

Rebirth: Fated to the Lycan King #Revival 181 – 190

Read Rebirth: Fated to the Lycan King Revival 181

Chapter 181

Nyssa pov

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The maid froze the instant my words cut through the air. The smile on her lips stiffened, then dropped completely. Like a switch, her eyes widened in pure shock as they darted to me, my finger pointing straight at her. A soft, barely audible scoff slipped past her lips as a storm of emotions crossed her face all at once—shock, disbelief, and most of all... fear. Fear of being caught.

No one spoke. The room was silent as every gaze turned on her. The other maids *looked* the most shaken, their expressions unreadable, as if they had expected anyone but her.

It was one of them who finally broke the silence, her voice low, trembling with disbelief.

“Claire...y—you’re the culprit?” she stammered, wide-eyed.

Almost immediately, whispers rippled through the group as they whispered among themselves.

“Oh goddess... the lady pointed at her. She’s the culprit. I can’t believe it.”

“Me neither. But—now that I think about it... Beta Cassian said it happened shortly after breakfast.

And Claire wasn’t in the kitchen then. She had said she needed the restroom.”

My brow arched, though my gaze never left Claire. She was growing paler by the second as their

chatter swelled.

“I never would’ve thought it,” another maid whispered. “She hardly speaks, keeps to herself... who would have imagined she could do something like this?”

I tilted my head slightly, a low chuckle slipping out, almost shaking my head.

Why were they so surprised? In my experience, it was always the ones you least suspected who drove the knife into your back. Trust was a fragile thing. Never whole. Never complete.

“So, your name is Claire,” I said, my voice calm,. “The girl who led me into the forbidden room... the one who trapped me inside?”

She snapped out of her daze at once, shaking her head so violently it seemed it might fall off. She stumbled forward, lips parting, her voice trembling.

“I—It wasn’t me, my lady! Y—you/must have the wrong person. I swear, I went to the restroom that day, I never went near you!”

She stammered desperately, pleading her innocence, but I only watched in silence.

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When no response came from me, she collapsed to her knees, chest rising and falling in ragged breaths as she turned desperately to Darius. Her teary eyes clung to him, lips trembling as though she could wring sympathy from stone.

“M—my king, I swear I’ve done nothing wrong. I’m innocent, I truly am! I wasn’t the one who went to the lady’s room. I swear to the goddess, it wasn’t me. It wasn’t me. Yesterday, I went to the restroom and then straight back to the kitchen. Please, believe me.”

Her voice broke as she pleaded, but Darius’s gaze stayed ice cold, his expression unshifting. A scoff slipped from me in amusement. I knew better. Out of everyone she could’ve begged, she chose Darius. That man cared for nothing. If you were guilty, he punished. If you were unlucky, he punished

all the same.

“Look, she’s crying... I honestly don’t think she’s the one,”

one of the maids whispered, her voice barely audible but I heard it.

“Me too. She’s the last person I’d suspect,” another muttered.

I ignored their chatter, narrowing my gaze on the maid before me. I wanted this done quickly. She wasn’t the one I was after, not the true mastermind.

“Well, I didn’t expect you to confess, not after hiding until now. But let me ask all the maids here one question.”

The air tightened. I felt every body stiffen before they all bowed deeply, waiting. Their eyes were on me when I continued.

“This morning at breakfast, there was pineapple among the fruits, wasn’t there?”

The kitchen staff immediately answered in unison.

“Yes, my lady. There was pineapple for breakfast.”

I gave a slow nod.

“The maid who came *into* my room reeked of pineapple. And while I’m sure others came close to it, I doubt simply being near would leave such a scent. No... only the one who cut the fruit would carry it that strongly. Isn’t that right?”

Almost everyone nodded in agreement, even Zayn, Cassain, and Drake.

“So tell me,” I said, leaning back against my seat, arms folding across my chest, one brow raised. “Who among the kitchen staff cut the fruit today?”

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The maids exchanged glances, brows furrowed as they tried to recall. Then, suddenly, one of them snapped her fingers and blurted out.

“It was Claire! I remember, it was Claire! She was scolded by the kitchen matron for nearly cutting her finger because she was so distracted!”

The girl gasped the second the words left her lips, slapping her hand over her mouth as her gaze dropped in embarrassment.

“Yes, I remember too. The matron was furious with her.”

“Oh goddess, that’s right, Claire was the one who cut the fruit. Could she really be the culprit?”

Claire’s face burned red under their words. She shook her head frantically, lips parting to protest, but I cut her off, my voice cool, almost bored.

“But that alone doesn’t prove she’s the culprit, does it? It could’ve been anyone. After all, werewolves can pick up scents easily. No...”

My eyes narrowed, my tone sharpening. “The maid I saw earlier had a mole on the back of her neck.”

I touched the spot on my own neck where I'd seen it. "I remember it clearly. That mole belongs to the true culprit."

Then, very slowly, I turned my gaze on the trembling girl, Claire, who stared back at me with wide eyes, caught between shock and fear.

"How about we check?"

The moment the words left my mouth, her hand flew to her neck and I saw it in her eyes.

The dreadful realization that she'd been caught. That there was no way out. Nothing she could say. She bit her bottom lip, her fists clenching tight at her sides as if she could hold herself together. I could almost see her mind racing, scrambling for an excuse, any excuse, that might save her.

But before she could speak, Darius's voice cut through the air.

"Check her."

Every head snapped toward him, his gaze locked on the trembling girl. His tone was cold, final.

"Check if she has a mole."

Darius pov

"Check if she has a mole."

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I ordered, my voice cold as I stared down at the trembling maid. Her eyes went wide, her hand flying to her neck as if she could hide it, the mole.

The she-wolf had been right. She was the culprit.

I knew it the moment I looked at her face.

Not guilt.

Fear.

Fear of being caught.

At first, when Nyssa said she knew who the maid was, I hadn't believed her. I thought it was just a trick to lure the culprit out. A not-so-clever trick.

After all, someone bold enough to steal the keys and shove her into that forbidden room wouldn't confess so easily.

But I was wrong. It hadn't been just a trick. Nyssa had really known and she'd given the girl one last chance to reveal herself before calling her out.

Now, all that was left was to confirm it.

If she had that mole on her neck, there was nothing more to discuss. Nyssa could punish her however she wished for all I cared.

Because she wasn't the one I wanted.

There was someone else behind her. That much was obvious.

She wasn't smart enough, or skilled enough, to have stolen those keys on her own.

The one who gave the order, the true mastermind was the one I intended to punish myself.

How dare anyone enter that room? It was my only safe place in the packhouse, the place where I kept Liana's paintings, the only pieces of her I had left, the only way I could still remember her.

And yet, they had dared to trespass. To risk destroying those paintings just to target the she-wolf.

My hands clenched into fists as the memory surged back, how close I had come to strangling Nyssa.

And for a brief moment, I felt it.

Guilt.

For the first time in years, I felt guilty for nearly taking a life. It hadn't been her fault, and yet I had almost killed her, especially when I heard her say those words:

"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-"

The corners of my lips tugged into a frown at the memory. But in the next second, she spoke again, her voice calm and steady. When I flicked my gaze toward her, I found her smiling at me.

“You are right, my king. Let’s check the mole. That should prove if she’s really the one or not.”

She didn’t wait for my response before turning to the two maids at the corner of the room, one her personal maid, the other recently assigned to follow her closely.

“Serena and Isabella. You two should come and check her neck for me.”

Almost immediately, the two girls lowered their heads in a respectful bow before stepping forward. Without a word, they obeyed their mistress. The maid in front of them gasped and stumbled backward, trying to create distance but it was useless. All eyes were on her as Serena and Isabella stopped in front of her, gently but firmly guiding her forward, tilting her head slightly downward to face Nyssa.

I watched as the maid struggled against their grip, twisting and pulling, but it was no use. Their hold was tight

“W–what are you doing?! Let me go! I’m telling you, let me go!” she screamed, thrashing, her voice shrill. “I–I am not the one who did that. Please believe me, my lady! I really went to the restroom!”

Tears streamed down her cheeks as she tried to plead, but Nyssa didn’t flinch. Her eyes remained cold and unblinking, locked firmly on the girl before her.

“Why are you crying now?” Nyssa asked, the corner of her lips curling into a slow, knowing smile. I tilted my head slightly, watching her as I idly toyed with the coin in my hand.

“M–my lady...” the girl stammered, sobbing even more as she looked up at Nyssa. But Nyssa’s smile only widened.

“You did nothing wrong, right? We’ll know for sure when we check your neck, so let’s just get on with it already,” she said, turning to her maids and nodding.

The moment they tightened their hold, the girl gasped, struggling to resist, but it was useless. Nyssa’s personal maid grabbed her collar and yanked it back just enough to reveal the back of her neck. As soon as the skin was exposed, everyone around gasped in shock, their eyes locking on the mole, exactly where Nyssa had said it would be.

“Oh my goddess, it’s really true! She’s the one!”

A scream echoed, and immediately the room erupted into whispers and murmurs, voices overlapping as everyone tried to make sense of it.

I said nothing, my gaze flicking briefly to Nyssa. She stood there, deadpan, emotionless, as the chaos erupted

around her. The corner of my lips tugged into an amused smirk, and I leaned back, resting my head on my hand, watching intently.

Interesting. The way she handled this... it was quite interesting.

"How could you do something like that, Claire?" one of the maids finally asked, her voice trembling in shock.

"Yes, a—and you didn't say anything! You almost got us all in trouble!"

Claire, that was her name, cowered as Nyssa's maids released her. She immediately covered her neck, shaking her head. Her mouth opened to speak, but only a few broken words escaped before she broke down, crying harder.

"I- I didn't... I really wasn't..."

"Oh, enough already," Nyssa cut her off, rolling her eyes with a bored expression, as though she'd grown tired of hearing the maid's repeated excuses. In the next second, she stood, and all eyes turned to her. I couldn't help but notice something different about her..

It was subtle, barely noticeable, but there was a shift. The way she carried herself, the calm in her voice—it felt like someone else entirely. And yet, I couldn't shake the strange sense of familiarity.

"I don't think you can say that anymore. You've already been exposed, so drop the act," she said, her tone firm but not cruel, simply tired of the maid's protests.

The maid froze instantly, her eyes flickering with fear as she looked up at Nyssa, who had stopped right in front of her. The full weight of the situation seemed to hit her, and she dropped her head to the ground with a thud, trembling. Lifting her head slightly, blood trickling down her face, she began to plead.

"P—please forgive me, my lady. Please forgive me, I was wrong. I didn't mean to do it," she sobbed, her hands clasped together tightly.

"Please spare me! I had no choice! If I didn't do it, I would have been punished!"

My eyes narrowed as her words confirmed my suspicions. Nyssa's expression didn't change; she simply smiled, crouched to the maid's level, and, with her face inches from hers, asked calmly, unfazed by her confession:

"So, you admit that you are the culprit... and that someone was behind you. They asked you to lure me into that room?"

The maid hesitated for a moment, then, under Nyssa's piercing gaze, swallowed hard and nodded.

"Yes, my lady. I admit it. I was the one who led you to that room and lied that the king wanted to see you. It was me... but someone else asked me to do it."

Nyssa's smile widened, and she leaned even closer.

"Who is it? Tell me, and I might spare you. Don't forget, your punishment is in my hands."

The maid swallowed hard, but this time she didn't hesitate.

"T—the person who asked me to lure you into the forbidden room was..."

She paused, trembling, before finally whispering,

"Miss Ella."

Nyssa pov

Ella. Cassian's mate.

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55 vouchers

I wasn't surprised, not in the slightest. Honestly, I had a hunch she was behind it all along.

It wasn't hard to figure out, especially since she was the only enemy of high status I had made since arriving at this pack. Even though I mostly ignored her, I wasn't blind. I noticed the way she looked at me, the glare that screamed she wanted nothing more than to kill me on the spot. But since I had decided to act as if she didn't exist, I didn't care.

Still, it was... amusing. She had gone so far as to use a maid to get me in trouble with Darius. Bold, reckless, and really stupid. And given how furious Darius had been earlier, I doubted she'd escape punishment.

Good. That should keep her off my back.

"Really?" I asked, a slow smile spreading across my face. "Did I hear you say Ella? Like..." I turned slightly toward Cassian, who was staring at the maid in stunned

disbelief.

“As in... Cassian’s mate? Ella?” I pressed, watching his eyes flicker between me and the maid, waiting for her response.

This time, she didn’t hesitate. She knew she had no choice.

“Y—yes, my lady. Beta Cassian’s mate, Miss Ella, is the one who gave me the keys and asked me to bring you to the forbidden room and lock the door before you could get out. She promised me money and said that if I didn’t obey, she could make my stay here short, I would get fired from the packhouse.

Her words trembled, and tears streamed down her cheeks.

A sharp intake of breath rippled through the room at the mention of Ella’s name, but Claire continued, desperation clear in her voice.

“I really had no choice, my lady. I promise, I didn’t want to... I have two little

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brothers to feed, and I couldn’t afford to be fired. Please forgive me,” she pleaded.

Before I could respond, Cassian’s voice cut through, heavy with shock as he stared at Claire.

“Ella? My mate? She actually asked you to do that? Are you certain she’s the one?”

He sounded as though he couldn’t believe it, yet there was a flicker in his expression that suggested a part of him suspected Ella could indeed be capable of such a thing. Even I, having just arrived at the pack, knew how she looked at Darius, how she wanted him, the way her eyes undressed him every time she stared.

And now, thinking back on it, it irritated me. Watching another woman look at my mate that way made me annoyed. If I felt this way, I couldn’t help but wonder why Cassian never seemed to get truly angry, there was no way he hadn’t noticed it himself.

But then again, if he had, he hadn’t shown it all this while.

Claire shook her head so fast that you’d think it would fall off

"No, beta Cassain. It is really your mate, Miss Ella. Yesterday, before she left the packhouse, she called for me and threatened me that if I didn't do what she said then she will have me fired. I swear on my life and my little brothers that I am not telling a lie. I had no choice to do what she asked me to do, please forgive me"

The corner of my lips tugged into a humorless smile at her words. Threatened? I highly doubted that. Still, I didn't call her out right away. Instead, I simply echoed

her claim.

"Ah, I see. She really threatened you?" I asked in mock shock.

Claire immediately nodded, a little too eagerly, parting her lips to speak but before she could, one of the maids at the back stepped forward, bowing her head respectfully.

"Forgive me, my lady, for interrupting, but I have something I wish to say."

At once, every gaze turned to her. I arched a brow, noting the open disdain in her eyes as she glared at Claire. My amusement grew, especially when Claire's own

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eyes widened in horror at the sight of her.

Interesting.

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"Of course, you may speak. Does it concern this situation?" I asked, straightening as I rose from the ground and stepped aside from Claire.

The maid nodded, her attention fixed anywhere but on Claire. "Yes, my lady. I believe Claire is lying about being threatened."

I tilted my head, listening in clear amusement. "Oh? And why do you say that?"

The girl didn't so much as flinch before answering. "Claire and I share a room in the packhouse. Yesterday, when Miss Ella visited, I saw Claire outside speaking with her. Miss Ella handed her a wad of cash, and Claire laughed, thanking her. She told her she'd get it done and not to worry. It didn't sound like a threat at all. Later that night, back in our dorm, she was on the phone with her brothers, bragging about how she'd

gotten rich without lifting a finger. She said she couldn't wait to blow it on new clothes, go clubbing with them, and finally enjoy herself after paying off some debts."

She rattled it out in one breath, and I raised a brow. Clubbing with her brothers? Hadn't Claire just claimed she had two little brothers to feed?

As if reading my thoughts, the maid pressed on. "My lady, Claire lied about having two little brothers."

The words had barely left her mouth when Claire snapped, her face twisting with rage.

"Shut up, you bitch!" she screamed, completely uncaring that Darius, the Lycan King himself, sat right there.

But the other maid didn't even flinch. It was as if Claire hadn't spoken at all as if she was used to her outbursts.

"My lady, Claire does have brothers, but they're older than her. The eldest is twenty-eight, the second twenty-five, while Claire is also twenty-three. I doubt either of them need her to feed them."

As soon as she said this, I almost burst into laughter. Around us, whispers grew

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louder, a ripple of shock cutting through the crowd.

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55 vouchers

Wow. It seemed Claire really did have enemies. Her own roommate despised her enough to spill everything just to see her punished.

Still... something told me Claire had earned it. She had probably done something to the girl. Not my problem, though. I had gotten the name I wanted, and the rest, well, that was Darius's business.

When I turned to him, I found him staring at me with an emotionless expression.

At the edge of my vision, Cassian was frozen, still in a daze, the maids' words echoing in his ears. For a moment, I actually felt bad for him.

I didn't know what it felt like to have a mate whose eyes belonged to someone else. Then again, maybe I did. Darius only ever had eyes for Liana, treating me like I was invisible... but since I was Liana, that hardly counted. Heh.

Either way, this might be good for Cassian. Better he find someone who truly loved him, someone other than Ella.

"So, what should we do now?" I asked lightly, breaking the silence. I fixed my gaze on Darius, smiling as he stared back with that same empty look.

"Since we already know who the culprit is, Ella and I nearly died because of her... what are we going to do?"

Darius didn't answer right away. He just held my eyes for a long moment, then leaned forward, his gaze flickering to Cassian as he gave the order.

"Bring her."

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Ella pov

Is she dead? That stupid omega, she has to be. There's no way **she's** still breathing after what I did.

If Claire had done her job properly and lured her into that room, then she should be gone by now.

Even without living in the packhouse, I knew what that room was. Everyone did. It was the place where the king killed anyone who dared step inside, no matter who they were.

The room where the king kept the last pictures of his mate, the only fragments he had left of her piled up and treasured like relics.

It was pathetic, really. Centuries had passed, yet the great king still clung to her memory as if she'd just slipped away yesterday. His eyes never strayed from his late mate.

I wanted to burn that room. Burn Nyssa. Let the flames swallow them both, the pictures and that girl until nothing remained to hold him back. Because he was mine. Only mine.

But I couldn't. Not when that coward of a maid trembled at the thought of fire, terrified of laying a hand on the king's room. She couldn't dare.

That was fine. I could wait.

Patience was all I needed.

Hehe... this was enough.

Just hearing that that bitch had been killed by her supposed mate, the Lycan King, was more than enough. The corners of my lips curved into a wild smile, and as I stared at the mirror, I could feel the excitement coursing through my veins, making it impossible to stay still.

I couldn't help but order Quinn, my personal servant who was styling my hair, to check on Claire again.

"Quinn, call Claire and ask about the situation. The girl should be dead by now, don't you think? Call and ask," I said, almost vibrating with excitement.

Quinn stiffened, her hands freezing in my hair before she spoke,

"My lady... are you sure? Claire told us not to call her to avoid suspicion. She said she would call us back when things settle and report the situation to us."

Her voice trembled slightly, as if afraid I'd lash out for her hesitation. But I didn't. Not this time. I was in a good mood, and what she said was right.

It might be suspicious to call Claire now if something had gone wrong. I was confident the birch was dead, but I had to **be** careful. One misstep and it wasn't just trouble with my dad, I could even be killed by **the** king, Better patience than death.

7:03 **Wed, Sep 10**

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55 vouchers

"Ahem, you're right. I should be careful and not do anything rash," I said, a smile blooming **on** my lips **as** I picked up the lip gloss on the table and applied it, Quinn's eyes widening slightly in surprise **at** how **easily** I'd agreed.

“That girl is going to die anyway. I’ll hear the news soon enough. I can’t have any dirt on me if I’m going to be the future queen, right?” I asked absentmindedly, rubbing my lips together and admiring my reflection **with a** satisfied smile.

I looked truly stunning.

“Y–yes, my lady,” Quinn said immediately, a grin spreading across her face as she agreed with me.

“You’re right. Only a woman like you is worthy of being the king’s queen. No one in this pack is as beautiful as you, my lady,” she continued, buttering me up. “You have flawless skin, a breathtaking appearance that makes even men and women take a second look, eyes that shine like the moon... My lady, you are perfect, queen material. Soon enough, you’ll become queen. I can feel it, my lady.”

The corners of her lips stretched into a wild grin as she spoke, and for a brief moment, I just stared at her without a word, brow arched, staring plainly at her. She froze when she met my gaze, her body stiffening.

This slave, I knew she was just saying this to stay on my good side. A lowly servant chasing favor and money, obvious in every way. But still, her words made me happy. Really happy. I didn’t care **if** she meant them or not; hearing them, especially when I was about to receive good news, kept me in a brilliant mood.

The next second, I burst out laughing, shaking my head as I muttered,

“Right! You have good eyes, girl. Really smart, really smart!” I laughed, reaching into my purse. Without checking or counting, I drew out some dollar bills and tossed them carelessly to the ground with a wild smile.

“That is for you, for being a good slave,” I said, adjusting my hair as I watched.

Almost immediately, Quinn’s eyes widened in surprise. She dropped to the ground, lowering her head in a deep bow, greedily snatching the bills from the floor. Her face lit with a mix of shock and joy as she exclaimed,

“O–oh my goddess! Thank you, my lady! Thank you so much! You are so kind, my lady. I promise I will always serve by your side and take care of you. Thank you so much!”

I scoffed and waved nonchalantly, rolling my eyes at the pathetic scene.

It was really pathetic. How a piece **of** paper could so easily sway someone’s decision and change them completely. In this world, there were two things that mattered most: money and power.

I had never stepped outside the Lunar Dominion, but I assumed it was the same in the outside world.

It was money that I had used to pay that dumb maid to lure Nyssa into the room, and I had it. I already had enough to do whatever I wanted, to spend however I pleased. My father was one of the elders of this pack; he had so much wealth that it had become tiresome to spend. But power... now that was what I truly wanted.

Sure, my father was powerful, but he wasn't the most powerful man in the pack. He didn't hold the highest position. One man did: Darius. That was why I had set my eyes on him.

And soon... soon enough, everything would be mine.

My grin widened as I imagined being crowned queen beside Darius, the servants bowing, calling me their queen, my friends and everyone showing me respect they normally wouldn't give. I wanted that, and I would

have it.

I chuckled, just as I was about to tell Quinn to apply more makeup, when the door to my room burst open, making me jolt in shock. I turned to find Cassian standing there, eyes blazing daggers, a frown etched deep on his face as he gripped the doorknob with rage that sent shivers down my spine.

My eyes widened. This was the first time he had ever looked at me this way. The world seemed to pause around me, and before I could even say anything, Cassian hissed:

"You... How dare you do that, Ella!"

I flinched, and the lip gloss in my hand dripped to the ground.

Chapter **185**

Cassian pov

74

55 vouchers

That girl. That foolish, stupid girl. How could she do that? She was the one who lured the king's mate into the forbidden room.

I hadn't wanted to believe it, but the moment the maid spoke her name, I did.

I believed it without hesitation.

And it was clear why. She was obsessed with the king, everyone knew it. She wanted him, wanted to be his queen, and she never bothered to hide it. Whenever we met, she would talk endlessly about him, how handsome he was, how she would do anything to be his mate, his queen. She spoke like I wasn't even there, like I didn't matter, even though I was supposed to be her mate.

But the truth was, I didn't care. She stirred nothing in me. Her face, her personality, none of it caught my attention. So I ignored her words, the way I ignored her entirely. Even when others asked when I'd finally mark her, when I'd make her my wife officially, I had no intention of doing so.

Why would I? If she didn't want me as her mate, then why should I force it? Rejecting her seemed pointless, so I left things as they were and carried on with my life, serving the king, while turning away from her desperate, fragile attempts to catch his eye.

But when the king found his mate, she became worse, more reckless.

She disrespected Nyssa right in front of him, sent countless messages asking about the king, even begged to come to the packhouse. And when I ignored those too, she showed up anyway, despite the king's clear order never to step foot there again.

She hadn't listened.

And now... now she had gone this far?

Watching her stare at me in shock, eyes wide, it was clear she still hadn't grasped the weight of her actions, hadn't realized that this time, she might actually die for what she had done.

Even I... even I, the king's beta, didn't dare cross that line and mess with the forbidden room.

"Y-you... Cassain, what are you doing here?" Ella asked, her voice trembling as she stared at me. But judging from her expression and the flicker of fear in her eyes, it was obvious she already knew why I was here, she had been caught.

"What am I doing here?" I repeated her words with a mocking chuckle and stepped further into the room, making the maid who had been on the ground flinch and quickly move aside. I closed the distance to Ella, who looked up at me, body trembling.

"Are you seriously asking me that, Ella? You know what you did, so don't play dumb with me!" I roared, my aura thickening **the** room, suffocating everything. She flinched, her eyes widening even more. She didn't move, she couldn't.

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EX 55 Vouchers

She only sat there, frozen, shocked at seeing me this way. I rarely got angry. I was a man who smiled despite everything, and I had never lost my temper at Ella but this time... this time, she had gone too far.

Even then, she didn't look guilty, just scared. She quickly raised her shaky hands as if to create space between

1. us.

"C—Cassain, why are you angry? I don't understand what I did... why are you screaming at me? W—we haven't seen each other in a while, and now you are—"

Her words cut off as my glare hardened. Before she could react, I reached up and pulled her toward me, tightening my hold. She whimpered, shocked beyond belief, as I yelled,

"Don't play with me, Ella! Do you think I don't know what you did? How could you do that to the king's mate? How could you hire someone to lure her into the forbidden room?"

Her mouth dropped open in shock, then fear, as she stammered,

"Y—you knew—"

But the next second, she caught herself before speaking.

"What are you saying, Cassain? Lure who? I don't understand! Let me go. How could you just come here and start screaming at me without explaining the situation?"

She snapped at me, her expression shifting in an instant, her eyes stabbing daggers at me.

My mouth opened in shock at her words, a soft scoff slipping out as I stared at her.

This girl... even now, she was still like this.

There wasn't even a trace of remorse in her eyes. Even though she had clearly done this to harm Nyssa, everyone knew that if the king found her in the forbidden room, she would die, she still acted this way.

“You are really something, Ella. Worse than I thought,” I spat out in disdain, tightening my grip around her wrist. She winced; it was obvious I was close to breaking it.

“You’re not even a bit sorry for what you did? Do you know you might die because of this?! Do you realize the gravity of what you’ve done?!”

For a brief moment, she froze, a tremble of fear flickering in her eyes but the next second, her face twisted in anger as she tried to yank her hand away from me.

“Are you crazy, Cassain?! You’re hurting me! Let go! I don’t know what you’re talking about!”

That was when I lost it.

My eyes flashed a deeper shade, the air thickened with intense pressure, my aura surging toward her.

Almost immediately, she felt it. The crushing weight of it pressed down on her. I released her hand, and a scream tore from her throat as she fell to the ground, clutching her chest in pain. She spat out a mouthful of blood, her body trembling but I didn’t react. I didn’t care.

11:10 Fri, Sep 12

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“Do you think I’m an idiot, Ella? Know who you stand before. I am the king’s beta. I will not tolerate any disrespect from you.”

I

spat the words out, and a sharp gasp escaped her as I towered over her. Her head shot up to meet mine, eyes wide with terror, blood smeared across her shirt, her chest heaving rapidly.

Fear but this time, it was because of me. Not the usual arrogant expression she usually wore. She finally understood... this wasn’t a joke.

11:10 Fri, **Sep** 12

Ella pov

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No.... he had found out about everything. It couldn't be. I wished with all my heart that it wasn't real, but he had said it with his very mouth, glaring at me with a killing aura so strong it knocked me off my feet.

I fell to the ground, chest tightening, a mouthful of blood spilling and splattering across the floor, while the air in the room seemed to vanish, leaving everything suffocating and nearly impossible to breathe.

This was the first time I had ever seen him this furious. Cassain rarely lost his temper, even when I threw tantrums, even when I openly spoke about Darius and how I wanted him as my mate instead of Cassain, he would simply roll his eyes, ignore me, and claim he had no time for my nonsense.

But today... today, as I stared into his furious gaze, I finally understood how terrifying he truly was when enraged. Fear gripped me so tightly that all I wanted was to run and hide from the man before me.

But I couldn't. I could only stare up at him as he towered over me and hiss out.

"Do you think I'm an idiot, Ella? Know who you stand before. I am the king's beta. I will not tolerate any disrespect from you."

My body trembled uncontrollably from fear as I heard his words, my mouth parting, wanting to speak but unable to, the words had died in my throat as Cassain spoke again.

"The maid said it was you who bribed her into luring the king's mate into that room, and we have a witness who saw this. Yet you are denying it in front of me? Goddess, Ella, how much of a fool do you think I am? How could you do such a thing!"

Cassain snapped at me, and I flinched, instinctively backing away, my eyes wide as I met his gaze.

"Do you realize the gravity of what you've done!? The king has asked me to bring you to the packhouse, to the dungeon, so he can interrogate you!"

The moment the words left his mouth, I snapped out of my daze. My jaw nearly dropped as I slapped a hand over my mouth, stunned.

“W—what did you say?” I asked, lifting myself slightly off the ground, leaning toward Cassain, grabbing his hand as he looked down at me with cold eyes.

“D—did you just say the king has found out? A—and he’s asked you to bring me to him for interrogation? Is that what you’re telling me?” I asked, tears brimming in my eyes, stinging as I looked up at him.

No, no, no!

It couldn’t be.

This wasn’t happening. This wasn’t happening.

Cassain wasn’t the only one who had found out but the king? Darius had discovered I was the one who did this, and now he wanted Cassain to bring me to him.

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But he couldn’t... I couldn’t go to him.

If I did, I would really die! I had heard that anyone interrogated by Darius never came back alive, they returned only as cold corpses. And now he wanted to interrogate me, especially after what I’d done?

Oh goddess...

I was truly doomed. I was in so much trouble.

Cassain didn’t move an inch as he watched me cry. His eyes, now emotionless, stared at me as though he wasn’t the least bit moved by my tears.

And when he didn’t answer, I forgot the earlier fear I had felt and gripped his hand tighter, snapping at him.

“I asked you a question, Cassain! Answer me! Did the king find out? Did he tell you to bring me to him?” I demanded, my voice trembling with fear.

But Cassain only glared at me, still saying nothing as he watched me.

This man! Even though I knew I had done something wrong, how could he just tell me this with a straight face, without so much as a reaction?

Goddess, if what he said was true, then I was really dead. A goner.

“Cassain! Answer me-”

My words cut off as my hands were suddenly flung away by him.

“My lady!” Quinn whispered, breathless.

My eyes widened, trying to process what he had just done, and a gasp escaped me as my chin was suddenly seized. I was pulled closer to Cassain, only to find that he had crouched to my level, his face just inches from mine as he glared directly into my eyes.

The world seemed to freeze when I saw the rage in his gaze.

He was angry. Really angry.

“C—cassain...”

Before I could stop myself, I muttered, breathless, but he spoke, not interested in what I wanted to say.

“I have tolerated you long enough, Ella. I have tolerated your nonsense, and I won’t anymore. Every day, you long for another man without holding back. I am your mate, but you don’t care about that or about me. You only care about what you can never have. So why should I keep caring about you?”

His voice was low, barely a whisper, and for some reason that frightened me even more than if he had yelled,

At that moment, I realized something felt terribly wrong.

I didn’t say anything; I just stared at him.

Then, the door opened, and I watched my father step inside the room, his eyes wide with surprise before

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narrowing on the scene.

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“What is happening here? Beta Cassain, can you explain why my daughter is on the ground?” he asked.

Cassain didn’t even spare him a glance. His eyes remained locked on me, narrowed and cold.

“Why should I keep letting you have your way when I don’t even feel anything towards you?”

He continued, and as soon as I heard his words, my eyes stung and tears began to flow.

D—did he just say that? He didn’t feel anything towards me?

No... it couldn’t be true. Cassain loved me. He had always loved me.

That was why he hadn’t rejected me-

“So I have made the decision to reject you, Ella.”

Thump. Thump. Thump.

My heart almost burst out of my chest at his words. I could hear the sharp intake of breath from everyone around me... but I couldn’t do anything. I remained frozen in place, trying to process what he had just said.

He didn’t hesitate before continuing.

“I, Beta Cassain of the Lunar Dominion, reject you, Ella, as my mate.”

Chapter 187

Ella pov

I didn’t hear him, right?

There was no way he had just said those words. No way he had rejected me like that.

I must be imagining things. Yes, that had to be it. But how could Cassain reject me?

Me?

It wasn't possible, yet the searing pain coursing through my veins, threatening to tear me apart, blurring my vision, nearly making me pass out right here and now, proved that I had heard correctly. He really was rejecting me.

The room seemed to freeze. I could feel everyone's shocked gazes on Cassain, yet his expression remained cold on me.

And then, I screamed.

The pain was what snapped me out of my daze.

"Ahhhhh!"

My scream tore through the air as I clutched my head, tears streaming down my face, body trembling from the intensity of it.

Rejection!? How could he do that when it could kill me?

Rejection was forbidden. It was like denying the bond the goddess had specifically crafted between two people, and doing so could lead to death. That was why no one ever rejected anyone.

If they didn't want to be with their mate, they usually saw other people while keeping the bond intact, which was what I had planned to do with Cassain. Our bond would remain, but I would belong to the king.

Yet I couldn't believe he was truly rejecting me. Cassain was a beta, a powerful man; he wouldn't die from rejection. But I... I was weaker. And the pain I felt now was nothing compared to what would happen if I accepted his rejection. If I did, I would truly die.

And in that same moment, I heard Cassain speak again.

"Accept the rejection, Ella," he growled. Despite the pain shooting through my entire body, I pried my eyes open and stared at him in disbelief, tears streaming down my cheeks, my chest heaving, and dots blurring my vision.

"W-what?" I asked, voice trembling, as I pulled my hands slightly away from my head, eyes wide. Despite the agony, I forced myself to speak.

"A-accept the rejection? H-how... but I would die," I stammered, more tears spilling down my cheeks.

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Even then, my words didn't faze Cassain. He stared coldly at me for a brief moment before responding.

“And? I don’t care about your life or death, Ella. Accept the rejection,” he growled. I flinched at his words, **my**

wolf whimpering, hurt but whether from Cassain’s harshness or the rejection itself, I couldn’t tell. Either way, one thing was clear: he wasn’t bluffing.

“Accept the rejection, Ella. Reject me, and let’s sever our bonds as mates.”

As soon as he said this, my father seemed to snap out of his daze. In the next second, he appeared next to Cassain, frowning.

“Beta Cassain, what is this? Why would you want to reject your mate? Did my daughter do anything wrong?” he asked, then sighed, flicking a sharp glare at me. “She probably did something again, but even if she did, please forgive her. She’s only acting like a child.”

He looked back at Cassain, expression cold, and when Cassain didn’t answer, he frowned and continued.

“She must have really done something bad for the beta to react like this, but you know my daughter. She is childish and doesn’t know what she’s doing, so if she says or does anything, please forgive her.”

I bit my bottom lip, forcing back the pain and tears as my body trembled, staring at my father in relief. Yes, my father was here. He would save me. Even if Cassain held a higher position than him, Cassain usually respected my father.

Whenever my father noticed how badly I was acting, I had seen him tell Cassain not to be angry with me, and Cassain would agree, showing he didn’t truly care. If my father spoke to Cassain now, he wouldn’t force me to accept the rejection. He would protect me. He wouldn’t let the king interrogate me.

However, just as a flicker of relief reached me, I watched my father freeze. His eyes widened, and the next second, his hand clutched his chest as he fell to his knees with a loud thud. I gasped in shock.

“Dad!” I called, moving toward him despite the pain coursing through my body. But his eyes didn’t even meet mine, they were fixed on Cassain.

When Cassain’s gaze shifted to my father, my blood ran cold. That’s when I realized what was wrong. He had directed his aura straight at him.

“B–beta...” my father stammered in disbelief.

Cassain cut him off coldly.

“Childish?” he repeated with a chuckle. “You’re calling what she did childish?”

I watched, trembling, as he stood tall, staring down at my father.

“She hired a maid in the packhouse, bribed her to lure the king’s mate into the forbidden room, and when she did, she almost got killed by the king and you call that childish?” He glared.

“W–what?!” my father screamed, spinning sharply toward me. I flinched under his gaze, my breath hitching.

“Or wait, are you defending your daughter despite knowing what she did? Did you also help her with this?”

10:18 Sat, Sep 13

Cassain pressed.

My father turned his gaze back to him and shook his head immediately, disagreeing.

“No, no, I didn’t. There must be a mistake. I had no idea about what you’re saying.”

Cassain’s gaze stayed cold and blank, completely indifferent to my father’s words. He sighed, running a hand through his hair in frustration before turning to me. For a brief moment, I caught a flicker of hesitation in **his** eyes, but it vanished as he hardened his expression.

“Agree to the rejection now. I don’t have time for this. The king has ordered you to be brought to the packhouse.”

Almost immediately, I noticed the two guards he had brought along standing at the door, faces cold and expressionless, waiting for his command. My stomach twisted.

Oh goddess... he was serious. He really wanted me to reject him.

My father stiffened beside me, opening his mouth to intervene, but Cassain hissed sharply,

“You won’t die from the rejection, Ella. Our bond wasn’t deep, but you might lose your connection with your wolf. If you refuse, you won’t be the only one to suffer, your father will also face the consequences. So, Ella...” He growled, eyes flashing brighter “accept the rejection.”

Chapter 188

Nyssa pov

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"Is that so?" I asked, popping a piece of popcorn into my mouth as Isabella leaned in with a gossiping **whisper**, telling me what had happened to Ella.

Everything happened yesterday. The whole ordeal, the maid, the forbidden room, remembering who I **truly** was, and then finding out that Ella had been the mastermind behind everything.

Once it was confirmed that Ella was the one who ordered the maid, Cassian had been told to bring her to the packhouse. The king dismissed everyone, saying it was over, for now.

I'd been a little disappointed. I wanted to confront Ella myself for what she did. But seeing how furious Darius was, I knew better than to do something reckless that might turn his anger on me. So I agreed to stay quiet, though not before giving the maid her punishment.

She would be thrown into the dungeon for a year before being released for her crimes.

When I'd declared that yesterday, the maid cried, begged for forgiveness, pleaded for me to spare her. But why should I? Why should I show kindness when she had intentionally tried to get me killed? I had even given her a chance to save her life, but she refused. So I turned away from her desperate cries as she was dragged off.

And now, Isabella was telling me something very interesting.

Cassian had rejected Ella, breaking the bond with her wolf and leaving her wolfless. When she came to the packhouse to face Darius, he hadn't laid a hand on her. Instead, he stripped her father of his position as an elder, robbing him of his status, and banned their family from ever stepping foot in the packhouse again. If you asked me, that was a light punishment, Ella could easily have lost her life for what she did.

"I heard Beta Cassian didn't even react when Lady Ella passed out yesterday from the rejection and was taken to the king. Isn't he... a bit cruel? I mean, she was still his mate. I can't believe he rejected her knowing she could die," Isabella said with a small frown.

Out of the corner of my eye, I caught Serena stiffen at her words. She clearly wanted to disagree, but stayed

silent.

"I don't think he's cruel," I said, reaching for another piece of popcorn and popping it into my mouth. "He did it to save her."

As soon as the words left my lips, both Isabella and Serena turned to me in surprise, Serena especially, shocked that I knew Cassian's true reason for rejecting Ella.

"If he hadn't rejected her, the king would have killed her himself. But since she had already been punished by her mate, and taking Cassian, his beta, into consideration, he spared her life and instead demoted her father as further punishment. Cassian might not truly care for Ella, but he took a gamble with her life and, in the end, saved it. He's not really a bad person. He saved her."

I explained, stretching slightly before placing the box of popcorn on the table. Isabella's eyes widened as she realized the truth of the situation, and Serena smiled softly at me. But I had a more pressing question,

8:13 Sun, Sep 14 N

something that left me confused.

"Hm, Isabella, how did you say Bella got the keys to the forbidden room again? You said someone **gave** it to her?" I asked, tilting my head slightly as I stared at her.

She paused for a moment, realizing what I meant, and then nodded.

"Yes, my lady, but what she said was weird. She claimed it was a blind old woman, the head attendant in **the** packhouse, who gave her the key without much explanation. But there's no such person here. We don't **have a** head attendant," she said.

A scoff escaped me at her words. Blind old woman?

That was Sandra or should I say, the Moon Goddess.

I couldn't believe the goddess had given Ella the key, but something told me it had been planned, a move to push me into that room so I could regain my memory.

The corner of my lips curved into a slow smirk. The goddess was really cunning, wasn't she? She seemed to flash everyone's memory of herself, everyone except Ella.

"Miss, are you okay?" Serena asked as I fell into a daze, her expression filled with worry. As my gaze flickered to her, I smiled and nodded, responding,

"I see... maybe she was hallucinating then."

I yawned and then turned to Isabella.

"I'm pretty hungry. Could you cut me some fruit, please?" I asked, watching as Isabella's brow lifted at my words. Her gaze flicked to the bowl of popcorn and the snacks already

on the table, surprise evident in her eyes. But when she looked back at me, I smiled, and she cleared her throat before standing and lowering her head.

“Ah... yes, my lady. I’ll go get some fruit now,” she said with a smile before walking out of the room.

As soon as she stepped out, I watched her figure disappear, and almost immediately, Serena’s voice rang through the space as she adjusted the blanket around me.

“You seem to be eating a lot more today, my lady. I’m happy for you,” she said.

I turned to her, narrowing my gaze suspiciously as I watched her smile.

As though she could feel my stare, she instantly stiffened, her hands pausing on me as she lifted her head to meet my eyes. The moment our gazes locked, she swallowed hard, and I studied her intentl closer.

“M–miss, what did I do–” she stammered, but I cut her off.

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“Serena, you’re acting suspicious. Do you have something to tell me?” I asked, my gaze sharp. She blinked at my words, her face flushing red, and instinctively shook her head, as if to deny it.

8:14 Sun, Sep 14 N

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“Don’t lie to me, Serena. Tell me the truth. Is there something going on between you and Cassian?” I pressed narrowing my eyes further. She sucked in a sharp breath, her eyes widening, as though I had hit the **nail on** the head.

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Chapter **189**

Nyssa pov

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“W—what are you talking about, Miss? How could there possibly be something going on between the beta and me, a servant?!”

Serena’s voice came out as a startled yell, her eyes widening in shock and a flicker of guilt, like she knew I was right but was too embarrassed to admit it.

This girl. She was amusing.

Did she really think I hadn’t noticed? The way she looked at Cassain the very first time they met. The way her eyes lit up whenever he was near. And the clothes, she had been putting on most of the new outfits I had given her lately.

Especially since Cassain had been calling her in for statements about the rogue poisoning, you’d think such interrogations would make her anxious, but she always returned in an unusually good mood.

I wasn’t blind to any of it, but I hadn’t said anything before. Now, though, I had to know if there was something serious between them, to decide whether I should intervene, after all, Serena’s safety was my priority.

“Serena,” I began, letting my voice drop slightly as I narrowed my eyes at her, my expression serious. Almost immediately, she swallowed, her gaze fixed on me.

“You know, I don’t mind if you like Cassain, but if you two are serious, I need to know. Don’t hide anything from me. Don’t forget, I’m not just your mistress, I’m your older sister who cares about you. You have to tell me everything, understand?”

I reached out, taking her hand in mine. She swallowed hard, her eyes flickering from mine to our joined hands and back again. After a moment, she parted her lips, her voice soft, almost shy.

“M—miss... y—you’re right. I... I have a crush on Beta Cassain. I’ve liked him for a while now,” she admitted, lowering her head in shame. “Please forgive me for not telling you....and for liking him. I know I’m just a servant and can’t like a beta of the king, but it’s just a harmless crush. Beta Cassain doesn’t know, and I’ll never tell him, I swear to the goddess.”

She spoke so quickly that her words were barely audible, her face panicked, and I couldn’t help but want to laugh at her expression. Serena really did know her to exaggerate, didn’t she?

I smiled, leaning toward her and giving her a gentle knock on the head. She froze, her breath hitching as she stared at me.

“My goddess, stop acting like you committed a crime, it’s okay, dummy,” I said with a soft chuckle, pulling her a little closer as I continued with a grin.

“There’s nothing wrong with you liking Cassain. Honestly, he’s **a** good catch, handsome, tall, kind... Frankly, I’d be thrilled if you two ended up together.”

Serena’s eyes widened at my words, but I didn’t stop there. I wanted her to feel the truth of what I was saying.

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“You’re not just a servant, Serena. You’re more than that. You’re my dear little **sister**, the one who’s been by my side since you were born. Our father and everyone watched you grow into this remarkable young woman, loyal, kind, always thinking of others before yourself...”

Just like you did for me when you left the pack and risked yourself for my safety.

“In this life, you deserve everything you want. If you like Cassain, go for him. There’s nothing holding you back, right? He rejected his mate, he’s single, so why not see where it goes?”

I said, reaching out to ruffle her hair gently. I watched as she swallowed hard at my words, her eyes glistening red with unshed tears before she stammered out in a whisper.

“M–miss...”

But I wasn’t finished.

“However,” I continued softly, “don’t get too lost in the feeling of love. Sure, it might feel incredible, like you’re walking on clouds. That fuzzy rush you get when you’re near the person you like can be so addicting it makes you want to forget everything else. But, Serena... don’t love only with your heart. Love with your head

too.”

I narrowed my gaze at her, and she blinked, clearly confused.

“Don’t fall so deeply that you lose the ability to make sensible decisions or see things clearly. Look at the way I loved that bastard, Kieran. I loved him so completely, he took advantage of me and betrayed me. Learn from my mistake. Don’t ever act recklessly. If doubts creep in, think carefully, weigh your choices, and come to your senses. Do you understand?” I asked, my tone serious.

Her eyes hardened as my words sank in, and she nodded firmly.

“Yes, my lady. I understand. I’ll do as you said,” she replied, her voice steady.

For a moment, I said nothing, simply watching her to see if she truly understood. When I caught the determined glint in her eyes, I smiled and leaned back slightly, nodding my head.

“Good girl. Good girl,” I echoed, stretching before holding up a finger.

“Also, one more thing,” I hummed. “If Cassain ever hurts you or betrays you, you tell me, and I’ll make sure he never walks again.”

Serena chuckled as if I were joking, which I wasn’t but seeing her laugh made me smile. Just then, Isabela walked back in, carrying a plate of fruit as we continued talking, or rather, gossiping.

The rest of the day went by like that. Not particularly eventful, but not boring either. I chatted, ate, and rested, just like I normally would but today felt different.

I was preparing for tomorrow, for when I regained all my strength. I had planned to start spending time with Darius, to seduce him into falling for me all over again. And when he did, I would reveal that I was Liana and show him the proof.

I **was** certain that he would believe me then, having fallen for my charms once more. But I knew just how hot-

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headed he could be, so I was saving my strength for what was to come. I might even risk my life to get close to him but I was ready.

Ready to win back my man, ready to stop him from thinking of ending his life, ready to live a long, full life with him this time.

And I would make it work.

No matter what.

Kieran pov

“When are we going back to the pack? It’s been two months since we got here, and I can’t stand this place anymore! No, I want to go back. I need to go back!”

Aria snapped for the sixth time, slapping the hot bowl of porridge from the nurse’s hands onto the floor. Her voice was sharp, high-pitched, and filled with rage as she screamed.

I watched her, expression cold and unflinching, taking in every pathetic move, the tears streaming down her face as she thrashed on the bed, crying.

“I don’t want to stay here anymore, Kieran! I said I don’t want to! This place is a dump! Why should I continue staying here?”

Her roar made the nurse gasp in surprise. She rushed forward, trying to hold Aria still to prevent her from moving too much.

“Please, calm down, miss. Stop moving around. You haven’t recovered enough!” the nurse pleaded helplessly.

But Aria didn’t spare her a glance, continuing her outburst.

“I want to go back to the Emberfang pack! My family must be worried sick about me! And I want to see that bitch, Nyssa! I want to see her and make her pay for what she did to me. How dare she poison me, and you are telling me that I can’t even go back and tell anyone what she did? Are you kidding me, Kieran? Don’t tell me you’re doing this just because you still like that bitch!”

She spat the words out, one after another, curse after curse, her voice dripping with venom. I stared at her blankly, as if I were present, as if I were listening but in truth, I really wasn’t.

Mentally drained and physically exhausted, I could barely register anything beyond the slow, relentless ticking of the clock, counting down to something I couldn’t name. I had even managed to drown out Aria’s persistent yelling, as I often did.

This wasn’t the first time she’d reacted like this, screaming, demanding to go back to the Emberfang pack. Ever since she’d woken up, she had changed. More irritable, more unhinged, her anger simmering just beneath the surface, boiling over at times. Most of all, that rage was aimed at Nyssa, for what she had done.

At first, it seemed like the usual Aria, the one who acted out whenever she was upset. But it wasn’t. It felt as if she were someone entirely different. And it wasn’t just her behavior that had changed, her body had, too, ever since she’d woken from the coma.

She was growing leaner by the day, but not in the way she had ever wanted. Her frame had become fragile, almost skeletal, and with every movement, it seemed as though she might break, shatter right before me. It

was that severe.

But the worst part, the reason I could barely bring myself to look at her was her skin.

Dark green.

1435 Tue, Sep 16

Like that of a decaying corpse. She gave off the scent of rot, not the familiar scent that had once driven me wild. It was as if she were a living, breathing corpse.

I had asked that bastard why her condition was like that, but he had simply shrugged lazily, a smirk of amusement on his face. Apparently, it was some new project of his—to see if he could bring the dead back to life. He had killed so many people and tried it on them, but it never worked. Aria was the first to actually come back, and he seemed just as surprised as I was at how she was reacting. Judging by her appearance, he doubted she would live long, but he said he would see what he could do when he had the time.

My hands clenched into fists at the memory of his words. That idiot. He had turned my mate into this and didn't even care.

"Can you not hear me? Why are you ignoring me, Kieran? Why aren't you answering? I see... it's because you're still in love with that bitch, isn't it? Is that why? Because I look like this?"

"Miss, please, stop moving so much. Your condition will get worse-

"Shut up!"

Smack!

I snapped out of my daze as the nurse hit the ground hard.

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My cold gaze flickered to her trembling form, eyes wide with terror as she stared at Aria, like she was seeing a monster. And truthfully, with the way she looked, she wasn't far from it.

"I said shut up, you fucking bitch! Can't you hear that I'm talking to my mate? How fucking dare you interrupt me while I speak? You're just a mere rogue nurse, and you think you can tell me what to do?"

Aria roared, teeth bared, a bony finger jabbing at the nurse. Her body trembled with every word she just the sight of her made my frown deepen.

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This wasn't the Aria I knew.

That bastard had ruined her. Twisted her.

The girl I once loved was gone.

"I-I-" the nurse stammered, at a loss for words.

I sighed heavily,

running a hand through my hair before pushing myself to my feet. Without sparing her a glance, I spoke coldly.

"Get out."

The nurse swallowed hard, lowered her head, then scrambled up and bolted from the room, leaving only Aria and me behind.

As soon as we were alone, I narrowed my gaze on her and stepped closer. She turned her glare on me, face twisted with anger but the closer I got, the stronger the stench of decay hit me, sharp and nauseating, making me almost gag. Still, I forced myself to ignore it and stopped right in front of her.

12:35 Tue, **Sep 16**

"Aria," I said, my voice low, void of emotion. "Are you happy with your current state? Do you realize how you look? How you smell? Is this what you want?"

Her expression darkened at my words, and the next second, she exploded.

"You bastard! What do you mean by that? How do I look? How do I smell? I'm perfectly fine! I'm just sick, and I'll get better soon, so stop talking nonsense!"

My gaze narrowed, fists curling tight as all the frustration of the past weeks finally burst out.

"Are you blind, Aria? You're not sick! You're dead! Can't you see it? You're decaying. Even though you're breathing—you're dead!" I hissed.

She gasped at my words, then immediately broke down, tears streaming as she shoved at me with her frail hands.

“Dead?! How could you say that to me? I’m not dead, you bastard! This is your fault—all your fault! You were the one who told me to pretend we weren’t mates, even when I didn’t want to. You didn’t save me. You didn’t drink the poison when that bitch asked me to. You were selfish, Kieran! You chose yourself. That’s why I’m in this situation!”

Her words sliced into me, rage surging through my veins. And even though I knew she was right, the anger consumed me at her, at my cursed situation, at the whole damn world... especially at that bitch, Nyssa.

Before I realized it, my hand shot up, ready to strike. Aria’s eyes widened in shock, but before I could bring it down, a low, amused voice drifted through the air.

“Haha... this is rich. A while ago you were thrilled your mate was alive, and now you want her gone. Don’t you?”

I froze. Slowly, I turned, and there he was, leaning lazily against the wall, a smile playing on his lips, eyes gleaming like he was watching a show.

The leader of the rogues.

The cause of everything.

Zayn.

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