

Tasting Darkness

Chapter 131

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Read Taming Darkness By Jessica Hall Book 3

Chapter 6 – Tobias

Darius was gone, and we were sealed in by Darius' magic. Aleera was stuck in this memories state, her eyes flitting back and

forth, her power magnifying with each tortuous second that passed as I paced back and forth while getting dressed.

Black and gold webbing bleeds out of her pores, spreading like a rash over most of her body, her breathing becoming rapid as

we watch her. Kalen's worry and fear bleeding into me like poison as he chews his nails, staring absently at where Darius just left through a portal.

Lycus grips his hair, he now has shorts on, but his fear is also potent, only amplifying mine. "What are we going to do?" Lycus

whines, she had only been out for a few minutes, yet that was long enough for Darius to escape us and trap us in this room.

We could still feel him, though we knew he was badly injured. We have tried to break the seal that snared us in, yet we were just wasting the energy and power we needed when it dropped.

With each passing second, we felt his power dwindle rapidly, and if she didn't wake soon, we had no way to break the seal

Darius placed on this room. We knew Aleera could if she would just wake. His magic now writhed through her. All our power

flowed through her, strong like a beating heart, a muscle waiting to be flexed and used. So I know she could break the seal that is in place.

Her phoenixes were cawing loudly outside. A storm brewing fiercely, and the more her magic strengthened, consuming her, as she came into more power, the louder the chaos got outside.

Kalen looks to the windows, light casting shadows through the room, when we hear a loud cr*ck of thunder. And the power goes

out. We are plunged into darkness, and at the same time, we feel Darius' pain, like a knife carving through our hearts, splintering our souls into a million tiny facets.

The pain is so intense it drops us all. I gasp and drop to my knees. "He's hurt!" Kalen grits out, stating the obvious, and Aleera sucks in a deep sharp breath, yet she isn't awake, still stuck in that transient state between the waking world and a time already lived.

Watching her, her back arches off the bed, her eyes opening, and her hands clawing at the sheets. She was fighting the memories, fighting to get back here, when suddenly the lights flickered brightly, too brightly, and the entire room started shaking, the brickwork cracking and glass shattering when she screamed.

The moment she does, a shift in energy smashes us, and I feel it surging in my veins when it erupts out of her like a furious volcano. Like a slivering cr*ck in the glass, I feel the seal Darius placed start to ripple, bend and cr*ck before it explodes along with the light bulbs. The sound is deafening, and I scream, covering my ears when the seal shatters completely, and the room

goes black.

Opening my eyes, the room is so cold. My breath breathes smoke clouds in the air, fog fills the room, and goosebumps lace my skin. It was like ice in here; whatever awoke inside her wanted out, fire and ice, light and darkness, both combative and just as lethal. Both fought a war inside her as she fights his memories, she could feel him, feel us.

As I rise to my feet, Aleera is covered in ice, yet her eyes burn brightly, her veins turn to gold, and she is still stuck. She was

stuck in a state she couldn't come out of until she saw every piece of him, bonded to the darkest parts of him, bonded and tamed the darkness she now possessed.

Lycus moves to touch her, hissing as his fingers touch her. They turn black as if frostbitten, and he screams as his magic quickly works to heal him. "How do we wake her?" he looks at me frantically.

"We don't," I tell him, gasping for air as Darius loses what's left in him.

"But Darius," Kalen chokes, clawing at his throat. I groan, forcing myself to my feet—"I know," Tossing my fingers out, I open a portal to the city.

"Tobias!" Lycus rasps, finding his feet again.

“I won’t let him die,” I stagger toward it, and Lycus growls, grabbing me when I stumble forward. “We can’t leave her.”

Kalen whimpers.

“Her phoenixes will watch over her,” I tell him, and he hesitates before nodding. “God help them when she wakes up.”

“Let’s just hope she does in time,” I tell him, knowing whatever Darius is facing just absorbed half his power in one blow, he was the strongest out of us, and if he was struggling, we stood no chance. Not without her phoenixes.

“And if she doesn’t?” I glance at Aleera.

“She’ll forgive us for leaving her,” I whisper, knowing full well if they kill us, Aleera will make it her mission to make them pay for it.

“She is safe here, but Darius needs us. I won’t abandon him, not when everyone else has.” I tell him before Lycus, and I step through the portal.

The moment we do, we step into carnage and chaos. We just escaped the room to be sealed inside a dome placed over part of the city. “Kalen wait!” I Lycus shrieks, but it is too late as Kalen steps through the portal directly behind us. “Too late,” Lycus shakes his head.

Kalen glances around and at the sky, and so do I, and I can see the bubble we are in, the translucent-like film wrapping the city.

“Now what?” Kalen huffs.

“We find Darius and try not to die,” I tell them, glancing around the empty city street. The flickering of light between the buildings

told which direction the fight was. The storm inside this dome was powered purely by magic, as we ducked and weaved out of

the way of flying debris.

Dead bodies littered the street, and buildings were half blown apart. Power hunters had ripped through the place and by the feel

of the dome. Power hunters sensed him the moment he entered and placed it to seal him inside it.

I place my fingers over my infinity mark, searching for Darius’ location. I feel his anger and disbelief that we found him, seconds

later I stop, hearing a growl

behind us. Lycus shakes his head, Kalen pivots, and Lycus sighs, almost sounding bored.

“I just got these f**king pants too,” Lycus snarls, turning to face the threat as I do. Kalen pats Lycus’ shoulder. “Yeah, yeah, f**k

me!” Lycus groans as I stare down the four gigantic wolves stepping out from between the buildings and rubble. They move

closer, teeth-gnashing and growling as they prowl toward us from the end of the street.

They stalk closer and Lycus takes his damn time to remove his pants and I hold out my arm knowing he wasn't losing those

damn shorts, I could feel Darius fighting his way to us now, but he seemed to have the upper hand for now.

"I swear if one of you bas***rds gives me rabies, I will be pissed," Lycus huffs, passing me his shorts. I fold them, setting them on a broken sign board at my feet. "Oh, get on with it," Kalen snaps at him.

"By all means feel free to take my place," Lycus tells him and I roll my eyes, not a damn serious bone in Lycus' body, the same sh*t whenever he used to come on missions with us while finding Aleera.

"Not my species, not my boarding kennel," Kalen says folding his arms, and I snicker. Lycus turns his head to glare at him, and Kalen shrugs. "What, I can revert the terminology if you want, but monkeys don't seem appropriate, though the circus part still may be fitting." he retorts before giving Lycus a nudge forward.

Lycus mutters, leisurely strolling toward them. "So which one wants to be my b*tch!" Lycus growls as they charge at him in full sprint. "Even in the pits they sweep, f**k sake," I hear him groan as he peers down at the litter on the ground, then he shifts at the last second just as Kalen nudges me, pointing to the sky.

Darius sends a flare into the sky, it hits the shield letting us know his location, fire engulfs the shield, licking and sliding down it showing us exactly how big it is.

"Let's go," I tell Kalen before taking off in the direction Darius is. Four measly wolves were no match for Lycus, so I did not fear for his life, Darius however I did, especially if he sent off a flare of his magic. Darius wasn't taking on a couple of wolves, but a damn army of power hunters.

However, what I am not expecting is the crater I nearly fall into as I rush out of the alleyway. My hand grabbing Kalen's shirt is the only thing that stops him from falling in as I rip him backward.

Across the other side is Darius standing out the front of the old council building on the steps while Hunters surrounded him. Magic flew everywhere, the energy rippling

and surging is intense, the air felt electrified and charged.

Kalen tries to open a portal, but it shatters instantly.

“Go, I will find another way,” Kalen tells me and I nod. I didn’t really want to

leave him, but Darius was in a very precarious position and backed into a corner. Backing up, I run, tapping into my vampiric abilities to jump over the huge crater.

As soon as I cross, I am chunked directly into the fray and only just see Kalen disappear as he tries to find another way across.

Now we just had to hope Aleera’s Phoenixes could break this damn dome to help us. If not, we may have finally just met our end.

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Chapter 7 – Aleera POV

The memories wouldn't stop. I come to learn, through them, that the plague was never meant to be a plague at all. It was

supposed to be a cure for Harmony-Fae who were dying off from some virus that spread like wildfire.

Darius being Demonic-Fae

was not affected by this virus, they couldn't explain why, neither was his sister.

However, what my father created was never a cure, it was a plague. Xandrius ordered him to destroy it when they realized what

they created. After all the things I saw him do, I wasn't sure how someone like him wanted to stop the unpredictable epidemic outbreak.

And yet, they were hoping to find a cure. However, my father was scheming behind Xandrius's back, plotting a way to take down the Demonic Kingdom and the Vamperic kingdom. From what I saw, he was adamant to destroy everything, sacrifice as many lives as needed, in his way just to get closer to his goal.

My father became the very definition of a mad scientist with a god complex." All of his plans and doings were hidden right under the council's nose.

And Xandrius could do nothing to prove it without implicating himself. Even if he wanted to, he couldn't stop my father, for it was too late to act once he found out what was happening behind his back.

Through Darius' memories, I also learned why the first plague existed. The same as why Darius' mother was also immune.

When the Harmony-Fae started getting this mysterious virus, and it proved to be not only dangerous but also deadly, cord blood

was taken right after Darius was born. By none other than my father, of course. So I had no doubt he was the one who was responsible for creating the first original strain.

But now, I also knew what Darius meant about him being responsible for the plague being set free.

What he meant when he claimed it started with him.

His blood created the plague, and that wasn't all – my father tricked him. Darius was so blinded by his hate for his father that it was easy to coax him into teleporting into the lab, and retrieve the vials his father ordered to be destroyed.

And my father was there, with a friendly smile on his lips, claiming that Darius was doing the right thing. He told Darius that if he did that, he would be able to put a stop to his father's vile doings. Darius was fooled into believing that he could stop his father.

Darius was under the impression his father was the evil mastermind. The root of all evil and ungodly deeds. Perhaps he even made Darius believe the reason for the vicious disease outbreak was his father.

I couldn't know every detail, just the memories that were presented to me, but I was sure that my father did far worse.

So, Darius did what my father asked – he retrieved both vials and then he retrieved both vials, and then burned the place to the ground out of anger. Darius hated that place with passion. He was convinced if he did what my father told him to, he would never be strapped to that chair again.

When the second wave hit, he knew it was his fault. And when the council ordered my father to find a cure, once again, Darius found himself becoming another casualty to those experiments. Until one day he had enough. And again, I watch the world through Darius' eyes. He is barely a teenager now.

He had spent all day at school and was now getting changed to meet his father, so he can go to the new lab built.

His father scrutinized every move made by my father. There were cameras set up on every desk, notetakers stood close by and copied down every move.

Xandrius was trying to catch him red handed and have justice served for the vile crimes he committed. He knew my father let off the second wave, but the council believed all evidence was destroyed in the fire, believe the lies my father told, and as far as the council was concerned Greyson could do no wrong.

My father had them wrapped around his finger, because no one was hated more than Xandrius the demonic King. And after the building burned to ashes, nothing could be retrieved or taken in as a proof to point fingers at the guilty one.

Besides, no matter how many times Xandrius had done awful things, he was trying to fix this and without him being present, there was no one who would stand against my father. And yet, he couldn't speak up without the much-needed evidence because then, the council could find out about his involvement in them.

Xandrius believed my father stole them. He had no idea he was keeping an eye on the wrong person. As smart as he was, he didn't realize that the one who stole what he sought was none other than his own son. It was Darius, all along.

What was even worse was that Greyson loved the power that secret gave him. He thrived in the sense of superiority over Darius.

He liked to use that against Darius. He threatened Darius that 'if he were ever to say anything, come clean with everything that

had happened and who was responsible for the mess – he would tell Xandrius that Darius was the one that unleashed the plague.

So, Darius had no other choice but to go along with whatever my father told him to do, or risk his father's wrath. If he were to disobey the orders, Darius knew he put his life at risk. What made everything even worse was that his sister and mother were trapped in the basement until a cure could be found. A cure that didn't exist. All he had was another outbreak of a deadly plague that crept over the lands and destroyed the water supplies like death itself, and a secret that tormented him every moment of his life.

I watch as Darius goes to his room and unpacks his bag. He knew that he had two hours before his father would come searching for him. Two hours before, he would be subjected to all kinds of torture. All in the name of science.

But Darius didn't trust anyone anymore. And how could he? After everything that I watched happening, those awful memories and the things he was forced to do, I couldn't force myself to question his inability to trust others.

Darius couldn't trust a single person's intentions anymore, and he would be damned if he was the reason a new plague was unleashed.

He set the contents of his bag on the counter as he double-checked the dosages from the book he spent the day reading. When

he wasn't sure if he had enough, he added a bit more to the concoction. I could see tiny specks of sweat breaking out on his

forehead. Feel his fear of the unknown and the weight of the actions he is about to take.

He was so focused on what he was doing, so lost in the moment I believe Darius wouldn't hear if anyone were to make a sound in the hall.

But nevertheless, I held my breath and kept watching. I had no idea what he was doing or where he was going with the concoction, but I was dying to find out.

What were you up to here, Darius? What was going through your mind? And most importantly – what were you trying to create in

the secret of your room? What were you hiding?

Some part of me thought it was all to stop our parents, or maybe he figured out how to save his mother and sister.

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Chapter 8 – Aleera POV

The fumes were h*rrrendous, and the liquid bubbled like a potion some film directors portray only in sci-fi movies.

I kept watching Darius as he started crushing up the devil's bane. My eyebrows furrowed in silent question. What was he planning to do with that thing? It was extremely toxic to demons, so getting a hold of that much of it had to be challenging. Was he trying to kill his own father?

Darius added sulfur and a heap of other, even more dangerous, ingredients. I couldn't stop wondering where, from who, and how the heck he got his hands on such poisons.

It was such a wide variety of dangerous and toxic that I knew Darius had to be aware of the things he had there. It couldn't be a coincidence. I refused to believe or even think that he had no idea what those things were.

Besides, the book he had opened looked like it could have been at least a hundred years old. It wasn't the plain old recipe book, either. And I knew he wasn't baking a cake.

My heart thundered against my ribcage as scenarios ran through my mind. I knew he wasn't trying to hurt himself, or at least I

hoped so, but that didn't mean I wasn't feeling like losing my mind while watching.

I knew he hadn't done anything deadly as Darius still was alive, outside these memories, he was alive.

That's all that mattered.

A movement caught my attention as I involuntarily held my breath. When Darius was done mixing up the dangerous plants, he

took off the mask he had on. I gasped at the view of him choking on the fumes.

But then, out of nowhere, he does something I never thought I would watch him do.

He drinks straighter from the beaker. Darius freaking drank that thing until nothing was left without missing a beat! No second

guessing, not a thought before he did it, just chugged it down as if it tasted like pure nectar.

It took literal seconds for him to pass out and everything faded. His room disappeared, there were no surroundings for me to

grasp or understand anything of where I was being taken.

For ages, all I could see was black. For ages, I listened to the harsh thumping of his heart in his ears. The sound was awful,

painful even, and then, it abruptly stopped. Not a thump, not a sound or movement. I couldn't believe I witnessed this, I couldn't

believe he did it.

He killed himself. Darius killed himself to ensure no more plagues were created from his blood. Darius killed off any chance of anyone ever manipulating him and using him for everything he hated.

But the price it took had to be too high, and soon after Darius killed himself, he came to realize the actual price. When he came back, he finally understood that with dying he not only killed himself but killed off his Harmony side. Darius didn't know better when he decided it had to be done. Yet, now what was left of him was so dark, so empty, and so wild in its roots, Darius had to face the new reality – the new him.

I already knew that with killing off that part of him, Darius killed off what little control he used to have over his incubus magic.

Whatever he thought he used to have – it was lost and forgotten.

His demonic side came forward far harder than he knew was possible. The very thing he tried to hide and control now was the only part of him that truly existed. The monster that lurked between him now became a permanent part of him.

It had more power and freedom than ever. Darius wasn't in control anymore, every moment of his life, the monster could break free and prove it had the upper hand.

Darius constantly needed to fight against the monster inside him to keep it at bay.

And just when I thought Darius might get some reprieve from the horrors he lived, I was wrong.

It was only two days later that Molly died. The pain, even if only a memory, that surged through him was indescribable. It targeted his heart, shattered his soul and drove his mind into a frenzy of regrets.

His mother begged Darius to save her, begged Darius to bring her back. And he tried, oh god, how he tried, but nothing worked.

Darius couldn't do anything to save his sister, to save the one person who was his true weakness. No matter how he hated that she was used as a weapon to control him far too many times, Darius still refused to let go of her.

He didn't give up. He couldn't. Over and over again, he tried everything but the more time passed, the harder it became to admit that he didn't have that kind of magic anymore. He didn't want to give up, but there was nothing he could do to save her. Not

without his Harmony-Fae magic. Something he destroyed, thinking he was saving the world from further damage.

Darius knew that if he took the risk and chose to resurrect her, it wouldn't be his sister no more. His sister was dead, what

remained was the outer shell Darius knew.

If he brought her back, it wouldn't be her – the real Molly would be dead. The black magic like that came with that part of him

dying was dangerous and unpredictable. It was the shadows.

Darius knew his sister would never live with them.

She was purer of light than he ever was, softer, and the shadows would ruin

everything Molly ever was. The shadows were something else, something dark and sinister, something all consuming, cold, and angry. Something dead.

Tears stung in my eyes as the memory faded.

Though the pain disappeared, and the heartbreaking view was nowhere in sight, it

left a sour aftertaste and more sorrow than my heart had ever felt.

The memory moved to the next, and out of nowhere, unexpectedly, I felt my soul shudder.

As intense pain coursed through me, I knew it had nothing to do with this past reality, but with the real world. Our world – our reality. Back home.

Darius! I pulled and pushed on the veil, knowing my mates needed me. I knew something had gone terribly wrong while I was imprisoned in the memories and couldn't break free. It felt as if the more I tried to move the veil, the sturdier it became.

The memories didn't stop as their panic bled into me, it consumed my senses and overtook every thought running through my mind.

Pain. Such intense pain I didn't know existed. The emotions I felt stood nowhere near the rage that simmered in me. I could feel my soul darken, feel this sense of entrapment. Yet it wasn't just being trapped within my mind, I could feel Darius magic wrapping around me like a cocoon. And our mates were trying to break his magic down.

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Chapter 9 – Aleera POV

As more memories washed past me, I couldn't be bothered to focus on them.

I didn't care for them. I cared for the feeling of agony tearing through my chest as his pain bled into me through the bond. The pain was so intense and raw, so d*mn fresh, that I didn't believe it could be eased by the most skilled healers.

Nothing I did would pull me out of the trance my body was in. It didn't matter how hard I tried to fight back, how much of my energy and my own power I forced into breaking the veil – it didn't move. It didn't let me go.

It forced me to watch his memories. I was stuck in-between the pain and past. The veil forced me to endure Darius' pain physically in this memory state and in the waking world.

Even in my current surroundings, I could hear them. As if the veil took pity upon me and let me listen in while the memory scenes kept rounding me. The foreign feeling forced me deeper into the past of the very man who shared his pain with me.

Their voices rounded me like whispers in the wind, but I could still hear the intense panic resonating through the few words I could understand.

Tobias wanted to help Darius and I could hear my phoenixes cawing loudly, desperately wanting me to come back. They were telling me something was seriously wrong. Nothing worked, no matter what I tried, it didn't work, so I decided to focus on my anger towards Darius' past. Maybe that could help me break the chains that held me in this helpless state.

A storm was brewing fiercely, it made the wind howl, and I was suddenly very aware of my outside surroundings. The memories that trapped my mind caught me between both worlds. I was present in two alternate realities at the same time – one in the far past, and the other which needed me.

The more I saw, the more enraged I became. Along with my rage, my magic strengthened to the point it consumed me whole.

Yet, when Darius' pain and power surged through the bond, something inside me broke. My scream echoed in my head and bled out of me. It was powerful enough to force my eyes open and break the veil between reality and memories.

I could hear and see everything, but my body was paralyzed. I could hear my mates, see them. Hear the glass breaking. Even

the tiniest cracks were like the loudest speakers replaying the same sound over and over again in my mind.

And then, finally, I could hear the power surging as I forced it on them, feeding my mates with my power through the bond. For a

brief moment, relief washed over me. I did something I had no idea I was desperate to do.

I wasn't sure how I did it. Wasn't even aware it was possible, but when I felt Darius start fighting with new vigor, I knew I did

something useful. Wherever he was, whatever he did, he had me now, and I would do anything to get him out of there alive.

Just like he chose me. Regardless of how wrong or right his doings were – he always chose me. Now, I chose Darius. Now I

accept every dark part of him, just like he chose to love every dark and light filled part of me.

“He's hurt!” Kalen gritted out. His voice was filled with anguish, and that alone made my heart sink.

Desperation overtook my senses again.

I knew that, just like me, my mates were desperate to get Darius out of wherever he was and bring him back to safety.

I sucked in a deep, sharp breath, yet couldn't break the trance. Although I thought I had gotten past the veil, broken it, I was as far from the truth as one could be.

Darius' memories were translucent as I peered up at the ceiling. I felt like I was watching everything through cellophane. I was still stuck in that transient state between the waking world and a time already passed.

His memories were forced on me to watch, but those were the last thing I wanted to see. What I truly wanted was him, safe and sound, away from the awful past and reality.

All of a sudden, the lights flickered brightly, too brightly, and the entire room started shaking. Even the memories shook as I tried to break the hold his bond had on me.

The brickwork cracked and glass shattered when a loud, deafening scream left me. I couldn't stop it. I didn't see the moment coming.

But the moment a scream broke out, a shift in energy rippled around me, and I felt it surging in my veins when it burst out of me, white-hot and f***king furious.

Like a slivering crack in the glass, I felt the seal Darius placed start to ripple, bend and crack before it exploded along with the

light bulbs.

My breath hitched and cold seeped into my bones. The darkness enveloped me, making my bones ache. While I couldn't move a muscle and pain kept surging through me, my heart felt like a raging inferno, growing hotter with each throbbing beat.

When I finally managed to open my eyes, the room was so cold that my breath reminded me of smoke clouds in the air. Fog filled the room as goosebumps laced over my skin. The room was ice-cold, like a freezer.

Whatever awoke inside me wanted out.

Fire and ice, light and darkness, both combative and just as lethal. Both fought a war inside, as I did my damndest to fight his memories.

I could still feel Darius, feel my mates.

Lycus moved to touch me, but once his fingers barely grazed my skin, he hissed in pain.

His fingers turned black, as if frostbitten, and he screamed, jerking away from me. "How do we wake her?" I could clearly hear

Lycus' voice.

I tried to tell them I was right here, I was here with them, yet no sound left my lips. Frozen like a block of ice, trapped in a

freezing room and my own mind. I could have screamed and even that sound wouldn't reach my mates.

Instead, i listen to them, focusing on them and their words. I barely grasped the short conversation as I tried to focus on the clawing caws of my Phoenixes. I tried to make them go with my mates, but they refused to leave. Their disobedience only angered me more. My mates needed the Phoenixes, yet the stubborn creatures weren't willing to leave their keeper.

Slight relief filled me as I heard them rush to Darius' aid, yet my nightmare was far from over. I was still left paralyzed in this state. I still couldn't break free and leave this place to look for Darius. Just when he needed me the most – I was... here...

Coldness slivered in my veins as I stared at the ceiling, watching the memories play out. Each passing second felt like an eternity, the coldness did nothing to numb my torment.

It did nothing to help me break free of the pure torture of knowing my mates needed me, and I was powerless. I was too far gone, too stuck to break free and help them.

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Tasting Darkness

Chapter 135

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Read Taming Darkness By Jessica Hall Book 3
Chapter 10 – Aleera POV

As the memories slowly started to fade, the shadows started slivering over my skin. I shuddered; feeling for my magic, desperate to reach it and grasp it in my hands.

If I managed to capture it, to hold onto it for long enough, I would be able to break free and go after my mates. They needed me now more than ever. Especially Darius.

A loud s*b tore out of me at the first twitch of my fingers. Any movement was welcomed, needed and long awaited. The necessity to move and get out of my own mind was so intense that I kept forcing my thoughts and prayers towards another movement.

Once my prayers were answered and my toes wiggled, I finally came back to my body.

My power flexed – strong, intense, angry, and so, so dark. Yet, to my surprise, it was so light, like a feather. As if it floated in my veins, under my skin.

It was an odd and unheard of combination. I sucked in a breath as I found my bond manifesting and bonding onto them.

I could feel them as if I were them.

Could sense and almost touch them as if they were extra limbs, suddenly attached to my body, yet so very familiar. I could feel

their magic mold and transform with mine.

Their powers became mine and mine became theirs, molding into something much bigger than everything I have known until

now.

After what felt like an eternity, I jerked upright to find my body covered in snakes. I couldn't tell where one snake ended and the

next one started. Heads, tails and bodies slid over me as if I were the home these reptiles had never known they sought.

I should have feared them, I should have tried to get away from the cold scales that slid over my skin, but I didn't. I didn't fear

them or have a flight or fight response.

Deep down, I knew that wherever these snakes came from and whatever they were – they were mine. All of them were a part of me, just like my phoenixes.

A loud caw at the window startled me.

My head twisted to look at the window, tearing my gaze away from the newfound addition. Two glowing eyes peered back at me.

A soft sigh left my lips at the view. Finally, there was something familiar that proved I had ***** escaped the memories and was right where I needed to be.

“Ryze,” I murmured, and he c**ked his head to the side.

The storm outside raged like the power burning inside my veins. Maybe everything around me didn’t happen for a reason, but I had a feeling that the weather was copying everything I felt. As if nature tried to match what was going on inside my heart.

Ryze cawed and flew over to me. He perched on my shoulder with such grace, anyone who saw him would claim he had done it at least a thousand times before. Ryze screeched and tried to sn*tch one of the snakes, but the moment he did, the snake evaporated.

Just like that, with ease, it disappeared right before my eyes, as if it had never been there, as if it never existed.

Shadows. They were shadows – they had to be. But how? As the snakes silvered and climbed up my body, they felt too real to be a figment of my imagination or a weightless shadow.

A jolt through the bond forced me back to reality. Right back to everything I was missing in the moment of confusion, created by the shadow snakes.

Before the thought flitted through my head I was standing, no doubt that had to be one of Tobias vampiric charms.

Besides, I usually didn't move that quickly, yet I felt different, felt... I couldn't identify the feeling, or try to describe it, so I focused on more important matters. Those feelings were a question to be answered later.

As I moved about the room, I snatched my jeans off the shelf. I instantly pulled them on, there was no spare time to waste.

Before I reached out my hand to snatch my bra and a shirt, I froze on the spot as I caught my reflection in the mirror I didn't recognize myself, I couldn't even if I tried my hardest to notice some of the details that made me look like... well, me.

The shadow snakes wrapped around my limbs like tattoos, they created intricate designs that didn't only adorn my skin – they stood out and made me look better than ever. My eyes, however, reminded me of pure blood demons. Black, no whites. What

was different and stood out were the irises of my eyes that were glowing like pure embers.

I shook my head, reminding myself there was something more important to focus on, and quickly put on my bra.

Then, I reached for my shirt, about to pull it over my black bra before looking at the fabric.

Once again, before the thought registered, my body reacted as my wings shot out strong. The power behind the sudden action

was so great, it nearly sent every object close by flying to the sides.

I gasped in amazement. My wings felt heavy and looked hard as steel. However, they were no longer the same either, something had changed.

Ryze cawed, and I twisted, dropping the shirt as my eyes zeroed in on the open window. I don't have to think or voice my

intentions when my wings close around me. My body bolts forward on instinct as I torpedo out of the window right before the wings open.

The feeling is indescribable. The wings are strong and powerful, effortlessly hovering my body in the air. I could be wrong, but I

felt as if this was just another time I could fly and watch over the world.

Spark screeches high above me before shooting down toward me. I glance over my shoulder just when Ryze zips out of the window I just came from.

My wings beat a few powerful fl*ps, thrusting me higher when Spark's massive body swooped beneath me and up. My legs opened as I dropped onto his back. I didn't have to think or plan anything, Spark felt me, he knew me, and perfectly complimented me. There was no better and more trustworthy ally than him and Ryze.

"Take me to them," I told Spark, brushing my fingers through his feathers. Feeling him under my weight, under my palms, calmed me. Just a little, but for a moment, I felt as if everything was going to be alright.

The loud, deafening screech that left Spark broke the short, momentary trance. My phoenixes mimicked the sound as my army headed for the city.

We were a force to be reckoned with, and if my mates had a problem with that, they could voice everything after I saved them from the very mess they created.

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Read Taming Darkness By Jessica Hall Book 3
Chapter 11 – Tobias POV

I sailed through the air and landed heavily on the other side, my weight leaving an imprint in the dirt. Only a few of the hunters glanced away from their prey, the rest of them didn't pay me any attention, as if I was no threat. What they didn't know was that the way they scoffed at me only lights up the fire inside me more. Their indifference added fuel to my anger, setting off a violent inferno of flames, ready to break free and turn everything to ashes. They were underestimating me, I wouldn't let that go unpunished. I would be damned if I ever allowed those fools to believe they were better than me, that I was no match to them. The power hunter on my left pointed at me, and a spiral of fire shot out of their outstretched hand. They can't be thinking I didn't see this coming. Although many might get scared by the sudden attack, it was nothing compared to the fire that raged through me. There's no way I was going to let this go their way. All of them were going to be stopped. One by one, until there were no power hunters left. They had no idea what was coming for them. They didn't suspect that their egos already dug their graves long before they decided to start this war.

The power hunters might have had the advantage of masses, but they forgot a very vital detail – Darius wasn't trapped in here with them, it was the other way around. They were trapped here with Darius. Their shield on this place will be their undoing, only fools lock themselves in a cage with a predator. They had the misfortune of being in here with Darius. He was them apart one by one. And judging by the crazed frenzied madness I felt writhing through him, he intended to do just that.

The hunters' fire hit me, but my own flames surged out and absorbed the weak ones. "Like this," I instructed before holding my hand out in a mockery of their attack.

My flames poured out and covered the hunter, bathing him in a blanket of raging fire that he couldn't escape from. His shrieks got higher and higher as he batted at his body.

The view was so magnificent, I was sure only gods would be worthy of waiting upon the pain and misery of this fool. But this is the outcome he chose, the consequences he brought on himself for the vile crimes all of them committed.

I pried my eyes away from the hunter and glanced over my shoulder to check on Kalen, but he flashed out of my view as he tried to find another way across.

Another group of hunters approached me, but this time flames weren't the only thing they were bringing. Tendrils of lightning flit through the group, and cold, heartless eyes glittered at me from more than one face.

I suppose they finally noticed me and decided to bring in the big guns. And to think all it took was to burn one of their friends.

While the hunters approached me at a slow but threatening pace, I quickly scanned my surroundings.

Across the way, Darius was also surrounded. A loud, infuriated growl formed in my chest. I stopped the sound before it could leave me, trapping the proof of my anger in my throat.

I knew we were risking a lot when we went after Darius, but now that I saw just how outnumbered we were, I wanted to finish this fight before it started.

I had to do anything to ensure my mates survived. And to my absolute displeasure, this would be a little more difficult than I thought it would be.

Now we just had to hope Aleera's Phoenixes could break this damn dome to help us. If not, we might have finally just met our end.

And if they keep up with this pace, our end won't be too far off.

Darius POV

I underestimated them. We all underestimated them. We thought we had seen the masses of power hunters in this organization, but we were so wrong. Who would have thought that there were so many more hiding in the shadows, avoiding the eyes of their enemies, and waiting for the right moment to strike?

I knew the power hunters had an army, but that wasn't a big enough word to describe how many there were. Hundreds or thousands more than I assumed. I couldn't be sure as they stood in rows so far away, there was no chance for anyone to notice the end of the army.

And worst of all, I knew I just got not only myself killed, but my mates. The rage I felt when I felt them break through the shield placed over this place was palpable.

I was willing to die, willing to die to keep them safe, yet they followed me. Yet I was baffled how, and now I was fighting to keep

them alive long enough to find them a way out of this city.

The group of hunters surrounded me, and I studied each of them, searching for that particular b*tch. The one I wanted to pull apart piece by piece and let my powers consume the remains. The one who had enough gall to go against me and the ones I love.

The one that had dared to bring harm to my mates. If he believed I wouldn't seek revenge against someone who thought it was a good idea to put my mates at risk, he was so f**king wrong, the entire world laughs at him.

A bulky power hunter approached me, twisting his neck back and forth until it cracked. I raised a brow. Was this their grand idea?

Were they going to come at me one at a time? Or was this a feeble attempt to intimidate me? To scare me so much that I would run away from this place and hide somewhere far, far away? B*tch, please.

"Oh, don't worry," the hunter announced, cracking his knuckles. "I

asked to go one on one with you. I've always wanted to see what kind of blood your kind has in your hellish veins."

I still couldn't believe they were underestimating me to this degree. Did they have a death wish, or had their egos destroyed the remains of their brain cells? It's hard to believe that someone could lack the basic survival instincts and be this happy about that.

"And what do I get from going on this little d*ck-measuring contest of yours? Though, have no doubt, I can assure you mine is way bigger." I stared right into his eyes as I spoke. I didn't need to try to intimidate this guy or try to appear better than him. At this point, I knew I was better. And for the record, my d*ck is definitely bigger than his.

He laughed at me. "I doubt that. As for why you should fight me? Aren't you looking for a certain someone in our ranks?"

I snorted. "And you're telling me you can magically produce her?"

The man flashed me a wide smile with his cracked and warped teeth, making it obvious he was not a Vampiric-Fae. It's beyond me how this fool could be so confident in his abilities. Did he really think he could beat me?

"She's the one that trained me. Fight me hand -to-hand, first one to plead for mercy loses. I win, I get to cut your fingers off one by one, and if you win I'll summon the

woman you're waiting for." He chuckled.

At least now I know for that he is not only ugly, but lacks brain power, has major complexes about his d*ck size, flaunts the skills he doesn't have, and on top of it all – his sense of humor sucks a*s.

"Though, that only means you'll get to fight her and her elite guard, not exactly the best reward, but hey if you want her here, it's the easiest way.

She's watching tis right now."

Did I believe him? I didn't matter if he did or not.

I will take them all on one by one if I have to. In order to get to her, I will crawl to hell and back and grin like a fool to show everyone how happy I am about meeting her death. I won't let her get away with the atrocities she has committed. Her life is mine. "Whatever," I grumbled, rolling my eyes. This guy looked like a blockhead, I doubt he could cause half as much trouble as he claimed.

"Good choice," he grinned at me again. "Name's Terry, thought you should know before I take you apart."

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Darius POV

As the words left his lips, he lunged at me with one arm held up like a boxer and the other he jabbed at my forehead. Instead of merely dodging, I stepped in and twisted beside the attack before bringing my leg up and kicking Terry straight in his jaw.

The impact was so strong his teeth clashed together, and I had no doubt he lost more than a few as a result.

I didn't have to wonder for long, as the proof was right before my eyes the next moment. One of his green splintered teeth dropped to the ground, and he held up a hand to his lips to stop the blood from dripping. "Lucky. Shot." He sneered.

I barely held back the urge to roll my eyes at his statement and rage. Had he forgotten that I am a Wraith? That name doesn't instill fear for no reason.

For all his bulk, Terry wasn't very good at actual fighting. At best, he made me feel more like I was thrown into a ring with a child.

Or a child who couldn't swim and was chucked in the deep end of a pool for the flailing he did.

Terry got back to his senses and tried to strike at me again, this time a body blow with his other fist still protecting his face.

I stepped in quick, swaying to the side to avoid the blow, and struck two times in quick succession at his chest. The grunts that left him each time reminded me more of pained cries from an animal than anything remotely close to human beings. No wonder I didn't feel any pity for this shithead. Besides, god-damn it, for all his talk, I half expected a challenge. I was growing bored already. Did this guy even suspect that I could predict every move he was about to take? Every next damn attempt to attack me? So much for taking me apart, someone clearly was very bad at keeping his promises. Terry made a strangled gurgle and stumbled backward, bringing his fists back up. Using a technique Lycus taught me, I struck from above, driving my fist down on the bridge of Terry's nose. Blood spurted like a sprinkler, but I gave it no time before I took my other hand and repeated the action until Terry was squealing like a pig. Blood poured down his face." Cheater!" Terry growled. His face became so red that now he not only sounded like a pig, but also looked like one.

He thrust his fist at me, a shower of ice radiated from him, and it struck me in the chest. My eyes traveled down my body as the ice spread across my body, traveling from my heart all the way to my toes.

It lasted for mere seconds as I summoned my flames. The flames from my hands were enough to melt the thin ice shell Terry managed to create.

Again, I had no idea where this guy found the insane confidence he had. He was shit at fist fights, even one he wanted himself, and the abilities were below average.

“Enough!” A loud voice boomed across the battlefield, stopping us all in our tracks.

Terry froze and took a step back, as if creating any distance might help his case, as my head snapped to the side and I spotted her. She was standing on a nearby roof.

First, obviously, I noticed her, but when my eyes traveled lower, I noticed that she had someone in front of her, forced to his knees.

Instead of fear, rage burned through me, fueling the insane anger and the need to get my hands on her. How dare that bitch think she could get away with something so brazen.

Kalen was at her feet with a heavy chain around his neck as if he was a pet. Holding the end of the chain was the Queen Bitch herself; Aleera's mother.

"If you're smart, you will give up now," she called out to me.

Was that all she could think of? Her grand, impressive plan? To capture one of my mates to stop me and save herself from the clutches of death?

I would be damned if I ever let her get away that easily. Unharmed, at that. No, she was getting everything that was coming her way, so I shook my head and stared straight into her eyes when I spoke. "That was my line, but giving up won't save your life. It

will just mean how slow or how fast you die, bitch."

"Maybe you don't see this mate of yours I've captured?" She taunted me as she grabbed a fistful of Kalen's hair and pulled his head back. "Wouldn't you hate to bring this young man pain? Go ahead, tell him how close to nothing this man means to you."

As soon as we get out of this mess, I will kick Kalen's ass for getting caught so easily.

Acting as if I didn't care was hard, but I still waved my hand at her and grinned. "Go ahead, I'll slice through your little hunter

army and come straight for you. Then, I will pull that twisted heart out of your chest and crush it.”

She clicked her tongue at me and golden light sparkled in her hand.” Remember, this is on you, Darius,” she spat my name.

I grunted, and the light glow brighter. It danced up and down the chain. Kalen hissed as the first wave of pain flowed through him

from the chain, but to his credit, he didn’t scream.

“Stop!” A new voice ripped through the air, and I turned to the side to see Tobias carving his way through a group of hunters.

There had to be twenty or so men, but they were no match for him. He grabbed one by the throat and bit them before tossing

them out of the way like they were rubbish.

I had forgotten how powerful Tobias was. He dealt with the danger with ease, and even now that we had an entire army standing against us, he went through them like the hunters were paper he shredded.

I didn’t need all of them here. Why couldn’t they listen to me for once and let me fight my own battles without them? Some things

couldn’t be fixed just because they were at my side.

I could handle this on my own, they should have stayed with Aleera.

The queen bitch released another burst of energy straight into Kalen. We watched how our mate's body jerked back and forth, but no sounds emerged from him. That little fact alone was pissing Aleera's mother off. She wanted his screams, his cries and his agony. She wanted for him to put up a show for us. It was her last attempt to prove she was better than us, that she would always find a way to hurt us. And because of her selfish, sick needs, more and more power flowed down the chains, but our mate somehow kept his cries internal. I could feel his agony, feel his need to scream, yet he held it. Kalen was determined to refuse that bitch the satisfaction of hearing his pain.

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Chapter 138

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“Really guys? You couldn’t handle this without me?”

Lycus entered the battlefield from the other side. He kept grumbling

something as he swiped a hand at his dripping wet bangs. Then, he scanned our surroundings and sighed. “Tobias, you better still have my shorts. Those are my current favorite, and I’m not okay with losing anymore.”

Only Lycus was crazy enough to join in on an actual battle while completely nude. On the bright side of the situation, he was distracting some of the female power hunters that had stopped focusing on Tobias and turned their gazes to him.

At one point, I caught one of them even fanning herself while staring at my mate. I shook my head and chuckled as pride surged through me. Even in the midst of battle, he still had bitches swooning over him.

“This is a disgrace!” Aleera’s mom spat over the whispers and murmurs around us.

Yet another wave of flames surged down the chain along with the electricity. I held my breath as I noticed that the chain had turned dark red from all the heat flowing into it. “Give up, or I’ll kill him!” She screamed again.

Perhaps giving up was the thing a wise man would choose to do, but I knew myself and my mates. We knew no surrender and sure as fuck didn’t want to let her go. Not now, not ever. Not after she pulled my mates into this mess and hurt Kalen.

Instead of submitting, we all attacked from our different spots. Tobias burned another group of hunters to dust, Lycus blasted

through another with well-timed punches and dodges, and I strode forward.

I kept my eyes zeroed in on my target. The bitch had to be watching my every move, because I didn't get much further when she decided to speak again.

"That's it!" She screamed as we blew through all the obstacles she threw at us. "It's obvious our organization can't stop you now.

Hunters of this level won't be enough, but this isn't all we have. Did you really think a group that's been around as long as us would be taken out so easily?" A smug, disgusting smirk spread across her lips.

She snapped her fingers and pointed at me. "Bring his head to me." She barked out the order as the others backed away, moving to the edges.

I didn't move a muscle, wondering what her so-called next test would be. While it pissed me off that the power hunters

underestimated my abilities and the threat I brought, I sort of pushed my own fist down my throat here.

I didn't consider what a hurt ego might do, how far it could push the person to go. And given that I was facing the biggest bitch in

this universe, I had to know that her pride would push her into her grave.

My attention jerked away from the Bitch, as portals shimmered to life all around me, and more hunters flowed through. I was not sure how they managed to do this, but they surged into the area, filling it up with more hunters than I could count. It was now obvious portaling in was doable, just not leaving the same way.

Fuck me sideways and call me a school boy because I was sure I was able to count at least another hundred, but there were more fleas than I could notice.

These weren't the pawn level of hunters we first went against. They weren't even the same level as Terry, no, these were strong warriors that would push all of us to our limits.

Finally, a real fucking challenge for me and my mates. If those morons thought we weren't a match for them earlier, now they would see how great of a power we could be.

"Give up and let me take your head," she snarls at me again, as if her repeating herself all the time would ever convince me.

Hasn't she understood that I refuse to give in? That I refuse to let her have her way?

She tugged on the chain that was still wrapped tightly around her fist. Kalen's entire body was smoking, but even now, defiance glittered in his eyes. Despite the pain and suffering she forced on him, my mate still refused to give in and let the bitch hear just how much damage she was causing. His snarls and screams would do nothing but fuel her greed for power. She had to understand that no one was willing to give up to the one that had done so much damage. A pillar of fire surrounded the area that Tobias was trapped in, but it was sucked away in front of my eyes by a funnel of wind coming from one of the hunters. He tried to dart through them using his advanced speed, but a hunter grabbed him by the back of the neck and threw him to the hard ground. These weren't typical Dark-Fae. Some reminded me of those unfortunate souls experimented on when I was a child, altered by my DNA. I thought they were destroyed along with any evidence that the place ever existed, apparently not. And though I had the proof right before my eyes, I still struggled to understand how that was possible.

I knew the bitch was crazy. She had lost her mind a long time ago and all she knew now was the intense lust for more power.

But I had no idea she would stoop this low. Did she have any idea what she had done?

This war wasn't about anything but her anymore. It was her attempt to prove the world that she stood above everyone and there was no greater force than her. She better step aside because no matter how hard she tried to push us down, we would keep fighting till our last breath. She will get what she deserves from the ones she wronged and hurt the most.

My initial shock wore off as Tobias sprung back up, but the hunter with the wind flung it at him, and he was forced to the ground like the element had become heavy weighted cuffs of air. One of the hunters kneeled on his chest, and Tobias growled like a cornered beast.

Sharp pain spread though my chest. It wasn't only the pain we shared though the bond that bothered me – it was the view. It was the fact that I stood aside and watched my mate getting hurt. She wanted it. The bitch would do anything to hurt us, no matter how far she had to go with her sick ideas.

“Damn it!” Lycus snarled. He was battered and bruised by the countless hunters by this time, but now he had a group of the elites surrounding him. Magic sparkled all around him, like they were containing him in a barrier. As powerful as these hunters might have been, they had no idea what was coming for them. The beast inside my mate was sleeping, he wasn’t dead, and now, they released it. Lycus snarled and dropped to the ground. He shifted with cracks and snaps as his bones relocated, and fur replaced skin. His paws and claws replaced hands, canines protruding as he morphed into the beast he truly was. An animalistic snarl left him as his lips pulled back over sharp teeth.

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Chapter 14 – Darius POV

He darted in without hesitation, but there was something different, and started tearing them limb from limb. Yet it became apparent that we missed something because these new Power hunters. Dead by his claws and teeth, missing limbs and blood drenching him were something more than power hunters. Because one by one they started rebuilding themselves, putting

themselves back together. Limbs stitching back together. Like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, they put the part of themselves back together again.

“What the f*ck!” I curse in disbelief. Lycus stops and shakes his head with a growl like he can’t believe what he is witnessing. The

hunters form a circle around him closing him in and the power that flowed out of them, caged him until his body is pressed close

to the ground, or he’ll be burned by a dome of fire.

He snarls, but there’s nothing he can do.

Kalen grunts as yet another attack is driven through his body. “I’m tired of this,” she grabs him by his chain and flings his body off

the side of the roof. He free-falls and the chain jerks taut as he reaches the end of it and the b*tch tries to hang him.

My powers fly through the air, they crackle around me as I fight my way through the hunters. Kalen’s limp form dangles above

me, but I don’t reach for him. I jump high into the air and land beside her. She’s startled and drops the chain’s end, letting Kalen’s

body crash to the hard ground below.

I waste no time in stalking forward. There’s nothing she can do to stop me.

“Take one more step, and I’ll blow your mate’s head off,” she sneers at me, holding up a small red button.

“That chain is special in more ways than one.”

I pause. The power flowing through his body I had no doubt he could take, but having his head removed? That was a bit more extreme. That would require more than a little stitching and help from the shadows to return him to Necromancy I had no issue dabbling in, but even it had its limits.

She laughs and struts forward, a long jagged knife in her hands. Its wicked edge glints with the light. On your knees, Darius,” she commands.

Tobias grunts, forcing my attention to him. One of the hunters has a knife of their own and is slicing into him, cut after cut. Lycus is burning alive, the fire is too much for him in such a tight area, and Kalen is still a battered heap at the bottom of the wall.

F*ck! My mind frantically searches for a way out of this, but my mate’s lives were at stake. I came here willing to die, but I am not willing to sacrifice my mates.

I drop to my knees, and she brings the knife to my neck, running the tip from one side to the other with the barest of pressures

and creating a thin ribbon of blood. I close my eyes, reading myself for death, praying mine will be all she decides to take.

One breath, two, three I take in waiting for it.

However, a high pitched screech steals our attention and my eyes open and we

both look up as a phoenix desperately throws its body into the shield, only to bounce off.

The b*tch laughs, the sound of it enough to beat against my ears. I wish I could throw her off this building, but I can't risk their

death. She returns the knife to the place she had put it before and smiled against the side of my face.

"Goodbye, Darius, go to hell where you belong."

She's right. I do believe in hell, i deserve to be embraced by its flames and for my soul to be devoured. I close my eyes and let my body relax as I wait for the sweet release of death,

Each breath I take, waiting for it to come when the Phoenix hits the shield again, followed by another. "

That's impossible," she

murmurs, and I hear her stagger back. My eyes snap open to see the sky outside the dome burning orange.

The shield cracked, fracturing like glass with each jolt. Each hairline crack growing larger than the largest as the Phoenixes torpedo the shield, like a meteor shower, when I hear her scream.

Then feel her burning anger, making me look to the center of the circling Phoenixes as they dropped one by one, bringing assaults down on the shield imprisoning us. Aleera hovered in the air, her anger so violent, so consuming, I am stunned as she looks at the shield encasing us when suddenly she screams.

Her Phoenixes caw a mighty scream along with her as flames erupt from their beaks, blasting the shield, and engulfing it in flames. I lose sight of her, but not for long because her fury turns white-hot, and she suddenly burned brighter than the stars as she dove straight into the flames.

Her wings closing in around her and I gasp as she free-falls through the flames and crashes straight through the shield. The blast of power that emitted from her when she did was like a shock wave, burning hot air blasting us and knocking me on my back, the ground rumbles.

I sit up just in time to witness the Fae below scattering like ants. Most only got out of her way just in time as she hits the ground.

The force in which she hit the ground created a crater. One so deep she disappeared. I crawl to the edge, peering down at it, when lava bubbles and spews out of it. I choke. Too much power, too much power for anyone to withstand.

“No!” Tobias screams seeing the lava engulf her, he screams the words my screamed, The same ones her mother did.

“Aleera!” Kalen screams only to be shocked by the device. Tense seconds pass, my heart thudding so hard it drowns out all other noise. Tears prick my eyes and her Phoenixes circle above chirping in song when I see the violent lava erupting and spewing out, eating away the edges of the crater. Then it stopped, rippled, and silence fell over everyone.

It was as if time stopped, the lava calms turning placid like the stillest lake.

I hold my breath until she casually walks out, the Lava and flames do not burn her. Like an avenging angel from the pits of hell, she took center stage, her eyes locked on her mother. And damn was she furious.

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Her wings spread wide, burning as brightly as the lava she walked on Yet when her lips parted on a scream, the sound matched that of her Phoenixes.

It erupted out of her, shattering the windows on the building where I stood. The sound was so powerful, even the ground below me shook like an earthquake. I had no idea a scream could be as impressive, all-consuming and destructive.

Our mate, she truly was a thing of beauty, grace and unseen dominance. She was a force to be reckoned with, and honestly, g*d should stand by those who ever dared to doubt her. Whoever had a gall to think of Aleera as less than she truly was, was in for a massive surprise. And pain. A lot of pain.

I could describe her scream as the sound of chaos and destruction. It roared, tore out of her, as if the process hurt her. Those sounds grew louder when she lifted her hands. The lava spewed out and morphed into snakes, slivering out of the crater. The snakes instantly attacked, hunting their prey, just

as her Phoenixes dived to help pick them off.
Aleera's magic was unimaginable. It was powerful
and strong, twisted and wicked, yet insanely
beautiful. I couldn't find better
words or ways to describe everything I was
witnessing happening before my eyes. I never dared
to go as far as to assume that
something like this might be possible.
Her mother screamed for her minions to grab Aleera.
A wicked smirk spread across my lips once I noticed
what was happening
right before the command. The minions were
hesitant at first to do her bidding, yet once their true
nature shone through, the
morons were eager to steal her magic.
Aleera moved almost as if she was dancing, so light
on her feet. She looked graceful with each precise
move. She managed to
create a performance as she showed off her skills,
flaunted her magic in front of those who were
unworthy of ever holding so
much power in their hands.
Watching her, one would think she had trained all
her life in combat. Assume that battles and wars
were all Aleera ever had
known. But it was instinct and intuitive sight as she
anticipated their every move. Once she gave into the
primal instinct of her

nature, of her magic, the power hunters were no match for her.

One by one, Aleera cut them down. Every hunter that tried their luck to go against our beautiful mate went down before they could get close enough to hurt her. Her wings were sharper than any sword and one of her biggest weapons. They cut and slashed through skin and flesh, leaving clean, deadly wounds.

Our Aleera. My Aleera looked like the angel of death. She was magnificent, indescribable and so, so unreal. After all the vile things I had committed over my lifetime, I still couldn't believe she was mine.

Yet, as much as I loved to admire my mate, her combat skills, and her magic, I couldn't stand aside like a fool. We were in the epicenter of a war and my mates, all of them, needed me to survive just as much as I needed them.

Just as I tore my gaze away from Aleera, Lidia turned her attention to the fight. Finally, her hand clutching the knife fell from my neck as she screeched at her men for them to grab her.

I moved quickly, sweeping her legs out from under her. The blade went flying from her hand as she hit the ground.

Getting to my feet, I went to grab her when she lifted her hand, blinding me with blue light. I knew that b*tch didn't play a fair game. She found an easy exit for everything, no matter what it took, so I should have seen her next move.

My eyes became scorched, and I was temporarily blinded when I felt her foot connect with my stomach. All of a sudden, I was falling.

Wind rushed past me when I heard her whistle. The sound was as loud as a siren call, to which I turned and tossed my hands out to open a portal.

Just as I thought I was doing something, Ryze swooped below me and then past, her talons sunk into my arm as she flapped with all her might to slow my fall.

Insane laughter rang through the air as my feet touched the ground.

Ryze screeched loudly, her wings, skimming my face as she shot off in the direction of Aleera.

I ran for her too, Aleera needed me, she needed all the help she could get. F***k! This was my battle to begin with, and now, all

my mates were involved. If any of them got hurt because of me, I couldn't forgive myself. Ever. From the corner of my eye, I noticed that Aleera's mother had opened a portal and now stood on the council stairs.

Aleera, however, was too busy fighting the man who had Kalen's leash in his fist. I cursed under my breath once I noticed that

Kalen's face was turning purple. The g*ddamn leash was caught around a pole as he fought not to let go.

Time slowed, and my eyes widened when I saw Lidia raise the remote in her hand. She didn't hesitate to push one of the

buttons, which in result jolted Kalen. The purple shade of his face turned into deep red, the pain traveled through the bond, nearly forcing me down to my knees.

Just in time, Aleera pivoted her wings, slicing the leash the man held. Finally, Kalen was released. He instantly sucked in a

breath and gasped for more, as if he was starved of one for centuries.

Kalen hit the ground in a heap, and my breath lodged in my throat as I saw him scramble to try to undo it. Just as, Aleera's mother raised her hand, clutching the remote once again.

My heart slowed before it started pumping erratically. I almost screamed when I noticed that Lycus was racing in Lidia's direction.

I knew he wanted to stop that b*tch as much as I wanted to, but his decision was outrageously dangerous.

So many things were happening around us that I only heard a sickening slashing sound. I didn't realize what had happened until blood spatter hit my face. I blinked as I watched Aleera's wings slice the man in half.

A second after the leftovers of the man hit the ground, her wings flexed. Feathers as sharp as razors

and as strong as steel flew off her as she turned, coated in blood. One hard feather slashed my cheek as it passed by me. The feather heading in the direction of her mother while more sliced our enemies.

However, it didn't hit her, but the remote in her hand just as she hit the button. Lycus howled, and I screamed as her feather cut through it.

My eyes widened in horror, moving to Kalen just as he unclipped the collar, tossing it aside. I waited for the explosion, but it didn't

come. Lycus' body crashed into Lidia, and he started tearing into her, only to be blasted with power. The loud ringing of her magic made me clutch my ears.

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