

135 135- Royal Head Warrior

Phoenix: 1

Like always, I woke up at four a.m. sharp and rolled out of my bed. After hitting the shower real quick, I strapped my gear.

Enough of this waiting around. I wasn't here to play guest or to warm a king's bed. I was here as a head warrior. If I was gonna keep that title, I needed to stay ahead of the game.

With that thought in mind, I stepped out of my quarters and froze for a second. A tall lycan stood right outside my door like a statue, reminding me of Delis. He wasn't even looking at me, just staring straight ahead like the hallway was the most interesting thing in the world.

"Uh, excuse me?"

He finally turned his head to look at me.

I waved at him, "Hi. How can I get to the training grounds?" I then brought a smile to my lips, "By the way, I'm Phoenix black. Head warrior..." I stuck out my hand for a shake.

That old version of me was left behind, where the maids or guards used to convey to me which part of the palace I was allowed to go and which part was meant to stay secret from me.

After a bit of hesitation, he shook it, "Sure, ma'am. Please follow me," he said, and started walking ahead.

He led me through a side path until we reached a wide clearing. Plenty of space, ideal for drills and sparring.

Seemed like it was built recently. 1

"Perfect," I said with a nod, "Thanks... and who should I talk to if I want an assembly with the other warriors? I need to meet them."

"I can set that up for you, ma'am," he answered quickly.

"Oh, good. I appreciate it," I gave him another nod, then tilted my head, "Who are you, by the way?"

Was he assigned to keep an eye on me by Sebastian or Tamia? Like last time?

He straightened, "I'm... I'm the Lycan guard... ma'am," Why was he stuttering so much? Goddess. I was missing Delis and Kamila.

I raised a brow but didn't press, "Alright then. Guess we'll be seeing a lot of each other around here."

He gave a stiff nod, maybe trying to decide if he should smile or salute. With a smirk, I turned towards the clearing, "You can relax, David," I had

read his name on the badge, "I don't bite unless it's training day," I furnished with a wink.

This time, I wasn't here to take orders from these guards. I was here to train them and rule them. 1

It was six in the morning, but the ground was already buzzing with energy. All the warriors were standing in rows. Most of them were Lycans, and a few of them were wolves. I might be the only one without a beast.

I stepped in the middle of the field and looked down as my boots crunched the dirt, and my eyes swept over them.

My warriors.

I felt my heart swelling with pride.

Look, Kiara. You tried to snatch the pack's warrior position. Today I'm standing in this palace as their head warrior.

"Good morning," my voice carried across the field, as I paced slowly, locking my eyes with most of the men and women as I walked, "For those who don't know me, yet... I'm Phoenix Black. Your head warrior," I stopped and turned on my heels to face them all, "Which makes you... my warriors... not my subjects..."

None of them flinched. Seemed like they had been briefed about me.

"Some of you might be werewolves, some of you are Lycans. Doesn't matter. Here you're soldiers first," I paused to take a breath, "And let me tell you one more thing... I don't have a wolf."

Well. Not yet!

This one hit the right spot. Surprise flashed across their faces, a few of the brows rose in suspicion, while some of the mouths twitched ... like they wanted to say something.

However, they must be smart. Because not a single voice broke the silence.

"Yeah, you heard me right," my voice hardened, slicing through their thoughts, "But the truth is... It doesn't matter. Wolf, no wolf, beast or not... we're equals when we step on this ground," I ran my gaze over their faces. The good thing was they were taking me seriously. There was no mockery or any doubts on their faces, "Every single one of you is expected to fight. To win. To bleed... if we have to. You got that?"

A warrior from the back raised his hand, hesitant, "Ma'am... how can someone without a wolf lead us?"

Others rolled their lips between their teeth, and I smirked, shaking my head, "Simple. Because

I've beaten plenty of wolves and Lycans without needing one of my own. You'll see for yourself soon," I raised a shoulder casually.

That got a few chuckles and nods.

Another young warrior spoke up, "What do you expect from us, Head warrior?" This one looked younger.

"No need to call me head warrior. For you all, I'm Phoenix. I expect you to give me everything you've got. Your strength. Your discipline. Your loyalty. And in return, I'll give you mine. I'll train with you and fight beside you. That's the only way we're gonna make this work."

After a few moments, they all were sitting on the ground, and I was in mid-stride, talking about combat drills and what they'd face during the coming weeks, when the air around us seemed to shift.

Just a minute back, they were talking and discussing the moves with me, and now a hush had fallen over the crowd.

With a frown, I turned, and there he was. King Sebastian.

As Lycans, they all must have sensed his presence because they got to their knees with their heads bowed in unison.

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I suddenly felt out of place. Before today, the King never expected me to bow to him. But now I was part of the royal staff. His subordinate. 1

My body moved on instinct, knees hitting the ground as I bowed my head with the rest of them.

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