

Claimed By The Rival Alpha

Selena

The sound of metal cups clinking against each other filled the kitchen, mixing with the low murmurs of servants moving around the busy room.

I stood near the edge of the kitchen, pretending to focus on the work in front of me, but my attention was somewhere else.

The courtroom and more specifically, the meeting happening inside it.

My eyes remained fixed on Niamh as she carefully filled goblets of ale, her movements calm and practiced. The tray in her hands would soon be carried through those large courtroom doors where the Alpha and the council members were gathered.

And she was my only chance of finding out what was happening.

Ever since last night, whispers had spread through the castle. Guards talking quietly and Servants exchanging worried glances.

Everyone seemed to know something was wrong, but nobody knew exactly what.

The only thing I had managed to hear was that the Alpha was preparing for an incoming attack.

An attack. The word alone made my stomach tighten. I didn't know who it was from but a part of me feared the answer.

My father! I hated that the thought still frightened me. I hated that even after everything, the idea of Alpha William finding me still made fear crawl through my body.

Because I knew what would happen would be bad. I would not be this free Selena anymore. I would become a possession again.

A bargaining piece and a daughter to be traded to the blood sucking vampires.

I quickly pushed the thought away and focused on Niamh. She lifted the tray and started walking toward the courtroom.

I watched her carefully. "Don't make it obvious," I whispered to myself more than to her.

If anyone noticed what we were doing, everything we had built would collapse before it even started.

Sally wasn't here today. She had gone to the market to speak with her friend about finding a possible outside base for our group meetings.

That was another thing constantly sitting in my mind. The revolution was no longer just an idea.

There were people involved now. People have begun trusting me and they are expecting me to lead them right and I couldn't fail them.

My eyes moved around the kitchen then I saw Marquee. She was working among the other kitchen servants, but the moment our eyes met, she quickly looked away.

My chest tightened slightly at such an act from her. Since the meeting last night, things between us have become so different. It has become colder and farther.

I hated this new development between Marquee and myself. I never expected this to be happening.

Before, Marquee was the first person who worried whenever I did something reckless. She was the person who followed me even when she was afraid.

But now? She barely spoke to me and I understood my part in it.

I have been busy. Constantly planning with writing letters, meeting people and trying to convince them into joining the revolution, and at the same time; I'm thinking about the next step.

Maybe I had been too busy with those things to give her more of my time but I never planned to ignore her.

Still, I couldn't understand why she was acting like this. Was she angry about the revolution? Did she regret helping me?

I wanted to ask but every time I looked at her, I felt like I already knew the answer.

Perhaps she didn't want to be part of my revolution plans. So instead, I decided to focus on what mattered.

I decided to focus on getting more people, more information and then getting the revolution to happen.

I spotted Jett and Ash nearby. Grengy's friends... The same two men who had once been ready to kill me because their friend had a fight with me or because I had beaten up their friend.

I approached them carefully. "Hey guys, Good morning."

Neither of them answered. They simply looked away from me like I didn't just speak to them.

I frowned before asking, "Are you both planning to pretend I don't exist?"

They continued working while I insistantly crossed my arms. I wasn't going to let them get away with ignoring me.

"That's interesting considering you both were the ones who tried to kill me. The least you can do is show me some respect because I do deserve it."

That finally got a reaction as they exchanged a glance before Jett sighed. "Just leave us alone, Selena. We are just here minding our own business."

I raised an eyebrow in confusion. "Excuse me?"

Ash looked uncomfortable as he spoke. "We don't want to get into problems because of you. Just let us be."

"What problems? Why would I want to get you into trouble?"

He lowered his voice. "Talking to you alone is a problem for us and we don't want it."

I stared at him in disbelief. "You're afraid of talking to me?"

He looked away before saying. "Look what happened to Grengy because of you."

My expression hardened. "Grenzy was imprisoned because he attacked me. He definitely tried to kill me."

"You know how servants fight," Jett interrupted. "People argue. People get angry. But nobody gets punished like that."

I narrowed my eyes. "So you think he was treated unfairly?"

They didn't answer and I took a deep breath because this argument wasn't why I came here. "I'm not here to argue about Grenzy."

"Then why are you here?" Ash asked with a sharp tone.

I looked between them. "To ask you to join us."

They both stared at me. "Join what?" Ash asked.

"It's a revolution."

A small laugh escaped Jett. "You're still doing that?"

"Yes."

"And you think servants like us can change anything?" He asked in a mocking tone

I ignored the mocking in his voice. "Why not?"

"Because we are servants." He pointed out again.

"No." My voice became firmer. "Because people like you have been convinced that you are powerless."

They looked at me silently as I continued. "The vampires have controlled our lives for centuries because everyone believes there is nothing they can do."

I stepped closer. "But what happens when people stop believing that?"

Neither spoke as I asked, "Don't you have anyone that has been taken away from you by those vampires?"

They shook their heads before simultaneously saying "No."

I studied their faces. "Then you're lucky."

They frowned. "Lucky?"

"Yes. Because some people wake up every day knowing someone they love was taken from them."

My voice lowered. "Some people had their families destroyed." I paused. "Some people lost their mates."

Their expressions changed slightly as I continued trying to reach them but they remained stubborn.

Eventually, Jett sighed. "Fine."

I looked at him. "You guys are in?"

"We'll consider joining but on one condition." He added

My eyes narrowed as I asked. "What's the condition?"

He looked at Ash then back at me before stating it. "You must Get Grengy out of prison."

I blinked. "What? Is this some joke?"

"You heard me."

"That's impossible." I muttered.

"Then we're not joining." He said and I felt irritation rise inside of me.

They were making this harder than it needed to be but I also understood something.

I needed more men. Many servants were women, and while that was not a weakness, convincing the males would be more difficult.

If some of them joined, others would follow. So I swallowed my frustration. "I'll see what I can do."

I didn't promise anything but it was better than nothing.

When Niamh returned, I immediately noticed her expression. She wasn't smiling so I pulled her aside. "What happened?"

She shook her head. "Nothing."

"Nothing?"

She sighed. "I tried everything. I stayed longer. I listened carefully."

"And?"

She lowered her voice. "They barely spoke."

I frowned. "What do you mean?"

"The Alpha, the Beta, the warrior general, the captain of the guards, the merchant master, the head healer..." She shook her head. "They barely said anything all the while that I was there."

I thought about it, then I smiled slightly. "I'm sure that was intentional."

Niamh looked confused as I continued. "He knew people might try to listen so he made sure nobody could hear anything."

For someone like Alpha Kael, it made sense. He was always thinking ahead.

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Later, I found the guard who had allowed us to use the main hall.

I approached him carefully. "I need information about the council meeting from you."

He looked at me. "And what do I get in return? Information is not for free."

I stared at him before asking. "What do you want?."

He smiled before saying. "Coins."

I hated how often people demanded payment for simple things but I reached into my pouch and handed him a silver coin.

He accepted it immediately and started speaking. "At the council meeting, they're preparing for a possible vampire attack."

My entire body froze. For a moment, I couldn't breathe on hearing the word vampire attack.

The same creatures my revolution was created to fight. The same creatures who had controlled our race for centuries.

They were coming here to Blackbourne. They were coming to my new home and Alpha Kael knew.

Anger replaced my shock. How could he keep this from me? Without thinking, I turned and walked toward his chamber.

I needed answers but before I reached the door, a guard stepped in front of me.

"You can't enter."

I opened my mouth to respond but then another voice responded. "Let her through."

I looked up to find Alpha Kael standing there.

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I stood in Alpha Kael's chamber, watching him move around like the news I had just discovered was nothing more than a minor inconvenience.

That only made me angrier.

He moved toward the table where a jug of ale sat untouched, picked it up, and poured the drink into a metal cup with the same calm expression he wore whenever he thought he had everything under control.

Then, as if we weren't discussing the possibility of an entire vampire invasion, he looked at me. "Do you want some?"

I stared at him with an angry expression plastered on my face. Was he serious right now? Asking me for a drink at this very moment?

"No." I said through gritted teeth.

Alpha Kael lifted one brow at my response before taking a sip from his own cup.

The casualness irritated me even more and I couldn't stop myself from reacting any more. "How can you stand there like this?"

"Like what?" He asked, feigning like he couldn't tell or see that I wasn't in a good mood.

"Like you acting like nothing is happening." I pointed out straight while staring intently at him.

He placed the cup down slowly. "Something might not be happening."

"Something might not be happening?" I repeated. "You mean the possibility that the same vampires who have been searching for me could come here and attack your entire pack?"

His expression hardened slightly. "They are not here yet."

"But you believe they will come and that's the main point."

Silence met my words and that was enough of an answer for me to believe all was not really well according to the rumors.

I stepped closer to him as I needed to confirm the truth of the matter. "Is it true?" I asked in a calmer voice but Alpha Kael didn't answer.

"Alpha Kael..." I called at the peak of being more frustrated by his silence.

His eyes finally met mine as he finally let it out. "Yes."

The confirmation hit differently even though I already knew. My chest tightened as I asked, "So you knew and you didn't bother to tell me about it? Why is it that you like keeping these things a secret from me?"

His jaw clenched and before I could say anything else, he spoke. "Do you really think I don't know about your little network around my pack?"

I froze in surprise. For a second, I forgot my anger. "What do you mean by that?"

"The servants. The guards. The information you have been gathering."

My heart almost dropped on realizing he knew almost everything I was doing in his pack. How long had he known?

"So you knew all about it?"

"Yes." He said with a shrug of his shoulders.

"And you just let me do it?" I asked with a creased brow.

Alpha Kael leaned against the table before speaking. "Because right now, I have more important things to deal with."

His words annoyed me and I found myself asking what I shouldn't have asked. "More important than me?"

"No." His answer came too quickly and that surprised both of us.

Alpha Kael looked away for a moment before speaking again. "It's more important than stopping a rebellion inside my castle when my pack may be preparing for an attack. I only allowed it because my hands are full with the chaos your presence is bringing to my pack."

I crossed my arms and stared into his face. "I never forced you to take me here. Instead, it was an agreement between the both of us."

His eyes snapped back to mine and the atmosphere changed as he asked as though he was surprised by my words. "Oh, You didn't?"

"No, I didn't." I affirmed without blinking.

"You don't remember?" His voice became colder. "Our first meeting?"

I stayed quiet as he continued. "You were injured and alone. Running from people who wanted you captured. You literally begged me for my help. You were so helpless and crying so hard that I had to pity your sorry ass!"

The memory came rushing back. The fear and the desperation but still, I wasn't going to admit to any of it. An agreement is an agreement.

"You were definitely so helpless with nowhere to go," he continued. "And I chose to help you."

"I didn't ask you to pity me."

"No." His voice lowered with a small smirk playing on his lips. "You literally knelt and begged me to save you and that was what I did to a helpless girl being chased by rogues."

The words struck harder than I expected and anger rose in me because part of me knew he was right, but I hated admitting it.

"You are making it sound like I owe you something." I snapped at him.

"I never said that."

"You imply it."

Alpha Kael sighed. "You're impossible Selena."

"And you're controlling!" I said and for a moment, we only stared at each other as neither of us was willing to surrender.

Then my eyes landed on the cup in his hand. Without thinking, I reached forward and took it from him before he could drink from it.

His expression changed. "Selena... Give it back."

"What if I don't?"

A dangerous look appeared in his eyes. "You're provoking me."

"Maybe."

"Why are you doing this?" He asked with a sigh.

Because I was angry. Because I was scared. Because I hated that he could make me feel protected and frustrated at the same time.

Instead of answering, I held the cup tighter, not ready to give it back as Alpha Kael stared at me for a moment before sighing.

"The vampire invasion is not yet confirmed." He finally was ready to speak. "It is a possibility."

"So you don't even know?"

"No." He walked closer to me. "But after everything that has happened, it would be foolish not to prepare."

I lowered the cup slightly. "Why do you think they'll come?"

His expression became unreadable. "Of course it's definitely because of you."

My breath caught. "I knew it."

"Selena—"

"No. That means everything happening here is because of me. I'm bringing you troubles."

His eyes softened slightly. "That's not what I said."

"But it's true." Alpha Kael stepped closer. "You are not responsible for what they choose to do."

I laughed bitterly. "Easy for you to say."

His gaze stayed on mine. "It's actually not so important. So stop being paranoid."

I got even more angry and wanted to anger him. "I'm going to pour your ale away." I threatened.

"Do you dare provoke me Selena!" There was something in his voice but I didn't care.

I raised the cup higher above my head, suddenly feeling more overstimulated to pester him. But suddenly, he held both of my hands above my head, rendering me immobile and collecting the cup from my hand but still didn't let me go.

Fortunately, I moved back and we both fell on the bed with Alpha Kael on top of me.

He wanted to swiftly stand up but I held him against me and whispered to him. "I want you to do what you did to me that midnight at the main hall."

His expression changed. "Selena..." he called with a sigh.

"What?"

"You have to Stop whatever you're trying to do right now."

I frowned. "Why should I ?"

His jaw tightened. "You don't understand what you're asking for. This wouldn't end well."

"I really do not care. I'm ready to take my chances. So go ahead and do what you did the other time."

He looked at me silently then finally, he began placing kisses all over my neck, grazed my skin softly then pinned my both hands against the bed.

I could already feel my arousal rising beyond expectations and I didn't know when I spilled out the next words.

"I want you to do that thing you wanted to do to me the other day and I stopped you."

"No! I'm not doing it." He blatantly refused but I wasn't taking no for an answer.

"I haven't stopped thinking about it since that night. I'm sure once you do it; I'll finally be able to get it off my head." I confessed.

Alpha Kael reluctantly raised my tunic and I began feeling ticklish as his breath fanned my bare core.

He asked for confirmation again, "Are you sure you want this?"

I simply nodded and he took a single lick at my now open clitoris and I shivered at the sensation I felt.

Then he continued, slowly at first, then driving into higher speed.

I find myself moaning and thrashing on the bed, I was confused but exhilarated at the same time. "Ohh my gawd..."

The feeling got so intense that I held his head and wrapped my thighs around it. Then I suddenly felt his fingers in my pussy, finger fucking me and I exploded with pleasure as my wolf howled from within me.

Immediately, my senses returned and mortification replaced the pleasure. I covered up quickly, unable to look at Alpha Kael's face and ran out of his room.

I felt heavily ashamed as I returned to my quarters, "What had I done?"

When I reached my quarters, I opened the door quietly and I immediately bumped into Sally.

She stared at me and asked. "What's wrong with you?"

I couldn't bring myself to answer. Then her eyes slowly moved past me, toward the direction I had come from.

A knowing expression appeared on her face. "Selena..."

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The guards give me a grateful look. Serena's eyes are still closed. I force myself to keep my eyes on only her face and not trail them down to her back.

"Alphas?" The rope is shaking in his hands. I understand he doesn't want to be punished by any of the Alpha brothers.

"Luna has the same authority as us. If she says stop, it means we already consented." Lucian says.

They lose the ropes and untie her. The first thing she does after her hands are free is to wipe her tears. She goes back to her passive face burying all of her emotions at once.

"Her other punishments will still be executed and are not to be evacuated by anyone. Take her back to where she's coming from, straight to the dungeon." Rowan tells the guards assisting her.

My jaw hardens. I know fully well that the last statement was made particularly for me. Even a completely stupid person would see it. I click my tongue and I decide to address it later.

"The Luna I'm in correspondence with the Alphas have called off the ceremony. The event for today is over." The man that shouts out names from earlier shouts again.

I'm curious if he's being paid here just to shout on different occasions like this. I pinch myself to stop myself from asking that question here.

The clan and their crazy absurd rules may find my questions very insulting. I take a step forward to go back when I realize the brothers are all standing with their back straight.

I really do not want to entertain any conversation with these men, not Rowan, not Lucian, not any of them. I just want to write a letter to my father and let it all out.

"We are standing straight as per the tradition. We already taught you about this part of the tradition with the upper and the lower council." Lucian informs me, ignoring my pretty bearish face.

I stand there in all of my glory watching people pass. Occasionally, I smile at some people, some babies and their mothers as well.

When they have all left the hall, I turn back immediately.

"What was the meaning of that Mira Anton?" Rowan is the one asking me this with a squinted gaze.

"The meaning of what? I did nothing other than stopping it and you told me I could as per the tradition."

"That's not what he's referring to. You were smiling at people."

"These people are the clan." I say to him, the anger brewing deep inside me.

"It is wrong Mira. It does not portray you as a good Luna."

"I'm done." I stop myself from saying anything else and I start leaving.

"Mira!" Damien almost screams my name forgetting that people are still nearby.

I turn a deaf ear and I keep walking steadily down the hall.

"Mira? Is she okay?" From the paleness in his voice, I know that's Lucien.

I strut faster in the hall because I do not want any of them to catch up with me. The last thing I want to do is talk to the brothers that consider heartlessness as part of leadership.

"What's she on about? I heard female werewolves have sudden mood swings when pregnant. Is she preggy?" Kai is trying to lighten up the atmosphere.

"Can you for once stop joking in situations like this?" Rowan asks him seriously.

"She needs and wants to be alone." He tells Rowan.

"What exactly are you driving at, Kai?" This time, Lucian is the one asking. I'm sure they'd be suspecting him after the stunt he just pulled.

"I am not exactly driving at anything. I am just stating mere facts." He sounds amused.

I wished I had my werewolf powers, I would have been able to block myself completely from hearing anything they were saying but I did not. Now I'm forced to eavesdrop on their conversations even when I don't want to.

"We should go after her." Rowan is suggesting to the rest of them.

"She obviously left because she currently does not want to have anything to do with any of us. Don't you think going after her is not necessarily a positive decision this time around?" Kai is telling them nothing but the honest truth. I don't want to have anything to do with them. And I'd rather if they just leave me alone and let me be.

"No, Rowan is right. Let's go after her. Looking at the problem from afar would not help us decipher a solution, will it?" Lucian is trying to convince the rest of them.

I strut faster, annoyed at the extreme lengthiness of the hall. I am still yet to arrive at my room.

Kai says something that I do not hear and it sort of makes me excited. I'm going far from them at least. I want to take these obnoxious shoes off my feet and run to my room but I remember the shadow guards. I have not been part of royalty until now but I know fully well that the gossip always comes from the royal guards and the palace guards.

After walking for hours, I finally arrived at my room. I'm shocked and excited to see that the door has been fixed. At least, this means I can have my alone time just like I want it. I get in, shut the door and fling off my shoes. I put off eventually wearing a very unladylike manner but that's not my problem.

I struggle to catch my breath as I stare around the place searching for writing materials. I found one on top of the drawer. I hadn't realized since when but the ink, the scroll and the paper were all together in my room.

They must be assuming I must have spoken to my father from the very first day I got here.

I climb up and I pull all of it down. I sit on the floor and I prepare to draft my letter.

"Mira." Lucian. I can hear his faint breathing and his voice is already weak.

I grit my teeth in annoyance. I just want to be left alone. Is that too much to ask?

I ignore him and I continue with my letter.

"Father, this is Mira. I know you may probably not be happy to see a letter from me. But I desperately need to let it out. The Alpha Brothers are typically monsters. They are as wicked as you described them and even worse. They are used to gruesome sight and are even encouraging me to do so. I wish I could come back home but I know that I am doing this for the family. I have sworn not to let any feelings harbor between me and these wicked brothers. Do well to send your regards." I hold my tears tight, careful not to stain the paper and start writing everything all afresh.

I turn over to the next page and I sign my signature. I place the stamp on the signature and I let the letter dry.

"Mira? No matter what it is, you can always turn it around. And the best option is obviously not silence." Lucian keeps knocking on the door.

"If you do not open the door Mira, Lucian will keep knocking here. You know the both of you badly need to rest and he particularly needs to rest to recover." Kai, as always, tries to convince me.

I hug my knees close to my chest. That's the only thing I can do to comfort myself, I hate it that the boys are by my door. I hate it that I have no personal maid like Serene to share burdens with me.

I hate the fact that there is no one to send my message back to my father. I hate that I have no mother to share this with. I have no one in my life except my father that sold me to the cruel Alphas yet I am forced to share things with. Things including my body as well.

If I dare try to break the bond, I know without a doubt that they will break my door without remorse again.

"Mira, can you please open the door? Please, everything will be okay if you just agree to talk to it. Please." Lucian is panting.

I open my mouth to say a word but more hot tears flow out. My tears are bitter to the core but it is not as bitter as the pain in my heart. I can't tell between Serene and I who have more hatred towards the Alpha brothers.

I wipe my tears as her name comes back in my head. I'm the reason she is in the place she has found herself. I have to do something. I walk to the door and I open it.

"I wasn't expecting you to open it so easily. It seems you are slowly growing a weak spot for Lucian and Rowan but certainly not all of us." Kai is the first person to say something.

I glare at him with hatred.

"I only opened the door for one purpose and it is going to be done." I state my reason clearly. The faster I speak to them, the lighter I would feel in my heavy heart.

"You were crying?" Lucian places his cold hands on my cheeks. I shiver as the cold passes through my body.

"You do not have to act like you care." I do not bother hiding my disgust. I have no reason to hide my feelings.

"Why are you acting this way Mira? Did we do something? None of us intended to hide the truth from you. We just want to build you so you can rule tomorrow. This is a werewolf clan. There is no way you'd live here without breaking the bond." Rowan says something that has been lingering at the back of my mind.

"And if I break the bond? Be sincere, why should I not want to break the bond? I don't want to live in these conditions. I am not fit to be your Luna. I never believed whenever my people would say the moon goddess made a mistake now, I'm really starting to doubt her judgment. How did she pair me with the set of you?"

"Hey Mira, what's going on?" Damian asks me.

I look to the ground immediately.

"Look at me." He places one of his fingers underneath my jaw and forces me to look at him.

"What exactly is the problem?" Kai asks me. I'm a bit surprised this question is coming from Kai. He has always seemed to be able to figure everything out.

"I want to get home. I want to see my father." I intend to close my mouth and say totally nothing but my mouth just seems to be against me.

"Is that all?" Rowan is asking me. He is behind Lucian.

"Yes."

"Fine. We'll go tomorrow then." Damien says it with a relaxed attitude.

"Did you ask her what exactly she wants? And when will she be okay with going to see her father?"

"She already told us by herself that she wanted to go to her father's place. We will all be free tomorrow, we still have heavy chores on our hands. Did you forget about Lucian's cu-"

"Can you just keep shut?" Lucian interrupts Rowan.

"Is she not yet aware? I had no idea she didn't know about it. But we still have to consider Lucian before we start leaving."

"What is wrong with you?" My question is directed at Lucian.

"It's nothing. You don't have to be worried about it. Just pretend like you never heard anything about it. Are you going to be okay with going with them tomorrow?" He's asking me like he has already assigned himself to stay here while the others come with me.

"Rowan is going to be there too."

"You go everywhere with them. Why are you staying here now?"

"Serene is currently in the dungeon. And you are going to be leaving. The clan has to be led by a leader, Mira. I have to stay."

"But you're not strong."

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Selena.

Sally had not stopped asking me the same question since we left the Alpha's chamber.

"What were you doing there?"

Her voice followed me down the corridor, through the quiet halls of the castle, and even when we stepped into our chamber, she still had the same suspicious expression on her face.

I refused to answer.

Not because I didn't hear her, but because I genuinely didn't know what answer would make things easier.

How was I supposed to explain that I had stormed into Kael's chamber angry because he had hidden information from me, only for everything to become more complicated the moment I was alone with him?

My thoughts were already a mess.

The way he looked at me. The way he always seemed to understand when I was pretending to be stronger than I actually was. The way being near him made me forget every reason I had built walls around myself.

I hated that.

I hated that the one person who was supposed to be my enemy was becoming the person I found myself turning toward.

I walked into the chamber and immediately went to my bed, hoping Sally would finally let the matter go.

She didn't.

"You're really not going to answer me?"

I looked at her.

"Sally."

"No."

She crossed her arms.

"You can't just disappear into the Alpha's private chamber and come back acting like nothing happened."

I frowned.

"I told you. I went to ask about the court meeting."

Her eyes narrowed.

"And you expect me to believe that?"

I sat down slowly.

"Why wouldn't you?"

"Because that isn't how things work here."

Her voice became more serious.

"Selena, this is the Alpha's chamber. Not a common room. Not somewhere servants walk into whenever they want information."

I felt irritation rising inside me.

"What exactly are you accusing me of?"

"I'm not accusing you of anything."

She paused.

"I'm saying you're not telling us the whole truth."

The words hit harder than I expected.

Because part of me knew she was right.

There were things I couldn't tell them.

Not because I didn't trust them, but because I didn't even understand those things myself.

"You want to know everything?" I asked.

"Yes."

The answer came quickly.

"If we are supposed to be part of this revolution, if we are supposed to follow you and risk our lives, then yes. I want the truth."

I stared at her.

"What truth do you want, Sally?"

"The truth about why you were in his chamber."

Silence filled the room.

Marquee, who had been quietly sitting on her bed, finally stood up.

"Enough."

Both of us turned to her.

She looked uncomfortable.

"You two are going to start a fight."

Neither of us spoke.

Marqee sighed.

"We already have enough problems. We don't need to turn against each other."

Sally looked away first.

I looked down at my hands.

The truth was, I understood her frustration.

She had followed me into something dangerous. She had believed in my words when most people would have laughed at me. She deserved honesty.

But there were some things I couldn't put into words.

Not yet.

The silence between us became unbearable, so I stood.

"I have something to do."

Sally looked at me.

"Selena—"

But I was already leaving.

I needed space.

And more importantly, I needed to focus.

I walked through the corridors until I reached Niamh's chamber.

When she opened the door and saw me, surprise immediately crossed her face.

"Selena? Is something wrong?"

I stepped inside.

"We need to hold another meeting."

Her expression changed.

"Another one?"

"Yes. Midnight."

She stared at me.

"Already?"

I nodded.

"There are things we need to discuss."

Niamh studied my face before agreeing.

"Who should I inform?"

"Everyone."

I hesitated.

"Tell Sally too."

Her brows lifted.

"Sally?"

I looked away.

"Yes."

"But... she already knows about the meetings."

I forced a small smile.

"She has been busy lately. I just want everyone informed."

It wasn't exactly a lie.

Not completely.

Niamh didn't question it further.

"Alright. I'll tell them."

After leaving her chamber, I walked back through the halls, trying to clear my mind.

But my thoughts kept returning to the argument with Sally.

Maybe she was right.

Maybe I had been keeping too much to myself.

But every time I tried to explain my situation, it became more complicated.

Especially when Kael was involved.

I was so lost in my thoughts that I almost didn't notice the guard standing ahead of me.

"Selena."

I stopped.

The guard looked at me, and immediately my body tensed.

For a moment, I thought he was trying to stop me.

"What do you want?"

His expression changed.

"I have a message from the Alpha."

My heart skipped.

"From Kael?"

He nodded.

"He wants you to go to the training yard."

The words immediately brought back memories I didn't want to think about.

My stomach tightened.

The training yard.

Being alone with him.

The way every conversation with him somehow became more difficult than the last.

I swallowed.

"Tell him I won't be going."

The guard looked surprised.

"You're refusing?"

"Yes."

I didn't wait for another question.

I walked away.

Because I knew myself.

I knew that every time I was near Kael, I lost focus.

And right now, I couldn't afford that.

I had a revolution to build.

A group of people who believed in me.

A purpose bigger than my own confusion.

When midnight finally came, everything was prepared.

The main hall was ready.

The guard who had agreed to leave his position had already been paid.

The plan was moving exactly how I wanted.

Or at least, I hoped it was.

I looked around our chamber.

Marquee was lying on her bed with her back turned toward me.

Too still.

I knew she was pretending to sleep.

Sally was also preparing.

Unlike Marquee, she wasn't pretending.

She looked serious, focused, but there was still something distant about her.

She left before me.

The moment the door closed behind her, I walked toward Marquee.

"Marquee."

No response.

I sighed.

"Don't do this."

Still nothing.

I shook her shoulder gently.

"Marquee."

Her breathing remained steady.

She was pretending.

I knew it.

But I also knew forcing her to talk wouldn't solve anything.

I stepped back.

"Fine."

I grabbed my cloak and prepared to leave.

My mind was filled with thoughts of the meeting.

The people waiting.

The future of the revolution.

The doubts.

The risks.

But then another thought appeared.

Marquee.

Why was she acting like this?

Why did it feel like she was slowly pulling away from me?

I barely noticed the darkness of the corridor until it was too late.

A sudden force moved against me.

My back softly met the wall.

My breath caught.

Before I could react, a familiar scent surrounded me.

Then I saw them.

Glowing red eyes staring directly into mine.

A familiar growl filled the silence.

"Why are you avoiding me?"

It was Kael.

His hand held my waist firmly while his other hand held my wrists above my head, trapping me against the wall.

Claimed By The Rival Alpha #Chapter 45 - Read Claimed By The Rival Alpha Chapter 45

Claimed By The Rival Alpha

Chapter 45

Selena.

I wanted to push him away. That was the first thought that crossed my mind when I felt Kael's grip tighten around my waist, keeping me trapped between him and the cold stone wall.

I should have been angry. I should have reminded him that this was exactly why I had been avoiding him since earlier.

But then he lowered his head, his breath brushing against my skin, and my thoughts became a mess.

The confidence I always carried seemed to disappear whenever he was this close. It was frustrating because I hated feeling like I had no control over myself around him.

"Kael..." I whispered.

My voice came out weaker than I intended.

His eyes remained fixed on mine, his expression unreadable.

"I'm sorry," I said quietly.

For a moment, his face changed slightly, like he hadn't expected those words from me.

"I wasn't trying to anger you," I continued. "I just... I needed space."

"Space?" he repeated.

I swallowed.

"Yes. Because what happened earlier shouldn't have happened."

His jaw tightened.

"Shouldn't have happened?"

I looked away from him.

"You know what I mean."

Silence stretched between us.

The corridor was dark and empty, yet somehow it felt like the entire castle could hear the tension between us.

"We made an agreement," I reminded him. "We both agreed that we wouldn't let this go further."

Kael stared at me for a long moment.

Then his voice dropped.

"What if I don't want to follow that agreement anymore?"

My heart stopped for a second.

I looked back at him, wondering if he was only trying to provoke me.

"You're joking."

He didn't answer.

That was when I realized he wasn't.

My expression changed.

"Kael..."

"You think I don't know what this means?" he asked. "You think I haven't thought about the consequences?"

I stared at him.

"You are forgetting something very important."

"What?"

"Who I am."

His eyes darkened.

"I know exactly who you are."

"No, you know who my father is," I corrected. "You know what he represents. You know what he has done."

I took a shaky breath.

"I am his daughter. The daughter of the man you hate."

Kael said nothing.

"And I'm not just some random person you can protect without consequences. If my father discovers where I am... if he discovers what is happening between us..."

I paused.

"He won't just come for me."

The realization settled heavily between us.

"He will come for you."

Kael's expression remained firm.

"My father would bring the vampires themselves to your gates just to make sure I don't become yours."

The words hung between us.

For a moment, I saw something flicker in his eyes.

Something like anger.

Not at me.

At the situation.

"You think I don't understand that?" he asked.

Before I could respond, he moved closer.

The argument I had prepared disappeared.

I expected another warning.

Another reminder of why this was impossible.

Instead, he kissed me.

Everything inside me froze.

Then slowly, against all the reasons screaming in my head, I stopped fighting.

For a moment, there was no Alpha, no rival packs, no vampires, no war waiting beyond the castle walls.

There was only him.

My fingers tightened around his shirt without thinking.

I hated how easily he made me forget everything.

I hated that part of me wanted to stop worrying and simply accept what was happening.

But then, just as quickly as it started, he pulled away.

I opened my eyes.

Kael looked at me like he was fighting a battle inside himself.

His voice was low.

"Think about what you just said."

Before I could ask what he meant, he stepped away.

And then he left.

I remained standing there, completely still.

My mind replayed everything over and over again.

His words.

His expression.

The way he looked at me like he was afraid of what we could become.

I don't know how long I stayed there before I finally forced myself to move.

By the time Sally found me, I was still trying to pretend my thoughts weren't completely chaotic.

"What are you doing here?"

I quickly looked up.

Sally stood at the end of the corridor, studying me suspiciously.

"Nothing."

Her eyes narrowed.

"You're terrible at lying."

"I'm fine."

She didn't believe me, but thankfully she didn't push.

Instead, she motioned for me to follow her.

The moment we entered the storeroom, I forced myself to focus.

Whatever confusion I felt about Kael had to wait.

The group needed me.

Two new women had joined that night, and I greeted them before beginning the meeting.

"Before anything else, we need to remember why we are here."

Everyone became quiet.

"This group isn't built on anger alone. Anger disappears. Fear disappears. But purpose remains."

I looked around the room.

"We are here because we believe things can change."

After introductions, I gave each person a piece of parchment.

"Write your reason for joining."

Some looked confused.

"Why?"

"Because one day, when things become difficult, you need to remember why you started."

They slowly began writing.

When everyone finished, I explained the next steps.

"We haven't achieved much yet, and I won't pretend we have. Building something like this takes time."

A few people looked discouraged.

"But we cannot stop because progress is slow."

I turned to Sally.

"Tell them about the outside location."

Sally stepped forward.

"I spoke to someone I know in town. There is an old shrine that belonged to his grandmother. It has been abandoned for years."

"That sounds useful," someone said.

"It would be," Sally replied. "But there is a problem."

Everyone looked at her.

"The owner wants payment."

"How much?"

"Forty silver coins."

The room immediately erupted.

"Forty?"

"That's impossible."

"We barely earn enough to survive."

I raised my hand.

"Quiet."

The room slowly settled.

"I understand why you're upset."

I looked at them.

"The average servant earns fifteen bronze coins a week. Forty silver is not a small amount."

Ryuiji shook his head.

"That isn't just difficult. It's impossible."

Several people agreed.

Later, I pulled Sally aside.

"Can your friend reduce the price?"

She sighed.

"That is already after bargaining."

I frowned.

The problem was bigger than I expected.

So I faced the group again.

"Then we start smaller."

Everyone looked at me.

"This week, every member here must bring two more people."

A few immediately complained.

"We can't just keep bringing people!"

"We need resources."

"I know."

I tried calming them.

"But we need numbers first."

The arguments continued.

Everyone was afraid.

Everyone had doubts.

And I understood.

They were risking everything.

But before I could say anything else, the door suddenly opened.

The room went silent.

Everyone turned.

Standing there was the headmaid.

"Does she know?"

Claimed By The Rival Alpha

Selena

The moment the headmaid disappeared through the doorway, silence lingered in the abandoned storeroom like smoke after a fire as every conversation died instantly.

Nobody dared to move and nobody even breathed loudly. I stood where I was, my heart pounding so violently that I could hear it echoing in my ears.

The lantern hanging from the ceiling creaked softly as if it, too, had frozen with us. Then someone cursed under his breath, another servant stumbled backward, and the entire room erupted into chaos.

"Hide the papers!"

"We're done for!"

"I knew this would happen!"

Excuses collided with one another until I could barely separate one voice from the next. I wanted to tell everyone to stay calm, but the words never made it past my lips.

The headmaid stepped inside and snapped. "Enough!"

Her voice wasn't loud, yet it sliced through the panic with frightening ease and every murmur vanished. "What is going on here?"

The moment she asked the question, every eye in the room turned to my direction.

Her gaze moved slowly across the room, following their gazes before settling on me.

The disappointment on her face hardened into something colder. "You again? I've warned you about your charades before!"

"This is just a welfare group to help one another in the castle." I tried to divert the narrative.

"So you think I would believe that? Anyways, I've marked everyone's face in this room and I promise you, I'm withholding four weeks of your payments for improper gatherings." She threatened and stormed out of the storeroom.

Then everything exploded as chaos broke. "What are we going to do now?"

"My wages!"

"Four weeks? She can't do that!"

"We're finished."

Voices overlapped until they became impossible to separate. Some servants blamed themselves for attending. Others blamed whoever had first suggested gathering. A few openly blamed me.

I didn't interrupt them immediately. I let them speak because they deserved that much. After all, they had taken a risk because they believed me.

Eventually I stepped onto one of the old wooden crates. "Everyone." I said but nobody listened as they continued with the arguments.

"SILENCE!" My voice cracked across the room harder than I intended.

Every face turned toward me and I swallowed hard before speaking again. "I know you're angry." No one answered as I continued. "I know you're scared."

A woman folded her arms before saying. "You should be."

Several people exchanged uncertain looks. "The headmaid knows who we are now. She knows our faces. She has punished every single one of us."

Someone muttered bitterly. "And because of who?"

I heard it but I pretended I didn't. I looked around slowly then proceeded. "If you want someone to blame..." I drew in a deep breath. "...then blame me. I gathered you here."

I continued steadily. "I invited every one of you. I spoke, I convinced you and If anyone deserves punishment, it's me."

Silence settled again.

"But..." I straightened my shoulders. "I will find a way to fix this."

A servant frowned. "How?"

"I don't know yet." I said truthfully and more murmurs spread.

"I won't lie to you." I shook my head. "I don't have an answer today but I will think. I will find one and until then..."

I looked at every single face. "Do not abandon what brought you here."

Their expressions softened slightly. "You didn't come because of me. You came because every one of you carries a wound."

I pointed gently toward the parchment each person still held. "You came because of those stories. You came because you lost someone. You came because you were tired."

I nodded slowly. "And that reason hasn't changed."

The room remained quiet. "So continue with this week's mission."

Several people looked confused as I reminded them. "Bring two trustworthy people. There should be no careless choices, no loud mouths and no people who enjoy gossip. Only people you would trust with your own life."

Someone finally nodded then others followed as hope slowly returned to their faces.

"We meet again after everyone completes their task."

Sally folded her arms and added. "You heard her." Her firm voice carried authority. "If you're afraid, nobody's forcing you but don't betray the rest of us."

That warning landed heavily as nobody objected. Gradually they slipped out of the storeroom in twos and threes until only Sally and I remained.

Neither of us spoke immediately as we simply walked out of the storeroom. The corridors were dark and unusually quiet.

After several minutes Sally finally broke the silence. "So."

I glanced sideways. "So?"

"How exactly are you planning to convince the headmaid to remove our punishment?"

I sighed before speaking. "I'll think of something."

She stopped walking as she turned around and stared at me. "'I'll'?" She asked with creased brows.

"What?" I asked not to get what she meant. "'I said I'll think of something.'"

She shook her head. "No."

I frowned. "No?"

"It should be We! We'll think of something." She continued walking before I answered. "We started this together, I argued with you, I doubted you, I questioned you."

She looked straight ahead. "But I joined. So if this falls apart..." She shrugged. "...it falls apart on all of us."

Something warm settled inside my chest. For the first time in days, I smiled genuinely. "You've changed."

She snorted. "Don't get used to it."

I laughed softly.

After another stretch of silence she spoke again. "About before...I owe you an apology."

That surprised me as I've come to notice she wasn't someone who apologized easily.

"I kept pushing into your personal business." She scratched the back of her neck awkwardly. "I thought if we were working together, I deserved to know everything."

She sighed. "Whether you have something with the Alpha..." She paused. "...or whether you don't... It isn't my concern unless you decide to make it our concern."

I studied her face and noticed she meant every word.

"I was harsh." She gave a humorless smile. "And I'm sorry."

I smiled. "I forgive you."

She looked relieved though she'd never admit it. "I just need to know one thing."

"What?"

"When everything becomes difficult..." She looked directly at me. "...whose side are you on?"

I answered without hesitation. "I'll always be beside everyone. The servants, the people everyone ignores and my place is beside you."

For the first time, Sally smiled without sarcasm. It suited her.

Together we reached our chamber as the door creaked open and Marquee stepped inside at almost the same moment.

She avoided looking at either of us. Without saying goodnight... Without asking where we'd been... Without even changing her expression... She climbed into bed, pulled the blanket over herself and turned toward the wall.

I stared at her for several seconds. Sally noticed too but neither of us spoke about it because there was nothing to say.

The room suddenly felt much colder than before. I climbed into my own bed as questions filled my mind.

Was she angry? Scared? Did she regret joining us? Or... Did she regret becoming my friend?

Sleep eventually claimed me before I found an answer.

Morning arrived with the familiar clatter of pots, shouting cooks and the smell of freshly baked bread.

I threw myself into work immediately as the kitchen storeroom needed reorganizing.

Large sacks of flour were stacked against one wall. Bundles of dried herbs hung from the rafters. Crates of vegetables waited to be sorted before breakfast preparations began.

Keeping busy helped distract me. At least until I noticed someone. She's Sera, the headmaid's assistant.

She quietly carried a basket of linens through the kitchen. Like always, she moved almost unnoticed and that puzzled me.

Everyone knew she was the assistant yet, the headmaid still insisted on doing almost everything herself.

People often whispered that Sera had the easiest position in the castle.

I watched her leave through the back corridor as an idea slowly formed in my head.

If I couldn't convince the headmaid to lift the punishment off my group members directly... Perhaps I could reach her through another way.

Father once said something during one of his lessons. "If you want someone to abandon what they believe is right, don't attack their belief."

"Instead, show them another perspective that feels even more right."

At the time I'd barely listened or knew what he meant by that. But now... Those words returned with perfect clarity.

Maybe... Just maybe... The headmaid herself wasn't beyond reaching.

Earlier that morning I'd already quietly informed two guards stationed near the old storeroom about another small task that needed to be done later.

One more piece in the growing puzzle. Now all I needed was an opening.

When she left the kitchen carrying another basket, I followed.

She turned into a quieter corridor near the laundry rooms. "Sera?" I called out and she stopped and turned around.

"Oh." Her smile was gentle. "Selena."

"I hope I'm not interrupting." I asked with a small smile.

"Not at all." She assured me and I walked closer to her.

"I just wanted to ask how you've been." I uttered.

She looked mildly surprised. "I'm well."

"And work?" I asked again.

She laughed softly. "Busy, as always."

"I've always wondered what it's like working beside the headmaid." I started by making small conversations.

She smiled politely before saying. "It's demanding."

"I imagine so." I hesitated just enough to appear genuine. "She can be... intimidating."

A tiny laugh escaped Sera. "Only when necessary."

"I don't know." I scratched my neck. "She always seems angry. Especially lately."

Something flickered in Sera's eyes only for a second. "People tend to misunderstand her. She carries many burdens."

I nodded thoughtfully. "I heard a rumour..."

"What rumor?" Sera asked.

"I heard that her daughter was kidnapped."

Sera immediately shook her head. "No, she wasn't kidnapped."

I frowned as I feigned surprise. "No?"

Her smile disappeared. "She was sold." The words were painfully quiet. "To the vampires."

I widened my eyes, allowing genuine horror to show. "I... I didn't know." I said even though I already knew this before now.

Sera nodded once. "Most people don't."

For a long moment neither of us spoke. Finally I said quietly, "I hate what they've done to our people."

She looked at me without saying anything .

"I wish..." I continued again while choosing my words carefully. "...I wish more werewolves believed we didn't have to accept it forever."

Sera didn't answer but something changed in her expression and I knew I had struck a chord.

I smiled politely. "I should get back to work."

She nodded slowly. "It was nice talking to you."

"You too." As I returned toward the kitchen, I couldn't help feeling hopeful.

I'd planted the first seed. Whether it grew... Only time would tell.

I had barely stepped back inside the kitchen when a castle guard appeared beside the doorway.

He looked around before lowering his voice. "Selena, the Alpha has summoned you."

Claimed By The Rival Alpha

Kael

I had lost count of how many times I'd crossed my study.

My boots struck the polished wooden floor in slow, measured steps as I paced between the windows overlooking the castle grounds and the desk near the fireplace.

Everything outside appeared normal. The Guards changed shifts. Servants hurried between buildings. Merchants entered through the gates after the usual inspections.

The castle looked calm but I knew better. Chaos had already found its way inside my walls.

The headmaid's report refused to leave my mind.

She had stood before my desk only moments ago, her posture rigid as she informed me about the secret gatherings taking place among the servants.

And at the center of it all... Selena was right there.

I stopped pacing.

Of course it was her! Who else would look at centuries of fear and decide the solution was to gather servants in the middle of the night and preach rebellion?

I let out a slow breath and rubbed my temple. The frustrating part wasn't that she'd broken castle rules... It was why she'd done it.

She wanted to fight the vampires. The same vampires I had spent years preparing to challenge. The irony was almost laughable.

If I punished her, I'd be condemning someone for pursuing the very dream I'd buried beneath years of caution and strategy.

If I didn't... I'd be telling every servant in Blackbourne that the Alpha's laws could be ignored whenever their intentions were noble.

Neither choice sat well with me.

I walked back to my desk and rested both palms against its polished surface. There had to be a solution because Punishing her would be the simplest choice.

The headmaid expected it, the castle expected it and the law demanded it.

Yet every time I imagined ordering her punishment, something inside me rebelled against the idea.

It wasn't because she had broken the rules. It was because I understood exactly why she had.

She wasn't gathering servants to overthrow me. She wasn't plotting treason. She was rallying them against the vampires.

Against the very race I had spent years quietly preparing to challenge. She was simply reckless enough to pursue openly what I had buried beneath years of patience.

A knock sounded on the door. "My Alpha."

"Come in." The guard stepped inside and bowed.

"The servant you summoned has arrived."

I straightened. "Send her in."

"Yes, Alpha." The guard stepped aside and a heartbeat later, Selena entered.

She paused just inside the doorway before giving the customary bow. "You sent for me?"

For several moments, I simply looked at her. She looked completely different from the fiery young woman the headmaid had described.

She was looking so calm, collected and almost innocent for anyone to believe she could do some things she always ended up doing.

If I hadn't already heard the report, I might never have believed she had gathered nearly twenty servants in the middle of the night.

"Come closer." She obeyed without hesitation. When she stopped before my desk, neither of us spoke.

I found myself studying her face, wondering what kind of upbringing could produce someone like her.

She was Alpha William's daughter. The same Alpha who had willingly bent his knee to vampire authority. The same Alpha who believed obedience ensured survival.

Yet somehow... His daughter had become everything he wasn't.

I folded my arms while staring intently at her. "Tell me something."

She raised an eyebrow as I added. "If you know the answer. Did your father ever secretly wish to fight the vampires?"

Her brows knitted together as she asked in surprise.. "What do you mean by that?"

"Answer me. It's a simple question, just give me your answers."

She looked genuinely confused. "Not that I know of."

I continued watching her. "No speeches? No attempt to guess why I'm asking?"

She slowly shook her head. "No."

I exhaled quietly. "This is Impossible."

She frowned. "What is?"

"You."

She blinked. "I don't understand what you mean."

"You were raised by Alpha William." I stepped away from the desk. "You carry his blood."

I stopped in front of her. "And yet every report I receive about you sounds like the complete opposite of the man I know."

Her expression softened slightly. "My father and I don't agree on many things."

"So I've noticed." I said and silence settled between us.

Finally, I decided to stop circling the matter. "The headmaid came to see me."

Her face remained composed as I said those words. I was expecting her to show some reaction but I continued anyway.

"She informed me about repeated unlawful gatherings among the servants. She informed me," I continued, "that you are the one leading them. You're the one planting all of these seeds into your minds."

I waited, hoping she could deny it. Hoping she could say it's all a lie, a cheap lie told against her. I was expecting her to blame someone else.

Instead, she surprised me with her next words, taking me off guard.

"So..." she asked quietly, "Are you going to punish me?" The look on her face shows she didn't really care what was going to happen.

For a moment I simply stared at her in surprise. She didn't bother to make any excuses. She had no atom of fear in her and definitely no denial.

Instead, she admitted it without hesitation.

I took another step forward until only a small distance separated us. "Do you want to be punished?"

The corner of her mouth lifted ever so slightly. "It depends."

"On what?" I asked.

"It depends on who is punishing me." She said and licked her lower lip with her tongue, taking me off guard.

There it was...That boldness again. The same boldness that constantly tested my patience.

I refused to indulge myself in her seduction. "You should choose your words more carefully."

"I simply answered your question."

"So you did." I folded my hands behind my back. "One thing you should know is, the punishment for organizing unauthorized gatherings within Blackbourne Castle is severe."

She waited as I continued. "Wages may be withheld, Privileges revoked and repeat offenders can be imprisoned."

At that, something in her expression changed. It wasn't fear... Instead, it was Frustration.

"What exactly is illegal about what we're doing?" Her voice rose slightly. "We're trying to help our own people."

She stepped closer. "We're talking, we're encouraging one another, we're reminding each other that the vampires aren't gods."

Her breathing quickened. "The only thing that should be illegal is selling young women to those monsters."

The room fell silent.

She wasn't finished yet. "The only criminals are the people who keep allowing it."

Her eyes burned with conviction as she added. "Every Alpha." She didn't look away. "Including you are criminals."

I remained perfectly still. Most people would have collapsed under the weight of what they had just said.

But it was never Selena. She stood there waiting for my response as though she'd merely commented on the weather.

Instead of answering immediately, I studied her. Every word she'd spoken had come from somewhere deeper than anger.

This wasn't a youthful rebellion. It felt personal.

"You speak," I said quietly, "as though the vampires have wronged you directly."

She held my gaze. "They've wronged all of us."

"No." I shook my head slowly. "There's definitely more to do."

She said nothing as the silence confirmed my suspicion.

Then her chin lifted. "You can punish me." Her voice steadied. "You can imprison me, you can throw me out of your castle."

She took another breath. "But as long as I'm alive..." her eyes never left mine, "...I'll continue fighting them."

She spoke with such certainty that even my wolf grew quiet. "I'll continue leading anyone willing to stand against them."

Another heartbeat passed before she added. "I won't stop until our people are free and safe."

Silence swallowed the room as neither of us moved.

I finally walked past her toward the side table where a jug of ale waited. I poured myself a cup and took a slow drink.

The cool bitterness barely registered as I turned to face her again. Slowly, I made my way towards her as I said, "I want to do crazy things to you."

I got to where she's standing and pinned her against the wall, while holding her face and told her "I want to teach you a lesson just like the last time."

She shivered without a word then I claimed her lips with mine, while holding her hands above her. I mauled her lips, kissed her neck and collarbone before suddenly pulling back and flipping her over.

Then I lifted her skirt, spanked her to her obvious shock and pleasure then whispered "I loved the fire I saw in your eyes when you talked about leading an uprising."

She asked, as I continued to fondle her ass, "Does this mean you approve of my rebellion group?"

I only answered by spanking her more. Then slowly, I slid my finger into her crack, teased her core and made her writhe with pleasure beneath me. "Oh... please..."

Then I suddenly asked what had been on my mind for days... "Why did you run away the first time I touched you?"

She refused to answer me as she remained silent. I had to do something to her body.

I immediately teased her more by touching her clit. Suddenly, she opened her mouth and uttered, "I panicked."

"Why did you panick?" I asked.

"I've never done it before and it felt embarrassingly good..." She said with her face already turning red.

I smirked while I was busy fighting down my own raging arousal and was more focused on pleasing her.

"I will do it to you again so it won't be new to you anymore." I said as I began to finger her from behind while holding her hands together behind her back.

"Yes, yes, yes... Ohh Kael..." Selena moaned and shivered continuously but I enjoyed every bit of it.

I continued to ask while still finger fucking her, "Do you still feel embarrassed?"

"I can only feel happiness right now." She admitted and I smirked and increased the pace of my finger sliding in and out of her.

Then suddenly, she began shaking but I still didn't stop until she climaxed and turned to jelly in my arms while breathing heavily.

"Come on." I immediately lifted her into my arms. I had to carry her to my bed so she could regain her strength.

The moment I stood up straight after putting her on my bed, She weakly asked, "Was that what you planned to do to me when you summoned me here?"

I sighed before responding. "No, but you unfortunately have a way of changing my mind."

"That... how can I help you out?" She said while pointing towards the bulge in my pants.

I quickly realized and turned my back to her, ignoring her.

Claimed By The Rival Alpha

Selena

Why did I say that? Why did I ask him how I can help him out? The question echoed through my mind the moment the words left my lips.

I stared at Alpha Kael's back as he now stood by the window with his back turned against me, and his broad shoulders rigid, the afternoon sunlight spilling over him. His silence to my question stretched painfully between us.

My heart sank as different thoughts ran through my head at that moment. Had I crossed a line?

I tightened my grip around the bedsheet wrapped around my body.

"I'm... sorry." My voice came out quieter than I'd intended. "I shouldn't have said that."

He remained facing the window for another heartbeat before answering. "Don't apologize."

I blinked as he still didn't turn to face me.

"I mean it, Selena." His voice was calm, but there was a heaviness beneath it. "Don't apologize for telling me how you feel."

I swallowed. "It's just..." I lowered my gaze. "I never knew how a mate bond worked because I've never seen one happen before now."

He remained silent, allowing me to continue. "I always thought it'd be easy."

A bitter laugh escaped me. "When we made that agreement not to culminate our bond, I truly believed we could simply decide not to complete the bond and be able to leave our daily lives without any issues."

I shook my head with a loud sigh then said. "I was just being so naïve and stupid to make such an agreement with you." My wolf stirred sadly within me. "I didn't know that every time I merely looked at you..."

I pressed a hand against my chest. "...my wolf would wake up inside of me. I didn't know she'd become restless. I didn't know she'd push me toward you every single day and also feel so drawn to you. My wolf wants you so much that I could barely refrain myself anymore from you."

My voice grew softer. "And every time you walk away from me... it hurts so much because my wolf didn't like it when you kept pushing us away from you. My wolf wishes to be closer to you than be in that maid quarters."

I laughed weakly as I continued. "It made no sense right? I'd tell myself I was only keeping my promise but my wolf..."

I smiled sadly. "...my wolf never understood our promises. She only understood him and only wanted him."

I closed my eyes briefly then proceeded. "The night in the main hall..." Heat still rushed into my cheeks despite everything that Alpha Kael had done to my body, I still felt shy speaking about it.

"When you touched me for the first time against the pillar that night at the main hall..." I breathed out slowly. "I wasn't frightened, instead I was so relieved and glad. I was exhilarated and since then, I want more of it from you."

"I'd wanted you to touch me for days without even realizing it." I laughed nervously. "That sounds ridiculous..."

My fingers tightened around the sheet. "But it's true." I lifted my eyes back to him. "Ever since then...I've wanted you and my wolf wants you more."

The room became quiet again as Alpha Kael still hadn't moved or turned to spare me a glance since he turned his back against me.

The silence became unbearable so I finally asked the question I'd been holding inside. "Is it like that for you too? I want to know how your wolf feels about all of these... is your wolf a pain in your ass too?"

He didn't answer immediately. Seconds crawled by then he quietly said, "No."

My heart dropped, the warmth inside me vanished instantly and I started regretting all of my actions. Regretting why I had foolishly allowed him to touch me because my wolf needs it.

Of course, what had I expected from him? He was an Alpha. He is strong and very disciplined. Unlike me who couldn't hold myself and my hungry wolf back.

I looked down, suddenly embarrassed I'd confessed so much more than I should. Due to the heat of the moment, due to the amazing pleasure he had given me, I had stupidly spilled out things I should have just kept to myself.

Things that should be left dead and buried inside of me! How more senseless would I be? I sighed, already deciding within myself to just leave and save my face from more embarrassment.

But his voice suddenly came again. "No, it isn't like that. It wasn't like yours."

I slowly looked back up as he still didn't turn around to face me. "It was much worse."

I froze as I wasn't expecting him to say anything anymore.

"My wolf became restless the very moment our bond snapped into place." He spoke almost as though confessing a crime. "It didn't start from the night when I first touched you against the pillar."

"Not after but instead; it started the moment I realized you were my mate." He let out a humorless laugh. "I've been fighting him ever since."

I continue staring at him dumbfounded.

"I've deprived my wolf of pleasure for weeks, I've restrained him and I've forced him into silence."

His jaw tightened. "Do you know what that does to a wolf?"

I slowly shook my head even though I knew he couldn't see me because his back was still turned to me. Still, he continued.

"It makes him angry, frustrated and violent. Every day I pass you in the corridors... I pretend not to notice you. I see you working sometimes and my wolf wants me to come hold you in my arms and do crazy things to your body."

"I steal glances that I shouldn't have to." His shoulders rose with a long breath. "And every time I force myself to look away...My wolf reminds me exactly who you are to us."

Warmth blossomed inside my chest as I couldn't stop smiling. Those words... They meant more than I could describe.

I was happy he felt it too. He didn't only feel it... He'd been suffering through it just like myself. Because of me and because of us.

Alpha Kael suddenly said again, "The deprivation had always made me angry and frustrated, knowing the scale of the consequences of our bond made me want to stay far away from you."

I slowly climbed off the bed as the sheet remained wrapped around me as I crossed the room.

My bare feet met the wooden floor one careful step at a time and I stopped only a short distance behind him.

"Then..." My voice barely rose above a whisper. "What if we stopped fighting it?"

He remained motionless as I continued. "What if..." I smiled sadly. "...just once... we ignored everything else?"

I stepped even closer. "What if we simply became Kael and Selena?"

"There's no Alpha, there's no runaway daughter and there's no enemies. It's just..." I swallowed before adding. "...us."

His shoulders visibly stiffened. When he finally answered, his voice sounded almost painful. "We can't do that."

"Why?" I swiftly asked.

He closed his eyes briefly. "My castle is crawling with spies. The one who stole your father's cloak and left wasn't the only one. One careless moment... one witness... one careless rumour..."

He shook his head. "And everything will be jeopardized. Before we even realize what's happened... Alpha William will be standing outside Blackbourne's gates."

I knew he was right. Every word was true yet... Knowing didn't make accepting easier.

I took another slow step closer to him again until I stood directly behind him. Without speaking, I gently rested my hand against his back.

His muscles tensed immediately beneath my fingertips. I smiled faintly then I leaned forward and placed a soft kiss against his back.

He inhaled sharply and the next moment, he turned toward me as his hand rose to cradle my jaw with surprising tenderness as our eyes met.

Neither of us spoke. Then I deliberately left the sheet covering my body to loosen to the floor as I exposed myself to him.

His gaze flickered downward for only the briefest instant before returning to my face. His restraint was almost tangible.

"I've heard stories," I whispered. "About mates... what they do to themselves, about how they care for each other, and how they protect one another. I've seen some myself and I secretly imagined myself doing them with you."

A faint smile touched my lips. "I used to think they were exaggerated but I don't think so anymore."

His thumb brushed lightly against my cheek as I continued. "You had crossed some of them when you fingered me earlier but there's one particular one I would like to do with you."

I suddenly grabbed his cock through his chaussees and he flinched while I froze.

I was initially startled at his size but as I continued to play with it, I got accustomed to it quickly and soon began to enjoy it as Kael groaned into my neck.

I used both hands to fondle him before whispering into his ear "Can I pull off your chaussees?"

That's when Alpha Kael pulled back hesitantly, shaking his head as he paced around.

I was slightly frustrated as I snapped, "There's no one here with us and one session of pleasure wouldn't bring my father automatically to Blackbourne pack borders, so why was he rejecting me?"

"I am not!" Alpha Kael claimed.

Then I asked the frustrating question, "Why wouldn't you mate with me?"

Alpha Kael faced me and asked, "Is that what you're trying to do?"

I shrugged smugly and he held my neck and pinned me to the wall." You should be careful what you wish for."

"I've been careful all this while... Do you want to see me unhinged?" I asked but before he could answer, I ripped his chausses apart.

"You have been the disobedient one and now, I'm going to punish you!!!"

Claimed By The Rival Alpha

Selena

I struggled against Alpha Kael's resistance with a determination that surprised even me.

My fingers refused to leave the fabric of his chausses. Every instinct inside me urged me to keep going, to ignore every warning we had ever given each other. The consequences were there, lurking in the back of my mind, but at that moment they seemed so distant compared to the overwhelming pull of the mate bond.

I wanted him. Not because he was an Alpha. Not because he had saved me countless times but because every part of me recognized him as mine.

I don't care if after tasting him I'd be coming back for more of him.

He caught my wrists before I could tug again. "Selena..."His voice was rough, strained.

"I am not letting you win this," I whispered stubbornly.

His jaw flexed. "You have no idea what you're doing."

"I know exactly what I'm doing."

"No! You definitely don't." He snapped but I still didn't care.

"I do know what I'm doing." I said and pulled again then the already torn fabric gave another inch.

His breathing deepened. The next thing I knew, he had caught me around the waist and pushed me backwards.

I landed on the mattress with a startled gasp and the bed dipped beneath my weight as I stared up at him.

For one hopeful heartbeat... I thought he had finally surrendered.

That he was done resisting us. That everything we had fought against for weeks was finally about to crumble and he was finally ready to mate me.

Instead, a sharp knock echoed through the chamber as both of us froze.

Alpha Kael shut his eyes. "...Alpha?" Beta Bastia's voice was heard from outside the door.

I immediately grabbed the nearest bedsheet and wrapped it around myself while Alpha Kael stepped away from the bed.

His breathing was still uneven. "So help me..." he muttered under his breath before answering loudly, "What is it?"

"Alpha, The patrol squad is assembled," Beta Bastian called through the door. "They're waiting for your instructions before departure."

"I'll be there shortly."

"Yes, Alpha." He said and footsteps retreating was heard.

Silence filled the chamber again as Alpha Kael rubbed a hand over his face.

Then he looked at me. "You need to leave."

I blinked before asking. "What? Why should I leave?"

"As you can see, I have work to do."

I frowned. "I can help you with it."

"You can't because I don't need your help." He said it without hesitation.

"Why don't you need my help?" I asked with a frown.

He walked toward the wardrobe, refusing to meet my eyes. "Because you aren't coming."

"But I'm really good with paperwork. I can organize reports, I can read maps."

"That is seriously your problem, Selena. I still do not need your help."

"Then what's the problem?"

"You are my problem!" He snapped.

I folded my arms. "I fail to see how that's a problem. How can I be your problem?"

He gave a short feigned and awkward laugh. "Exactly."

I watched him disappear behind a folding screen to change his ruined clothing.

The silence felt strangely awkward after everything that had nearly happened.

I sat on the edge of the bed, clutching the sheet around myself. "I wasn't joking."

His voice drifted from behind the screen. "Neither was I."

"I really can help. I learned administration from my father."

His movements paused briefly. "I believe you."

"So let me help. We are definitely going to make a good team."

"No." He said and I sighed dramatically.

"You are impossible." I said with a roll of my eyes as I began wearing my tunic.

A moment later Alpha Kael emerged wearing a fresh pair of dark chausses, every trace of disorder gone except the faint redness still lingering around his neck.

He looked composed again. Far too composed.

Meanwhile, I still felt as though my heart had forgotten how to beat normally.

He studied me for a moment before saying, "There's something else."

I tilted my head. "What?"

"I've arranged private combat training for you with a formidable warrior."

I stared at him in shock, "...You what?"

"You'll begin soon." He added like it's nothing.

My mouth opened then closed. Then it opened again. "You arranged my schedule without asking me?"

"Yes, I did."

"You didn't even think to consult me?" I stood as I asked. "Kael!"

He remained perfectly calm as I continued ranting. "I don't remember agreeing to this."

"You don't need to agree to it."

"I absolutely do! I have other work to do."

"You'll still work." He said it as though it is that simple.

"I already barely have enough hours in the day."

"You'll manage." He said and I glared at him.

"You should always consult me before making any decision about my life." I uttered.

He stepped closer until the difference in our heights forced me to look up. "You seem to forget your position here."

I narrowed my eyes as I asked, "My position?"

"You're a maid in my pack." His voice was calm. "I don't owe you an explanation for every decision I make."

The words irritated me far more than they should have. For a moment I wanted to argue simply because he sounded so unbearably confident.

But... When my anger settled, reason quietly slipped in. Training wasn't actually a bad thing.

If vampires invaded... If my father found me... If another assassin appeared... I couldn't keep relying on Alpha Kael to save me. I also need the training for my revolution against the vampires.

I hated admitting it but he was right. Still, I wasn't going to back down easily. "I reserve the right to complain."

He almost smiled. "I expected nothing less."

I crossed my arms before asking. "So... Who's training me? Hope it isn't that ugly guards captain?"

He answered immediately. "No. It's the scout."

I frowned. "The one you sent into Nightbane territory?"

"Yes."

"The one who nearly died?" I asked with a creased brow.

"He already recovered." Alpha Kael said while throwing me a tired look.

"Huh." I thought for a second. "What about the spy?"

His expression became thoughtful as I added. "The one who stole my father's cloak."

He nodded. "I've been thinking about him."

"So have I."

"He would definitely report to my father knowing I'm here."

"I don't think he does."

I asked with surprise, my face. "Why do you say so?"

"I don't believe the spy worked for Alpha William."

I frowned. "That makes no sense because he knew who I was and he only took just my father's cloak."

"Yes."

"So why wouldn't he work for my father?"

Alpha Kael leaned against the table. "Because if Alpha William knew with certainty that you were here..."

His eyes settled on mine. "...he would already be at my borders waging war."

Silence settled between us as I slowly replayed everything.

"...Unless," I murmured, "he's waiting."

Alpha Kael looked intently at me. "Waiting For what?"

"He is definitely waiting for the vampires. If they invade first...He won't have to do the dirty work himself."

Neither of us looked convinced because there were too many assumptions and also fewer answers.

Alpha Kael rubbed his temple tiredly. "I hate guessing."

"So do I." I added and for a long moment neither of us spoke.

He looked exhausted. The burden of leading an entire pack rested on his shoulders every waking hour.

Without thinking, I almost stepped behind him to wrap my arms around his waist. To simply let him know he wasn't carrying everything alone.

But before I could... He turned to face me. "Our conversation is over."

I stopped awkwardly. "Oh."

"The scout will find you regarding your training schedule."

I nodded slowly without saying a word but seeing he was done with the conversation, I walked towards him before I could lose my courage.

Then I rose onto my toes and kissed his cheek softly and Briefly.

His eyes widened ever so slightly. He didn't move away and he didn't stop me.

When I stepped back, warmth spread across my own face. "Thank you," I whispered.

He simply watched me. I reached the doorway again before another thought struck me. "Oh."

He sighed lightly. "What now?"

"It's about the headmaid."

"What about her?" He asked, staring weirdly at me.

"The punishment she gave everyone because of our gathering. Would you..." I hesitated. "...lift it?"

He grunted thoughtfully. "I'll handle it."

Relief flooded through me. "Really?"

"Yes." He said and my smile came so naturally that I couldn't stop it.

"So..." I asked carefully, "Does that mean I can continue my revolution?"

His eyes narrowed. "I'll allow it."

My heart skipped as he continued. "...As long as none of you decide to start a hostile rebellion against the vampires yourselves."

I quickly straightened my face. "We wouldn't dream of that."

He gave me a look that suggested he didn't entirely believe me while I offered him my sweetest smile anyway.

Then I slipped out of his chamber before he could change his mind.

As I descended the castle stairs, reality finally caught up with me.

My days had just become impossibly full. I still had my duties as a maid. I still had an entire revolution depending on me as the leader.

And now... I somehow had to fit private combat training into everything else.

Claimed By The Rival Alpha

Serena

"Yesterday night. You tried to talk to me while I was sleeping or maybe you got people. But that should be the end of it. Stop trying to manipulate features to get to me."

I narrow my eyes as I listen calmly to what she's saying.

"Were they ethereal?" I ask a question from my suspicion.

"I just knew you would be at it. I'm here to warn you Serena. Stop being so childish. Let me be." Sje warns me seriously. From the dungeon, I can see clear fear in her eyes.

"Why? Why should I let you be?" I ask her chuckling.

"Shouldn't you be lucky I only presented you with a dream that has not rendered you immobile? Are you really that ungrateful? Tch. Maybe next time, I will bring memories that would shut you up for good. What do you say?"

"The next time, I would make sure you are killed in that dream or whatever you call it. Stop daring me." The audacity in her eyes. It itches me like I've been bitten by some bitter animal.

"I would love to see what you can do the next time Mira. Remember, the boys would not be there to protect even a single gland of your hair."

"I no longer need their protection or guidance every single day." The defiance in her gaze would have fooled me but I am not anyone. I am Queen Serena.

I smile quietly as she walks away.

"We need to do something and fast before she finds out exactly who she is." I go deeper into my cage so no one knows what exactly is going on with me.

At most, they would suspect a case of madness.

"I asked you to kill her, you delayed with incessant unnecessary speeches, now they have found her and you come to me. I can't help you with anything. The ball is in your court, if you can manage to kill her before whatever last punishment it is those boys would want to give to you."

"I will grant you a second life. That is the only thing I can assure you and help you with."

"Fine. But I need you to do one last thing for me."

"And that is?"

"Grant me superpowers. I just need enough to kill her. That's all I'm asking of you please."

"I do not grant powers to people that do not carry out my commands. You can ask for the powers and extra life if you kill her today."

"I'm not going to be out of here today! If you're not going to help me, then you should as well stop giving me tasks."

"Aren't we being a little too forgetful? Serena Anderson?"

I play with my lips between my teeth.

"Or have you forgotten your real name and your true identity? With the wave of my hands, they will see you for who you are."

"That tone should not be used for your ruler now, should it?"

"My apologies."

"Good."

"You will leave here today. If you can kill her like I said, I will grant you extra life again."

"What if I don't?"

"Then this will be your last. I would just have to look for another humble servant."

"This servant is forever loyal and humble." I go on my knees.

"That's more like it."

"Now, accomplish your mission and the deal stands."

"Why won't you just kill her yourself? It will end all of these things. There is no way they will be able to trace her death to an existence not of them."

"Is that what you think? Sadly, some of the other races actually know about us and can differ us from the rest. So there will certainly be people that can tell."

"Not that I particularly care about that set of people though."

"Then why won't you just kill her already?"

"That witch knew we would all come after her child. So she put a spell on her. If we ever try to kill her ourselves, all of her memories and her powers that were sealed would be unleashed."

"That is equivalent to sheathing a double edged sword. We have all been keeping tabs on her through our people. But none of us is bold enough to face the consequences of her memories being revealed."

"I'll kill her." I am disgusted by her annoying lifestyle.

"Good."

"They'll be here in the next two hours. I'll coat your claws with poison that would kill her."

"Thank you."

The voice goes back into the shadows. I walk back till my back is on the wall and I relax there patiently waiting for them to come.

"Queen Serena."

The chains turn and I'm not bothered. My plan is focused on the big plan.

"Is your Luna Mira there in the courtroom?" I raise my chin high up.

"Yes Queen Serena."

I walk silently with them holding the two chains weighing me down.

"Welcome Queen Sere."

"Cut the greeting short. She's a prisoner now." Mira stares straight like she's daring me.

The Alpha Brothers have a neutral look on their face. Just as I expected.

"Go straight to the business of the day." Kai is the first to say something.

The upper council feels cold to me, I brush it off as I narrow my mind on my mission.

"Queen Serena, is it true that you are currently forging a team that pledges allegiance to only you?"

My heart skips a beat but I decide to play it cool.

"I have no idea what you are speaking of. I have been in the dungeon and I would never do such a thing. This is my clan."

"Bring in the witnesses."

My personal maid and a couple of people that I know fully well walk in.

"What? What is the meaning of this?" I ask the members of the upper council.

"You have no reason to fear given that you know nothing about what he spoke of. Yes?" Kai speaks to me again.

"I'm not bothered by Kai." I draw lines with my toes to ease off the tension weighing heavy on my shoulders.

"For someone that has no idea about allegiance. You sure are bold to the person that married you." Rowan says. The look on their faces tells me I'm in for serious trouble.

"Repeat everything you said earlier. Do not omit a single word else your head will roll in front of the members of the clan today." Lucian says.

"Alpha Lucian, my intention was never to bully or oppress anyone. It was Queen Serena. She"

"Again, it is Serena. She doesn't deserve to be a queen." Mira squints at me.

"Serena asked me to gather as many people as possible. She wanted to turn the members of the clan against Luna Mira in every way possible."

"She had used some methods already but they seemed not to be effective. This was one of the patterns with one of the highest rates of success. Please have mercy on me, Alpha Lucian, Alpha Rowan, Alpha Damien, Alpha Kai." The stupid girl goes to her knees and bows her head.

"Show your exposed skin to the members of the upper council."

"Yes Luna Mira."

She turns her arms around. I wince in pain when I see the scalded part of her skin.

"Explain to them what brought about the injuries on your body."

"Yes. Luna Mira."

"Rosette came to meet me, she asked me what I thought of Queen Serena. I told her that Queen Serena to me is not all that."

"And she splashed hot water on my face."

"My Lords, she and her accomplices do even worse than this to my fellow kind. They have no sympathy. The moment you say no to pledging your allegiance to."

"Serena, they subject you to different types of harsh treatments including isolation."

"My sister, MJ has been locked up in her chambers simply because she refused to pledge her allegiance to Serena." Her shoulder quivers as she cries.

"Rosette, you told the members of the upper and lower council, that you had no accomplice and you were the only one. Explain yourself."

"I apologize on her behalf." If I let this stupid girl go ahead to expose the other accomplices. My eyes and ears will be completely off the clan.

"You! Serena!" Damien rises up from his chair.

He takes slow strides to where I am.

"Damien." I soften my voice and my gaze.

"Shut up!"

His palm lands on my face.

"You....you slapped me?" I place my hands on my cheek still in shock.

I stare at the rest of the brothers and none of them seems surprised. Did they all plan this?

"And I would go ahead to hit you again! What on the Blackwood clan has gotten to your head?"

"The quest for power? From a Queen? We as four brothers rule this one place and you!"

"You want to overthrow the clan! How did we crown you as the Queen? Just how?"

"Damien, I'm,I'm sorry. I'll let them all go." I swallow hard.

"Can you hear yourself? Do you listen to yourself when you utter words? Do you sound like a leader in any way?"

"She can't handle the clan! Can't you all see it?! This! This! Human!"

"The human has the clan at heart and you have your evil quest for power. At the end of the day, she is far more suited to the Queen and Luna than you are."

"There can only be one Queen Damien."

"Alpha Damien, it is the constitutional responsibility of the upper council to decide her punishment."

I say a silent thank you to the council member that just saved me.

"Fine."

He goes back to the seat.

"Serena has truly done what none of us would approve of."

"Those are not the only allegations. Discuss them all."

This is the end for me. Just this one offense will have so much drawback coupled with the next.

"You tried to murder Luna Mira again?" Even the council member is surprised at my actions.

"No, I didn't! Mira, how could you say such a thing about me?"

"Chr the crap. Raise your hands Serena."

I raise my hands with ease.

"The gash on your arm was from my knife when I was trying to defend myself, yes or no?" She has a straight face. A drill I'm sure must have been installed on her by her brothers.

"I," I swept my eyes through the council.

Even my most trusted allies seem disappointed in me.

"The Luna asked you a question. Do well to answer."

"The gash. It's," I scratched my arms on the gate of my cage. That's where it's from."

"Exactly when did this incident happen, Serena? We will need to confirm." Kai is the one asking.

I should have known he would ask.

"I can't recall the particular day, Alpha Kai."

"Then it's safe to say it never happened." Rowan says.

"It was Alpha Rowan."

"Evidence then?" Lucian asks me.

I shut my mouth as I know all of the evidence is titled in Mira's favor.

"No response? Fine then. Let's proceed to the punishment." Damien is the one talking.

"Your Queen title should be revoked." Kai says immediately.

"Alpha Kai. We do know that the actions committed by Serena were of gross misconduct and should be punished severely. However, the title revoke should be considered carefully. Serena has..."

"A queen that does not behave like a queen should not be addressed as a queen. This is not even a punishment befitting for what she has done. The title being revoked is not a punishment. It must be done."

The council goes quiet. After seeing that the brothers are all quiet, they carry it.

"The title of the Queen has been revoked from Queen Serena and she shall henceforth be known as Serena."

I scoff as I scan Mira. There is sincerely nothing that will stop me from killing this girl today.

"The second punishment?"