



## 69 WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SHOW ME?

The last time Iris saw Redmond was a week before the Blue Moon pack lost the battle against the Howling Wolf pack led by Cane.

Redmond had told her father that they needed to evacuate and ask for more help from the king, but her father was too arrogant to listen to him. He didn't actually think a former slave like Cane could gather so much power within half a year to take down his pack.

But then, reality hit him hard as he turned out to be hopelessly wrong while his arrogance only made him pay a huge price.

Iris tried to think of a reason for Redmond wanting to pledge his loyalty to her when they didn't even know each other so well. It would be less complicated if he bowed to Cane and acknowledged him as the new alpha.

However, from the looks of it, Iris realized this was his final and only resort to preserve the last shred of dignity he had as the leader of the warriors, as if trying to imply, even until his last, he didn't bow down to the alpha. He was aiming to rub this in Cane's face by actually pledging his loyalty to his mate instead.

It was actually not common for a warrior to pledge his loyalty to the luna, unless when the alpha was inept and unable to lead the pack, probably that was the message that he wanted Cane to receive.

But then, Cane couldn't care less about that, since his goal was way bigger than minding such a petty revenge.

"Miss Iris," Redmond called her name gently, as if they had known each other for a long time. He knelt on one knee and lowered his head, offering her the utmost respectful gesture. "I am glad you are well after the huge ordeal that you have to suffer. You don't deserve to go through that, especially after what you have done for them."

He must have heard about what those people had done to her, along with the things she did for them in the past. Though his voice sounded humble and pleasant, there was also mockery, which he directed at the alpha for not being able to tame his people.

Ethan gritted his teeth, while the four guards were having a hard time trying not to scowl at his statement. They had been feeling bad enough without his reminder.

Meanwhile, Cane and Jace said nothing, it seemed both of them shared the same personalities at one point.

"A misunderstanding can be scary." Iris played down what happened to her. "You may rise," she said softly.

"Indeed." Redmond stood up, he made sure that he didn't pay any mind to the alpha at all. Yet, he still ended up being the one to be upset because Cane didn't care about his childish behavior at all.

"Let's wrap this up quickly," Jace said in a dismissive tone, as he nodded to the other four guards that came with Ethan.

One of them walked out of the room and returned a few minutes later with a bowl, made of stone and engraved with intricate words along the rim.

This was a vessel bond, where two people would offer blood to bind them in a pact. This was commonly used by those who would pledge their loyalty.

The vessel bond held magical power and if the person pledging their loyalty committed any act of treason, it would bring them pain.

The vessel bond was like a small basin with a croak in the middle of it. Despite how shabby this vessel looked, the intricate words that were written in gold along its rim gave this device an impression of something antique in nature.

Ethan gave a small dagger to Redmond for him to use and draw blood from his hand.

Redmond received the small dagger and raised his hand above the bonding vessel. He sliced the blade against his palm until a droplet of blood fell into the bowl.

"I will protect you and not bring harm upon you. Follow you and will not question you and this is my oath for you."

The intricate words around the rim of the stone vessel gleamed following what Redmond said. The droplet of blood couldn't be seen anymore, as if the vessel had absorbed it completely.

"Luna, your turn." Jace handed another dagger to Iris, which made her grimace. She didn't like to hurt herself, but this time, it was something that should be done.

With uncertainty, Iris took the dagger and took a deep breath. She did what Redmond had done and once a droplet of her blood dropped into the bowl, it got absorbed too and the gleam of the intricate words grew brighter.

"I take your oath and may you have faith in me." Iris felt a warm feeling inside her chest when the pact had been formed between the two of them.

Redmond would never betray Iris and so would the people under him. He wouldn't bring any harm on her and that was enough for her.

After the oath was made, Ethan gave a handkerchief to Iris. Then he told the four guards to escort Redmond out of this library. They would send him back to the mines, where the monster hunt was being held.

"Thank you," Iris muttered, as she received the handkerchief and wrapped it around her hand to stop the bleeding.

"You need to see Grace, she must be able to stop your bleeding in an instant," Ethan suggested enthusiastically, which left Iris bewildered about how the gamma treated her very differently now, as if someone just pressed a switch in his personality.

However, the alpha had another idea. "Leave," Cane said firmly.

"But, she is bleeding, we need to call Grace, at least." Ethan tried to retort the order, but Jace dragged him out of the library to leave Cane and Iris alone. Thankfully, the beta was wise enough to read the situation and get rid of the gamma before the alpha did it himself.

Once it was only the two of them, Cane beckoned Iris to follow him. He led her to one of the bookshelves, where she noticed the books about ancient curses and whatnot.

"Do you think you can find a specific stone?" Cane gave a book to her and flipped to a specific page,

where he pointed at the picture of a specific stone. "I want you to find this."

"Huh?" Iris was taken aback, staring at the book. "I don't know how." She lifted her head and looked at Cane dejectedly. "I would love to help, but I truly don't know how to find a specific stone."

"Come here." Cane walked toward one of the four tables and sat down, while Iris followed and sat across from him. From his pocket, he took out three magic stones. Iris immediately realized those were the three stones that she had found. "These are different stones."

Before this, Iris had learned a few things about the magic stone, each stone held a different power. There were four elements of magic stones, which then further branched according to more specific characters.

The most common magic stones were earth magic stones and water magic stones. The fire magic stones could be found in specific locations. However, the air magic stone, which happened to be also the one that Cane showed to her, was the rarest among all magic stones.

"From what I learnt, these two are earth magic stones, while this one is a water magic stone." Iris pointed at the stones one by one.

"Yes, you are right."

"But, why do you want me to find this magic stone?" Iris tilted her head. "Even if I can sense the difference, this is the rarest stone that exists."

Cane didn't answer that, which didn't surprise Iris. Maybe one day, he could be more open with her.

"Try to practice with these." Cane pushed the three stones toward her and told her that he would look forward to seeing her progress. He stood up and left her alone in the library.

"Wait, did he just give me homework?" Iris couldn't figure out what kind of situation she was in.

Cane didn't say an exact time when she needed to find the magic stone, but from the looks of it, this was something important.

"Why does he want this?" Iris slipped the three stones into her pocket and then spent the rest of the day holed up inside the library to read more books on the magic stones and their variations, also the difference in power that each stone held.

However, no matter how powerful a magic stone was, it was useless for the shifters, as their power was so different from those healers or sorcerers.

"What does he actually want?"

When the sun almost set, Iris lit up the candles inside the library to continue reading. But soon Hanna came to her, looking miffed because she didn't immediately return to her bedroom.

"I thought you were still with the alpha, but I met sir Ethan and he said that the meeting had ended hours ago. Why didn't you return? You need to drink your medicine," Hanna nagged, as she strode into the library and looked at Iris morosely. "You need to drink your medicine, you know."

"I am sorry," Iris said gently to see how Hanna was so concerned about her.

After that day, Iris didn't leave her room again for another week, until the monster hunt had finished. That was the most peaceful week she had in her life and from what Iris heard from Hanna, Aria was still trying to visit the alpha, but Cane was always very busy, especially since they were preparing to

move back to the pack house of the Howling Moon pack.

"We will leave this place..." Hanna said sadly. She looked a little bit somber.

Iris knew, while this place didn't hold good memories for a lot of people, including her, they had lived here for years. Iris only knew this place since she was born. To know that they had to leave soon, made them a little bit sentimental.

However, it also meant they didn't have a lot of time to be here and there was still something that Iris needed Cane to see.

"Hanna, can you ask Jace or Ethan if they can ask the alpha to make time for me? Tell them that I want to show him something that I had promised him before."

"What do you want to show him?" Hanna got curious.

"I want to show him 'that'."

Hanna looked at Iris for a moment, before something clicked in her mind. "You really want to show him that? Do you think it's a good idea?"

"I don't know, but he needs to know."

Hanna didn't ask further about it and just followed what Iris wanted her to do.

And when Hanna returned, she told her that the alpha would see her in three days, since he needed to wrap up the monster hunt first and there were a few urgent things that he had to take care of first.

Iris could see what Cane dedicated his life to and how he poured his soul into what he was doing. It surprised her that what her father had done didn't completely break him. Or so what she thought...

On the third day, Cane came to her bedroom at noon after lunch. He looked stoic as usual and didn't say much, but his mood seemed to be a little bad from what Iris sensed. Would it be a good decision to let him know about this? Iris couldn't stop having second thoughts about her decision.

"What do you want to show me?"

"Can you come with me to the hill on the east side of this pack?" Iris approached him, she was dressed simply with her hair braided behind her back.

Cane didn't know what she wanted to do, but he had cleared his agenda for this afternoon, thus he agreed with her.

Cane tapped her shoulder to get her attention. "How about your progress?"

Iris grimaced and Cane got the answer he needed.

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