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Phoenix: 1

I fell back on my bed and took a long, tired sigh. Jai was not responding to my calls. He must be mad at something, and now I wasn't planning to waste my night after him.

After so many nights guarding the borders, I could finally spend this one fast asleep in my own bed.

I sent a last text message to Jai that only had a tongue-hanging emoji and placed my phone on the nightstand. I didn't have enough mental strength to think about what made him explode.

I was slowly drifting off to sleep when my phone started ringing. I shot up, thinking it must be Jai, but it was Alpha Blake.

"Alpha?" I tried to make my voice active and suppress the yawn.

"Did you promise King Sebastian that you would heal him?" his question left me stunned for a moment.

Wait! What?

I blinked several times in confusion, "Go to him, Phoenix... he is waiting."

The brain fog was not letting me think clearly
when I heard a voice in my head.

"I've heard a lot about your healing power."

*Oh, fu*ck.*

*"I'm sorry, Alpha. I forgot," I closed my eyes,
running a hand through my hair in helplessness.*

Moon Goddess. I need to sleep.

*I gave a pleading look to my tempting bed and
drew a long breath. After jumping out of my bed,
I threw on a T-shirt and denim pants.*

*I needed to go to him. The same delicious
tingling sensations were back in the pit of my
stomach at the thought of seeing him again.*

*I stepped inside the library that was being used
as the Royals' office for the last few days. The
only thing that welcomed me there was silence.*

Where was the King?

*I scanned the room, puzzled, and bit my lip.
Why did I assume he'd be here?*

*Taking a seat near the window, I folded my
hands in my lap and waited. Picking up my
phone, I sent a quick text to Alpha Blake that I
was waiting at the library.*

After a few minutes, I heard footsteps. Turning swiftly, I saw Beta Hunter entering the room.

"Beta!" I quickly bowed to him.

"Phoenix. The king is waiting for you," he told me with a polite smile.

Ah! The irony. The last time I told him that I wanted to meet the king, he had asked me to go back to my room.

And tonight, he was the one taking me to him.

Without any idea where he was taking me, I followed him through the corridors. I could feel the nerves curling in my stomach like vines.

Was the king waiting for me in the garden?

Outside the pack house?

Secretly, I kept praying to the Moon Goddess not to cross paths with Tina or Luna Tamia. Beta Hunter stopped in front of the large, carved wooden door of the guest room that was prepared especially for the king.

I tried to calm my breath when Beta Hunter knocked it twice. The door opened, and there stood King Sebastian barefoot, wearing a dark emerald-green robe that hung loosely around him, revealing the sculpted lines of his bare chest and black boxers hugging him tightly.

The dragon tattoo sprawled boldly across his chest.

Goddess. I could feel the heat rising to my cheeks. I tried to fix my mask on my mouth when I felt piercing eyes on my face.

"Phoenix," he drawled with that lazy smile and stepped aside, "Come in."

I could feel my throat drying. *Goddess help me.*

I took a tentative step forward, trying my best not to look at his chest but... sigh...

That hard plane, the subtle dip of muscles... the V forming just above his boxers that was low on his hip bone.

"I... I thought..." I cleared my throat, "I thought we were supposed to meet in the library."

I wasn't aware that Beta Hunter had already left, after closing the door behind him.

There was amusement all over his face, "Don't blame me, sweetheart. I waited for you in the library."

Oh. He was there.

He walked to his liquor cabinet and took out a wine bottle, "Stop looking at me as if you have never seen a handsome man before."

His remark made my eyes go wide in

embarrassment as my heart skipped a beat. I could detect amusement in his voice.

Come on, Phoenix. You are a warrior. You have been on the battlefield and did great. This is just a man's body. Right?

Right, Phoenix?

I was too busy talking to myself in my head.

"Obsidian night," he offered me one of the glasses, "it's smooth, strong, and hard to forget."

Wow. I'm flattered. The Royal king made me a drink!

I hesitated before accepting it, feeling the sparks that erupted when our fingers brushed accidentally.

The contact jolted something inside me.

I quickly looked away from his probing gaze and tried to focus on the swirling wine instead, pretending to examine it.

With my peripheral vision, I could see him taking slow sips from his glass, his eyes never leaving me, "You're too quiet when a few hours back you were enjoying that dance with me," I couldn't even take the sip when he murmured and stepped closer to me.

"I'm... I'm sorry... I was expecting... I was not expecting this..." I said softly, taking a step back.

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He raised a brow in amusement. "What were you expecting, Phoenix?"

I clutched the stem of my glass a little too tightly and didn't answer him. With a chuckle, he closed the distance between us until we were just inches apart.

I felt my feet glued to the floor. My breath caught in my throat as I tilted my head to meet his gaze.

"You are trembling, Emerald!" With that, he took the glass from my hand.

I wanted to remind him that my name was *not* Emerald. Before I could say anything, I was pulled into a fierce hug that made me gasp.

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