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Phoenix: 1

Sebastian's aura still churned through the hall, refusing to fade. Warriors stayed frozen on their knees, heads low, no one dared to breathe.

His Lycan's fiery orange eyes locked on the crowd, daring anyone to move.

I could hear my heart thudding in my ears. As a warrior, I'd seen death before... but never like this.

The crowd was silent. Luna Tamia's hand covered her mouth. Tina's eyes were huge in fright. This must be the first time she had actually witnessed Sebastian's beast taking someone's life right in front of her.

The Alpha King's Lycan finally looked at me, his eyes still burning orange, "No one!" his voice was raw with fury, "No one touches you!"

The air shifted as his aura started to settle, but some of it stayed behind like a dark fog.

His Lycan moved back a little, allowing Sebastian to sweep his gaze over the crowd. His claws were still dripping with Brian's blood, "Anyone else wants to test my patience?" he barked, his

voice booming through the hall, "Touch her, look at her the wrong way ... hell... never breathe near her without my permission or I will end you the same way."

The crowd stayed frozen, and I felt my head reeling.

Two years back.

Two years back, how much I wanted this.
Someone who would tell the world that nobody could hurt me.

Sorry, Sebastian, but isn't it too late for that?

In two long strides, he was in front of me.
Without asking, he scooped me up like I weighed nothing, cradling me to his hard body.

"Sebastian..." I trailed off when my voice cracked,
"Y... you killed Beta Brian."

"You're shaking," he muttered, and I was taken aback by the sudden transformation. From an angry monster to a softie, "You can yell at me later. Right now, you need to be away from all these vultures."

He was heading towards the exit of the hall, and I couldn't see anyone from the crowd because an army of Lycan guards was following him.

"Y...you can put me down... I'm... I'm fine..." my fingers curled into his shirt on their own, "I can

walk."

"Yeah, and I'm a damn priest," he said drily, not slowing, "I'm choosing not to let you."

Once we reached near the gates, his voice rose again, "No one follows us. No council, no guards."

The heavy doors slammed shut behind us, and his pace slowed. His chest was solid under my cheek as I leaned into his body to comfort myself.

He glanced down at me with a teasing smirk, "Congratulations once again for being a head warrior."

Goddess. He just killed an important man of my pack, and now he's trying to be funny.

"Head warrior?" I glared at him, "You didn't even ask me."

He sighed and tightened his hold, "You were given what you were worthy of. And you deserve more than that, Phoenix. Stop belittling yourself just because some pack members think that you are wolfless." 1

It didn't lessen my anger, but I leaned my cheek against him anyway. My body was too tired to keep up with my mouth.

Sebastian pushed open the door to his room with his shoulder and stepped inside without missing a beat.

The door clicked shut behind him. He crossed the room and finally stopped near the bed.

I thought he'd finally set me down on the bed, but instead he just stood there for a second, his arms still locked around me like I might vanish if he let go.

I saw him tilting his head slightly with that familiar faraway look flashing in his eyes, mindlinking someone.

"I asked to bring us some food."

I groaned, "I'm not hungry... I told you..."

"And I told you, I don't care," he started moving towards the bed.

"Sebastian. Put me down."

I called his name, forgetting momentarily that now I was the head royal warrior and would work under him.

"Oh, I will, sweetheart," he said, sitting right on the edge of the bed with me still in his arms. Before I could react, he adjusted me easily on his lap like it was the most natural thing in the world.

I scowled at him, trying to wiggle my ass, "This isn't what I meant."

"Yeah. But it's what I meant," he replied smoothly, pulling me more into him, and then sniffing me. 1

I narrowed my eyes, "Did you just—"

"Mm-hmm," he said in a low voice, his lips dangerously close to my ear, "You smell like trouble, Emerald," he remarked lazily, and before I could shoot back, ignoring the jolt in my stomach, his teeth grazed my earlobe in the slightest tease.

I nearly jumped out of my skin, "Sebastian!"

He chuckled, bumping his forehead against mine like he was testing my patience, "What? You look tense. I'm just helping you, Phoenix."

"Helping?" I muttered. After killing my pack's Beta, what was he helping me with? However, the corner of my mouth was betraying me, twitching upward.

Right now, Sebastian King wasn't acting like a fu*cking king.

He had detected the slight amusement in my voice, "Ah, there it is," he said softly with a small smile.

The smile lingered for a second, then slowly it

started fading. Something in his gaze changed.

We stayed there, eyes locked, neither of us speaking. And for the first time.

For the first time, I wanted back my beautiful face so badly. I wanted to feel his face rubbing against mine.

For the last two years, Jai convinced me that this mask was now a part of my personality. But no. It wasn't. 1

My breath hitched when he leaned in just a little, his hand brushing the back of my neck. His mouth opened, grabbing the edge of my mask and pulling it up with his teeth.

The hot breath on my naked lips did something to my insides.

He wanted to kiss me.

Goddess! My face!

That was when the knock ruined the moment.

"Food, your highness," a servant's voice said from the doorway. Sebastian's jaw flexed, but he didn't let me get off his lap.

Surprise! Surprise! Surprise!

Because not only did the servant enter the room, but Tina also stepped in, right behind him. Her eyes flicked between us, and I could see shock

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and fury on her face.

I instinctively tried to stand, as I felt heat rushing to my cheeks, but Sebastian's hand pressed firmly against my thighs, keeping my ass exactly where it was.

"This isn't your room, Tina," his lips curled up in a mocking smirk, "Do you actually need something, or are you here just to watch the show?"

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