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Kael 1

For a breath, the world faded out of existence, but she remained bare, suspended in the void, the lone flicker of light in my darkness. My heartbeat was a rampage, echoing in my head and roaring in my ears.

I closed the distance between us in two strides, going down to pick up the dress pooled around her feet. Her scent hit me, the ache in my chest sharpening into a burn that made every breath an act of defiance.

Still, I pulled her dress up, only for her to stop me. My gaze snapped to her eyes. They were no longer unreadable: they gleamed and blazed. "I thought this was what you wanted." Her words, sharp. "Isn't it?"

I stopped dead, staring at her like she had slapped me. "Sex?" My voice was low, hurt lingering. "You thought I wanted sex?" 6

For a moment, she looked unsure. "Isn't it?" She stared up at me, and I noticed that she had begun to tremble. "You are a beta of a lycan pack. Second only to the Alpha and Luna. I am..."



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"My mate," I cut her off quietly. "You are my mate," I repeated. "When did I ever allude to your hypothetical rank having any bearing on how I want you, need you?" 1

Her eyes widened, her confused gaze flickering with astonishment. "But..."

"There are no buts, Thea," I whispered, trying to keep my voice level and not expose just how much her insinuation had hit me. Did she really think that I wanted sex—no partnership, no companionship—even though we were mates? That somehow the disparity of our ranks would sway me?

I pulled her gown up, my jaw clenching. I slipped the strap onto her shoulders. My hand still lingered. "You should get some rest," I muttered. "I could escort..."

Her lips slammed into mine. Instinctively, my arm found her waist. I pulled her body flush against me. 1

Ajax growled triumphantly in my head, his excitement stoking the burning ambers of hunger inside me into roaring flames. Her mouth was hot, pliant but oh so demanding, inviting me as I slipped my tongue past her teeth. I savored



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her, tilting her head back for more access to what I'd craved for so long.

She moaned against me, the sound splintering my senses until there was nothing but her and her alone. Our tongues met in a desperate, unyielding rhythm that turned my senses to mush. Her warm fingers tangled in the strands of my hair, pulling me impossibly closer to her, into her, into an abyss I never wanted to escape.

Our bodies and mouths moved in tandem, offering, taking, devouring, in a battle that was surrender wrapped in an ardent plea.

I held her face, afraid she might disappear and I would be alone with the insatiable longing. My heart skittered in my chest when I touched wetness. Was she...

Instantly I pulled away, our breaths intermingling in the space between our faces. I held her face so she would look at me just as another tear slipped past her eyelid.

She spoke before I could compute. "I hurt you..." She muttered. "I misread...I didn't mean to. I should...have known you...were not capable of that..." She sniffled.

I wiped her tears with my thumb. "You don't

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know me," I whispered. "I know..." Kissing away another tear.

"But you seem so sure...of us..."

"I AM sure of us. I am sure of you."

She searched my eyes for the lie, some tell of the deception she expected. But she would find none. "You want me,"

There was no hesitation. "All of you. Not just your body. I want your will, strength, stubbornness, rage, fear..." I had been panting without realising it. "I want your soul." 2

"You can have it," She breathed, sealing the declaration with a kiss, she pulled away momentarily. "Mark me, Kael. Make me yours and I will make you mine."

Something in my chest snapped—not breaking, but locking into place. The bond. The mate bond. I could feel it, golden and inevitable, threading between us. 5

"You're already mine," I growled. "You've been mine since the moment I saw you."

"Then prove it."

That was all I needed to hear.



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Our lips met again in a clash that was both hunger and submission. My hands roamed—her waist, her ribs, the curve of her breast. She gasped into my mouth, arching into my touch.

Then her hand inched down, cupping me through my pants.

I hissed against her mouth, grinding my erection against her hand, groaning with each thrust.

Mate, Ajax snarled in my head, red bleeding into my vision. Claim her. Mark her. Make her OURS.

Fuck, I was going to lose it.

My kisses grew feverish, hers turned teasing as she bit and nibbled on my lips.

Her hand did not stop, the rubbing continued, me growing, harder, hotter. She knew what she was doing, she was torturing me.

"Oh baby," I snarled against her mouth.

She giggled against my mouth, breathless, delighted. The sound ignited my lust into a blaze and snapped my restraint like a rope pulled taut. Her amusements died on her luscious lips when I grabbed her thighs, hoisted her up, wrapping her legs around my hips



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She crossed her legs over the small of my back instantly. My hands lowered to grab hand full of her ass, pressing her bare centre against my hot erection.

She groaned, arching back. I took full advantage, dipping my head down to neck, trailing kisses down her collarbone to her bare shoulder. With every roll of my hips, she followed.

My sweatpants doing nothing to conceal or clad me from her intoxicating heat. Her hypnotising scent filled the space, Ajax growled against his enclosure, writhing under my skin like a starved beast.

I traced my mouth from her collar bone back to her pulse, my lips feeling the thrumming of her wildly fluttering pulse. I grazed my teeth over the tender spot before coming down to drown myself in her breasts. My teeth, lips and tongue tastes, teased and savoured every curve and swell.

She arched her back, giving all that she could. I caught a hardened nipple between my teeth and felt her squirm. My tongue darted out, flicking the bud until she sobbed with the pleasure wreaking havoc within her. I bit down harder, then let my lips take over, sucking.



My hips still working, my length throbbing painfully.

Her moans, her scent, her aching body could undo me and all I wanted was to take her, hard and rough, filling her until she had no thoughts of anything else. But through bleary eyes and a lust fogged mind, all I could see was her.

Her golden hair flowing and shimmering like every strand held the sun, her azure eyes dilated and full with desire that mirrored my own. So beautiful it ached; tugging at the bond, so vulnerable it shattered me.

I came back up for air...

Her air...

I took her lips, gently, softly, like she was the most delicate thing in my world. Like glass that had gone through fire, just to be moulded into this woman that I knew would haunt my every waking moment...

Who was I kidding? I thought hopelessly. She invaded my dreams too.

She returned the softness of my kisses, bringing her hand to hold my face.

The bond between us pulsed—golden, inevitable,



right—and I knew in that moment that I'd never be alone again.

I moved her to the bed, laying her lightly on the bed, while not pulling away from her alluring mouth. Her hands slipped into my shirt, caressing my back. I teased her lips, slipping off my top so her wandering hands could explore as she pleased.

Her hand brushed against my scars and I subconsciously waited for her to hesitate. Relief flooded me when she only tilted her head to kiss me deeper.

One pulled away from my back, and trailed down to pants. She rolled her hips against me, trying to unsheathe my length. I fought the mindless lust and pulled away from her.

My eyes never left her as I pulled off what remained of my clothes.

Those seductive of her, grazed my form bashless. I watched her peaks tighten when cock sprang out. Her eyes dilated even more.

I wanted to smirk and give a clever quip but my mind blanked when she parted her legs for me.

I dove down, catching as her surprise flickered

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in her gaze just as I buried my face in her sweltering heat. Holding back had always been my specialty but this...

I let only instinct take over her as I sinfully devoured her. I explored every fold, my tongue probing and tasting, teeth crazing the engorged nub.

She cried out my name, my ears twitching at the sound as she ground cunt against my ruthless, ravenous mouth.

"Kael, please," She wept. "I am so...close..."

She didn't need to tell me, I could feel her beginning tense. I buried my tongue into her rippling core, her walls writhing, pulsing against my tongue as she hit her peak with my name on her lips. 5