

98 98- The Woman

Phoenix: 1

I was outside the office of the Lycan King with Jack and Nicholson, waiting in the hallway. Alpha Blake and Beta Brian were already inside with Kiara. 2

Sebastian King wanted a detailed briefing on the upcoming Royal Warrior posts. There were five open warrior positions, and Kiara was supposed to occupy one of them.

She was also a strong contender for becoming a Royal warrior leader.

After a few minutes, the door opened with a click, and a royal servant motioned us to enter the office. Meeting Sebastian in the confines of my bedroom was another thing, but sitting face to face in an official meeting was different.

I stepped into the room, trying to look everywhere but him.

Nope. Not today.

My eyes were everywhere.

Ceiling, walls, Stupid carpet... anywhere but him.

I walked over and took the seat farthest from

where Sebastian sat, pretending like I didn't care.

But I could feel his eyes on me, burning holes into my body like he had a scanner fit there.

Please look somewhere else. I wanted to roll my eyes so bad, but I kept it together. Barely.

Just one look at him and I saw amusement in his eyes.

Enjoying yourself? Huh!

I was getting comfortable in the chair when bam! I saw them. The ladies!

Luna Tamia and Tina were both sitting behind him, shooting me death glares like they had been rehearsing it in front of a mirror.

Great! Just what I needed.

No one told me they were gonna be here.

I wish I could go to Tina and tell her. See! You destroyed my face so that he wouldn't look at me. He still comes to me. He can't keep his eyes off me.

The joke was on her.

Tina tried to hold my gaze, and at last she gave in. She leaned into Luna Tamia and whispered something to her, and they both smirked.

I fought the urge to mouth silently *grow up* at them and tried to focus on Kiara, who was saying something to the king.

"I did ask our Alpha to pick up warriors who actually hold their ground. We never wanted pretty boys and girls holding swords," Kiara flipped her hair back like she made the smartest point in the room.

I tried to suppress my yawn and looked at Alpha Blake's face, where the pride was too obvious.

Odd! He was never this easy to please.

I leaned back a little, tapping my fingers lightly on the side of the chair, still trying to understand why we were called here.

"There are a few warriors in our pack... I reviewed their combat records twice. They were issued warnings, too. I guess after becoming the royal warrior, the first task will be to ask them to quit fighting. Our pack can use their skills somewhere else."

Sitting in his chair, Beta Brian chuckled and showed her a thumbs-up sign. I felt uneasy. Since when has a Royal warrior been allowed to make decisions on behalf of the pack Alpha?

Sebastian didn't say a word. Just leaned back, one arm draped over the side of the chair, watching her like she was releasing a news

bulletin.

As usual, he was calm. That unreadable smirk hovering at the edge of his mouth. That lazy confidence. Hair slightly messy. His collar buttons were undone... two of them, maybe three. Just enough to show part of his chest, perfectly tanned, showing the dragon tattoo, like he just walked out of a fashion magazine.

I shifted in my seat and forced my eyes away from his chest and straight into his gaze.

Crap.

He had caught me red-handed, checking him out.

Oh, come on. Get a grip, Phoenix.

Damn it. Why did he have to sit there like that? There was the smallest twitch at the corner of his mouth.

I crossed my legs and looked the other way, pretending to notice a scratch on the table. I could feel that little pull.

The man didn't even need words to make my damn heart race.

Suddenly, I wanted the meeting to end. Instead of giving a presentation about our pack's combat skills, Kiara was praising herself.

And that was when my eyes drifted to the corner of the room.

What the hell? How did I miss this woman?

She sat there, completely still, all this time. Her long white hair flowed over her shoulders like silk. Not even a single strand out of place.

Elegant. Almost too perfect to be real. She raised her hand to tuck the hair behind her ear, and her hands caught me.

She had rings on every single finger. She wasn't even looking at anyone and was busy admiring her rings.

There was some weird energy surrounding her, which gave me goosebumps. I tried to focus back at Kiara, but...

I couldn't look away.

"Wh...who is she?" I whispered to myself, barely audible, but that disturbed Kiara's speech in the middle.

"Sorry?" Kiara frowned, looking at me.

"That woman," I pointed towards the corner, and all of them followed my gaze.

"Seriously?" Kiara started shaking her head, "Was this preplanned? To disturb my presentation?"

Tina was already biting a smirk while Brian

chuckled under his breath.

How could they not see her? The woman was now looking at me, almost startled. There was a flicker of what... bewilderment?

She looked like she had seen a ghost. How to tell her that in this room, she was the ghost. We were all normal ones. Visible ones.

I peeled my gaze off her and found Tina nudging Luna Tamia with her elbow like I was losing it. I swallowed and looked at my hand that was placed on my lap.

Kiara had resumed her speech, but now I wasn't listening to her. Gathering all the courage, I raised my eyes and found that woman still sitting there.

She blinked, like shaking off whatever she'd just witnessed.

Then after a few seconds, her face softened. She gave me a small, kind smile and nodded at me.

That was it.

I didn't understand what she wanted to say. But the weird thing was. I wasn't scared of her. 1

