Chapter 146 fl

Tasting Darkness

Chapter 146

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Read Taming Darkness By Jessica Hall Book 3 Chapter 21 – Lycus moved to Kalen's side, his hand ghosting over the others' shoulder. He leaned against him,

trying to pull him away from the darkness that threatened our mate. His depression was heavy like a blanket and was not only suffocating Kalen, but also us.

Without Aleera he was a mess, he needed her to remove the shadows that threatened to overtake him.

Tobias on the other hand had lapsed into silence since we found ourselves back here. Silent and troubled, he was lost to his

thoughts, every bit the same as I was, trying to reason out her plan. Aleera wouldn't have risked abandoning Kalen.

Even if she did have a plan for all this, her actions would still have consequences. She'd forgotten the most important thing about

our unit, without her, there was no us.

If anything happened to her and her plan went wrong... There was no way we could survive her loss, not now when we were all connected to each other and finally complete.

Loud screeching caws echoed close by and my eyes moved to where Tobias stood still staring out the window. Did he not see it?

From his blank, empty stare I figured he was trapped in his own mind, but I did. A flash of bright plumage in this dark hellscape.

Ryze landed on the windowsill. She screeched again at Tobias and almost automatically, he scratched her feathers. She shook

her head and called to him again, but he continued to stare. Ryze screeched angrily before biting him hard enough to make him

jump.

"What is it, girl?" I asked, approaching the pissed off Ryze." Why did you leave her?"

The bird ignored me and when I reached the window my attention was diverted by the training fields.

They were covered in Aleera's Phoenixes, which all peered up at our window.

Kalen looked up as their calls penetrated his prison of darkness. He gasped at the sight of all of them. He moved quickly,

shoving me aside, so he too could stare at all of them. Hope bloomed within him and flagged shortly after. He must have thought that she would have returned with them, but that would be too easy. His hope wilted away as she hadn't made her triumphant

return as he had hoped.

Ryze nudged my hand, nipping at my fingers. She screeched at me, trying to get me to show her my palm. Her feathers ruffled

and she bit me harder. "What?" I snapped.

"Finity," she tried to speak, but the Phoenix still clearly hadn't mastered speech. "Leera," she added, biting my finger again, did it

have to be the same one?

I hissed at the abuse and quickly turned my hand to show her my empty palm. I had no food for her right now. Her tongue flicked

over my wrist, and fresh power surged through my hand as my infinity mark lit up with fiery energy.

The beacon was set off and through the connection,

I felt it. It was a small glimpse, but the bond confirmed that she was alive. I

had my own glimmer of hope. However, she was moving farther away, until she faded away completely.

What? My brows furrowed as I reached out again but there was nothing there anymore. Ryze ruffled her feathers before zapping

me once again with her magic.

The jolt of power danced through me, forcing my muscles to go rigid, but it blessed me with the clarity I so desperately sought.

"We aren't powerless, she sent them home," I mumbled. Her intentions were crystal clear. She wasn't sacrificing herself, she was

leading us to them.

"The Phoenixes," I whispered.

Lycus wandered over to me. He finally had on a pair of shorts. He peered over my shoulder, staring at the legion of magical

birds. "What about them?" He asked, his voice sounding oddly detached compared to what I was used to. He cocked his head,

seeming to think. The cogs were turning in his pretty little head.

A deep chuckle escaped Tobias, and he shook his head as he stared at his glowing red wrist. The surge of power Ryze had

given me, shone on my mates as well. "She sent them home to us," Tobias declared, pushing off the wall beside the window and

snatched his jacket off the couch.

"Where are you going?" Kalen asked as I followed suit.

"To get our mate back, we aren't the only thing bonded to her, she sent them home," I explained to Kalen, with a nod at the birds. Kalen scrambled to his feet and took a step forward, then stopped. He peered back at Ryze and the glimmer of hope from before

bloomed through him. He shook his head as a crooked smile reached his lips. "She was never trapped," the words left him in a

laugh. "She was trapping them," he grinned.

I tossed the door open and Tobias rushed past me and disappeared. Lycus continued to stare obliviously into the distance.

Thank God he was good-looking, it really helped with his sheer lack of brain cells sometimes.

I raised a brow at him, waiting for him to catch on to anything we just said. Kalen was long gone with Tobias. I waited for the

moment the light bulb would go off, and his eyes bled black to that of his beast. "She is leading us to them!" Lycus announced

with a grin, there was so much pride in his voice, I almost felt sorry for breaking his moment of brilliance...

Almost Yet as we made it outside her army awaited their caws loud as they circled like a tornado above, each screech renewing

and sparking determination in each of us, every loud caw lending us power.

We weren't powerless, we had the phoenixes, we had the bond I could feel her feeding us energy through it. I don't know how she had managed it, but I got the distinct feeling telling me she was biding time, searching and looking for something and when she found it, she would call on us. We would be ready when she did.

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Chapter 147

Tasting Darkness

Chapter 147

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Read Taming Darkness By Jessica Hall Book 3 Chapter 22 – Aleera

I was shoved into the facility and stumbled forward a few steps. I used the slack to yank out of their clutches. I couldn't stand the

sensation of their hands touching me. Weren't the cuffs enough? I couldn't use my magic yet, nor could I call for help.

One of the men grabbed my shoulder in a vice grip, his hold tightening around my upper arms. Did they fear me because of the

damage I had done to their fellow minions in the battle? It was smart, but they acted as if I would break free with the little

strength left in me.

I wouldn't have fought back even if I did have some way of doing so. Not when I desperately wanted to know what that vile woman had planned. She'd disclosed just a few tidbits so far, nothing that would give me a means of

shutting her and her power

hunters down for good. I needed more evidence, and I needed to see it with my own eyes.

Besides, right now she was exactly where I wanted her, with all the false bravado to match. I wouldn't risk breaking my cover or

spilling any of my own secrets. I needed her to think I was broken, that she was the one in control, that she had triumphed over

her weak malleable daughter. She had to believe that she could take me off the board at any moment, if she wanted to bother

herself to, that was.

The grip on me didn't loosen in the slightest, if anything, their fingers dug deeper, like they wanted to cause me pain. They

dragged me after her as she strode ahead of us, leading the way with her head held high, as if she was true royalty. She

believed herself to be a Queen, but I understood she was nothing by a tyrant.

I glared at her back, wishing I had laser vision and could cut her head right off her neck. No, that wouldn't be enough torture for

this bitch. I wanted her to truly suffer with every breath that left her body. I didn't want her to have a quick, merciful death. She

was no mother, no Queen, nothing but a vile, rotten creature. Her only goal was to obtain power at any cost, everyone around

her were just pawns to that end.

During our little trip, my eyes darted around, trying to recognize any of the objects on display. Would they trigger any of my

memories? Would she actually stoop low enough to try to make this place look like home to fuck with me? I wouldn't put it past

her, but the question was would it be worth her time to try to torment me?

Those thoughts all faded from me as we got to our destination. My steps stumbled, and my insides froze up. I never thought I

would see this place again, and all those warnings that had been pressed upon me in childhood came roaring back. The one

reminder that I was never allowed to forget.

Stay away from the basement. Don't even touch the door. It was pounded into me from the moment I could crawl. It was where

my father spent most of his time, and it was strictly off-limits. I didn't have many rules growing up, despite who my parents are now, my childhood wasn't traumatic. But the basement for some reason always instilled fear in me, a deep-rooted fear I could not explain.

My mother must have noticed my hesitation because she giggled and a cruel sparkle glittered in her eyes."

Say, Aleera, did you want to hear something funny?" she questioned me, stepping beside the door.

I wanted to turn and run, I didn't want to go near that door, but their tight grip on my hands wouldn't allow me to move. I bit my lip

to stay silent. My skin would be mottled with bruises from their disgusting hands, but despite the pain, I didn't want to play along

with this sick bitch's game.

"No," I sneered beneath my breath.

If she heard my rude reply, she ignored it. Placing a hand on her hip, she tilted her head as she gestured her free hand to the

door. I hated this place and I hated her. I did my best to not let my breathing change, I refused to give her any satisfaction from

what this place was doing to me.

A wide, wicked smirk spread across her lips as she took a step toward me. Like an actual snake, she leaned in and hissed in my ear, "This place, your home, my dear Aleera, is what saved my life when that lab went down in flames. This is where I hid while

the chaos broke loose. So many of your father's experiments were under these very floorboards when Darius set this place alight.

They died in that fire. I bet now you wish it was me to be one of the ones who burned to ashes, huh?" I repressed the urge to shudder. Had she planned this damn speech of hers? As always, she was doing her damnedest to hurt

me. Why else would she go to these lengths to point out that the one place I had any refuge in, my only home, was the same

area that had saved her worthless life?

I watched her every movement, trembling to contain myself. She laughed and turned her back on me, sticking her hand in her

pocket and pulling out an old key. She strutted to the door and jammed it into the lock, twisting it until we heard the heavy clunk

of the lock.

The old door screeched as if in warning, as she pulled it open and a grotesque putrid stench wafted out. I wished I could cover my nose because the smell burned my insides. What was it down there? Had she been experimenting with skunks and moldy

macaroni and cheese that had been stuck down there since the fire? I wanted to vomit and my eyes watered. But despite how

much I tried to turn my head and bury it in my shirt to avoid the odor, her brutes held me in place, forcing me forward.

"After you, dear," my mother mocked, giggling at me again. The men holding me shoved me toward the door, dragging me as my legs turned to jelly.

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Chapter 148 fl

Tasting Darkness

Chapter 148

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Read Taming Darkness By Jessica Hall Book 3 Chapter 23 – Despite how my body had reacted, this was still to my advantage. This weakness hadn't been

planned, but what better way to sell that I was powerless than not having the ability to walk? I would stop her, no matter what I had to endure. Her vile future

plans and the madness she sought to spread over the world was going nowhere.

She laughed again as I flinched being drug through the doorway. When this was over I would never have to endure that laughter

again. It was already burned into my memory, a sound that echoed in my head and featured in my worst nightmares. I would do

anything to never have to hear it again.

They shoved me the rest of the way through and for a moment I thought they would throw me down the narrow flight of stairs

that led downward, but surprisingly, they held back. One of my captors lets me go and pushes me to the side as he stomps down the stairs. The other shoved me after him, making

me stumble on the stairs. I caught myself before I lost control and took a deep breath as I descended. Worst decision ever. The intense stench only got worse the lower we got and these monsters had to be nose blind, they didn't

even respond to it. I glanced around, trying to make out where we were going, but beyond the dim light that reflected on the

stairs everything else around me was pitch black darkness.

We were nearing the end of the steps and I let my mind race. What would she try next? What exact wicked plan did she have up

her sleeves? Considering she was bringing me down here, I was likely a prisoner for her schemes, I'd be thrown in a cell until

she was ready to use me.

However, once we reached the basement floor, I understood how wrong I had been all this time. This wasn't a basement, it never had been. My mother was waiting for me on the hard concrete floor, tapping her foot. My trauma of coming down the stairs had

apparently bored her. "This floor here is the original basement, however, this...," she motions to a door that she goes through, as

one of her men opens it. They don't give me time before shoving me through it into another stairwell leading farther down. "Was

where I opened a portal to the night Darius came for you. Your father's experiments died on the floor above, but this place

remained untouched," she continued to explain in that mocking tone of hers, while I descended the cold concrete stairs, only

accompanied by her thin irritating voice.

The darkness below seemed to stretch forever, and it made perfect sense why I was never allowed to enter this place. Why they

had gone so far as to cause fear inside me at the thought of this place.

Once I reached the bottom, she flicked on the lights and illuminated the room. I was positive she hadn't done it earlier because

she wanted to remind me that she was the one in control here. A clinical white glow cast over the scenery around me. I had

thought this was some sort of torture room, but the scene before me was a different sort of depravity. The stench that had been

tormenting me since I set foot down here made more sense now. If I had any doubts about the type of woman she had been,

they were all cleared away now. There was no way for her to fall lower, not after this, not after everything she had done.

Tears stung my eyes as I took it all in. An entire wall that stretched farther than I could even see, was full of rows of glass cages.

They were separated cells and crystal chains were attached to each wall, ready to torment whatever subject found itself in its

walls.

I nearly broke when I saw what occupied almost every cell. Harmony-Faes, we were supposed to be like unicorns, mythical

beings of the imagination that had been snuffed out of existence. And yet, she had an entire basement full of them, caged like

animals to be used for whatever sick purposes she so desired. It made me want to bend over and vomit, one of those

unbearable odors was coming from them and I shuddered to think what they endured all this time.

I scanned the vast clinical room, but couldn't see any restrained by the crystal cuffs. Those spots must have been reserved for

her next victims. She wouldn't take any chances by leaving the house and leaving them out in the open. No, she had to insure no

one had the tiniest chance of being able to escape her twisted clutches.

The scale of this place was beyond my comprehension, but it was obvious that the Harmony-Fae weren't the nearly extinct species I had been led to believe they were. There were more Harmony-Fae here, more than I could

have possibly imagined still

existed. Not even in my wildest dreams would I have thought there were so many of us.

All were prisoners of my mother, to use however she wished, or even kill if it suited her. Test subjects just waiting for her to need

them. Used as a way for them to keep power. It explained how the power hunter's lasted so long. My mother wasn't just crazy,

she'd crossed that line long ago and lost any shred of reality she had left.

From the moment I'd seen my childhood home, I'd made plans to escape this hell, but now I needed to change those. I wouldn't

leave all these innocent prisoners behind to endure her wrath, but how would I find a way to release them? There were far too

many for me to just escape with, and none of them looked like they would be useful in a fight. Their dull, hopeless eyes didn't

even register me.

While I was still gaping at the imprisoned Fae, my mother's minions forced me to move down the hall and stopped at my very

own cell, similar to those of the other Harmony-Faes. One of them opened the door, while the other roughly shoved me inside,

closing and locking the door behind me.

As soon as the workman

disappeared from my view, my infinity mark burned, reminding me I wasn't alone. It was a hard reach with the cuffs still on, but I

managed it and covered it from prying eyes. I needed to alert my mates, they had to know what was happening here.

I pushed my fingers deeper into the mark. This had to work. I needed to recharge their magic with my own and share my location

with them. I couldn't give up, I needed to help these poor people that were trapped, being used for my mother's selfish gain. And I couldn't do it without my mates, they had to come after me.

They had to find out that the Harmony-Faes didn't die or become extinct. All of them were kidnapped and hidden away by my evil

bitch of a mother for all these years. How she managed to fool everyone into believing they were all dead for all this time was

beyond me. It showed what greed and the promise of power could truly do to a person.

I wanted to stare at my mark to see if maybe my mate would feel the mark and that my plan would have a chance to work. A

defeated sigh escaped my lips, yet my mark tingled, making my lips tug in the corners at the reminder of them.

A movement to my left caught my attention and my head snapped in the direction and my eyes widened. Porter? Lycus' father

stood there just a few feet away. He smirked at me through the glass, triumph glittering in his eyes.

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Tasting Darkness

Chapter 149

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Read Taming Darkness By Jessica Hall Book 3 Chapter 24 – I glared back at him. He chuckled and shook his head, and walked way from me and after my mother.

A defeated sigh left my lips as I kept hoping my darnedest that my mates would feel the mark, and that my plan would work, right

when a movement to my left caught my attention. As my mother's soldiers moved further down the hall and disappear through

another door. Now to wait and see what she has in store for me.

Time passes quickly while I'm locked inside the damn cell. I paced back and forth, waiting for some sign, for anything really to tell

me that things were going to turn in my direction. However, no amount of time stuck in there could have prepared me for the

three scientists in pristine white lab coats that bust into the room.

My mother followed behind them, her hands clasped behind her back and a wide smile on her lips.

Two of her more burly minions shoved the scientists aside as they opened the cell and grabbed me by my arms, and dragged

me closer. My senses were on high alert as I thrashed against them. I still needed to play the helpless victim for my mother

dearest's benefit. I couldn't let her know that any of my power had returned.

One of the scientists pulled a long syringe out of his pocket before proceeding to screw on the longest needle I'd ever witnessed.

One of the burly asses twisted my arm, preparing me for that monster. My damsel in distress act might have to be cut short if

things got any more dangerous. I prepared myself just in case.

"I want to test it against the sample I have from when she was a child, see how much her magic has morphed since she

manifested," my mother explains to the man, clicking her fingers at him." Charles, go and get a bed for her. I don't want just her

blood, I think some spinal fluid would be appropriate for our first comparisons."

Fuck. I hated needles. Or maybe it was more, seeing what Darius had endured at the hands of his own mad scientists that

scared me most. Whichever the case may be, I didn't want them coming anywhere near me with that thing, or taking anything

from me.

Charles grunted and stomped off, I was left with just one of the sinister men. Unfortunately, Charles wasn't gone long. He came

back wheeling a thin metal gurney and shoved it at his companion. The other man caught it with one hand and together, the two

of them forced me onto the table. Their crushing grip pinned me down and panic clawed at my throat.

My mother didn't get closer until they had me secure. Even if I summoned every bit of power I did have, it would be hard to get

myself out of this situation. She grabbed my bra and reached for a pair of scissors one of the scientists handed her. "You won't

need this anymore, Aleera," she chided as she cut my clothes off my body. The only thing keeping me from flashing all the men

in here was my body pressed to the cold metal. "You don't have to worry about being gentle with her, just get me the sample."

One of the scientists stepped forward, the syringe held in his hand. I shuddered. I couldn't even jerk away. His hand reached out,

stroking my spine, fingers searching for the spot he wanted to jam that fucking needle. He jabbed it into me, but there was no

pain. In fact, it was almost like a little clink. I couldn't see what was going on, but the maniacal grin on my mother's face was

gone.

"Her body's defense mechanism must be kicking in," she growled."

The anat..

Try another, a bigger gauge this time." Another massive syringe was produced, this time the needle was thicker than the last one.

I closed my eyes, preparing myself for the pain that was to follow. Instead, another clink and this time a curse as one of the men

holding me down staggered back, warm blood splattered across my back and I cracked an eye open to see what was going on.

Sticking out of his cheek, like a long metal straw, the needle was buried, and the man was cursing as he yanked it out, only for

blood to gush from the wound. "Fucking bitch," he snarled at me.

Maybe my skin had become titanium. Now that would be a nice development.

"How is this possible?" One of the scientists asked, one of them that didn't have a big ass needle. This one was writing my

reactions down. He chewed on the end of his pen, his big bushy brows furrowed. "She has no magic and the cuffs are on,

correct?"

Wrong, moron. You might think those things are true, but I'm just not letting you see that I've got magic back. I still needed to

bide my time, thank God for the whole body defense thing. The last thing I needed was for her to get away with taking my spinal fluid. I had to resist the urge to demonstrate just how incorrect he truly was, now wasn't the time for my breakout.

My mother sighs, her earlier excitement wiped away. "Demonic and Seraphim remember, Clint? She is part Seraphim, her mate

is Demonic-Fae. When she is scared, even powerless, her body still has certain safely

mechanisms. Why do I have to explain

this to you? You're supposed to be one of the top men in your field." She rolled her eyes at him.

"Greyson used to have to shock

Darius regularly, even when he was powerless to drop his body's shield."

I wished she would keep going because I would also like to know more about these apparent safety mechanisms my body had

that I'd never heard of. That last line though was more than a bit worrisome.

"Charge her, you know the drill, it will weaken her bodies' reaction. Once that's finished, I want that sample, and make sure you

fill the syringe completely." My mother orders, walking off and out of the cell.

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Read Taming Darkness By Jessica Hall Book 3 Chapter 25 – Charles, and two of the scientists, left with her, leaving me alone with the bleeding man and Clint. A

moment later, one of the scientists returned wheeling a trolley, and he handed it over to Clint. "I'll take care of some of the other test subjects. I'll be back when you've got the sample."

Mr. Bloody grinned as the scientists prepared the electrodes and set up the equipment, plugging it all in. My heartbeat pounded

like a drum. I recognized the device, it had been used on Darius when he was a child. The scientist frowned and handed a

bloody hospital gown that gaped in the front to Mr. Bloody. "She needs to be turned over, make her wear that."

Before I could object, I was yanked up and the offending outfit was shoved onto me, before the brick of a man slammed my back

against the cold metal, and he used his weight to hold me down until he tied me up with black leather restraints. "Better?" he

challenged Clint. "I'm going for a smoke, I'll be back." He leaves the two of us | alone, and I can't stop the excitement threatening

to spiral through me. My plan was about to take another step forward.

Clint nodded. He set about attaching headgear to me that had wires connected to the control pad in front of him and adjusted the strap. He pauses at my cold stare, his lip twitching. "Do you think a glare is enough to stop this? There is no pity left in me for

someone like you. My wife was murdered by that bastard Xandrius. Watching his son's mate suffer will bring me more joy than

anything this world has to offer." He sneers as he speaks, tightening the cap until the restraints are cutting into me.

He stepped back, admiring his work and all the black wires that crisscrossed my body from the helmet and all the leads that have

been attached to me. He moved back to the small trolley and gave me a grin as he twisted the dial.

I smile a moment before the electricity zips up the line. For being her loyal scientists, my mother sure did hire morons. My

Lycus's ability was to manipulate electricity. All the volts this little machine could produce combined wouldn't be able to hurt me.

No, all he was managing, was to make me even more powerful.

He froze, glaring at me, then at the wires. He twists the button off then checks each wire, each lead, he searched for some

reason I hadn't reacted to his torture. Shaking his head, he returns to his seat and pushes the power button again, twisting the

dial as far as he can, his eyes narrowed as if he could make me suffer through sheer strength of will. He looked up to check how the session was going when I smiled at him.

He gasped, trying to back away. I'm not the only one in this cell anymore. My shadow serpent slithers out of my skin and curls up

into my lap, its tongue tasted the air. Slowly it turned to regard the scientist.

Clint jumped out of his chair, scrambling at his control station and twisted, slamming any button he could. I could feel the currents

zipping through me, but instead of any harm being done, all he's done is recharged me. My serpent rose from my lap, and

slithered closer to the man.

"This isn't happening." Clint rubbed the sweat pouring off him onto his shoulder. "You are powerless, I saw that myself. The serum must be making me hallucinate again." I wasn't sure if he was trying to convince me or himself. "Yes, that's it," he nodded and reached for another device on the trolley. He came back to my side and hooked up his latest toy. My serpent hissed, and it grew in size until it was standing just as tall as he does. Through the mist of the creature, I got to enjoy Clint turn around to grab something else off his trolley and come face to face with my little pet. Clint screamed and jerked backward, hitting the glass panel of the cell next door.

The girl that lived there watched my snakes with a wicked smile on her face. There was no doubt she knew it was me, but she

was enjoying watching the scientist freak out as he tried to reason what he was experiencing. My neighbor is yet another

Harmony-Fae and I give her a wink. Instead of returning it, she glanced in the direction of the hall. I looked over there too, but I

don't sense anything and there were no auras coming near us.

It was the perfect chance to unleash more power. My veins wriggled under my skin and the entire floor was covered in my

precious shadow snakes. Clint's eyes went impossibly wide, and he shrieked, running for the closed cage door, and nearly

knocked himself out with it when he noticed the door wasn't open. He yanked it open, slamming and locked it on me before

running down the hall like his ass was on fire, and my neighbor burst out laughing.

I grinned at her, giving her a slight nod as we listened to the melody of his screams for help. I let the shadows drop, and she

glanced back in the direction he ran before turning to me and mouthing a warning. "They are coming."

I nodded and played dead on the gurney and drop my head to the side, giving my best half-dead impression from all the socalled

torture I'd just received. I even went so far as to let my drool drip off my face.

My mother threw the cage door open and stomped her way over to She grabbed a fistful of my hair and jerked my head back,

studying me. "She looks subdued enough to me!" she snarls to the shivering Clint.

I rolled my eyes to the back of my head and let my body twitch. I was going to enjoy Clint's howls of torture.

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