

Rebirth: Fated to the Lycan King #Revival 171 – 180

Read Rebirth: Fated to the Lycan King Revival 171

Chapter 171

Nyssa pov

It was dark.

I couldn't see anything. I couldn't hear anything. The only thing I could do was feel.

Feel as I stood frozen, trapped and unable to move, my heart pounding hard against my chest as a wave of dread washed over me. I struggled to make sense of everything that had happened today.

I had been locked in a room filled with nothing but paintings. I had discovered that Sandra was the moon goddess all along. I had been thrown into the body of the woman I'd been seeing in my visions and dreams—Liana, the late mate of Darius.

And now, here I was... standing in a place swallowed by nothing but darkness.

I tried to move, or even open my mouth to say something, anything but I couldn't. Yet as the seconds passed, the space around me began to shift. Tiny dots of light slowly appeared in my vision, faint at first, then spreading rapidly as I inhaled sharply. The once darkened void grew brighter and brighter until, with a single blink, the entire space was enveloped in light.

Nothing but light.

But it was enough to ease me, enough to let the tension in my body fade and the fear lessen.

I could see.

My gaze flickered downward, landing on my feet, still glued to the ground. I narrowed my eyes, frustration rising at the fact that I still couldn't move at all.

What was happening? Wasn't I just in Liana's body?

I remembered passing out... but where was I now?

"Hey, can you hear me, Sheila? You can hear me, right? Where are we... w—what's going on?" I asked through the mindlink, my voice cracking as I

desperately tried to reach her. But just as I feared, there was no response.

Silence.

She didn't say anything. She had gone completely quiet, and the corners of my lips tugged downward into a frown as I stared at the endless white space.

"Sheila, answer me. This isn't the time to joke-"

But before I could finish, something happened. Something that left me utterly speechless.

The white space in front of me began to shift, flowing like water as it changed into colors and shapes. First the sky, then grass, and then two human figures slowly began to take form before my eyes. It was like watching a scene from a movie unfold right in front of me.

And as the figures sharpened into focus, a sharp gasp escaped my lips, I recognized them.

A man in a white shirt and trousers.

A woman in a flowing white dress, smiling as she gazed at him.

"Hey, my name is Liana. You must be Prince Darius. It seems... we are mates."

The woman spoke, and I blinked in stunned disbelief as she extended her hand toward him, an excited glint shimmering in her eyes.

And Darius...

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Well, never in my life did I think I'd see a stunned-looking Darius with wide, unblinking eyes as he stared at the woman before him in awe. His face flushed with the faintest hint of pink as, slowly, he reached out and clasped her hand, a grin tugging at his lips.

"Yes..." he muttered under his breath. "It seems we are."

Liana's grin only widened at his words, and my heart pounded violently against my chest as I watched. But before I could even begin to comprehend what I was seeing, the Scene shifted, changing into something else entirely.

Now, Darius and Liana were seated beneath a tree in a quiet garden at night, the sky stretched above them, stars shimmering like jewels. Their eyes sparkled just as brightly, their smiles soft and warm as they leaned closer to one another.

“This is our first date. It feels so nice here with you, Darius. I’m really happy to be close to you like this,” Liana whispered with a smile, resting her head gently against his chest.

As I watched, the air around me grew heavier, pressing down on me until I couldn’t breathe. My lungs tightened, every breath feeling suffocating.

Something was wrong. Terribly wrong. Even more wrong than anything that had happened to me today.

These visions... what were they? Why was I seeing them? What did they mean?

A thousand questions clawed at me, but I couldn’t voice a single one. My mouth opened and closed, yet no sound came out.

Then the pain hit, sharp and unbearable. My head felt as though it were splitting in two, the ache so brutal I swore I could feel my skull throbbing from

the inside out.

I wanted to close my eyes and scream, but I couldn’t even do that. I couldn’t tear my gaze away from the images before me.

And then it shifted again.

Darius and Liana at the wedding altar, taking their vows, sharing a kiss, smiling at each other as if they were the only ones in the world, as if nothing else mattered.

Ahhh! Oh, Goddess. My head... it felt like it was about to explode as I watched, like I wasn’t just witnessing these scenes but having them branded into

me, forced to take in every single detail.

The image shifted again, Darius and Liana, living happily, surrounded by everyone. His father. His mother. His brother, Dalton.

Everyone was happy. Darius had nothing to worry about except his mate, and supporting his brother, the crown prince. But then everything spiraled downhill so quickly.

The crowning ceremony.

The day Dalton was meant to be crowned Lycan King. But the Moon Goddess did not choose him, she chose Darius, his younger brother.

From that day forward, the bond between them fractured. The warmth they once shared was gone. And though Darius felt guilty, even though he never wanted to be king, he had no choice but to bear the heavy responsibility laid upon him.

“Everything will be okay, my king. I’m sure *your* brother will come to understand. Don’t blame yourself,”

Liana had told Darius with a smile, her hand gently cupping his cheek. But she was wrong.

Nothing was fine.

After the death of Darius’s parents, the rift between the brothers only deepened. And soon... that day came.

“How could you do this?! How could you do this to him?! He trusted you, Dalton!”

Liana’s voice broke as she lay in a pool of her own blood, staring at the man before her with tears in her eyes.

This time, I saw him clearly, a man who looked so much like Darius, only slightly older. And in his hand, he held a dagger.

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One I recognized all too well...

The very dagger I had once used to end my own life, the same one I had stabbed my chest with.

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Nyssa pov

The same dagger. He was holding it.

My eyes widened, a shaky breath escaping me as my gaze flickered to the tattoo on my wrist. Instantly, my body tensed.

It was truly the silver dagger my father had given me, the one the goddess had said tied me to the reason for my rebirth. But now, with my eyes fixed on the blood dripping from

its blade, realization struck me. I had seen this very dagger before, in Darius's hands during the earlier visions...

A gasp slipped from me as everything began to fall into place.

The dagger belonged to Darius!

The reason I was reborn, it was because of him. He was the owner of the dagger, the one bestowed upon him by the goddess.

My lips parted, but no sound came. I could only stare in stunned disbelief at the truth I had uncovered. But I had *no* time to dwell on it, because in the next instant, a guttural scream tore through the air as Darius rushed into the scene, cradling Liana in his arms.

He held her so close, crying out desperately, pleading with her not to leave him, that she would be fine, that she would be okay. But Liana only smiled faintly, locking eyes with the man she loved before whispering that she was sorry... sorry for leaving him. Then, her eyes closed, and no matter how many times he called her name, she didn't answer. She couldn't.

Liana was gone.

A tear slid down my cheek as I watched everything spiral out of control.

Darius killed Dalton, who had tried to strike him. He slaughtered the elders who conspired against his mate, then turned his wrath on their sons and relatives, murdering them in cold blood, just as they had conspired to murder Liana.

I shook my head, wanting to stop him. To beg him not to kill the innocent. Not to lose himself. Not to go rogue.

Because—because once he did, the goddess would curse him. He would be forced to live for eternity. But no matter how I struggled against the invisible force restraining me, no matter how much I tried to reach him, I couldn't.

And then, when the bloodshed ended and the screams finally faded, I heard it, the voice that made my breath hitch and my vision blur:

"You have crossed the line this time, Darius. There is too much blood on your hands. You've taken too many lives, and now you must be punished. You will live forever, watching those around you die one by one. You shall know the pain of loss, crave the salvation of death, but never receive it. The only thing that can break this curse is a purebred white wolf... but that is only if you can find one."

I closed my eyes, unable to watch any longer, my breaths coming out thick and uneven as more tears spilled down my cheeks.

"P—please... forgive him," I whispered, voice trembling. "H—he didn't mean to do it. He was just hurt... he was just—"

But my words faltered when I felt a sudden presence before me. My eyes snapped open, and the world seemed to still. She was standing there, smiling, a smile that sent shivers racing down my spine.

"L—Liana..." I breathed, my voice breaking, barely a whisper.

She stepped closer, her smile widening **as** her hand rose to cup my cheek. I stared at her in a daze. She was familiar. So achingly familiar. Like I had always known her.

"Who are you?" I wanted to ask, but the words barely formed before her sad smile deepened. She didn't answer, at least, not with words. Instead, she leaned in, closing the space between us until our faces were just inches apart. And then, in a breath that brushed against my lips, she whispered:

"Remember, Nyssa. Let's remember who he is to us."

And with that, she closed the distance entirely. My eyes widened in utter disbelief as her form melted into mine, Liana entered me.

The moment she did, the force restraining me vanished, and my body jerked backward, a scream ripping from my throat. Suddenly, all the scenes from earlier replayed in my mind, only this time, they were clearer, sharper, as though I were reliving them myself... through Liana's eyes.

I screamed again, clutching my head as hot, heavy tears streamed down my face, my body trembling uncontrollably.

What was this? These memories... why did they feel like they were mine?

I collapsed to the ground, writhing as the pain in my skull intensified, each passing second forcing more of her memories into me until I had taken them

all.

No... not her memories. Mine.

Because as the final flashes burned through me and then faded, everything fell into place. Everything clicked.

I was Liana.

"... Tam Liana," I whispered in disbelief, this time my voice audible as I stared into the endless white.

"I am Liana. I am really Liana. I remember now—I remember who I am." My breathing grew heavier with every word. "I remember who Darius is to me. He is my mate... the man I love. The one I longed to be with. He is my king."

Tears streamed harder down my face. How could I have forgotten him?

After yearning to reunite with him so desperately, I had been with him all along in this lifetime, yet I hadn't remembered.

Oh, Darius...

I'm sorry. Sorry for not remembering you.

In that moment, nothing else mattered. I didn't care about anything anymore, I could only cry.

Cry for leaving him.

Cry for losing our unborn child.

"I'm sorry... I'm so sorry, Darius—"

"She isn't waking up, my king!" a panicked voice suddenly rang through the white void. "Her breathing is slowing. Her pulse is faint—I fear she might die."

That voice. I recognized it instantly.

Zayn.

"Do whatever it takes to save her."

My breath caught the second I heard him, my mate, my Darius.

"If she dies, then prepare to follow after her. I want her alive."

I froze, my tears halting as my heart lurched. I blinked through the haze of grief, desperately searching the space around me for him, but he was nowhere to be seen. Instead, the void glowed brighter, trembling violently around me.

"B—but, my king..." Zayn stammered.

"You heard me. Do everything you must to keep her alive"

And **in** that instant, the entire space erupted with such blinding light that I had to squeeze my eyes shut, a whimper escaping me as the brilliance

10:40 Thu, 28 Aug

swallowed everything.

The next moment, when I opened them again, everything had changed. The white void was gone.

86%

28

Instead, I found myself lying on a bed, and beside me sat Zayn, his fingers pressed against my wrist, checking my pulse. The second my eyes fluttered open, his widened in shock before a breath of pure relief escaped him.

“Oh, goddess—the miss is awake!”

I heard another voice, Cassian’s, and my gaze drifted toward him. But then, almost instinctively, my eyes shifted past him, landing on the tall, imposing man standing at his side.

Darius.

My Dariùs.

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Chapter 173

Darius pov

An hour ago.

70%

I flipped through the pages of the book, my gaze fixed as I read in silence. The only sounds in the room were the steady ticking of the clock and the soft rustle of paper, but I tuned them out, my eyes following each word with concentration.

This book told the tales of white werewolves, detailing their origin, what made them special, and how they differed from others. It was unlike the one I had read before, far more detailed, and I was surprised it had even been found, since there weren’t many ancient texts that spoke of white werewolves. But two days ago, Cassian had given it to me, saying he had gone to find it after noticing my interest in them.

At first, I was pleasantly surprised. Cassian rarely used his brain, and aside from his strength, he was rather useless, unlike his late father, who had both brains and strength. So naturally, I assumed this was just another book of little value. But the more I read, the more I realized I was wrong.

Because this book... this book described things the old one never mentioned. And as I continued reading, I found myself becoming completely immersed.

White wolves are special beings created by the Moon Goddess. Though not as powerful as silver wolves, they are the second strongest, and by far the rarest, so rare that centuries may pass with only one sighting. At times, there may be but a single person who bears a white wolf in two hundred years, sometimes even longer. They are so rare that I, myself, have only ever met one in my lifetime.

And that person was my mate, my wife. She was a white wolf, a rare breed. I couldn't believe it at first when I discovered my mate was one, but more than anything, as a researcher, I longed to understand what made such a breed truly unique. We had always heard whispers of their rarity, but what was it that truly set them apart? That, I was able to uncover.

The corner of my lips tugged slightly into a frown as I continued reading

*So I experimented on my mate, trying to figure it out. At first, nothing seemed to work, there were no results from the experiments, and my mate didn't want to continue. She said it was 'painful,' but what she didn't understand was that pain was nothing compared to

what we were going to achieve if this got out. We would be rich, popular, remembered as the husband and wife who dedicated their lives to discovering the truth about white wolves. So when she still refused to see

reason, I did the most sensible thing anyone would do in my situation: I locked her up and forced her to continue the

experiments."

The air turned colder, and in that moment, I heard an astonished voice in my head.

"Wow... that's crazy," Silas muttered, but I ignored him and kept reading.

"It wasn't easy at first. I did feel guilty, but everything I did was for the sake of the research, and I was certain she would eventually understand. Yes, she would because not long after, I made a breakthrough. I discovered what was different, what made that breed so unique. It was none other than their blood!*

"Blood?" I whispered, my hand pausing between the pages.

*Their blood is what makes them truly unique. It is incredibly toxic, ten times deadlier than any poison I had ever seen.

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82,70%

But do you know why I hadn't realized it before? Because it was tricky. Their blood looks no different from any other, harmless at first glance, and even contact with it shows no difference. But it becomes toxic in one circumstance, when it

comes in contact with silver.*

Their blood mixed with silver creates a deadly poison. Just inhaling the fumes that ooze from silver tainted with it is enough to kill someone. Now, imagine what would happen if you took a silver dagger and coated it with the blood of a white werewolf... What do you think would happen?

As soon as I read those words, my eyes widened slightly, and a scoff escaped me as they skimmed the last line.

'That dagger would be able to kill anyone. I reckon even the immortal Lycan King, Darius, wouldn't survive a silver blade

laced with a white wolf's blood.'

I see.

It seemed this *book* was written after my curse, likely not long after. But if this was true...

I leaned forward, shutting the book as I rested my head lazily against my hand, a slow smirk curving at the corner of my

lips.

If this was true, then I had finally discovered a way to break the curse and die.

"But would you truly want to die, now that she remembers who she is?"

The world seemed to freeze. My head snapped toward the voice and there she was, the blind head maid, standing by the door with a faint smile, her clouded eyes fixed on me.

The sight of her made me tense instinctively, though I couldn't explain why. She stood there with the corners of her lips curved upward, her eyes seeming to twinkle as they lingered on me. And I couldn't explain it, but for some reason, it felt as though I knew

her. Not as the head maid... but as someone else entirely. And with that realization, a familiar wave of hate

washed over me at once.

As though the blind woman could truly see, her smirk widened, and she parted her lips, whispering something under her

breath.

Something inaudible, yet I heard it.

"I wonder, Darius... will you be able to escape your ill fate in this lifetime?"

My eyes widened at her words, but before I could react further, the door to my study burst open and Cassian rushed in, his

voice frantic,

And just like that, the woman was gone. Vanished without a trace.

"My king!" Cassian blurted, panic lacing his tone. "Something has happened. The miss—she's nowhere to be found!"

I froze, my gaze narrowing on him.

"What did you say?"

Chapter 174

Nyssa pov

↻ 50% >

I couldn't take my eyes off him. I couldn't look at anyone else. As I stared, it felt like everything was crashing down on me

all at once.

An ache rose from deep within, spreading through my chest, and before I could stop myself, my eyes grew watery. A moment later, tears slipped down my cheeks, and the urge to run to him, to throw my arms around him, burned deep inside me.

After so many centuries, we were finally together.

In this life too, I had been born as his mate, chosen once again by the goddess to be bound to him.

A small laugh escaped me, my whole body shaking as my vision blurred.

No matter what happened, it seemed we were destined to find each other, after all.

The room fell into silence. I could feel Zayn and Cassian's stunned gazes fixed on me as they watched me cry, and when I lifted my eyes to the emotionless man before me, I caught it—a flicker, just for a moment, a flash of relief in his gaze as he looked down at me.

Darius... how much he had changed. He was like an entirely different man. The fire in him had dimmed, the smile I once loved erased, and the eyes that once shone so brightly when he spoke to me were gone. In their place was only the hollow

shell of who he used to be.

But now... now I could understand him. I could see why he had become this way, unlike before.

He had lost everyone and carried the weight of it alone for so many years, watching those around him die and be replaced

again and again.

Maybe that was why he never let himself grow close to anyone because deep down, he knew he would only end up

watching them die too.

How could anyone live like that? How cruel of the goddess to curse him so? No wonder he longed for death, no wonder he wished for peace.

He had truly suffered... but things would be different now.

I remembered him. And if he knew I was Liana, I was certain he would be happy. Things could return to the way they once

were.

"Are you okay?" Zayn's voice broke through my thoughts, snapping me out of my daze as I turned my head to look at him.

“How are you feeling? You fainted earlier and didn’t wake up for a while. Your pulse was almost gone too,” he explained, and for a moment, I caught a flicker of worry in his eyes. “You were really at the brink of death, you know.”

I blinked at his words, swallowing hard,

10:57 Sat, 30 Aug

50%

I wasn’t surprised. I had felt it myself in that moment when Liana entered me, when my memories came rushing back, I had been standing on the edge of death.

But that wasn’t important right now. I didn’t care about it. Instead, I turned back to Darius, my lips stretching into a trembling smile as I gazed up at him, my voice breaking as I called his name, hurriedly.

“D–Darius.”

The moment his name left my lips, I heard a sharp gasp from both Zayn and Cassian. Darius’s brow lifted, a small frown

curving his mouth as his eyes narrowed at me.

I knew why.

38

Because I had dared to call him by his name. The only times I had ever done so before were when we were having sex, and he hadn’t seemed to mind then but this was different. Normally, I only called him by his name when I was Liana; most of the time, I had addressed him as King.

“Darius... it’s been so long, hasn’t it? You don’t have to worry anymore, you don’t have to be sad. I’m right here. I remember now, I remember who you are to me, Darius.”

My voice cracked as my eyes stung and turned watery.

I could feel everyone’s confused gazes on me, and even Darius looked slightly taken aback. But just as I was about to continue, to tell him who I was, his voice cut through mine. Cold. So cold it sent a shiver racing down my spine.

“Is she out of danger now?”

His eyes were fixed on me, but he wasn’t speaking to me. He was speaking to Zayn.

Zayn seemed to realize this too, because he cleared his throat before answering.

“Yes, my king. It seems the lady is out of danger for now.” He pressed his thumb against my wrist, checking my pulse. “Her pulse is stable too, but I will still need to-”

“Get out.”

Darius hissed out before Zayn could finish.

– I stiffened instantly, every hair on my body rising as his aura surged, heavy and suffocating, stealing the breath from my

lungs. He seemed pissed, furious and something told me that anger was directed at me.

Cassian and Zayn must have sensed it too; their gazes flickered to me in unison, both of them swallowing hard.

“M–my king,” Cassian stammered, his voice trembling as he turned his gaze back to Darius. “I apologize for overstepping my boundaries, but please, forgive-

Before he could finish, he suddenly grunted, collapsing to the ground. To my horror, blood spilled from his lips as he doubled over

My eyes widened and I screamed his name.

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“Cassian?!”

“You heard me, didn’t you?” Darius continued coldly, not even sparing Cassian a glance as he groaned in pain. “Out. Both of you. Now.”

Zayn rose immediately, calm and collected despite the thick tension. He bowed his head low.

“Understood, my king. We will do as you wish.”

Without another word, he moved to Cassian, lifting him carefully from the ground and helping him out of the room.

The moment they left, silence fell–thick, suffocating, and heavy with tension. I didn’t take my eyes off Darius.

I could feel it—the killing intent in the air, sharp and suffocating, directed straight at me. Even though I should be scared out of my mind, I forced myself to smile.

He was angry. I didn't know why, but once he realized I was Liana, he would forgive me. He had to.

So, I parted my lips, ready to speak. But before I could get a word out, his voice lashed out first.

"Why did you do it?" he hissed, his tone dripping with venom. For a brief moment, his cold mask cracked, revealing his

fury.

I blinked in confusion, my brows furrowing.

What did I do? What was he talking about?

"D—Darius, what are you saying? What did I do? Why are you angry—

My words faltered, cut off by a sharp intake of breath as the next instant he moved, so fast my eyes barely registered it.

A startled gasp escaped me when he suddenly appeared right in front of me, inches away. His icy gaze bored into mine as his hand shot out, gripping my wrist and yanking me toward him.

"Why did you enter that room?! How dare you, she—wolf?"

Nyssa pov

"Why did *you* enter that room?! How dare you, she—wolf?"

Darius's voice sent a shiver down my spine, dread pooling in my stomach as his eyes narrowed into a deadly glare. His aura radiated off him, heavy and suffocating.

I had never seen Darius this furious—not even when I was Liana. Back then, he rarely lost his temper; even in a foul mood, he would only smile at me. In this lifetime, he mostly ignored me, staring with cold indifference as though I didn't exist.

But this... this was different.

This time, he looked truly angry. And it made my blood run cold.

I parted my lips to speak, my breath coming out shaky and uneven, but no words would form. All I could do was stare, my eyes widening in fear.

Enter which room?

The one with the paintings of me... was that why he was so angry?

"I asked you a question, she—wolf," he snapped again, slicing through my thoughts. "What were you doing in that room? How dare you go in there!? You pulled away the covers! Who gave you the right to do that!?"

His roar made me flinch, and in that moment, realization struck me.

He was furious because I had wandered into the room filled with his paintings of me.

Now that my memories had returned, I understood. Those paintings were likely the only things Darius had left to remember me by, the last pieces of Liana he could cling to. They must have been precious to him, explaining why the door was made of silver, and why the maid had deliberately led and trapped me there.

To get me into trouble with him.

It all made sense now.

"Who gave you the right..." he continued, as I stood there dazed. His grip tightened painfully around my arm, making me whimper. "Who gave you the right to see her?"

My eyes widened at his last words, at how broken he sounded. I could hear the pain lacing his voice, and before I could stop myself, my eyes trembled, turning red, stinging with unshed tears as I stared at him.

I could see it. Even if only for a moment/I saw it.

Beneath the cold mask and the anger/I saw the pain in his gaze as he looked at me.

How hadn't I realized it before? Why hadn't I truly looked at him, tried to understand him? Like everyone else, I had always believed he was some heartless monster who cared for no one, who killed without remorse. But behind it all, there was a

tragic story shaping who he was.

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He wasn't heartless, he felt, just like everyone else.

49%

38)

I shook my head as a tear slid down my cheek. Maybe it was because of that, but Darius froze, his expression shifting for just a moment. Before I could stop myself, I reached out, my hand brushing against his cheek. Then I leaned in, closing the space between us until there was barely any left, and whispered under my breath.

"I'm sorry..." I breathed, my lips trembling as more tears slipped down my cheeks. Darius stiffened, his eyes widening in surprise, but he didn't move, he didn't pull away from my touch.

"I'm sorry for everything you've been through, Darius. I'm sorry for leaving you so soon. It... it was because of me. That's why you were cursed, why you had to suffer so much. I'm so sorry, my king."

My fingers brushed gently across his face, and I watched as his eyes fluttered closed, as though drawn to my touch.

The corners of my lips curved into a faint, trembling smile, a shaky breath escaping me as I looked at him. Perhaps it was

that moment that gave me courage, because I raised my other hand, cupping his face fully between both palms and pulling him closer as I whispered on.

"But I'm here now, Darius. Your mate is back, and everything will be okay. It will be just like it once was..."

.....

His eyes slowly opened at my words. I was just about to tell him, just about to reveal that Liana was back, that I was the one he had been grieving all this time, when his gaze turned icy. In an instant, he swatted my hands away from his face, his deadly aura pressing down on me, heavier than before.

"Don't call me that," he spat, his voice sharp with rage.

Before I could react, his hand shot out, gripping my shoulder as he shoved me back onto the bed. He leaned over me, his face inches from mine, his fingers tightening against my shoulder as a low growl rumbled from his chest, his eyes burning

silver.

"I am not your mate. You don't get to call me that. We are not fated mates and we never will be."

My heart plummeted to my stomach at his words. Fear shoy through my spine, yet still, I forced myself to shake my head.

“No... no, you don’t understand, Darius. I am your mate. I am Liana! Yes, I am Liana. I remember who I am now, I’ve been born again-”

Before I could finish, his hand shot up and closed tightly around my neck.

The world seemed to freeze in an **instant**. I stared at him in shock and disbelief as his grip tightened, cutting off my air

until I couldn’t even breathe.

Instinctively, my trembling hands flew to his, clawing desperately as I tried to pry him off, gasping harshly for air. But it didn’t faze him. His eyes were so cold, they looked almost dead.

“W—what are you doing?” I wanted to say, but no words escaped me. My lungs burned, and still his gaze bore into me, his eyes flashing as though his wolf was fighting for control. Yet Darius didn’t blink, he didn’t even flinch.

“Don’t you dare!” he roared, his voice shaking the room. “Don’t you dare say her name with your filthy mouth. How dare you!”

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49%—>

+38

I whimpered, my nails digging into his hand as the pressure around my throat grew unbearable. If I didn’t suffocate first, it felt as though he would snap my neck in two.

And he was going to, any second now, especially as I felt his nails slowly sharpen into claws.

AD

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Chapter 176

44%

+33

Nyssa pov

It was suffocating.

I couldn't breathe, the air felt thick, everything turning fuzzy and blurry.

I clawed at Darius's hand, desperate to pry his grip from my neck as his claws slowly dug into my skin. But if he felt the sting of my nails, he didn't react; his cold, unyielding gaze stayed locked on me, piercing straight through.

My body trembled, my toes curled, my breaths came out ragged, and my eyes rolled back as I fought desperately for air.

Oh goddess... this man, this man was going to kill me if I didn't do something soon.

But fuck, was I dumb! How could I just blurt out that I was Liana, especially when he was already furious about me entering that room? I should have taken my time, found a way to convince him. Instead, thanks to my foolish mouth, this man literally had my neck.

"Miss!!" A sharp scream of my name came from behind the door, and from the sound of it, I was sure it was Serena. I could hear her trying to rush toward the door, but Cassian was there, no doubt holding her back.

"You can't come in. The king... the king is speaking to the lady," he said.

I wasn't sure how Serena knew, but she could sense something was wrong, her voice trembled as she stammered,

"B—beta Cassian. C—can I see my lady? Just for a moment, please. I heard she fainted, please let me see her."

Her voice grew louder, desperate, and though I was being suffocated, I still heard it clearly.

The fear in it.

"You can't. Please stay back," Cassian huffed, his tone strained, as if he was struggling to restrain Serena.

"B—but, my lady—"

"What are you doing, Serena? Stop. You'll get in trouble!" Isabella cut in, but their voices soon faded into the background as Darius spoke.

“Say that again,” Darius growled, his eyes flashing brighter as he leaned closer, his voice dripping with venom, “Say what you just said again. Who did you say you were?” His nose brushed mine, his breath hot and sharp against my face.

I almost had the urge to roll my eyes and snap that I’d answer if he wasn’t currently strangling me but of course, I couldn’t do anything except keep gasping for air. Words refused to come out; all I could manage was a slow shake of my head.

And then, he tightened his grip. That’s when I knew, he didn’t actually want an answer. He wanted me dead.

But I couldn’t accept that. No. Not after finally regaining my memories. There was no way I was going to die before I even had the chance to spend time with Darius, before I told him who I really was.

M

And with the way Darius was acting like a complete dickhead, I doubted anything I said would get through to him anyway. So instead, I fought to keep my eyes from rolling back, forcing myself to lock them on his.

Then, with what little air I could pull in, I inhaled sharply and called out to Sheila, my dumb wolf who had been silent this whole time.

“Sheila! Give me your strength unless you want us both to die right now!” I screamed through the mindlink.

Sheila scoffed at my words, but before I could even process it, a sudden surge of strength ripped through me. Maybe it caught Darius off guard, but somehow, I managed to grip his hand and wrench it away from my neck. With everything I had, I shoved forward and to my utter shock, Darius went flying into the wall.

09:26 Sun, 31 Aug

But I didn’t have time to care. My hands instantly flew to my throat as I doubled over, coughing violently, tears blurring my vision.

Fuck, fuck, fuck, it hurts.

44%

Drawing in a breath after nearly being strangled was agonizing. My throat burned, my chest tightened, and every inhale felt like fire, making it nearly impossible to breathe.

My coughing grew harsher, loud enough that it must have carried outside, because the next second, Serena's screams became frantic. I could hear her trying to rush through the door, but Cassian's strained voice snapped from outside,

"Stop! Don't do anything that will get you in trouble!"

I barely paid attention to them. Still coughing, I turned sharply toward Darius, only to see him slumped against the wall.

33

The shove hadn't seemed to affect him much, but he was on the ground, his head slightly tilted down. As I watched him, I couldn't help but feel actually pissed.

Sure, I loved this man. Apart from the fact that I was Liana, I had already realized I loved Darius all along, I just didn't want to admit it. But him strangling me almost to death? That was actually infuriating.

"Are you crazy?!" I tried to yell, but my voice came out in a whisper as I coughed harder, glaring at him. Still, Darius didn't move an inch, his head lowered.

"You almost killed me! Goddess, I want nothing more than to flick your head right now!" I spat out, and almost immediately, his head jerked up. His eyes

met mine in surprise.

My body went cold under his gaze, and then I realized why, it was because of what I had said.

Whenever Liana was angry at Darius, which was rare, she would always say exactly that: that she wanted to flick his head.

Hearing me say it must have stunned him. But after nearly dying a moment ago, I was smart enough not to blurt out again that I was Liana. So instead, I cleared my throat awkwardly, tearing my eyes away from him. I was about to ask if he was okay, but before I could, he suddenly stood from the ground.

Without sparing me a single glance, he stormed out of the room. I reached out instinctively to stop him, but he was already gone, opening the door and walking away.

And as soon as the door opened, I saw everyone, aside from Zayn flinch in fear as they watched Darius's figure disappear, I began coughing again, and Serena was the first to snap out of her daze. She called my name and rushed toward me to see if I was alright. Zayn and Cassian hurried over as well, but I didn't pay attention to any of them.

My eyes stayed fixed on Darius, my thoughts scattered, my body trembling slightly. Only one thought echoed in my mind.

Darius... how was I supposed to tell him I was Liana without being strangled to death?

AD

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Chapter 177

Nyssa pov

“So you’re telling me that a maid came to you, claiming the king wanted to see you in his room, but instead led you to the forbidden room and once you got there, she locked you in, and you fainted from lack of air because there were no windows nearby?”

Cassian summed up my story in a single breath, his eyes wide with disbelief as he tried to process what I had just said.

While Zayn continued checking my pulse, Serena fed me porridge, and Isabella massaged my back, I simply nodded, chewing and swallowing before answering with nonchalance.

“Yes, that’s exactly what happened. I don’t know who the maid was, she kept her head bowed the whole time. But I’m not blind. If I saw her again, I’d recognize her.”

I smiled lightly as I spoke, then opened my mouth again. Serena caught the hint and slipped the next spoonful between my lips, feeding me before taking the handkerchief in her other hand to dab the corners of my mouth. As she did, I tapped my right shoulder, and Isabella seemed to know exactly what I wanted, she added more pressure to it as she massaged me.

I could feel Cassian, and Drake who now stood beside him, their eyes fixed on me, watching everything in confusion and disbelief.

Even Zayn, who had been checking my pulse, I could sense the amusement in his gaze as he pulled his hand away from my wrist.

I also caught Serena and Isabella exchanging quick sideways glances at each other.

I knew why they were looking at me that way, it was because I had nearly been strangled by Darius, yet here I was, not looking the least bit afraid.

If anything, I seemed even happier than usual, a wild grin plastered on my face as I allowed myself to be spoiled by both Serena and Isabella.

But why wouldn't I? I had finally regained my memories, my true self, who I really was.

Looking back, as Nyssa, the daughter of Ethan, I had always felt incomplete, as though a part of me was missing. No matter how happy I appeared, I could never feel truly whole. No matter how hard I tried, I could never figure out what it was that I lacked.

Maybe that was why I had tried to find that happiness in Kirean.

Why had I loved him so deeply in my past life, convincing myself he could fill that emptiness? Yet in the end, I realized the void existed because of the Lycan King... it was my soul itself that had been desperate to return to him.

The corners of my lips tugged into a faint, sad smile as I imagined how desperately the Liana in me had wanted me to remember who I was but now... now I didn't need to be sad anymore..

I remembered.

"Did you hear what I said, my lady?"

I heard Cassian calling out to me, and I snapped out of my daze to see everyone's gazes still pinned on me. That's when I realized he had been speaking

to me.

I blinked and answered the question he had just asked, if I would remember the maid.

"Yes, I will be able to remember her from her scent alone. She had a faint smell of pineapple, and since we had pineapples for breakfast today, she must have been a kitchen staff, particularly the one who cut the fruit, because I could smell it on her. She also had a small mole at the back of *her* neck, which she kept lowering her head enough for me to see. She looked a little taller than most of the maids here, at least taller than me."

I spoke, opening my mouth as everyone watched in surprise at how much I had remembered. Even Serena, who was supposed to be feeding me, froze in astonishment. But when my eyes met hers, she quickly blinked out of her daze and slipped the spoon back between my lips.

As I swallowed, a soft sigh of relief escaped me. I was already starting to feel a little better.

When I had woken up, after everything that had happened earlier, I'd been exhausted and weak. But with Zayn's medicine and now the food, my **strength** was slowly returning. I felt ready, ready to track down the maid who had locked me in that room, before doing anything else.

"I see," Cassian murmured, his voice low as his fingers stroked along his chin. His gaze flickered toward Isabella, and I noticed the way her body stiffened instantly, her hands on my shoulders pausing mid-motion.

"Do you know anyone that fits that description? Or anyone that comes to mind?" Cassian asked. Out of the corner of my eye, I caught Drake jotting everything down, no doubt recording every detail I'd just given.

I shifted slightly, glancing at Isabella as she lifted my arms, her own hands trembling faintly. She shook her head, her voice a little shaky as she answered, clearly nervous with all attention on her.

"N-no, Beta Cassian. I don't know who fits that description. We had new maids come into the packhouse just yesterday, and I haven't had the chance to meet most of them yet. But judging from the lady's description, it must be one of them, because I don't think any of the older maids have a mole on their necks or are that tall."

I nodded in agreement.

"That's true. I don't think it's anyone I've seen before either. Even though most of the maids are scared of me and usually keep their distance, I still take

notice of them."

I stated firmly, and everyone's expressions grew serious. Still, I didn't think it would be too difficult to track down the culprit from this morning.

If I had still been the old Nyssa or even Liana, I probably would have brushed it aside, saying we should forget about it because I wouldn't want the hassle of dealing with a maid. But not this time. Not anymore. I wasn't going to let this slide.

She had acted with clear malicious intent, trying to get me in trouble with Darius. She knew how sentimental that place was to him, and she knew that if I was caught there, I would face serious consequences.

There was no way in hell I was letting her walk away unpunished.

I opened my mouth, ready to tell Cassian that there was a faster and more direct way to catch her but before I could speak, Zayn beat me to it.

"I mean, you could arrange for all the new maids to gather and let her take a look. It shouldn't be that hard to identify who it was," he said, voicing the exact thought I'd just had.

My gaze flickered to him, and I couldn't help but nod in agreement. He was indeed a very smart man.

"Zayn is right. Let's gather the new maids, and I'll know her the moment I see her again." I said, then placed a hand lightly on Serena and Isabella to stop them, before turning my gaze to Cassian.

He gave a small nod. "That can be arranged. We'll have the maids brought in." He was about to turn toward Drake to give the order when I spoke up again, my *tone* sharpening with seriousness.

"However, I want to ask something," I said, making Cassian pause. His brow lifted as he turned back to me in question.

I met his gaze without hesitation.

"If we find the maid... I want her given to me. I'll be the one to punish her myself."

Cassian's eyes narrowed at my words, and perhaps seeing the seriousness in my expression, he didn't dismiss me outright. Instead, he took a *deep* breath and answered.

"Alright. But I'll have to report to the king first and hear what he has **to** say."

I nodded with a grin. At least he was willing to hear me out and believe me about the maid, unlike someone else. I nearly rolled my eyes as **Darius's** furious expression from earlier flashed in my mind.

"Thank you, Cassian. I really appreciate it," I said, and he gave me a small smile before turning to leave. Drake, who had been by his side, lingered a

moment longer.

"You should rest well, my lady," he said with a sincere smile.

"Thank you," I replied warmly, returning his smile as he followed Cassian out, closing the door behind them.

Before I could even look away from the door, Zayn's voice cut in as he stood from the bed, closing his medical kit with a yawn and a stretch.

“Well, that’s my cue to leave. You’re looking better now, but you really need to rest and stop getting yourself into trouble, you know,” he said, flashing me his usual teasing grin.

“The fact that you keep passing out isn’t a good sign. Your health doesn’t look great... how are you supposed to bear the king a pup like this?”

He had meant it as a joke, but the moment the words left his mouth, both Serena and Isabella gasped in shock. I stared at him, just as stunned that he’d said it so casually. His eyes widened too, as if realizing what had slipped, and he opened his mouth to add something else.

But by then, my face had already flamed red. I awkwardly reached up to scratch the back of my head, nodding in agreement.

“Ahem... you’re right. I should take care of myself, shouldn’t I?” I said with a shy smile.

My response seemed to shock not only Serena and Isabella but even Zayn, perhaps because none of them had expected me to agree. But then again, there was no reason not to.

I mean...

My gaze dropped to my stomach, and my throat tightened as memories surfaced, of the children I had lost twice. The one I carried as Liana for Darius before Dalton stabbed me... and the one I carried for Kieran.

Even though I hated Kieran with everything in me, I couldn’t help but feel a sharp ache at the thought that I had almost been a mother twice, only to have it ripped away both times.

“Are you okay?” Zayn asked quietly. I felt his gaze narrowing on me, and when I turned to look at him, I caught a glint in his eyes that I couldn’t quite place. Instead of dwelling on it, I forced myself to smile and nodded.

“Yes, I’m fine. Thank you.”

He didn’t press further. After checking one last time to make sure I truly was alright, he finally walked out of the room.

Chapter 178

Nyssa pov

Almost immediately after Cassian, Drake, and Zayn left the room, both Serena and Isabella practically jumped on me, demanding to know more about what had happened

with Darius, if I was truly okay, and who would deliberately lead me to the forbidden room just to get me in trouble with him.

Serena had been furious, muttering something along the lines of, "If I see that bitch who led the miss to that room, I'll rip her head off." And judging by the cold glint in her eyes, I knew she wasn't joking. She ranted about how cruel Darius had been, nearly strangling me to death simply for stepping into

that room.

Before I could even respond, Isabella spoke up, her voice more cautious. She explained that the room was called the Forbidden Room, the place where the king kept the paintings of his late mate. She added that I was lucky to have survived, because according to her,

"Everyone who ever entered that room died, my lady. The king killed them for daring to go there... *no* one had ever survived after stepping inside."

She had said it with a terrifying expression, as though even speaking of it made her truly afraid and I understood then that she wasn't exaggerating. With how furious Darius had been back then, he had been ready to kill me. The only reason I could think of for why he backed off and stormed out of the room was because he still needed me alive.

I was a white wolf, after all.

The only thing capable of putting an end to his eternal life.

The corner of my lips twitched into a sad smile as the realization sank in. I hadn't been wolfless when I was Liana. No, Serena had been with me then, my wolf, a white breed. But just like in my past life as Nyssa, she had been locked away, unable to reveal herself to me.

The more I thought about it, the more I felt how cruel fate truly was. In this life, it had made me the very thing destined to kill the man I loved.

My hands clenched into fists at the thought, but one thing was clear: now that I remembered, there was no way I would let Darius die just like that. No way in hell.

And another thing that shocked me was when I asked Serena and Isabella about Sandra, the head maid who was, in truth, the moon goddess in disguise. Neither of them seemed to know her.

No... it was as if her memory had been completely erased from their minds. They didn't even recall there ever being a blind head maid, and Serena had gone as far as to ask if I was all right, her face full of concern.

Realizing they didn't remember, I didn't push the subject any further. Perhaps it was better that way. Because from the way the goddess had spoken earlier, it felt as though she was leaving... for good.

Afterwards, our conversation shifted to me asking Isabella more about Darius, wanting to at least know a little about how he had lived. She told me everything, how he never smiled since the day she met him, how he spent most of his time locked away in the forbidden room, uninterested in pack matters. I listened quietly, saying nothing.

Then, as she continued, recounting how Darius had once broken a maid's hand simply because she touched him, there came a knock on the door. Immediately, everyone fell silent and turned their gaze toward it. I spoke first.

"Come in," I said, and as the door opened, I watched Drake step inside. He lowered his head slightly before speaking, a small warm smile on his face.

"How are you feeling now, my lady?" he asked.

I returned his smile instantly and answered, "I'm better now, thank you."

He nodded before continuing. "Please, can you follow me? The king **has** asked you to come and inspect the maid, to see who it was that led you to the

forbidden room."

I raised a brow at his words, but what struck me most was what it meant. Darius was going to be there.

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08:55 Tue, 2 Sept W

A smile suddenly bloomed across my face as I turned to Drake, almost excitedly. "Does that mean Darius will be there and I'll get to see him?"

95%

Honestly, I longed to. Even though it had only been an hour since I'd last seen him, I wanted more. I wanted to look at him again, to stare at him for as long as I could.

I missed him.

+25)

Drake looked startled for a moment, but then his expression softened into pity. Even Serena and Isabella were watching me with the same sadness in their eyes, I blinked in confusion, but Drake's next words made me understand why.

"Yes, my lady. The king is there but you don't need to be afraid anymore. I don't think he's that angry."

A small scoff almost slipped from me.

I see... they thought I had asked because I was afraid of seeing Darius. But it was far from that.

I didn't bother correcting them. Instead, I only smiled, pulling the blanket off me and jumping from the bed with a bright grin. Slipping on my slippers and running my hand quickly through my hair to make it at least presentable, I walked up to Drake and told him I was ready.

Then, without giving him the chance to say another word, I stepped past him and out of the room. I could feel everyone's surprised gazes on me as I left, but I didn't stop. I just kept walking or rather, skipped down the hallway with excited steps, a wide grin on my lips. I couldn't wait to see Darius again, but I was also eager to find the maid who had led me *into* that trap, to teach her a lesson and uncover who was truly behind her.

Who had ordered her to do what she did? Because the more I thought about it, the less it made sense.

Isabella had said there was something fishy about the whole thing. According to her, the forbidden room was always locked tight and only the king had the keys to it. If what she said was true, then it truly was suspicious.

A maid who clearly worked in the kitchen... how could she have possibly gotten the keys to the forbidden room?

It could only mean one thing someone had been behind her. Someone had given her the order to trap me inside.

Nyssa pov

As soon as I stepped into the living room, I felt every pair of eyes on me.

55 vouchers

Everyone had turned to look, Cassain, Zayn, and at least fifteen maids, all staring at me. But my gaze was fixed on him.

The man sitting at the center of the room had his eyes locked on me, expression cold as always, not a hint of emotion in them. I would have thought the furious look I'd seen a moment ago was just an illusion, but it wasn't—no, not when I could still feel the way his hand had tightened around my neck as he strangled me.

But now, watching him, there was no flicker of emotion in his gaze. His expression was almost empty, cold, as we stared at each other. For a brief moment, it felt as though the whole world had stilled. My heart pounded hard against my chest, my body warm, fuzzy, and giddy as I gazed at the man I had always wanted to see.

Then, in the very next moment, Darius looked away without a shift in expression, his eyes lowering to stare vacantly at nothing, his fingers idly toying with the coin in his grip.

And just like that, he completely ignored me, as though I didn't even exist.

Like he always did, only this time, it bothered me.

Normally, I would've rolled my eyes and brushed it off, but now? Now I felt offended. The corner of my lips curved into a sneer as I glared at him, a low scoff escaping at the audacity of him still pretending I wasn't there.

The nerve of this man!

Of course, I hadn't expected him to apologize for what happened earlier, but he didn't have to act like I was invisible. My sneer deepened, and I noticed the maids had already lowered their heads, careful not to stare. Cassian, standing behind Darius, and Zayn, seated nearby, exchanged a quick glance. I caught the way Cassian swallowed hard before he turned to me with a nervous smile, gesturing toward a seat far away from Darius.

"Well, **miss**," he began carefully, "these are all the new maids who've just started working here. You must not be feeling too well... perhaps you should take your seat and—"

Before he could finish, I nodded and cut in with a small smile, my voice steady.

"Yes, you're right. I'm not feeling well, so I should sit."

And without a second thought, I walked straight to where Darius was sitting and dropped into the seat right beside him, so close there was barely an inch of space left between us.

Almost instantly, the air thickened, heavy with tension, and I caught the way everyone in the room froze in shock. Even Darius's hand stilled mid-twirl with the coin, his eyes flickering toward me, brows narrowing in

confusion.

I only smiled brighter, inching even closer to him, testing the limits. For a fleeting moment, the urge to lean in and hug him surged through me but I knew better. If I tried that, I'd probably end up flying into the

9:31 Thu, Sep 4

nearest wall.

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"W-what are you doing-" Cassian stammered, clearly flustered on my behalf.

But I cut him off, turning to Darius instead.

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"As you can see, I'm not feeling well, so I need to sit. And this is the nearest couch, so I'll be sitting here," I said shamelessly, even though everyone knew I could've taken one small step to the empty seat beside us.

Darius's frown deepened as his eyes lingered on me for a moment. But instead of saying anything, like I half-expected, he simply looked away and resumed twirling his coin nonchalantly, ignoring me. Again.

But I didn't let it bother me. Instead, I shifted my gaze to the maids standing before us, their heads bowed, shoulders trembling ever so slightly in fear, no doubt because they were in front of Darius.

There were at least ten of them, most taller than the other maids who worked in the packhouse.

My gaze swept over them casually, my head tilted slightly as I studied their forms in silence. It only took a few seconds, just enough time for me to pick out the culprit.

The one who had come into my room and lured me into the that chamber under the pretext that Darius wanted to see me.

Finding her was easier than I thought it would be.

Since all the maids kept their heads bowed, I didn't need to walk up to each of them. I hadn't seen her face clearly that day anyway, but that wasn't what I relied on. No, I

remembered her posture, the slope of her shoulders, the way she had bowed earlier... little things that gave her away.

I knew exactly who she was.

"The king has granted you permission to deal with the maid who led you into the forbidden room," Cassian announced, his voice firm. "So please, pick who you believe it is, and we will investigate to confirm. So-"

He turned to the maids. "Everyone, raise your heads."

The maids instantly obeyed, lifting their heads and fixing their gazes forward. Even though their bodies trembled in fear, not one dared to disobey.

"And please step forward one by one so she can-

"There's no need for that, Cassian," I cut him off with a grin, turning my gaze his way.

He blinked in confusion, and I finished calmly, "I already know who the maid is."

The moment those words left my lips, every head snapped toward me, surprise flashing across their faces that I'd managed to figure it out so easily. But really, it hadn't been difficult at all.

Even Darius stilled, the coin no longer spinning between his fingers. He took a slow, deep breath before leaning back in his seat, crossing his arms and legs as his eyes swept over the maids in front of him. Almost instantly, they all lowered their heads, none daring to meet his gaze. And then, in a cold, razor-sharp voice, he

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spoke.

"Then pick." His tone was low, detached, and he didn't spare me a glance. "Who is it?"

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I arched a brow at his words, a slow smile tugging at my lips as I replied, "Of course, I will, my king."

Leaning back in my seat as well, I let my eyes drift over the line of trembling maids before tilting my head, my smirk deepening.

“But first,” I drawled, “let’s give the culprit a chance at redemption.” My voice sharpened just slightly, cutting through the thick silence. “If you’re the one who did it... step forward and reveal yourself.”

Nyssa pov

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E55 vouchers

Everyone deserved a second chance. After all, I had been given one by the moon goddess, to make things right in this lifetime. So, I decided to extend the same to the culprit: the chance **to** step forward now, on her own, before I called her out.

It was simple.

If she came out willingly, I wouldn’t do anything to her. Of course, she’d lose her job, Darius would never let her stay in the packhouse after what she’d done but that would be the end of it. If she didn’t, then punishment would be unavoidable.

Another reason I was doing this was because I couldn’t shake the memory of how terrified Serena had been when she was dragged to the dungeon. I didn’t want to send someone there unless I absolutely had to.

So even as everyone turned to me, suspicion flickering in their eyes about whether I truly knew the culprit, I didn’t flinch, didn’t move, didn’t give anything away.

Instead, I raised my voice just enough for everyone to hear.

“I know who the maid was, the one who lured me into that room earlier today. But I want you to step forward yourself, admit your mistake, speak the truth, and ask for forgiveness. If you do, I won’t pursue the matter further. The king has already granted me the right to punish the culprit myself, so don’t think I’m bluffing. I won’t let this spiral out of hand... however—”

My words trailed off as my gaze sharpened, sweeping over the maids and pinning each one of them in place.

“But if the culprit doesn’t do that, then she’ll be thrown into the dungeon. And from there, I won’t care what happens to her.”

i said before turning my head slightly, narrowing my eyes at the clock as I checked the time.

“You have three minutes to reveal yourself. If you don’t *by* then, I’ll call you out myself.”

As soon as those words left my lips, the air grew heavy with tension. The maids began glancing at one another, suspicion flickering in their eyes as though searching for the one who would step forward. But just as I expected, none of them moved. The silence pressed down thick and suffocating, everyone’s attention fixed on the maids, while they in turn looked nervously among themselves.

From the corner of my eye, I caught sight of Drake, already downstairs. Serena and Isabella stood quietly at the far end of the sitting room, their faces etched with worry **as** they watched

8:38 Fri, Sep 5 B...

everything unfold.

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Even Darius looked at me with a flicker of confusion, though he said nothing because he was a man of his word.

His expression made it clear he didn’t quite believe me, that he thought this was just another tactic to draw out the culprit. He only sighed, running a hand through his white hair before leaning back in his seat, silent.

The corner of my lips curved into a small smile, pleased that even if he thought that, he hadn’t said anything.

“Are you sure about this?” I heard Cassian’s voice behind me, and I turned to find him at my side, leaning in slightly to whisper.

“I mean... don’t you know who the person is?” he asked softly, his blond hair falling over his face, his eyes fixed on the clock. “I don’t think anyone will step out,” he added, and I followed his gaze to see that a minute had already passed. He was right.

No one would step forward. They all thought I was bluffing, that I didn’t know who the culprit

was.

“We’ll find out who the culprit is in two minutes, whether they step out or not, so it’s fine,” I said with a grin, flicking my gaze back to the maids. They were whispering among themselves now, asking one another where they’d been at that time, their faces tight with nerves.

All but one person.

The culprit.

The girl who stood at the end of the row, her face calm and composed, as though none of this concerned her, as though she wasn't guilty of anything. Even the innocent ones looked terrified, whispering and pleading among themselves for the real culprit to step forward and spare them all.

But the girl? She didn't move. She didn't speak. Her expression was cold, unblinking, yet I caught the faintest tilt of her lips, a subtle smile.

The corner of my own mouth curved into a smirk, a low chuckle slipping from me as I finally looked away. She probably thought, just like everyone else, that I didn't know. That she was

safe.

From the corner of my eye, I caught Darius watching me. He followed my gaze, and in that instant, I knew, he had realized who the culprit was too.

"One more minute," I announced, my smile widening as I glanced back at the maids. Their

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faces had gone pale, their voices rising in panic.

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E55 vouchers

"If it's any of you... please speak," one maid begged, turning desperately to the others.

Another quickly agreed, her voice trembling.

"Yes, please, don't drag the rest of us down."

I watched them, amused. Maybe they really thought I didn't know who it was, that I'd just pick someone at random. I couldn't understand why they were so afraid if they were innocent but I didn't waste time dwelling on it.

Because the very next second, as the clock struck the time, my lips curved into a wild smile.

“Time’s up,” I said with a sharp clap of my hands.

The sound cut through the room, silencing every whisper. All eyes snapped to me, and the tension thickened until it felt almost suffocating.

“Well, that’s disappointing,” I continued, my tone smooth, cold. “I’d hoped you’d step out,

you didn’t.” show some remorse, maybe even avoid punishment altogether. But

I shook my head slowly, then lifted a hand to point at my neck.

“And because of you, I almost died. I was willing to look past that, to forgive you... but I suppose some people don’t deserve forgiveness after all.”

The maids went even paler, though the culprit still didn’t so much as flinch.

Damn—she must really believe I haven’t recognized her.

“So why don’t you come out already?” I said, raising my hand and pointing toward the line of maids.

The moment my finger landed on one girl, she flushed red, eyes going wide. She opened her mouth, ready to stammer out a denial-

But then my finger shifted.

To the girl at the far end.

As soon as the words left my lips, the room froze.

“Tall lady with a small mole at her neck”