

50 50- Punished

Aurora/ Phoenix: 1

My arm was hooked through Jai's when I entered the hall where our pack had thrown an official party for the Royals.

Light music was playing in the background while everyone around was busy having a good time, chatting, and drinking.

There was a dance floor in the center, but no one could dance unless the king decided to go for the first dance.

After him, the couples could break the dance floor if they wanted.

"Thank Goddess they are not wild here!" I remarked, moving my gaze around, "Last time they passed out after getting drunk."

"Yeah. I hope it stays like this," Jai mumbled and walked in a direction. I was not a party person, but Alpha Blake wanted me to attend it.

"King's orders," he had told me, "The king wants every pack member to attend it."

I was wearing a faun colored gown embellished with silver embroidery and white pearls that caught the light with every step, paired with a matching mask.

It was not too sex*y or revealing. I had given up on such clothes a long time back. Men wanted to see my face after finding my skin too smooth to resist, and I couldn't afford their screams after their discovery that I was nothing but an ugly duckling inside that mask.

Jai and I must have walked a few steps further into the crowd when I spotted Kiara.

She was stuttering in our direction like she owned the place. Her gown barely covered her thighs, its backless design revealing smooth skin, leaving just enough to the imagination. The golden shimmer on her chest matched her heels.

When she caught sight of us, she smirked, and her steps got deliberately slow. Her eyes were scanning me as she came closer.

Here, I needed to be civil to her, but Goddess knew why she hated me so much. There were only a few female warriors who genuinely liked me.

Otherwise, most of the females despised me, including Raya and Kiara.

My lips curled up under the mask for a half

smile, which I was sure she couldn't see or feel, due to the mask covering my face.

Her smile didn't falter as she spoke, but her words were like daggers, "You've got two hours, Phoenix. After that, I want you back at your post. Got it?"

I blinked, stunned for a second before I finally found my voice, "This event is meant for everyone, Kiara."

She cocked up a brow and shrugged, "And you expect me to leave the borders empty?"

"You did last time, when it was *you* who was partying."

She didn't seem to take my bluntness well. Jai stepped in with his usual calm voice, "She's done enough for today, Kiara. Give her a break, for Goddess' sake."

As usual, she didn't take it well when he spoke up for me.

"What's going on?" We all turned around when we found Luna Raya standing close by. She had the same fake smile pasted on her lips, "Phoenix, I'm sure it's the usual drill. Right," she gritted through her teeth and looked funny, "Your head warrior reminding you of your duties and Jai favoring you as usual. Right Jai?" she turned to look in his direction and I couldn't ignore his

clenched jaw. 1

At that moment, it felt strange.

They always seemed to be against each other. Jai as always taking my side, and Raya as always trying to blame him for something I didn't know of.

She wanted to speak more when her eyes glazed back, "Phoenix. My husband wants you to join him on the VIP table," she pointed in the direction where her husband was seated..

My gaze went there, and my heart skipped a beat. Right next to Alpha Blake, King Sebastian was seated, who was already looking at me.

He nodded his head when our eyes met.

"Why am I needed there?" I said under my breath. Luna Raya and Kiara had already walked away.

"I don't know," Jai followed my gaze and then tapped my shoulder with his index finger, "Don't worry. I'll stay nearby." He then leaned over as if he was going to kiss my cheek, but rather he whispered, "Rub your nose several times and I'll take the hint and I'll come to save you."

Perfect!

I nodded at him and then scurried to the table that was on the other end of the room.

"Alpha Blake," I bent my head a little and then, without looking in his direction, I kneeled, "Your highness."

Luna Raya had already taken her seat next to her husband, while Kiara was sitting next to Beta Brian.

"I asked you last time not to kneel," Tonight, his voice was not as gentle as the last time. It had an edge to it. Before I could rise, he was there helping me up by holding my elbow.

I gulped and nodded at him, "My apologies, your highness."

In all honesty, I didn't know what I was apologizing for. Why was he asking me not to kneel or bow?

"Please take the seat," he gestured towards the seat beside him.

I looked around in confusion. Wasn't this chair supposed to be for Tina?

I caught sight of Kiara, whose face still had that smile, but her eyes were throwing daggers at me.

"Sir ... your highness..." I still didn't look at his face, "I ... how can I..." My hands trembled slightly as I clutched the hem of my sleeves.

"Why not? You have to if I'm asking you to," he

then leaned forward, his breath fanning warm breath on my cheek as he whispered in my ear, "If you won't, I need to carry you. I'm sure you won't like that."

My pulse picked up. I felt like in the hall, all eyes were watching me.

I felt my face burning in embarrassment. Raya and Kiara must be wondering what he said, and I was sure, soon I would be getting punished for getting his attention.

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