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ONYX

Don't panic, Onyx. Do not panic! Play it cool!

Zion's eyes scanned my face, and I licked my lips nervously, which made his eyes linger on them for a bit.

What was I supposed to do now? I had no idea how Seth looked. I glanced around the garden, hoping that something would give the Lycan Prince away, but everyone present looked like they could be royalty too. These were not the Middle Ages, and, unfortunately, lycan princes did not wear any crowns. It so did not help.

I had no idea what to do, but then Filin, who was still sitting on my shoulder, flapped his wings unexpectedly and flew away. The air from the impact got into my eye, and I blinked.

Suddenly, an idea came to my mind, and I

started blinking as if my life depended on it. Because it kind of did.

"Is something wrong?" Zion asked, and I could swear there was a little smirk on his lips.

"Something got in my eye!" I kept blinking desperately until I almost teared up. "I can't see anything!"

Maybe it was a stupid excuse, but it was the best one I could find in the given situation and with such short notice, so I just went with it.

I couldn't point to where Seth was because I had small vision problems. So sad...

Two warm hands cupped my face, and I froze instinctively because this wasn't a part of my plan. Zion leaned over so that I could feel his minty breath on my skin, and our noses almost touched.

"Let me help you," he whispered gently, and my lips parted. I couldn't say no, could I? "

Which is it?"

I blinked again, not knowing what to reply. However, it did not look like Zion needed a response from me. He seemed happy with how things turned out. His warm thumb brushed over my cheek as he looked for whatever it was that got stuck into my eye. This so wasn't what I expected, and I didn't even notice when I stopped blinking, since he still kept staring at my face.

A loud growl emerged from behind our backs, and I instantly knew who it was. I wanted to turn and see what made Ruhn so angry, but Zion kept me in place.

"Just a moment," he muttered, "I need to have a better look."

"I think it's gone!" I blurted out and noticed the corners of his lips rising upwards.

"Yes, I did not find anything," Zion now looked smug and darted his eyes somewhere over my shoulder with a sneer. I tried to follow his gaze and saw Ruhn with

a grim expression on his face, talking to his Beta. None of them looked our way, so it was probably all in my head.

"So," Zion taunted me, "about Prince Seth—"

"You promised me a drink, remember?" I used another lame excuse, but, to my surprise, he decided to go with it, nodding gallantly.

"I would never leave a girl thirsty," a chuckle rumbled through his chest, and he disappeared once again. I was finally able to breathe properly; even the tips of my ears had gone red after that last phrase.

"You did well," Filin muttered quietly as we watched the Scorpion walk towards one of the waiters with beverage trays.

"Yeah, yeah, I am a good Onyx," I sucked in a deep breath, knowing that the party had just started, and I was already walking on a thin line. "Quickly, show me Seth!" I hissed at the bird. We couldn't waste any time.

"Six o'clock, the blonde guy in white with his shirt half unbuttoned," Filin informed me professionally. He wasn't new to this, and, for the first time, I was grateful for his spy experience.

Now that I finally was aware which man here was Seth, I took a closer look at him. He was younger than Ruhn, handsome, rich, and probably had an enormous ego. There was something about the way he held himself that made me want to throw a bucket of ice-cold water over his head. His whole look with light honey curls screamed that he was above everyone here.

Seth played a significant part in the book, but he wasn't one of the main characters. Nevertheless, he created many problems for Ruhn until the finale. And yeah... he had a gruesome death as well. Just remembering the scene made me shiver. I never knew I was so bloodthirsty until I wrote it, and I had seen it in my nightmares more times than I could count.

"Here you go," Zion was already back and offering me a glass of sparkling champagne, the bubbles twinkling and calling my name as if they wished to help me. I drank it in a few gulps, hoping it would give me some liquid courage to get through today. I needed this. Or anything, for that matter. Something was telling me that I wasn't ready for all that.

"And Seth is right there," I pointed the slightly shocked Zion in the direction he should go next. "It's a good moment to speak to him, don't you think?" The warlock clearly did not think that, but since he asked for it first, he had to play his part too. And I wondered once again what all this was about. He did not look like he wanted to talk to the younger prince.

Zion already had his back to me when I heard a loud slap. The warlock froze, and so did I, realising that my hand was stinging painfully all of a sudden.

Shoot! Did I just... **slap his a*s?** We have

already been through this!

He turned on his feet and stared at me with an arched brow questioningly. "Oh?"

"A fly," I cleared my throat and then thought that a fly wasn't a good enough explanation for attacking his behind. "I mean a wasp. Yeah, a wasp. A big one. Huge. This size." I showed him the size with my hands, but it only made him smirk at me again. For the stone-cold leader of a criminal organisation, he was doing that a lot.

"Thank you, Onyx, for protecting my—" Zion did not finish the sentence, but his eyes told me everything I needed to know. "I will try to return the favour."

"Don't," I squeaked, but he was already gone, leaving me to dwell on my embarrassment in solitude.

I was in panic mode. What had just happened? I had learned to control my wolf so well in the past few days, and now I didn't even feel her do it. It was as if... she

tricked me somehow.

"Idiot," the familiar voice in my head sounded, "I gave in to you on purpose a few times, and you decided that you mastered what others learn for years to do? Let me show you what control really is! You are leaving this body today, *impostor!*"

No! No, no, no! This couldn't be happening!

However, my feet started moving without me wanting them to. So did the rest of my body. I started to walk, and after only a few steps, I realised where I was heading. Ruhn was sitting in a comfortable garden armchair under a large white and golden canopy with sheer curtains swaying in the wind. A few people surrounded him, laughing and joking. I recognised his Beta Enzo and Kalani with Jessica at once.

Great, just great.

The people I knew under this tent were not my biggest fans. Not that I had fans at all.

I had to stop this madness! My wolf, whatever her name was, wouldn't do anything good if she got me to step inside.

"Wanna bet?" she chuckled darkly, and I knew I had to struggle. She had a very powerful grip on me right now, obviously knowing what she was doing. If anything, she was extremely powerful. I could feel her mind inside of mine, and it seemed like hers was made out of steel, while mine was a marshmallow in comparison. She was a powerful Alpha she-wolf, and I was just... me.

Nevertheless, I refused to go down like that. I clenched my jaw together and used every bit of willpower I had inside of me to gain back the control switch. Shocking as it was, my little attempts were working slightly. My movements slowed down and became awkward, as if I was a puppet pushed by my puppet master under that canopy forcefully. My arms flapped unnaturally, and my heels dug into the grass as the struggle made us leave the stone path we were standing on

and go straight through the lawn. This, in turn, only brought more attention to me. I noticed Conrad's displeased glare, and Cesarre's worried one. A few people were already pointing at me as I kept marching to the Crown Prince.

"What's your plan exactly?" I gritted my teeth while still trying to fight off the wolf's control.

"To get you killed and get my Onyx back!" the wolf sneered.

"Well, that's a dumb plan! Just saying!" I hissed, sadly coming to the conclusion that although I had put up a fight, I was still losing miserably because I had just entered the tent area, and everyone inside was now staring at me.

I did not know what my wolf was going to make me do, but it was probably nothing good. At least I had control over our voice, but my hands and feet belonged to her entirely.

"Onyx, dear," Jessica angled her head at me, narrowing her eyes with lashes that were too thick and long to be natural. "We're in the middle of a very private conversation. You know how private Alpha Ruhn is."

My eyes met with Ruhn's. There was an unreadable expression on his face. Anyone else would say that there were no emotions on it, but I could feel with my bones how agitated he was.

"Excuse me," I muttered in a croaked voice while my body dragged me in the direction of the Lycan Prince. "It's too hot... over there ... and... I don't... feel too well!" Each word was a struggle because the wolf wanted this too now, bringing my demise closer and closer. Ruhn's brows were furrowed as he observed me with curiosity in his gaze. One wrong move, and I would be done.

Step.

Another step.

One more...

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+5 Points

And I landed straight on his lap, wrapping my arms around him.

Shoot! Shoot, shoot, shoot! I was so dead!



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