



226 226- Child

Aurora: 1

Once, I had walked these paths in fear. In panic.

Tonight it wasn't the same. This time, I was more confident and knew in my heart what I was about to do.

The dark and damp jungle stretched endlessly ahead. My knees were begging me to rest. Maybe against a nearby tree. Or a wooden bench where I could get some rest.

But then Sebastian's furious face flashed in my mind. I couldn't take a risk or he'd find me. He and his lycans could easily trace me in seconds.

I couldn't let my hard work go to waste. That cushion and maternity cloak were just there to help me leave the palace. Once I crossed palace boundary, I got rid of it.

Now I was wearing my cloak and my face was covered with the mask. I wasn't planning to show my face to anyone without announcing that I was not Phoenix but Aurora.

By now, Sebastian must have found it and must be thinking about where I was heading. The poor man might not have any clue.

However, I needed to find Lucien before he



found me.

A little bit of moonlight filtered through the thick trees, but it was enough to show me the path. Delis had explained to me everything.

The silence in my head had started to bother me. Aria was quiet.

She hadn't said a word since I left the palace.

"I need you tonight, Aria," I whispered while walking, pushing away a low-hanging branch, "Say something, sweetie."

Nothing.

Still the same silence.

"Aria!" I got louder this time, "What is the matter with you? Speak!"

She, at last, stirred in my head, "Don't *speak* to me, Aurora. You didn't think about Sebastian before taking this rash step."

Oh. So, she was missing him.

"Don't start," I muttered under my breath, "This is for Jai, Aria," I told her gently, but she just chuckled sarcastically.

"Seriously? Your friend means more to you than your husband?"

I stopped, "Jai used to be my *friend*. He was the



reason we both are alive today. We owe him this much."

"Friend?" Her tone was dripping with bitterness, "The same friend who you killed?"

My heart stilled at her words, "Don't say that!" I whispered.

"You let him die. You could've healed him. You didn't even try. You... you killed him, Aurora."

Goddess. When I needed my wolf's support the most, she was arguing with me on a topic that hurt me the most.

I felt my chest tightening as the memories flashed in my head... his heart in Tamia's hand...

I closed my eyes and started walking again, trying to ignore the tears that started rolling my eyes.

"Everything I suffered... everything I lost... it was all because of him..." I pressed a hand against my chest and laughed shakily, "Can you, for once, act like a good wolf and help me?"

She had again gotten quiet.

"Don't you want to go back to Sebastian?" My question made her wiggle her tail, "If you want to see him again, then cut off this bullshit and help me. Okay?"



I could still feel her resentment simmering inside me.

For a long time, the only sound I heard was the sound of the crunch of the leaves beneath my boots.

I thought she had gone silent again. But then her voice finally came.

"Keep walking east. You'll start to smell smoke soon. The rogues light fire to mark their borders."

I nodded at her, "And then what?"

"You'll find a clearing. Don't step on it. We need to walk around it to move forward. One mistake and you will become their prey."

The trees in this part grew denser, but I kept moving through them. Stopping here meant danger.

"Turn on the left. Some rogues are too busy drinking. They might smell you if you don't keep your distance from the clearing."

"Sure," I turned left and slowed a little. My legs were now killing me.

"Slow down," Aria whispered, "You're close. Don't make any sound."

I crouched low behind a large tree trunk. I could



smell smoke here. The fire.

I was passing by a rogue territory.

"Where is Lucien's territory?" I asked her, crawling on the ground.

"I'll let you know. Just stop breathing and keep moving," I filled in lots of Oxygen in my lungs and then started moving ahead.

Here I could hear their laughter and tipsy voices.

After a while, I could sense the smoky air going lighter. I was moving away from the rogues.

"If you want, you can get some rest here. Even the rogues don't patrol this deep. It's wild land now."

"Good," I muttered, brushing past a bunch of vines, "Then maybe I can breathe for a while."

"Breathe for a while? You need rest, Aurora."

"Not now," I said stubbornly, "Once I'm sure that I have reached near Lucien... I will."

Now she was worrying about me. Bitch!

I was about to tease her when a sharp pull yanked me off balance... there was something that caught my ankle.

"Ah!" I gasped.

"Aurora!" Aria screamed, "Careful!"



I tried reaching for a branch, but before I could grab it, the ground under my feet vanished. My cloak fell over my face as I dangled in the air. Head down.

My ankle was trapped in a rope snare.

"Are you kidding me?" I hissed, trying to twist free. But the blood rushed to my head, and everything blurred.

"Shit!" I groaned, kicking my free leg. But the robe that was holding my ankle only dug deeper.

"Who the hell puts traps this deep in the forest?" I asked myself.

"Rogues. Hunters. Or someone worse..." Aria muttered, "Be still. Someone is coming."

What!

Who was coming?

I tried to break free from it, but Aria hissed, "Slow down, Aurora."

And then I heard footsteps, getting closer.

"Wh... Who is there?" I asked loudly and hissed in pain. No one spoke.

"Whoever you are, talk to me!" I asked again.

After a moment's silence, a childish voice came through the trees, "Hello."



My breath got caught in my throat when out of the shadows a small girl, no older than six or seven, stepped out.

What the hell was going on? What was a child, this young, doing here in the dense jungle all alone?

Comment ⁰



Leave the first comment for this chapter.



Vote



Send Gift

Swipe left to continue >