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Tina: 1

I drew in a startled breath when I heard Jai's rejection. Not aware of what I was doing, I immediately left my seat and ran to Kiara, who was sitting on the ground, crying.

I had always seen her as a strong warrior, barking orders, and here she was crying like a poor Omega whose bread was snatched away by a bully.

"Kiara. Get a grip," I helped her up and gave a cutting look to Phoenix, who was standing there calmly like nothing happened.

Dr. Jai was still standing behind her; his eyes were now on Phoenix.

"Don't come any closer," I hissed and wrapped my arm around Kiara's waist, "Stay away from her, you monsters!"

Phoenix ignored me and turned to face Jai instead, "What have you done, Jai?" It did not sound like she was concerned for Kiara. It sounded more like suspicion to my ears.

"Didn't I tell you that I would give you the last gift at the Blood Moon ceremony?" he told her gently, "Here it is," Without another word, he



turned abruptly and made for the door.

It seemed like he had been waiting for this moment. Like... like he knew that this was bound to happen.

For the first time, I saw Phoenix's confidence crumble.

She looked as confused as any of us.

"Drama queen!" I muttered under my breath and helped Kiara out of the hall. She was shivering against me and was still in shock.

"What got into him?" she leaned closer, her question barely reaching my ears.

I couldn't answer her. How could I when I wasn't aware of it myself?

Once she was stable, I let her go and walked beside her till she reached her room. The same room where she was kept after the house arrest.

I followed her inside the room and went straight to the water dispenser to get a glass of water.

"First, he rejected Raya... three years back," Kiara seemed to be in a trance when she started speaking. I gave her the glass of water, but she just held it and kept staring into space, "And tonight he did the same to me. But in public. At least, he rejected Raya privately," she chuckled

and started chewing her lower lip.

"But Raya also got rejected tonight. In public," I pointed it out, and Kiara came out of that trance.

"Phoenix," One word, and her face shifted, giving way to something darker. The haunted look in her eyes flickered, then hardened, and what replaced it, was pure hatred.

Her lips curled as if even saying her name left a bitter taste in her mouth. The grip on her glass seemed to tighten until I thought it might shatter in her hands.

"She... she is the culprit! She must have done something..." Kiara's voice broke into a harsh whisper as she suddenly set the glass aside and grabbed my hand with desperate force. Her nails dug into my skin.

I suppressed the hiss in my mouth.

"She is a curse," she breathed in a trembling voice, "See. What she did to me. To Raya. She will destroy everything. Don't... don't make the mistake of taking her to your palace, Tina," she was panting now as if she had been running a marathon, "She'll ruin everything...she'll ruin you. She'll kill everyone... she'll kill you."

A chill swept through me, and I felt the first bead of cold sweat slide down my back. For a moment,

I couldn't move, couldn't even pull my hand free from her grip.

Kiara giggled like she had gone crazy, "She has taken her revenge. Ha-ha," she clapped her hands, "She kept her word and now..." she stopped laughing and looked at me with dead seriousness, "Now it's your turn. You and Tamia are finished. Ha-ha. You two are finished..."

I went back to the main hall where the ceremony was still in progress. I was dead sure that my seat would be occupied by now. Of course, Phoenix must be celebrating her win with Sebastian. How could she let go of my seat?

However, when I reached there, I was taken aback by what I saw. She hadn't taken my seat. She was still sitting on hers and was engrossed in talking to Beta Hunter.

Her body language was calm, as if nothing had happened. Even if it did happen, it did nothing to disturb her peace.

Two women got rejected by their mates, and she was involved in it, directly or indirectly. I walked up and took my seat quietly.

She must have felt my presence because she turned to me and smiled, "Hey, you're back. How is she doing?" She popped a cherry in her mouth,

like she was discussing a rom-com with me.

I took my sweet time to answer her, "Who are you?" I asked her in a whisper.

"Sorry?" She grabbed a handful of salted pecans from a nearby tray and lifted her mask to pop them into her mouth. I tried my best not to look anywhere else. She did it intentionally... showing me a part of her battered face.

"I asked..." I leaned closer, "Who are you?"

I needed to know about her because something deep inside told me that she was not what she posed.

She took her sweet time, munching all those pecans. For a moment, I thought she had ignored my question.

But once she was done, she wiped her mouth with a napkin and then at last met my eyes.

"What were you asking again?" She swiped her tongue over her lips and laughed when I didn't respond, "Oh, yeah. Who am I! Good question. What's the rush, Tina?"

She leaned back in her chair, brushing the last crumb from her finger. Her eyes glittered with mischief, "Patience isn't that hard, is it? You'll know soon enough, love."

Her fingers tapped lazily on the table, "Once I

reach the palace, I'll remind you exactly who I am... and trust me," her smug smile deepened, "You won't ever forget it again."

My heart missed a beat.

What was she exactly planning? Now she held a good position of Royal Head warrior, while I wasn't even married to Sebastian.

Tonight!

Tonight I'll ask Tamia to make it quick. I needed to marry Sebi, or this girl would wreck everything I've built and bring me to my knees.

Phoenix Black was not a mere threat. She was a tornado.

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