



112 112- Wasn't He Dead?

Phoenix: 1

Sebastian didn't say a word when he lifted me. I just sank into his strong arms, too drained to fight or even think of what else to do.

My face stayed against his chest while my mind was still on Jai.

Sebastian carried me straight to his room and set me down gently on the bed, "I'll order some snacks for you. You didn't eat anything when you left my room," his eyes glazed back as he sent the mindlink, but I shook my head quickly.

"I don't want food," I said in a hoarse whisper.

Amora, who had followed us to the room, was now watching me closely. She stepped forward, watching my face, "Sebastian... maybe let me have some time with her. A heart-to-heart. Just us girls."

I shook my head right away, "No," the word came out sharply, but then my throat tightened as my eyes welled up with tears, "No, thank you. B...but I ... I don't want that.... I just... I need to be alone for a while..."

The silence stretched, and guilt pressed down on me.



What was I even saying? Was I forgetting that Sebastian was a king?

I couldn't dismiss him just like that.

I pushed myself up, wiping my face, "I'm sorry," I looked up and found them looking at me with worry, "You two stay here, please. I'll leave the room."

I barely got to my feet when Sebastian's hand stopped me. His voice was low but firm, "You're not going anywhere, Phoenix. Stay here."

Before I could argue, he leaned down, held my hand, and pressed it to his lips. The warmth of his lips seemed to seep in, and for a moment, the world outside ceased to exist.

His touch sent a jolt straight to my heart.

"I'll be close by," he said, letting my hand go slowly, "You can have all the privacy you need."

They both exchanged a look before they finally stepped out of the room, the door shutting softly behind them.

The silence hit me right away. My heart was heavy. Too heavy with all the pain and all the heartache.

I let myself fall back on the bed, and my body sank into the mattress. I felt my leftover strength draining away as my eyes stayed on the



ceiling, but my mind?

It ran back to Jai.

The way he used to pull my hair and then laugh.
The stupid jokes we shared while him treating
my face.

A laugh slipped out of me. A broken one.

And then tears came right after, spilling down
my face and soaking the pillow. I was crying and
laughing at the same time.

"Damn you, Jai," I whispered, "Why'd you have to
change?"

What if he was just drowning in sorrow right
now... and maybe by tomorrow he'd be okay
again?

I dragged a pillow over my face, pressing it
down, shutting out the dim light in the room. Oh,
Goddess, I needed more darkness.

The same kind of darkness that was already
inside me. Inside my heart...and inside my world.

I didn't even realize it when I was pulled into a
deep slumber. It had made me forget where I
was.

When I opened my eyes, the room was dark. My
heart skipped a beat.



Someone was sitting in the chair near my bed. Panic shot through me for a moment... until that figure shifted a bit and I caught the sharp contours of his face.

Sebastian? What was he doing here? Didn't he assure me last night that he would leave me alone?

I tried to move, but my wrist was caught. My eyes dropped, and there it was, trapped in his grip.

I blinked groggily. That was when his eyes snapped open and he sat straight, "What happened, Emerald? Phoenix, you need something?" he was trying to shrug off the sleepiness in his voice.

I was still heavy with sleep, because my words came out half mumbled, "I need to go to the bathroom..."

I thought he'd just let go of my hand. But no.

Before I could say anything else, he scooped me right up and carried me straight to the bathroom.

He set me down gently beside the toilet seat. My eyes went wide as I tried placing my palm on his na*ked chest.



"Seriously?" I muttered.

Was he really expecting me to pee in front of him?

His jaw tensed when he understood what I was trying to tell him. He shook his head, quickly looking away, "I won't look. Take your time."

Instead of leaving, his Highness only turned around so his back was facing me, standing there like a stubborn guide, "Can't risk leaving you alone," he had felt my eyes boring into him.

I sighed, half annoyed, half sleepy, and half too tired to argue.

I must have drifted off again, because the next thing I knew, a faint scraping tugged me out of my sleep.

My eyes fluttered open, and I froze.

What was that sound, or was I imagining it?

Sebastian's heavy arm was wrapped around me, I could feel his chest rising and falling against my back. He was snoring lightly.

The great king Sebastian, who never missed a thing, was out cold like this?

The sound came again. A faint clatter.



My gaze darted towards the corner of the room, and my whole body stiffened. A shadow moved there, bent over the table, fiddling with something I couldn't see.

My throat tightened as my nerves screamed at me to wake up Sebastian, but when I tried to open my mouth, nothing came out.

It was like my body refused to move.

Whoever it was, he was working calmly, as though this were his room.

I sucked in a breath, slowly slipping free of Sebastian's hold... surprised that he didn't stir. I quietly slid out of the bed.

My heart was pounding like a drum inside my chest as I slowly started walking towards the man. The closer I got, the clearer the faint clinking got.

I halted in my steps and saw him still busy. Goddess knew what he was doing here, at this hour, in the King's bedroom.

Weren't there Lycan bodyguards outside this room?

The person before my eyes must have sensed my presence because his hands stilled and his shoulders stiffened.

I held my breath as I tried to decide if I should



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call the guards or just scream to wake up Sebastian.

Slowly, the man turned, and my heart stumbled.

"B...Brian?" The word skipped out in a gasp, "What are you doing here?" and then I remembered something.

Wasn't he dead?

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