **Her** fate **has** already been decided.”

That was what my father had told me earlier this afternoon when he returned from his meeting with Darius. In that moment, **I wasn't even** sure what I felt hearing him say those words. The only thing I knew was that my father had truly tried his best to save Serena... but he couldn't do any more.

He had to think about his position.

As the Alpha of the Emberfang Pack, he couldn't risk doing anything that might harm the welfare of the pack, especially not something **that** would anger Darius. So when he told me all this, I forced myself not to react. I simply said I understood and urged him to return to our pack before it got too late.

I could tell he didn't want to leave, likely because he suspected I might do something reckless. But he eventually left after saying his **final** goodbye to Serena. I wasn't certain, but Isabella later told me that she had heard from the prison guard that he had cried too.

And now that he was gone and night had fallen, I realized my father had been right.

I was about to do something reckless.

“M—my lady...” Isabella whispered, her voice breathless as we hid behind the wall, watching the packhouse servants pass by and do their chores, unaware that both Isabella and I were hiding just behind them.

“I—I don't think this is right, my lady. If anyone catches us, then I might be punished...” she said again, her body trembling as I stood behind her, leaning slightly to poke my head out while trying to stay hidden.

“You don't have to worry about that, Isabella. I just need you to guide me to the cell where Serena is, and then you can go back and act like you know nothing. This won't affect you,” I explained once again, keeping my voice low.

So, you're probably wondering what I was doing here with my temporary servant, right? **It** was pretty simple, actually.

The reason I had asked Sandra to give me Isabella instead was exactly for this.

So she could lead me to the cell Serena was in and I could help her escape before Darius interrogated her.

I called this secret plan:

Operation Save Serena and Sneak Her Out of the Lunaris Dominion Safely.

Yes, this was my last option to save Serena, and even though I knew it was nearly impossible, I couldn't sit there and do nothing. Sneaking her out of the cell was already an impossible feat on its own, but getting her out of the Lunaris Dominion, where they were strict about no insiders or outsiders ever crossing pack boundaries was another challenge entirely.

Yet I also knew I couldn't just stand by. So, now that Darius was in his study, busy with Cassian and Drake, I took the perfect opportunity to

ask Isabella nicely and by nicely, I mean threaten her with my aura to direct me to the cell.

Since she was already afraid of me in the first place, convincing her was easier than I expected.

"B—but Miss Sandra will know that it was me who—" Her words trailed off as my eyes narrowed. I quickly pulled **her** back. wrapping tightly around her waist while the other covered her mouth, silencing her just as the laughter of the passing **maids rang out in the**

st me, one arm

air.

That **is** what **I'm saying**. **Beta** Cassian **is so** cutel Such a shame his **mate**, Lady Ella, doesn't **seem**

to live him much one of the fint for the **they walked past us**, oblivious **to our** presence.

"**Right! Even** though the Lycan King is the most handsome man in the packhouse, all the girls have a crush on Sir **Zayn**, Beta Cassan and Gamma Drake...

Their voices faded as they walked farther away and I tilted my head slightly in mild surprise,

Huh. So Darius wasn't the most loved by women? I'd thought he would be, judging by his appearance but then again, personality was just as important.

The corner of my lips curved into a slight, smug, sneer before I could stop myself. I couldn't help

"Hmmm."

but think it served him right.

Isabella shook her head, her hand reaching for mine over her mouth, clearly trying to tell me to let go.

Ah, right. I forgot.

I removed my hand from her mouth and pulled away slightly, muttering a quick apology.

"Sorry for that, Isabella. It was a mistake," I whispered.

She immediately waved her hands and lowered her head slightly.

"N-no, miss. It's okay. You don't have to apologise,"

she said, her voice trembling.

I frowned, studying her.

Why was she so scared of me? Sure, I'd unleashed my aura that day, but that didn't mean she needed to tremble around me every time... If anyone saw this, they'd probably think I was bullying her, which I swear! wasn't.

(TDT)

"You know, you really don't have to be so frightened of me," I said, leaning toward her with a grin. Being taller, I easily towered over her, and she gasped, leaning back slightly as I went on.

"I won't do anything bad to you unless you provoke me. So, you don't need to look so scared, I'm actually a very nice person, okay?"

I tried putting on my kindest expression but it seemed to have the opposite effect. She swallowed hard, trembling even more before stammering,

"O-of course, my lady. I am not scared of you."

Her fingers fidgeted with the hem of her dress, and for a moment, I just stared at her before scoffing softly and leaning back to mutter under my breath,

“Liar.”

She blinked, clearly startled but the next second, her gaze dropped to the floor. She didn’t say a word and I realized I might have scared her more than I intended that day. So, I sighed and offered a quiet apology.

“I’m sorry for frightening you. I can take things said to me but not to my pack or the people I hold dear. I didn’t mean to **scare** you,” **I said and** her eyes widened slightly at my words. When she looked back up at me, I gave her a sincere grin.

“Thank you for showing me to the dungeon. I promise this won’t affect you,” I added before leaning against the wall, poking **my head out to**

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see **if** the coast was clear.

But before I could take another step, I heard her speak, her voice small and hesitant.

“M–Miss... forgive me, but I lied to you.”

I blinked in confusion and turned to see her swallowing hard, her face blooming into a deeper shade of pink. She looked away quickly, pointing toward the opposite direction.

“I’m sorry... but that’s the way to the dungeon not here”

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Chapter 155

Nyssa pov

Isabella had lied to me. She had lied about wanting us to roam around the packhouse instead of going to the dungeon because she was scared **of** getting into trouble.

And to be honest, I wasn’t even upset or annoyed. I could understand her. She didn’t want to get punished, and knowing how terrifying Darius could be, he probably would have made her pay for it. But I wasn’t going to let this implicate her in any way.

If anyone found out, it would be solely my fault.

I had promised her that. And so, as we walked silently toward the dungeon, sneaking past maids and the guards stationed around, I didn’t actually think it was necessary to

move so cautiously. I had already borrowed one of Isabella's maid outfits before leaving my room. Still, just in case someone might recognize me, I opted to keep quiet and make myself as invisible as possible, especially trying not to come across Sandra.

Even though she was blind, something told me she would recognize me instantly if she saw me.

"My lady..." Isabella whispered as we ducked our heads, passing by three maids who didn't give us so much as a glance. We pressed ourselves behind a wall when more maids walked past, making sure to avoid unnecessary attention.

"Yes?" I replied, glancing ahead before starting forward again when the coast was clear. She followed closely, her voice timid as she asked,

"F—forgive me for asking, my lady, but... why would you go through all this for a servant?"

My steps faltered briefly at her words, but I kept walking.

"I don't mean any harm, but... we servants have been taught that our entire existence is for our masters. We've been trained to give up our lives for them without hesitation. Our bodies, our lives, they belong to the Lycan King, and only death parts us from him," she explained in a voice so soft it was barely a whisper.

By then, we had stepped out of the packhouse. Apparently, the dungeon was located a few meters away from it.

As the cold air hit my face, she continued,

"I have seen many people of high status treat us servants as nothing more than their possessions. But you are different, my lady. The way you treat Serena... it's different. You don't treat her like a servant at all. And now, you're risking yourself to save her, even though you know you could get in trouble."

She paused, taking a deep breath.

"Why is that?"

Instead of answering, I stopped walking, my ears perking at a sound behind us. Thank the goddess I was used to sneaking around at home—my reflexes kicked in instantly. I grabbed Isabella's hand and pulled her toward a large tree, hiding us both from view.

Almost immediately, voices echoed through the air. Leaning closer to Isabella, who gasped softly, my gaze flicked toward the two men who walked past the tree.

Guards.

“Are you sure you heard a voice here, Liam? You’re not mistaken, right? Honestly, I think you are because who in their right mind would be dumb enough to sneak into the packhouse?” The taller one of the two men said as they both stopped walking.

Chapter 155

The one who had spoken carried a **sword**, while **the** shorter one had a gun strapped to his belt.

Isabella **and I** exchanged a quick look, and I could feel her trembling.

We might’ve been the dumb ones, but we weren’t sneaking into the packhouse, we were trying to sneak out.

“I’m telling you. I heard something, Billy. I’m not exaggerating, I really heard a woman’s voice just now.”

Liam shot back with a confused expression, his eyes narrowing as he scanned the area like he was trying to sniff us out.

A loud smack suddenly echoed through the air, and Liam hissed, rubbing the back of his head as he turned to glare at Billy.

“Of course you’d hear a woman’s voice, you creep. You’ve got a mate at home who’s pregnant. *Don’t* you think you should stop looking **and** fantasizing about other women already?”

Liam growled at Billy’s words and Isabella and I exchanged another incredulous look at the scene unfolding.

“I promise I’ve stopped that already! I only have eyes for my mate, and I’m not lying. But I really did hear a woman’s voice just now,” he insisted, turning sharply toward the tree we were hiding behind.

I stiffened, pressing Isabella and myself closer to the trunk.

Shit. He was walking this way, which was bad because if he caught us, we wouldn’t be able to save Serana. But more importantly, Isabella would be in trouble since she was helping me, and I couldn’t let that happen.

I had promised her she wouldn’t get involved.

My gaze flickered to Isabella and I found her staring back at me, fear filling her eyes as though she knew we were seconds from being caught.

“where are you going now? Let’s just go back. I’m sure there’s no one here, you’re just imagining it. I have to get back to my mate and kids!”.

“Oh, wait a second. Let me check first.”

Liam shot back as Billy spoke, the sound of footsteps drawing nearer, making my frown deepen.

He seemed adamant about checking, and if I didn’t do something now, we’d be exposed.

“M–Miss,” Isabella whispered, breathless. My hands curled into fists as I made my decision.

I didn’t care if I was exposed, but I couldn’t let this affect Isabella, not after I promised. I reached out, gave her arm a reassuring squeeze, and shook my head, signaling for her to stay hidden.

Then I turned, ready to step out and reveal myself to the two men, when something happened, something that made me freeze.

A voice, low and amused, echoed through the air.

“Wow... this is the first time someone’s said I sound like a woman.”

I inhaled sharply, eyes widening in surprise as I instinctively snapped my head toward the direction of the voice and there he was.

Sitting on a branch of the tree we were leaning against, his posture almost lazy, dressed in a baggy shirt that hung slightly open to reveal a hint of his chest. His narrowed eyes were fixed on the two men who now stared up at him in clear surprise. In his hand was **an** apple and **as** the two men blurted out at the same time, he bit into it and smiled.

“Sir Zayn!”

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Chapter 156

Nyssa pov

Oh. My. Goddess.

My jaw practically hit the ground as I stared at Zayn in shock and disbelief, watching him casually grin down at the two men below. His posture was so relaxed he could’ve been mistaken for a sloth. But that wasn’t even the most shocking part—sure, him sitting

up **in a tree was** strange enough, but what truly stunned me was the fact that he had been here the entire time... and i hadn't noticed.

Maybe it would've made sense if I were still wolfless, but after Sheila, my senses had sharpened to the point where I could detect a presence almost instantly. Yet this man had been perched there all along without me realizing. And something told me I still wouldn't have, if he **hadn't** spoken up.

"S—sir Zayn," Isabella whispered, her voice trembling slightly as she stared up at him. Almost instantly, her cheeks flushed a deep pink, clearly mesmerized by his beauty.

And to be fair, I'd agree, Zayn was an undeniably beautiful man. After Darius, he was the second most attractive man I'd seen, followed closely by Cassian and Drake. Sitting there under the moonlight, with the wind ruffling his hair, he looked like something painted by the goddess herself. Any woman would be smitten.

But for some reason, I felt... nothing. Not even the faintest flutter in my heartbeat.

Instead, my mind was preoccupied with the fact that this man had been here all along, his presence completely hidden.

I arched a brow, my gaze narrowing as I studied him.

From what I could tell, he didn't seem like an ordinary doctor.

That or I didn't notice him because I was too busy trying not to get caught.

"Sir Zayn, is that you? What are you doing in the tree?" Billy, the taller of the two asked in confusion, staring up.

Zayn's grin widened and I knew he'd spotted me from the corner of his eye. My heart pounded at the thought that he might expose us.

"Good evening, guards," he greeted casually, lifting a hand in a lazy wave before gesturing toward the tree he sat on.

"I came to get some juicy apples the maids were gossiping about. They called them the forbidden apples of the packhouse, apparently, once you take a bite, you can't get enough. So, naturally, I got curious." His tone was light, almost as if he were telling a story. "And just like they said, after the first bite, I couldn't stop. I just kept eating them one after another."

He pointed toward the ground beneath him, and as the guards followed his finger, so did Isabella and I, only for me to scoff in disbelief at

what I saw.

Beneath him lay a heap of already–eaten apples, and it wasn't just three or four.

No, even from here, I could'clearly tell there had to be at least fifteen... maybe even twenty.

No freaking way, did this man actually eat twenty apples?

"Wow..." the two guards muttered in unison, eyes wide as they stared at the pile I caught the twitch **in** Billy's eye as he muttered, "**You must** have really loved those apples, Sir Zayn...! you ate a lot."

"Yes... I think you ate most of the apples on the tree, Sir Zayn," Liam added, and Zayn chuckled at his words before shaking **his head**.

Chapter 156

"**Oh, I didn't. You don't** have **to worry** about that, there are still more. I think five, but we're in the right **season**, so they'll **grow back in** na

time

A silent scoff escaped me at his words, and I couldn't stop myself from shaking my head as Billy and Liam exchanged a confused **glance**.

This man... he didn't seem too normal.

"I see... haha. It was you, Sir, that I heard then? I thought it was a woman, sorry for the mistake," he said, and I swallowed nervously, turning to Zayn as he spoke.

"Ah, that is fine," Zayn responded, and for the briefest moment, I felt his gaze flicker to me before he returned his attention to the **guards**.

"Sometimes I just like to speak to myself while I'm alone. I talk about different herbs that I mix together to be effective, so you might **have** mistaken me for a woman but I am the only one here."

As soon as he said this, a breath of relief escaped me and I instinctively relaxed.

Liam nodded in understanding.

"Alright, Sir Zayn. Apologies for disturbing you—we'll get back to our work. But be careful though... you know what they say: an apple **a day** keeps the doctor away... and you are a doctor." He snorted, laughing hard at his own joke, while Billy rolled his eyes.

I even caught Isabella cringing slightly, but Zayn actually laughed in amusement and clapped his hands.

“Haha, that was actually a funny joke. I will be careful.”

I watched as both Liam and Billy lowered their heads respectfully to Zayn before walking away, their voices carrying through the air.

“You see? I told *you*, dimwit, there was no *one* there. You already wasted my time.”

“Come on, bro. There was someone there, Sir Zayn so I wasn’t hearing things like you said.”

As soon as *their* voices faded, I released the breath I hadn’t realized I was holding and leaned slightly away from Isabella, who still looked terrified at almost being caught. I couldn’t deny I felt a little bad for forcing her into this situation with me, so I reached out and touched her arm, my voice low as I whispered,

“Isabella, you should go back to the packhouse. Just point me in the direction of the dungeon, I’ll go alone from here.”

Her eyes widened, and the next moment she parted her lips, ready to say something. But before she could, a low, calm voice drifted through the air, and when I tore my gaze from her, it flickered to him.

Zayn was now standing right beside Isabella. I frowned instinctively, realizing I hadn’t even heard him move.

As soon as I met his gaze, the smile on his face widened. He lifted one hand in another casual wave, the other tucked into his pocket.

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Chapter 157

Nyssa pov

I almost rolled my eyes at his words, knowing he was referring to the night he’d caught me sneaking back into the packhouse and **had** helped me slip into my room before the Emberfang Pack guards could catch me. Now, it felt like déjà vu, he’d done the exact same thing **again**, keeping me from being exposed to the guards.

I wasn't sure why he had helped me twice. I knew I should be grateful, but as I looked at him, I couldn't shake the feeling that he seemed different today.

Like a completely different person.

The way he carried himself had changed—he appeared more laid-back, almost lazy. I wasn't certain, but it was nothing like the composed version of him I usually saw. And his clothes...

He stood tall before me in loose, baggy attire, his shirt unbuttoned down to his stomach. If you looked closely, you could catch a glimpse of the rock-hard abs etched along his torso.

But most of all, what felt strangest was his aura. I couldn't put my finger on it, but it seemed different, thicker.

Not the same energy he usually radiated.

"Hm?" Zayn lifted a brow at me when I didn't respond, and I could feel Isabella's confused gaze on us. For a moment, I simply stared at him without saying a word.

"Hmm... why are you staring at me like that—"

He stopped mid-sentence as I suddenly stepped closer, closing the distance between us until we were only inches apart.

Zayn's eyes widened, a little taken aback and as he blinked, I leaned in, narrowing my eyes as I tried to study his aura, without realizing I was well into his personal space.

"H—hey, what are you doing?" Zayn stammered in surprise, hands raised slightly as if to create some distance, and that's when I finally spoke.

"You seem... very different today," I whispered, tilting my head slightly.

Zayn raised a brow at my words, and for a fleeting moment, I thought I saw amusement flash in his eyes before it vanished. He smiled faintly, shaking his head, his warm breath brushing against my lips as he said,

"What are you saying, miss? I don't understand. How am I different today?"

The corners of my lips pulled into a small frown.

He really did seem different... or was I just imagining it?

"Maybe I'm overthinking it," I murmured under my breath. Zayn's smile deepened, and it was only then I realized just how close we were. Clearing my throat, I stepped back.

"I apologize for invading your personal space... and thank you for saving us, Zayn. I'm not sure how to repay you for **this**,

but I am indebted to you," I said.

He chuckled, raising a hand and giving it a casual wave.

"You **don't** have to thank me. It's all good, I couldn't possibly sell out the **king's mate**, **could I now?**"

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His gaze flicked briefly to Isabella, who shuddered visibly, a blush creeping over her cheeks as she shyly avoided his eyes.

"However," he continued, a lazy smile tugging at his lips, "I am curious about what you're doing out here late at night with a servant Planning to flee the Lunar Dominion?" he asked nonchalantly, running a hand through his hair, his eyes glinting **with** amusement

I swallowed hard at his question before shaking my head.

"I'm not running away from the Lunar Dominion Pack," I replied, keeping my tone neutral, I wasn't about to tell him I'd been trying **to** sneak

Serana out.

Still, his grin widened as he leaned in slightly.

"Ah... I heard your female servant was arrested. And now, it seems you're heading toward the dungeon. Tell me, are you trying to sneak **her**

out?"

My eye twitched at how easily he guessed, but I quickly cleared my throat, neither confirming nor denying his words. Instead, I lowered **my** head in quiet gratitude.

"Thank you, Zayn. We'll be parting ways here. I appreciate your help once again," I said, and before he could respond, I turned to Isabella, pulling her a little aside, away from earshot.

Holding her by the arms, I drew her closer. She looked at me in a confused daze, but knowing time was already short, I leaned in and whispered,

“Isabella, you should go back to the packhouse and act like you know nothing. Just describe where the dungeon is, and I’ll find my way **from** there.”

I wanted her to leave for two reasons. First, I didn’t want her to get in trouble, and second, it would be easier to move around without drawing attention.

She blinked a few times, as if trying to process my words, then finally spoke, her tone laced with concern.

“Are you sure, miss? Will you be able to get there safely?”

Her worry caught me off guard. She usually looked at me with fear, yet here she was, concerned for me. I couldn’t help but smile faintly and shake my head. It turned out Isabella wasn’t a bad person after all, she was actually quite a nice girl.

“You remember the question you asked me earlier? Why I don’t treat Serena as just a servant, and why I’m willing to save her even if I’ll be punished later?” I asked. When she nodded, I continued,

“That’s because Serena isn’t just a servant to me, she’s my little sister. I love her, and I always will. In this lifetime, I’ve sworn to myself that I’ll protect the people I love, even if it costs me my life. And Serena... she’s one of them.”

As I spoke, Isabella’s eyes widened, glistening with an emotion I couldn’t quite name.

“So, thank you for helping me with this. I’m truly grateful. But *you* should go now. If anyone asks about me, tell them—‘The miss asked **me to** leave her room, as she wishes to rest without disturbance.’”

I watched her carefully. For a moment, she didn’t respond, just stared at me then she drew in a deep breath and nodded.

“Okay, miss. I’ll do that... and I wish you all the best,” she said softly.

I gave her a small smile and leaned back as she began explaining the way to the dungeon. Once I **understood** her **directions**, **she lowered**

her head respectfully before slipping back toward the packhouse, doing her best to remain unseen.

As soon as she disappeared from sight, I drew in **a** sharp breath and turned toward **the direction she had pointed out. My gaze narrowed**

15:13 Thu, 14 Aug

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determined glint flashing in my eyes as my hands curled into fists.

This was it. I had to help Serena escape quickly. I didn't know when Darius might decide to interrogate her, so I needed **to act before**

"You know, the dungeon is actually hard to find. How about I help you?"

My thoughts shattered at the sound of Zayn's voice. I blinked in surprise, whipping around to find him standing right behind **me**. **I hadn't** expected him to still be here but must of all, he wanted to help me?

"

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Chapter 158

Nyssa pov

As we made our way down the path to the dungeon, my gaze kept flicking to Zayn, who walked casually beside me with a small grin etched on his face. His steps were so silent you could barely hear them, and his posture was completely relaxed, like he wasn't the least bit worried about being caught by the guards. If anything, he looked as though he was simply taking a midnight stroll.

Zayn had volunteered to guide me to the dungeon, claiming that even with Isabella's directions, I might still end up lost since the route was complicated. And now, walking with him, I realized he was right. The path twisted and turned so much that, even after Isabella's explanation, I probably would have ended up wandering in circles.

That was why I felt both grateful and slightly guilty toward this man. Grateful because he had helped me so many times already... and **guilty** because I had unknowingly built a wall between us. I wasn't sure why, but at first, being around Zayn made me feel calm and at peace, yet now, there was a strange, unshakable feeling whenever I was near him.

It seemed to have started when I came to this pack, when the dreams and visions began. Even now, as we walked, that faint shiver along my spine lingered, making me uneasy. Still, instead of showing it, I pushed the feeling aside and tried to make small talk along the way.

“So, Zayn... I heard you’re not from here. What were you doing before you came to the Lycan King’s pack?” I asked, keeping my voice light but low enough not to catch the guards’ attention.

Zayn’s steps didn’t falter at the unexpected question. He didn’t react outwardly, just smiled a little wider before answering.

“Nothing much, I was here and there. I didn’t really belong to any pack, just roamed freely, treating people and curing illnesses. It was easy, since people seemed to know me. Then I met the King’s Beta, Cassian and he asked if I wanted to work here.”

I watched him as he spoke, hands casually tucked into his pockets, his voice low and almost nonchalant.

“And since I’d already been to most of the packs and had nothing better to do, I agreed. After all, the Lunar Dominion is the strongest pack, and it’s been closed off for centuries. All I’d ever heard were rumors... so I thought, why not give it a try? And here I am.”

He explained, and I nodded, understanding why Cassian had invited him to stay in the Lunar Dominion pack. Zayn was that skilled of a doctor. Even back in my pack, there were rumors claiming he was so good he could bring a dead person back to life but of course, that was just an exaggerated tale. No one could bring someone back from the dead except the goddess herself, no matter how talented they were in medicine.

“Since you asked me a question, can I ask you something too?” he said, suddenly stopping, causing me to pause as well.

I frowned in slight confusion, but then my eyes drifted past him to a tall, imposing building that, at first glance, looked truly frightening, radiating an ominous energy that sent a shiver down my spine. Two guards stood rigidly at its entrance, their faces blank and unreadable **as** they kept watch.

I instantly knew that it was the dungeon.

We had arrived at the place where Serena was being kept. My frown deepened as I stared at the building, thinking about how scared she must be right now. Despite the fact that she appeared tough on the surface, Serena was actually soft-hearted and couldn’t handle harsh environments.

I had to get her out quickly.

“Miss, do you love the Lycan King?”

I stiffened at Zayn's sudden question, my attention instantly flicking back to him. I stared at him in confusion **as** he **grinned at me with a** knowing smile that made every hair on my body stand on end.

1/3

I thought I must have misheard him, but when he stayed silent and simply waited for me to respond, I could only ask **again**,

"What did you say?" I asked, watching as Zayn repeated the question without hesitation.

"I apologize if this sounds strange, but... do you love the Lycan King? I'm just curious. You are his second-chance mate, and it **seems your** relationship with him has been improving lately, so I wondered if you've started to fall for him."

My frown deepened instinctively, my gaze narrowing at him in suspicion.

Hm... why was he asking me this? He claimed it was curiosity, but there had to be more to it.

Wait... could it be because-

"Zayn, do you-" I lowered my voice to a whisper, glancing around to make sure we were well out of earshot before pointing to myself with **a** raised brow. "Zayn... you don't like me, right? Is that why you're asking...?"

For the briefest moment, Zayn looked genuinely confused, as if trying to make sense of what I'd just said. Then the amused glint in his eyes twinkled, and he shook his head.

"Oh, of course not, miss. It's not like that. Haha, it could never be like that."

As soon as I heard his words, a pout formed on my lips, and I couldn't help but glare at him. I wasn't sure whether to be relieved that he didn't like me or offended by his reaction.

But then another thought struck me, and my eyes widened.

"Wait... then is it the Lycan King you like-

The disgust that crossed his face was so immediate and obvious that I stopped mid-sentence. As if the very thought was unbearable, he shook his head again and sighed.

"Maybe we can talk about this later, but I'd advise you to save your servant before the next guard rotation begins," he said.

I blinked, finally realizing I didn't have time for this. I gave a quick nod, about to thank him for his help but before I could, he stepped back, tilting his head slightly with a grin.

"I'll distract the guards for you, don't worry," he said, not giving me a second to process his words before pulling a small black cloth from his pocket and using it to cover half of his face. In the blink of an eye, he moved—so fast his figure blurred.

I watched as he appeared in front of the guards. The moment they saw him, they stiffened, instantly on alert. Before **they** could even speak or demand his identity, Zayn had already darted in the opposite direction, away from them.

Almost instantly, the two guards snapped out of their shock and shouted.

"Hey! You! Who are you?!" they yelled, sprinting after him and abandoning their posts.

My eyes widened at the sight, but I didn't waste a second. This was my chance.

I turned sharply toward the dungeon and bolted for it, muttering under my breath,

"Thank you, Zayn. I owe you big time for this."

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Chapter 159

Nyssa pov

As I ran into the dungeon, my steps were fast, though soundless and my breathing were soft, barely audible and once again, I found myself grateful to Zayn that he had helped me and saved me the trouble of trying to get past the guards.

However, as I walked through the two large gates in front of the building, I couldn't help but think about something.

Why were there only two guards at the dungeon? The dungeon wasn't inside the packhouse. It wasn't that far from it, but the route to it was complicated and, unlike the packhouse, it was usually heavily guarded. Yet here, only two guards stood at its gates.

Wasn't this the place where Darius kept his prisoners? Why was it so unguarded? I had expected far more guards, but I knew I couldn't dwell **on** it. I **had** to focus and be careful.

As soon as I stepped inside the dungeon, my eyes briefly scanned the place. It was dark but tidy with black walls and dim torches casting a soft, flickering light along the way.

I frowned and quickly pressed myself against a wall, hiding from view before leaning out slightly to take a closer look. To my surprise, there wasn't a single person around, the whole place was so empty that you could probably hear your voice echo if you spoke.

I wasn't surprised that there weren't any prisoners in sight since they were kept in the cells beneath the building, but the lack of guards was what truly shocked me. Shouldn't they be here in case an intruder came in or someone tried to escape?

I wasn't sure but maybe that was why I had this chilling, uneasy feeling that something wasn't right.

Either way, I leaned back against the wall and shook my head, trying not to think too much about it as I recalled Isabella's words to me.

"When you enter the dungeon, miss, you should go straight. On the right side, as soon as you step inside, there's a stairway. If you **follow** it down, you'll find the cells where the prisoners are kept."

That was exactly how she had described the dungeon's location to me.

Taking a deep breath, I clenched my hands at my sides, ready to move. But just as I began to push away from the wall, the sound of footsteps and a voice reached my ears, making me instantly stiffen. My breath caught in my throat as I quickly pressed back, hiding myself from view.

Almost immediately, a man's voice cut through the air and I could clearly hear the sound of his footsteps just inches away as he passed by and spoke.

"Haha, that's what I'm saying. I really can't wait to go home and get some rest, I'm so tired, man," he began and I frowned, my breathing harsh as I tried not to make a sound and draw his attention, realizing I had been wrong about the guards and had almost gotten caught.

"I don't even know why I was the only one picked to guard the dungeon today. Apparently, it was the king's order that everyone should go home and only three people should stay on guard."

I blinked in confusion at his words. His footsteps stopped, and as he continued speaking, I slowly leaned my head away from the wall before peeking out slightly, seeing his back turned to me. He had stopped walking and in his hand was a phone.

"I'm not joking, bro, he really asked us to do it. I don't have many details, but the head of the guards ordered Erick and Andrew to guard **the** frontes and me to guard the inside. So basically, we're the unlucky ones stuck here. What am I saying? They're lucky to be outside while I'm **stuck inside alone** with these prisoners. I'm even scared to go down into the dungeon."

The man hissed in frustration, running a hand through his hair, and as I watched him, I tried to process everything he was saying while keeping **myself** hidden.

“Of course I’m scared of the prisoners. They’re a troublesome bunch, I know they can not escape their cells so I’ve got the **keys with me**”

My eyes followed his hand as he tapped his waist, where a set of keys hung, making me narrow my **gaze on them**.

14:11 Sat 16 Aug ©

“**But** still, some of them are dangerous criminals, and they scare me, you know.”

He whispered the last words under his breath, then straightened and ran a hand through his hair as he kept talking. My eyes stayed locked **on** the k my jaw tightening as i stared at them.

I wasn’t sure if this was luck or just Darius’s strange order working in my favor, but there was no way in hell I was letting this opportunity **ship by**. The keys to the cells were right there, practically jingling as though they were begging me to take them. And as I turned my attention back to **the** man, I realized the wasn’t even paying attention to his surroundings, which made things easier, especially since I was certain I was stronger than him.

The corner of my lips tugged slightly into an almost–smirk, and for the first time since this whole mess Begari, Sheila’s voice echoed in my head.

“You look ugly when you smile like that,” she said, but my smile didn’t waver. Instead, I lifted my hand into the air and muttered under my **breath**,

“I remember how Father told me to strike the neck when I want to knock someone out instantly... I remember exactly how he said I should do it! murmured, practicing the motion with my hand as my grin widened. I heard Sheila scoff, but before she could say anything, I drew in a sharp, deep breath and moved–so fast that I even surprised myself.

As I closed in on the guard, he suddenly stopped speaking, and I knew he’d sensed my presence. But before he could react, it was too late. I raised my hand higher, then brought it down sharply against his neck.

Almost instantly, he let out a groan and collapsed to the ground without even turning to see my face, his phone slipping from his hand and clattering **to**

the floor.

My eyes widened in brief surprise that I had actually managed to knock him out so cleanly, but then I smiled and whispered a quick apology to the **man** before snatching up his keys, and without a moment's hesitation, I sprinted in the direction Isabella had described to me.

It didn't take long before I reached the stairway, and without slowing, I descended the steps into the depths below. As soon as I did, I was met with rows of cells lined up side by side.

I hadn't even taken a single step when, as if they had already sensed my presence, loud voices suddenly erupted.

"Oi! Looks like someone's finally here!" someone shouted from one of the cells.

Before I could react, another voice called out, "About time! We haven't eaten yet. Why aren't you guys bringing us dinner today?!"

"Yes, we need food! Do you think this is fair, just because we're prisoners, we can't eat?" another voice echoed.

Soon, the whole place was filled with shouting, everyone screaming above each other. I swallowed nervously, but knowing I didn't have much time, I rubbed my sweaty palms on my dress before stepping forward.

The moment I did, I was met with dozens of stunned eyes staring right at me.

The place instantly fell silent, everyone watching me as if shocked to see me here, probably even more surprised that I was a woman. I ignored their stares and kept moving, scanning the rows as I walked forward, searching for the cell Serena was in.

"Wait... is that a woman, or am I tripping?" someone finally spoke, and in the blink of an eye, more voices followed.

"Oh! It is a woman! And she's dressed like a maid! Two women in one day, we're really lucky, boys, aren't we?" one of them joked. My stomach twisted at

his words.

Two women in a day... He was probably talking about Serena. I didn't ask, though, something told me engaging them would be a bad idea and proved right when I heard what came next.

instincts

"Hey, look at her hand! She's got the keys **to** our cells. Oh, goddess, lady, are you looking for someone? Why don't you open this cell so I **can help you**

search?”

“Keys! Please, come open this cell! I’m begging you!”

“Open mine **too!**”

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Serena. Sitting

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ground,

staring up at me in shock.

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Chapter 160

Nyssa pov

“My lady?” I turned sharply at the call of my name to find Serena sitting on the ground, her eyes staring at me in surprise. As I stared back **at** her, my mouth parted, my eyes widening as I took in her appearance.

She sat on the ground, arms hugging her legs tightly. She looked normal, her dress still neat, her hair tied in a bun, not a strand out of place but even though she seemed untouched just as she had left my sight earlier, it was clear she was terrified and not okay.

Dried tears streaked her cheeks, her eyes red from crying, and her lips quivered slightly as she held my gaze. Something jabbed at my heart as I watched her, and before I could stop myself, my own eyes grew wet, especially as she squinted at me and muttered again,

“1—is that you, my lady? Is that really you? W—what are you doing here?” Her voice trembled in disbelief.

I couldn’t hold back any longer. I completely broke down, tears streaming down my cheeks as I rushed toward the cell where she was kept, falling to the ground and pressing my hands through the gaps, desperate to hold her.

“Oh, Serena! Come here, it’s me. Oh my goddess, I’ve been searching for you! I came here for you. You must have been so scared, weren’t you? You must have been crying because it was so scary... oh, my Serena. You don’t have to worry, I’m here. I won’t let anything happen to you for as long as I’m alive!” I cried out, tears falling in broken sobs as I reached toward her, moving closer to the cell.

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But Serena didn’t move an inch. Her gaze was fixed on me as she sat frozen in disbelief, as though she couldn’t wrap her head around the fact that I was really here, even as I curled my hands, opening and closing them, trying desperately to reach her.

She didn’t move.

She blinked at me and then reached up to wipe her eyes, as though she wanted to check if she was really seeing me or hallucinating. It was only when one of the prisoners at the cell finally spoke that she snapped out of her daze and gasped.

“Ah, it looks like she is here to see that female who was brought here this morning. Miss, can you come here for a second and open this cell for me? I swear I am a good man who was unlawfully detained.”

One of the prisoners voiced out, and the others immediately began speaking again, voices rising over each other.

“Ha, unlawfully detained? You assaulted a woman, that is why yo

are here, you

bastard!” one

screamed.

“Miss, don’t mind him. I was the one unlawfully detained, I really didn’t do anything wrong. Please, can you come and open this for me?”

“Oh, shut up! Didn’t you kill someone...”

Their voices were loud and echoed through the underground dungeon, and for a brief moment, I almost lost it, wanting to snap at all of them to be quiet and let me speak to Serena. But Serena’s eyes almost popped out of their sockets as she slapped a hand over her mouth and gasped in shock.

“Oh my goddess! You are real, miss. You are really here?! What are you doing in this dangerous place?”

She asked, quickly shooting up from the ground and moving toward me, her eyes scanning me as if she couldn’t believe I was really in front of her.

“My lady, what are you doing here? T–this is the dungeon. Please don’t tell me that you sneaked-”

Before she could finish her sentence, I finally pulled her against me through the bars and wrapped my arms around her tightly, holding her as best as could.

As soon as I did, I felt her body stiffen slightly at my touch, and as she inhaled deeply, I rubbed her back. In a shaky whisper, I spoke **to her**.

“I am here to save you, Serena..I am here to get you out of here. You are okay now. You **don’t** have to worry. I will get **you** away **from this pack before he** finds out and does anything to you, so don’t cry anymore, okay?” I said to her, even though I was the **one sobbing**

quietly.

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10:16 Mon, 18 Aug

The thought of what might have happened to Serena if I hadn’t come filled my mind with fear, Isabella’s words back at the packhouse had **made me** resolute in coming to save her.

According to her, Darius rarely interrogated prisoners himself but when he did, the prisoner never survived. Every prisoner interrogated by Darius **met** the same gruesome fate. They all died. But death wasn’t the worst part. Isabella had said the guards told the maids that the prisoners suffered to **the** point that they begged for death themselves. There was no way I was going to let Serena endure the

“M—miss, why...” she stammered, as if she didn’t know what to e
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say. Before I could respond, she leaned slightly away from me, her eyes meeting mine
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go back, miss. You shouldn’t worry about “Miss, why would you come here? If the king
knows you are here, you’ll get in trouble because of me. Please me. I don’t deserve it...
not after what I did to you. I don’t deserve your sympathy. It’s really okay; I am merely
being punished for my crimes, so please... go back.” She wiped her tears, taking a
deep, shuddering breath, shaking her head.

“So please leave before anyone sees you here—”

Before she could finish, I reached out and grabbed her arm, cutting her off with a sharp
glare that made her breath hitch.

“Don’t tell me what to do, Serena,” I said, a frown tugging at the corners of my lips.
“Don’t forget that I am your mistress. Whatever I decide, you will listen and obey.”

I whispèred under my breath and squeezed her

arm

gently, letting her feel the weight of my seriousness.

“M—miss...” she whispered, breathless, but I cut her off again.

“Sure, what you did was stupid, and I’m still upset that you hid it from me because if you
hadn’t, things might have turned out the way it did. But what you did isn’t so grave that it
deserves your life. You were only thinking of me, and that would never make me
abandon you, Serena.”

I leaned closer, my voice dropping lower as I added the last part.

“I will never abandon you. In this life, I will save you this time. You will live longer, you
will be happy. You will have your own life, your own family. I won’t let anything happen
to you.”

Her eyes widened, her lips parted at my words. Without hesitation, I moved my hand to
her head, giving her forehead a soft flick while smiling, and she whimpered softly.

I pulled away and reached for the keys that jingled at my side, quickly searching for the one to her cell. Thankfully, the keys had the cell numbers engraved, making it easy to find the right one. I picked it up and chuckled, showing it to Serena.

“Look, I found the key. Let’s get you out of here,” I said with an excited grin.

But her eyes immediately darted past me, and in the next second, her face went pale, as if she had seen a ghost. Her voice trembled as she whispered,

“M—miss, miss... Behind you. The—the...”

Her words trailed off as she pointed shakily. At that exact moment, everything seemed to freeze. I didn’t even need to hear the rest—just the unmistakable, intoxicating scent drifting behind me told me everything.

“Well... this is awkward,” came the familiar voice of Cassian behind me,

I swallowed hard, fighting the urge to look

away, but I couldn’t.

And there he was, standing there, staring at me with those cold, emotionless eyes that sent shivers down my spine.

Darius

Ah... fuck.

2/3