

Tasting Darkness

Chapter 86

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Book 2 Chapter 7 ” Just remember , I gave you power , Aleera . I can always take it away . I allow you to be with us ! So take it or leave it . Our mates will listen if I tell them too . You may have the bond , but I had years of being their keeper . They are sired to me which is stronger than your incomplete bond . You are not the only keeper here . Just remember that ! ” Darius growled before letting me go . He then storms out of the basement . I glared at him as he stomped off up the steps . I should have known better . The media always portrayed him to be a monster . And once again , he showed me they were right . Yet the stupid bond craved him . I push the intense feelings to apologize and beg at his feet for acceptance down . Instead , I let my anger over him fester . The longer I sat there , the more I hated them and

myself . Well , no , not all of them . Not Kalen . I don't think it is possible to ever hate Kalen . He was as much a victim in all this as I was . We all were in a way , but they weren't the only ones that sacrificed everything . I tossed my entire life away to run from the very man who seemed hell bent on destroying me . When my grandmother died , and I was thrown into that school , I went on autopilot . Hide what I was from the world for so long , even I forgot who I was and what I was capable of . Everything that has happened , losing my parents , then my grandmother , my entire life turned upside down . It slowly broke the pieces off that I used to love . Only then did I suddenly believe I could live without magic , slip into the human world and be happy . And at first , I was happy to let those pieces go , glad to give my magic up because it was the safest thing to do . Mum said to hide what I was , that no one could know . And I did just that , yet her words were more than words . They became my life . And now I didn't want to restrain myself any longer . I have been shackled for years . I didn't fit in here

with them . I didn't fit anywhere . How could I , when I was the only one of my kind ? Never able to reveal what I am and who I used to think I would one day be before I lost everything ? I used to love magic , loved being a Harmony Fae . Until I was suddenly forced to hide it from everyone without realizing my parents were already hiding me from the world . Dad used to say , at home I could be whatever I wanted , and I loved that . But to the rest of the world , I had to be Dark Fae and Dark Fae only . It was the same with my grandmother . Home was a place of safety , where I was free until she was gone and I no longer had home at all . I no longer had a choice . My safe place was again gone , and I lost what that felt like . What having a home felt like . After I marked Kalen , I finally got a sense of that again . Only for Darius to rip it away this morning all over again . I thought we were past everything , and I was finally free to be who I actually was . It should have been a turning point , but now I wonder if it was just a ruse and Darius's shock at what I was that made him do it . I was just some tool he could use to become

stronger because that is what it felt like this morning , with the way he used me for my magic , only to toss me away like I was garbage afterward . It angered me . I wasn't sure I could go back to hiding what I was . I was sick of hiding , sick of being repressed ! They know what I am now . And if they think I will just wait around for them to decide if they want me , they were mistaken , I was sick of being shackled and chained by fear , by the judgement of what others would think . I realized that I had given up everything until there was nothing left of me . I spent all my energy running from them , giving them control , which is what I did .

By running from them , I ran from myself put myself in this situation . Thinking that running from them was me taking control of a problem I didn't want to be in . I was wrong . and They held all the power , and Darius showed me that first chance he got this morning . However , I did know that despite him hating me , he would protect me and keep me safe if I stayed because it benefited them to do so . As much as I wanted to run again , I also didn't want to go back to that repressed version of myself . I

no longer wanted to be a Dark Fae . I wanted to be able to be who I am without fear of it . Yet even I knew how dangerous it was to be a Harmony Fae in this world . So if I left , I would be forced to suppress it all over again . Here , I was at least safe to find out what I was capable of . I don't even fully understand what the true meaning of being a Harmony Fae was , and I suddenly wanted to find out . And Darius wasn't going to stop me from finding that power . The power I was born to harness . With a power that could even take the feared Demonic – Fae King down . With that thought in mind , I got up . Anger coursed through me as I opened up the portal to Tobias's classroom . I stepped into the room at the back , sitting behind everyone . I did miss school . I always loved learning about Fae history and loved the practical side that I always made excuses not to participate in . But now , now I had another motivator to get me to stay . Here , I could learn freely with no repercussions because everyone here was aware of what I was . There was no need to hide it . And if that helps me get back at Darius , then so be it . He wanted to destroy me ? Play with my bond ? Toy with me ? And

turn my mates against me ? Fine ! Two can play at that game . So let's see who breaks who first.

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Chapter 87

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Chapter 87

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Chapter 8 Lycus POV One thing I loved and also hated about the bond was feeling everyone's emotions . I had marked her , and our bond was forged . Sure , she hadn't marked all of us , but I knew she would feel us , so I kind of felt bad . I just stood there .

However , I was shocked . Darius had finally come to accept her , and I knew he wanted to be with her . We all did . The guilt that washed through me at how we had treated her was stomach turning .

So when her feeling of embarrassment and rejection hit me , it was like Darius had rejected all of us . I just don't understand what happened . " What the fuck just happened ? " I asked Kalen after I watched her leave in a rush without looking back .

Darius had been in a mood for the last day or so since she had marked Kalen . He and Tobias had been constantly at each

other's throats , and the dramatics were really bothering me . But he might as well as just slapped her , teasing her bond out like that only to push her way stung even me .

Kalen makes a strangled noise as her pain rattles through us . " I have no idea , " Kalen says with a sigh . I watch as he runs a hand through his hair before tugging his shirt on . "

Where are you going ? " I asked him . " To find her , of course , " he said ,

sitting on the edge of the bed and pulling his shoes on . " Just give me a second . I'll come with you , " I

tell him . 11 " I don't need

a babysitter , Lycus , " " Ah , maybe I just want to help find her . She is my mate , too . I said nothing about babysitting you , " " I

tell him . " Kalen rubs his fingers over his infinity mark , trying to gauge where she is , we should be able to find her instantly with

one touch , But when he rubbed his thumb over it , all we got was a cold feeling running up my arm as he brushed her name

etched into his skin . My brows furrow and I look at Kalen . Kalen was the only that could hide from the bond .

He could manipulate it , which is precisely how he managed to kill himself repeatedly . Controlling auras came in handy but also

a nuisance for us over the years when he would go missing because , with it , he manipulated our thoughts and emotional patterns . Keepers usually harness their mate's magic , so it made me wonder if she was blocking us without knowing it . We searched the entire castle grounds when we suddenly got the first flicker of emotion back from her . It had moved us toward Tobias's classroom . We spent hours looking for her , and I missed two of my classes by canceling them . Moving toward where Tobias was teaching , I stuck my head in the doorway .

Aleera sat at a desk at the back of the room , a pen in her hand , nibbling on the end as she concentrated . Tobias watched her curiously as he sat at his desk . Walking in , Kalen goes toward her while I make my way to Tobias . " Care to explain what the fuck happened ? " Tobias hissed in a hushed voice . " Darius , who else ? How long has she been here for ? " I asked him .

" About an hour . She hasn't said a word , " Tobias says . " I didn't even know she was in here until I finished casting and noticed her sitting at the back . She should be in Darius's class , " he says . " She portaled ?

" I ask , and he shrugs , glancing at her and biting his lip . I looked over at Kalen , who was whispering to her before he took her pen from her , scribbling something on the page she was working on . Her brows furrow as he explains something to her about wayward casts . " I have a class to teach , so either sit in or get out , " Tobias says , and I glance around to see the demons waiting for Tobias to continue . I wander to the back , pulling a chair out on her other side . I sit down in it heavily and my hand goes to her knee under the table . " Are you okay ? " I whisper to her . " Never better , " she says , watching as Tobias teaches , and I lean back in my chair and peek over at Kalen , who gives her a strange look but says nothing as he leans back .

" Did she say anything to you about where she went ? " I mouth to him , and he shakes his head , dropping his hand on the back of her chair and fiddling with her hair while she jotted stuff down in her notebook . " Aleera ? " Tobias calls to her , and her head snaps up to look at him . He waves her to come to the front of the class , and I sit up straighter , wanting to see what he would get her to do , especially since this was an

advanced class ; she wasn't even supposed to take this class .

Her bond flops giddily inside her as she moves closer to him when she suddenly stamps it down so abruptly that Tobias gives

her a questioning look before he looks over at us .

Turning , I looked at Kalen , who was observing her aura . Kalen tilts his head

to the side and leans forward curiously , watching her . I slide into Aleera's seat next to him . " What is it ? " I whispered , and I

saw Tobias glance in our direction , so I knew he was listening ; I could also feel Tobias ' worry about why she was acting so

strange , almost indifferent like nothing happened . "

She forced her bond back , " he whispers , and I look at her , noticing how

Tobias's jaw clenched and his eyes flickered , Great , whatever is going on with her , we have Darius to thank .

Just when I thought we were getting somewhere .

Now we were back to square one . Darius had some fucking answering to do .

Tobias turns his attention back to her . He asks her to hold out her hand , and a devious smile plays on his lips . She does

looking up at him curiously with bright eyes , excitement filling her at using her magic . As if she was excited to use it , having been deprived for so long , to her , it felt freeing that she didn't have to hide what she was . At least not here , well , until Darius walked into the room . She looks over her shoulder at him , and her eyes flicker strangely , turning glassy before she swallows and turns her attention back to Tobias . Her embarrassment came back and zapped through the bond before it turns to anger . She stamped it down , blocking us back out . Darius leaned on the doorframe with his arms folded staring at her . Everyone in the room watched him as his intimidating aura filled the room . He commanded attention without even trying , and right now , whatever was going on with him , he appeared to be angry with Aleera for ignoring his presence . But Aleera looked just as angry making me worry with the determined glint in her eyes .

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Chapter 88

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Chapter 88

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Book 2 Chapter 9 Aleera POV Tobias asked me to step forward , and I did . My bond became excited , and I stamped it down , forcing it back . I knew they felt it , but when I felt Darius's presence moving closer , I didn't want him to feel my reaction to my mates . H So it was no surprise when I felt him stop behind me . " Hold your hands out , " Tobias whispers , then his eyes dart over my shoulder . I glance back at Darius . He leans against the door frame , watching us , but I turn my attention back to Tobias and focus on the casting he was about to show me . Tobias holds his hands out above mine , and I watch the air between his hands ripple and thicken . A picture forms and my magic wants to latch on to him , and it does . He transfers the strange sphere into my hands , and it hovers above my palms . He pokes it with his finger , and it ripples , taking the form of the rainforest . " Why are casts dangerous ? " he asks , looking out at the class , yet he looks back at me for the answer . Vampiric – Fae primarily did casts because my kind no longer existed or was rare . It took compulsion and could

temporarily blind an opponent , yet it also took a lot of concentration to maintain . ” They are dangerous because they act as virtual reality , and people can be trapped within them until the cast holder releases them , ” I tell him , and he nods . One demon in the class raises their hand , and Tobias nods to him . ” Why are we learning this , though ? Only vampiric and Elemental can yield it , “ the demon asks , and Tobias asks . ” You think a vampiric will care if you can yield it if they are planning to use it against you ? ” he asked , and as Tobias said , the man dropped his head . It was a stupid question to ask . ” So , how does one break out of the spell of a cast ? ” Tobias asked before the sphere was suddenly wrapped around my face , blinding me to the rest of the classroom . Forest scenery surrounded me , and I could vividly see and hear , even smell , everything . The classroom completely disappeared , and I stumbled forward . I could even hear the crickets chirping , the sound of the soft breeze , and feel it like it was real , the air thick and moist , and the ground smelled of moist soil .

Yet Tobias's voice I could also hear faintly , his voice becoming more distant until he touched me , making me jump , thinking something fell from the trees and landed on me . My hand moves to his hand on my shoulder . " Focus on my voice , Aleera , "

he says , yet the cast I am stuck in feels real , so I instinctively look up when birds take off out of the canopying trees above . "

You need to remember it's a cast . Remember your true surroundings , no matter how much fear or what is going on around you

. It isn't real . You just need to focus on where you were before , paint that picture in your head , and implant it .

This will force fake reality away to bring you back to your true surroundings , " I try , but I find myself stuck as everything

becomes overwhelming . " Where are you , Aleera ?

" Tobias asks . " Rainforest , " I murmured , turning when I heard leaves

rustle behind me . " Where were you before Aleera , focus ? " his voice says , and I look for him but can't see anything but forest

. My pulse races when I see a giant tiger step out from the foliage . I stagger , taking a step back , only to trip over my feet . It

charges at me , and I put my hands up to shield myself when the cast is dropped , and I find Tobias grabbing me and hauling me to my feet . Everyone in the class laughed , and Darius even chuckled at me . Embarrassment coursed through me .

” This is why you should have been in my class instead of running hiding in an advanced defense class , ” Darius says , making me glare at him as I catch my breath . ” You did well . Ignore them . It was your first go , ” Tobias whispers , yet as I went back to my desk , everyone tried to stifle their giggles , and Darius clicked his tongue . ” Do it again , ” I snap , gritting my teeth . I hadn’t wielded magic like that before it was banned in the schools , yet I could feel how he did it and knew I could mimic it if I could just touch it again . ” You don’t have to , ” Tobias says , his lips brushing my cheek . The demon holler and whistles at his gesture , and I glare at them . ” Do it again , ” I tell him , turning to face him . I refuse to let them think I don’t belong here or that I can’t do this . Tobias’s eyes search my face before he sighs , looking past me to Darius . I look at him , too , and he waves arrogantly , thinking

I would fail again . I could feel his amusement at my anger which only served to anger me more . When Tobias sets the cast in my hand this time , however , my magic locks onto his , but instead of letting him manipulate it when he flicks his fingers , I grasp onto it tightly . He raises an eyebrow at me . ” Aleera ! ” he hisses , wondering what I am doing , but I hold on firmly and feel for the compulsion he was using in it before crushing and stamping it out . His magic fizzled in my hands . I feel how it disintegrates his cast , dying out as I destroy it . The demons laughed . ” What’s a matter , Aleera , scared , burned it out before entering it ? ” one chuckles . ” That was my intention , ” I tell the demon . He scoffs , throwing his head back . Lycus snarls at him , and he jumps when my mate stands behind him . ” Stop playing around and get either to my class where you should be or back to your seat , ” Darius snaps at me , and Tobias nudges me , but I refuse to move . ” I can do one better , ” I smirk , feeling my magic sing in my blood , morph and twist as it writhes through me , cold and chilling while also warm tingling as I blend both sides of my magic , melding them into one .

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Chapter 89

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Tasting Darkness

Chapter 89

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Book 2 Chapter 10 The air between my hands
fizzles and zaps , electricity zapping between both
as the air warps and I cast the
sphere . I swallowed , feeling how hard it was to
maintain and hold on to . Tobias made it look easy
like he did casts regularly ,
but as hard as it was , I could feel my magic thriving
, wanting to see how far it could push itself . “
Do you know why Vampiric- Fae casts are so
dangerous ? ” I murmur . ” You’re not vampiric ,
though , ” The demon laughs . ”
You’re right . Because I am so much more , ” I tell
them , and the sphere casting changed to flames ,
the forest Tobias created in
my head now burning in my hands . ” But that isn’t
what I asked ? ” I tell the man who mocked me . ”
What are you teaching now
, Aleera ? ” Darius taunts behind me . ” Yes ,
teaching you all who you’re fucking with , ” I tell them
. Darius shakes his head at
me .

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” And to answer my own question , since you idiots
don’t seem to know the answer , they compel your
deepest fears and

manipulate them into the cast , ” I answer , making the sphere bigger . I focus on everyone’s auras , pulling on Kalen’s magic across the room , their auras dark and shadowy , and I am shocked at how easy it was to pull on his magic since I had marked him . He gasps , and I glance at the aura tainting the demon men , each a distinct shadow of darkness with a different consistency . “

So my next question is , what do you fear most ? ” I chuckle , clenching my fingers into a fist before opening them . My magic flew out , the cast wrapping around them all like a dark cloud , and the chair screeched as I manipulated their auras , feeling for what they fear most . Watching as they scream and arms fly in the air . One in the front was petrified of spiders , and he clawed at his clothes and tried to wipe them off . Screams rang out through the room as others ducked , fearing Phoenixes they thought were swooping . It was oddly satisfying watching them scream and fear the images I had put their heads . They laughed , and now they screamed . I chuckle at the coldness of the magic meddling with

them and spewing out of me , magnifying , latching onto their biggest fears . All of them suddenly plunged into their worst nightmare , and I smirked , feeling the angry ripple when the one covered in spiders set himself on fire with his magic , the flames flying at the roof when Darius grabbed me and shook me . ” Drop it ! ” he snaps at me and shakes me .

And I see Darius go to absorb my magic and drop it before he does . He glares at me , and the screams die out . ” Are you trying to burn this fucking place to the ground ? ” he snarled at me . I glanced at the Demons , who were all shaken . I smirked , my eyes flickering . ” Do you think this is funny ? ” Darius said while his grip on my arms tightened as he shook me . ” Fucking hilarious , as hilarious as they found me falling on my ass , ” I sneered back at him , and he growled , and I noticed out of the corner of my eye . Tobias was helping some off the ground . Darius growls and looks at Tobias , but the moment he turns his gaze away , my magic erupts again as I clamp my hands on his face . ” What is your greatest fear , Darius ? What makes you : shake in your fucking boots ? “

I spit at him as he gasped , and he became stuck in the cast . The sphere takes shape as I latch onto his fear , manipulating it and making him relive it . I see a room . It looked sterile , with lots of science equipment and steel tables . He is a little boy , maybe only six years old , and he runs over to a man tugging on the back of his white lab coat . My breath lodged in my throat when the man turned around . I don't know who I expected to see , but it definitely wasn't him . The man turns , and I am suddenly staring down my own father . I blink , watching the cast when Darius roars , his grip tightening on my arms , and I try to push the cast wanting to see more and hold it over him when the room inside the cast catches on fire when Darius manipulates it himself and I am shoved back . My ass and lower back hit Tobias's desk , and I stared at him wide – eyed as he stalked toward me . His face was furious as he snarled , and I flinched as he smashed me with his magic , sucking the oxygen out of the air and choking me . ” You want to play , little Fae , then let's see

what you fear ! ” he snarls , reaching for me . His hands lock on the side of my face . I don’t fight him . I knew what I feared , and I have faced my fears head – on . He forces the cast to latch onto me . Only when it does what I fear is reflected at him , too . He staggers back when what he sees is his own reflection . The night he killed my parents was the first thing he saw . What I fear , I have always feared was him . The cast warps , and we are suddenly back in the basement where he broke my hand and leg , yet I don’t scream when it snaps it this time . I keep my head , reminding myself it isn’t real . However , Darius is not expecting to star in my biggest fears , his magic drops , and he takes a step back from me . ” What is it , Darius ? I face my fear daily . Not as weak as you thought , huh ? Because I’m still fucking standing ! ” I tell him . He blinks at me in shock , which soon turns to rage when he grabs me again . ” Let’s see how much bravado you have without magic then , “ he snarls before stealing my magic so quickly I stagger , sucking in air and gasping for breath when he takes every drop , leaving

me with nothing , leaving me hollow as he siphoned me . ” Darius ! ” Lycus growls , rushing toward us , but he freezes when Darius turns his glare on him . ” Give her power back to her , and she will be back in the fucking cells where she belongs . ” He yells at our mates before turning his attention back to me . ” If you think you can push me and win , Aleera ? You can’t . You’re smart to fear me . I am the monster you portray me to be , and pull that shit again against me , and you will relive your biggest fears . ” He snaps before turning on his heel and walking out .

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Chapter 90

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Chapter 90

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Book 2 Chapter 11 Darius POV My anger gets the better of me . I stole her magic , something I didn't think I would do again . I

didn't want her powerless , yet I couldn't have her digging around in my head . My anger will also be how I lose them if I am not

careful . Instantly , I regretted it as I walked out of the classroom . The betrayal I felt from her stole my breath . My mate's anger

was scorching me through the bond . However , Tobias's energy was curious as it washed through me , and I knew he would be

following me . Opening a portal in front of me . I stepped through it before he could follow me Letting the suction of it zap me into new surroundings . It was cold down here . Far below the ground and directly beneath the castle were the bunkers . When my mother and sister lived down here , I swear it felt warmer . Now it felt as cold as the nagging at my soul , cold as the nagging guilt that plagued me . No one knew this place was here except my father when he was alive and the two guards that kept watch in the cells , and of course , my mates . Aleera is utterly unaware that she sat in the cell that was the only entrance into this place besides portaling . However , only those of blood could portal into this place .

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The blood encryption that protected the place kept everyone out . Walking around and across the bunker , I sit on my sister's old bed . It was only a single , and she had drawn a fake window on the wall . I remember that day so clearly . She was so excited when I brought the paints down to her and snuck them in against Dad's orders . The beating I copped for that was worth it just to

see her face light up as she painted what she envisioned outside to look like . My father was a good father , but with my sister and that idiocy on my part , he lost it . If there was a closet full of skeletons , this place held mine , the bones and blood spilled by these hands , the souls destroyed and lives lost , this is where they are stored as a reminder of the kind of monster I truly am .

An entire species of Fae is eradicated because of me . No one had blood on their hands as I did . No one can say they have killed more people than the Dominic – Fae King . Was this my karma ? A punishment for my past ? Now I risked losing them all , the only four people I care about , and they would leave when they figured out what I had done . So many secrets , and now they were unraveling . I tried to make it up to her and apologize , but mum never looked at me the same after that day . She never uttered a word to dad or anyone again . She slipped into herself and became a shell . Her life force was gone , and she was an empty vessel of my mother . I did that to her , and she took it to the grave rather than risk losing another of her

children . Waving my hand in the air , I let my magic fizzle through my fingertips , casting the memory like a projection , and watch it repeatedly , wondering how I forgot , looking at any little detail I may have forgotten or overlooked . Though , there was no denying it was my fault . The familiar echo of the sound of her laughter as she skipped around the vast bunker . She was so small , pale from not being in the sun , but full of life even though forced to live down here .

” Darius , Darius , look at me , ” Sarah squealed as I stepped into the bunker . She did a cartwheel running over to me . I clapped , watching her do another before she slammed into me , wrapping her tiny arms around my waist until I scooped her up . I had just gotten home from school and couldn't wait to show mum the grade I got that day on my test . I ran straight down here . I always brought my homework down in the afternoon , and mum would help , and I wanted to show her that despite her being underground , I was still doing ok . She hated being apart from us , but none of us could bear the thought of leaving my sister down here on her own after the second wave hit . My father couldn't stay with her . He was too busy

trying to find a cure . Setting her down on the ground
 , I placed
 my bag on the coffee table and rummaged through it
 . Mum was making afternoon tea at the industrial –
 style bench and cutting
 sandwiches into the little hats , as my sister would
 call them . ” Mummy , mummy , can I have a drink ?
 ” Sarah asked , and my
 mother looked over at her and smiled warmly , a
 smile I never saw again after that day . ” In a minute
 , sweetie Darius is showing
 me something , ” my mother tells her , and she sticks
 her tongue out at me . I stick mine out back at her ,
 and she rushes off . My
 mother stops what she is doing when I stop beside
 her and hand her my paper .
 She beams happily and gives me praise , hugging
 and squeezing me tight , telling me how proud she is
 . Something dad never
 did since mum became trapped down here . ” That’s
 great , honey , ” she says , giving me a hug and
 kissing my head when we
 hear Sarah cough . The room fell silent , and it felt
 like time had stopped along with my heart . We
 turned from the counter to look
 at her . The scream that left my mother was loud ,
 visceral , guttural torment . That noise my mother
 made would forever haunt

me . The sound of Sarah's voice and the look on her face haunted my nightmares for years until I marked Kalen .

The blood drained out of me when I looked at her
My drink bottle fell from her hands as she coughed ,
blood sputtering out of her

lips . The plague worked like acid , eating away at
them so quickly no one stood a chance . No help
was ever fast enough . ” I

just wanted a drink , ” Sarah murmured as the
orange cordial spilled on the floor , pouring liquid
death all over the floor along

with her life . ” Mummy ? ” she gasped as blood
seeped from her tear ducts , ears , and nose . Sarah
collapsed and seized on

the floor while my mother wailed , clutching her and
all I could do was stand there in horror until my
mother screamed at me to

get help . But it was too late . They never survived . I
had filled my bottle up from the tap upstairs before
school . Tainted water .

That error took her life and killed her .

When she stopped seizing , I knew as I stopped at
the door to the cells . A noise so agonized and
tortured I knew I didn't just kill

my sister ; I had killed my mother too . I flick my
fingers , shutting it off , unable to see any more ,
unable to watch her shut down

, unable to see the horrified look on my father's face when he came down . How did Aleera survive and my sister didn't ? Why didn't I die that day with her , with mum ? I sat in the ruins of what killed my family . Staring at the place haunted me more than anything . Time slipped by , and it wasn't until I felt the tug of the bond that I found myself in my room . How many hours had passed ? I had no idea , but my mates were all asleep . Aleera was asleep on the edge of the bed beside Kalen .

Her head lay on his arm , and I brushed her hair back from behind her ear . Her bond tugged at mine , and I wanted to crawl in beside her , wanted to give in . Thank god she looked like her mother . I don't think I could bear staring into the eyes of her father every damn day . Even asleep , her bond tugged at mine , wanting my power , and mine wanted to give it to her , Ryze shakes his feathers out where he is perched on the headboard . Such wise birds , and I hated the way its beady eyes scrutinized me , though when he spoke , it shocked me . " Solace in harmony , " Ryze spoke . My brows furrow . "

Alirra , solace in harmony , ” he says ,
mispronouncing her name . I glance down at her ,
and Ryze leans down , raking his
tongue across her cheek , and his tongue glows red
. But he was still juvenile . Yet his message was
clear . He wanted me to
give her power back . I stroke his head feathers ,
and he moves , sitting back up his tail , swishing
around , and slapping Lycus in
the face . Lycus swats it in his sleep , which seems
to egg Ryze on because he continues to do it .
Leaning down , I brush my
lips against hers , my lips warm as I give it back ,
letting her bond take it when her eyes fly open . I
stand back , and we stare at
each other . She looked at me like she wasn't
sure she was dreaming , her bond tugging at mine ,
wanting the connection back . When she sits up
abruptly , she looks at our
sleeping mates , and I quickly slip into the bathroom
to escape back to her old room ” Darius ? ” I heard
her question herself and
felt her confusion , but I didn't stop needing to get
away from her , get away before I broke and gave
into her .

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