98 Awake (Ch.98)

A groan of pain escaped Neveah's lips as a bright light penetrated through her closed eyelids, Neveah tried to lift a hand to shield her eyes but her hand was far too heavy. 1

Try as she might, she could not move a single limb.

Neveah's brows twitched as her eyes squinted slightly, as though sensing her discomfort, a shadow shielded the bright rays of sunlight from reaching her eyes.

It took a short time of struggle for Neveah to force her eyelids open and when she did, she was faced with the familiar brooding expression of Xenon whose muscular build blocked off the sunlight from shining over her face.

Neveah blinked weakly, her mind was disoriented and her thoughts were hazy, she did recognize Xenon immediately but it took her a moment to recall all what had happened and why she found herself in this position.

Poison... she gulped down a goblet of poisoned wine in King Jian's stead like some self designated hero and landed herself in this

position just a moment before she could be taken away for punishment which King Jian had permitted.

Neveah could not decide if this turn of events was a better option than getting poisoned for someone else, either ways... she would have ended up in a very bad situation and King Jian would still be the cause.

Now that she was alive, Neveah was also not sure how to feel about it... this was already the second time she was getting this close to death's door, the only difference being that in the first instance... she did die.

Whatever poison it was, it was strong and potent but it seemed Neveah's will to live was much stronger and just the thought that she was once again a part of the world of the living left a lazy smile on Neveah's lips.

"I... I'm alive..." Neveah chuckled to herself, leaning back into the satisfyingly soft beddings with a delighted sigh as her grin spread across her cheek.

Neveah was one who rarely smiled, not because she was a block of ice like King Jian was but simply because in her lifetime, she rarely ever had reason to smile and so mustering the

foreign expression had become difficult and bothersome for her.

But this time, Neveah felt she had the rights to be truly a genuinely happy...here she was, right back again, alive and perfectly fine... ready for another run at this thing called life.

Death had come but was unable to claim her because she did not chose it, the only thing that ever seemed to honor Neveah's choice was death. 1

Thinking of this, a quiet laughter bubbled out of Neveah and as she twisted to the side, her laughter was interrupted by a quiet groan of pain before it resumed.

It was only after another moment that Neveah recalled Xenon's presence, staring at her with a confused expression and Neveah realized she must have looked like one who had lost her wits.

It was just as well, perhaps if Xenon thought her insane, he would tire of his unreasonable fascination with her and know to stay away from her. 1

"S...ssilly...w.wolf." Xenon finally spoke in his drawling tone when Neveah fell quiet from her short episode.

"Thank you... I am deeply grateful, you have done a priceless service... something along these lines is what I think you meant to say." Neveah adjusted in a blank tone, as her relief at being alive faded off, she reverted to her usual self.

"Th.. that... Jian's w.words." Xenon drawled again and Neveah raised a brow as it took her a moment to understand his meaning.

"Thank you is meant to be King Jian's words, you mean?" Neveah asked and Xenon nodded.

Neveah rolled her eyes, she did not realize Xenon could also distinguish these affairs. She was not certain the extent of his savagery and what level of wisdom could be expected of one who was more beast than man.

But then again, dragon's were intelligent beasts so Neveah guessed it did not matter altogether.

"Fair enough, his life is his and his gratitude is his to express as well...so what be your words to me then?" Neveah asked, wondering why Xenon was still here.

"D...do n.ot dieee." Xenon murmured, his drawl in a much lower tone than it usually would be.

Neveah was taken aback by Xenon's response

to her question and for a moment, she just stared at him, unsure of how to respond.

But after the moment of surprise passed by, Neveah did respond.

"It seems there is something we can both agree on." Neveah said as she struggled to a sitting position, her muscles still felt heavy and so it was a difficult endeavor yet she managed.

Neveah glanced around the room she was laid in, it did not seem like an infirmary at all but rather a rather elegant bedroom and Neveah's brows raised slightly.

The stone walls, the barely audible sounds of dragon roars outside, the wind brushing over the window pane and the brief view of hilltops whenever the curtains fluttered,

Neveah realized they had already arrived the Dragon Keep, she had slept through the landing and now, she had missed that memorable moments she arrived at her new prison yard.

Once, Neveah had heard that the manner in which one arrives a place predestines the manner in which one would leave.

Neveah had hoped to arrive the dragon's keep

with her head held high and determination in her heart, with an unyielding will to survive each day believing the very next day could be her day of freedom... she had hoped to arrive in this manner and in turn leave as such.

Yet instead, Neveah had arrived these walls carried on dragon's back, unconscious and at death's door and she could not help but think... would this be the manner in which she left these walls also?

At death's door much like now? Or already upon her deathbed with her body long gone cold? Neveah presumed fate would toss a coin and then flow in whichever part, it always had most of Neveah's life.

But whatever it was, a single breath more and each day alive was a day of victory...it had been an entire year since her time of death in the previous lifetime and Neveah hoped, she would count this victory as years came and went. 1

Now that she was here in the Dragon's Keep, Neveah would make the very best use of it...or as much as she was allowed.

With that thought, Neveah's gaze turned to Xenon who still stared in complete silence, his expression blank as always yet the look in his eyes complicated.

He watched her, not saying a single word as though all in the world would begin making sense so long as he stared long enough.

Unlike the dragons who had the lifespan of centuries hence they could spare so much idle time knowing nothing of their fate or caring to know of it,

Neveah was not so, she had but a few decades to live at most before she was old and gray, whatever would be her fate, Neveah wanted to know it now.

"So... what happens now?" Neveah asked blankly and Xenon did not respond immediately.

Finally, he walked over to Neveah, looming above her and peering down at her for a long moment after which he left, with no words said and no response to her question.

Neveah was yet to fully comprehend why Xenon had left so easily when her door was pushed open and a team of attendants came in numbering to exactly five.

They each held a different object in their hands from a pile of towels to fresh clothing and other bathing materials,

Again, before Neveah could demand of them to know who they are and why they were invading the current space she had found herself left in, the strange females introduced themselves first.

"We are attendants of the Dragon Keep and have come on Lord Rodriguez's orders to have your bath drawn and have you cleaned up."

"Equally, we shall alter your appearance and take measurements of your body shape so the clothing of the Asvarian shall be tailored for you." One of the attendants revealed in a perfunctory tone.

"Alter my appearance? What is that to mean?" Neveah asked suspiciously,

"If you are to reside within the Dragon's Keep, then you must abide by the rules and we have also received orders to teach you of these rules...our lesson begins with two rules." The attendant who had spoken first and seemed to be the highest ranked attendant continued.

"First, there shall be no strange and uncomely appearance within the keep, the Dragon Shifters are a race of practicality hence do not hope to be accorded luxuries as you are used to her." 2

"Secondly, all within the Dragon's Keep must earn their keep, by this I mean to say must be useful at something... hence we will get you in order first and then move on to the next." The attendant concluded.

Neveah stared blankly at them for a moment before she sighed...it was clear to her that her life in the dragon's keep was to begin at this moment.

What sort of life it would be, Neveah did not know yet...but she guessed she was about to find out.

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