

# Replacement Bride for the Alpha of the North

## - Chapter 221 – 240

### Chapter 221: THE CRITICAL SITUATION (13)

“Do you think it is alright to let Zaya absorb the dark magic? Do you think it will work?” Pyro asked, he didn’t really understand what Lyra and Dawn were doing, he was there to guard this place from the monster, but he felt agitated because he couldn’t do anything, but standing there, watching them doing something he didn’t have any knowledge of.

He could be out there and help, he could advise Zaya of what to do and how to absorb black magic, even though he was not sure how it worked, since nobody had ever been able to do so, aside from the previous queen.

However, Pyro knew how dangerous it was and Dawn said it herself that she saw Zaya was dying and that was the last thing the royal beta wanted to happen.

“I don’t know, Pyro, but that’s something Zaya has to do.” Dawn kept her focus on the material in front of her. “Can you call for all the knights and the shifters to gather here?”

“What do you want with them?”

“Just call them here, Pyro.” Dawn was frustrated, but Pyro felt the same, because he used to know everything, while Dawn didn’t have time to explain thing to him.

Pyro followed Dawn’s instruction begrudgingly and then went to get those people, who seemingly had butchered most of the monsters.

These people from Marca El were scary, as they could match the stamina of the shifters and from the look of it, they had a fun time, treating this as a battle hunter, since the one that they had previously didn’t work really well, because the capital city was under attack.

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“They are here, my king.” Burke went to approach Zander, who was still trying to calm Zade down, the baby was still crying.

Though they still could move around just fine, it didn't mean they were in good condition, the shifters lost their ability to shift and they look in pain.

For the warriors, who used to feel pain from various occasion, this simply made them uncomfortable, after the initial shock that they couldn't shift had worn off.

However, for Zade the pain was too much. He had been making a fuss and no amount of consolation that could stop him from crying.

Now, he clawed his thigh, the spot where the mark was.

"Tell them to come in," Zander said.

And with that, two people the king had not seen for a long time stood in front of him. They nodded at him politely, as if they were simply showing courtesy.

"It has been a long time, Rye, Lucia." Zander took off his golden mask.

Lucia's eyes lit up when she saw Zade, she immediately came to the baby. "Is he Zade? Zen's son? Why is he crying?" Lucia then gave an accusation look at Zander, so bold to make that move on the king, if only you were not close. "What did you do to him?"

"I am not so deranged to make a baby cry."

"Maybe because of your stupid golden mask that scared him."

Yara gasped because what Lucia said was too brazen, she was afraid for her, but Lucia simply smiled at her winked.

Lucia was wearing man's clothes, her long hair was tied into a messy bun above her head.

"On our way here, we realized that we can't shift into our beast," Rye said.

"Yeah, and what the hell with the sky? It's a chaos when we crossed the Moonlight pack." Lucia added, she nudged Zade's little feet. She wanted to carry him, but she was reeked of blood and dirt.

"Yes, thing doesn't look good in Moonlight pack." Zander kept patting Zade's back, it bothered him that the little one was in so much pain. He then told Lucia and Rye about it.

The two of them had been spies in the West Kingdom, they had witnessed countless children had to meet their demised for the sacrifice that the black magic users did.

Therefore, they were also familiar with the mark and confirmed that was the one. The two of them looked pissed off.

The only reason why they couldn't save those children was because it would expose themselves. It was not easy to get into the West Kingdom, therefore, they needed to turn blind eyes and deaf ears when they witnessed each sacrifice that they did, in order to get more information and help Zander to take down the West.

That was the only consolation for them.

And now, the time was near, that was why they were here with the children that they managed to be rescued.

"Some of the children that came with us have the same mark too on their bodies." Rye contemplated about it. "No wonder, some of them kept crying."

Zander handed Zade over to Yara and then followed them out of the room, where they saw three carriages that filled with children, some of them the children that were kidnapped from Moonlight pack.

Lucia took a five years old girl, who kept crying and asked her, why she was crying. It was hard to ask Zade, because he was too little to elaborate what he felt.

"My shoulder is hurt..." The little girl said between her sobs, she touched her left shoulder. "And..."

"And?" They waited for the girl to explain what else that she felt.

"There are men..."

"Men?" Zander knelt down in front of the little girl, but she hid behind Lucia's legs. "What men, little one?" He was not wearing his golden mask now, thus he was smiling softly at the little girl.

"So many men wearing black cloak..."

"What men?" Zander touched her hand, to reassure her that he wouldn't hurt her.

"Men..." She murmured, her eyes looked around her filled with fear and tears. "Men with golden mask..." she said and then cried again, she hugged Lucia's leg and refused to answer more question. Her little body was shaking. She was really scared.

"Men with golden mask?"

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The only man with golden mask that they had ever seen, without a doubt, was the king.

But, when the little girl told them that she saw many men with golden mask, it confused them.

However, they couldn't say what the little girl said was wrong, because the other two children, who were at the same age as her and could tell them what made them crying, saying the same thing.

"Golden mask?" Lucia repeated the same thing.

In the end, Lucia decided that she would talk with the little girl and see if she could get more information from her, for the meantime, Zander and Rye discussed their next move.

Everything went well according to their plan in the West, but the only aspect that they didn't see coming was what happened in the Moonlight pack and the newest revelation from Dawn's memories that Zenith was the target.

"We need to handle the problem in the Moonlight pack first before we can continue with our plan in the West," Rye concluded, after they went through every option that they had to win this battle.

This was a critical situation.

"Oh, I hate this situation." Rye grumbled. He hated the unexpected.

"Do you think I love it?" Zander closed his eyes. "What do you feel? Your wolf spirit, I meant."

"I feel like someone is squeezing my heart tightly. Uncomfortable, painful." Rye then looked at Zander. "The golden mask..." he started. "Do you think it has something to do with what happened ten years ago? With... her?"

Both of them knew, who 'her' that Rye referred to. It was Zander's destined mate.

However, Zander had never talked about what happened ten years ago and what happened that night when he lost his wolf spirit, which caused him unable to shift. It would be a great scandal if people learned about it, since it would show how weak the king was without his beast.

That was the time when he started to wear his golden mask to hide his face.

"No, I don't think so." Zander's answer came so fast, as if he didn't even reconsider it at all. He simply thought that was not the case at all, or maybe he didn't want to even think about that.

Rye opened his mouth, he wanted to say something, but the look on Zander's eyes made him stopped himself and then sighed deeply.

How could those children could see the golden mask men, but they couldn't?

Not long after that, Lucia came with another information about what the children said about the golden mask men. They described the golden mask was the same like what Zander had.

"Lend me your golden mask, I will let them see whether the intricate of the mask is the same like what they are seeing."

Zander looked at Lucia's hand that stretched out, waiting for him to give her the golden mask.

"What is it, Zan?" Lucia narrowed her eyes, because she felt there was something wrong.

Zander pressed his lips, hie jaw hardened. Both Lucia and Rye knew there was more about the mask, something more that he hid deeply and didn't want anyone to learn about this, but what? All of them were confused about what actually was going on with the king.

"Zan?" Lucia walked toward him, but Zander's gaze stopped her.

His eyes were cold, his blue eyes looked a few shades darker. They had never seen Zander like this, especially when they had not yet met with him very often due to their assignment in the West.

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Dawn and Lyra managed to finish whatever they were doing and asked all the knights to pour their sword with the liquid that they concocted.

"What is it?" the knight scrunched their nose because the smell was so awful.

"Think of this as holy water," Dawn said simply. She was fine with the smell. "So, your sword will be able to cut down the devil."

"Ugh. I don't know that holy water is so disgusting." One of the knights stared at the green liquid. "What is the point of this?"

Dawn then explained that the liquid would enhance the power of their sword, which would allow them to ward off the magic from magic users.

“How do you know that it will work?”

“Let’s find out,” Pyro said, as he attacked one of the knights. The magic scattered, but the sword cracked.

“This is not really working,” the knight said unhappily because his sword cracked.

“Well, I think it works.” Pyro tilted his head. “Without it, I will be able to cut your body into half.”

“What?!”

They thought Pyro wouldn’t really attack the knight seriously, because they only tried the strange liquid that Dawn poured on their sword. They were not happy with the smell though.

“What did you expect? Do you think those magic users will attack you playfully? Of course, they will attack you with the intention to kill you.”

That was how Pyro justified his action and thankfully, Dawn cut them off before thing would escalate. They had their enemy to be taken down, it was not the right time to attack each other.

But, when they finally reached the place, where Dawn left Zaya, she couldn’t see her, instead it was the black wisp and flames that clustered in the wind.

The knights that came with king Rowan fought off the magic users, the fight had broken loose and Jared seemed to try to get to Zaya, while Zenith was left in his beast form.

Dawn didn’t know what happened to him and it seemed, the eleven black magic users that surrounded him looked very tensed.

When all the shifters couldn’t shift into their beast, Zenith was the only beast there. His black beast looked magnificent and... feral.

But, Dawn could tell something was not right with him when their eyes met and a second later, the beast launched at the closer magic user and ripped his head off, before he went to the next one.

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“What happened?” Pyro watched the same thing too, he was dumbfounded... he watched how feral the black beast was and from the look of it, Zenith didn’t even realize what he was doing. He kept attacking all the people that he could reach, not even a shield could stop him.

He became ridiculously strong.

“What is going on here?” Addie approached them as well.

Meanwhile, Zaya was still trying to absorb all the black magic from Zenit, but if you watched closely, you would know that it was her, who was being absorbed by the black magic.

They could no longer see her body, as she was engulfed by the black wisp. It was like an ominous cocoon.

“What else did you remember from your previous life, Dawn? I am sure there must be a missing piece somewhere!” Pyro asked loudly against the harsh wind. The wind was very hot, it felt like it was going to burn them.

“I don’t know... I can’t remember anything else.” Dawn shook her head. She would have told them if there was something that she remembered, but she agreed with Pyro. There must be a missing piece somewhere.

Meanwhile, all the knights fought the black magic users. The concoction that Dawn and Lyra created helped their case, though it didn’t strengthen the sword, but at the very least, it would give them some form of protection.

Dawn observed it. Three strikes. Three strikes from black magic that the sword could handle before it snapped into two.

She told Addie to relay the message to all the knights.

Meanwhile, the warriors, who couldn’t shift into their beast took the swords from the dead knights and fought as well. They were not used to using sword, never in a sword fight, but they learned quickly and their sharp instinct helped them to adjust with this uncomfortable situation that they were in.

But, it wouldn’t really help with their current situation, because their real problem right now was not those black magic users, but this black wolf that ran rampant, killing all the people around him.

For now, because he was being surrounded by the black magic users, he killed them, yet Dawn was afraid, he wouldn’t stop there.

She was sure that he wouldn’t stop there...

Dawn knew from the crazed look in his eyes that Zenith wouldn’t stop there. There was something not right with her mate, but she couldn’t put her finger on it.

Dawn then looked the ominous cocoon that engulfed Zaya. "I think we need to get Zaya out of there." She couldn't absorb the black magic, but what happened was the opposite and it could put her life in danger. That was the last thing that Dawn wanted for Zaya to be in danger.

Pyro cursed under his breathe. "Yes, I think she couldn't handle it."

With that was being said, he immediately rushed toward Zaya to get her out of the cocoon that trapped her, but his power was not enough, even with the help of Rowan, since the king was not a magic user.

"What kind of nasty thing that you put on the other knights' swords?" Rowan asked Pyro and the royal beta explained it to him. "Give me one."

Pyro then took a small bottle from his hip and poured it on Rowan's sword, but he warned him first. "Don't let your hope high, I don't think it will work. It will only protect you from three strikes, before the sword snapped into two."

"I don't do it to protect myself," Rowan said. He scrunched his nose because the smell of it was really disturbing. "Now, back off."

Pyro looked at him with a frown. "What are you going to do?"

"Saving the princess," Rowan replied nonchalantly.

Pyro did not really understand what Rowan was aimed for, but when he watched how he swung the sword and intended to break the cocoon of black wisp that covered Zaya, his eyes widened in shock.

"You could cut her!" Pyro shouted. Rowan could accidentally cut Zaya in the process, but he simply took a step back and stared at his sword.

This was the sword that made of fire magic stone. The same stone that was in Zaya's dagger and Rowan could feel there was something different when he poured the concoction in it. The sword felt more... alive and stronger.

"Stop this!"

However, Rowan didn't listen to him, he went ahead and swung his sword and this time, he did it with all of his might.

The sound when the sword and the black wisp cocoon made a collision was deafening. Pyro had to take a step back and cover his ears, so did the magic users, knights and the warriors nearby.



However, to their surprised, Rowan managed to split the cocoon into half and reveal Zaya inside.

“What the fuck are you doing?! Go and get her!” Rowan said, he couldn’t retract the sword, the black wisp held on it tightly, it was akin to a vine that crept on the blade. “GO AND GET HER OUT!”

Pyro finally snapped and then rushed to get Zaya out of the cocoon, she was unconscious. Her body was cold.

And once she was out, Rowan let go of his sword, as the black wisp swallowed it. It was a pity, since it was a good sword, but right now, Rowan’s main focus was on Zaya.

“What happened to her?!” Rowan asked, as he approached Pyro, who laid Zaya down on the ground, she was still breathing, thankfully. The king could see the movement from her chest, but she was unconscious.

“I am not sure.” Pyro shook his head. He checked on Zaya, she was fine, but he couldn’t tell for sure, since he was not a healer.

Meanwhile, not too far from them, the black beast managed to kill most of the black magic users, but just like what Dawn was afraid of, he didn’t stop there, because right now, he attacked the knights too.

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“We need to get her out of here,” Pyro said.

But, even before the royal beta finished his sentence, Rowan had carried Zaya in his arms to a safe place.

They found a spot, beside the ruin of what it looked like one of the bedrooms in this pack house and laid Zaya on the bed, after Pyro cleaned it up from dirt a bit.

“I will call a healer,” Pyro said, he then stood up and rushed to find Lyra. He remembered that the healer must be nearby, she was with Dawn earlier.

Rowan didn’t say anything and let Pyro left the room. He stared at Zaya and wiped her face from dirt. He checked her body and found the back of her hand was bleeding. There was not much blood, because from the look of it, it was only a scrap.

However, he tore his clothes and tied it around the wound. This was enough for now.

And for the meantime, he was waiting for the healer to come. Rowan looked up and saw the sky was still the color of red from the hole on the ceiling and the wind became even hotter than before. This place would turn into hell in a few more hours.

Sweat trickled down from his forehead, as he tried to keep his composure. He held her hand and saw the dagger on her waist.

Thankfully, it didn't take long before Pyro finally returned with Lyra. The healer checked on Zaya and said that she was fine.

"But, she is unconscious," Rowan stated the obvious. "She is not fine."

"She got a backlash from using her magic, king Rowan. She will recover after some time," Lyra replied.

It didn't put the king at ease, but he accepted the explanation. "Take her back to the palace with the portal and informed your king about what happened here."

"I can't."

"Why not?" Rowan frowned.

"I don't have enough magic stone with me to create a portal." What happened here was not as they had predicted. Pyro and Zaya came here with different mission.

While Zaya came to convince king Rowan not to take the enemy's side, which was not even a problem in the first place, since he proved it that he was on their side, Pyro came here to take Zenith back to the palace, but as it turned out, he had to fight the enemy.

"Fuck." Rowan looked frustrated. "Those magic users from the Sect could use their magic as they pleased."

"They were using black magic, they used sacrifice as the source of their power."

"Then do it. You can do the same, right?" Rowan furrowed his brows at the royal beta.

"I will not go down in the same path like that." Pyro was strongly against it. He had never done it, but from what he knew, the feeling of using black magic was akin to drink your own blood. Who would do that? But, obviously, many people was willing to do that for more power.

"Fine. Go and find a carriage to take her back to the palace."

Pyro squinted his eyes at the king. "You care so much about her."

Rowan didn't say anything, he simply stood up and then took one of the swords from the dead knight. He glanced at Pyro and then his eyes fell on Zaya. "I demanded a great deal from your king for what I have done for him."

He didn't say that he would ask, but it would be a 'demand'. And from the way he looked at Zaya, Pyro knew what he wanted. He was sure that the two brothers would throw a fit, but right now, it went without saying that the Marca El people really helped them a lot.

"Make sure you don't die, if you wanted to demand anything from the king," Pyro said before Rowan left. He didn't know whether the king hear him or not among the roaring sound out there. He then looked at Lyra. "Do you know where can I get a carriage?"

"I don't know if they still kept a carriage, but I know where is the stable."

"Good."

Lyra then helped Pyro to put Zaya on his back, as both of them went out of the room and away from the chaos. The wind became even more unbearably hot. They felt like they were going to be evaporated at some point.

The horrendous sky didn't even help with the ominous feeling that they felt.

Pyro was panting heavily. He gritted his teeth and fastened his steps, as Lyra led them to the stable and they to their bad luck, there was no carriage, but there were a few horses there.

"You have to take her on horseback," Lyra said, she took one of the horses and then led him out. She helped Pyro to secure Zaya on the horse, while he hugged her from behind. "I don't know if it will help or not, but take this."

Lyra gave him a small bottle with white liquid inside.

"What is this?"

"Be careful with that. That contain a very corrosive liquid. If someone touched it, their skin and bone will melt almost immediately."

"Why you people have this dangerous thing?"

"That Dawn's creation, not me." Lyra raised both of her hands in her defense.

"What if the bottle cracked accidentally? I will die." Pyro thought the thing that Lyra gave him was not helping at all.

“Don’t worry, the bottle is strong enough. It even managed to contain the corrosive liquid.”

Pyro shook his head. “I don’t know what to be worried about now.”

After that, he went away with Zaya, but the battle in the Moonlight pack kept going, as it only grew vicious, since the black beast started to kill anyone on his path. He absorbed back the black magic that Zaya managed to extract before.

“Do you have plan?” Rowan asked Dawn when he finally saw her. He approached her. “That’s your man, right?”

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“Yes,” Dawn said. Her heart was torn apart to see Zenith in his beast form. Her mind brought her back to the night, when he annihilated the whole pack when he let his beast loose.

It went without saying that he could do the same thing right now, because whatever Jared and those filthy black magic users had done to him, it only made him stronger.

“Well, don’t be shy, you can share it with me,” Rowan said casually, he stared at the sword in his hand. It didn’t feel right, because this was not his sword. He liked his own sword better. “So? What is the plan?”

“We need to stop him,” Dawn replied, she turned her head and then looked at Rowan.

“Yes, I am aware of that. So, what is the plan?”

“The plan is to stop him and turn him into normal again.”

Rowan stared at Dawn for a little bit longer and then it dawned on him what she meant and he sighed deeply. “I really couldn’t talk with strategy with woman.” He then unsheathed his sword. “Fine. I will try to stop him. Don’t cry if I manage to kill him.”

“You will not be able to kill him,” Dawn said with conviction. “Both of us know.”

Rowan scoffed at the statement and then went ahead. It was not like he was going to argue with Dawn over something that petty.

And after he joined with the knights, they decided to back off and let the beast to kill all the people there, the magic users to be precise, since Jared was still trying to get a sense of control over Zenith.

It was funny to see how he didn't know what to do and was equally surprised by the alpha's outburst. Jared didn't even have a plan B as a back up.

Because previously, he extracted the black magic from Zenith's dead body, but right now he was still alive and obviously, fighting back when he stole some of his black magic.

The beast could be very petty and now, he aimed for the leader of the dragon sect. The magic users tried to stop the beast, but it was a futile attempt, since technically, their power came from the same source of magic, which was very ironic.

Dawn stared at the black beast that fought against Jared. That man was insane, he was powerful enough to be able to hold a fight against the black beast, but probably because he had consumed enough black magic from Zenith that was why he was so powerful right now.

The wind became more and more hot, it was suffocating and her dress stuck to her skin, which made her felt like she needed to peel it off if she wanted to take it off.

"Dawn!"

Dawn startled and saw Darius rushed toward her. He looked fine, it seemed, the venom from the snake had worn out and he looked like a brand new.

"What happened here? What did I miss?"

"A lot." Dawn then gave him a brief summary about what was going on and how the situation could escalate to this point.

"I think it's good if Zenith fought those black magic user, especially Jared," Darius said, his voice laced with proudness, but he missed the big point here. "I think he can kill Jared and we can go back home quickly."

Dawn shook her head. "Zenith is not in his right mind, after he killed Jared, who would guarantee that he wouldn't kill us too?" She looked at Darius and watched how the realization finally came to her mind. "He had killed three knights in his beast form. He doesn't see us as friend or foe, he only moves out of instinct and his main instinct right now is to kill."

Darius pressed his lip. "Do you think his outburst will run it course after some time? I meant, I happened to see him lost control over his beast, but there is some point where he had this clarity and then regained his control back. Don't you think we only need to wait?"

That made sense.

“Let’s see,” Dawn said, unsure. She felt her heart ached so bad to see how Zenith didn’t even remember himself at this moment. She wanted to reach to him, but then she remembered one more crucial thing that she overlooked, because there were a lot of things that was going on in her mind right now.

She was the one, who killed Zenith in their first life.

And the prophecy...

In a way, the prophecy was right. She killed Zenith.

Zenith tried to avoid the prophecy by taking another woman as his mate in their first life, but apparently, it didn’t work that way. Dawn still ended his life.

Would that be the same right now?

“Dawn... what do you think he is doing?” Darius asked when Jared let out a shrill scream when the beast managed to bite down his shoulder. They saw there were something so red shoot up like a shooting star that entered to his body. There were a lot of it and it came from the direction of the safe place.

“Oh no...” Dawn recognized that. “He took the soul of those who had been marked as the sacrificed.

It would enhance his power and with there were a lot of them, she was sure all the people inside the safe place had been marked as the sacrifice.

It clicked in Dawn’s mind now about why they would take the pain to save them in the first place when they appeared couldn’t care less of taking someone else’s lives, but as it turned out, they saved them as their back up power.

This was the reason why they saved them. Dawn explained it to Darius.

“That’s disgusting.”

But, little did Dawn know, her own son had the same mark too, along with a few other children who had been saved by Rye and Lucia from the West.

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“So, will you tell us what is the deal with this golden mask?” Lucia asked Zander for explanation. She looked at the king with her sharp eyes, Rye was sitting beside her, while she was standing.

She crossed her arms in front of her chest and waited impatiently. She didn't even have any scrupulous to demand the answer, even though the man before her was the king.

She needed to know after all the horrendous thing that she had to go through. She still remembered all the name of the children that had met their demise on the slab when they sacrificed them and she couldn't do anything about it.

Lucia knew it was not nice to bring this up, but she was more than willing to stoop that low to remind Zander about that. She looked at the king in the eyes and then reiterated all the name of the children.

"... Rose, Dean. There are around thirty children in total, but obviously there are more children that I didn't know of, since I am not always in the ritual." Lucia walked toward Zander and stood in front of him. "If you don't think you owed me an explanation, you are sorely mistaken."

Zander looked at Rye, who didn't seem wanting to say anything. He only shrugged his shoulders. "She insisted to remember those children's name." Rye then changed his tone. "Whether you think you owed us or not, you need to know that we are willing to help only if you allowed us to do so."

Zander creased his brows. He took off his golden mask and stared at it for a while.

"Nadia..." Zander said. This must be the first time he said that name after a decade. "She is a spy, but she is also a magic user."

Nadia was his destined mate. She died ten years ago, where all of this started, where he started to wear this golden mask.

"What the thing with the golden mask?"

"She came from a tribe in Andelus continent," Zander started.

All of them knew about this, ever since decades ago, this continent gave them nothing, but a headache, yet somehow they seemed to tangle together in the matter of business and whatnot related to magic stone.

"She put curse on me before she died."

"What curse?" Lucia narrowed her eyes.

"I don't know how to explain this, but ever since her death, I saw so many people in golden mask and while they don't bother all the other people... they would always notice me. As if I am part of them."

These people in the golden mask were akin to a ghost, where only Zander could see them. The reason why Zander would use the golden mask very often was because they would come to approach him and take over his body.

All this time, Zander was wearing the golden mask because he pretended that he was one of them. He had been 'hiding' from them behind his golden mask.

"What happened if you took off your golden mask?" Rye asked. This was weird, this was the first time for Rye to hear something like this. He didn't even know there was this kind of curse. The black magic world was indeed vast and confusing. He was sure even the magic user didn't even know the depth of their own history.

"They will take over my body. I realized this on the first week of the death of Nadia."

Zander didn't talk to anyone about the golden mask people that he saw the moment he realized that he was the only one that could see them. This might be ridiculous, but he was afraid that people would call him crazy.

People already looked down on him because he lost his destined mate and branded him as an incapable king. He didn't want to add more label on his head.

Therefore, when he found a way to keep these 'masked people' from him by wearing a golden mask that was the same like them, he didn't see the point of talking about it and now, after a decade, he used to it.

"You are crazy, Zan," Lucia said, she clicked her tongue. "Don't you think if you could see those masked people just like the children that had been marked as the sacrificed, it meant, you have been marked too?"

Zander tilted his head. "I know." A self deprecating smile grazed his lips. "Why do you think I lost my beast? My dear mate took pity on me, so instead of outright killing me, she put the mark on my wolf spirit and killed my wolf spirit instead, which caused me unable to shift. How sweet she was..."

The sarcasm was very thick in the way Zander was speaking, he gave a chuckle to make the situation less tensed, but it was clear to see that it still hurt him deeply. People thought he must have forgotten about it, but as it turned out, Zander still remembered every detail of what happened and he was holding onto that memory. He only put it on the back of his mind and pulled it out whenever he was alone.

"Zan..." Lucia was speechless she didn't know what to say anymore.

"Did Zen know about this?" Rye chimed in, he stood up and then approached Zander.

"No. I told you that I have never talked about this. So, no one knew about it."



“Who do you think ‘those people’ behind the golden mask?”

“The people that had been killed for the sacrifice.” Zander put on his golden mask again, but this time, Lucia shuddered and looked over her shoulder, as if someone could jump from behind her and this subtle movement made Zander chuckled. “Don’t worry, they will not be able to bother you. They only like to bother me though.”

“How do you know that? Can you communicate with them?”

“No. They didn’t really talk.”

When they were in the middle of discussion, Yara barged into the room.

#### Chapter 227: THE CRITICAL SITUATION (19)

Even after there were so many people had died for the sacrifice, Jared was still having a hard time to get out of the black beast. His shoulder was soaking red with how much blood that oozed out from his deep wound.

His magic only managed to protect him from the beast from snapping his body into half, but obviously it was not enough to get out from this predicament.

Meanwhile, when those black magic users saw their leader was weaker than the opponent, one by one stepped back, they feared the black beast and in their mind, there was no point for them to fight this losing battle.

Based on that, they started to flee from the scene, yet the knights immediately chased them down and the battle started anew between them, while Jared was still struggling to keep his life intact.

“Dawn!” Jared screamed her name. “You are the one, who wanted this! You are the one, who wanted to kill all the shifters! Have you forgotten about that?!”

Dawn frowned, she didn’t have any idea what he was talking about.

But then, Jared started to talk about her strong desire that she wanted to kill all the shifters, the war between the magic users and the shifters and how the shifters saw her as a traitor.

Because even though she was a shifter herself, she was on the magic user’s side and also, even though she was a shifter, she used to fight with her skill in poison art, instead of shifting into her beast, because she despised the shifter so much.

It explained why Dawn was fighting against Zaya in the first life.

“You hated all the shifters because they let you down!” Jared screamed. “What happened now?! Have you forgotten how those people had hurt you? Have you forgotten how those people let you down?! You were not allowed to see your own child, you were poisoned and was abandoned! You saw your son’s dead body, mauled by the monster! Can you let it go just because now you have another son?!”

Dawn was slightly taken aback with that revelation. She was one of the instigators of the war between the shifters and the black magic users in the first life.

“Don’t listen to him, Dawn,” Darius said hastily, because he could see how what Jared said started to get to her. “Don’t listen! It’s different now!”

However, Dawn didn’t need to listen anymore, because Rowan came and cut off his head.

The leader of the dragon sect died and once life left his body, the protection around him broke, the black magic that shielded him from being snapped into half by the beast, broke as well and Jared lost a big chunk of his shoulder.

Yet, Rowan was in a dangerous position right now because he was too close to Zenith and without Jared, the black beast directed his killing intent toward the king.

Rowan knew his action was very risky, but he did it anyway and despite the feral look on the black wolf, there was this smirk that tugged on the corner of his lips.

“Well, Zaya will be pissed if I hurt her brother, but I have no other choice now, right?” Rowan smirked at the beast, as it started to attack him.

The king dodged the first attack, but on the second attack that came so fast, he used his sword to prevent his arm from being claw. The sword snapped and he was left defenseless.

Now, it wiped off all the smirk from his lips, because his face turned dark, as he faced the beast.

Seeing what happened, five knights immediately came between their king and the beast, protecting Rowan, but they were not a match in a fight against a bloodlust beast, who let his killing instinct ran rampant.

“Shit!” Darius went ahead and grabbed one of the swords on the ground.

“You didn’t know how to fight with sword, Darius!” Dawn followed behind him, she was afraid. She was trying to think of a way of how to fix the situation.

There was this one thing that she noticed, which dreaded her, because even though Jared had died, they still couldn't shift into her beast. She felt uncomfortable with this fact.

Could this be only a phase? Where they would eventually get their beast back?

But, there was no time to peruse over that when she rushed after Darius. The gamma looked at her, mortified.

"You don't even know how to fight, go back!"

No. Dawn didn't want to go back. She wanted to fight to get Zenith back to his sense. She didn't want what happened in their first life happened again here, where he killed all of the people.

If anything, she remembered even in his beast form, even when he was out of control, he still managed not to kill her that night. The black beast only stayed out of her door, after he annihilated the whole pack.

Which meant, he still had self preservation for not hurting her, though the hope was very slight and probably it was crazy of her to bet on it, but she was willing to try.

"Are you crazy? Go back!" Darius pushed Dawn aside, he was in panic and he didn't mean to push her too harsh, he forgot to control his strength because the adrenaline that rushed in his blood, but he ended up pushing Dawn too hard, which caused her to fall on her butt.

Darius stopped running and looked at her in shock, while Dawn stared back at him in disbelief. But then, this gamma had the audacity to question her.

"What are you doing sitting there?"

"Why do you think I am here?!" Dawn snapped back at him, annoyed, but then her eyes widened. "Get down! Darius, get down!"

Darius didn't even think twice when he knelt down and a black beast lunged over his head. He would have been knocked down if he were standing.

"Damn it!"

Chapter 228: THE CRITICAL SITUATION (2)

Darius escaped death only a by a sheer of luck, because he did what Dawn told him to do without even thinking about it. It was funny how his habit of not thinking thing twice could save his life.

However, it did not end there, because the black beast touched the ground and then immediately turned around, it was obvious that Darius was his next target.

“Zen! Seriously! Couldn’t you remember me?! Damn it!” Darius scrambled to his feet, he put his hands out, telling him random thing to make the alpha remembered about him. “I am your sweet gamma, okay?! I didn’t mean to push her! I swear!”

However, the black beast didn’t seem to interest with whatever explanation that he was trying to blurt out, as he charged forward with the intention of killing him off.

Seeing this, Dawn immediately got on her feet and chased after the beast as well. Thankfully, Dawn was closer to Darius and manage to reach him.

She didn’t know what she was thinking when she put herself between Darius and the black beast. If Dawn was wrong and Zenith completely forget about her, it only meant, she would die in the hand of her mate.

However, the black beast indeed stopped and then let out the most deafening roar that they had ever heard. Dawn and Darius pressed their palms against their ears, because they were the closest to the beast.

“What the fuck!” Darius growled. He felt his ears were ringing painfully and the pain from unable to shift to his beast only intensified, it didn’t help with his situation at all, as he knelt down and whimpered.

Dawn could feel the discomfort for not being able to shift into her beast became more unbearable.

What was going on?

However, they were not the only one that felt that way, because all the shifters felt the same thing, even those who were not aware of the battle that was going on in the moonlight pack, or the shifters, who were in different continent.

They could all feel the pain, including the young shifters, who had not yet awakened their beast spirit.

Yara rushed toward the throne room just an hour before the pain started and she told the king about Zade’s weird condition, where the baby breathed heavily and Celine tried to heal him because his little lungs didn’t work.

“What do you mean?!” Zander immediately rushed toward the nursery room, where he saw how desperate Celine was to keep the little boy to breathe. “What is going on here, Celine?!”

“I am not sure,” Celine said, she was frustrated and half sobbing at this point, the light from her hands seeped through Zade’s chest. “I think he is in so much pain and because he is too young, his little body can’t bear the pain.”

Lucia and Rye followed behind them and heard what happened.

“I will go for a while,” Lucia said, she was worried about the children that she brought with her, because they had the same mark just like Zander and she was afraid something like this might happen to them as well.

Zander and Rye didn’t stop her, but Rye chose to stay in the room, as he watched Celine tried to save Zade desperately.

Right at the same time, in the woods that separated the Moonlight pack and the capital city, Zaya finally regained her consciousness, she pulled the rein of the horse that Pyro was riding and this startled the royal beta.

“Zaya!” Pyro shouted, as he held her closely, afraid that they would fall from the horse back. “What do you think you are doing?!”

“We need to go back,” Zaya said, she gritted her teeth. Because her back was against Pyro, he couldn’t see how her eyes were not the color of blue, but instead it was black. Yes. She had black color of eyes.

Her expression was hardened, as if she knew what she needed to do right now and she was in hurry, because she could be so late to save anyone.

Pyro took the rein of the horse from Zaya’s hand and then made the horse to run faster. He didn’t know what was going on, but he knew something didn’t look good.

And because the two of them were not shifters, they didn’t know that half an hour later, all of the shifters had been subdued to an excruciating pain.

Back in the palace, Celine was trying to keep Zade alive, because his lungs were collapsing and because Zander had lost his beast long ago, he didn’t feel the pain, but Rye and Yara did.

Both of them fell on their knees and screamed in pain, as the discomfort that they felt because they couldn’t shift into their beast intensified thousand times and they felt something weighing down their chest.

“What is going on?” Zander approached Yara and she only cried, saying that she was in so much pain. “Celine!”

"I can't," Celine said, she couldn't stop her treatment to Zade, just in case his condition got even worst.

"Damn it!"

Zander rushed away and then found Hecate, he dragged him to come with him and tell him to do something about this.

"What should I do?!" Hecate grumbled, but he knelt down and checked on Yara and Rye. "I think something is wrong with their wolf spirit, not with their body. They felt the pain because of that."

"Can't you do something?"

"I can put them to sleep." Hecate shrugged his shoulders nonchalantly. "But, I need to use my precious baby to put them to sleep." Hecate immediately changed his tone when he saw the rage in Zander's face. "Fine, fine. I will get it."

Zander checked the other warriors and from the look of it, they were under the same excruciating pain as well, all of them fell on their knees.

They said the pain was akin to someone just ripped their chest opened and it was the same pain that Zander felt when he lost his beast.

#### Chapter 229: THE CRITICAL SITUATION (21)

Fortunately, Dawn was right. Zenith stopped right in time before he could rip them off, but he looked in so much pain, the black beast roared in anger, the beast was enraged, as if there was something that aggravated him, or probably, he was trying to fight something off, something that he was the only one, who could fight this off.

"Zenith?" Dawn called him.

But, there was the time when all of the shifters felt the pain, as if their heart was being ripped apart, their skin was burned and the excruciating pain sent them to their knees. They couldn't breathe and with the heat of this place, they were struggling for air.

This place was very hot. At this point, they felt like they were standing on top of a stove and they couldn't even figure out how to survive this, because obviously, there was not even a shred of hope at this point.

The knights were trying to fight the black beast, once they realized the roar from the beast effected all the shifters.

Rowan led his knights to fight, they intended to kill the beast and Dawn knew that. Against the agony, Dawn pushed herself from the ground and ran toward Rowan.

“You can’t kill him!” She screamed at him, which didn’t help with her situation, because she was already having a hard time to breath. “I am going to kill you if you hurt him!”

No matter what, the beast was still Zenith. Her mate was there, somewhere. They needed to get him back, not to kill him.

“Are you crazy?!” Rowan was enraged. “I am here to help! Can’t you see that he is trying to kill all of you!?”

Dawn didn’t care! She wanted to say that out loud, but she stopped herself because she knew that was not the appropriate thing to say.

“There must be another way!” Dawn screamed at him, panting, she held his hand, which held the hilt of his sword. She knew that if the king wanted to push her to the side, he could do it without any trouble, since Dawn was literally very weak and in so much pain, but he let her to speak. “There must be a way to get him back. We can get Zenith back!”

Dawn kept saying all the things that jumbled up in her mind, at this point, she didn’t think her words was coherent enough for him to understand her, but she kept talking.

“Enough!” king Rowan finally snapped, he looked at Dawn closely. “We are done here! You kept saying to save him, but you yourself didn’t even know how to save him! What are you going to do to save him?” He looked at Dawn closely. “If you don’t have any solution, we will go with my solution.”

Dawn gritted her teeth. “You are going to kill the royal family.”

Rowan’s eyes blazed with rage. “This is not my battle, I could withdraw all of my knights and let you to fend for yourself if that’s what you wanted. So, you need to be grateful that I helped you here instead of threatening me.”

That was right, Rowan could get all of his knights to withdraw and leave this place as soon as possible, since they were so close to the harbor and their ships were still there, they could just bail out.

However, he didn’t do that only because of this silly reason in his mind. He was annoyed with himself because he risked all of his knight’s lives for this stupid battle that wouldn’t give him any benefit and now this woman rubbed him in the wrong way.

King Rowan then added. "Moreover, he is going to kill all of you, shifter, if anything, I saved your kind from the extinction. You need to kneel and kiss my feet to show your gratitude."

After that, King Rowan didn't even look at Dawn again when he walked away and sheathed his sword to join the fray to kill the black beast.

"No... please..." Dawn felt her heart was tightened to watch how Zenith was fighting against hundred of knights alone.

She was scared so much, the pain that racked her body was forgotten. She wanted to make them stop from attacking Zenith.

She could see blood, there was so many blood that stained the ground and she couldn't tell whose blood was that.

She saw how the black beast's fur coated with blood. Was that Zenith's blood?

She was both terrified and relief to see the black beast managed to defend himself against so many attacks from the knights and while she didn't want the knights to die, she didn't want them to succeed too, because they were their last defense and if they went down, no one could fight the beast anymore.

"Zenith, please... stop." Dawn whispered to the nothingness in the air.

One more knight down, his head was ripped off his shoulder and this enraged king Rowan, he charged forward to take down the beast and wanted to do the same with him. It became personal now.

However, the black beast moved so fast and his attack was very precise, where he could kill the attacker in one single move.

Darius crawled toward Dawn, his expression was ashen. He must have shared the same feeling and thought like Dawn to see how everything unfolded.

He couldn't help Zenith because he couldn't shift into his beast and even if he could, he wouldn't be able to do so, since Zenith right now, was not in his right mind and would definitely kill him the moment he got too close to him.

"What are we going to do now?" Darius breathed heavily and Dawn shook her head.

"I don't know..." Dawn breathed raggedly, she tried to wreck her memory, trying to think of a solution, a way out from this situation without having to kill Zenith.

There was must be the answer somewhere in their past life that could help them.



## Chapter 230: THE CRITICAL SITUATION (22)

There must be a solution for this situation, but what? What she could do? What happened in the past?

Kill him.

The prophecy.

The prophecy that Zander believed about her killing Zenith, that was one thing that had not yet happened.

Dawn shuddered, she felt this another pain in her heart when she thought about that. Called her selfish, but she would choose to die even she had to kill Zenith with her own hands.

She couldn't watch this...

"Dawn...?" Darius seemed to notice that Dawn was thinking of something. "What is it? What is in your mind?"

Dawn shook her head, she didn't want even talk about this with Darius, because she didn't want anyone to have that idea in their mind, especially when Darius also knew about the prophecy. She wouldn't be able to stand it if he thought that it would be best for them to kill off Zenith to save all of the shifter kind.

She must be the most bitter and selfish person when she thought, she would rather to have the whole shifter to die rather than to kill her own mate.

Let them all die together if it had to come to that.

"Dawn?" Darius grew puzzled, the pain was unbearable, but he tried to stay focus on their current situation and obviously, Dawn knew something that he didn't. "Did you get another memory? There is a way to stop this?"

"No." The answer was so curt to make that sounded believable, but the pain only became worse and they couldn't even think of anything else, but the pain and the battle between the black beast and the knights.

Meanwhile in the palace, the situation there was not particularly good, it was only getting worse as well, especially when Celine cried out loud.

"He is not breathing!" Celine was trembling in fear when it became even harder to keep Zade's little lungs to work and now, he was not breathing at all, despite Celine's crazy effort to keep him alive.

Zander immediately rushed to the bed and check on Zade's pulse. He was still alive, but he wouldn't for long if this kept going on.

"Fuck."

Zander gritted his teeth, he didn't know what to do to fix this whole situation. He wanted to rip his head so he could find a solution.

He was so dumb. How could he let thing escalated this far? How could he not see it? He couldn't save his kingdom and his siblings and now their child was dying under his care.

"Hecate!" Zander shouted his name and the man immediately rushed toward him. "Do something!"

Hecate checked on the little one, but he was trembling too, he was afraid of the king because he looked like he was going to kill him if he told him the truth.

"There is nothing I could do, my king," he said in small voice.

"What do you mean with that?!"

Zander was frustrated, he felt useless. All of the negative feelings that he felt the moment he stepped on the throne rushed back to him.

How useless he was and how he didn't fit to be the king, how he couldn't even save anyone. He was weak and stupid. He was nothing like his father.

People always said how great his father was and how he could solve all the problem and him? He created only problem and dumb mistake. He was not a planner, neither he was a fighter.

He lost his beast, he couldn't even call himself as a shifter, but it was hypocrite of him to rule those shifters.

Zander balled his fists tightly.

He was useless and stupid.

"This is beyond me, my king," Hecate said politely and it seemed, he knew there was something off with Zander, the king was over the edge and if he pushed him a little bit, he was going to explode, therefore, he minded his own manner and the way he spoke.

The sight of Zander must be very terrifying for him to be willingly polite with the king.

“This is something that couldn’t be cure with herb or anything, this is the power beyond my knowledge,” Hecate said regretfully.

Zander didn’t say anything, he turned around and then left the room. He needed to calm himself down and shut down all the negative thoughts that kept plaguing his mind because it wouldn’t do any good on him.

It wouldn’t help him to make a decision or to decide what he would do or what he need to do next.

Zander closed the door behind him and closed his eyes to think of a solution. His mind wandered all of the possibilities that could happen and what he missed.

But then, it something crossed his mind.

He stared at the distance, as if there was something that intrigued him, but at the same time, he didn’t see anything in particular.

But then, slowly, he took off his mask. He let his face to be seen and just like usual, those masked men started to notice him.

They turned their heads toward him and approached him.

They were not walking, they were gliding, as if their body made of paper, but then they didn’t have body. They were akin to ghosts.

They were not even alive...

All this time, Zander was always ‘hiding’ from them, because he didn’t know what these creatures wanted from him and why he was the only person, who could see them, until those children with the mark came and said the same thing.

Zander didn’t want to talk about this even to Zenith, because, in his mind, it only added to his ‘weakness’.

He always thought that Zenith was the person, who suited to be the king, he fit more to be the king. Often time, he agreed with Zenith’s supporter that his twin brother was way more capable to be the king than he did.

“What do you want now?” Zander asked these ghosts...

All of them approached Zander now.

## Chapter 231: THE CRITICAL SITUATION (23)

They said something to Zander, but at the same time, they didn't say anything.

Zander heard this noise in the background, as if they were trying to communicate with him somehow, but their mouth didn't move. They kept staring at him.

Most of the time, he would put back his golden mask and they would turn around and leave him alone, as if they didn't see him.

All this time, he wouldn't stand to not wear his mask for a few minutes, unless he was unconscious and sleeping, but right now, he pushed through. His mask fell on his feet beside him and he stared back at them.

"What do you want?" Zander asked again. His voice was raspy. He breathed raggedly, but when he closed his eyes and opened them again, there was a new resolution in his eyes. "Whatever you are going to do, do it now."

He was not sure how it could help Zade, but his instinct told him that everything was related to one another.

He calmed himself down. There was nothing to lose now. His siblings were out there and he didn't know what happened to them, but seeing the situation with the shifters, things wouldn't look good on them no matter how he tried to stay positive.

Therefore, if these ghosts were trying to do something with him, there was nothing that he couldn't endure.

It was time to accept that life has no more to give.

"Do it," Zander said firmly.

=====

Zaya and Pyro marched toward the Moonlight pack and they could already see how devastated this place was. The pack was ruined and when they crossed the harbor, the sea was boiling.

"This is..." Pyro shuddered. You could see the white fog above the sea and the surface of the water that boiled. "I have never seen anything like this."

Zaya didn't answer him immediately, but then she pressed her lips and took a deep breath. "I did."

She had seen this once in her previous lifetime. Something like this happened and now she knew how to absorb Zenith's black magic power.

Dawn was right, it was her, who had done it. She was the one, who had absorbed all the magic power that came from Zenith, but that was not the end of it.

Their memories returned by it was not whole, it came piece by piece, which was very annoying and frustrating when you were in hurry to get more information of how to end this situation.

“You did?” Pyro was surprised, but Zaya didn’t explain, yet he could guess where Zaya had seen something like this.

It must have something to do with her first life.

“Say, why do you think I couldn’t see my past life like you and Dawn did?”

Zaya shook her head. “I don’t know. I am not sure. I think not all people got the chance to see their first lifetime. This is anomaly.”

Pyro and Zay then spent the rest of their trip back to Moonlight pack in silence, but as they got closer to the battlefield, their body became so tense.

They could see the knights and the black beast fought and somehow, Zaya was relief to see that king Rowan was still standing, fighting back with all of his might with his knights.

But then, they spotted Dawn and Darius.

Zaya rushed toward them and immediately got off the horse to approach the two of them.

“I remember. I remember how to absorb the black magic.” That was the first thing that Zaya told Dawn, once she was kneeling beside her. “But, I think you must have figured out how to stop this, right?”

Dawn shook her head, but her eyes couldn’t lie. Tears brimmed in her eyes and Zaya hugged her.

“You need to be brave, Dawn,” Zaya said, as she hugged her tightly, but Dawn kept shaking her head. “I know this is not what you are thinking. I know that this must be very difficult, but you need to know that this is the only way.”

Zaya held back her own tears. She didn’t even want to think about that. She must be the worse sister ever, because she suggested her own sister in law to kill her own brother.

But, that was what they must to do.

She felt so bad to feel relief because she was not the one, who had to do that. "You need to do it, Dawn. Be brave please. We will be fine."

"No." Dawn's voice sounded like a whimper, a plea for Zaya to not bring this up and to think of another solution. "No, please... I couldn't do that... I can't..."

Zaya hugged her a little bit tighter and then kissed her cheeks. "My brother will not want to hurt you, Dawn. He will suggest the same thing."

Dawn gritted her teeth. "Let us all die. I don't want to do it."

Zaya's heart sank. She knew this request was too much and for her to force Dawn to do it was cruel.

"What happened? What is going on?" Darius came to them, he was panting, his face pale and droplet of sweats fell on his face.

All of the shifters felt the same pain as well.

"Zenith tried to kill all the wolf spirit."

"What? But, I thought that's Jared's idea? Why would he want to kill his own kind?"

"It's no longer Zenith, the vicious black magic inside of him is trying to get control over him. He is not himself right now."

Zaya kissed Dawn's forehead and when Dawn thought she was going to persuade her to change her decision, she simply said something that left her more guilty.

"I will do the best I could do, I will leave the rest to you, Dawn," Zaya said and then she went toward the black beast.

King Rowan spotted her and growled angrily at her.

"What are you doing here?! Go back!"

"You should be the one, who retreated!"

Chapter 232: THE CRITICAL SITUATION (24)

"You should be the one, who retreated!" Zaya yelled back at him. "Now took all the knights with you and retreat! Go to Pyro, he will create a shield!"

“What are you going to do?!” King Rowan asked, he had to raise his voice, because of the deafening roar and harsh wind that became hotter by second.

Zaya had asked Pyro whether he had enough magic stone to create shield and he had enough to shield them for a day if there was no disturbance from the outside.

It was enough time for Zaya, but she was not sure it would be enough for what would come next.

“I will absorb the black magic.” Zaya checked on king Rowan briefly. He didn’t seem to sustain a concerning wound, only a few cuts here and there, as far as she could see.

Most of the knights had taken off their armor, because the steel was too hot for their body. It made them felt like they were on the frying pan.

“You have done that before and failed, you are going to do it again?!”

Zaya frowned. “That’s hurt my ego,” she said unhappily. “I know what to do now. Now, go back with your knights! I will need you to fight something else next!”

“What’s next?! I don’t want more monsters or anything alike!”

“Well, unfortunately, you couldn’t choose.” Zaya shrugged her shoulders nonchalantly. “Go back now and saved your knights for what will come! Now!”

“Fuck!” King Rowan growled, he pulled Zaya and kissed her lips. “You better be safe, because I am not yet done with you!”

Zaya blinked her eyes, she was too shock to respond, only when he had barked order for the knights to retreat that she glowered at the king.

“I am not done with you too!” Zaya then cursed. “Fuck.”

However, the king had walked away and he didn’t hear what she said, thus she continued with her plan, she needed to calm herself down first for a moment before she concentrated with the matter at hand.

Zaya started it again, the black beast that was her brother was in front of her, growling viciously, looking at her with killing intent in his eyes.

“Forgive me, Zenith. Forgive me... I don’t want to do this. I don’t want to hurt you. Forgive me...” Zaya closed her eyes and started the same thing again, she tried to absorb the black magic from the black beast and once again, she became the main target of Zenith.

This must be the second time that Zenith tried to kill her because she tried to take away his power and soon enough, there was this cocoon of black wisp that surrounded Zaya, but even when her body engulfed in this darkness, one could still see how her body was shining.

There was this tiny light from inside. The darkness didn't consume her whole now like the first time and Zaya could hold her power better.

The beast roared, he let out a deafening growl, which sent all of the shifters down, they were in so much pain, they couldn't even speak anymore.

Dawn closed her eyes, she couldn't feel anything, but pain. She couldn't even feel how hot the ground was and how King Rowan tried to make her to stay awake.

No. She didn't want to wake up throughout the whole pain. She didn't want to wake up throughout this. She wanted to sleep and skip everything. She didn't want to make a choice whether she had to kill Zenith or not.

"What is that?"

Addie was the first one, who realized it and all of them followed his line of sight, at the same time, the ground started shaking, as a crater appeared.

"What is that?!"

All of them started asking question, but no one could find the answer. Pyro stood up and watched how the ground split into half and the heat escalated, at this point, they were all going to die because of the heat.

From under the ground, you could hear the ominous sound and Pyro knew what was that.

"This... no way... he breathed heavily, because he himself couldn't believe with what he was seeing. He had read about this, something similar had happened during the last war of the previous king.

It was written in the history of the kingdom.

"What is it?! What is happening?!" Rowan shouted, he put let Addie to look after Dawn, as he approached the royal beta. "If you don't start talking, I will throw you down there!"

Pyro shook his head to gather his thought. "That's... the gates of hell." He then told him about what he had read in the history.

"Your continent is crazy..." King Rowan gritted his teeth. He would prefer the civil in his continent than this kind of battle.



“I know...” There was no other word to respond to that.

Both of them went to the crater, as close as they could go because it was too hot, they felt like their skin blistered and they would be fried for good in no time.

But, what they saw down there was not really excited them.

“Is this what she meant?” King Rowan clicked his tongue and then watched Zaya, who was still fighting the black beast, as she put the shield around her, so the beast couldn’t get to her.

From the look of it, she was fine, she could handle her own battle with her brother and now, this was the battle for them.

“What now?” King Rowan asked.

“We need to retreat. I can provide the shield from these creatures, but I don’t think the shield will stay for long. More so, we didn’t know how long it would end...” Pyro grimaced. “If there was even an end for this at all.”

Which meant, it left them with no other choice, but to fight back.

“What happened? What is down there?” Addie asked with confusion.

“Dead people. A lot of them,” Rowan replied.

#### Chapter 233: THE CRITICAL SITUATION (25)

“What do you mean dead people?” Addie asked Rowan when he walked back with Pyro with ashen expression, he knew something was going on. “I don’t want to fight dead people. I don’t want to fight them at all!”

Addie shuddered with the thought that dead people crawled on the crater’s walls and tried to come back to the living world.

“What is that?”

“Gates of hell,” Pyro replied. He checked on Dawn and Darius.

“What is that? Is that like a gate to an underworld or something?” Addie didn’t like this explanation at all, it made his stomach churned.

“You can say so.”

“I only fought a living creature, not a dead one.”

“Unfortunately, you don’t have the privilege to choose your enemy.” Pyro grimaced when he watched all of the shifters were writhing in pain.

“And what now?” Addie asked. He shuddered when he watched there was something climbing out of the craters. The royal beta was right. The dead came back from the underworld.

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Zander watched the ghosts before him, all of them were wearing the same golden masks like him. Zander stared at them and thought the worst possible think that they could do to him, but then he realized, they were talking, but the language that they used was familiar with him.

He knew that he had heard this language before, but he couldn’t figure out where he had heard this, or when he had come across with this language. He tried to wreck his brain to think of all the possibility, but he still couldn’t get a grasp of it.

The masked man kept talking to him, which made him frustrated, but then they stepped aside and opened a path for the king.

“What is it? Do you want me to come with all of you?” Zander was not sure that was a good idea at all, but he couldn’t stay there and figure out what they wanted to communicate with him when he didn’t even understand what kind of language that they used.

He knew that it was not Andel language, because he could speak it, but then it was not Karam...

Zander tried to exercise his memories, who else the people from different continent that he had come across in his almost three decades of life.

And when he remembered, he stopped walking, he staggered and thankfully, he steadied himself just in time when he remembered the language.

Nadia. His late destined mate.

Nadia came from a tribe in Andel continent and the language that these ghosts spoke was the same like the language from her tribe.

Zander could be mistaken, because it had been so long since the last time he heard someone spoke in that language, but he couldn’t be more sure than this right now.

He gritted his teeth, his mind was in a mess and what he felt right now was a whirlwind of emotions, as he followed these ghosts toward the west garden. He remembered what happened that day, happened in the west garden. The west garden also the place that Nadia loved the most in this palace.

When she was here, the west garden was the most beautiful garden in the palace, but right now, this place was abandoned. It almost looked like a swamp.

There was no beauty that was left, just like how Nadia left him with this bitterness. This swamp was the same like Zander right now.

He followed them, they were everywhere, but actually, they guided Zander to this place by kept staring at a certain direction, while chanting the same thing over and over again. it was not even a song, he didn't know what was that, but it sounded ominous.

He tried not to think too much about this, but part of him questioned his action and decision to be here, instead of in the room with Zade, while Celine and Hecate tried to save his life.

He felt stupid.

And yet, even if he was inside the room, there was nothing he could do to prevent what happened. He held no real power.

But then, if these ghosts tried to harm him, there was no one could save him, since he was the only one, who could see them and as they walked deeper into the west garden, Zander didn't bring his golden mask. He left it in front of the door of Zade's room.

He didn't want to tempt himself to run away from this again. He was going to see the end of it now.

That was what Zander, thought but when he saw the end of it, he froze. He was stupefied to see her again.

It had been a decade since he saw her, but there she was, as beautiful as ever, like how he remembered her. She didn't age at all, she was still that young eighteen years old girl that his eighteen years old self loved.

She was standing there, in the end of this path, smiling at him warmly with her golden hair that cascaded down her back, the same hair that he used to run his fingers.

This must be hallucination, but she was talking.

She was smiling at him, her eyes sparkled, as if the flames in the sky reflected perfectly in her green eyes.

Her voice was sweet. She didn't age at all. She was still her eighteen years old self.

"Hi, Zan," she greeted him. "It has been a while, don't you think? I miss you."

"No way..." Zander muttered, he staggered back. "You are dead." The word that he just blurted out sent pain in his chest.

In the first few years Nadie's death, he couldn't even talk about that night, though he was not open to talk about it even now, but he was fine when someone mentioned about it.

However, he didn't know what to believe anymore.

"How could this be?"

Nadia tilted her head and giggled, she scrunched her nose and pretended to be sad. "You don't look happy."

#### Chapter 234: THE CRITICAL SITUATION (26)

"Don't you want to come closer to me?" Nadia asked.

Zander was petrified, he was still stunned and couldn't utter a single word to respond to that question, he looked at her intensely, as if she was going to disappear or something the moment he blinked his eyes, but it didn't happen.

However, he noticed another thing.

Because Zander was too shock to see Nadia again, he didn't realize with his surroundings and now he got his composure a little bit, he noticed a little black wolf in Nadia's arms. She cradled the pup and there were more little wolves around her.

Nadia followed his line of sight and then smiled at the little black wolf in her arms. "I am sure his name is Zade. He is a cute little wolf."

Zander turned rigid. His voice was a little bit harsher than he intended. "What have you done to him?" his eyes a few shades darker, but it didn't scare Nadia. She had never been scared of him, no matter how angry Zander was.

Needless to say, Zander was a hot headed teenager when he met with her for the first time. He was not always this easy going and could snap easily, especially when thing didn't go as he wanted.

"I didn't do anything, Zander. I am here to help if you haven't notice yet."

“You are dead.”

The word was like a dagger in Zander’s heart, but he blurted it out firmly, he saw a flicker of sadness in Nadia’s eyes when she heard that, her smile faltered, but she tried to look brave.

“Yes, I am, but not really...” Nadia took a step forward, she paused and looked at Zander, expecting him to take a step back, but he didn’t, thus she walked toward him slowly.

The little wolves followed Nadia’s movement, they looked adorable and liked her.

“What do you mean?”

“I think you must have forgotten what I said to you in my last moment, that’s why only now you came here.” Nadia nodded. “I can understand. I know that I have been an awful mate for you.”

Zander said nothing, but his eyes would occasionally flicker toward the little black wolf. The little wolf was alive, he was breathing, but he seemed to be asleep.

It calmed Zander a little bit.

“I don’t want to remember.”

Zander bit his tongue when he saw Nadia’s face fell, she looked so sad when she heard that and simply nodded.

“In that case, I think there is nothing more to discuss about us.” Nadia lifted her head again, but the hurt from Zander’s word still lingered. “Let’s save the world then?”

Zander was not sure what Nadia was talking about, but she was the one, who gave the prophecy about Zenith.

She was the one, who saw the future and said that Zenith would be killed by his own mate...

“What did you see now?” Zander asked through his gritted teeth. He wanted to talk about them. There were a lot of things that he wanted to talk about with her and also thousand of questions, but there was another important thing to be handled.

“A lot. A lot of things...” Nadia then turned around and then glanced over her shoulder at Zander. “Came with me, okay?”

Zander didn't know where she wanted to go, but he followed her nonetheless.

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Zaya absorbed all the black magic from Zenith, which made the beast become even more furious and wanted to kill her.

She couldn't believe the brother that was always overprotective of her right now was trying to kill her.

Zaya was sad that it turned out to be like this, she didn't want to lose Zenith, but then this was the right thing to do. She hated to do the right thing!

Meanwhile, the dead people crawled from the craters that appeared on the ground, the knights fought them all, while the shifters were well protected inside Pyro's shield, because the shifters were not able to shift and they were in so much pain, they couldn't even do anything, but to curl on the ground, breathing heavily.

Jared was dead, but it seemed, he won the battle, since he managed to eradicate the shifter. He managed to kill their wolf spirit and now Zenith was losing his mind.

However, there was some backlash from this like before, but it didn't knock Zaya out cold, as she kept trying to keep her brother, yet as the result all of the black magic users got their magic sucked out of them and they turned into dust.

Pyro didn't know that something like this could happen, he was not even aware that it could happen, but it did.

All of their black magic sucked out of their bodies and left them with nothing, since their entire being had been sustained by black magic. It almost looked like someone just sucked your blood until your body turned dry, leaving you with only bone and skin, but in this case, there was nothing left from the black magic users.

They were all dead, they fell to the ground and the ashes of their remaining had been blown away by the wind.

Meanwhile, the knights kept fighting the dead people, trying to protect the shield that Pyro created because of the limited magic stone that he had, he couldn't waste it by fighting them.

"There is no end to this!" Addie said to king Rowan. "We need to retreat! We are not going to be able to fight them all off!"

There were hundreds of them, if it was not thousands or millions. There would be more and more dead people that came out of the craters.

They couldn't close the crater and they couldn't make the dead people stopped from coming. There would be the point, where the knights were too tired to even lift their sword and they would be dead then.

"Our knights are tired!" Addie said again.

They didn't know night and day.

#### Chapter 235: THE CRITICAL SITUATION (27)

With how crazy the sky was and how it looked like it was in eternal flames, they didn't know whether it was night or day or even how many days they had been in this battle.

They were tired, exhausted and the end of the battle was not even near. They didn't know when it would end if it would end at all.

Things didn't become better, if anything, it kept getting worse. When they thought it wouldn't get any worse, the universe proved them wrong and showed how it could escalate into the night of terror.

The worse part came when they started to see the people that they knew. The knight who died during the war, the people that dear to them, who left them long time ago, this didn't look good at all to say the least.

And Rowan saw his father...

The previous king had a huge wound on his chest, the same spot where Rowan carved his heart out. He killed the previous king, his own father and also two of his older brothers, who would become the successor of her father.

He was third in line for the throne, but he killed them all to be the king.

He pressed his lips. "Shit. Not this." He grunted. He hated to see his father again. He didn't enjoy this sight at all. "I killed you once, do you think I will not kill you twice or thrice?" Venom on the tip of his tongue, as he swung his sword and cut the head of the previous king and kicked him back to the craters.

Rowan hated to see his father.

As the third son, he had never been treated good. His father had his heir and spare, thus he was not even a spare for a spare in his father's eyes, no matter how he proved himself.

However, what drove him to do what he had done was not because of the lack of attention from his father or how bad his brothers treated him, it was because he couldn't stand his father's regulation. He made people in their kingdom's miserable.

Ever since he was little, Rowan would go out of the palace and played with the commoners, since it was easy for him to do that, because his father didn't pay close attention to him, to the point he didn't care.

Because of that as well, he watched closely what his father's regulation had done to the people, throughout the years, he tried to make his father to change his mind.

But the last straw was when a family of his close friend was killed because they couldn't pay tax and their land seized by the royal because it would be given to one of the king's supporters.

Rowan was mad.

Rage was an understatement to describe how he felt at that moment when he watched how their dead bodies were left in the woods and let the wild animal to take care of it.

He and the other friends buried them.

Rowan killed his two older brothers because they were nothing good. They tried to get the commoner women and bedded them, leaving them on the street the next morning.

Most people said that Rowan wanted to ascend the throne because of his ambition to be the king and probably they were right, because there was some truth in it.

Since he realized, he couldn't help anyone if he didn't hold any power.

"Rowan!" Addie shouted when Rowan's mind was not present, he threw the dagger toward him, but it passed his ear and cut small part of it, but Addie's aim was obviously the creature behind him.

"You just cut my ear," Rowan said, he touched his ear, it was bleeding, but he had so much blood in his hand already at this point.

"Hey, you should thank me, you know. I just saved your life!" Addie protested. "Focus! I don't want you die and then have to kill you again." He shuddered, his stomach was queasy to fight these dead people.

However, Rowan was not the only one who saw the people that he knew came to live in the worse condition ever.



But, Dawn saw her son too... she saw his tiny little body, she couldn't believe her eyes at first, because there was no way he died when he shouldn't have been born at this timeline.

"No way..." Dawn was having a hard time to stand up, she watched one of the knights swung his sword toward his little body and pushed him back to the craters. "NO!" Dawn screamed on the top of her lungs, but Darius stopped her when she was about to rush out of the shield.

"Calm down, what happened?!" Darius gritted his teeth, the pain was still unbearable, but he got used to it now.

"They killed my baby!" It was baby Rex. Her baby in her first life with Zenith. She remembered him. Even though it was only a glimpse of him.

"Who? What? Zade?"

Dawn dreaded the thought if it was Zade even more, but she shook her head. "My baby... baby Rex..."

Darius tried to remember who was Rex, but he couldn't recall, probably because he was in pain and the chaotic situation turned his mind into a mess, but he reminded Dawn that those people had died already.

"You don't need to feel bad, Dawn, they died already all of them had died. There is nothing you could do."

Darius was right. Baby Rex had died, but to watch how your baby was being slashed into two and was pushed over the crater, it was still a devastated sight.

However, Dawn not only saw her baby, but she also saw her mother... she cried so hard when one of the warriors 'killed' her too. She remembered that day when her mother was killed by the rogue.

Everything was too much for her and she couldn't take it any longer. She wanted this to end...

#### Chapter 236: THE CRITICAL SITUATION (28)

"You didn't trust me, did you?" Nadia asked, as they entered the swamp, Zander followed behind her and this was the first time, she broke the silence and talked to Zander.

The king didn't know where Nadia would take him, but he followed her regardless, he watched how the little wolf spirit around her followed her, being playful with one another,

but it was only Zade's wolf spirit that was being carried by Nadia. Zade's wolf spirit looked sick and this worried Zander.

"You tried to kill me."

"But, I didn't. You are still alive, right now."

Zander scoffed and Nadia stopped walking, she actually glared at him, which made him take a step back.

"I told you not to scoff at me."

Zander was reminded of how pissed Nadia could be whenever he was scoffing at her. He didn't do it again when Nadia gave him an earful when he did that, but just now he did it again.

The old habit returned.

"What? Are you trying to complain now?"

Nadia narrowed her beautiful green eyes. "You are already so old to act bratty, you know."

"We are on the same age."

"No, we are not. My time stopped when I was eighteen." Nadia saw something in Zander's eyes and then turned around, she continued to walk.

Zander didn't want to be reminded of that. He didn't want to be reminded that the woman before him had actually died.

His mind must have made a fool of him to think that Nadia was actually coming back from wherever place she went all this time.

"Where will you take me?" Zander finally asked.

"Just follow me," Nadia replied curtly.

They walked for another five minutes in silence and none of them wanted to speak, though there were a lot of things that Zander wanted to ask to her.

They finally stopped walking when they reached a small lake there.

“I used to love the lake here.” Nadia looked at the lake with sad face, the pup around her stopped walking too and started to fight playfully with one another, as they bit or nipped at each other legs or ears. They looked happy.

Zander didn't give any response for that comment. He knew how much Nadia liked this place and asked him to take a good care of it, but why would Zander listen to the person, who wanted to kill him?

“What do you want?” Zander stood two steps behind her, but she beckoned him to come closer to her.

“What? Are you afraid that I will bite you?”

And there, Nadia still had time to joke around with him. Zander approached her just because he wanted this to end quickly and he could hear what actually she wanted.

“Here. Hold him.” Nadia actually handed over Zade's wolf spirit to him. Zander accepted it out of instinct, because she just shoved the little wolf into his arms.

“What the meaning of this, Nadia.”

Nadia smiled at him. “You can save your siblings, you know.” She watched how the questions started to build in Zander's mind and before he could ask, she already explained everything to Zander.

Started from the prophecy that she saw for Zenith and the whole thing that was going to happen in this kingdom.

“You have known everything since the beginning?” Zander couldn't believe that.

“I am a magic user, remember? But, I am also a clairvoyant. I saw it's happening.” She stretched out her hand to touch Zade's spirit wolf and caressed it's ear. “Do you know that the dragon sect initially came from my tribe?”

She looked sad when she said that and gave Zander a little story about it, as the leader of the previous dragon sect was actually her father's brother. They went separate way because they had different view on how they saw magic.

“I know how to save your brother and sister.” She smiled sheepishly at him. “I am sorry for the misunderstanding. It made me sad to see how you lived your life in the past decade. I really wished for your happiness, Zander.”

“You took my happiness away with your betrayal.”

Nadia shook her head. "I have never betrayed you. If I didn't do what I did that night, instead of living without being able to shift into your beast, you will die." She shook her head. "I did what I have to do in order to keep you alive and I am sorry if I hurt you."

"You should tell me."

"You would never agree."

Nadia was right, whatever the reason that she gave him if it ended up with her death, Zander would never agree to any of that.

"You left me."

"Yes, and I am sorry for that." Nadia took a step closer toward him and this must be crazy, but Zander could smell her sweet scent. "Let's end this chaos, okay?"

Nadia's green eyes fell on Zade. Her eyes softened.

"You need to hurry, I don't think he will be able to hold back longer than this. He is so brave to endure the pain this long." Nadia lifted her head and met with Zander's eyes. "The masked men that you have been seeing, are the people from the sacrifices, they are all needed to close the gate of hell. The children that Lucia brought with her still could be saved if you are quick enough, but them..."

Nadia waved to the little wolves around her, they were playing happily, as if they didn't have any care for the world, but then, they were no longer in this world.

"They had died for a long time, there is no way for them to go back to the living world again."

"How do you think I can help my siblings?" Zander gritted his teeth. He didn't need to elaborate his question, because Nadia understood.

"This will be the last time for you to be able to shift into your wolf." After saying that, Nadia pushed Zander down into the lake.

#### Chapter 237: THE CRITICAL SITUATION (29)

Zander was truly upset when Nadia pushed him down to the lake, this woman really know how to push his button and piss him off.

Not only she tried to kill him before, but right now after he thought there was indeed a misunderstanding between them and tried to understand her point, she actually pushed him down.

How many times she would let him down.

However, when Zander fell on the lake, he felt so different. The water didn't soak into his body, he didn't feel wet at all, but there was this indiscernible sensation that he felt, as if he was being wrapped by something warm and Zade's wolf spirit disappeared from his arms.

That was the first thing that Zander noticed, he immediately tried to swim back to the surface, but he couldn't reach it, not even close. He didn't remember that the lake was this deep. There was no way the lake was this deep, right?

Zander tried again to swim to the surface, but he couldn't, it almost felt like he was swimming on the spot.

He could see from under the water how the sky was on fire, the red color was beautiful, yet terrifying, because it almost felt like the end of the world.

'Nadia...'

Zander wanted to call her name, but it would cause him to swallow the water and the more he tried, the more he couldn't go anywhere, to the point where he lost his breathe.

The lacked of air burned his lungs and he struggled.

'And she said that she doesn't want to kill me?'

Zander thought bitterly when the darkness swallowed him whole. This woman really knew how to lie and Zander felt stupid to actually believe her again.

He should know better not to trust her ever again.

And finally, he lost his consciousness, the water filled his lungs and the darkness followed after.

The last thing that he saw was a black beast that came toward him.

Zander thought that would be the end of him, but he was completely wrong when he opened his eyes and then looked at his surroundings. He was in a forest, somewhere between Moonlight pack and the capital city, you could say that he would be able to reach the pack for a few hours now if you were fast enough.

However, Zander had a moment to grasp what was going on. A moment ago, he was drowning inside a lake, but right now he was in the forest? He couldn't understand.

He looked around him for a while before he pushed himself into sitting position and the nausea feeling hit him hard, which caused him to bend his body over and empty his stomach. Obviously, this was not a great experience for him, but aside from that, he felt this sensation. The sensation that you would feel when you were connected with your beast, the natural feeling that you had when you were about to shift into your beast.

Zander tapped in that feeling and he was shocked when he found out that he could shift into his beast.

This feeling was surreal. After a decade he couldn't shift into his beast, right now he could feel it again and then he remembered what Nadia said.

This would be the last time he would be able to shift into his beast and his main goal was to save his siblings.

Zander would contemplate about that later because right now what was more important was to find Zenith and Zaya.

With the new feeling and excitement upon finding himself again in his beast, Zander moved so fast toward the battlefield. His heart pounded against his chest.

Occasionally, he would look around, as if he hoped to see those green eyes, but he knew she was not here.

Would he be able to see her again? There were a lot of things that he wanted to say to her. The first time they were separated, he didn't have a chance to say it, but the second time, the situation was too complicated for them to talk about what happened in the past.

The black beast shook its head and fastened the pace. He needed to focus at the matter at hand.

It took the black beast less than three hours to reach the battlefield and once he was there, he watched in horror what was going on there.

There were so many monsters, but from the look of it, those creatures were supposed to be dead with how mangled their bodies were, but what got his attention the most was the black wisp that created a cocoon and a black beast there, which was no other than his own twin brothers.

Inside the black cocoon, Zander could see Zaya.

From his understanding, Zenith was going to kill Zaya? The thought didn't settle well in his mind. He went to approach Pyro, who had created a shield around him and the rest of the shifters, who couldn't shift into their beast.

The royal beta was flabbergasted to see Zander.

“Zander!” Pyro was surprised. He watched him in his beast form, but the king shifted into his human skin. “How?! How could this possibly happen?”

“Long story,” Zander replied quickly and then Pyro waved to the shield to let Zander enter. “What happened?” he checked on Dawn, who was still breathing raggedly.

They looked unharmed, but because their wolf spirits were actually assaulted at this moment and they couldn’t shift, they were in an excruciating pain.

“Zenith lost it. He is going to kill Zaya and Zaya is trying to absorb the dark magic from Zenith.” Pyro pointed at the crater and the knights, who were fighting off the dead creatures from the underworld.

Pyro explained everything briefly to Zander, who listened with grim expression.

“What are you going to do?” Pyro asked when Zander didn’t say anything. Instead, he turned to Dawn and talked to her.

“Dawn, I need your help.”

“No,” Dawn immediately replied, as if she knew what he would ask.

#### Chapter 238: THE CRITICAL SITUATION (30)

Dawn didn’t want to listen to what Zander said, because she knew what he would ask from her. She knew what she needed to do, but she didn’t want to do it.

She was selfish to watch them die and lose their beasts, but to ask her to kill Zenith, it was too much, that was something she couldn’t bear.

Dawn shook her head desperately, at this point, her fear eclipsed her pain. She didn’t mind to be in this pain, but she was not going to kill Zenith’s life with her own hands.

She had done that once in their first lifetime, she was not going to do it again.

In this case, the story only repeated itself.

She was going to kill him. She didn’t want that. The pain was too much, she couldn’t breathe through the pain and Zander could see that. He knew what kind of pain that you must endure when you have to kill your own mate, before they could kill you.

And he understood why Nadia didn’t tell him about her plan, because there was nothing she could do to convince him to kill her.

Zander hugged Dawn closely, he patted her back and she trembled in his arms.

“Dawn...” Zander gritted his teeth. “You need to do it.” He could feel how she shook her head vigorously against his chest, but it didn’t deter him from telling her the harsh truth. “If you didn’t do it, Zade would die too.”

With the mention of her son, Dawn stopped crying abruptly, she lifted her head and looked at Zander with incredulous eyes, as if Zander just told her the most horrendous thing, as if the king just punched her face.

“Don’t bring my son in this,” Dawn said through her gritted teeth. “You couldn’t blackmail me by using my son.”

Dawn was angry because now Zade was brought into the equation. He shouldn’t have brought up her son lightly in this matter.

However, Zander explained to her about what happened to Zade. She needed to understand the severity in this situation.

Dawn could ignore the pain in herself and the fact that she let down all the shifter kind by refusing the task to kill Zenith... but, she couldn’t ignore her child. Her baby son.

“He is dying now, Dawn.” Zander looked the pain in Dawn’s eyes when he told her about that, but she kept shaking her head, still in denial.

“You lied to me, Zan.” It was hard for Dawn to see Zander’s face, because he looked exactly the same like Zenith, though at the same time, they were so different. He didn’t have Zenith’s callousness, he didn’t have her mate’s love in his eyes, the love that could make her go through everything.

“I don’t lie to you, Dawn. If I could, I will give up my life for Zade. I will do it in a heartbeat.”

Dawn knew that Zander didn’t lie to her, but it didn’t make her felt any better, if anything, she felt even worse.

“No way... there is no way...” Dawn cried, she balled her fists tightly. Pyro and Darius looked at her, they didn’t know what to say and choose not to utter a single opinion.

“Dawn, please... Zenith will want you to do this.”

Dawn hated it, but she knew that Zenith would say the same thing. He didn’t mind to die in her hand and he had proved it once. He would do it all over again if it meant to save their son’s life.



“I couldn’t... I can’t...” Dawn tried to swallow the bile that rose in her throat. “If you wanted to kill him, you need to do it yourself. I don’t want to do it.”

“There must be a reason why the prophecy said it must be his mate.” Zander didn’t really answer whether he would do it or not, but he then he stood up and shifted into his beast.

Right now, Zenith had managed to breakthrough Zaya’s shield and try to kill her. Zander dashed toward the two of them and managed to push him away from their sister.

The fight was inevitable and this time, it was not like their other fight, because right now, they really fought for their lives. They didn’t hold back at all. Every strike was an attempt to kill the other people.

Zaya was shocked to see Zander was able to shift into his beast form. She wanted to ask how he could do that, but it was not the right time and moment to do so. She scrambled to her feet and looked around her. It was disaster to say the least.

The knights were exhausted. They wouldn’t last for long in this fight. Soon enough, they would be killed by the dead people if they didn’t find a way to close the crater.

Meanwhile, some of the shifters, who were able to endure the excruciating pain, fought alongside the knights, their pain tolerance must be top notch to be able to fight with such pain.

Zaya made a shockwave that sent all of the dead people and the dead monsters back to the craters, this gave them time to breath, but of course, it wouldn’t save them. It only gave them time for a few minutes to gather their strength again.

Zaya then rushed toward Dawn, she handed her the dagger in her waist, as she looked at her pleadingly.

“Dawn, I don’t want to force you to do this, but please, look around us and make the right decision.” Zaya didn’t know about Zade, but it didn’t make thing easier for her to ask someone to kill her own brother.

If she were in Dawn’s position, she wouldn’t be able to bring herself to do it, therefore, she could understand why Dawn was adamant to refuse this cruel request.

“Please, think about this carefully.” Zaya put the dagger in Dawn’s hand, curled her hand around it’s hilt and then went away to help them fight.

## Chapter 239: THE CRITICAL SITUATION (31)

This was crazy. The heavy burden in her shoulder for the responsibility to be the one, who took her own mate's life was insane.

Dawn felt the dagger was so heavy in her hand when she curled the hilt. She was trembling. The pain of losing her beast was nothing compared to the pain of the thought of losing Zenith.

How could she lose her? When the last time they talked to each other? She remembered it was when she returned to the palace after she took care the venomous snake in the tent.

Who would have thought, that would be the last time they talked to each other? She felt like it happened a few lifetimes ago. She missed him dearly.

How could they end up like this? There was not even a goodbye for them?

“Arrghh!!!”

Dawn let out a shrill scream, she felt her heart and head would explode at any minute. Darius and Pyro immediately came to her side, but they didn't know what to say to make Dawn felt a little bit better about this situation, they didn't even want to be in her shoes right now to make this crucial decision.

The two of them could only hold her closer, preventing her from falling apart even more.

Dawn then looked at her surroundings. All the people that she saw right now would die. They couldn't fight forever and more importantly, her baby... her baby was not going to survive this pain.

Zander had told her that he saw Zade's wolf spirit and he didn't look good at all and she was going to lose him too.

She shouldn't care about that, if Zade died, it meant the three of them would be together again, right? The crazy part of her mind told her to let go, not to care, but her mother's instinct and a shred of humanity that left in her couldn't take that route.

She didn't want all the people to die because of her choice. She looked at Darius and Pyro. She didn't want them to die, so did Zander and Zaya, also the rest of the shifter kind to go extinct.

With that, Dawn made the most difficult decision in her life, she stood up. The dagger in her hand was so heavy, but probably, it was only her heart that pressed her down.

“What are you going to do, Dawn? You couldn’t go out there and approach Zenith without any plan!” Pyro immediately stood up when he realized what Dawn had decided, while Darius was in so much pain to even stand up on his feet.

“I know.”

“You need to make a plan first.”

Dawn didn’t immediately answer that suggestion, her eyes fell on the two black beasts that fought fiercely against each other, though they looked the same, somehow, Dawn could differentiate the two twins.

“There must be a reason why the prophecy said that it should be his mate, who killed him.”

After saying that, Dawn stepped out of the shield and went toward the two beasts. There was no hesitation in her steps, but the closer she got, the more she wanted to stab the dagger in her hand to her own heart.

Just like what Zander said and she said earlier, there must be a reason why it should be her and she found out the reason of it.

When Dawn came closer to the two beasts, who were fighting, Zenith’s beast turned rigid. He didn’t want to get closer to her, because he could accidentally hurt her.

“Even when you lost your mind, you still want to protect me...” Dawn muttered under her breathe. “You only make this harder for me, you know? You should have just attacked me. You should have just come to me and attack me.”

Zaya came to her and put her hand on her shoulder, this was an encouraging gesture, as she watched her two older brothers fought against each other.

Usually, she was not even worried about the two of them were fighting, but this time, it was different. Because right now, they fought for their lives, they fought with the intention to kill each other.

“The first time I met Zander, he wanted to kill me because of the prophecy. He made me swear that I will never hurt Zenith. He was going to kill me, if I did something that could harm his twin, but right now, he asked me to kill him...”

Zaya bit her lip. She knew about that. “The situation is different now.”

“I wish he would threaten me again to not harm his twin. I wish he would just kill me at that time...” Tear fell on Dawn’s cheek, she stared at the dagger in her hand.

Zaya hugged her, she let Dawn to cry on her shoulder, because she felt like crying too. She didn't want to lose Zenith.

"I wish I didn't need to do this..."

"I know. I know and I am sorry." Zaya herself wouldn't be able to bring herself to kill Zenith. This task was too much.

And after a few moment, Dawn straightened her back, she looked like she already accepted her fate. She curled her fingers around the hilt of the dagger.

"Zander and I will distract Zenith. Attack when you saw the opportunity." Zaya glanced at the dagger in Dawn's hand and then went away to help Zander to corner Zenith.

Dawn's vision was blurry because of her tears, she needed to wipe her face again and again to get rid of this haziness.

She pressed her lips and saw the opening, where she could stab Zenith. Zaya restrained his movement at the same time, but it was not enough.

Dawn managed to stab the side of Zenith's neck and the black beast roared angrily, he turned around and was ready to claw his attacker until he saw it was Dawn and he held back the assault.

He still didn't want to hurt her even when he lost himself.

## Replacement Bride for the Alpha of the North - Chapter 240 - Chapter 240: THE CRITICAL SITUATION (32) -

### Chapter 240: THE CRITICAL SITUATION (32)

There was no word could describe when the black beast turned around and then saw Dawn. The sharp razor claw was only an inch away from Dawn's face, as she fell on her back.

Dawn had never seen a beast as feral as Zenith right now, but more importantly, she had never been in the last end of his killing intent, whether it was in this life or the previous one.

But even so, Zenith still refused to hurt her. The black beast roared viciously, but that was all. The dagger was on the side of his neck and Dawn quickly reached it to pull it away and stab his heart this time.

Everything went so fast, Dawn didn't even have time to think twice, or probably, it was because she didn't even want to think at all. She didn't even want to reconsider it at all.

She wanted this to end quickly.

Zade.

Her baby was in critical situation and she knew Zenith wouldn't be happy if she put their son in danger. She would have time to mourn this moment and cry her heart out, but right now, she needed to finish this task.

"Arrghh!" Dawn screamed as she stabbed Zenith for the third time on the chest and from inside his body, the black wisp exploded, engulfed him completely.

Thankfully, Zaya came in time to prevent Dawn from being swallowed by the dark magic. She pulled her body back and create the shield around the two of them and Zander, as black wisp exuded from Zenith's wound.

"It's a backlash." Zaya knew what was going to happen next. Her eyes filled with horror and before Dawn could say something, she already stood up and walked out of her own shield to approach her brother.

Zaya herself had absorbed most of Zenith's black magic, thus it was time to seal it forever. Destroyed all the black magic in this realm, but in the process, they would lose their wolf spirit as well.

"Ah!" Zander growled in pain, as his beast left him, he was forced to shift back into his human form and he growled because the pain was too much. He was panting when he finally returned to his human skin.

Both of them then watched how Zaya and Zenith fought, while being surrounded by black magic that was ready to explode.

In this rate, Zaya would die along with Zenith and Zander immediately stood up again, ignoring the pain, as he took Zaya with him and he fought Zenith's beast. The beast was wounded deeply, somehow the wound didn't heal and it weakened him.

With that fact, Zander cornered Zenith toward the crater and then pushed him down, where all the dead creatures were trying to crawl their way back from the underworld.

Dawn watched everything unfolded. She was petrified, her body was going through a great shock, she couldn't even move a finger.

She was sitting there, on the ground, while Zenith fell down the crater. At first, she thought he would crawl back like those dead creatures, but after some time, the realization finally sank in.

He would never come back.

“No...” Dawn immediately stood up. She stumbled toward the edge of the craters. “No, no.”

She could only repeat the same thing over and over again. She couldn't believe this happened to her. She didn't even get to say goodbye to him, but she also had to accept that she couldn't even touch him ever again? There would be no body to be buried?

“No, please... no...”

“Dawn!” Zaya rushed toward her and prevented her from going closer toward the crater, Zander approached them as well.

By this time, Dawn was having a mental breakdown, as she the harsh reality came to her sense. That would be the last time she saw Zenith.

Not Zenith that she remembered, but Zenith in his beast form, where he was controlled by the black magic. It was not him at all!

How unfair life was to separate them again after everything that they had gone through. After everything that they had to endure and what they had to do to be together!

Why would the history repeat itself?! Why would she need to lose him again and she had to be the one, who killed him?!

Dawn couldn't understand where everything went so wrong?! Why they couldn't escape from this ill fate between them?

How you called this as the second chance when there was no chance for them to be together?!

“No... please, bring him back...” Dawn whimpered between her cries and for her to see Zander, it was so hard, because he looked exactly like Zenith.

She kept shaking her head, as Zander hugged her. Her emotions were all over the places, her heart shattered and her world crumbled on her feet.

She wanted to push Zander away, because it was not him that she wanted to see, but at the same time, she wanted to see Zenith through him. It was so hard...

"It's okay, Dawn. It's okay, Dawn," Zander chanted the same thing, he patted her back to calm her down, but there was nothing could make her felt better, he knew that. He had gone through the same thing too.

They still couldn't believe that they had lost Zenith. It was too much for them.

"Dawn?" Zander could feel her body limped in his arms and he knew that the shocked took toll on her and took her consciousness as well. Probably it was better this way.

Meanwhile, Zaya stood up and went toward the craters.

"What are you doing?"

"There is still remaining of black magic within me." Zaya then looked up the sky and then closed her eyes, when she opened them again, she looked down and released all of the black magic that she had absorbed toward the gate of hell.

She unleashed everything. The ground was shaking the wind was so harsh, but the fire in the sky slowly dissipated.

It almost like they watched a hurricane.