

## 142 142- Are You Still Curious?

Phoenix: 1

The king of Velmora Kingdom stood frozen as if the ground had shifted under him. His golden orbs were searching my face, "Who told you that?" he asked in a low voice.

My lips curved faintly, secretly enjoying myself, "Oh. I just heard it today," I held his arm and leaned my cheek against it, "Today, I was with the warriors, and they were talking about something. Maybe I caught it wrong. It's nothing really."

His gaze darted past me, scanning the Lycan guards far away and the corners of the hall as though the walls had ears.

His hand reached for mine, wrapping my fingers with urgency that startled me.

"Come," he whispered, "Let's get out of here."

Without waiting for my answer, he tugged my hand lightly, pulling me towards the exit.

I wanted to laugh so hard. The two strongest people in the palace.

I had managed to shock them.

\*\*\*



Sebastian was still holding my hand when we turned the corner. His door was only a few steps away when Hunter appeared, blocking our path.

There were worry lines on his face, "Sebastian," he rushed towards him, "Sorry. This needs to be conveyed personally. The southern border is under threat. Rogues are trying to enter the borders. The nearby packs are holding them back, but they may not last... we might need to send help, brother."

Sebastian frowned, and before he spoke, Hunter added quickly, "I think it's time Phoenix steps forward..." his voice died down when he saw Sebastian shaking his head with that stubborn set to his jaw.

"Phoenix has nothing to do with this attack, and I wouldn't allow..."

I placed my hand on his arm, "Actually, I do..." I gave him a tight-lipped smile to soften the blow, "If you remember, I'm the head warrior, your highness."

It seemed like Sebastian wanted to argue. That stubborn set in his jaw didn't ease. He didn't say anything and took a sigh, maybe reminding himself who I was.

His gaze turned distant, sending a mind link. Within minutes, the open field was filled with all

the royal warriors.

After a few moments, I stepped ahead to speak to them, with Sebastian and Hunter standing right behind me.

"The Southern border is under attack," my voice carried across the rows, "Rogues are trying to cross the border, and our allies may not hold for long. We cannot waste time."

I got down from the podium and walked slowly in front of them, reading their faces, "Right now we don't need to send all our warriors there, so if any of you want to volunteer, please step forward, if you think you're ready."

Several men moved ahead without hesitation. I studied them because I needed to choose with care.

"Come here," I asked one of them, who looked nerdy because of the glasses he was wearing. "I'm sending you with them, but not to fight unless it's necessary," I signaled Hunter, "Give him a phone so that he can explain to me the situation once he reaches the border."

"Sure," Hunter nodded, and for some odd reason, I thought he tried to bite back a smile.

Or maybe I was imagining it.

Once I picked the ones I needed, I waved them off, "Don't waste a second. Go... and fight."

They gave a quick nod and jogged out, rushing for their gear.

The rest of them started walking off the ground, while chattering to each other. I stood there brushing my palms on my pants.

Sebastian was still standing there, watching the last of the men disappear.

Neither of us moved towards our wings. We just kind of stood there, not knowing what to do.

"Umm... I think we should start moving," I suggested. He held my hand as we walked. Halfway down the corridor, he lifted it and pressed it to his lips... kissing my knuckles.

*Stop it. Let me concentrate on my work.* I scolded him in my head and shot him a side-eye.

"What?" he asked me, pretending all innocent, "Can't I show you a little charm?"

I tried to stay serious, but my lips twitched, "You'll run out of your tricks soon, my king."

He smirked, "Not possible. Anyway, I was thinking... how about you come to my room and we sleep together?"

I tilted my head, dragging out my answer, "Sleep?"

"Yeah. Sleep. Do you know what that is?" A hint

of mischief appeared in his eyes.

"Yes," I replied while he started examining my hand, "I know what sleep is... Something you do at night when you're tired and you close your eyes... and enjoy it in bed..." I retorted, but he found my explanation funny.

"Ahan! That's se\*x, love, not sleep."

Goddess, this man!

I rolled my eyes in embarrassment, "You're drunk!"

He half laughed, "You don't trust me?"

"Not with that face," I teased him, tugging my hand free from his grip as we reached my door.

He leaned on the frame, looking down at me, "So... should I come in?"

"Nope," I crossed my arms, "You need to go and sleep. Because honestly, I might not even sleep. Remember? My soldiers are at the border. I can't crash when they are fighting."

His gaze softened, and there was something in there that I couldn't brush off... respect? Or maybe admiration?

He raised his finger and trailed it over my brow, "If you want, I can stay awake with you... keeping your brain busy... so you don't have to check the



clock every five minutes." A laugh stirred at the corners of my mouth.

"Keep me busy? You mean to annoy me until sunrise?"

"Exactly," he said with a grin, "Or maybe keep you busy in some activity where we both forget about our surroundings?" he said meaningfully, and I wanted to give him a hard push.

"No, thanks," I shook my head, "I can stay awake without using a company."

"Fine," he exhaled a long sigh, "Whatever you say..." he stepped back so that I could get inside my room, "Let me know if you change your mind," he smirked.

I bobbed my head with a polite smile, "Sure."

I was about to close the door when his voice stopped me midway, "By the way, are you still curious about my wife?"