The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter, Chapter 121-130

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter Chapter 121

121 LAY DOWN ON THE BED

Cane felt like his skin was being burned, when the bald man touched the upper part of his arm, he almost thought his hand had turned into hot iron instead.

However, he only knitted his brows and said nothing, he didn't even let out a grunt at all, which amazed Redmond, because when Masson got his entry, he cried and wailed

like a three year old boy because of the pain.

Later on, he said he had never been in so much pain like that, but Redmond now realized that the endurance of both of them was not even comparable.

While Mason was only a spoiled brat, Cane had gone through something that Mason

didn't even dare to dream of.

On the other hand, Iris was talking to Ethan, showing her little lizard, which distracted him enough to not focus on the fact that they were inside this tiny room and was

locked.

Ethan didn't look he was fine, but at the very least, he was not on edge like before. He was trying to focus on what Iris was saying, but the problem was; all she spoke was about her little lizard, which didn't really interest him.

"Why don't you hold the lizard, maybe it likes you," Redmond spoke and once he opened his mouth, Iris glared at him, she missed what he was saying, but she knew it wouldn't be something good. "Both of you look cute together."

"Do you want to die?" Ethan shot the most terrifying glare at him.

"Honestly, every time I talk to you, it feels like I am setting myself to be stabbed."

Redmond snickered.

"Then maybe we should talk more often, so you can get used to it." Ethan's body emitted cold aura when he growled at the warrior, who looked like he didn't take this matter seriously.

Redmond clicked his tongue, his eyes glinted with humor. "No, I am not that much of a

masochist."

Thankfully, the bickering didn't last long, because a few second later, the man said that he had done with what he was doing.

Cane looked a little bit pale, but aside from that, there was nothing else to be worried about.

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121 LAY DOWN ON THE BED

Rewards

"Are you sure the girl is not a magic user?" the bald man asked again, he tilted his head to the direction where he heard Redmond's voice earlier.

"A hundred percent. She is a runt."

After that, the bald man mumbled again and laid on the bed, talking to himself in incoherent voice and not long after the woman in red dress came to open the door. It was Ethan, who rushed out of the room almost immediately.

He didn't want to spend another second inside and wanted to quickly go away from this tunnel. He felt the air in this place was suffocating and he could die if he had to stay any longer than this.

He didn't even care to see the magical tattoo on Cane's upper arm.

Iris also immediately hid her lizard when the woman opened the door. Cane had told her strongly that no one could know about the lizard, so she needed to be careful.

"Why the woman and the man inside that room talk in Andel language?" Cane asked Redmond once they had gotten out of the brothel and walked toward their inn.

"Because they are from that continent and can't talk in our language," he replied in a

matter of fact tone.

"Why they hire people from that continent?" Cane didn't really need to know about this trivial matter, but he found this questionable.

"Maybe because the owner is someone from there." He shrugged his shoulder nonchalantly. "There is a rumor about that, but no one knows the truth for sure about the owner of that black market and the auction."

Cane thought to ask Arthur to investigate about this further.

"They agreed to meet with you tomorrow morning, there is something that they wanted from the black market, but since they couldn't get the entry, they want you to buy it for them in exchange of one of the water magic stone," Will reported it to Cane.

"One?" Cane scoffed coldly. They had two and they would only give one? Meanwhile, hours ago, they were ready to give up the two stones and paid more money for the entry. "What they want from the black market?"

"For that, they want to discuss it with you tomorrow morning in their inn." That was all that Will could get. "Oh, and I happened to know that the crown prince and Sir Corry stay in two inn away from here."

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121 LAY DOWN ON THE BED

Rewards

Cane nodded. "You can go." He was waiting for midnight when Arthur would come to give him the report, but he felt his head had grown so heavy.

He was always having this headache, aside from not being able to sleep and having an acute insomnia, oncee he fell asleep, it was nightmare that was waiting for him.

But, after getting the tattoo, the headache became more and more unbearable, as if this increased of pain tested his patience, this almost like the feeling when he had to endure his new moon.

"Will."

"Yes, alpha?" Will was about to walk out of the bedroom when he was called.

"Tell Iris to come here."

Will was puzzled, but he didn't dwell on it and immediately went to the room next door, where Iris stayed.

It didn't take long before someone knocked on the door and Iris entered the room. Her sweet scent was enough to alleviate a bit of his headache.

She had her long, curly, hair loose, which made her tiny figure cloaked by auburn color. Her blue eyes stared at him, there was fear and anxiousness there.

"Yes, alpha?" she said gingerly. The memory of last time must be still fresh in her memory. There was nothing good coming out from being alone with him.

"Lay down on the bed," Cane said.

Her fear intensified when she heard that. "P- pardon me?"

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter, Chapter 122

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter Chapter 122

122 A PEACEFUL NIGHT

"P- pardon me?" Iris blanched when she heard the command. Her fists tightened under her long sleeves.

She wanted to say that there were literally brothels around them, he could pick anyone to his desire and fulfill his needs to his heart's content, with someone that could give him pleasure, instead of her, who knew nothing about it.

But then, the thought of him sleeping with someone else didn't sit well with her.

"Lay down on the bed," Cane repeated what he said earlier. He kneaded his forehead, seemingly trying to alleviate some pain, which made her a little bit worried.

Was this the feeling of seeing your man in pain?

If she could be worried about him, even over a little bit of discomfort that he felt, despite what he had done to her and hurt her, Iris couldn't imagine what kind of agony that Cane would feel whenever he remembered his late mate.

How he felt when he saw with his own eyes, his other half being killed brutally, along with their firstborn.

He didn't even show much emotion when she showed him the place where she buried the remains of his firstborn and his twin siblings.

"What are you staring at?" His voice was cold, but then he had never really warmed up to her, even after knowing what she had done.

In the end, since Iris knew she didn't have any other choice, she went to the bed and was about to take off her clothes, but then Cane stopped her.

"Just lay down."

Iris blinked her eyes, yet she remembered that he didn't need her to do that, thus she laid on the bed, waiting to see what he was going to do with her and braced herself for the inevitable.

However, even after a few minutes of waiting, Cane didn't do anything, he didn't make any move on

her.

What was he waiting for?

Iris was nervous, but then she became curious because Cane didn't do anything, nor did he approach her. She tilted her head to look at him and what she saw stunned her.

Cane was actually sleeping, his eyes were tightly shut while his head lolled to the side, as he was still sitting in the same position. Was he really sleeping now?

What was the point of calling her here when he wanted to sleep?

Iris pursed her lips. It was not that she wanted something to happen between them. The tips of her ears turned red for having such thoughts. She was having a hard time guessing what was on his mind.

But then, knowing he wouldn't do anything, Iris turned her body and lay on her side, so she could look at him clearly.

The wards

He looked less scary when he was sleeping, though she couldn't say that he looked peaceful, because there was a tight knit between his brows, as if even in his sleep he couldn't rest.

There was this long scar on the left side of his face. It traversed from his right cheek to his left cheek over the bridge of his nose.

But, it was not the thing that made him look scary, Iris didn't think he was scary with that scar. A lot of people had scars, even though not all of them were visible like the one he had.

As for her, there was nothing about scars that could scare her, after all a scar was only a reminder of how strong he had been and how he had survived, despite every cruel thing that was thrown in his.

way.

However, it was his cold and unfeeling nature that rendered Iris unable to stand the sight of him. She hated it when he was not able to control himself and let his past dictate his actions. His mind would be clouded by his pain at times like that.

"I hope you will not be in pain anymore..." Iris muttered under her breath, as she closed her eyes. She felt tired and a little bit sluggish now her worries had been proven unfounded and she knew that he wouldn't hurt her.

In the end, she fell asleep as fast as Cane did when she was there.

This small room was engulfed with tranquility, as both of them enjoyed each other's company, but around midnight, there was a soft knock on the door, which immediately woke Cane up. He looked very sober for someone who just slept so well after a long time.

Cane stood up and glanced at the bed, where Iris was sleeping soundly, her lips were slightly ajar and her auburn hair scattered on the pillow and the sheets beneath her.

He couldn't understand why he wouldn't have nightmares whenever she was nearby, but then he would think of this as a perk of the mate bond between them.

Cane walked toward the door and opened it, but he didn't let the person see inside the room, as he came out right away.

"Let's talk somewhere else," he said to Arthur, who looked travel-worn. Thick dust coated his cloak, but he followed the alpha to the bar, where it was still lively and ordered two drinks for both of them. "What did you find?"

"The king sent the crown prince to this pack and he and his advisor are in an Inn two streets from here," Arthur started.

Cane knew about that, but he didn't mention it. "What else?"

"I think you must have seen him at the auction, because he came to buy something from the black market, but he went to the auction instead."

"I have seen him. What is the item that he wants to buy from the black market?"

"From what Clad and I gathered, it's a herb. A medicinal herb.

Cane narrowed his eyes, but he didn't interrupt and let him continue to explain.

"I am not sure what Medicinal herb that the king wants, but he is willing to pay an exorbitant price for that. He even gave the crown prince the golden stamp. Arthur then explained briefly the golden

stamp incident from five years ago, and it was not so different from what Redmond had told him.

"That's why it is so significant for the king to give the item to him again."

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter, Chapter 123

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter Chapter 123

123 HE HAD THE URGE TO TOUCH IT

"Wake up! Alpha!" Will was knocking on the door for a while now, but Cane did not even make any movement from the inside, which made him anxious, because he knew the alpha was a light sleeper, there was no way he was sleeping through this commotion that he created. "Alpha! If you don't answer, I will tear down the door!"

It was not every day sight to find Will so worked up like this, but judging from the current situation, he was assuming the worst.

However, thankfully, before Will could burst the door with his shoulder, it was opened from inside and he went through, almost bumping into one of the pillars of the bed. He blinked his eyes and looked at Cane, who was standing at the door frame. Ilis expression was indiscernible.

"Alpha, I have been knocking at the door for a while now, but you didn't answer, so I thought something has happened to you."

"I was sleeping" Cane said simply.

Will didn't believe that, since when did he sleep until he was ignorant of his own surroundings, but then from the corner of his eyes, he saw red color. Iris was still sleeping and only then did he get it. He forgot that last night the alpha had told him to call Iris over.

Even so, it still didn't make any sense why he could have overslept. "You have an appointment to buy the water magic stone, he reminded him.

"Yes, I remember," Cane said languidly, as he waved his hand, gesturing for Will to go out.

After that, Will didn't say anything anymore, even though he felt it was weird for him to oversleep. His acute insomnia was not a secret. He could stay up for three days and three nights straight and even if he tried to sleep after that, it wouldn't last more than a few hours.

Amee and Grace were so worried about this and tried to concoct him some sleeping pills, unfortunately nothing worked, but he overslept this morning? It was inconceivable.

However, the same thought plagued Cane's mind right now. He stared at Iris, who was still sleeping. curling her body, while the little lizard nestled on her pillow.

Her scent lingered in this room and this eased his headache a lot. He almost didn't feel it anymore

now.

Cane spent a good few seconds staring at her and then walked closer, as he shook her shoulder, but she swatted his hand away and curled her body even more, until her knees touched her forehead.

"Wake up, Cane said, as he shook her shoulder again.

Iris mumbled something and swatted his hand away again and this time, she pulled the blanket over her head to cover her face. "Too... bright."

Cane knitted his brows, he looked at the curtains and walked across the room to draw them apart, so there would be more light illuminating the room before

he approached Iris and mercilessly pulled away the blanket that she was using to shield her eyes from the light.

"Ugh!" Iris grumbled pitifully when the light almost blinded her eyes. "No, Hanna, I want to sleep..."

Rewards

She stretched her hand for the blanket, but couldn't find it, thus she used the pillow to cover her face, which made the lizard fall off the bed.

But, Cane took away the pillow as well, forcing Iris to open her eyes.

"Hanna!" Iris was being grumpy, she felt her whole body was in pain and she needed more sleep. Her butt was still in pain as well, but then she sobered up at the sight of Cane.

She looked around, as if looking for Hanna, but then she remembered that Hanna wasn't here. She was traveling with Cane and the others.

"A- Alpha..." Iris stuttered, as if feeling her distress, the lizard jumped onto her shoulder. Iris rubbed her face and tried to neaten her hair. She knew exactly how she looked in the mornings with her curls making her head look as big as a troll. She would look like a lion with mane.

On the other hand, Cane didn't make any comment on her looks, but he spoke languidly. "Come down in fifteen minutes. His eyes flickered to her auburn hair. The sunlight shone brightly, making her look. like she was on fire. He had this sudden urge to run his fingers through her curls, but he walked out of the room instead.

Fifteen minutes?!

Iris immediately got off the bed and rushed to the room next to this, as she washed her face and tried. to untangle her hair. She couldn't brush her hair, thus she could only braid it and be done with it as soon as possible.

Once she was done, she put her lizard into a small pouch. Ethan bought it for her last night, so this little thing wouldn't catch anyone's attention. Along with the small pouch, he also gave her the book that she asked Redmond to buy for her, since he didn't have money for that.

The gamina was so nice and she liked him.

Iris walked down the stairs and looked around the restaurant on the first floor for Cane. It was not difficult to find him, he was sitting with Will and Ethan, while Redmond was nowhere to be seen.

Despite being surrounded by other people and how he dressed casually, he still gave domineering aura and aloofness.

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Iris walked closer to them and sat next to Ethan, who greeted her with a bright smile, as if what happened yesterday in that small room had never happened.

"We will leave once you finish eating" Cane said, as he pushed two sandwiches in front of her. It was still too early to go to the black market.

Iris took a sandwich and munched on it quietly, after she was done, Cane stood up, ready to leave, but Ethan and Will stayed behind.

More so, Redmond had not yet come down.

"Are

you not coming? Redmond is still not here," Iris said, puzzled.

"No, you will go with Cane, alone, Ethan replied to her question.

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter, Chapter 124

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter Chapter 124

124 THE PETTY ALPHA

Iris thought they would leave for the black market much later according to the original plan, precisely at night after the sun went down. But now, she was going alone with Cane?

She looked at the man beside her. He said nothing since they left their inn, or on their way to the meeting point. It was a tea stall not too far and would take around ten minutes on foot.

Iris said nothing either since Cane was very quiet. She didn't try to start a conversation, nor did she try to ask about anything, since more or less, she knew his intention to meet with the two people.

When they arrived, the couple was already there. From the information that Will gathered, they were merchants from the Holy Kingdom.

Iris felt there were so many people from that continent in this pack. Sometimes, she would even catch some people talking in Andel language.

However, she didn't voice this fact, as she followed Cane to sit in front of the couple. Neither of them looked more than forty years old.

Now, without a mask, Iris could see them clearly. Most of the people from the Holy Kingdom had small figures, even the average height for their men was only around one hundred eighty centimeters to one hundred eighty five centimeters, while shifters could grow two meters tall in general, almost twice the size of their bodies, especially when you were an alpha.

Therefore, with Cane sitting in front of them with his imposing figure, they literally looked like dwarfs.

However, these two were merchants and were used to facing various kinds of creatures, thus they got their bearings right away and assumed a formal attitude to talk to Cane, as if they were there to do business.

"What do you want from the black market?" Cane asked after a nice greeting, there was no need to exchange pleasantries, since they were there for trading.

"We want the Asturi stem." The woman named Cecilia spoke clearly. "You can find it if you find the head of the Rosantine guild."

The Rosantine guild was the largest guild from the Karam continent whose people were well known for their little barbaric nature. They would trade anything, even if it was an infant, from the most crucial information to trivial matters, as long as it brought benefits to them. Cane knew this much about that guild.

"I will give you one water magic stone if you can bring us the Asturi Stem." The woman did all the talking, while the man stayed quiet during the entire conversation.

"Two."

"No, one."

Cane tapped Iris' shoulder, as he stood up. "Let's go." They were willing to lose the two stones in the auction last night only for an entry, but right now, they were actually trying to make a fool of Cane, while expecting him to give them too many benefits.

On the other hand, Iris was surprised that Cane didn't haggle at all and asked her to leave immediately She didn't have any other choice and stood up, following Cane out of there

Seeing that, the woman was surprised, because she didn't think he would leave like that. There was no

effort whatsoever.

"Wait! Gentleman Cecilia immediately stood up as well and rushed toward Cane and Iris, as she

blocked their way.

Meanwhile, her husband, Fergan, tried to talk to Cane. He didn't know his name, since he didn't

introduce himself earlier.

"Come on, we can talk about the price, you don't need to leave so hastily." He chuckled awkwardly, as if to smoothen the situation, while his wife stood there to prevent them from leaving this place. "You have not even touched your drinks yet."

"One water magic stone is more than twenty thousand gold, Cecillia said, as if Cane didn't know the value of one such stone. Neither of them had the slightest idea that they were talking to one of the two alphas who owned a magic stone mine in this realm.

"We will add five thousand gold to that magic stone, how about that?"

Iris glanced at Cane, but his expression didn't change at all. It seemed what they offered was not good enough.

"Two water magic stones and you will pay however much price quoted to get the item"

Iris was surprised by his proposal, but then she remembered, the man was ready to let go of two magic stones, just for the entry, thus for them to pay the same price to get what they wanted, wouldn't be too much, right? More so, they wouldn't need to go through the hassle of finding the leader of the guild.

"No, that's too much!" Cecillia cried, she looked around and immediately lowered her voice. "I will give you one water magic stone and ten thousand gold, but we will pay half of the price for the item.

Cane narrowed his eyes. They wanted to rob him and make him work for them for nothing. "There is nothing to be discussed."

This time, he grabbed Iris' hand in an attempt to walk away once again, but Fergan joined his wife to stop both of them, effectively blocking their way.

Seeing this. Cane could see how important the Asturi stem was for them, but he was not clear about its functions.

"Fine! Fine! Let's talk, Cecilia said begrudgingly, as she waved her hand toward their table, gesturing for Cane and Iris to return, but he didn't budge, while Iris stared at his big hand that grabbed her wrist. "I agree!" Cecilia blurted out. "Let's discuss this."

Only then did Cane relent and return to sit on the table again and was willing to discuss terms. He let go of her hand and focused on the discussion, while the couple didn't seem to be happy with the price that they had to pay.

"I want to see the two water magic stones first. That was the first thing that Cane demanded.

Cecillia swiftly fished out something from her pocket, it was a small wooden box, and pushed it toward him across the table, but instead of checking it himself, Cane pushed it to Iris.

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter, Chapter 125

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter Chapter 125

125 FORGIVE ME

Iris looked at the small wooden box in front of her, she could feel there were water magic stones inside without even opening it, but because Cane told her to check it, she took the box and opened it to find two water magic stones that shone brightly.

She took one of them out and looked at the stone closely.

"That's a legit thing. If you are familiar with magic stones, you must know Cecillia looked relaxed, she wasn't worried at all.

On the other hand, Cane and Iris said nothing. He could tell that they were original, since he had spent a lot of time mining those stones.

But, there was another thing that they needed to check and Iris knew that as well.

It took a while for Iris to look into the stone and then return both of them to the wooden box before she nodded. "Yes, they are authentic," she said.

Fergan took the box away and secured it.

"So? Will we meet again here?" Cecillia asked, she looked at Cane, but then dropped her gaze, his dark eyes were too scary for her. "We will be here until next week.

because

"Just wait for the news from me," Cane said and then he didn't waste anymore time and stood up.

Secing that, Iris also did the same, she looked at the two of them before she followed Cane out of there, she walked a step behind him back to their inn.

And just like before, none of them talked.

But, when they arrived at the inn and Iris was about to return to her room, Cane called her over to his bedroom.

"What about those two magic stones?" Cane asked her immediately, as he closed the door behind him. He had asked for their lunch to be delivered to their room, because a few hours from now, they would leave for the black market

Iris knew he would ask about this. It was only him who she told about the origin of the little lizard. "No. Those two water magic stones are nothing like the fire magic stone."

What she meant with nothing was; those stones didn't have the core element like the fire magic stone did, before it hatched into a lizard.

"Did that only work with fire magic stones?" Cane seemed to have posed the question to himself and then, he raised his head. "Tell me again how it hatched."

Iris then recalled the event with all the details that she had already told him. There was nothing that she missed and now she had told the same thing twice, only now it was way more structural.

"Are

you sure it was a fire magic stone, and not something else?" Iris asked him.

This was the first time for Iris to witness such a thing, but then she was not familiar with the magic stones until recently. She thought she was gifted to feel the magic stones, probably this was a gift to offset the fact that she was a runt, yet the lizard was a different thing entirely.

On the other hand, even though Cane didn't have the ability Iris had, he had learned a few things about the magic stones and had been seeing them since he was a child, because of the shared mines between the Howling Wolf pack and the Blue Moon pack

"No, that's a real thing" He could tell that for sure.

Right at that time, someone knocked on the door behind Cane. It was the workers of the inn who brought their lunch.

The delicious smell of the delicacies wafted in the air and this tempted the little lizard to come out of the pouch.

Iris took the little thing out of the pouch once all the servants had put down their lunch on the table and left the room.

She took a piece of meat and gave it to it, which it munched on happily.

Cane frowned, he thought that little thing was sure eating too much for its tiny body. It seemed there was more for him to look into and find out how the fire magic stone that they gave could be so different from the others.

After finishing lunch with Cane in silence, she went back to her bedroom and slept for a while, before she woke up and changed her clothes. Half an hour from now, they would leave for the black market.

Iris braided her hair, while the little lizard slept in her lap. Now that she had to do this by herself without Hanna's help, she could do it faster.

Only after she was done did she walk out of the room to meet with the others in the restaurant on the

first floor.

However, the moment she opened the door, she saw someone was waiting for her and it was one of the two warriors that Ethan had brought along with them.

He looked at Iris sheepishly and this made her a little bit confused. Why was he here?

"Did the alpha call for me?" Iris asked him, but he shook his head and scratched his neck. He looked like he was about to talk, but didn't know how. "What is it? Is there something important?"

He then looked around, as if to make sure there was no one there. The corridor was empty, it was only the two of them here.

After making sure no one was there, he suddenly dropped to his knees with his head lowered, which startled Iris.

What is this? Iris blinked her eyes, because she couldn't understand this gesture. "What are you doing?" She took two steps back, puzzled by this action.

"Luna, please forgive me," he said in a low and regretful voice.

"What?" Iris blinked her eyes. She didn't understand what she should forgive him for. If she was not mistaken, his name was Avid, but she didn't remember that he had offended her before. "For what? Why should I forgive you?" Avid raised his head and looked at her earnestly. "Have you forgotten about what I did to you?"

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter, Chapter 126

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter Chapter 126

126 THE MYSTERY OF THE MAGIC STONE

In front of Iris, the warrior named Avid was kneeling with his head hanging low, as he spoke. "Have you forgotten about what I did to you?"

Iris didn't remember anything related to him at all. "I am sorry, but I don't remember. Have we met

before this?"

There were a lot of things that had happened recently and she couldn't recall that they had met before this.

Avid raised his head and looked at her closely. "I was the warrior in the tent under your care, were still in the Blue Moon pack and the monsters breached the fortress."

when we

It took Iris a while to recall a memory from that time, but then her eyes lit up, as a certain memory came to her mind.

"Ah! It was you!" It was not that she forgot about him completely, but the events after that overshadowed everything else. She remembered Grilla telling her about what happened to his family, what her father had done to him and his siblings.

"I want to apologize for what I said." He lowered his head in shame. "I wanted to talk to you earlier, but only now did I get a chance."

Now Iris remembered what happened and what he said to her at that time, but she didn't take it to heart, or else, she wouldn't have forgotten about that. There were more people who had talked harsher than him and hadn't apologized yet.

"Why are you apologizing?" Iris also dropped to her knees, because she didn't like it when someone knelt before her. "I didn't take it to heart. You don't need to think about that."

But, Avid shook his head. "I need to apologize and also thank you for what you have done for the Howling Wolf pack. You don't know how much we treasure your help."

If people said it was just food and medicine that she gave to them, they would agree, it was indeed only food and medicine, but people, who had never been in their position at that time wouldn't understand how much that simple thing gave them hope and comfort.

There were days when they thought they wanted to give up because the pain of living was too hard for them to bear and how desperate they were.

Therefore, a small act of kindness meant so much to them. The food she sent had helped them to go through their days and the medicine that was delivered had helped countless people.

Yes, a lot of people had died in her father's hands, but a lot of people had strived and were saved because of her. Now, Avid could understand why Hanna always insisted that she was nothing like her father. She was indeed different from her father.

Avid was shocked to learn what happened to Iris that day and also what Hanna had said. He was there, though he couldn't see, because he was still lying on the bed, he could still hear Hanna's clear and stem voice from outside.

"I am sorry for my offense."

"Thank you for apologizing to me, but please stand up, I don't think it is appropriate for you to do this to me. Iris looked at him. She remembered him now along with the words that he said to her, yet she didn't feel the slightest of anger toward him. "I too would have reacted like you if I were in your position."

Avid looked remorseful. He kept his head down. This was the reason why he pestered the gamma to take him on this journey, because he needed a chance to apologize to her properly.

He stood up and spoke in a low voice. "The food you sent then saved my mate. Thank you." He met his mate when they were still in the slavery and he remembered how he felt like his heart was being ripped apart when he watched his mate starve to death inside the cell opposite his.

It was a terrifying thing and a gruesome feeling to watch your other half die slowly, going through a painful death, as she grew weaker and weaker.

"Thank you."

Iris nodded, she said nothing, because she felt her throat constrict. She was overwhelmed by emotions at this moment, because she felt all her effort was paid off.

If she had to do it again, she would, without a second thought, despite all the beatings that she got

from Mason afterward.

In the end, both of them went to the first floor, where all the people had been waiting for them. The sky had turned reddish when the sun finally set in the west.

From this inn, they would need to travel around half a day by horse to reach the black market.

It was not far, but secluded, commoners wouldn't know about this place, even the members of the Moon Dew pack didn't really know the existence of this pack at all.

"Come on," Redmond said, as he stretched out his hand to help Iris to get onto his horse. "I think I need to teach you how to ride a horse later," he mumbled to himself.

And after everyone was ready, they left for the black market, leaving Avid and Trion behind, as they had their own tasks to get on with as well.

Currently, the crown prince and Corry were about to head to the black market as well.

It was night when they left for the black market and because of the location of the black market, they would need to go through a Lucent sand area. That place was like a desert, where it would be too hot if you crossed it in the bright day light. To avoid that, all the travelers would travel in the evening and arrive in the black market the next morning.

Just like the name, the sand was sparkling under the moonlight, as if it reflected starry sky.

"It's beautiful..." Iris muttered, she had never seen anything like that before.

"Nah, that sand will burn your feet if you walk on it under the sunlight," Redmond said, despite Iris not being able to hear that.

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter, Chapter 127

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter Chapter 127

127 THE BLACK MARKET

The black market was a place of mysterious trades and transactions, never lacking in providing even some forbidden goods or items for sale at inflated prices.

The

money

used often came from irregular channels as well, such as usury loans, laundered funds, thus making the entire market "black",

The black market was an illegal place where you could trade anything, or anyone. There were no explicit rules here, aside from all things that happened there would remain there and anyone that you saw mustn't be discussed with the outsiders.

If these rules were breached then the consequences would be dire, since it was easy to track down through the magical tattoo on your arm.

you

All in all, this was a very secretive organization, the owner of which was unknown. But according to rumors, it was someone from the Andelus

Continent, because Andel language would be often used during the transactions in the black market and the auction.

More so, even the king seemed to be well aware of this place, since the crown prince was here on orders from him. Meaning, he turned a blind eye because he gained benefits from this place as well. Before daybreak, they finally arrived in the black market, which was called Sky Black Pearl. It was a fortified stronghold located completely underground, despite the name 'Sky Black Pearl, with its entrance hidden on a barren hill.

As soon as they reached the barren hill, all of them dismounted their horses and walked toward the

entrance.

They stopped walking when they reached a dark, upright stele. With no words on its surface, the stone looked markedly cold and gloomy.

"This is the entrance," Redmond said. He gave the reins of the horse to Iris, who looked at the structure curiously, and walked forward, as he kicked it carelessly three times.

Slowly, a pitch-black passageway opened up behind the stele, leading to a tunnel deep into the hill. Soon enough, an old man emerged from the darkness, his hair was grey while his body was slightly bent forward. He had a luminous pearl in his hand to illuminate the path.

"Kicking the door with your foot? Are you sick of living?" The old man reprimanded Redmond angrily, since he took the lead and walked in front of all of them.

Iris was given a fright as soon as the old man raised his head and the luminous pearl in his hand to look at the five people before his eyes one by one.

When he raised the pearl in his hand, they could see him as well. The man had one of his eyes completely blind while his face was covered in wrinkles. His ferocious expression made him look. absolutely hideous!

Iris took a step back and bumped onto Ethan, who put his hands on her shoulder to calm her down, while Will took the horse's reins from her hand.

Ethan still couldn't guess why Cane took her to this kind of place, instead of Avid or Trion. New moori

was still ten days from now and there was enough time to go back from this underground black market. He didn't understand what the old man was saying because he was talking in Andel.

After Redmond talked to the man, Cane tossed a gold coin to him, who caught it deftly, despite being half blind. He looked at the gold coin and inspected it, only after he was sure that it was legit, a warm smile appeared on the corners of his wrinkled lips. Even his voice became a bit gentler.

The old man then called two of his subordinates to take care of their horses, before he opened the door behind him, where another man, looking identical to him, seemingly his twin, had been waiting for them. He wore a cold expression and even after Cane tossed him a gold coin, he kept that attitude. Will and Ethan frowned. What a waste of money. Why were they even in this black market in the first place? They didn't think this was worth it, more so, they were still under the impression that it was not right to go to an illegal place like this.

However, they kept their opinions to themselves after witnessing how Cane didn't budge with his decision.

The alpha showed the tattoo on his arm and the man examined it, while his twin brother was the guard for the entrance, he was the examiner.

After five seconds of staring at the symbol, he nodded and let them pass.

"I don't like the vibe here," Ethan grumbled and Will couldn't help but agree with him.

The first old man walked ahead of them and soon enough, a lively underground world revealed itself before their eyes.

This place was a literal subterranean town, aside from its location, it was no different from towns found aboveground. There were streets full of shops and magnificent buildings. Everything one expected to find in a town were all present. Luminous night pearls illuminated the expanse throughout the domain, leaving no corner unlit.

All of them followed Redmond past a few streets, because aside from him, no one ever came to this place.

Iris was looking at the variety of items displayed for sale, slaves and women, they didn't even spare the children.

All of this made their stomachs churn, but Cane and Redmond didn't seem to be affected at all. Iris pressed her body close to Ethan because she felt her heart ache to see the children crying, but the grown ups were conversing about how much they would be worth.

The three of them hoped they could buy rations and find the head of the guild to buy the Asturi stem as soon as possible, and then get out of there, instead they were strolling around for a bit. During this time, Iris would keep looking over her back, until Will noticed that.

"What is it?" Will asked, they were in a crowded street, but everyone seemed to be minding their own

business.

"Nothing." Iris was puzzled, because she felt someone was watching her, or maybe it was just her own feeling.

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter, Chapter 128

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter Chapter 128

128 SOMEONE IS WATCHING HER

After walking around for a bit, they finally came to the grain exchange district. Unlike the lively bustling scene in the other strects, it was very quiet here, only a few stores were open for business. but even those had a pitiful number of customers inside.

Even though some of these store owners were selling their own crops, the majority of the merchants here were middlemen in charge of the money. All they cared about was the cash, not the details of buying and selling.

"Now you know!" Redmond glared at Cane, who was walking beside him and then threw a glance at Iris, who was walking between Ethan and Will.

Redmond didn't want to talk much about this black market, nor did he want to provide this knowledge to Cane, because he wanted to make things difficult for him, but all the alpha did was only tell Iris to tell him that he had to answer all of his questions.

And of course, Iris did as she was told and Redmond didn't have any other option but to follow his master's orders. He told Cane everything from his knowledge about this black market.

He felt that he was just being robbed!

"The delivery would be free and I will make sure that you will get the items before winter comes!" The merchant was sweet talking to Redmond, while Cane just watched from the sidelines. "Where is the young master? Is he not coming here?"

He was Zen, an old merchant whom Mason always visited whenever he needed to buy grains and dry meat for winter, therefore, he was familiar with Redmond.

"He is not here," Redmond mumbled, not paying this man any attention.

"Who is this? New warriors? And who is that girl?" The old merchant nodded at Iris. "Did you just buy her for sharing?"

Iris didn't understand what he meant by that, but the other four men with her absolutely knew what he was talking about.

Will and Ethan shot him a dagger look, while Redmond was furious, as his face turned ashen. However, Zen didn't notice that and because this was not uncommon for Redmond to buy a girl when they came to the black market, so he assumed Iris was another chick that he bought to accompany him and would sell her again before they left this place.

"I know a place to buy a good girl. A virgin! You will like it! I am just telling you because you are a regular!" He said excitedly. "Give her to me when you are done, I will pay half of the price!"

But, no one shared his excitement and a moment of awkward silence descended. It was so disgusting to see a man thrice Iris' age to look at her with lust swimming in his Iris backed away and hid behind Ethan' body.

eyes.

They were familiar with such eyes, but Iris was mortified when she finally understood what he meant and missed what Cane said.

"You can't afford her, his voice was so cold and detached. The items are not good here, we will leave." Cane turned around and walked out of the store, followed by the others. He didn't even spare the merchant another glance, nor did he stop when he told them to wait.

Iris was sure Cane was saying something, but she didn't know what it was. She could only see his retreating back and how his veins protruded from his arms, even the sight of his back was so scary.

"You made a big mistake, Zen." Redmond sighed, as he patted his shoulder. That chick is the luna and that scary guy is the alpha. You offended them."

Zen blinked his eyes, as the information sank in. The luna? The alpha? From which pack?" He had never seen them before. "What about Mason, isn't he the next alpha of the Blue Moon pack?"

Redmond shrugged his shoulders. "You can say that he is as good as dead." And then he too walked away from that store.

Iris was tired from all the walking and when they could finally rest and Redmond found a good inn for them, she was able to enjoy her bathing time.

The warm steam wafted in the air, as Iris dipped her body inside the tub, she could feel her muscles. relax a bit.

She couldn't forget the image of those crying children and women and how callous people were to their predicament.

Just because they were of low birth, they were treated less than them, as if they were not more important than grains or dry meat for winter.

Iris was spacing out inside the tub when she felt that feeling again, as if there was someone watching

her.

She was currently on the second floor, so there was no way someone could accidentally walk into this room, especially when this bathroom was connected to the main room and all the windows were closed, but she couldn't shake this feeling off.

In the end, Iris hurriedly finished her bathing and put on a robe around her body. She didn't even dry her hair before she walked out of the bathroom, only to see Cane was waiting for her. He was sitting on the bed, holding a few papers in his hands.

"Al- alpha..... what are you doing here?" Iris felt the urge to go back to the bathroom, but he waved his hand to beckon her to come closer.

"Come here," Cane said impatiently, because Iris just stood there and didn't move.

"Hm..." Iris fidgeted. "I need to put on a dress first."

Cane lifted his head and looked at her state. She was dripping with water while her wet hair stuck to her face. She looked so small, as she stood uncomfortably, while hugging herself. Fear evident in her bright blue eyes.

"Hm." Cane nodded, but he didn't move.

Iris frowned. Wouldn't he go out?

But then, thinking back on it, he had seen everything, there was nothing to hide from him, yet Iris felt.

it was not right.

"What are you waiting for?" Cane knitted his brows when she didn't move.

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter, Chapter 129

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter Chapter 129

129 HER LIPS ON HIS NECK

In the end, Iris chose to get changed inside the bathroom, thankfully, that feeling of being watched had disappeared. It was probably because she was too tired and started imagining things.

Iris toweled her hair, but it would take time for it to really dry, thus she let her damp hair cascade down her back, at least, there was no more water dripping from it.

She walked out of the bathroom and her eyes met with Cane again. He stared at her for a while, before he beckoned her to come closer to him.

Iris relented and stood up two steps away from him. "Yes?" She asked in a timid voice, glancing at the papers in his hands and immediately knew what he wanted from her.

However, Cane didn't hand her over the scrolls, instead he started asking her. "Do you know the Karam language, Kars?"

"Yes. Iris learned a few languages from different continents and she could say that she was fluent in Kars, same as with Andel.

Cane nodded. "How fluent?" He himself could only handle a daily conversation in Kars and because he didn't use it for a long time, he was not sure if it was sufficient.

"Same as Andel."

Cane nodded again, seemingly satisfied with her answer. "You will come with me tomorrow to find the head of the Rosantine guild."

Iris was surprised to hear that, though she didn't object to it immediately, she still had some doubts. "I don't know about trading, I am not sure what to say." She had never haggled for anything in her life, how could she talk to the head of a guild?

"You only need to inquire about the price of the Asturi stem."

"But, what if they try to fool me?"

"And what if they did? Cane knitted his brows and when he saw Iris was having a hard time seeing the situation clearly, he simply said. "The couple will pay whatever the price that I paid to get the item. Why would I bother to haggle?"

Only then did Iris understand. The alpha didn't even want to be bothered by such a thing. For some reason, Iris felt bad for the couple. Wouldn't it make Cane look irresponsible?

But then, he had never agreed to haggle for the item for them.

Iris realized that Cane was a little bit cunning...

"Do you know what the Asturi stem is used for?"

Iris shook her head.

Cane didn't really hope for her to know about it, he only thought that maybe she stumbled on it when she read somewhere.

"Translate this and wake me up when you are done." Cane tossed the four scrolls in his hand toward Iris, as he laid down on the bed.

Iris managed to catch two scrolls, but the other two fell on the floor. She didn't have any complaints. though. This was not the first time he asked her to do this, more so, she preferred this than seeing him spiral out of control.

From what she learned, Cane was suffering from acute insomnia. He had tried a lot of things to help him fall asleep, but none of them worked on him.

Yet, seeing him right now, Iris was having doubts, because he could sleep just fine... was his insomnia even severe?

Shaking her head, she took all the four scrolls to the table and started to translate them.

Meanwhile, Cane closed his eyes, he put his guard down, as he indulged himself in the sweet scent that lingered in this room. His headache gradually dissipated and soon sleepiness came to him, something that was so peaceful, which he thought he would never experience again.

Outside, it was hard to tell whether it was day or night, since they were underground, but soon after Iris translated the fourth scroll, she couldn't hold back her drowsiness any longer. Her eyes were so heavy. Today was so tiring, whether it was mentally or physically. She wanted to close her eyes for a while...

She nodded off and rested her head on the table, using her arm as a cushion. There were only two more paragraphs left in the last scroll, but she couldn't hold back anymore.

In the end, she fell asleep, without knowing there was someone standing right outside the window, watching her. His eyes were so dark, like a night sky, as he looked at her intensely, as if trying to find something in her.

However, he immediately got away from there when the alpha stirred awake, feeling his presence. Fortunately, he was already gone when Cane got off the bed and went to the window, there was not one there and Iris was already snoozing off.

He stared at the girl for a while and then looked at the work that she had managed to finish. There was a complicated feeling that flashed in his eyes to see her.

She was his mate, she bore his mark on her neck. More so, she was nothing like her father, but he didn't feel right to treat her as one, despite the mate bond that was steadily growing between them.

This bond only made him feel ill at ease.

Cane looked at her deeply and out of impulse, he extended his hand to touch her hair that stuck to the sides of her face and splayed on the table.

Just like he thought, her hair felt so soft to his touch. He fiddled with the strands of her hair between his fingers. He didn't think that he had ever touched something so soft like this in the past ten years.

"What should I do with you?" Cane murmured to himself, as he bent down his body and carried Iris to the bed. She would hurt herself if she slept in that position for too long, moreover, it was just an excuse asking her to translate those reports.

Not all the reports needed to be translated.

But then, his body stiffened when Iris wrapped her arms around his neck unconsciously, her lips grazed his neck, while her warm breath caressed his skin. She snuggled closer to him because she felt

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter, Chapter 130

The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter Chapter 130

130 IRIS REALIZED HER CRISIS

Her scent assaulted his senses, but the most terrifying part was not that he felt uncomfortable with it, but because it was the other way around. He liked her scent lingering around him, as if she was the best medicine that he could ask for.

He wanted to keep her close, but at the same time, he wanted to put her at arm's length. No one would be left unharmed if they got too close to him.

But then, Cane's entire body stiffened, he halted his steps when Iris wrapped her arms around his neck unconsciously, her lips grazed the sensitive spot on his neck as her warm breath caressed his skin. She snuggled closer to him because she felt cold.

Cane's eyes turned a few shades darker, as he carried her to the bed. Her soft body against his made it hard for him to let her go, but she was sleeping right now. He could feel himself turning hard for her.

As he put her down on the bed, Iris opened her eyes groggily, her blue eyes looked at him hazily, as she blinked a few times, still unaware of her predicament, while her arms were still wrapped around his neck. He was only a breath away from kissing her.

No. Cane wouldn't kiss anyone. He didn't even kiss Aria during the whole three years of their relationship. He did it based on their carnal desire.

When it came to Cane, it was more pain than pleasure and Aria was willing to take all the pain from him. That was why, it was always her. The deed would be done callously and there was nothing more beyond that.

However, at this moment, Cane had this sudden urge to kiss her. Her plump and soft lips looked delicious and those lips enticed him to take a taste. He growled when his desire for her, to have her.

made him hard.

It was painful for him when he had this carnal desire, because he had to go through it until the end.

Maybe because of how he growled dangerously until it sent a shudder down her spine, Iris finally came to her senses and realized what state she was in right now,

"A- Alpha..." she stuttered to see the darkness behind his eyes and then let go of his neck. She didn't. even realize that she had been clinging onto him this whole time. "I-I am sorry...

It was a little bit too late for an apology.

Cane stared at her with his hooded eyes, there was a complicated emotion that Iris could see in those dark pupils and from how hard he knitted his brows, he seemed to be having a battle with himself.

Desire clouded his features, his hands fisted on the sides of her head.

At this point, Iris could feel his thighs tensing, as she straddled him without her knowing, while he placed himself between her legs. This position made her terrified, because she knew what would

come next.

How did they end up like this? The last thing she remembered was herself dozing off after translating the scrolls while Cane was still sleeping on the bed. Did she sleep-walk to the bed?

This wouldn't do... Iris still remembered what happened the last time they did it, even though she

couldn't blame him, since it could be said as him helping her when she was in heat, or else she would be more in pain.

Still, Iris wouldn't say that was a pleasant memory that she wanted to reminisce about. Did she have the strength to face his demons?

They stayed like that, while silence washed over them as time dragged by.

"I don't want to do this..." Cane finally spoke, his voice was deep and coarse, but he didn't move away

from her.

This time, Iris took her time to look at him closely. She could see deep pain in his eyes, ghastly scars. on his soul. Has anyone ever noticed that? Has anyone ever asked how he felt?

There was one silly question that crossed her mind at this moment; don't you feel tired?

His shoulders were wide, but not wide enough to carry all those responsibilities. No one had shoulders that wide to carry the whole world on his own.

She wished there was a way to take it all from him... even for a moment.

Iris hurt for him, somehow, she could understand him to a certain level, was it because of the bond that they shared? There were too many burdens for him, too many responsibilities and too many demons tormenting him.

But then, he had no one to turn to. Everyone looked up to him, they put their hopes and lives in his hands, and he must hold fast to their expectations for him, which meant he couldn't show any

weakness.

He didn't want to do it...

That was what he felt, he didn't want to hurt her, but he couldn't stop himself. Her father made sure to ruin him completely, tormenting him even after he had died.

Iris was not sure what to do, but she couldn't resist raising her hand and then touching his head. His body stiffened further with her touch, but he didn't jerk away from her. His hair was so soft when she buried her fingers in it.

She expected him to pull away from her touch, but he didn't. He looked shocked, but he didn't move away from her.

And when she started patting his head in rhythmical soft pats... Cane gave in to exhaustion and tuned out the pain. He lowered his head, as if encouraging her to continue what she was doing right now.

He buried his head in the crook of her shoulder, as he took the liberty to breathe in her scent, while Iris kept patting his head and soon, his breath evened out in sleep.

The alpha was sleeping in her arms, something that had never happened before. Time dragged by, and his labored breaths filled the air.

But soon, Iris realized her crisis.

He is so heavy!