

The Lycan 191

Chapter 191

ASHANTI'S POV.

The population is more than I expected, the clamoring crowd makes my knees buckle and I struggle to stay on my feet as I walk to the circle drawn at the center of the field. There are voices calling out my name, cheering for me and others doing the same for my opponent. As I walk on, I look around the stadium and spot the stance where Alpha Reagan and the other high ranking officials are seated. His eyes are trained on me, reminding me of the fact that I don't have to disappoint him.

I won't.

Sighing heavily, I clench my fists by my side and join my opponent in the circle. I smile at her, hoping we can exchange pleasantries before beating the crap out of each other, but her scowl deepens and that's an indication that she doesn't want to be involved in my pleasantries. I look at the crowd once more and fear envelops me when I think of the possibility of me losing in front of everyone.

I can't let that happen.

"Why is that look on your face? Are you scared?" The girl, whose name I know to be Lois, asks with a sneer. I ignore her and keep looking around as we wait for our referee to arrive. "If you're that scared, why don't you just give up?" I shoot her a scowl. She nods. "It's possible, you know. All you have to do is kneel before me and bow down your head."

I'm not going to let that slide. I shoot her a tight smile.

"Where I come from, people who tell their opponents to surrender before the battle starts are the scared and weak ones."

"Scared and weak ones?" She scoffs.

"Yes. That's what I think you are since you keep trying to lure me to give up."

"You seem to be forgetting the fact that I'm the Lycan here. I'm faster, stronger, and more deadly th..."

"Yadda yadda yadda..." I rudely interrupt her, rolling my eyes. "Stop talking and prove it when the whistle is blown."

An uproar from the crowd makes me look away from her to see what's going on. When I see it, my soul leaves my body.

Beta Ronald.

He's going to be our referee!

No way!

"Alright girls." He hollers, standing a few meters away from the circle. "Your safe word is Red. No cheating. You start at the sound of my whistle. Understood?"

“Yes Sir!” Lois and I reply in unison.

“Let the best fighter win.”

I take my stance the moment the whistle is blown. Feet slightly apart with my left foot which is

s my non-dominant foot ahead while my right foot stays behind. My torso is hardened. I curl my hands into a fist and raise them in front of my face. My right hand behind while my left hand stays ahead. Lois had taken the same stance, but unlike me who is on one spot, she’s jumping around with a smug smile on her face.

Meanwhile the crowd has gone erratic.

“Come on!” She hollers, still smiling smugly and I’m so annoyed, I skip forward and throw a punch at her face. She swiftly shifts to the side, dodging the punch with such ease then smirking at me. “I told you I’m fast...”

I land an unsuspecting blow on her lips, shutting her up before she can finish that stupid statement of hers. She staggers backwards, trying to gain her balance and when she looks at me again, her eyes are dark with rage and her lips are bleeding. I smirk at her. She comes at me left angrily, swinging her right fist before my face thoughtlessly. I block the punch with my hand and duck down, ‘my eyes locate her exposed ribs and I don’t hesitate to drive my right fist into it. She howls in pain as she comes flying a few meters away before dropping to the ground with a loud thud and for a moment, I’m shocked at what I’ve done

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She flew.

She literally flew in the air. I had no idea I could do that.

There’s an uproar of cheers from the crowd and I can hear more people chanting my name and shouting out for me to get her.

I take a step forward, but she shouts out the safe word, Red, and the whistle is blown.

I just won the first round. A smile spreads on my face as I watch Beta Ronald go to check if everything is fine with her.

It turned out my opponent was all talk and no action. At the end of the duel, I emerged victorious with a ten on ten victory. She was so weak, she wasn't even able to throw a single powerful punch at me.

for my

We're escorted back out of the stadium, to the dressing rooms where I have to prepare second duel which turns out to be the same. I win ten rounds on ten and soon, it's time for the final duel and just as speculated, it's between Alina and me.

Right now I'm in the dressing room, repairing for the final duel and I wish Alpha Reagan would show up and kiss me again."

Instead the worst thing that could ever happen, happens.

Alina shows up.

"We've met at last."

"We've met at last." I repeat her words with a serious look on my face. If she thinks she's going to succeed in intimidating me before the fight begins, she's wrong.

"I heard your opponents were no match for you. You won both duels with such ease."

"You heard right."

"So are you ready to have a real battle?"

"I've never been more ready for anything else in my life."

"That statement made goosebumps scatter down my spine. I look forward to kicking your ass Infront of all these people."

I don't say anything.

A guard comes in.

"It's time." He announces. Alina and I shot each other murderous glares before following him

out of the room and then the stadium. We are halfway to the circle when a loud voice calls my

name.

"Ashanti!"

The cheering stops. I pause on my tracks and turn to see who just called. It's a woman. I don't know her from anywhere. She's frowning as she approaches us.

"What's going on?" Beta Ronald asks, confused.

"This girl has been cheating!" She screams at the top of her voice, to the hearing of everyone in the stadium. The cheering dies and my heart beat skyrockets.

What the fuck is she talking about.

"What... what are you talking about?" I ask, confused. Even Beta Ronald looks very confused.

"Her opponents, Lois and Céline, have been rushed to the hospital. Immediately after their duels with Ashanti, they started vomiting and Lois even fainted. It was discovered that their meals had traces of a dangerous herb in it."

“And you just concluded that she did it?”

“Yes, because there’s CCTV footage which shows her doing so. And also, the food tester who was sent to test the meals to be served to the guest Alpha dropped dead a few minutes after he tasted the meals. Ashanti was seen going into the room where the meals were being kept. There’s CCTV footage to prove that. She poisoned her opponents and also tried to poison the guest Alphas!” She says firmly, loudly and the entire stadium is filled with gasps from everyone present.

I look around, confused.

“That’s an act of treason!” Someone shouts from the crowd. “Seize her!”

Before I know what’s going on, a group of guards are dragging me out of the stadium.

“I didn’t do anything of that sort!” I try to fight them off to no avail. “I swear I didn’t, please. you have to believe me!”

But they don’t and I’m dragged all the way to the dungeon.

This is the end for me.

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REAGAN’S POV.

Okay.

I have one question to ask amidst all this chaos.

WHAT THE F**K IS GOING ON?

One minute Ashanti was being led into the stadium by my Beta and the next she was being dragged away like she was some criminal. If Kyle had not stopped me, I would have jumped right into the stadium from where I was seated.

“Alpha Reagan.” His voice calls my name, snapping me out of my thoughts. I look over my shoulders.

“What?” I bark.

“You’re walking past your office.” He says, calmly. I look back ahead and that’s when I notice I’m indeed two steps away from where my office door is situated. Groaning, I pull myself behind and stand In Front of the door. He opens it and once I step in, I’m beyond shocked to see Alpha Morgan and Rowan already seated in my office, engaged in a raging conversation on the topic. The moment they see me, they rise to feet and bow.

Alpha Reagan, how do you intend to handle this situation?” Asks, Alpha Morgan, impatiently.

“Yes. Tell us. What that girl did was sacrilegious! She deserves to be hanged immediately!”

“Silence!” I roar furiously and they both snap their mouths shut?

Hanged my a s s!

I’d cut my head off and feed it to the crows before I let my mate get hanged.

I’m walking towards my office table, but halfway to it, I turn to Kyle who looks ready to execute any command I give him right now.

“The fighters who are accusing Ashanti of poisoning them, I don’t care if they’re still puking their guts out or in a coma, bring them to me. CCTV footage, bring it to me. I want every detective in this pack on this issue. Now!”

“That will be done with immediately effect, My Lord.” Kyle bows and swiftly exits the office. I resume my walk to my work table where I sit on the chair and heave out an exasperated sigh.

Alpha Morgan and Rowan are staring at me, their eyes begging me to let them talk but I tell them with my own eyes to be quiet if they want to keep having heads.

I’m too upset, too furious, too scared to have a conversation with anyone now. The only thing

I want to talk about at this moment is how to get Ashanti out of this mess.

A murder attempt on the lives of two Lycan Alphas. That is not a crime even I, the Lycan King, can get her out without proper investigation. If evidence leads to her, she will be hanged and there’s nothing I can do about that. So, you see where I’m standing.

My a s s is on hot coals.

She didn’t do it.

know she didn’t do it. Ashanti is not a cheat, neither is she a murderer. She has no motive for trying to kill two Lycan Alphas and she’s definitely not the type to cheat in order to win a competition. She’s strong, she’s an excellent fighter and she knows that. She believes in herself, so there’s no way she would have planned to poison her opponents just so she could have an easy victory.

This is another one of those planned acts.

Her enemies are at it again.

This time around, when I get a hold of the culprit, I won't go easy on her. He or she will feel the wrath of my anger.

Twenty minutes later, the door to my office is opened and Kyle walks in with the two girls right behind him with a few guards. I don't let them come to me, I rise to my feet and go to meet them. The girls look terrified.

Good day, Alpha." They both greet in unison.

There's nothing good about the day.

"Tell me what happened." I order calmly, dangerously. The girls exchange knowing looks and nod at each other before one of them, the red-haired one, clears her throat to speak.

"Ashanti poisoned our meals so she could have easy victories over us." Says the girl, but I don't believe a word she just said. I look at Kyle who shakes his head.

He doesn't believe it either.

"No." I say, looking back at the girls. "Ashanti would never do a thing like that."

"How are you so sure?" That's Alpha Rowan. He rises to his feet and comes to meet us at the centre of the office. My eyes are glued to his lips and I'm fighting my urge to leave a punch on it. A punch that will keep the mouth shut. "That girl Ashanti, she's an ordinary werewolf who was going to go up against Lycan Soldiers. She'd do anything to win and poisoning the meals of her opponents to incapacitate them was the easiest thing to do." I shoot him a sharp glare that makes him back up.

"You know nothing about that girl, so be quiet!" I sneer, before looking back at Kyle. "The CCTV." He stretches his right palm out and in it lies a flash. I pick it up and fly back to my table

at the speed of light.

The rest of the men, except the guards, join in as I watch footage of Ashanti arriving at the Premium Residence and going to the room where the meals were being kept, but other than that, there's nothing else that directly ties her to being the one who poisoned the meals.

Even more confusing!

Just then, the office door opens and a guard walks in with something that looks like grass a small bottle in his hand.

and

"My Lord." He calls with a deep bow.

"Speak." I order impatiently. He raises his head to look at me.

“After searching Ashanti’s locket room at the stadium, these two things were found in it. This herb is what they claim she used to poison her opponents meals and the liquid in this little bottle is the deadly poison they claim she put in the meals for Alphas.” The guards’ words splatter across my face like hot oil. I am hot and cold and unsteady.

That can’t be right.

That can’t be true.

“She tried to kill us!” Alpha Morgan insists and I shoot him with an angry glare that shuts his mouth.

Something’s not right!” That’ Kyle. I shoot him an eager look. He looks back at the CCTV footage and backwards the scene where Ashanti arrives at the Premium Residence and goes into the room for meals. It ends there as usual.

My frustration peaks.

“Why does the footage show her going into the room, but there’s no other footage of her actually poisoning the meals?” I ask, agitated.

“That’s because there cannot be footage of something that never happened.” He says and looks closer at the screen. “And that time. Quarter past eleven am, that’s just ten minutes before I went to the dressing room to talk to her. When I saw her she was angry with me for asking someone to tell her to meet me at the Premium Residence only for her to arrive and I was nowhere to be found.” The entire room goes still and I stare blankly at the wall ahead of me.

After a few seconds, I look back at Kyle who has a knowing look in his eyes.

“Are you thinking what I’m thinking?” He asks me quietly and I slowly nod my head.

“She has been set up.

“F u c k!” He curses bitterly and I look at him in awe.

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ASHANTI’S POV.

I’m sitting on my butt on the cold cell floor, leaning against the wall with my knees pulled up to my chest. I have been crying since I got thrown in here. My heart hurts, my head feels like someone is blowing away horn in it. My face is completely drenched with tears. I raise my head from between them and stare blankly at the dark wall in front of me.

I’m being accused of poisoning my opponents and attempting to poison the guest Lycan Alphas who were invited to come watch the competition. Among all the accusations that have ever been levied on me in this pack, this tops it all and it’s definitely going to be the end of me.

Alpha Reagan is no longer interested in me, so I doubt if he'll jump in to save me like he always does. My only hope now is Alpha Kyle and there's very little he can do because the people who set me up definitely crafted the perfect plan that will trace back all evidence to me.

I'm going to get hanged publicly and my father will be persecuted for the rest of his life for having a child like me. It's Over.

Everything inch of my body is taut with tension. Pressure is building in my chest, pounding louder and faster and harder. I cannot calm the palpitations crashing my nervous

I'm

going to die for a crime I did not commit.

system.

The sound of approaching footsteps makes sirens spin in my head. I jump to my feet and rush to the barred cell door, looking left and right, eager to see who's approaching so I can begin my plea of innocence. The footsteps become louder as the person comes closer and when he finally comes to view and I see his face, I almost sprout out a pair of wings and fly away.

"Alpha Reagan." I call in a broken whisper. He steps in front of the cell and my stomach falls over. He's glaring at me with his wiped clean of any emotion. "I swear I didn't do it. You know I'm not capable of such." I whimper. Tears return to my eyes and spill down my cheeks like a waterfall. The look on his face, the unguarded strain, the flinching terror, makes me swallow dryly. "Please. I've been set up. You have to believe me." Is all I can manage.

"The CCTV footage shows you entering the meal room at about quarter past eleven am." He finally speaks and my mind starts working like a computer to process what he just said.

"The meal room?" I ask with creased brows.

"Yes. The room were the meals to the served to the guest Alphas were being kept." I look away from him and furrow my brows as I try to scout my brain for any memory of me going into a meal room at eleven fifteen am and it clicks.

The meal room!

That room!

I shoot Alpha Reagan an eager look.

"I remember going into a room which had foot set on the table. So much food! I was even tempted to test some. I had no idea those were the meals for the Alphas."

"What did you go to do there?"

"Someone told me Delta Kyle asked me to meet him there, but when I got there he was nowhere to be found. I only found out later, when Delta Kyle came to meet me himself at the dressing room, that it had been a prank. That's the only reason why I went into that room."

“So, you didn’t put anything in the meals.”

“No!” I deny it with all my might, tears burn behind my eyelids and a painful nod forms in my throat. “I would ne...” I try to speak again but my voice breaks. I attempt to swallow the knot in my throat, but it feels like I’m trying to swallow toothpicks. “I... I...” I stutter painfully. “I swear I would never do a thing like that. I’m not a murderer.”

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“What about your duel opponents? Do you know anything about their food poisoning? There’s a serious look on his face as he poses that question. I’m too weak to speak. My head drops and I simply shake it with tears falling from my eyes to the floor.

What’s all this?

“I don’t.” I croak and sniffle tears. “Please you have to believe me.”

“I believe you.” He says calmly. My head stops shaking and I stare at the ground below for a millisecond before averting my gaze to him, looking thoroughly stunned.

He believes me.

Did he just say that?

“I believe you.” He repeats the words as if he knew I needed him to do that. Sparks explode in my brain. My eyes water even more. I’m momentarily dumbstruck by the impossible of this

moment.

Alpha Reagan believes me.

“Do you?” I ask, shocked.

“I do.” I smile in tears.

Thank you Alpha Reagan. Thank you so much for believing me.” I watch him take out his cell phone from his suit jacket and dials a number. The person picks on the third ring.

“The girls in the hospital, bring them back to me. The woman who showed up at the stadium. to accuse Ashanti, bring her to me too. I need to interrogate them until one of them tells me the truth about what happened. Even if I have to break their skulls open to see the truth sitting in their brains, I will... I’m on my way.” He ends the call, shoves his phone back into his jacket and looks at my face. Our eyes lock and electricity zaps between us. “I’m going to get you out here.” He says with so much confidence, I almost dance on my spot. I smile.

“Thank you.” My inaudible voice whispers, but he hears. He pips his head, staring at my lips, studying me in an entirely new way. I look at him, not knowing what to say or do anymore. When he’s done staring at me, he clears his throat and takes a step back.

“No one is allowed to come in here and see you. Beta Ronald is out there to make sure of that. Also, don’t eat or drink anything served to you. The person trying to set you might try to get extreme when they find out an investigation has been opened. We don’t want history repeating itself. Is that clear?”

“As clear as day.” I nod eagerly.

I’m famished right now, but my life is on the line. I’m not going to risk it for a plate of food. I can definitely withstand hunger for a few hours.

“Good. Just hang in there for some time. I’ll get you out here very soon.”

“Thank you very much, Alpha Reagan.” I thank him from the bottom of my heart, my eyes lighting up hopefully. He doesn’t say anything. He simply turns on his heels and walks away. The moment he’s out of sight, I return to

my sitting position and lean against the wall with

my eyes closed.

I feel a lot better and alive now. If Alpha Reagan is in on this case, it means the truth will be revealed and I won’t have to get killed for a crime I did not commit.

“He has come, Lena. He has come to save us.” I whisper to my wolf, who immediately springs up in my mind, as though she had been waiting for me to summon her.

“I told you, didn’t I? Alpha Reagan never stopped caring about you.”

I don’t know if that’s true, but I’m very happy.

His involvement in this investigation gives me hope that things will go smoothly and I’ll be vindicated.

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ACHILLES’ POV.

Her completely dishevelled hair. Her red as a tomato and tear-drenched face. Her watery eyes and trembling lips. The overall hopeless look on her face.

She thought no one was going to fight for her. Not even me. That reality makes my chest constrict with pain.

What she doesn’t know is that there’s very little I wouldn’t do for her.

Every second she spends in that dungeon cell takes away a hundred days from my life. It took me all my will power to walk away from that dungeon, leaving her there. I need to solve this issue as fast as I can so she can get released.

“Where are they?” I ask Kyle as I approach him. He’s standing in front of a door and he immediately opens it when I ask that question.

“In there.” He points into the room. I step in front of the door and look inside. It’s an interrogation room. It has a metal table at the centre with four chairs around it. Two on each long side of the table. Two of the chairs have already been occupied by the two girls who accused Ashanti of poisoning their meals.

They are in on this plan to set up Ashanti. They know the mastermind of the whole plan and I’m going to get that name out of them.

“Should I join you?” Asks Kyle. I approve with a simple nod before walking into the room. The girls look terrified to see me again.

“Alpha Reagan.” They call in unison.

I hate it when they say things in unison.

I take one of the seats across from them, while Kyle takes the other which is just by my The girls, who cannot maintain eye contact with me, drop their gazes when I stare right at their faces with my eyes burning with anger and indignation.

“You claim Ashanti poisoned your meals so she could easily win the duels.”

“It’s not a claim, My Lord.” Says the red-haired girl, looking at me. “It’s the truth.” She firmly states. My brows crease.

I admire her confidence, okay?

“Is it?”

“Yes, My Lord.” She maintains her confident response. I look at Kyle who looks like he’s trying to hold himself back from breaking her mouth with a punch.

side.

He’s p e .

“How come you’re so sure it was Ashanti who poisoned you?”

“In the course of my duel with her...” Says the brunette girl. “I felt very weak and unsteady. My eyes were spinning and I couldn’t throw a single powerful punch. My body felt like it wasn’t mine. After the duel, when I got into the dressing room, I rushed to the toilet and vomited my guts. Celine rushed into the toilet and puked as well and that’s when we noticed we had the same symptoms and duel partner, which was Ashanti. We then proceeded to ask around if the other fighters were feeling such as well, but everyone else was fine. That’s when we concluded that Ashanti poisoned us in order to win and get to the top.” She explains in detail, in a confident tone. I fold my arms over my chest and lean against the chair, my gaze flickering from one girl’s face to the other.

I can see through them.

I can read their expressions and it tells me they are telling lies about Ashanti poisoning them.

“So, Ashanti poisoned you to get to the finals, is that what you’re saying?”

“Yes, My Lord.”

“Who’s the most obvious girl in the women’s category to reach the finals?” I ask carefully. The girls look at each other, confused.

“Uh... Alina?” The brunette girl says, unsure.

Alina?” I ask.

“Yes. It’s Alina. She’s the strongest female warrior in the pack. She was the most obvious. finalist. Everyone knew that.”

“Everyone, including Ashanti, right?”

“Yes.” The brunette nods. I smile. They have no idea I’m trying to back them in a corner.

“And have you heard any rumours of Alina getting poisoned like you too?” I ask, giving them critical looks. The red-haired girl chuckles.

“No. Of course not! Ashanti wouldn’t dare to do that!”

I’ve got them.

“Good. So what you’re trying to tell me that Ashanti knew Alina would be a finalist, but she didn’t poison her, yet she poisoned you two so she could win and go to the finals and fight a strong and healthy Alina, who happens to be the most powerful Female Lycan warrior in the pack? Does that make any sense to you?” My brows are furrowed. The calm look only face has been replaced with a scowl. I place my hands on the table and lean forward. “I asked you a question.”

“The herbs! We also concluded that she was the one because of the herbs.”

you

“You were rushed to the hospital before the herbs were found in her locker. How did before then that they were in her locker?” I ask sternly. All colour drains from their faces. They are as white as ghosts now.

know

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“I uh... we...”

My anger tips over and I slam my palms against the table, causing a loud bang that echoes throughout the empty room and makes the girls jump in their seats out of fright

“Stop stuttering and answer me! I want your voice and sentences to be as clear and concise as the ones you made when you were accusing Ashanti of poisoning you.” Kyle places a hand on my shoulder, urging me to calm down. I shoot him a stern glare. He doesn’t flinch. He’s used

to this mood.

“Calm down and let me take it from here.” He gives two gentle taps on my shoulders and nods. I suck a deep breath and lean against my chair, allowing him to take over.

He looks at the girls who are almost in tears, I bet my sudden outburst scared the shit out of their pants.

That was my goal.

“You know...” Kyle starts. He places his hands on the table and intertwines his fingers. His eyes are trained on their pale faces. “I just carried out a survey on the number of contestants who were able to eat food before going in for their various duels and do you know the results I got?” The girls shake their heads. “Out of the one hundred contestants who were to fight today, just the two of you ate food this morning despite the big fights you had ahead of you.

‘so, statistics have shown that more than ninety five percent of fighters are unable to eat anything before going in for big fights because they lose their appetites. How then were you girls able to eat full course meals? Where did you get the appetite?’

“I... I was hungry.” The brunette girl quickly says. I hold back a chuckle.

Another lie.

Even me, as strong as I am, cannot bring myself to eat anything before big fights just the others. Nervousness steals away your appetite leaving you empty.

“I was hungry. I have a very big appetite. You can ask my mum.”

“Be quiet!” I command. She instantly shuts her mouth. I lean forward, my eyes on her white. face.
“Seated before you are Alpha and Delta, yet you have the audacity to open your mouth and spew lies?”

“I swear I’m not lying.”

“You put the herbs in your food with your own hands. You poisoned yourselves and now you’re accusing Ashanti just to put her in a bad spot. Yes or no?”

“Alpha Rea...”

“If you dare lie to me one more time...” I cut her off with a deadly tone. “I will hang each and every member of your family before your eyes and chop off parts of your body piece by piece into nothing but a pile of bleeding flesh on the floor. So think hard before you answer that question.”

“We know the truth.” Kyle chimes in. “We know all of this is a plan act and there’s the main mastermind behind it. You two are just pawns in that mastersmind’s game. You are just carrying out orders. We know all of that already. I don’t need your confirmation to know if Ashnati did it or not, I know she didn’t. She’s innocent. What I want is for you girls to tell me the truth. Say the truth and you’ll be pardoned. Lie one more time and everything Alpha Reagan just said will come to pass. If you think he’s bluffing, make the wrong move.” The girls start trembling as they look at each other. Kyle leans closer to them. “Did you or did you not poison yourselves?”

The red girl turns to the other who frantically shakes her head.

“You can’t!” She denies. “She’s going to kill us!” That piques my attention. I lean closer to

them.

“Who’s she?”

“We can’t say.

“WHO IS SHE?” I roar at the top of my voice and the walls of the room tremble. The girls scream in fright and duck under the table like I pointed a bullet at them.

e’s going to kill us if we say her name.

“Would you rather die by my wrath for concealing the truth or be shown mercy by telling me what I need to know.” They both look up. “Speak now!” I scold furiously.

“It’s Rhea!” The red-haired girl cries out, tears streaming down her cheeks. “Rhea is the mastermind of all this. She asked us to poison ourselves and accuse Ashanti. She poisoned the It was all her. There is even CCTV footage to prove it! It

meals to be served to the guest Alphas

was Rhea!”

I am ready to set something on fire.

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ACHILLES’ POV.

Rhea.

The sound of that name in the red girl’s voice keeps ricocheting through my mind like a bullet. Irritation burns through me each time the image of her face flashes in my mind.

She’s Ashanti’s sister. The one who has been causing troubles for her since the day they both set foot in this pack. My mind is whirled with a dozen different things I could do to punish her.

This was supposed to be an endgame. If Kyle and I didn’t pour our hearts out of this investigation to uncover the truth, Ashanti would have been killed.

After the girls called her name, Kyle scouted every CCTV footage and there was the evidence we needed to prove that Ashanti did not poison anyone. I watched the footage of Rhea dropping the poison in the meals ahead. Right now I’m heading to my office to show the evidence to those impatient Alphas so they can divert their attention from my mate.

I’m so relieved her name has been cleared.

“Tell Ronald to get Ashanti out of that dungeon right now. She should be taken to my chambers and attended to by every maid available.” I order Kyle who’s walking by my side.

“Yes, Sir.”

stops walking to transmit the information through minlink while I go into the office. When the Alphas see me, they both rise to their feet.

“I hope you’ve come to tell us the girl involved in this is about to get hanged so we can go and watch.” The sharp mouthed Alpha Rowan spews carelessly.

“Sit down and be quiet!” I order, without sparing him a glance. Soon, Kyle joins us. I connect the flash to the laptop and carry it to meet them. They’ve both taken their seats and are quite. “I feel obliged to do this only because the woman involved is very important to me.” I say, placing the laptop on the table. Kyle comes over and plays all the tapes in the flash, all of which show that Rhea indeed orchestrated the entire operation. When the final tape ends, Kyle closes the laptop and I turn to face them.

“The girl who was dragged away from the stadium, the formally accused, is innocent. She had nothing to do with all of this. The real culprit is the girl you just saw in the footage. She’s now in the dungeon.” I tell them in a serious tone. The two Alpha exchange confused glances before looking at me again.

“Meaning the formally accused girl was set up?”

“Exactly.”

“Then the culprit should be killed immediately.” Alpha Morgan agitates.

That’s why I always have problems with him. He kills without thinking. I can’t count the number of innocent people he has wrongfully executed in his pack because of his bad temper. One of the reasons why we are never on a good foot.

I shoot him a frown.

“The n

next time I tell you to be quiet will be with a punch to that flippant mouth of yours. We can’t just kill her even though she’s guilty. There’s a procedure to follow when handling this sort of issue. For now...” I stand up straight. “Go back to your packs. I apologise for the tension caused, but this crime took place in my pack and I will handle it. I will let you know when a decision is made.”

“But Alpha...”

“I AM YOUR KING!” My voice rises with each word until I’m yelling. The men freeze. I force myself to take deep breaths so I don’t drown beneath my anger. The men standing before me look pale and tired as they bow their heads to me.

“I’m sorry, now.” They bow to Kyle as well and exit the office.

My Lord. We’ll be on our way

“You did it.” Kyle says, a smile touching his lips. I turn to him with a soft look on my face.

I cannot begin to describe the relief I feel in my heart right now. The anxiety I felt a while ago has taken a twenty storey jump out of the window. Probably bleeding to death on the ground.

I now.

My mate is free.

“I didn’t do it alone, Kyle. You played an important role in this investigation.” His grin widens by a fraction of an inch.

“I’m just carrying out my responsibilities.” He says softly and I nod my head. As I look at him, closely, something in my gut comes to life.

There’s something I’ve always wanted to confirm from him and I think now’s the right time.

“Ashanti.” I say her name quietly. His eyes light up as expected. “You like her, don’t you?” He pauses. Looks away. Drops his head and chuckles lightly before looking back at me. There’s still that soft look in his eyes that screams to me the answer to that question.

“Of course I do. She’s a sweet girl. Easy to get along with. Anyone with a brain will know she’s a very likeable person.”

“I’m talking about something deeper. I saw you two the other night. I’ve seen how you interact with her. How you look at her. How you do everything to protect her. You’re in love with her, aren’t you?” The tension between us can suffocate someone a mile radius away.

“What does it matter?” His trembles throb.

His face shows no emotions. Lips perfectly still. Back straight and hands unclenched.

He doesn’t look angry.

He doesn’t look happy either.

He’s just... there.

“Do you want to be with her?” I ask calmly, quietly.

“You already have her.”

“But you desire her.”

“I do not desire what belongs to my King. That’s sacrilegious. I swore an oath to protect you and what’s yours, not take it away from you.” He says-tightly. I nod.

“So, your duty towards me is what’s stopping you from going after Ashanti.”

“My duty and our friendship.” He simply states. Warm pools in my stomach as my eyes widen in shock

Friendship.

He looks at me long and hard.

regret about how I feel about Ashanti and focus on making things right with her. My

tions are mine. I will control them. You should do the same because if you don't, you'll

lose a great partner and this pack will be robbed of the opportunity to have a great Luna rule over its subjects." He gives me a lopsided smile and roughly pats my shoulder. "Stay woke!" Then he breezes out of the office before I can say anything.

I stay frozen on my spot, staring blankly at the door he just exited, my mind filled with words

in his voice.

He's right.

I need to make things right with Ashanti, else I'll lose her for good.

Chapter 199

RHEA'S POV.

"Why won't anyone tell me what's going on?" I ask the guard who ushers me into a dimly lit room, but I get no response from him. I was napping in my bedroom when armed soldiers barged in and asked me to follow them. They escorted me out of the Harem quarters and brought me to the castle dungeon where they had me locked up in a cell. Now, I've been brought into this dimly lit, shabby looking room without anyone telling me what's going on.

"Sit." The one word order comes and I quickly sit on the chair that has been pulled out for me. There's a table in front of me and a chair on the other side. My cuffed hands rest on my lap as I take inventory of the room. It's almost completely dark and cold and has an eerie feeling that's drowning me in fear.

Why have I been arrested?

A question I still haven't had an answer to.

It couldn't be because of the set-up Alina and I planned. She promised to make sure even if the plan backfires, it won't be traced to me or her.

"Alright..." I look at the guard standing by my side. "Now, I'm begging you. Please tell me what's going on."

"You will know soon." The guard says curtly and looks away from me. I know he's not going

to answer any other question, so I seal my lips and impatiently wait for what's going to

happen.

A few minutes later, the room door is opened by a guard who steps in and peeks around in for a few seconds before stepping aside for someone else to come in. Every organ in my body freezes when Alpha

Reagan steps into the room. I almost evaporate on my seat. At the speed of light, I rise and bow down my head as I offer him a greeting.

“Good day, Alpha Reagan.”

No response.

All I hear is his footsteps coming closer to the table I’m seated at. Soon, I can feel him standing right before me, but I keep my head down because I’ve not been instructed to lift it up.

“Leave us.” The Alpha’s gruff voice deciphers and the next thing I hear is retreating footsteps and the sound of the door closing. I nearly swallow my heart. I’m alone in this room with Alpha Reagan.

I wonder what I’ve done to warrant this.

“Look at me.” The order I’ve been waiting for comes through. I sigh with relief and raise my head to meet his gaze. I flinch in terror when he looks at my face. He looks like he’s going to eat me raw.

That is not a good sign.

If that’s

If I’ve been brought to the dungeon and my hands bound, it means I’ve done something very bad and the only bad thing I’ve been involved in lately is the poisoning and set-up. Why I’ve been brought here, then it’s over for me.

“What did Ashanti ever do to deserve all this hatred you have for her?” He asks, his voice filled with dark undertones. My heart melts.

It definitely has to do with the set up.

But how?

How did they trace it back to me?

Alina said...

“When I ask you a question, you give me an answer without any delay.” I quickly nod my head and swallow dryly. “Now answer my question. Why do you hate Ashanti so much?” His voice is deeper and more dangerous as he repeats the question. My fingernails dig into my palms, almost causing them to bleed.

I’m so nervous, I can’t even think straight.

1-out of my mind, I try to look for reasons why I hate Ashanti. The first one being because she’s my woman’s daughter. Second, she’s the firstborn, so that makes her our father’s heir. She’ll inherit the throne and become Alpha of our Pack when he’s no more. She’s a great fighter and no matter how much I try to deny it, she’s better than me in every way.

Those are a few reasons why I hate her, but of course I can’t say that to the Alpha. He’s in love with her and badmouthing her in his presence is equivalent to a death sentence.

"L... uh... I don't hate Ashanti." I lie, which is a big mistake. His gaze darkens. A low growl escapes his throat as he takes a step closer to me. His piercing brown eyes pin me in place with it's spikes and I draw in a deep breath and shake my head. "I... hate her because she's our father's favourite child. He always treats her differently, specially, simply because her mother was his true mate. I hate her for that."

"To the extent that you'd want to see her hanged in public for a crime she did not commit?" My jaw drops. My eyebrows touch my hairline as my eyes widen in shock.

I'm here because of the set up. The plan backfired and now I'm a suspect.

This is messed up.

"I... I don't know what you are talking about."

"Don't even try to feign innocence on the subject, Rhea, there's evidence. You orchestrated the poisoning of Ashanti's duel opponents and attempted to murder the guest Alphas who came to watch the competition and tried to make it look like it was Ashanti's doing. You failed." His words land their blow and I'm struck and speechless as I process the words. My eyes flick from his burning gaze and I plaster them on the wall ahead, asking myself how this is possible.

Alina said she made sure nothing will be traced back to us.

Does this mean she was arrested as well?

This is not good.

"I know about the previous set ups you've done to make things hard for Ashanti in that . I only turned a blind eye to them because I thought there was a simple

misunderstanding between the two of you, after all, siblings fight. But after witnessing this, I've come to the conclusion that this is more than a sibling brawl. This is enmity. Raw hatred that's heavy on your side. You will be punished accordingly for your crimes, so brace yourself." His verdict comes through and world fades out of focus. The only I see is his silhouette breezing out of the room and his footsteps sounds like echoes in my ears.

My eyes water. A painful lump forms in my throat and I try to swallow it to no avail.

What the fuck did I get myself into?

Chapter 200

RHEA'S POV.

"Get on your feet and start moving!" The guard who walks into the room barks, but I'm too weak and stunned to move.

...you will be punished for your crimes...

Those words are still ringing in my mind. The wild look in his eyes spoke a hundred unspoken promises to me when he said those words to me.

Promises to make my life a living hell. Promises to make me go through suffering ten times worse than anything I've put Ashanti through. This is the end for me. That reality makes me feel like I've been struck in the chest with a lightning bolt.

I still have one question in my mind.

How?

How the fuck did they trace all of this to me?

"If you make me repeat myself, you won't like what will happen to you."

"Leave us." A feminine voice orders and the next thing I hear is heels clicking on the floor. My composure dissipates when I look up and see Alina approaching the table with a bright smile on her face.

Alina." I call as I eagerly rise to my feet. The guard has left us and the door has been shut. Alina you are here." I breathe with relief. A smile even dares to form on my face.

If Alina is here then everything is going to be alright. She's going to get me out of here.

"I'm here." She pulls out the chair across from me and sits down. "Sit down." She says and I prop on my seat. Energy is coursing through me with such vigour I have never felt before. I feel relieved. So relieved, it makes me want to laugh.

For a moment I thought it was over for me.

I place my cuffed hands on the table and lean closer to her.

“Did you run into Alpha Reagan on your way here?” a ridge forms between her eyebrows as she gives me a confused look.

“No. Why?” She asks blankly.

“Well...” I sigh heavily. “He was here a while ago and he gave me a good scare.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“He told me he had evidence to prove that I’m the one involved in the poisoning and that I’ll be punished for my crimes. The only evidence he could have is CCTV footage which you said you’d make sure no one gets a hold of. I don’t know if he has it at all. And if he does, I don’t know how he got a hold of it. The girls must have ratted me out when they were being interrogated.” I’m talking so fast, I wonder if she can hear a word I just said.

I’m nervous and scared.

I don’t want to go to jail. I don’t want to be hanged in public. This has got to be a mistake.

“Alina, you can get me out of this, right?” I ask her with hope-filled eyes. The emotionless expression on her face has not changed. Compared to how chatty she can get when she has a plan to destroy Ashanti in mind, she’s very quiet and I wonder why. “Why aren’t you saying anything?” I reach out for her hands with mine, but she dodges and leans back on her chair. My heart misses a beat.

What was that?

“Rhea you need to calm down. You are saying too many things at once. I can’t even keep up with you. Relax.” I try to relax on my seat to no avail. My heart is beating too fast, my body is too hot, my stomach

is flipping in and out and I feel like there's a volcano about to erupt within me. I risk facing a death sentence because of what the two of us planned and did. I can't keep calm.

I watch in terror as she picks her pristine manicure without any care in the world. It feels like to her, I'm not in this room at all. My fear and nervousness have no effect whatsoever on her.

lina." I call her name and she looks up at me. "What do you have to say about this situation?"

"What I have to say is that it's pretty bad." She says carelessly. Heat-like oil splatters all over my face and I go numb.

"What do you mean by that?"

"The crime you're being accused of is too serious. If I try to get you out, I'll be dragging myself in. I can't let that happen."

"What the hell is that supposed to mean?" My voice is a broken whisper.

"It means you'll be taking the fall for what we did." The fluid tone of her voice makes me go limp. I blink and stars explode and a new torture rages through my limbs. I start shaking my head in complete denial.

"No. No. No, no, no, no." I cry within short, heavy breaths. "You can't do this. I can't take the fall for this. Alina, someone died. I'll be convicted for murder. I could be sentenced to death and hanged in public!" My voice rises with each word and I'm yelling by the end of the sentence. Alina, however, is as calm as a wave.

She looks unbothered by my current predicament and the prospect of me being hanged in public if she doesn't help me out.

I stare at her in total disbelief. Reality taps wine on my face.

She's not going to help me. She doesn't care.

She smirks at me and says;

“I don’t care.”