

Chapter 8: Tana

I don't know what the little Kestrel told Ishir, but whatever it was, it nearly cost her life. I'm not surprised by my boos, although if these guys were smart, they would have played me up so that their odds would have been better. There's no way they are making money if I die tonight.

However, as the four of us take our stance, ready to ght, I know that none of us are dying tonight. But everyone in this stadium will burn.

All afternoon, I've been soaking up the sun. I've been breathing in the fresh air, feeling my re returning and burning in my gut. Unlike the others, I didn't try to partially shift. If I had, everyone would have realized what I am. I saw Ishir watching me several times today. He knows my strength has returned. I'm not sure I can totally shift, but I can denitely breathe re and burn these assholes alive.

When the doors open, I see Cedric head toward Zaiden as planned. Ishir heads straight toward me, and I run at him. I hope that Cedric will be okay, and Zaiden will follow the plan.

When Ishir grabs me, he begins spinning me. "Cedric has to open the gates on our side." That's all the notice I get as he tosses me toward the Commander. As I y through the air, I can see that it takes the Commander a moment too long to realize his mistake. My eyes burn red, and I can feel the re moving up from my stomach.

As the Commander's eyes widen, I blow my re over him and everyone in his box. I hear the screams of those around us as I make a point of swinging the torch into the re that I started. It may sound sick, but I relish in the sounds of the leaders of this hellhole burning alive.

I see Cedric and Zaiden working their way past the keepers to get to the underground. I take the opportunity to blow a stream of re at the chiefs coming to try to restrain me.

I turn, standing in the re, letting it rejuvenate me. I see Ishir tearing through the stadium, killing those that he comes into contact with. Keepers and chiefs are going after him. I see Cedric running across the arena. He makes eye contact and smiles at the re going on around me. I watch as he goes underground before making my stand.

I leap into the air and shift. My dragon form pushes through, and when I land in the center of the arena, I am completely transformed. I roar my deance to the crowd, and starting with the chiefs and keepers heading toward Ishir, I blow my re around the stadium. People are jumping out of the stands, willing to risk their death or serious injury to escape my re.

I turn to face Ishir. "Fly! Go! Burn this place to the ground. Then shift and run!" He tells me before shifting and ripping through the humans who came here to watch us kill each other but, instead, are the ones who will die today.

I y up into the air, roaring again before blowing my re over the arena, careful to spare the entrances where Zaiden and Cedric ran and the area where Ishir is currently killing. I can see the shifters running from the underground on the side where Zaiden ran to open the gates. Cedric is still missing, and no one is coming out yet. I blow more re over the top of the arena, watching as the spectators try to escape my wrath.

My re is blazing hot, and the arena is starting to melt in places. I see Ishir shift and jump from the bleachers as they start to collapse. I y around and see that shifters are now running out of the underground on three sides, but the area where Cedric went still has no one exiting. If they don't get out of there in the next couple of minutes, they will burn alive. I can't let Cedric die, not like this.

I y back to the stadium, screeching at Ishir before grabbing the seating area with my claws and ripping it off. I look down, seeing a group of shifters still locked in their cages. I begin ripping more of the walls away, trying to nd Cedric. The shifters are shrieking and screaming as the re gets hotter. I see a keeper; he has a gun, and he's shooting the shifters while they are trapped in their cages. I reach down, snapping him up in my jaws before throwing him across the arena, which is now a burning inferno.

I take my claws, wrapping them around as many of the cages as possible before lifting up and yanking their anchors out of the ground. I y them as far away as I dare before racing back to grab another group. I still haven't seen Cedric.

On the third trip, Ishir, in his tiger form, comes racing into the gaping hole. As I watch, he shifts, grabbing a body on the ground before turning to me. "I got him. Go, get the last group, and get out of here. This place is about to collapse."

He throws Cedric over his shoulder and shifts before racing back out. I grab the last of the cages, ripping them from their casings on the oor and ying them away from the arena. When I land, Ishir comes running over. He shifts again.

"Here, you take him and get out of here. They can't see you. No one can know who you are. Go! I'll nd you." He runs up my tail and onto my back, putting Cedric between my wings before running back down. I launch us into the air and watch as the arena implodes, collapsing in on itself. I can see Ishir helping the shifters out of the cages before I turn, ying us away from the re and ash, which is all that remains of our personal hell.