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Phoenix: 1

While walking to the Alpha quarters, I missed Jai. I swear I missed him.

He didn't know what these vile women did to me and my face. In my initial days of treatment, he used to flinch while wrapping the cotton gauze around my waist.

Luna Tamia had burned the skin of my back, and it took a whole year to heal.

With a sinking heart, I was trying to make myself stronger. That was not fair.

All this time, I was practicing how to face King Sebastian. This was something unexpected.

Once I reached there, I was ushered into the guest room where Tina was lying on the bed, holding her knee.

Luna Raya and Tamia were also there.

Several lines appeared on Luna Tamia's forehead, maybe due to my mask. I even caught giving a questioning look to Luna Raya. I was sure, Luna Raya must have mouthed silently...

Later!

"Can you please have a look at it, Phoenix?" Luna

Raya requested me sweetly. At least she was giving me respect in front of the Royals, "We were taking a walk in the garden when she stumbled and fell, hurting her knee."

Until now, I couldn't feel any heat in my palm. But once I brought it closer to Tina's knee, it started glowing.

Tina let out a sharp gasp the moment my hand hovered above her skin.

"Oh... careful," she whimpered, dabbing her temple with a silk handkerchief, "Just look at it. It's terribly swollen..." She leaned forward to have a better look, "Raya. Look at this. Tell her, I could hardly walk back. Can someone please ask Sebastian to come here?"

The name made my heart skip a beat.

I didn't reply and placed my hand gently over her knee, letting it absorb the warmth from my hand. It seemed like a minor sprain.

Luna Tamia was standing nearby, and I didn't even try to look at her. My only job was to heal the woman and leave.

I sensed her stepping closer to me as if she wanted to inspect the technique. As a fake witch, it must be natural to be this curious.

"Now come on, Tina dear. You are about to

become a queen. Show some strength." A crooked smile was playing on her lips. Her eyes moved from Tina to my masked face, "She tripped over a few plants. Not a cliff. Ha-ha."

She was being sarcastic. I wondered what happened to their friendship.

Tina raised her face and gave her a wounded look, "Luna Tamia. Didn't you see the gown that almost tore? It was humiliating." She started crying, and I wanted to roll my eyes at this cringeworthy performance.

Tamia just hummed, barely hiding her amusement, "Sebi will be so distressed when he will learn about this fall. Aww."

Tina's eyes lit up at the mention of Sebastian.

"Tamia. Please send a mind link to Sebi." Her fingers brushed the hem of her gown, adjusting it.

I forced myself to keep my face stoic. Every time they mentioned Sebastian, my chest tightened in grief and longing.

"Done," I said softly, removing my hand from her knee, "You'll feel better by tomorrow morning. Rest for now."

I was trying my best to avoid any kind of eye

contact.

Thankfully, Luna Tamia and Tina were busy with verbal attacks, and that spared me, I guess.

"Thank you, Phoenix," Luna Raya clapped her hands twice... or maybe thrice, "You're a miracle."

Could they believe that she was the same woman who went crazy when I tried to heal her son?

I got up from the bed and bowed a little before leaving the room. However, when I reached near the door, Luna Tamia called me from behind, halting me mid-step.

"Hey, Phoenix. What a weird name?" she remarked in amusement, "I got to know that you lost your family in a fire, and it damaged your face too."

I slowly turned around and kept my eyes on the floor.

Look down, slave! Her orders still echoed in my head. I still remember those painful lessons.

I wanted to stay calm. My wild heartbeat could grow doubts in her heart.

"Can you show me your face?" Luna Tamia's smile had vanished, and the only thing I could see was cold interest.

Why did she want to look at my face?

I gave a bewildered look to Luna Raya, who was herself struggling to understand this weird request.

"Oh, please, Luna Tamia. No..." She started shaking her head, "You won't be able to see this ugly face without flinching. You'll puke. Trust me."

For the first time, I didn't feel insulted by the way Luna Raya tried to convince them.

Luna Tamia chuckled lightly and crossed her arms on her chest, "Oh, trust me. I've seen worse. Let me see what's the fuss about."

My fingers twitched at my sides. She was still the same. Evil.

"Luna Tamia," Luna Raya went to her, her tone pleading, "the stench is too much. You won't be able to sleep for the whole night. Think of Tina, Your Highness."

I, at last, raised my face and looked at Tamia, who took a seat on the couch and was now enjoying the discomfort she had stirred.

She was acting like she had turned deaf and couldn't hear Raya.

I clenched my jaw and decided to speak for myself, "I can't. I don't remove my mask in front

of people I don't feel comfortable with."

The smile on her face vanished as she got to her feet, "Your voice..."

I didn't let her complete.

A Lycan's Granma? My ass!

"Yes. That's what I'm left with. My voice. I lost everything in that fire. And I don't want to show my face to you, as I'm sure your eyes are only made to look at beautiful things. Please forgive me... your highness..." I bowed.

With that, I turned on my heels and left the room.

For the first time, I felt happy for myself. A long time back, they took advantage of my innocence.

But not anymore.