

Forgotten Wife : Let the Traitors Kneel Down Novel

Chapter 381-390

Before Kiara was born, the palace doors swung open. Several guards in linen uniforms marched forward, swords at their sides, accompanied by their brothers. Behind them, a group of dancers performed a mesmerizing dance with swords, and in the midst of it all stood the royal family of Xurt. Cassian tried to push his way to the front, but it was nearly impossible; the ballerinas were blocking the view for everyone. He felt a surge of desperation and shouted the name of the princess, hoping to catch her attention.

"Princess Elisha!" As he reached the entrance, he could hear his own voice echoing back to him. Elisha turned, her gaze scanning the crowd until it landed on him. "Why didn't you let me know you were coming?" she asked, a hint of reproach in her tone. "You didn't have to leave." "I wanted to see what you found," he replied, gesturing toward the parade. "But it seems I've arrived at the wrong time." Elisha turned to one of the dancers who had guided them to the palace, her expression softening. "I'll have to go now.

"See you later." After bidding farewell, she rejoined the parade, knowing it was something she could not postpone. "I don't need you to protect me," she declared firmly as Cassian, Kiara, Barto, and Fay were led inside the palace by one of the dancers. The soldiers lowered their heads in fear, perhaps worried about what Princess Elisha would think of them for not allowing her to enter uninvited. The dancer guiding them introduced herself. "I'm Sai, the princess's assistant. If you need anything, I can help." "I want a change of clothes and some money," Cassian said.

"I'll bring them to you after I show you to your quarters," Sai replied. "Princess Elisha is ready to return," she added. "If the parade lasts, they'll leave a day before they could have given it as it should be, even though the asylum desires otherwise," Sai continued. They had traversed the desert, enduring the heat, and stood in front of the palace all afternoon, exhausted. Fay, however, seemed eager to assist. "I would like to rest for a moment," she said.

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"When my parties last a week, it's never a dull affair." Cassian had been part of those celebrations, which always felt like madness, with dancers coming and going for seven restless days. "Believe me when I say it's true," he replied, recalling the chaos of the festivities. "Even though my land is at peace now, we are also preparing for what comes next: the celebrations and the days ahead." "I don't need you to protect me," Kiara insisted, her voice firm. "Rest is a luxury we can hardly afford." Cassian couldn't remember the last time he had attended a party in the human world.

The realization that he had left that life behind for so long filled him with a sense of loss. "Try to come back after dawn; we won't be here much longer," Kiara urged. "The first time was Fay's, and then we'll leave." "I don't think I want to be at a party at a moment like this," Barto said, his expression serious. "Sometimes, in the worst times, we need laughter and dance to remind us that there is still hope," he added. After leaving Cassian, Fay strolled through the palace, having heard whispers of monsters attacking the kingdom.

Yet everyone seemed to agree that monsters were merely relics of the past. The kingdom of Xurt was a peaceful place that had suffered a great epidemic years ago, and this parade was a reminder of their resilience and a tribute to those who had fallen. Fay found no one to share her concerns with, so she decided to return. As she approached the door, a servant knocked gently. When Fay opened it, she found a young man holding a set of clothes. "Princess Elisha is waiting for you to say goodbye," he said. "I don't need your protection," Fay replied, feeling the weight of the situation.

"That's obvious," the servant said, "but you can't see the princess looking like that." Fay glanced down at her sweaty clothes, caked with dust and grime. The young man continued, "I can help you change." After a quick wash and change, Fay joined the others in the dining hall, where they awaited Princess Elisha's arrival. "Good morning! Do I have to wait?" Elisha asked as she took her seat. "No, but I do want to speak with you about something important," Cassian replied, his tone serious.

"Now that we're alone, you can speak freely," Elisha said, glancing around to ensure no one else was listening. "I thought you had come to bless my weapons," she continued, "but I suspect there's more to this visit." "There was no mistake; we came to bless your weapons, but we are also here for another reason," Kiara interjected. "What's going on?" Elisha asked, her curiosity piqued. "We believe there are monsters on Vaizel's mounts," Kiara explained.

"We came because we want to investigate and also to see if you have heard anything about it." "It's the first time I've heard of monsters in my training," Elisha replied, her brow furrowing. "If you want to join us, we would welcome your help," Kiara said. "We need to know if what we suspect is true." "I'll join you," Elisha declared. "If there are indeed monsters, I want to see for myself." "Be careful; it could be dangerous for you to accompany us," Cassian warned.

"Your life is precious, and you shouldn't take unnecessary risks." "I've been forced to take care of myself," Elisha replied defiantly. "I don't need a prince to protect me; this is my kingdom, and I will defend it."

382

Cassian didn't want to expose Elisha to danger. She was the reason for the alliance between the kingdom of Xurt and the kingdom of Cosset. If she died because of him, that alliance might come to an end. After contemplating the situation for a while, he finally spoke. "The princess may lack strength and skill in battle, but she is not fighting against humans; she is facing monsters, creatures of blood." "I understand that," Elisha replied, her voice steady.

"But I am also aware that yesterday afternoon, I felt the urge to leave without you." "If something happens, your priest will not be pleased. It could jeopardize the alliance between our kingdoms."

"I am responsible for informing my father of the dangers. It is my decision to accompany you." "This is the hereditary princess who would speak in such a manner," Cassian remarked, a hint of admiration in his tone. "I must know what my kingdom is facing and be prepared to confront it." "But..." Kiara interjected, her brow furrowed.

"I don't believe there is any point in arguing or explaining," Elisha said, smiling softly. "You won't convince me not to go." Cassian sighed. "Very well. I hope you will join us, but I would like you to explain to your priest the potential dangers of this journey." "There will be no problem. Let's finish our conversation, and then we can speak with Princess Kiara." "May she bless my arsenal," Cassian added, his voice filled with determination. Kiara nodded. "I have completed the blessings, Princess Elisha.

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With these weapons, you will be prepared to face the monsters." "I'm glad to hear that," Elisha replied, relief washing over her. Cassian turned to Kiara. "How are you feeling?" "I'm fine," she said, though her eyes betrayed her fatigue. "You need to rest. One day will be enough." "Then go and rest, Princess Elisha. We will depart tomorrow morning." "Very well," Elisha said, turning to her assistant. "Prepare the weapons we need and find Rania. We'll leave for our mission soon." "As you command, Princess," her assistant replied.

The following day, Elisha waited for the first light of dawn, accompanied by Samira and another young girl who must have been Rania, the one Elisha had mentioned the day before. Cassian noticed that no one was there to escort the princess. "Is no one coming with you?" he asked. "At Ilevará, no one escorts Her Majesty," Samira replied. "Samira and Rania will serve as escorts. Even if they are women, they know how to fight," Cassian insisted. Elisha had left him no choice. "We have several horses," she said. "The terrain of Vaizel's mountains is uneven.

Using a carriage would be dangerous, so it's best to ride. It will take us a day, but it will be less perilous, especially since we don't know what we will encounter." Cassian mounted his horse. "Then let's go. We can't waste any more time." As they began their journey, Elisha noticed Cassian was still recovering. "Do you feel better?" she asked. "I do," he replied, though his voice was strained. "I still need your magic to regain my strength." "Magic usually heals quickly, but I don't understand why it's taking so long." "It's because my body was dead for a long time.

I need more magic than usual to fully recover my mobility." "What about your magic?" Elisha inquired. "Every time I infuse it into you, it feels as if..." "That's because I died from my magic. I can't restore my body quickly; I only have three days to live before I can return to life. Recovering will take longer than I imagined." "I hope it doesn't take too long," Elisha said, concern etched on her face. "The best moment to have your magic is when you're at your strongest." "Exactly. Why does everyone insist on reminding me of my past?

Even the fairy child is still here?" "Are you referring to Tarik?" Elisha asked, intrigued. "Yes, he is still here." "Could you ask him if I might speak with him?" "For what purpose?" Cassian questioned. "I want to ask him something important. He is the successor of my beloved. If something were to happen, it would be a significant problem." "Your beloved? You mean the fairy

queen?" Cassian's eyes widened. "Of course. She was my one true love in life," he replied, his voice filled with longing.

"If I loved her so deeply, how could I not wish to be reunited?" "No, that's something you also asked me. It's not that I didn't return sooner; it's just that when I took on the body of this young man, my heart told me that even after centuries, I still love her and wish to recover what was lost."

383

Timeless Magic Abril sent for Tarik and llevó with the first guard, as requested. As she walked through the corridor, she couldn't shake off the feeling of shyness that lingered in the air. "How do you find it?" she asked, her curiosity piqued. "Are you growing well?" "If always," he replied, a hint of uncertainty in his voice. "It will be when you come back." "Why do you refuse to speak to her?" she pressed, sensing his hesitation. "It seems to me that you're also like the rivers." "Because if you see her, you will lose the desire to stay here. I will end up returning," Tarik confessed.

His words struck a chord with Abril, filling her with a certain fear about his answer. "Tarik, why do you want Lissana to grow up?" "When I grew up, we became helpless. I wanted everything to be as it was before. I wanted to laugh with my friends. And Lissana is never as true as her friends are. That's why I wanted to return her to the earth. And now I'm fine, so I want to be one of them." "Are you sure that this is the only reason you don't want to go back?" Abril asked, her brow furrowing.

"Is it because you'd like her to have your age, or is there another reason?" Tarik fell silent for a long moment, lost in thought. "I just want her to grow so we can return to being friends," he finally said. Abril sensed he was hiding something, so she decided to change the subject. "Lissana told me that you write letters. How do they get there? Will they arrive?" "Some pixies came to me; it must be at their request," he replied. "I thought they weren't allowed to leave their land," she said, puzzled. "Only if they don't have permission from the queen.

I believe they didn't wish to remain in the world of mortals." When they reached the door, Abril paused. "One moment, I need to tell you something. The first guardian is a bit odd and annoying, so have patience with him." "Understood," Tarik replied. "I'll see you later," she said, stepping inside to meet the first guardian. As she entered, she noticed the guardian's appearance was striking, but there was something different about him. His eyes, though green, conveyed a depth of wisdom that was hard to ignore. "Are you the first guardian?" she asked. "Yes, I am a guardian," he replied.

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"I'm not a child; I have a sharp edge. I'm just a quince," she stated firmly. "I have thousands of sharp edges," he countered, a hint of amusement in his tone. "I want to know if you have any way to communicate with the realm of the fairies," she pressed. "Yes, I usually do," he said, his expression turning serious. "You are the prince of the fairies; you must have a way to communicate with your queen. Would you like a magic mirror or a necklace?" she suggested. "The magic mirror reigns in Abril, and the other things are nothing but letters," he replied dismissively.

"Cassiel says he has a home or tells me how he talks to you," she continued. "I suppose I will have to wait until I recover to see her face or hear the voice of my beloved Leriana. I guess I'll have to settle for sending her a letter," he said, a hint of sadness in his voice. "Write a letter; I want to send it to the queen," Tarik urged. Tarik wasn't fully following what the guardian was saying, but he kept asking questions, trying to make sense of it all. "I don't believe this is a favor to the queen," the guardian said. "I assure you, you will receive a letter," Tarik insisted.

"I'm not lying; I just want to know how to recognize a lie." "Good luck; don't be too happy," the guardian replied, his carefree expression fading into seriousness. "But it is vital for your kingdom," Tarik pressed. "Why is that?" the guardian asked. "Do you know why Leriana doesn't want to unite forces to fight against the darkness?" Tarik replied. "No, even she hasn't given me an answer," the guardian admitted. "I say it was because she wanted to save our kingdom. Our people, who would know the moment I became illegitimate." "She wants to transfer the land of the fairies to another world.

She doesn't want to support us in this war because it won't be when she is untied," Tarik explained. "Another world?" the guardian echoed, disbelief etched on his face. "Yes, that could cost you your life. In this new world, you will be..." Tarik hesitated, realizing the weight of his words. "I would see Lissana again, but I would lose my best friend forever." "It can't be certain; it's possible to do it," the guardian said, trying to reassure him. "You have seen the power Leriana possesses; that's a huge power," Tarik replied, a glimmer of hope igniting within him. "Sometimes you can use it.

If she has chosen you as her successor, it means you can wield timeless magic, just like her," the guardian stated. Tarik was so surprised that he struggled to find his breath. "I'm saying this so you can enter the plan. I want to count on your help so I don't lose the woman I love and to save the world." Tarik fell silent, and the guardian looked at him intently. "Is it possible to count on you?" "Write your letter; I will ensure it reaches the fairy queen," he promised. "Thank you for your understanding," Tarik said, relief washing over him.

"But I'm not doing it for you; I'm doing it for myself." Abril was training with her daggers in the garden when Alessandro appeared, a determined look on his face. "Is it possible to train with you?" he asked. "Of course," she replied, a smile breaking through her concentration. Alessandro drew his sword, his confidence evident. "It won't be too hard." "I'm not so weak," she retorted, her eyes sparkling with challenge. Even though she thought he was strong, seeing his small figure, slender arms, and delicate hands made her doubt he could muster all his energy.

But she was surprised when he made the first thrust and successfully blocked her attack. Abril noticed the determination on his face. "I tell you, I'm not so weak." "I'm glad you're here," he said, a hint of admiration in his voice. "Do you know anything about Cassiel?" she asked, shifting the topic. "Today, there are already mountains of work to do," he replied, a hint of frustration creeping in. "Of course, it's clear how to recover quickly," she said.

"Alright, even though it's taking longer than I imagined, I can't use all my magic because we don't know when we will be attacked," he admitted. "Thank you for your hard work and

dedication. We must ensure our home is safe and protected," she said, her resolve strengthening.

384

After spending a day in the desert, Cassian found himself completely exhausted, just like Kiara and Barto, the only ones who seemed to be holding up alongside Princess Elisha and her assistants, Fay included. Barto looked at Kiara and said, "Let's take a break, Kiara. You don't look well." Elisha glanced at Kiara and added, "I think I might delay our trip for another day." "I'm fine. I can keep going," Kiara insisted. Barto shook his head. "No, you're not. If you don't rest, you'll end up collapsing." "He's right," Fay chimed in.

"We need you strong for what lies ahead." Elisha's servants began to set up camp, driving stakes into the ground, attaching blankets to provide shade, and laying out cushions on the floor. As Barto helped Kiara down from her horse, he cradled her in his arms and carried her into the shade. She was flushed and weary, and after giving her some water, he asked, "How are you feeling?" "I'm just a little worn out from the heat. I'll be fine," she replied, trying to sound more confident than she felt. Elisha knelt down and used her magic to create a small hole in the ground, filling it with water.

In that moment, Cassian realized why the kingdom of Xurt, despite being in the desert, had such an abundance of water. It was because the royal family had the ability to conjure it. She removed the cloth covering her head and instructed her assistants to air out their water canteens. Cassian inquired, "Are we still far from Vaizel's mounts?" "Yes, even though they seem close, it's still quite a trek," Elisha replied. "We can't risk using any teleportation parchment without knowing the destination. We could end up lost in the desert." "This is a desert; there are no landmarks, no clear path.

The best option is to travel by horse," Cassian said. Elisha glanced at Vaizel's mounts, which were tethered nearby, and asked, "Do you really believe the rumors about those creatures lurking in the mountains?" "If it's true, I'll have to prepare my army to destroy them," she replied, determination in her voice. "I don't think that's wise. It would be better to fortify your kingdom with barriers to keep the monsters out and gather a strong army," Barto suggested. Elisha sighed heavily.

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"I hope we don't encounter anything in those mountains." "There are no monsters in those mountains," Kiara interjected. "But it's wise to be prepared for when they do appear." "My kingdom may not be large compared to others, but every soldier knows how to defend themselves. One of my soldiers is worth three of Vaizel's men in skill," Elisha asserted. "I know that well, as I've seen them fight," Barto replied, his tone serious. "We must unite against the darkness." "I just hope Todd comes through this unscathed," Elisha said, her voice tinged with worry.

They spent the rest of the afternoon resting and went to bed early. The next day, when Kiara awoke, Barto was the first to ask how she was feeling. "Are you feeling better? Should you keep resting?" he asked, concern etched on his face. She caressed the sponge ball of water

beside her. "I'm fine now. My magic has fully recovered. We can continue our journey." "Are you sure?" he pressed. "I'm here," she reassured him. Once they had packed up camp, they set off again, though the intense heat made the journey difficult.

No one complained; they pressed on through the sandy dunes until they reached the foothills of Vaizel's mountains. Elisha halted and ordered her assistants to prepare camp. "Why are we stopping? It's too bright out here," Cassian questioned. "Yes, but if we push on, we'll arrive at dusk. Those mountains are dangerous, especially at night. It would be suicide to enter after dark," Elisha explained. Cassian understood the risk but remained silent, knowing that the danger of arriving late was preferable to the threat of nightfall.

The next day dawned, and as they approached the mountains, Elisha drew her sword, its blade gleaming at her side. "Be very careful where you step. If the ground feels soft, leave immediately. It could be quicksand," she warned. Elisha moved with grace among the rocky terrain, and Cassian asked, "Have you been here before?" "When I was younger, my brothers and I wanted to explore these mountains ourselves, but we were warned against it," she replied, her voice filled with nostalgia.

"We never saw anyone, just wild animals and the treacherous landscape." "The years you speak of are the ones when the monsters roamed freely," Cassian noted. "Yes, they were forced to flee or perish because of those creatures," she confirmed. "If what they say is true, we'll find out soon enough," he replied. As they advanced through the mountains, an eerie silence enveloped them. Fay suddenly halted and drew her sword. "Something isn't right. There's too much silence. No animals can be heard," she warned. Everyone readied their weapons, and Cassian urged them to stay alert.

"If you sense danger, stay vigilant," he cautioned. Barto turned to Kiara, his voice firm. "Don't hide behind me. We need to face this together." Kiara felt a surge of anxiety but nodded, determined to stand her ground. "Don't leave me alone," she pleaded. "That's what I should be saying to you. Just focus on your magic," Barto replied, his protective instincts kicking in. Elisha felt a thrill of excitement watching Kiara and Barto. She could never have fought alongside Enzo like this. "Stay sharp.

It seems there's something lurking among the trees, and they're closing in on us," Elisha warned. "We have to decide our escape route quickly." Suddenly, a monstrous figure lunged at her, and Fay swiftly severed its head before it could reach her, the creature collapsing at her feet and staining her boots with a viscous liquid. "Don't get distracted, Princess!" Cassian shouted from behind. Elisha regained her composure just in time to fend off another attacker.

She raised her sword, ready to fight, while Kiara unleashed her light magic to obliterate the other creatures that emerged from the shadows.

Barto fell onto his back, instinctively protecting himself as the monstrous creatures closed in. Cassian and Fay were losing their grip on reality during the attack, their focus shattered by the chaos around them. They fought fiercely, but no one could see the true monster lurking in the shadows. "It would be better if we found a place to protect ourselves before more

monsters arrive," Cassian suggested, his voice strained with urgency. "We can't afford to be caught off guard again." Elisha remained silent for a moment, contemplating the truth hidden within the mountains.

"I want to know why you are here," she finally said. "These monsters will never leave this place; they are bound to it. You must discover the reason." Barto understood Cassian's reluctance to abandon them. The mountains of Vaizel were perilous, but staying was equally dangerous. "We haven't encountered any monsters yet, perhaps it would be wise to retreat," Kiara proposed, her tone cautious. "We've faced worse situations than this," Barto replied, trying to instill confidence.

"We'll be fine." "In these circumstances, we have a wizard and an army at our disposal," Cassian added, glancing at Rania, the princess's assistant. "I'm just a mage," Rania interjected, her voice steady. "I can only perform certain spells if I leave the tower of magicians. When I was younger, I could create a protective barrier, but it wouldn't be perfect." Elisha's expression turned serious. "You don't want to know what lies hidden in these mountains, do you?

That's why you're afraid." After a few moments of silence, Elisha asked, "What did you come to find in these royal mountains, Cassian? If you answer me honestly, I might decide to stay, since it's clear you didn't come here just to prove that monsters exist." "If I wanted your help, I would be sincere," Cassian replied, his voice low. "I want to see it once more," he continued, revealing the true reason for his journey into the Vaizel mountains. "I'm not here solely because of the monsters. I'm searching for the gates of Hades.

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I believe they are hidden within these mountains, and the monsters are here to guard them. This is where our war will either begin or end." "Can we go today?" Elisha asked, her eyes wide with concern. "Are you telling me the whole truth this time?" she pressed. "Yes, that is the truth. That is the real reason I came to these mountains," Cassian confirmed. Elisha turned to Rania. "We will stay; it's our duty to protect ourselves." "As you wish, Princess," Rania replied. "Let's move quickly; the monsters are closing in," Barto urged.

They pressed deeper into the forest, where the relentless attacks continued. Eventually, they stumbled upon a cave, a potential refuge from the ceaseless onslaught. Rania secured the entrance by conjuring a barrier, while Barto extended a protective spell into the ground. "I'm fine, Barto. I haven't used that much magic," she reassured him. "Even so, you should rest," he insisted. Kiara took Barto's hand, her grip firm. "You need to rest too; you've been protecting me this whole time." Fay settled against the cave wall, closing her eyes.

Cassian started a fire in the center, searching for a place to sit. "You should rest, Princess, only if we can," Elisha said, sitting on the floor next to Cassian. Barto shot her a warning look, silently conveying his concern. "I'm watching you," he seemed to say, his gaze sharp. Cassian hesitated, wanting to sit beside Elisha but not wanting to appear disrespectful. "The gates of Hades you seek," he began, "if they open, my kingdom will be in great danger. Is that true?" "Yes, but I will do everything possible to protect your kingdom," Cassian assured him.

"That's why we need to form an alliance to confront these horrors." "Monstrous creatures emerge from those gates. Wouldn't it be better to destroy them?" Fay questioned. "No," Cassian replied firmly. "If we destroy them, they will simply appear elsewhere. If we're here when the gates open, we'll be prepared, and we'll have a chance to win." "I suppose that makes sense, but it's not ideal," Fay conceded. "No, but if the gates are indeed in these mountains, we will have the advantage," Cassian stated.

"We will not be caught off guard." Elisha wrapped her arms around herself, looking at Barto and Kiara, who were holding hands tightly. She couldn't help but wish she were with them, feeling a sense of belonging that was almost tangible. The thought of being destroyed by the monsters haunted her; her life felt precarious. Elisha glanced at the sword and dagger Enzo had left her, remembering the words written in the letter. She sighed deeply, whispering a wish she feared she might never voice again.

"I would like to see you once more." The night stretched on until dawn, and as Rania's barrier faded, they continued into the forest, despite the overwhelming odds against them. Monsters lurked everywhere, ready to attack. As they hid behind some rocks, Rania created another barrier to shield them. "Continuing forward will be difficult; the monsters seem to multiply," Barto warned. "Of course, we know where we're headed," Kiara replied, her determination unwavering. "I think I'm going in the right direction," she said, her finger pointing ahead.

"I can sense something dark and evil." "Is it not just the monsters?" Cassian asked, his brow furrowed. "No, it feels different-more sinister," Kiara insisted. "Are we near the gates?" Cassian inquired, glancing around warily. "Though there are many monsters nearby, we must press on," Fay added, her voice filled with resolve. "I'm exhausted," Barto admitted. "What are we doing? How do we escape these mountains?" Cassian asked, "What do you mean, Fay?" "Everyone is sick and tired. We can't stay here much longer," she replied, her concern evident.

"Could we use teleportation parchment?" Cassian suggested. "I don't think that's a good idea. We don't have a fixed destination, only a desert," Elisha cautioned. "It doesn't matter; it's better to be in the desert than to die at the hands of monsters. They seem to handle themselves well when they're safe," Cassian argued. "I suppose you're right. It would be less dangerous than retracing our steps," Fay conceded.

386

They only needed to stay together, for they couldn't teleport to the ground. "It doesn't seem like a bad plan to me," Fay said, "unless Kiara uses her magic to make us overcome. Let's just see where we truly are." "Everyone is fine," Elisha replied, though the tension hung in the air. "If we can't fight, the magic of light will heal us and put an end to the monsters that surround us," Cofatah declared. "I think the same," Cassian said.

"Now, let's keep moving forward." They pressed on through the hell of monsters that harassed them, until they arrived at what seemed to have once been a village. Cassian turned to Kiara. "Is this the place?" "Yes, it's here," she replied, though she couldn't see anything. She felt the oppressive darkness that lingered in the air. It was difficult to pinpoint the source of the

malevolent energy that had created so many monsters attacking them. They all reached the same conclusion and turned to Kiara, who would reveal the source of the darkness.

Kiara released a surge of magic that obliterated the monsters surrounding them, healing the land and restoring the magic of her companions. With the monsters gone, Kiara could finally sense where the malevolent darkness was emanating from. Her gaze fell upon the towering stone structures that loomed ominously. "I believe this dark power comes from these towers," she said, her voice steady. Cassian approached one of the towers, feeling a strange familiarity wash over him. He examined the engravings on the stone, and his certainty grew.

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"We've found them; these are the doors to Hades." Elisha stood transfixed, staring at the stone columns that Cassian had indicated. To her, they seemed like the last remnants of the hell Cassian had described. "But this doesn't seem like a door," she said, puzzled. "Only in your mind," Cassian replied. "These are the gates of Hades. With all the monsters here, it's hard to see the engravings, but I believe this is where the gates will appear.

One of the columns bears a mark that matches the key we possess." Before they could discuss it further, the monsters returned, surrounding them once more. "We should hurry," Barto urged. "We don't have much time." Everyone gathered closely, preparing for the worst as the monsters closed in. "We'll end up lost in the desert if we don't find a way out of here," Fay said anxiously. "Let's not panic," Cassian said, trying to keep everyone calm. "We need to stay focused." Elisha scanned their surroundings, but nothing looked familiar.

"I don't know where we are," she admitted, exhaustion creeping into her voice. She felt drained, as if she might collapse onto the white sand beneath her. Her companions looked at her with concern. "Princess, are you alright? Are you hurt?" they asked anxiously. Elisha raised her hand to shield her eyes from the sun. "I'm fine, just a little tired." As the others settled down, Cassian remained alert, watching over them. He could see that everyone was ready to rest, but he felt the weight of their situation pressing down on him.

When the sun began to set and the first stars appeared, Elisha knelt on the ground, tracing patterns in the sand with her finger. "It's time," she said, looking up at the sky. "Do you know where we are?" Cassian asked. "No, but there's a place we should go," she replied, determination in her voice. Everyone stood up, gathered their belongings, and followed Kiara as she led the way. They walked through the night, and by dawn, they discovered a small oasis with palm trees and crystal-clear water. They rested there all day, sheltered by the palms. As night fell again, they resumed their journey.

When they paused to rest, Cassian approached Elisha, who seemed to be studying the stars. "How do you know where to go?" he asked. "Only the stars," she replied. "If you know how to read them, they can guide you anywhere." "This is the first time I've heard such a thing," Cassian said, intrigued. "In my kingdom, everyone learns to read the stars from a young age," Elisha explained. "It helps us find our way home, whether we're lost in the desert or in an unknown place." Cassian looked up at the sky, contemplating her words. "You must want to return to your wife," he said softly.

"Yes," he admitted, his voice filled with longing. "At this moment, that is my greatest desire."

387

Elisha returned to the bridge as the sun rose, and in the distance, she could glimpse the kingdom of Xurt. After reporting their findings, Vaizel's mounts returned to Cosset. Everyone went to rest, except for Cassian, who sought out his brother to inform him of what he had discovered in the mountains of Vaizel. He would go to the workshop when he met Abril. "Cassian, I'm glad to see Gresado safe. How is everyone?" Abril asked, her voice filled with concern. "Everyone is fine. They've all gone to rest. Is everything calm here?" Cassian replied. "Yes, everything is quiet."

Cira hasn't attacked," Abril assured him. As they made their way to Alessandro's workshop, Cassian asked, "Have you spoken with Maya?" "Yes, I spoke with her yesterday." "How is she?" "Good, I think. Every time we spoke, you asked me if she had returned. You should talk to her later." "I was actually thinking about going to the land of the fairies," Cassian admitted. "Are you ready to return?" Abril inquired. "Yes, I'll only be gone for a day," he answered. "That sounds good to me." When they reached the door, Alessandro's daughter knocked, and Gabriel opened it.

Seeing his brother, she rushed forward to embrace him tightly. "Thank God you've returned safely," she exclaimed. "I'm glad to see you too, brother. How is everyone?" "It would be better if we went inside," Cassian suggested. As they entered the workshop, Gabriel served them cups of tea. "There were stone columns in those mountains, with strange inscriptions on them. Each one seemed to hold a key to the gates of Hades, which would fit perfectly," Cassian explained. "I'm not sure what those inscriptions meant," Abril said thoughtfully. "I believe Cassiel will tell us more."

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He might not want to cooperate, though; he didn't seem eager for us to return to the place where the gates of Hades appeared." "There's no other option than what we discussed to help him recover. He can't deny himself that," Abril insisted. "Is he getting better?" Cassian asked. "His recovery is slow. Even though he's been treated every day, he hasn't improved much," Abril replied, her brow furrowing with worry. "I hope he comes to his senses and agrees to help us reveal what those inscriptions mean," Cassian said. "His safety is paramount," Abril added.

"We need a double-edged sword to confront the challenges ahead." Cassian felt extremely tired. "You should rest, Abril. You look unwell." "I'll take you there, and I'll see you later," she replied, trying to sound reassuring. "Don't worry about me. Just rest," Cassian said as he headed toward the door. "After I talk to Cassiel, I'd like to return to the land of the fairies, even if it's only for a few days. I miss my family," Abril said, her voice softening. "That sounds good to me," Cassian replied. Once Cassian left, Alessandro sat next to Abril.

"Do you also want to go to the fairies' land?" he asked. "Yes, I'd like to see how Lissana is doing, but I won't go without you," she replied, her determination evident. "She is safer on the ground, and she has grown strong. I believe it's not yet time for her to return," Alessandro said, taking Abril's hand. "When everything is over, we can all be together," he promised. Alessandro paused,

looking at Abril, feeling a pang of guilt for leaving her behind. "How was our relationship before?" he suddenly asked. "Why are you asking questions now?" Abril replied, surprised.

"I just wanted to know what we were like before," he explained. "I believe we were doing well," she said, a hint of nostalgia in her voice. "Have you always felt that way?" he pressed. "I suppose so," she admitted. Alessandro leaned in and kissed her softly, a brief but tender moment. "Is that how it is?" he asked, searching her eyes. Their relationship had changed significantly, but the warmth of their kisses and caresses remained. It was as if Alessandro had hesitated, fearing she might reject him. "Whenever you want," he murmured, pulling her closer.

"Are you safe?" she asked, her voice barely above a whisper. "Yes, I'm safe," he assured her. Though still close, uncertainty lingered in the air. When their lips met again, it was more intense, filled with longing. The moment stretched, and as they finally separated, both felt the weight of what had been lost and what could still be regained.

388

A double-edged sword hung in the air, its presence palpable. Abril was eager, longing to feel Alessandro's touch against her skin, wishing he could caress her for as long as possible. She turned, wrapping her arms around him, their lips meeting for what felt like the second time in a world that faded away around them. "Your brothers are stubborn," she teased, her smile playful. Alessandro paused, his brow furrowing. "I think we should stop." "Why?" she asked, her voice a mix of confusion and desire. "This isn't our first time, but for me, it feels like it is."

I can't remember it." He tucked a loose strand of hair behind her ear, his expression softening. Abril laughed, finding him adorable in his concern for her. "A kiss in the mess? You're making me feel emasculated." "Then let's not waste time," he replied, a hint of urgency in his tone. "Why don't we convince the first guardian to collaborate with us?" "Yes, that seems like a good idea," Abril agreed, her mind shifting from the moment to their mission. They made their way to Cassiel's room, where they found him waiting.

"I was beginning to think you two would never visit me at the same time," he remarked, a teasing glint in his eyes. "Cassiel has discovered what appears to be the location of the Gates of Hades," Alessandro informed her. "What do you want to do?" Abril asked, her curiosity piqued. "In this place, there are stone columns with strange engravings," Cassiel explained, his voice serious. "What do you think they mean?" "What is the purpose of these inscriptions? They don't speak to us," Alessandro mused, his frustration evident.

Cassiel hesitated for a moment, then replied, "We've done everything possible to help you. If you want Abril to continue treating us, we need to understand what we're facing." "Nobody knows where to find the Gates of Hades," Cassiel continued. "What we might find is a place filled with monsters guarding it. There's nothing there except those columns, and they might drive you mad." Abril frowned, her determination unwavering. "We need to cure whoever lives behind those doors so they can save our world. Why are you so hesitant?" "Sometimes, it's better not to know," Cassiel warned.

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"It could increase the risk for you." "Increase the risk? We're up against a force we don't understand," Alessandro countered, his voice rising. "We need to know what we're facing and where the battle will be. Talking in circles only leads to dizziness and exhaustion." Cassiel sighed deeply. "These are recorded instructions on how to open the doors. You'll need the Keys of Hades." "To open these doors, a ritual must be performed on a specific day, under certain conditions," Cassiel added. "What kind of conditions?" Alessandro pressed, his interest piqued.

"If you need the blood of a guardian," Cassiel replied, his tone grave. "That's why you were hesitant. You were afraid we wouldn't be able to open the doors," Abril said, realization dawning on her. "Darkness can corrode anyone, even a guardian. That's why I decided only a guardian should know how to access the depths of Hades. It's a place only they can enter," Cassiel explained. "If there is darkness, we wouldn't be able to open those doors," Alessandro stated firmly. "Consciously, you wouldn't do it, but if you were overwhelmed by darkness, you might."

That's why I made this decision," Cassiel said, his voice steady. "You can think of it as you wish, but remember, you are a double-edged sword. On one side, you can protect the world; on the other, you can destroy it." "Then until Cira retrieves the Keys of Hades, we won't be able to open them," Abril concluded. "The inscriptions on these columns are in the angelic language. Even demons can read them, just as angels can," Cassiel added, his eyes narrowing. "But they might take time," Abril cautioned.

"If Cira were to open the Gates of Hades, she could steal their memories and learn everything contained within. The doors will inevitably open, but it may be delayed. We need to gather our strength and prepare." Liona had been lost in thought for several days since her arrival at Laios, feeling more like a servant than a princess. Cira had ordered her to comply with every demand. "I didn't come here to serve," Liona said, her voice firm as she cut vegetables, frustration bubbling beneath the surface. "Do you hear my voice?" Cira asked, her tone sharp.

Liona dropped the knife, her thoughts racing. "I feel like a princess, but I can't help but think about what to prepare for her." "Distract yourself, and we can read together," Cira suggested, her expression softening. "Princess Cira, you look much better, but you still seem pale," Liona remarked, concern creeping into her voice. "What's wrong?" Cira asked, her gaze steady. "Nothing, princess! Just ask me if you need anything," Liona replied, forcing a smile. "Then, if I'm still not ready to retrieve the Keys of Hades, we'll be here for a while," Cira said, determination in her eyes.

Liona enjoyed the moment, a flicker of hope igniting within her.

389

Cira stood at the door, her expression serious as she addressed Liona. "Does that bother you?" "No, Princess! I just want to see the doors of Hades open," Liona replied, her determination evident. "I'm tired of being just a girl." "It's ready, I assure you," Cira said, her voice steady. Liona felt a flicker of hope as she thought of the moment they would reach the doors of Hades. But when Cira stepped away for a moment, Liona's heart sank.

She had marched forward without looking back, and now, as she fell onto her bed, the weight of Angel's blood coursing through her veins felt heavier than ever. The same question echoed in her mind, but she had no answer. In the darkness, she felt her strength wane, and at times, she questioned why she was enduring all of this. By stealing Alessandro's memories, she had created a rift that divided her family and left her in fear. She knew she was about to face another blow, one that would bring her to the brink of despair. A voice resonated in her mind.

"Opening the doors of Hades is our greatest desire. When the dark king is free, we will always be by your side, ruling in the new world as one of its generals." Those words repeated in her head, as if trying to convince her of their truth. Cira's presence faded, leaving her with a severe headache, the knowledge of her situation weighing heavily upon her. Suddenly, Liona opened her eyes, but she was not in her room. The darkness inside her felt like a force controlling her body. She rose from the bed, leaving the mansion behind, and ventured into the forest.

There, she called upon the monsters that lurked in the shadows, hidden in the water, and devoured them. "This blood is from an ancient time," she thought, feeling it weaken her and rob her of control as she struggled to recover her memories. Hades had another container, and just then, Liona appeared, tears streaming down her face. "Princess, is everything alright?" she asked, concern etched on her features. Cira's gaze scrutinized Liona, as if examining her closely. "Why have you followed me?" "It didn't seem like it was very important that I needed help," Liona replied, her voice trembling.

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Cira stepped closer, lifting Liona's chin with a hand. "You don't have much power; you don't serve me." With that, Cira turned and left, leaving Liona seething with anger. She had been the one who cared, yet now she felt weak and unrecognized. "Damn it," Liona muttered under her breath. "Someday you'll regret belittling me." The same dark figure that had appeared before her emerged from the trees. "I suppose you're bothering me," it said, its voice low and menacing. "I'm tired of being belittled. I could kill you," Liona snapped.

"I tell you to wait; this is not the moment," the figure replied, its tone dismissive. "Why? Because you don't have to serve that person?" Liona shot back. "We need her to open the doors of Hades. Until that happens, I'll help you kill her, but I will make sure my master rewards you for it." "Your master?" Liona asked, her curiosity piqued. "I told you before, only a few have managed to escape from Hades. My master, however, is still trapped in this place," the figure explained. "Are you speaking of the one in hell?" "No, in hell there is a hierarchy. You may enter, but you must be strong.

The power of those who follow him will be greater, so do not despair. In the new world, you will have a place where you will not be treated as a servant again." After Abril and Alessandro left, Cassiel asked one of the servants about Tarik, who had just entered his room. The sun was setting, casting a warm orange light that flooded the space. "Why are you here?" Tarik asked, his brow furrowed. "I have a message for you," the servant replied. "Are you sure you received it?" Tarik pressed.

"You sent it astray along the way." "There's little I can do if there's no response to the letter I sent to Lissana. When you ask if you haven't read it, I say to deliver it, but—" "Are you safe?" Tarik interrupted. "We did not lie. If I say that you delivered the letter, then you must trust that it was done," the servant insisted. "I don't want to be seen as a fool because of this," Tarik muttered. "You said Abril looks magical. Ask me to give it to you," the servant urged. "Why not? Why didn't you ask for it sooner? I never requested it," Tarik replied, frustration creeping into his voice.

"Because I am the only one with the letters, but I still don't understand why there was no request made." "I don't have a choice until I want to. At the moment, I can't walk freely, but you fail me with your legs while walking," the servant said, trying to maintain composure. Tarik could see the tension in the servant's posture, but he pressed on. "Even if she gives you the letter, the queen had to be the one to talk to you. Say it again." "Why do you think my letter hasn't been answered?" the servant asked, raising an eyebrow. "Maybe she forgot about you," Tarik replied bitterly.

That thought stung. She would forget him, just as he had tried to forget her. "Don't bother me," he said sharply. "I'd rather not see you again until you bring a reply to my letter." "I tell you that I can't come back yet. You must wait patiently for the queen's response," the servant insisted. Tarik began to turn away. "Where do you think you're going?" the servant called after him. "I can't help you, so there's nothing left to do here. I will return when the queen sends a reply to your letter," Tarik said, his voice firm. Darkness attracts darkness, he thought as he walked away.

Cassian wasn't worried about how tired he was until he finally collapsed onto his bed. His eyes closed immediately, and he fell into a deep sleep. When he woke, the first thing he thought of was Cassiel, and a flood of questions filled his mind. After touching the door of the room and receiving no response, he entered without an invitation. Cassiel was sleeping soundly, and Cassian called out to him repeatedly, but his brother didn't stir. "Can the snoring be that heavy?" Cassian wondered aloud, shaking him until he finally woke. Cassiel opened one eye and groaned.

"What are you doing here?" "I want to talk. I have some questions," Cassian replied, urgency in his tone. "Fine, but wake up before you throw a jar of water at me," Cassiel grumbled, sitting up. "What do you want?" "I want you to talk to me about the doors of Hades." "Yesterday, I spoke to your brother and Abril. Talk to them and let me sleep," Cassiel said, trying to settle back down. Cassian persisted. "What did you say to my brother?"

390

Cassian stared at the strange columns he had discovered, his mind racing with the implications. "What on earth are these?" he muttered, sketching the towers on a piece of paper. "These are the columns you found. Look closely and confirm that this is where the gates of Hades will appear." As he studied the drawing, all the worries that had plagued him seemed to fade away. "Yes, in this place, the gates of Hades will open. You know where the battle will begin. Good luck," Cassian said, his voice steady but laced with concern. "This place is dangerous, filled with monsters.

Do you really believe there's any way to control these columns?" he asked, his brow furrowing. "If you destroy the columns, they will reappear," came the reply, calm yet foreboding. "What about the monsters? Won't they follow?" Cassian pressed. "No. The monsters that dwell in that place

lack a clear purpose. They wander off, assembling to attack villages and wreak havoc elsewhere. But I assure you, this is where the gates of Hades will close the dark king.

It doesn't mean we can control it; the doors appear where there is a concentration of darkness." "What do you mean by that?" Cassian asked, confusion etched on his face. "In this world, darkness attracts more darkness. If this world is shrouded in shadow, these doors merely impede its passage temporarily. I believe the ancients protected the world by opening them," the voice explained. "So there's nothing we can do?" Cassian's voice dropped, a hint of despair creeping in. "No.

Even if you succeed, you will never know where these doors will appear next," the voice replied, leaving Cassian with a sense of helplessness. He took a deep breath, trying to shake off the weight of the conversation. "I need to rest. I still can't get used to being in my own body. If you want to know more about Hades, my brother..." Cassian stepped out of the habitat, seeking Abril and Alessandro to clarify what Cassiel had told him about the depths of Hades. As he walked, he encountered Fay. "Good morning, Fay. Are you going somewhere?" he asked.

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"I dislike being cooped up; it tires me to be alone," she replied, her eyes brightening at the prospect of conversation. "I'll speak with Abril, then. I plan to head to the land of the fairies for a few days," Cassian said. "That sounds like a good idea. Since you're going, you could tell Tarik that we met," Fay suggested. "Of course." "How many more thoughts do you have in the human world?" she inquired. "A few, but not many," he admitted. "Are you with Tarik?" she asked, a hint of concern in her voice. "I believe you are referring to Tarik," he replied.

"You don't want Tarik to become king, really?" she pressed. "Being their king is a tremendous responsibility. Unlike human kings, who can exchange power without consequence, few are worthy of this throne," he explained. "Is that why you refuse it?" Fay asked. "Yes. I love my land and my life for her, but I don't want the throne. I'm lonely, so I wouldn't want Tarik to take it either." "Have you told him this?" Fay asked. "If it seems like I don't share his ambition, he might change his mind," Cassian replied. "Yes, but Tarik is very stubborn and believes he must be king," she said.

"Is this really the time to change his mind?" Cassian wondered aloud. "Abril asked me the same question, and I still don't have a clear answer. I just hope his decision is the right one. Tarik is very intense, and someone is tense here. I've said a lot about the situation," he admitted. "I know, I won't steal your time," Fay said. "Fay, have you fallen into the palace?" he asked, changing the subject. "Yes, at least for a few days," she replied. "I'll keep an eye on my brother," he promised. "I don't think anything is missing, but if something happens, help me," she said gratefully.

"Thank you. You should also come; it will be a long trip," Cassian replied with a smile. After their conversation, Cassian sought out his brother and Abril. They found them in Alessandro's workshop, alongside Gabriel, discussing the remaining issues with the dark beings. Cassian knocked on the door, peeking inside. "Can I come in?" Abril smiled and nodded. "Of course." Alessandro looked up, his expression warm. "Have you slept well?" "Yes, I went to see Cassiel. We discussed the gates of Hades," Cassian said.

"Did he show you the drawing of the columns he found?" Alessandro asked, his interest piqued. "Yes, and this is the place where they will appear," Cassian confirmed. "I didn't love you before, but now that it has been confirmed, we should send a message to Princess Elisha so her kingdom can prepare. It's likely her realm will become a battlefield. We must also inform the elven kingdom and others," Alessandro stated. "That seems wise," Cassian agreed. "I believe the battle is closer than we think," Abril added, her tone serious. "The time flows differently here."

What feels like weeks for us will only be days for you. So enjoy your time with family while you can," Cassian advised, feeling the weight of their impending challenges. "It's been a long time coming for me," Abril said, her voice softening. "Cassiel doesn't know anything more about the doors of Hades." "Bells say the reason we shouldn't know where the doors will appear is because we are the guardians. We can save this world, but we can also destroy it. The only guardians are us and our children. No one else can open those doors," Cassian explained.

"Then we must be vigilant," Abril replied, determination shining in her eyes. "We cannot let darkness prevail."