Chapter 141 fl

## **Tasting Darkness**

Chapter 141

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Read Taming Darkness By Jessica Hall Book 3 Chapter 16 – Darius POV

Since Lycus' hearing was far more sensitive, he shrieked. I couldn't look away as his claws tore at his head. Tobias wailed,

covering his own.

Although we were in the same situation, in the heat of the moment, I couldn't understand where to go or what to do. I needed

them safe, all of them, but where was I supposed to go first?

Lidia snarled, getting to her feet. She straightened her body and clutched her neck where Lycus teeth got her, a sheer look of

disgust crossed her face.

Lycus' cries of agony forced his shift, leaving him naked and clutching his head in his hands.

Lidia casually walked down the stairs, unfazed by the chaos surrounding her. Aleera stopped, seeing the strange look on her mother's face and the way everyone suddenly backed up.

"You dare betray me," Aleera snarled at her mother. Her lava snakes slivered behind her as she faced her mother. If we had

more time on our hands, I would gladly stand aside and admire the beauty of Aleera's newfound, destructive power as she

harnessed the shadows, morphed and tamed the darkness that was now writhing through her.

Lidia's loud, screeching laughter caught my attention. I snapped my head in her direction just as she spoke up. "You silly girl, all

you had to do was come to me. None of this was necessary," Lidia chipped back at her.

Although I didn't know what to expect, of all the things, I was more worried about the way Lidia's mutated monsters were backing

away. "Aleera!" I called her name, my voice sent a jolt up her spine as she turned her head briefly in my direction.

Slowly, as if not to be noticed moving, Tobias also backed up, joining me in the center. He kept clutching Kalen close to him,

refusing to let go.

Lycus was still on the stairs, gasping for breaths. Finally, Aleera noticed the strangeness of their behavior. She had to understand something was terribly wrong if her mother's minions backed away as if the whole area was dangerous. No, the looks on their faces said so much more – this place wasn't just dangerous, it was deadly, and we were in the epicenter of

a trap.

"Your father worked too hard for this to be for nothing," Lidia spat at Aleera. It took a brief moment until I noticed her mutation

Fae lift their hands. Then, the next moment, I finally realized what she was doing – they backed away to get to their assigned

places. The minions didn't try to save their lives, they were changing their positioning

Lidia got us right where she needed us, right where she wanted us to be. We were standing in a

pentagram as the ground

shook. My eyes scanned our enemies as each one retrieved something from their pocket. Now, I finally understood why they

domed us into this exact location.

They tossed the crystals at the ground, letting them shatter before using their magic. They blasted the broken crystals, making

them grow in size.

Crystalline pillars raised from the ground. I didn't risk tearing my eyes away from everything around us, but the more I watched

over their actions, the more I wondered for how long this had been planned.

A sharp, loud gasp escaped me when I noticed the Onyx, Peridot, and Smoky Quartz Towers growing larger, surrounding us.

The crystals grew tall, zapping a barrier from each one. Crystal couldn't do much to general Fae, but to Demonic-Fae, they could

immobilize us. They could stop us from trying to stop that evil witch.

Another gasp passed my lips as I watched each tower light up. Almost no time had passed since the crystal towers appeared

around us, but I could already feel how they affected my magic.

I turned to try to warn them, and Aleera's eyes noticed them too. She knew, just as good as I did, what was about to happen, and

my lips parted in shock.

Aleera POV

As the towers rose, I could feel them drawing my energy. But the greed of the crystals didn't stop there, it clutched onto the

magic of my mates.

Darius turned to look at me. I could feel that he wanted to warn me, but when our eyes met, he knew that we were thinking about the same thing. I focused my gaze back on the towers rising from the shards. Each of them zapped the next as it created a barrier. A barrier I

was trapped inside- inside a perfectly created fence that held me contained until the owner decided to release me.

My Phoenixes started attacking the creatures, pouring their magic into the towers. I wasn't sure what they were, but it was

obvious they were once Fae, but now something else. The creatures didn't react to the constant attacks. Their eyes were glazed

over, as if in a trance-like state. They weren't in control anymore. It was my mother, she held them hostage.

"Run!" Darius gasped as we watched power surge to the last Crystal Tower. That was the last key which would seal us in. The

power of my mates was already immobilized, yet mine flexed at the challenge.

Especially the shadow snakes. I could feel them slide over my skin, slowly taking their places and gladly hissing at the danger

heading towards us as they fed power into me. I couldn't be sure, but it felt as if the cold-blooded creatures were glad to test their

strength, test my magic.

My eyes turned to Kalen as he raced toward me. "I'm not running this time, I would never run from you," I tell him, feeling my

magic surge down my arms.

We would not make it out of this pentagram. The only doorway out was closing in. Darius started running at me too as if they

both believed they could scare me into running away or just force me out of this battle.

I wouldn't let them be trapped here with me. My mates might think otherwise, but I knew she wanted me here. She needed me to

be trapped inside here.

So I flicked my wrist, opening a portal. Their eyes widened when a sad smile spread across my lips. I was doing the right thing, I

knew I was. I blasted my mates with wind. My Phoenixes screeched their song as my mates were blasted backward.

Darius screamed, his power surged to attack mine, but he was no match for me anymore. "Aleera, no!" Tobias screamed as he

was tossed into the portal back to Astrid. Lycus snarled, clawing at the ground as I threw him through, leaving Darius.

"I forgive you, but it's about time you forgave yourself," I whispered, addressing Darius, blasting him with every ounce I had left.

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Chapter 142

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## **Tasting Darkness**

Chapter 142

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Read Taming Darkness By Jessica Hall Book 3 Chapter 17 – Aleera POV

Darius' screams of despair broke my heart as he was forced out of the pentagram, his body hurled through the air to the safety of

my portal. I felt like I could break down in tears, yet was unsure if it was because of the relief that they were safe, or despair for

possibly losing them.

The portal shut, just as the last tower was charged, and I was smashed with electricity. It traveled through my body with such

force, I didn't have enough time to register if I felt any pain.

My knees went out from under me, hitting the hard ground along with my hands as I was propelled forward. I tried to get up, to

fight

the force that held me down, but each attempt ended with the same scenario – a helpless dead end. I was wasting the little energy left in my body.

The energy emanating from the towers slowly drained me of power, immobilizing it. I gritted my teeth and ignored the pain that

slowly spread though my body as I lifted my head. My eyes found her within a second, and I made it a point to glare at my

mother.

I forced all hatred I had for that woman into my gaze, but even that didn't feel like enough. There was no living person I could

ever hate more than her. And yet, as unfazed as ever, she casually strolled down the stairs toward me.

Her feet stopped next to my face. I expected a blow, a show of power and superiority, but instead, she circled around me. "Your

father's death won't be in vain."

An amused giggle escaped me at her words. "You have no idea what you have just done," I growled at her.

"See, now that is where you are wrong. I know exactly what I am doing, Aleera. Who do you think came up with the plague?" she

murmured, crouching beside me. I didn't want her so near me, if anything, I wanted her as far from me as possible, or better yet,

dead.

She gripped my chin, forcing me to meet her gaze. As my eyes looked into hers, I couldn't believe this was the same woman who had given birth to me. The same woman I once called my mother.

Her eyes no longer resembled my mother's. That part in her had died a long time ago. Buried so deep inside the leftover shell of

a person that no attempts would ever bring back even half of the mother she could have become. Now, she was nothing but a monster. A woman responsible for so much carnage.

I refused to show her how hurt I was. Not after what she did, but for what she had lost and robbed me of. A wicked smile spread

across her lips, as if she could read my thoughts. She pressed her fingers deeper into my skin, nearly breaking the skin and drawing blood. "I did," she whispered.

Although I suspected that there had to be more to the plague than I knew, a part of me refused to think someone close to me had

a hand at its creation. My father, yes, he had lost his mind, but her?

I could feel nothing but disgust, everything else faded, but she just laughed as I tried to jerk my face out of her grip. "Xandrius

took everything from me, and once I am done, I will return the favor when I kill his son." My brows furrowed at her evil promise. "Silly girl, you still don't understand," she murmurs, letting me go.

My gaze followed her as she straightened her body and opened a portal before nodding to someone. Hands suddenly grabbed

me when I felt my power immobilized completely as something was clamped on both wrists.

More crystals were hanging from the gold cuffs, entwined with magic I knew was hers. My wings folded in and disappeared

under my skin. The shadows retreated once again, leaving me powerless.

I felt exposed, naked, and vulnerable. The one thing I never wanted to feel just washed over me all at once, all thanks to the

woman who was supposed to be my mother.

"When I am finished, this world will fall to the true Queen. Our species may be extinct, but not for much longer," she announced,

raising her voice for everyone to

hear. "I will restore the order back to the rightful hands of our ancestors."

"You're crazy, no one will follow you," I spat at her. For how long had she been feeding herself all those delusions?

Was she really that desperate for power to lose any grip on reality she had, to forget how to tell evil and good apart? Or had she

always been like this? Vicious, disgusting and tainted by her greed for power?

"Oh, they will; they will, when they see who has true power," she growled, her eyes flickering down to me as the portal behind her

rippled and shuddered.

I was hauled to my feet, as someone dug their nails into my upper arms. I almost hissed in pain, but before the sound escaped

me, I pressed my lips together to keep the sound in. She won't get the pleasure of hearing my pain.

"And you, girlie," she brought her hand to my cheek and ran her fingers over my skin, making me shudder. "You are the key to it

all, the last of your existence, a harmony. Pure of light and darkness. Our ancestors would be proud that through you, the last of

us will be brought back to power, and not only that. You yield light but also darkness, the first of your kind. But you won't be the last."

I glared at her, wishing I could burn the smug look off her face." What are you talking about?"

She clicked her tongue. "You still have no idea what you are, do you?"

More of her games. Couldn't she speak her mind, share her plans or just talk like everyone else did? Why did she do everything to sound mysterious and important? I shook my head. "Of course, I know what I am. I'm Harmony-Fae."

"No, sweet girl. Why do you think we survived the plague when no one else did?" She asked, cupping my cheek. I jerked my face

away from her. "Your father was pure Dark-Fae, but me – angel. Fae don't have wings. History is wrong, Aleera. Only the

Seraphim do. And you're gonna help get mine back! You may be part Fae, but your wings prove you're so much more, just like I

knew you would be." Her words shocked me. Angels were extinct, and have been for centuries.

"The plague was never created to wipe out the White-Fae, it was created to wipe out Demonic-Fae, They caused our ruin, and

they will pay for it, because now his very DNA is morphed in yours, his magic yours, soon to be mine." She spat, and I was

shoved forward toward the portal before I felt it suck me in, and I was suddenly looking at a place I thought no longer existed.

Home, I watched this place burn to the ground, and yet here it stood, looking exactly the same.

"Welcome home," my mother's voice taunts.

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Chapter 143

## **Tasting Darkness**

Chapter 143

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Read Taming Darkness By Jessica Hall Book 3 Chapter 18 – Aleera

My eyes swept over my surroundings. This could not be what it looked like, she was using my memories against me. I was

desperate to find a weak spot or vulnerability into what could only be an illusion. Though, the harder I looked at it, the more I got

the sense it truly was my home that had been destroyed by fire, plucked out of time itself and given back to me.

There was no way I would trust that. I glanced over at her minions, they followed after her in perfect obedience, but there had to

be some sort of weakness they would display for me to take advantage of.

"You can look all you want, but you're not going to find a way back. You'll never escape me again," she taunted.

I kept my eyes low, avoiding hers, and tried to look like I was shaken about where I'd ended up. Think, Aleera. Maybe there

would be a hidden secret inside the building I could use, since there was nothing out here. My mates had spent years searching

for this place, it had to be the power hunter's lair. I turned my head and watched my mother as she strolled forward. taking in my surroundings she was correct there was nothing out there, I couldn't even see the road leading in anymore, it led to the dead end street amongst the trees. The grass was

overgrown, and this place gave me an eerie feeling. Even the sky looked off, as if we were in some sort of matrix, it appeared to

ripple and morph like looking through a bubble at the sun, it glimmered oddly. Turning my attention back to my mother, I watched

as she talked with some of the power hunters that were standing guard around this place.

I wondered briefly if the power hunters were aware she was just using them, yet by the devoted looks they gave her, it was as if

she was their deity they prayed to, or an altar they worshiped on.

My mother smiles and converses in a tone that sets me on edge, one I realized was reserved for me as a child, she spoke to

them like some loving mother and I watched as she caressed the guard's cheek, manipulating him with soft words and gentle

touches before he rushed off to do as she asked. The man she spoke to went in the direction of the surrounding forest, and suddenly disappeared, making me notice the domelike protection surrounding this place as the shield ripples. No wonder my mates were never able to find her.

They'd sifted through so many clues and witnesses, only to hit one dead end after another. They'd even gone as far as hiring

snitches and paying them off, those most likely to know exactly where this special little piece of hell was, but the results were

always the same.

The men I can see were brainwashed, the power hunters indeed did worship the ground she stood on as we approached the

huge building that was once my home. All coming to speak and touch her while sneering at me as I trudged behind her.

Every forward step of progress my mates made over the years, toward finding the real location, only ended in shoving them

three steps back. They'd been betrayed countless times, while my mother's minions had lured them farther and farther away

from the truth.

All of them had been desperate to unearth the place where the root of all the evil had buried itself. Where it hid, right under our

noses, concealed from the eyes of everyone outside their little members-only organization.

After all the time that has passed, it boggles my mind that she never left. Never would I have considered the possibility, even if

someone had sought me out and explained in great detail, that she was hiding in our home under concealment. Not even that

would have led me to believe the truth. But seeing it now, it was the perfect cover, a place no one would ever suspect.

And yet, here we were. Me and the bitch of a woman who brought me into this hellish world. Never once in all this time had I

ever dreamed of meeting her, this woman who thought she had captured me and was bringing me closer to my end to fuel her

tyrannical reign.

Unbeknownst to her, I wasn't the one that stumbled into a trap, she was. Reason escapes me as to why she would so easily fall

for it in the first place, was it because she had been in hiding for so long, or does she just completely underestimated me? Either

way, she never took into account the plans other people might have. Her oversight worked to my advantage, and I planned to

reap the benefits of her underestimating me and my abilities.

Even the gardens looked the same as we walked through the small track leading to the front porch. I used to play in the gardens,

which were slightly overgrown now. The grass in the garden beds strangled the plants, plants that looked like they were from

another planet, not this one. I wondered how I had never noticed as a child the oddity of them. They were otherworldly.

"Is it how you remember?" my mother asks, motioning around me. It was the same but also different, maybe because I wasn't

looking through the lenses of a child's eyes now. "A little different," I admit, and she smiles softly, and

for a second I almost see the woman I remember from my childhood, until

her lips purse and the glint in her eyes turns sinister. "Your father hated this place when we first moved here. However, I am glad

I managed to convince him." Her words irritated me because I realized my father was just another victim for her to torture. Yet

growing up they seemed devoted and loving toward each other. It made me wonder how much of my childhood was a ruse.

She might have given birth to me long ago, but she was no longer my mother, but a dangerous stranger. She didn't know

anything about me or the lengths I would go to for those that I loved. Nothing could prepare her for what I was willing to do to

protect my mates and strip her of her position and power.

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Chapter 144 fl

# **Tasting Darkness**

Chapter 144

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Read Taming Darkness By Jessica Hall Book 3 Chapter 19 – Thankfully, I have forged my own path and was like neither of my

parents. Both were inherently evil in their own sick and twisted ways, with plans for power and domination. After everything that

had come to light, experiencing what Darius had at the hands of my father, through his memories, and what I had witnessed

firsthand of my mother, I could wholeheartedly say I am a better person than they were, and apparently smarter too.

Maybe she'd been too enamored with the idea that she had finally won against me to even notice the walls of my trap closing in.

She hadn't overpowered me, even if she believed that to be the case, but my only goal had been to get my mate's out. Not only

out of that awful place, but far away from the eyes of my mother. Her hatred for them clouded the reality of what was actually going on. They were her kryptonite, which I would use to my full advantage, keeping her focused where I wanted.

As much as they played a part, it seemed I was enough of a distraction, her grand prize, the main attraction of all the twisted I

things she had worked so hard to accomplish. I was to be the key to everything she had ever wanted to become.

From the moment I'd decided to go after my mother, I was aware I would do whatever it took to ensure the safety of my mates,

even let them think I risked my life for them. It was a small price to pay for the song of revenge that played beneath my breath.

Given the choice of suffering their wrath over having to watch them in agony another moment, it was not one I had to think about.

What she attempted to do to all of them inside that barrier had been enough to cement my decision. I would not be the reason

they lost their lives.

Keeping in the forefront of my mind that my mates were not just Demonic-fae. Tobias was Vampiric fae, Lycus was Were-fae and

Kalen, he was darkness. For these reasons, I had forced each of my mates through that portal and ignored their reactions. My

mother would have killed them without a second thought. Her precious crystal would have drained my power, and we all would

have been immobilized.

If she had succeeded, they would have been temporarily defenceless to her power, which was more than enough time for that

vicious woman to extinguish their lives.

With my plan firmly in place, step one was complete. Although it had been heartbreaking hearing my mates, as I saved them one

at a time, it had been successful. I needed to get caught and taken away from them. I'd allowed my mother to tap into my magic,

as a distraction, so she wouldn't touch theirs. It was risky, that woman's greed knew no bounds, but that worked to my advantage

and I accomplished my first goal.

If my plan had failed, she would have syphoned all their magic, leaving them and me powerless while she slaughtered them,

forcing me to watch as they died.

When it came to me, I understood her plan, but she overlooked an extremely important detail. Her demonic crystals did weaken

me, as she knew they would, but the effect was only temporary.

Even now, my power was slowly creeping back. It filled my being and overrode the shackles she'd constructed to take down a

Demonic -Fae. That dark side of me was gone, it had burned out the moment her crystal towers zapped the power from me. She

immobilized Darius! magic in me, but completely forgot I wielded my own. But although intelligent, my mother kept overlooking

the important little details, like I was a Harmony-Fae. Okay, apparently, according to her, I was Seraphim. Which made zero sense, I wasn't sure if she was trying to trick me with an

obvious lie or if there was more to it. It would be something to figure out later if time permitted. One thing was painfully clear, my

mother kept underestimating me and what I was capable of. It was as if she was stuck in some vicious cycle of self sabotage.

Her sole focus was on how close she was to attaining her heart's desire and everything she had worked towards and ever

wanted. She was blind to my previous actions, my current ones, and how I was acting now. She was so tied up in herself, she

probably wouldn't even notice me falling off a cliff.

For the briefest of moments, I worried she might cotton on to how calm I was, and how I hadn't resisted, tried to fight back, or

didn't spit profanities, at least out loud. I was acting like a model prisoner, not someone who wanted to get away from her.

It was almost laughable, she believed that she was the one who had trapped me. That she could just drain me of my magic and

leave me powerless, an easy target. All of this was so far from the actual truth.

Standing here, being restrained by her minions is all on me and my choices. I needed them to think they were winning this grand

battle. I had given up my freedom in order to put myself in a position to take them all down.

The moment we stepped through the veils and wards that surrounded this place, I felt the shimmer of magic around me and I

realized it wasn't just this place but the land that held power, it was almost supercharged. I didn't have enough left to understand

exactly what it was, but it was some sort of protection or concealment spell and that was also clear how her men moved in and

out of the shields, just disappearing and reappearing elsewhere.

They pushed and shoved me toward the house. The house looked exactly how I remembered it, making my throat dry. My

mother casually walked through the door as if she'd never left, and it made me wonder if she ever did. The magic crackled around me as we went through the door, and the fake outside layer melted away, revealed to be the illusion I

had suspected was there all along. It was nothing but a cover for what this place really was.

I was hot on my mother's heels when I stepped through the door frame and was transported, or maybe just exposed, to what

was no longer my childhood home. She had brought me to her dirty little, or not so little from the look of this place, secret. It was

a massive facility, and I fought to hide the spike of joy that flooded through me.

She'd just led my mates straight to her.

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Chapter 145
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## **Tasting Darkness**

Chapter 145

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Read Taming Darkness By Jessica Hall Book 3 Chapter 20 – Darius

The surrounding air was all I could hear, the whooshing loud, like I stepped inside a hurricane. Yet her final words travelled to me

regardless, almost as if carried on the wind she created. I witnessed the destructive determination on her face, as seconds

slipped by me, before I truly understood the intention behind the look Aleera gave me, I raced toward her, tried to shield her

power, absorb it..

Yet the moment my magic touched her, she siphoned me for every drop, red energy zapped toward the tower, stealing my breath

as I knew I would be powerless within the barrier, when she hit me with so much strength I could no longer hold onto the

miniscule piece of power I had left.

A panicked scream ripped out of me the moment her power blasted me into the damned portal. They rebounded off the crystal

tower, and echoed inside the portal as I was vacuumed back to Astrid Castle, back home and far from her reach. My heart beat

harder as I hit the ground, hand outstretched, as if my sheer will alone could stop the portal closing. I couldn't hold it in.

Why had she done it? None of it made sense, and try as I might, I couldn't fathom why Aleera just handed herself over to them

like she was a gift on a silver platter.

Meeting death while fighting beside her would have been far better than being forced back home. I tried to keep the portal open,

so I could return to her or even just fight to make it bend to my will, but all of my power was gone.

Aleera had completely sucked

it away, so she could overthrow us and throw us back home through the portal.

Home? This place could no longer be labeled that, not without her. Not for me at least, and I was pretty sure it would be the

same for our mates.

"No!" Kalen gasped. He fell to his knees at first, then sprang up, flinging his hand out, trying to scrounge up enough power to

conjure a portal back to her. But just like with my magic, his had been siphoned too.

All of us were powerless. She'd stripped each of us of any real chance we had to get back to her side. Despite knowing that,

Kalen, frantically, continued to pull on any bit of magic he could muster. He succeeded in opening a portal up for half a second.

"Maybe we can drive?" Tobias suggested. There was a dark haunted look in Kalen's eyes that hadn't been there before this

whole mess. A look I hadn't seen in ages, not since Aleera's Phoenixes brought him back to us.

The city was way too far, we all knew it. He was grasping onto anything he could think of that had even the slightest chance of

working. By the time we got there, they would already be long gone. There was no way the wannabe Queen Bitch would give us enough time to get to Aleera and fight for her. She never played fair.

I still couldn't believe Aleera just tossed us aside as if we were unworthy of fighting by her side. She abandoned us, knowing full

well what her mother was capable of.

Kalen slammed his fist into the hard ground. "She promised!" his scream echoed through the room bouncing off the walls, angry

tears streamed down his cheeks. He slammed his other fist down again. "She lied!" Anger was getting the best of him, but I

couldn't blame him. We'd been prepared to lay our lives down to protect her, and she'd shoved us all to the side.

I understood why, though I didn't want to

acknowledge it. Kalen hissed as he grabbed onto his own hair, fisting his hands in it, as

he pulled until the strands were tense in his grip. He jerked his head up to the sky and screamed in

anger, frustration and the

heartache we all felt.

When Kalen had calmed down, I'd explain her reasoning to him. Aleera had sent us away on purpose, it hadn't been a last

minute decision, her actions were calculated. We would find out the reason for her actions, I was sure of it. She tossed us away,

but I knew it was only to save us.

I paced the room, mind focused. Had she given us any hints in the last words she'd said to us? I thought about our last

encounter, replaying every detail. She'd given herself up to save us, her last words, saying she forgave me and I needed to

forgive myself, left me no clues as to what she was thinking. Unless she wasn't sure if she had signed her own death sentence.

Kalen groaned, the sound of a man breaking. "I'm not running this time. I would never run from you," she had told him, and the

words left my lips in a whisper before I could stop myself from repeating her.

She understood how off the rails Kalen would get without her, how the shadows would come and haunt him.

She had lied about that too, come to think of it. It was a flicker of a memory, something buried deep by this point, but I recalled

her words, that if she ever ran away from us, she would take Kalen with her.

Did that mean she had just fed us all these lies? Or was there something else going on that I hadn't understood? A reason for

her actions? What had been going through her head in those moments? Her Phoenixes had still been around at that point, she

could have ordered a full-on attack, she had more than just my magic, more than what those crystals could hold power over.

Everything snapped into place in an instant, the puzzle solving itself as I finally understood. Aleera hadn't been captured, she'd

surrendered, and that changed everything. Now the question was, why had she done it? What was her plan, or was it a last -

second decision? Maybe one made out of desperation?

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