

Tasting Darkness

Chapter 81

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Book 2 Chapter 2 Darius pov All night I was awake . I couldn't sleep . I had completely forgotten about the true meaning of

keeper . She would know our darkest secrets , even the ones not even my mates knew , and some I kept were unforgivable . I

was too ashamed to tell them , too afraid they would run from me if they knew the sort of monster I truly was . I could feel her so

easily through the bond , feel her fear as she lived through what Kalen endured . Feel her burning anger at what they did to him .

I wondered what she would think of my past , how much she would turn against me once the truth was out .

We all had secrets , but none of them kept the secrets I did . None of them had done what I did .

They all thought they were

monsters . I was the biggest monster of all . Hearing the door push open , I see Lycus walk in . His wolf sniffed the air before coming over to the bed . He climbed up , laying across Kalen and me . I stroke his fur , and he purrs , resting his head on Kalen's lower back , his tail swishing back and forth in the air happily . Tobias flicked his wrist toward the door closing it before turning his attention back to me . Tobias watched me . I could feel his eyes on me , feel his burning curiosity . I knew he was also worried about Aleera knowing his past , knowing about his brother . At the same time , he wanted answers too .

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Some part of him wanted her to know what she took from him . He may act like he has forgiven her , but I know he hasn't . I

could feel it festering inside him , yet the bond was irresistible , and he was done fighting it . We all had lost something because of her , maybe not directly because of her , but what would happen when they learned everything started with what I did . All of it was my fault . Everything that happened was my fault . I never should have gone looking for her . If I had known whose daughter

she was , I would have waited until she came of age before seeking her out . I was not expecting her father to answer that door .

What were the chances that I would be bonded to my father's greatest enemy's daughter ? Aleera was his best

kept secret , but knowing what I know now . I was certain he was the one that unleashed the plague .

Hearing a commotion

downstairs , Kalen jumped , sitting upright . I grip Lycus's fur as he growls and stands glaring at the door . Tobias gets up . " For

crying out loud . What now ? " Tobias growls , stalking toward the closet . Shaking my head , I push Lycus back so I can get up

before kissing Kalen when he rolls off me . Getting up , I walk to the dresser . " Wait here , " I tell Lycus and Kalen .

I grab a tank top , pulling it on before walking out of the room and down the corridor . Tobias cursing as the racket grew louder as

the recruits freaked out about something downstairs . " What time is it ? " I asked Tobias . He pulls his phone out of his pocket . "

5 am , " he growls , shaking his head . We walked down the stairs to the next level . The recruits were freaking out about

something , and I could see them all looking out the windows . Some even rushed back up the stairs to their rooms .

” What the fuck is going on ? ” I boomed , leaning over the banister and looking at the ground floor . They all froze , looking up at us , and Tobias cursed while a few pointed out the windows . All of them are too stunned to speak , and Tobias growls . ” Back to your rooms ! ” Tobias snapped , his voice echoing like a thunderclap , and they took off . Waiting for the stampede of men to scatter , we descended down to the next level . Grabbing one of the stragglers , I yanked him toward me . ” What is going on ? ” I snarled at him , and his mouth opened and closed like a fish as he shook . I shoved him away , looking up to see haunted peering faces staring back at us . ” You call yourselves an army ? ” I bellowed angrily . Tobias turned toward the double doors . Some ran . Others shrieked when someone on the top level spoke up . ” I wouldn’t go out , ” he said , and Tobias froze , looking at me and I , him . He looked out the windows , and I moved to the wide double doors and glanced out but saw nothing .

" Fucking bunch of pussy's , " Tobias snapped . He shoves the doors open and stalks outside , and so do I . " I swear if this is a fucking prank , I am opening veins , " Tobias snapped as we stepped outside . Looking around , we saw nothing . Shaking my head , we started walking toward the huge obstacle course to find what they were scared of . " You have been quiet tonight , " Tobias states , nudging me . 11 " Just thinking , " " You're worried about her finding out her parents are alive , " Tobias says , and I sigh . That wasn't what I was worried about . " You might as well tell me . We will find out anyway , " Tobias says as we stop at the edge of the obstacle course . " What the fuck is that ? " Tobias says , looking at the climbing wall . He points , and I follow his finger to notice something torn apart and bloody perched on top of the wall . Sniffing the air , it was definitely blood . I growl , stalking toward it to see better , yet the closer we got , the more unidentifiable it became . " You going to answer ? " Tobias asked as we climbed the hill toward the center of the obstacle course . " What if I did kill someone ? " I ask , and Tobias stops . He looks at me , and I look toward the forest , unable to meet his gaze . "

I think she would understand you killing your father ,
Darius , ” ” Not him , ” I admit . Tobias seems taken
aback , and his shock
hits me through the bond . I swallow , and he steps
closer before grabbing my arm and shaking me . ”
What did you do ? ” he
snarls . ” I killed him , ” I tell Tobias . Though I had a
reason , it was also a reason for her to hate me
when she found out . ” Who
? ” ” Her father , ” I tell him . Tobias lets me go and
tilts his head to the side . ” No , I was there . I would
have seen you do it ? ”
but he also knew I wasn't lying was just hoping I was
.
” It was when I went back in , ” I tell him . ” Darius ! ”
” So you fucking killed them ? ” Tobias snapped . ”
No , her mother got away
, and she is lucky she did because I would have
killed her too , but , ” I tried to explain . ” You killed
her father ? ” he asks again
and I nod . ” Fuck Darius ! How could you keep this
from me ? ” ” She already assumed I killed them ,
and I didn't think . He was
a fucking elder , ” I let out a breath . ” He is also
guilty for unleashing the fucking plague . You could
have told me ! ” Tobias

forever , my defender . I swallowed guiltily , I never killed him for what he did to Aleera but what he said to me .

” Fuck ! Darius , she would be pissed knowing they were alive , but to find out you actually did kill them ,

” ” ” Her father , her

mother is still alive , ” I tell him , and he clutches his hair and gurses . ” Anything else I need to fucking know ? ” he asks and I

press my lips in a line . ” There is more , isn’t there ?

” ” You’re unbelievable , ” he says , storming off toward the obstacle course

. Tobias climbs the climbing wall , grabbing whatever it is and ripping it off , letting it fall to the ground in a heap . ” We agreed on

no secrets , Darius ! What else ? ” He snaps before jumping from the top and landing beside me

. ” Darius ! ” ” Shut up , ” I snap , squatting next to the torn apart creature or what was left of it . Tobias growls and walks off , and

I see him pick up something on the other side of the wall before tossing it at my feet . It was a cow head . I take a step back . ”

It’s a cow , ” Tobias says , and I look at the climbing wall . ” Now , how did a cow get up there ? ” I ask , and Tobias growls . ”

How else ? It is a fucking prank . I am going to kill them , ” Tobias says , storming

off back toward the castle in a burning rage . I didn't know who he was madder at , me or the recruits .

Climbing the hill again , I

get to the peak , and Tobias was further ahead when color caught my eye , making me peer up at the roof . My feet stop in horror

as I gasped . I look at Tobias , unaware of what is right above him . Opening a portal ,

I appear beside him and grab his arm . " What ? " he snaps , and I point to the roof . Tobias looks up and takes a step back . "

Fuck me ! " he gasps , and I look around at the trees and tap his shoulder . Tobias turns , his eyes also going to the trees . How

we missed it , I did not know . " That's impossible .

They are almost extinct , " he whispers . " Apparently not . They were just

waiting for their master , " I tell him , turning back to peer up at the roof . " There are hundreds of them ! "

Tobias shrieks . "

Explains the dead cow , " I tell him , nearly choking on my spit .

" What do you think they want ? " Tobias asked . "

Geez , I don't know , Tobias , go ask one ? What do you think they want ? " I

snap at him . " Aleera ! " We both say simultaneously . " She has a fucking army of them , " Tobias

murmurs . " Well , you better

hope you don't have too many secrets because she unleashes those things , you're fucked , " Tobias says , storming off toward the castle doors . @ 11 " And I ain't feeding them , " he calls over his shoulder . I looked up at the roof , and I could not see a single tile . Hundreds of phoenix's all perched like a sea of flaming color , every inch of the roof was obscured by them . But if this was after obtaining her power and marking one of us , what would she bring when she owned all of us ? But more importantly , if they could sense her , who else could ?

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Chapter 82

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Tasting Darkness

Chapter 82

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Book 2 Chapter 3 Aleera pov I spent most of the next day drifting in and out of sleep , wasn't I supposed to shred until I had claimed all of them . That it is how it usually worked so when I woke up to find the process over I was a little confused , though relieved . It took me a few seconds to recognize what woke me , it was whispers . My eyes felt heavy as I opened them , blinking rapidly as I fought the urge to yawn and rub my eyes . Lycus was pressed against my back , his arm draped over my waist and

his face buried in my hair . Kalen is asleep , facing me , his face slack looking rather peaceful . I wanted to trace his facial features gosh this man was beautiful . However the whispers I could hear were coming from near the fireplace and I couldn't help but listen . Tobias and Darius appeared to be arguing . I tried to listen , catching the end of their conversation . " You could ruin everything , everything Darius , I can't believe you would do that , " Tobias hissed . " I am not a necessary piece . We can still maintain power . We have for years , and she seems fine , " Darius growled . My brows pinch together , wondering what they are talking about . " And when she wants to ? Then what ? How will you explain that to her fucking bond , to her ? You are a right prick sometimes , you don't need to control everything , " Tobias snarled .

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" Me controlling everything is what has kept us alive . As I said , we can work it out , we can- " his words stop abruptly , and I hear their footsteps and quickly shut eyes , pretending to be asleep . Tobias touched my arm , and I knew he was checking to

see if I was awake and I knew they both felt the stir of the bond . His hand was cool , soothing as tingles rushed over me . ”

Darius ! ” Tobias snarled , his hand moving off me , and I opened my eyes to see Darius walking toward the door . He throws the door open and walks out in his blazing fury . ” We aren’t finished talking , ” Tobias calls after him , his voice rising above the hushed whispers .

” Conversation is over . My choice is final , I hear Darius say before he is gone . ” Fuck ! ” Tobias curses before shutting the door . He turns around , his eyes meeting mine , and he sighs , he rubs his face before scratching his chin and looking back the door .

” I thought I felt you wake , ” he murmurs , moving toward the bed . ” Why is Darius angry ? ” I asked . ” Darius is just being

Darius . He will come around , ” Tobias answers . ” Come around to what ? ” ” Doesn’t matter ; I will sort it , ” Tobias says ,

leaning over Kalen . He grips my chin , brushing his thumb across my swollen lips , his eyes flicker with hunger before he dips

his head and his lips brush against mine softly . ”

How do you feel ? ” he mumbles against my lips . ”

Just tired , shouldn’t the

shredding have lasted longer ? ” I ask and he smirks . ” Did you want it too ? If you want me to fuck you , just asks , ” he chuckles , and my face heats . That is so not what I meant . I shake my head , and he smiles seductively , pecking my lips before standing back up . ” We figured it might be something to do with being a harmony Fae . ”

Tobias says looking away from me and I got the feeling it was something else , I could feel the lie he just told which only confused me . ” You have a lot of power running through your veins ; I would say you need rest , so you don’t burn out .

” It kind of made sense . Most Fae creatures hold one or two elements ; I held all elements plus more . Maybe I was reading to

much into it . ” I have work to do , but will you be alright here ? I have a class to teach , ” he says . I nod before he wanders off

toward the bathroom and gets ready . I snuggle back down between my mates , tugging the blanket back around us , only for

Lycus to kick it back off and roll into me . I sigh accepting his body heat since he would only kick the blanket off again . It was

amazing how hot he ran , Darius 1 expected it yet were – fae seemed to be just as warm or maybe it was because he harnessed fire .

Hours later , I woke and felt wide awake . The bed was empty , and I stretched out like a cat and yawned . It must be around midday because the sun was at its highest from what I could see out the window . Yet the room was quiet . Sitting up , I move to the bathroom and quickly use the toilet before hopping in the shower . My body ached , yet the power in my veins made me giggle . I had never felt stronger . I rummaged through the closet when I finished showering and found some jeans . Yet none of my shirts were here , so I know Kalen must have gone to put a load of washing on because the hamper was also gone .

Grabbing a button – down shirt from the hanger . I slip it on and roll the sleeves to my elbows . I could wear it as a dress , yet I couldn't care less what I looked like as I pulled my hair up in a ponytail . I checked the phone that sat on the bedside table to see what day it was and to check the time . Two days had passed without me noticing , I checked

my schedule to see what class I had . Darius's class was nearly over yet that is where I should be .

Slipping my shoes on , I headed down to the field , walking past Tobias's open classroom door . He turned to look at me as I passed the door and heading for the last stairwell leading outside . I was near to the ground floor when his strong arms wrapped around my waist , tugging me back against him . " And where are you off to , and in my shirt ? " he purred , kissing down my neck . I lean back against him .

" I had no clothes , and I am going to class , " I answered turning my head and looking up at him over my shoulder . " You should rest . Darius won't mind , " Tobias mutters against my neck . His fangs slip out and graze my flesh . Heat pools in my belly , and I tilt my head to the side , offering him my neck . He moves my hair to one side and runs his nose across my skin to the back of my ear . " Hmm , I like it when you are willing , " he growls before he sinks his fang into me , his tongue lapped and sucked at my skin . Lifting my hand , I run my fingers through his hair while he feeds on me .

My eyes flutter shut as he drains some of my magic before pulling his fangs from my neck . He ran his tongue over his bite mark , holding me against him while I waited for the room to stop spinning . ” You can skip Darius’s class and come to mine , ” he growls , nipping at my ear . ” Anyone would think you don’t want me near him ? ” I question . ” Maybe I want you to myself , ” he laughs in his arms . I searched while turning his face . He seemed worried about something yet never voiced it .

” What is it ? ” I ask him , but he shakes his head and smirks . ” Nothing , get to class , or I may give you detention , ” he chuckles . I raised an eyebrow at him , since when was detention a thing here , though I wouldn’t mind by the sly look on his face . ” Is that so ? ” I laugh . ” Hm , I wouldn’t mind punishing that ass while your bent over my desk , ” he purrs . Tobias squeezes my ass and groans . I push on his chest at his playfulness when one of his recruits sticks his head out the classroom door .

Tobias sighs , looking over his shoulder .

” I gotta go teach , ” he says , pecking my lips and letting me go . I shake my head and turn to the doors . Stepping outside , the

day was a little chilly , the sun hiding behind the clouds as I walked around trying to find the class .

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Chapter 83

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Tasting Darkness

Chapter 83

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Book 2 chapter 4 I could hear Darius barking orders at his men and running drills . Walking around the side of the out building , I spot in the center of the field . I come up behind him . Darius looks over his shoulder at me . His arms are folded across his chest as he turned his attention back to his men and glared out at them . Demons appeared to fearful , nervously glancing at the castle roof . I look to the roof to see what they kept staring at only to find hundreds of Phoenixes standing on the rooftop watching the demons like they were prey and were waiting to pick them off one by one . I gasp at the sight of them when Darius moves toward me . He jams his fingers in my ribs , making me jump . " You should be resting , " he growled , tugging me toward him while I gaped at the roof . I was stunned . I had never seen so many in one place at one time . " How ? I ... why are they here ? " I ask , shaking my head . " Why do you think ? " Darius says , nudging me . I

shake my head , and Ryze fly's down from the roof , perching on my shoulder . Darius ruffles his feathers , and I arch an eyebrow at him watching as he pet him . " What , he is growing on me , " Darius says while Ryze rubs his beak against my face before nipping at my hair . " What do they want ? " I asked Ryze . He looks at me . " Alira , " he tries to speak before looking at the rooftop . I turn my gaze back to the roof . Some were positively lethal , giants , and I was seriously worried about the roof caving in from the weight of them . The recruits freak out when a huge one takes flight , moving high in the air and Darius growls . " Get a fucking grip of yourselves , " He booms at them . I laugh as he shakes his head , waving them off the field . I watch the huge pheonix fly around , circling the field . The Phoenix lands on the grass about a hundred meters away when I realize he has caught something . The shriek of whatever it he caught makes my heart flutter in my chest , and I swallow as the phoenix rips it apart before tossing his head back and swallowing it down . " Marvelous creatures , but fuck they're savages , "

Darius mutters . He tosses his arm across my shoulders when the siren blares , signaling the end of class . ” Come on , you should eat , ” he says , steering me toward the castle doors . Ryze walks along my shoulder and onto Darius ‘ . He tenses briefly before Ryze starts smacking his beak on Darius’s head like he was trying to crack open a coconut . Darius grabs his beak . ”

Don’t push your luck , Ryze . I will stuff you like a damn turkey , ” Darius warns him , and he caws but stops , instead playing with

his hair . ” Where are Kalen and Lycus ? ” ” Classes , ” Darius says , and I nod . ” Kalen is doing classes now ? ” I asked . ” No ,

he is just with Lycus . He doesn’t teach , not anymore , ” ” ” Why ? ” ” Because , ” Is all Darius answers . I head for the mess hall

when Darius grabs my shoulder , steering me back toward the stairs . ”

Where are you going ? ” he asks , looking at me confused , and I shake it off . I

didn’t think I just headed where I usually went . ” I don’t want you alone with them . You stay with one of us from now on , no

exceptions , ” Darius says , nudging me toward the stairs . That was fine by me I hated being around them . We see Tobias in the

corridor as we head back upstairs . He glances at us before turning back to whoever he was talking to .

As we approach , his eyes go to Darius , some silent message passing between them , and whatever was going on between them had Tobias angry . ”

Is everything alright ? ” I asked them . They look at each other before Darius walks off . I look at Tobias , but he shrugs , and I

know I wasn't going to get any answers .

***** Days passed , and one thing became clear as I hopped in the shower to get ready for class .

Something was going on between Darius and Tobias . They were hiding something . Even Kalen and Lycus seemed suspicious about whatever it was .

They barely spoke , or when they did , the tone was never friendly . I rinse my hair out , listening to them argue . Lycus opens the

shower door stepping into the shower behind me before turning me around . His fingers replace mine as he starts massaging my

scalp rinsing the shampoo out of my hair . Kalen shakes his head , washing himself as he glares at the bathroor door where

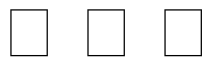
Darius and Tobias were again at each other's throats . ” Man , I seriously can't take much more of their fighting ,

" Kalen mutters . I had noticed the darkness seeping back into Kalen over the last couple days , I knew he was picking up on their energy , and it worried me seeing his mind taking him back to some dark places . " Leave it , Kalen . They will sort out whatever is going on , " Lycus tells him . I purse my lips hoping he was right . Darius had been sleeping in my old room the last two days , and I hated how my bond called out to him , Tobias was miserable . And we were hardly getting any sleep with Kalen constantly getting up in the night searching for him . Yet , they remained tight – lipped whenever Lycus , Kalen , or myself were around , speaking in riddles and having digs at each other . Well , it was more Tobias who kept provoking Darius .

I sigh , pushing past Lycus and grabbing a towel when I hear something shatter . " Aleera , stay here , " Lycus growls , reaching for my hand , but I pull back . " No , I am bloody sick of it , " " Aleera , Lycus is right . Let them deal with it . You don't want to get between whatever is going on out there , " Kalen says . I sigh , chewing my lip before hearing the door slam . Kalen gets out ,

wraps a towel around his waist , and comes over to me . He grips my hips tugging me against him , and presses his lips to my forehead . I sigh before waiting a few minutes to ensure the fighting in the room had indeed stopped . When I hear nothing , I open the door to find Darius glaring at the burning wood in the fireplace . He looks over at us as we walk out but says nothing . Kalen moves toward the closet while I make my way over to Darius , stopping in front of him . He reaches for me tugging me down on his lap . My towel pushes up my thighs as I straddle him and he runs his hands up my legs to my ass . His hand grips my ass hard , making me squirm , and his eyes flicker . I could see Kalen watching us from the closet's doorway as he got changed .

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— Chapter 84

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Tasting Darkness

Chapter 84

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Book 2 Chapter 5 "What's going on?" I asked Darins. He looks up at me, nipping at my neck, and I shudder. "Nothing you need to worry about," he mumbles against my skin. My bond ignites as he grips my hips, rolling me against him. "Something is wrong. You two have been fighting all week," I tell him. "Just leave it," Darius says, his eyes darkening. Yet I know Lycus

and Kalen were struggling with their bonds , too , with Darius sleeping in the other room , Kalen's sleep walking was out of control . Pain wasn't accurate enough word to describe it , with Darius in the other room it was almost like missing a limb .

They didn't know how to function without him He was an attachment of them , and over the last couple of days , And since I haven't marked three of them , I noticed how much they gravitate toward him , picking up on his moods , they reacted to him , and I wondered if it was because for so long he acted as their keeper . Darius growls , nipping at my neck before gripping my chin . He tilts my face down to his and kisses me , and arousal flares through to life like burning embers in a breeze setting everything ablaze..

I could feel his magic rolling over me , consuming me , and my bond reacted to it , taking over as I kissed him back with the same burning desire . Lycus steps out of the bathroom . It was so odd feeling them . I could pinpoint each one , tell who was who and if they were close and where they were at all times , completely aware of them , so I knew when he stopped behind me . I

pull my lips from Darius and look up at Lycus ,
whose eyes are pitch black .
He smiled , dipping his head down , capturing my
lips , and I felt Darius tug at the front of my towel ,
pulling it apart before his lips
were burning my skin as he nipped and licked my
nipple . I gasped as heat rushed through me , almost
like he was awakening
the urge to shred . Lycus pulled away , looking at me
oddly , and I tried to shake the overwhelming feeling
rolling through me
before turning my gaze to Darius . He growls , his
grip tightening , and I realize it
wasn't the urge to shred at all but him needing
magic like he was drained . Power – hungry , his lips
traveled back up to my neck
as he kissed and licked his way back to my lips . I
kissed him back , letting him take what he needed ,
letting him recharge off me
and my eyes fluttered shut as his tongue invaded my
mouth . His kiss was domineering and hungry ,
tasting every inch as he
pulled on my magic , I gave into him , letting him
take what he craved .
My bond wanting more , needing it so I kiss him
back before nipping at his chin , and he sighs .
Darius rests his head on the

back of the couch . I kiss the marks on his neck ,
and he shudders , his hand moving to my hair as he
fists it . My mouth waters
at his addictive scent before running my tongue
across his skin . My bond has overtaken every
sense as I pressed closer to him ,
letting his heat into me . My teeth press against his
seep skin , my blunt teeth breaking his flesh when
he tenses , yanking my
head back by my hair , pain rippled across my scalp
, making me cry out . I clutch his hand in
my hair . His demonic eyes gleamed back at me
while mine filled with tears . Darius stands abruptly
and drops me on the couch .
He breathes heavily , and Lyeus shoves him with a
growl . " Darius , what the fuck ! " Lycus snarls while
I rub the back of my
head where he had pulled my hairs from my scalp .
My bond recoils , rejection smashes against me ,
and my face heats with
embarrassment . I want to run from the room as he
glares down at me . What did I do ? He was fine a
few seconds ago .
Realization dawns on me . Of course , he needed
power . That is all it was , he didn't want me just
what I had to offer . Power

was everything to Darius . I thought we were past all this , but clearly , I was wrong . I felt used as he powered off me only to toss me aside when I wanted more . I swallow , looking away and he storms out of the room , not even bothering to answer Lycus .

The door slams making me cringe and shame creeps into me . Why does he do that ? He does it every time I try with him , constantly pulling only for him to shove me away . Lycus reaches for me , but I jerk my hand away when he tries to grab it before tugging my towel up covering myself . I rushed past Kalen , who moved toward me and into the closet to get changed . I shut the door , slipping some clothes on . I felt stupid , stupid for believing he was capable of being my mate . " Aleera ? " Kalen says , knocking on the door , I pull some clothes on quickly . Opening the door , Lycus and Kalen stood there staring at me . I push past them , heading for the door . " Aleera ? "

" I have to get to class , " I tell them , not bothering to stop . I just wanted a way from them , so I went to my safe place . Funny , how I call it that . It was the worst place in the castle . The cells , yet the dark , desolate place , and the solitude allowed me to

hide and regather as I sat in the old cell .
Questioning everything , wondering what was bad
about me that Darius couldn't just
put the past behind us and accept me .

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the Fae monsters that were chasing after her and they exhausted
her. Her parents were murdered by the Savage people. Darius
kills them and avenge her

and she waits for his pity. ... At Chapter 84 of the novel series
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Chapter 85

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Tasting Darkness

Chapter 85

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Book 2 Chapter 6 My humiliation diminished after a while , and I felt stupid for running from Kalen and Lycus . I could feel them searching for me , yet I didn't want to be near anyone . I suddenly missed being on my own . I was alone but comfortable in my own misery , yet I also didn't want that anymore either . I craved interaction , touch , power , everything I lived without for so long . I desired not to have to look over my shoulder everywhere I went . I dreamed of not having to hide from the world . I craved being able to use my magic without guilt , without fear of what would happen if I did . I wanted for so long to be free . And now , I had a taste of that freedom . And I wasn't sure I could box it back up and run again . Run from them and myself . Being down here , the more I contemplated the chaos . Thought about what had become of my life ,

and wondered how the fuck I got here . What was the one part of my life that determined it would get to this exact point ? Where did I go so detrimentally wrong that I ended up here , at this very moment ? I couldn't entirely blame – them . We all played a part , but somewhere along the way , just one stupid night , I gave into the bond and what I thought it offered . My bond had made me backflip on who they really were . Blinded by the bond , forgetting what they had done . Yet I knew they had their reasons , and I had mine . So why was Darius still punishing me for it ? For once , I let myself believe I could be with them and that it would work out . Hearing the door open , I sat up , leaning against the wall as his heavy footsteps came down the stairs . I quickly wiped my face with the hem of my shirt before glaring at him as he stepped off the last step . ” Why are you down here ? ” Darius asked . ” Why are you down here ? ” I asked , wondering if he had come to humiliate me more . ” You're upset , ” he states because that much was obvious . A quick swipe at my face with my shirt wouldn't hide the puffiness of my eyes , or the blotchiness from crying like an idiot over this

insufferable man . ” You toyed with my bond , and you used me . How else am I supposed to feel ? ” I snap at him , and he arches an eyebrow at me . He wanders over to the cell I was sitting in . ” I didn’t use you . You’re our keeper . That is what you’re born for . Not my fault you got carried away , ” he growls , leaning on the steel bars . Wow ! My eyebrows felt like they escaped into my hairline at his words . So everything was just some game to him ? I was just something he could hold on a pedestal or knock the legs out from under whenever he pleased ? My bond panged in my chest , and I couldn’t help myself as it reached out for his , but all I got was nothing , just indifference . I couldn’t even tell if he was just forcing his bond to me back or if he generally felt nothing for me . ” Look , I didn’t mean to upset you . You have the others . You don’t need to mark me . I don’t want you to mark me , Aleera . That is why I shoved you away . Not because I didn’t want you , just I can’t have you mark me . “ Was this fucker mentally retarded ? Did he not just hear what he said ? ” You know what you said is the same thing , right ? ” I

scoff , shaking my head . ” You don’t get that sort of control over me . The others may let you , but I need to keep a straight head

. And I can’t do that if I let you mark me , ” H ” A straight head ? ” I ask . ” I have this place to run . I can’t be at your beck and call

any time you bat your eyelashes at me ! I have to keep you safe from what’s out there ! I can’t do that if the urges of the bond

blind me ! ” he snaps . ” But it was okay for you to mark me ? ” I asked , shaking my head . ” Yes , you won’t retain power without

us marking you . ” What about me marking you ?

What ? Am I supposed to be a keeper when you feel like using me ?

” ” You are a keeper . You still have access to my magic , and I yours . That is all that is needed . ” ” I just won’t have access to

your bond ! ” I spit at him . ” I am not some toy for you to manipulate ! Darius sneers at me . ” And I am not your fucking toy either

! So fuck off , Darius ! You don’t want me ? Fine !

Not like I haven’t lived without you before anyway , ” I tell him . ” Excuse me ? ”

he says , pushing off the steel door . He takes a step toward me before grabbing my face . ” You even think of leaving , I will drag

you back kicking and screaming and make you wish you never crossed me .

You hurt them , Aleera . You will regret it ! ” Darius snarled , his fingers dug painfully into my cheeks and the look on his face told me he seriously would hurt me if I tried . I glare at him before gripping his wrist and letting my magic flow . He hisses , ripping his hand away from me before grabbing my throat and slamming me back down on the bed . His anger was suffocating as he pinned me , yet his hand was only a warning on my throat . He wasn't hurting me , just showing me he could and how easy it would be for him if he wanted too .

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