

## Chapter 24: VINDICATION

He proceeded to begin to rip at my dress, but I turned around weeping, trying to stop him.

But he was so strong, and I was defenceless.

I tried to fight and squirm free, but he pinned me down, and the tears were flowing nonstop.

"You're just like your father." He told me.

"No please." I begged as I wept.

"What's happening, Xaden?" A man's voice said.

I turned and saw that all the men were now awake and were looking at us.

The tears were still rolling down my eyes.

"What's that smell?" Someone else asked.

"This bitch tried to poison us." Xaden said. "A spoilt princess like her trying to cook?"

The men were quiet, and then I heard footsteps, and then the first man's voice said, "If she tried to poison us, I think the best punishment is that she takes the food. If it's poison, then she should take it. If she dies, then we know it's poison."

I turned to see the man who was speaking.

He had short, blonde hair and was as big as Xaden.

Then I remembered him.

He was the one Xaden had ordered to kill all the high-ranking members of the pack.

Xaden stared at me and then let me go.

"Go, take it." He said.

I swallowed heavily and walked up towards where the food was, past the scrutinising gaze of all the men.

They all looked at me through the eyes of an enemy.

They all hated me.

I picked out the meat; it was so soft and tender, and then I took it to my lips.

It was so delicious.

Then I took a spoonful of the gravy and ate.

Then I turned to face the men.

They all looked at me as if hoping that I would explode or something.

I stood for a while and then stared at them. Then I felt my throat feel uncomfortable.

They noticed my discomfort.

Had I accidentally put in a poisonous mushroom?

This was how I was going to die.

I had proved him right—I had poisoned them after all.

I waited for the impact of the poisonous mushroom, and the unexpected happened.

I belged.

I quickly closed my mouth in shame.

"I'm sorry." I apologised.

They just stared at me.

"She didn't poison it." The man said,.

"She is just lucky, Erik," Xaden said.

The men stood in their places, refusing to go near the food, even though I had cooked it for them.

"Please, I made it for you." I offered.

They didn't move.

I sighed, knowing that no matter what, I was their enemy and they would never trust me.

Then I walked back into the carriage and got in.

When I peeped a while later, I saw them eating the meal, and I smiled.

