

The Storm Behind the Throne

But unlike me—painfully aware of the politics, the danger, the chains still linking us—my wolf isn't afraid. She is something carved from prophecy and pride and teeth.

She feels insulted.

He dares.

Tamed? she snarls inside my head. Obedient?

The word 'queen' she might forgive.

The word tame?

Never.

She was not born to kneel but to rule.

"He thinks he is the king between us?" she hisses, her voice still weak but blazing. "Then let's show him a piece of us, shall we?"

The growl that leaves my throat doesn't sound human. It starts low—barely audible, a vibration against Kei's chest. A warning.

Then it deepens.

It rolls through my bones and tears out of me like something ancient waking up.

The air shifts.

At first it's subtle—a tremor in the floor, the faint rattle of glass. Then—

The hall erupts.



A violent wind rips through the chamber like a living thing. Tables flip as if struck by invisible giants. Chairs crash and skitter across the marble. Decorations tear free from the ceiling as though shredded by unseen claws. Silk banners snap violently. Candles gutter and die. The massive chandeliers sway, groaning overhead.

People scream.

Alphas — powerful, arrogant alphas — duck and shield their heads as debris rains down. Elders drop to their knees, shouting prayers. Servants cry out in terror.

The wind howls louder.

And I—

I stand perfectly still.

“What is happening?!” someone shouts.

“Is this the Moon Goddess?!” another screams.

I scoff inwardly. Now you remember to call her a goddess, not a god.

I feel it — raw power pressing against my skin, begging to be unleashed.

It isn't even whole. I can feel the limit, the choke of the remaining shackle.

I don't even know the full extent of what I'm capable of.

And yet—

The entire hall looks like it's been struck by a hurricane.

Kei looks at me — really looks at me — but not with fear. With uncertainty.



He doesn't understand. Or maybe he refuses to.

Without hesitation, he moves, turning his back to the chaos and pulling me into his chest, shielding me with his body as if I'm fragile glass instead of the storm itself.

My wolf laughs darkly.

He thinks he's protecting us from the storm.

He truly doesn't know.

But across the wreckage, my father's eyes lock with mine.

He knows.

Oh, he knows.

I see it there—anger, calculation, and that old fear he never shows anyone else.

He's seen this before and if the world knew what I could do—what I am—they would either worship me...

Or try to kill me.

He hid me because of this.

Not to protect me but to control me.

The wind whips harder—

Then—

Kei's arm tightens around my waist as debris flies past us.



And the most infuriating part? His touch calms her.

My wolf stills.

Not fully. Not submissive.

Just... calmer.

His touch is grounding.

Infuriatingly grounding.

My wolf's rage simmers the second his skin presses against mine. The mate bond hums like cool water poured over fire.

The storm dies as abruptly as it began.

A heavy silence crashes down over the hall. People stare at one another in confusion, pale and breathless.

My father steps forward smoothly, as if nothing happened at all.

"This is nothing," he announces coolly. "A natural gust of wind. That being said, the celebration is over. You may all return to your homes."

Murmurs ripple through the hall. Some elders look unconvinced.

One of them dares to speak. "But, Your Majesty—"

My father's growl cuts him off.

"I said the celebration is over."

His Alpha King voice rolls through the chamber—commanding. Absolute.

"Everyone get the fuck out. Now."



No one argues. No one protests. People stumble over themselves to obey.

Within seconds, the once-crowded hall is empty, leaving behind overturned furniture, shattered glass, and wounded pride.

Now it's just us.

Kei.

Me.

My mother.

My father.

Silence settles like dust after a battle.

My wolf is calm now—coiled, alert—not because of peace, but because Kei's thumb is absently brushing my freed wrist where the cuff used to be.

He's the one who angered her.

And somehow, he's also the one steadying her.

I hate that.

It's going to be a problem. I can feel it already.

A very big problem.

One I will have to solve by making him accept my rejection.

My father steps closer to Kei, lowering his voice.

"For your own good," he says coldly, "you will re-cuff both her hands."



I stiffen. So does Kei.

"And I will warn you one last time," he continues. "Never—ever—remove those cuffs completely until she is marked and mated by you."

There's something beneath his tone.

Not fear for me.

Fear of me.

"You have no idea," he adds quietly, "what she is capable of when she is whole. She is not... ordinary"

That's all he says.

Before Kei can respond, my father turns and walks away, his robe sweeping over broken glass.

My mother lingers. She looks at me—sadness heavy in her eyes, an apology she will never speak.

Then she follows him like a lamb.

The doors close behind them.

And just like that, it's only us.

Kei exhales sharply. "Unbelievable."

He drags a hand through his hair, irritation written all over his face.

"Just how stubborn are you," he mutters, glaring down at me, "that you have the Alpha King repeating himself and lecturing me like a paranoid old man?"



His pride is bruised. I can see it.

He hates being told what to do.

Especially by another Alpha, king or not.

“Why the hurry?” I shoot back sweetly. “Soon you’ll find out.”

His eyes darken instantly. The green fades.

“Careful,” he says quietly. “Because I can shut that mouth of yours. You’d be prettier if you were mute.”

His thumb brushes my lower lip.

“And I know exactly how to shut you up.”

Heat rushes to my face before I can stop it.

My traitorous mind flashes to that bruising, breath-stealing kiss — his mouth crushing mine, the taste of dominance, the way my lungs forgot how to work, the way he stole my balance, my control.

I hate that my body remembers.

My cheeks burn.

He notices. Of course he does.

A slow, dangerous smile curves his mouth.

Then he pulls. The cuff linking our wrists snaps taut as he drags me toward the exit.

I stumble forward, furious at how easily he moves me — furious at how painfully aware I am of every inch of his body beside mine.



Kei pushes the doors to the outer hall open.

And there, near the doorway—

Standing rigid, pale, and nervous—

Is his brother.

Waiting.

For half a second, the world goes quiet.

Then he speaks. “Brother. I was waiting for you. I’m sorry.”

The words hit me like a slap.

All the heat, all the humiliation, all the fury I’d been forcing down comes roaring back like a wildfire finally given air.

Oh. No.

You do not get to stand there looking sorry.

My wolf is still sore and groggy, but she doesn’t need to be whole to remember pain—the burn on my scalp, the way he dragged me like I was luggage that complained too much.

I lunge without thinking.

The chain between Kei and me snaps tight as I yank him forward with me. He stumbles—actually stumbles—then catches himself with a curse, but by then I’m already there, my fingers fisting in his brother’s hair.

I yank—hard.

He yelps. Not a dignified sound. More like a startled animal discovering



consequences.

The sound is deeply, profoundly satisfying.

“Remember this?” I hiss. “Because I do.”

His hands fly up, panic splashed across his face. “Y-Your Majesty—wait—!”

I don’t wait.

I drag his head down to my level and snarl, “That’s how it feels.”

Kei’s hand clamps around my waist and he hauls me back before I can do something truly memorable—like introduce his face to the floor.

But not before I rip my hand away—

Still holding a chunk of his hair.

He stares at it.

I stare at it.

Then I look at the very obvious, very new, very thin—and very ridiculous—bald patch on his head.

A slow, vicious smile curves my mouth.

“Consider that interest,” I say sweetly, holding up the trophy for a second before letting it fall.

He goes even paler, which I didn’t think was medically possible.

“Touch me again,” I say calmly, “and you’ll pay the rest with blood.”



Kei's grip tightens, but he doesn't scold me. He just exhales through his teeth, like he's trying very hard not to murder someone in a palace corridor.

"I—I'm sorry, Your Majesty," he blurts, bowing so fast he nearly headbutts the floor. "If I had known you were the princess, I would never have—"

"Stop." My voice is sharp enough to cut. "You should have listened when I told you not to touch me. And even if I weren't a princess—you don't lay a hand on a woman. Ever."

Behind me, Kei's voice turns cold. "Enough, Ravelle."

His brother looks up, relief flashing across his face, like he expects backup.

He opens his mouth again, desperate. "I did what I thought was best for you, brother—"

"Don't call me that."

The temperature drops.

I turn, startled. Kei's expression isn't smug. It's fury—contained, precise, and far more dangerous than shouting.

"You did something unforgivable," Kei says quietly. "When I trusted you with everything."

That surprises me. I expected him to clap his brother on the shoulder, proud—because thanks to him, he knows my truth.

He doesn't.



“And don’t flatter yourself by pretending this helped me,” Kei continues.
“You didn’t reveal the truth. You trampled it.”

His brother swallows. “But—look on the bright side. What I did made us see the truth. She’s the princess. Now you’ll take your—”

“That’s for me to decide.”

Kei steps closer, his presence alone forcing his brother back a step.

“When we return tomorrow, you will face the disciplinary committee. They will decide whether you’re still fit to be Beta. No Beta goes against his Alpha’s orders. Brother or not. You crossed a line that should never be crossed, Kael.”

So that’s his name.

Kael.

Kael looks like he’s been slapped.

Kei doesn’t wait for a response. He just turns and yanks me along by the cuffs—like a very offended storm god having a very bad day.

We nearly collide with a maid who’s clearly been standing there, pretending she’s invisible.

She curtsies so fast she wobbles. “T-The King asked me to take you to your room for the night.”

“Lead,” Kei says shortly.

She does.

The room she brings us to is... impressive. Huge bed. Tall windows.



And the second I step inside, my stomach turns. Darius.

His scent is everywhere.

"I don't like this room," Kei says immediately, like he's stolen the words straight out of my mouth. His jaw tightens. "It's covered in that bastard's scent. Get me another one."

The maid wrings her hands. "B- But this is the largest guest room, my lord. It's the best—"

He gives her a look that could curdle milk. "I hate repeating myself. And I've been doing that a lot since I came here."

I snort before I can stop myself, then glance at the maid. "We'll stay in my room. The princess's room. It's bigger than this anyway."

Kei looks... thoughtful. Then, to my surprise, he just nods. "Good."

And just like that, my bad idea becomes reality.