

Submission is Not My Style – Chapter 61

I cross the room in three strides.

“You bastard,” I growl, grabbing a fistful of his thick hair and yanking his head back.

The size difference between us is almost comical—I barely reach his chest—but the fury in me could tear down mountains.

“Why the hell did you mark her?” I hiss through gritted teeth. “I warned you, Khoas. I told you if you ever touched her again, I’d end you.”

Khoas chuckles, his face twisting into mock sympathy. “Mmm,” he purrs, lips parting to reveal perfect, sharp teeth. “You did warn me.”

And yet... here we are.”

His eyes glint as his voice drops. “Go ahead, Kali. Pull harder. Rip me apart. But just know—every ounce of pain I feel, Jasmine feels it twice as much.”

I shove him away, a hiss escaping my lips as disgust coils in my gut.

He’s not bluffing. I know he’s not.

Just like how my father collapsed when my mother was tortured.

“You’re a coward,” I spit, stepping back, my fists trembling. “Jack’s going to end you when he finds out what you did to his sister.”

Khoas leans forward slowly, resting his elbows on his knees, his voice low and cold. “You should be more worried about yourself. About how he’ll react when he finds—or doesn’t find your body instead.”

And then—before I can see it coming—his hand snaps forward, too fast. I feel something cold and sharp jab into the side of my neck.

Pain explodes like a firework beneath my skin. I gasp, stumbling back, my legs buckling. “You... son of a...” My vision spins, the world tilting like a broken picture frame. I drop to my knees, trying to shift, to call my wolf—but she’s trapped, strangled by whatever toxin he used.

My world dims as Khoas crouches beside me, his breath-reeking of blood and something fouler-hot against my cheek.

“If only you’d stayed in your place like I warned,” he murmurs. “You’re lucky I’m not killing you yet. My master wants something from you first.”

I try to lift my hand, claw his face, scream, fight—anything—but I’m sinking. Fast.

He keeps talking, voice fading in and out like a dying flame. "There's a price on your head, Kali. And when I'm done... the world will thank me for getting rid of a monster like you. You're no woman-and that wolf of yours is a beast. Even Alpha jack would be grateful."

The last thing I feel is his arms scooping me up like a sack of potatoes, my head lolling against his shoulder as he carries me out.

Then-

Nothing.

Complete, consuming darkness.

Light.

Too much of it-blinding, searing.

I groan, turning my head, but it feels like it's made of stone. My eyes flutter open for half a second before I squeeze them shut again.

Everything hurts.

And I'm not alone.

Someone's here.

I can feel it.

Then a voice-smooth, amused, unmistakably pleased-cuts through the haze:

"You're awake. Good. Watching you sleep was fun and all, but / was starting to get bored."

My blood runs cold.

I know that voice.

Somewhere in the back of my mind, alarm bells are ringing. But the fog won't clear.

"What do you want?" I croak, each syllable scraping painfully against my dry throat. The light still stabs at my eyes like knives, forcing them shut.

There's a pause, then the voice replies-calm and casual.

"I won't waste your time. Let's cut to the chase."

Another pause.

“That blue necklace. I want it.”

My heart skips a beat.

What?

How the hell does he know about that necklace? Jasmine’s words echo in my mind-how she said it looked just like the Alpha Queen’s, swearing mine had to be fake. My fingers twitch instinctively toward my collarbone, even though left the necklace hidden at the home I shared with Jack.

“It’s just a necklace,” I rasp.

“It’s not,” the voice snaps, suddenly sharp, impatient. “Hand it over. Or you die a very slow, very painful death.”

I grit my teeth, still refusing to open my eyes against the blinding light.

“That all you’ve got? Empty threats?”

“Oh, you misunderstand,” he says smoothly, almost delighted. “It’s not just you. Your mother... your big, bad Alpha mate... even sweet little Jasmine. They’ll all die. Slowly. I wonder who you’ll beg for first.”

The rage flares, hot and sudden, giving me a moment of clarity.

Then something else-a sound.

Tap.

Tap.

Tap.

A stick. Hitting the ground in a slow, rhythmic beat.

I know that sound.

Gods, I know that sound.

The hairs on my arms rise. My senses sharpen. The fog lifts just a little more.

My mind reels back-

To the day Lady Celestia came to have me arrested... and the man at her side.

Jacks uncle

With his dead eyes.

And his twisted leg . The same one he tapped against the ground just like this.

And the worst part?

The way he looked at my necklace that day-like it was the only thing that mattered. He was absolutely obsessed.

“Oh,” I whisper, the horror finally settling into my bones. “It’s you.”

He chuckles in the corner.

* “Yes,” he says, and I can hear the smile in his voice. “I told you we’d meet again, Kali.”

A beat.

“Now... let’s try this again. Where is the necklace?”

When Fury called Jack’s uncle the worst kind of monster, I’d shrugged it off. Told myself I wasn’t scared.

Guess I was a damn fool:

Even Jack had rarely spoken about him-and when he did, the way his jaw clenched every time was enough to tell me everything I needed to know.

But I wanted to believe it was just history talking. That maybe this old man was just a bitter relic, clinging to a grudge.

But now?

Now I see the truth.

He’s worse than a monster.

He’s calculated evil in flesh and blood.

But instead of crumbling under the weight of fear like he clearly expected... I start to laugh. It starts small—a soft scoff-and then bursts out of me in uncontrollable waves. I throw my head back, eyes still squeezed shut against the blinding light above, and laugh so hard that tears slip from the corners of my eyes. It’s not from the pain or the brightness in this hellhole of a room or the ropes cutting into my skin.

No.

It’s the ridiculousness of it all.

“Gods,” I wheeze, trying to catch my breath. You’re even dumber than I thought.”

Silence.

I hear him shift in the room. I can't see his face, but I don't need to. The tension in the air says it all. He's pissed, I can feel his irritation crackling around me like static.

It's delicious.

"I asked you a question," he says through clenched teeth. "Where is the damn necklace?"

I snort, tilting my head slightly, though my wrists are still tied tight to this goddamn chair.

"Are you blind, old man? When you kidnapped me, did you not take five damn seconds to look at my neck? Or were you too busy monologuing like a villain in a bad play?"

I pause, then snap, "I don't. Fucking. Have it."

Silence.

He moves-just a step-but the shift in pressure is immediate, like a storm cloud crawling closer.

Then, a slow inhale. His tone drops, low and dark.

"Watch your tone, little girl," he growls. "If you value your tongue, you'd better keep it in check. Cutting it off and mounting it on the wall as a warning would mean nothing to me."

My body goes rigid. A cold shiver rolls down my spine, despite the heat pressing in from the lights. He's not bluffing. I can feel it.

This man would slice me up without blinking.

Still, I swallow hard and square my shoulders, even though my body is still sluggish from whatever poison he injected me with.

"Tell me where it is," he snaps.

"I told you," I say, forcing the tremor from my tone, "I don't have it. But.. if you untie me—" I shift slightly, testing the ropes, "-I can go get it for you. Bring it back all nice and wrapped up. Just... let me go."

This time, it's his turn to laugh—a dry, humourless, cold sound that scrapes across my nerves like rusted metal.

"Do you think I was born yesterday?" he sneers. "Do I look like a fool to you? Like I'd just let you walk out of here, run straight to Jack, and cry about how I've been a very bad uncle?"

"I won't tell him," I snap, injecting just the right amount of desperation into my voice. "You can have me watched—I don't care. Put a damn collar on me if it helps you sleep at night. Assign someone to follow me, monitor me-whatever you want. But if you want that necklace, I'm the only one who can get it."

He hisses in irritation. "You won't be living here, alive, or seeing Jack again."

That hits harder than I expect. My heart drops like a stone, and I swallow hard.

I blink rapidly, forcing back tears-not from laughter this time, but from fear. Real, bone-deep fear.

“Why?” My voice cracks despite my efforts to stay strong. “Why are you doing this to me? I’ve never done anything to you. Is this about Jack? Is that it? You’re using me to get back at him?”

“If it were just about revenge,” he says slowly, like he’s explaining something to a child, “I would’ve killed you long ago. Believe me, that would’ve been easier-and not the first time I’ve done it. But unfortunately for you... you’re more valuable alive. For now. I do plan to kill you eventually.”

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I clench my jaw as he keeps talking.

“So tell me, Kali. Where is it? Or should we play a little guessing game?” he asks, his tone smug. “Because I think I already know where you stashed it. There’s only one place it could be-Jack’s house. The home he built for the two of you.”

I go still, saying nothing.

He chuckles-dark, triumphant. “Ah... silence. The worst kind of liar. I love when people give themselves away so easily.”

My nails dig into my palms as I hear him begin to circle me, the sharp tap of his cane echoing with each step.

“Tell me where exactly you hid it,” he says, voice coated in venom. “No need to beat around the bush-unless, of course, you don’t value your mother’s head.”

Rage explodes in my chest.

“You’re disgusting,” I spit. “You really think threatening me with my mother and the people I love is going to get you what you want?”

He doesn’t answer. He doesn’t have to. The silence says everything.

I take a shaky breath, forcing myself to stay smart. My wolf is still silent-out of reach. Whatever he injected me with is still working, still dulling our bond. But I can feel her-faint, flickering like dying embers. I just need more time.

So I play along.

"If I tell you exactly where the necklace is," I say, lifting my head toward his voice, "are you going to send your little mutt Khoas to fetch it? Pretend he's the loyal beta, like he has this whole time?" There's a beat of silence. A flicker of surprise.

Bingo.

"How long, huh?" press, my voice rising. "How long has he been spying for you? How many years have you had him planted, watching Jack, pretending to be his ally? You really think Jack won't find out?"

He exhales sharply, annoyed.

"You give him too much credit," the bastard replies, his tone curling with disdain. "My nephew has spent so long wallowing in his hatred for me, he hasn't even noticed the knife pressed at his back all along."

He chuckles-this time with pride, his voice oozing satisfaction.

"He thinks he's in control. Thinks he's clever. But he's been a pawn all along-moving exactly how I want him to. And now you-his mate- you walked right into the final piece."

I let out a bitter laugh and shake my head.

"So this was all a setup. Khoas... marking Jasmine, knowing I'd come for her. You knew I'd try to play the hero."

He doesn't deny it.

"You planned this."

I can almost feel his smile.

"Very good, Kali. You're smarter than you look."

I smile too, but there's no warmth in it.

"And you're even more pathetic than I thought," I sneer. "Lurking in the shadows, pulling strings like a coward... all for a necklace you can't even touch. You really are a bastard." He steps in closer-too close-the sharp tang of cloves and blood filling my nose just before his breath brushes my cheek.

"Oh, but I will touch it," he whispers lethally. "And when I do, you'll wish you had died before ever crossing me. So let's stop pretending you have a choice in this, Kali. You're going to talk... or I'll start getting creative. And believe me, I've had centuries to perfect the art of pain."

I wet my cracked lips, forcing my expression to stay neutral even as my heart pounds so loudly it echoes in my ears.

Stall. You have to stall him. Just buy time...

If Jack realizes I'm missing, he'll come for me-

"Fuck," I whisper under my breath, the word slipping out before I can stop it.

He won't be able to find me. I don't bear his mark.

God, I wish I did.

Now I'm trapped-alone-and paying the price for every time I pushed him away."Fine," I rasp at last, voice hoarse. "I'll tell you. But why are you so obsessed with that necklace, anyway?" I squint against the harsh overhead light, trying and failing to see him clearly. All I can make out is a looming shadow pacing back and forth like a restless predator.

"It's just a stupid necklace," I add. "Fake. Trust me."

He growls—a low, guttural, vicious sound that makes the hairs on my neck stand on end. He knows I'm lying.

"You fucking bitch," he snarls. "That necklace isn't fake. It vanished nearly a decade ago. Do you have any idea how long I've been hunting for it? How many people I've tortured, killed, bribed-ruined-just to find that damn thing?!"

A chill runs down my spine as I picture the trail of destruction he's left in his obsession. But that fury—that slip in his composure?

That's my way in.

"Are you doing all this because of the Alpha King as his personal lapdog?" I ask, keeping my tone calm, baiting him. "Or is this your own selfish little crusade?"

He stills. And the way he hesitates—just slightly—is all the answer I need.

"The necklace you're so desperate to claim, looks exactly like the one the Alpha Queen was rumored to own. So if you're so sure mine isn't fake... that can only mean one thing."

I pause, watching his shadow.

"It is hers. The Alpha Queen's. So tell me—why would someone like you want something that belonged to her?" The silence that follows cuts deeper than any blade. And then, his voice slithers through the air—low, venomous, and seething with rage.

I know I struck a nerve.

"I know what you're doing," he sneers. "You're stalling. Hoping your wolf will come and save you."

My heart skips as he chuckles—sound that's sick and gleeful.

"She's not coming," he says. "Not now. Maybe not ever."

I freeze.

"You know what I injected you with?" he continues casually. "It's called Neruthium Veil-a poison bred from the roots of the Bloodshade tree, soaked in silver, enchanted with death chants. The most vicious substance known in our world. It severs the soul from the beast."

No.

No.

My breathing quickens. I still can't feel her... but she's not gone. She can't be.

"She's quiet," I whisper, more to myself than to him. "But she's not gone."

"You think that?" he scoffs. "Keep dreaming. Soon, you'll join her in death. But before you do.." He steps closer again, and I brace myself as his breath brushes against my cheek. "I don't mind giving you a little truth as a parting gift."

"Since you know it belonged to the Alpha Queen," he continues with mockery, "then surely you understand its worth. What it represents."

I nod quickly, clinging to his every word, desperate to keep him talking."Oh, you foolish girl," he spits. "You had no idea what you were carrying. You strutted around with it like it was some cheap piece of costume jewelry-something you'd find at a market stall. Pathetic."

He laughs again, the sound jagged and unstable, echoing off the walls.

He begins pacing once more, his cane striking the floor with a steady, unnerving rhythm-crack, crack, crack.

"You want to know why I want it?" His voice darkens. "With that necklace in my possession, Kali, I could buy power. Rule kingdoms.

Raise armies. I crush that smug bastard nephew of mine and reduce him to ash. Even the Alpha King wouldn't dare touch me. Not with what that necklace means to him. To her. He'd fall to his knees and offer me everything he owns."

seize the moment and push further, my voice softening, almost uncertain. "Then why me? Why did I have it?"

His footsteps halt, and I take it as a sign—an opening.

"Was my mother... someone close to the Alpha Queen? Maybe her personal maid who hid the necklace away?" I ask hesitantly. "But... she wouldn't have given something so important to just a servant, would she?"

I can't see him, but I feel the stillness in his shadow. And I know-he's hiding something. Something I haven't yet pieced together.

Then his voice slithers through the darkness. "Do you remember anything about your childhood?" he asks, almost playfully but remember the first time I met him-how he asked about my parents during the party at Blood Fang.

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"You're not originally from the Red Night Pack, are you?" he adds. "You were adopted."

My blood runs cold. He knows. He knows something about my real parents.

I swallow and nod slowly. "Yes. I was adopted. But... I don't remember anything before that."

He claps his hands once and laughs-truly laughs, this time. A full, bone-chilling sound that echoes through the room and makes my stomach turn.

"That's good," he says, delighted. "That's perfect. You don't need to know a damn thing."

My heart leaps into my throat. I open my mouth to respond-

But he cuts me off.

"In fact," he says breezily, "don't bother telling me where the necklace is anymore. I'll find it myself."

His voice twists into something childlike and cruel.

"Hide and seek was always my favorite."

The moment the words leave his mouth, something sharp pierces the side of my neck. Pain blooms instantly-hot and brutal.

"AHH!" I scream, my body convulsing violently against the restraints of the chair.

I feel it before it happens-his boot slams into the chair, sending me toppling over. I crash to the ground with a sickening thud, my shoulder slamming against the cold, hard floor. My head spins from the impact."No need to scream," he murmurs above me, his voice a soft, mocking drawl. "No one can hear you. No one's coming."

"HELP!" I cry out, my voice ragged. "Jack-!"

"Keep screaming," he taunts. "It makes it more fun."

My ears are ringing now. My vision blurs.

But then-I hear it.

Footsteps.

Not his.

Heavy. Steady. Getting closer.

He hears it too. i feel the way he straightens, how his breath hitches slightly.

Someone's coming.

Jack?

Please, let it be Jack.

My heart pounds violently against my ribs, and I cling to consciousness

-grasping for that faint flicker of hope.

But just when I think I hear salvation in those approaching footsteps-just when my trembling heart dares to hope it's Jack-

The scent hits me.

No.

Oh, Moon Goddess, no.

That scent-sickeningly sweet, drenched in roses and poison. I know it too well. I'll never forget it.

And then I hear her voice.

"You didn't kill'her, did you?" Lady Celestia's whiny tone grates against my ears like nails dragging across bone. "You promised you'd give her to me alive. I already sent a letter to Daddy asking for her heart. I can't wait to see him stab her and present it to me. Best birthday present ever!"

She claps her hands like a child receiving a toy.

A sob rises in my throat, but I swallow it down.

Not her. Not that delusional parasite. She's part of this too?

Jack's uncle growl rumbles through the room like thunder cracking overhead. I feel his anger vibrate in the floor beneath me, even as my head pounds and my limbs grow numb.

"Do I need to remind you never to question me?" he snarls. "Or should I show you what I'm capable of? You play the Alpha King's daughter, Celestia, but that doesn't really make you one."

There's a pause.

A sharp, terrified inhale.

And then, just like at the Blood Fang party, I hear her whimper. A pitiful, breathy little sound, like a pup with its tail between its legs.

“What... what do you mean by that?” she stammers, her voice shrinking, her confidence crumbling.

I can feel it-her mask is cracking but why?

There’s a beat of silence before he barks coldly, “Get out. And come back only after you’ve gotten your father’s approval—if you want herhead or her heart.”

Silence again. Then the shuffle of heels against concrete as she scurries away like the coward she is.

“I will get it,” she spits over her shoulder. “Daddy will grant me anything I want.”

Her footsteps grow fainter and fainter, until they vanish completely.

And just when I think I can exhale-just when I think maybe she’s gone for good- his presence returns.

Closer.

His breath ghosts over my cheek, hot and repulsive. His voice drops to a whisper, every word laced with venom and cruel amusement.

“You’ll finally be reuniting with your father,” he murmurs, the edge of a smile in his voice. “It’s unfortunate you’ll be dying at his hands.”

My heart stops.

And then

Darkness.

No thoughts.

No pain.

No light.

Just endless, suffocating black.

Normally, it takes a solid four damn hours to reach the Alpha King’s palace—even at full speed. But today, somehow, my wolf, who’s been whining and cursing me out since the second we left the Red Night Pack, managed to shave it down to three.

Three hours.

It's insane.

Three relentless hours of tearing through forests, leaping over rivers, crashing past startled wildlife, and ignoring every bone-deep warning my body tries to send me.

Not that I'm complaining.

I'm a man in love. The sooner I get this ridiculous "fine" sorted for taking down a corrupt power structure to protect Kali, the sooner I can get back to her-back to where I belong.

But I won't lie-every mile I put between us gnaws at me. I hate this distance.

And I regret not marking her.

Deeply.

Without that mark, I have no way of knowing where she is, if she's okay, or if she even made it safely to Blood Fang with her mom. No connection. No bond.

Sure, Fury and a few warriors are with them for protection, but even the natural link between Fury and me is starting to fade with the distance. And without the mate bond... I'm completely in the dark.

If I'd just marked her, we'd be connected-heart, soul, mind. But something about marking her in the middle of that cursed territory didn't feel right. Sacred things deserve sacred moments.

Still... the regret claws at my chest.

By the time we reach the tall hedges shielding the rear of the palace grounds, my wolf is practically foaming at the mouth with frustration, snarling in my head like he wants to tear me apart from the inside out.

My muscles scream, my skin burns from the sudden shift, but I push through the pain. I grab the spare clothes we always keep hidden and throw them on, brushing the dirt from my pants before that damn mutt starts complaining again.

"This is all your fault," he growls for what has to be the hundredth time, pacing in my mind. "You should've marked mate-even if we didn't mate her-then at least I'd be at peace. I could talk to her. Feel her."

I sigh, running a hand through my damp hair. "We will mark her," I murmur. "Once we return home. And then we'll make love to her."

Properly. In our bed. With candles and everything. Romantic as hell."

That earns a bark of disbelief, like I just said we'd be dancing under the moonlight to love songs.

"Since when do you do romantic shit?"

I smirk, adjusting my collar. “Since I fell in love with Kali.”

He makes a gagging sound so loud it echoes in my skull. “I don’t even know who you are anymore.”

I roll my eyes. “Don’t act like you’re not whipped too.”

“Tch.” He doesn’t answer, and I take the chance to cut the link between us before he can start nagging again.

By the time I step into the palace courtyard, the scent of burning incense assaults my nose. The air shifts-thick with power, royalty, and something older than time. But I don’t flinch.

Never have.

I march through the front entrance like I own the place. The guards straighten, eyes wide in surprise as I pass. Clearly, they weren’t expecting me.

Weird

I push the thought aside. The palace is massive-built to intimidate.

And yeah—it probably works on most.

But not me.

I walk tall, my steps echoing with authority, radiating the Alpha energy I was born with.

Then I enter the grand hall—and immediately stop cold.

The raised platform at the far end, the one with the three thrones—especially the central one, made of black iron and carved with moons and wolves—is empty.

That’s the Alpha King’s throne.

He’s always there.

That’s where he spends most of his days-holding court, hearing petitions, and issuing orders. I’ve never come here without finding him seated like a god among mortals. His absence feels wrong...like a sword without its blade.

Where the hell is he?

I frown just as a footstep behind me makes me spin. A palace guard steps forward and offers a slight bow. “The Alpha King is in his personal chambers, Alpha Jack. He’s resting... and not receiving anyone at the moment.”

What?

I blink, then scoff, temper flaring. “What the fuck are you talking about? He summoned me. He asked me to come.”

The guard blinks like I’ve just grown horns.

“I wasn’t informed-”

I don’t wait for him to finish as I storm past him, following the strongest scent in the palace—the Alpha King’s. It’s sharp, deep, and ancient. Easy to trace. I hear guards yelling behind me, trying to catch up, warning me off, but I ignore every damn one of them.

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“The Alpha King isn’t in the mood-”

I shove open a thick, arched door carved with runes and symbols of the old bloodlines—his office.

And step inside.

What I see brings me to a standstill.

The Alpha King sits in a massive chair behind his desk, shoulders hunched forward like the weight of the world finally crushed him into that chair and forced him to bow. He looks... tired.

No, more than that.

He doesn’t look like himself.

The usual aura of untouchable power—the kind that feels immortal, invincible—is dulled. He’s always been the Unshakable One, a titan among men. But now? His face is shadowed, the lines deeper than I remember. For the first time in my life, he doesn’t radiate indomitable strength.

He looks aged.

His shoulders, broad and powerful, slump under a weight I don’t understand. His eyes, sharp and emerald, don’t carry their usual fire.

He doesn’t just look tired.

He looks worn. Ageing.

I swallow hard. The Alpha King doesn’t do tired. He doesn’t do old.

His gaze meets mine, and I swear, a flicker of surprise crosses his face.

It flashes so fast I almost miss it—but it was there. He wasn't expecting me but that's not what shakes me the most.

It's his eyes.

Those piercing emerald eyes that suddenly feel like a memory crawling through my brain, trying to resurface. Where have I seen them?

They're so... familiar

And then—like a bolt of lightning—Kali's face rushes to the front of my mind.

Her eyes.

Those same eyes.

No.

I chuckle under my breath, shaking my head.

I must be losing it. Missing her so badly, I'm seeing her in the Alpha King now. Imagining her reflection in the eyes of the most feared man in the realm.

It's absurd. Impossible.

But still...

The feeling won't go away.

Then his voice slices through the fog of my thoughts.

"Why are you here?" he asks, arching a tired brow, but there's a steel edge under his tone. "I didn't call for you... or are you here to finally accept my proposal and marry my daughter?"

My jaw ticks. Here we go again.

He leans back in his chair, lacing his fingers over his stomach, eyes gleaming with the faintest hint of amusement. "I mean, come on. No one in their right mind would pass up a golden opportunity to become the next Alpha King..."

I scoff, the bitter sound leaving my throat before I can stop it.

"Cut the crap. You sent a letter," I snap. "A letter that reached me in the Red Night territory. Said I was being fined for taking over the pack."

That I violated treaty law and had to report here immediately or face harsher consequences. That's why I'm here."

He blinks.

Frowns.

Then slowly, very slowly, shakes his head. "What?"

I narrow my eyes. "Don't act confused. You said I violated peace between packs and that you were issuing punishment"

"I didn't send any fucking letter," he growls suddenly, rising to his feet.

The force of his aura expands, crackling through the room like a coming storm. "Why the hell would I send you a letter at the Red Night when your territory is Blood Fang? And you know I don't meddle in pack wars and politics unless innocent pack members are dying."

His emerald eyes blaze with authority-but behind them, there's something else.

Confusion.

Genuine confusion.

And that sends a warning bell screaming in my head and sets my nerves on fire. I reach into my jacket, fingers curling around the crisp parchment Foxy had handed me before I left. I toss the letter on his desk like it's a cursed artifact.

"Then explain that."

He snatches it up.

The moment his eyes drop to the seal, something changes. The color drains from his face.

His thumb brushes the thick red wax-his royal crest embedded perfectly in the center. There's no mistaking it. No forgery could mimic that exact mark. The damn thing even pulses faintly with residual magic.

His lips part, then shut again.

When he finally speaks, his voice is tight. Cold.

"This isn't from me..." he murmurs, staring at the letter like it might explode. "I never wrote this. I never ordered any letter to be sent to you. Whoever impersonated me committed high treason... That's a crime punishable by death."

Something clicks.

One name barrels into my head like a train.

I grind my teeth so hard my jaw aches. "My uncle..." Chapter 107

His gaze flicks up sharply.

I don't wait for him to speak. "He's your royal messenger, isn't he? He delivers your personal letters. That means he could pull something like this and make it look official."

The Alpha King squints, rubbing his chin thoughtfully. "Your uncle doesn't have access to my personal office. Nor to the royal seal. That's kept under magical protection only accessible to me- and any royal by blood. My queen is out of the question.." He trails off, visibly reluctant to speak about her. "My daughter, Celestia. But she-"

He frowns, shaking his head. "No. She wouldn't. I doubt she'd go so far."

"Wouldn't she?" I mutter, bitterness lacing my words.

"Where is he?

Where's my uncle now?"

The Alpha King shrugs, clearly losing interest. "Why should I know where a messenger is when I have bigger problems to deal with? He could be out running deliveries. Or maybe crawling under some rock he belongs under."

I ball my fists at my sides, my nails digging crescent moons into my palms.

That son of a bitch.

He played me.

Dangled the King's authority over my head just to get me out of Blood Fang. Away from Kali.

But why?

A sick feeling curls in my gut."I should've killed him when I had the chance..." I mutter under my breath.

The Alpha King raises a brow. "TU make sure to scold him," he says dryly, clearly unimpressed. "If it turns out he's the one behind this... prank."

"Don't worry, Your Majesty," I growl. "It'll be my pleasure to make him pay."

"Thanks for your time. If you'll excuse me..." I grit my teeth, fighting the rising panic in my chest as I turn toward the door. "I have a mate waiting for me."

I reach the door, the weight of wasted time pressing heavily on my shoulders, when the Alpha King's voice stops me.

"Speaking of mate.."

I stop, jaw tightening.

"Jack, since you're here, maybe the Moon Goddess sent you to me."

My fingers curl tighter around the doorknob. I don't turn around yet." What is it?" I ask, keeping my voice level, even though irritation claws at the edges of my tone.

I feel like I'm on fire, seething. My time. My mate. Wasted. All because of a forged letter and a power-hungry uncle who's still breathing.

I hear the Alpha King step away from his desk and approach. "This is a royal favor, Jack. You can't refuse it."

That makes me spin.

"Try me."

But he's not offended. No, his face is serious. Grave, even.

"I need you to really think about what I'm about to ask. Take Lady Celestia as your second wife and mate."

I blink.

"Come again, Your Majesty?" The words rip from my throat like a growl. "I've already told you- Twant nothing to do with your-"

"It will be on paper," he cuts in quickly, holding up a hand. "You won't have to touch her or be involved with her in any way. No bond, no bed, no obligations... nothing beyond the title. I just need you to assume the role of Alpha King temporarily. I've been thinking about this for weeks, and you're the only one I trust not to let power corrupt him. You're the only one I believe can protect this kingdom without being blinded by selfish greed. I'm asking this not as her father-but as your king."

I stare at him.

He's... desperate.

And the Alpha King doesn't do desperate.

"Celestia's your blood," I say slowly. "She's next in line. She should be Alpha Queen. Let her rule."

He lets out a long, pained sigh and rubs a hand over his face like the words physically hurt him.

"My daughter..." he starts, then stops again. "Celestia is still a child in too many ways. She makes rash decisions based on emotion. She isn't ready to lead. Truthfully, I don't know if she was ever meant to lead.

But she's all I have left. My only surviving child. I can't strip her of her future. I have to give her what she asks for-while I still can."

Submission is Not My Style – Chapter 65

I swallow down a sharp breath. Something in his voice... it aches.

“What you’re asking is impossible,” I begin, but he cuts me off again.

“Think about it, Jack. I’m not asking for forever. A year. Two, tops. Just until she’s ready. I’ll put it in writing. You’ll still lead Blood Fang, this will just be a royal role. No real marriage, no Luna bond. Nothing changes with your true mate.”

I study him. “Are you alright?” I ask at last. He hesitates for a long moment. Then finally speaks.

“Since I am asking you for a life-changing favour...i think you deserve to know a little bit of truth about why I am asking you to become the next alpha king,” he sighs tiredly. “My Queen... my mate...” His eyes drop to the floor, then slowly close. It’s the first time he is opening up about her.

“She’s dying, Jack. Slowly. Since we lost our first daughter, she’s never fully recovered. Her body’s here, but her spirit left long ago. I need to be with her. Not as Alpha King. Not as a leader. Just as her mate. I want to spend what time we have left... by her side.”

The desperation in his words settles on me like a storm cloud. I nod once. Quietly. I’ve never seen the Queen. People whispered she was dead. She never appeared in public. I thought she was a myth... a ghost. Because for as long as I can remember, the throne she was meant to sit on has always been empty.

But none of that matters now because his pain is real. Before I can respond, the door slams open.

“Daddy!” a shrill voice squeals. She nearly skips inside, long black hair falls in waves bouncing, eyes wide and manic with excitement. “Did you grant my request? Tell me you did!”

The Alpha King exhales like he’s been holding his breath for years.”

Celestia-”

Her eyes land on me.

She freezes.

Like a thief caught in the act.

The excitement drains from her face, replaced by something sharp and calculating.

I gaze at the Alpha King. “Pll think about it,” I say tightly. “But don’t get your hopes up.”

He nods silently. There’s nothing more to say.

I turn to leave again, but fingers clutch my wrist.

I know that touch before I even look.

Celestia.

“Are you really going to ignore me like I don’t exist?” she asks, her voice soft but venomous.

I clench my jaw. Hard. My wolf growls inside me, eager for blood, and my patience hangs by a frayed thread as I stop myself from ripping her damn hair out by the roots.

But I don’t.

Because of her father.

Because of his pain.”Don’t touch me,” I say coldly.

She blinks, then frowns. “Why are you being so stubborn? Do I really have to get rid of her before you accept me and see only me as the one meant for you?”

That’s it.

I shove her hand off my arm, not gently, and storm out of the room.

The door slams shut behind me with a satisfying thud but I don’t get far before her voice echoes behind it.

“Did you at least see what I want for my birthday tomorrow?” Celestia is whining now. I can practically hear the stomp of her foot.

“What you’re asking is basically impossible,” her father sighs, sounding exhausted.

“Then I’ll kill myself!” she shrieks.

I roll my eyes so hard they nearly get stuck. “Fucking ridiculous,” I mutter, walking away from the chaos.

I have more important things to focus on like Kali, my mate.

If the Goddess is kind, she’ll be home-wet, willing, and ready to be claimed.

It takes another three goddamn hours to reach the pack, and of course, my wolf never stops clawing at the inside of my chest-dragging us forward by the throat the entire time. He grows more restless and agitated with every passing minute, increasingly impatient and pissed off, though he still refuses to tell me why.

I’ve asked him over and over again, what the hell is wrong with you?

But all get is growls and the sharp snap of teeth like a rabid beast.

I try to reason with myself. It's probably the frustration of being away from Kali for too long. He's furious we wasted time dealing with the Alpha King's bullshit when we should've been home, wrapped around our mate.

The second I cross the territory line, I don't slow down. I shut off every mind-link trying to reach me-Fury, pack warriors, even the damn omegas. I don't care who it is. I block them all. There's only one person I want right now.

Kali.

I rush through the pack grounds, ignoring the bowed heads and startled glances as I head straight to the house. My boots hit the porch hard, and I shove the door open, calling out instinctively, "Kali?"

Silence.

I inhale deeply, searching for her scent-but it's faint. Stale. Like she hasn't been here in hours. That alone nearly sends me into a panic. She was supposed to be here. Safe. Waiting. Home.

So why the hell isn't her scent fresh?

I told Fury to make sure she got back safely. My growl rumbles low in my throat as my eyes scan the living room. But then another scent hits me-jasmine-and it's everywhere.

Lingering heavily in the air, like she's been pacing, crying... something.

I round the corner, and there she is-curled in the corner of the living room like a child, her arms wrapped around her legs.

"Jasmine?" I breathe, confused. What the hell is she doing here? Not in her secret treehouse, not in her mate's home, but my house?

She slowly lifts her head to look at me like she's trying to convince herself I'm not some ghost or monster. Her eyes are red and glassy, like she's been crying for hours. Her lips tremble.

"Jack?" she whispers. Barely a sound. Her voice is shaky-unsure, broken.

I step inside slowly, my brows knit together. "Are you okay? What happened?

She lets out a small whimper and hides her face again. Her body is visibly shaking.

That's when I see it-the mark.

A mate mark. Fresh. Right on the side of her neck.

Khoas' mark.

I blink in surprise, my first instinct relief.

“You’re finally marked,” I say, trying to smile-though it doesn’t quite reach my eyes. Deep down, I silently wish it were Kali wearing my mark. “It’s about time... huh. Congratulations, Jas.”

I chuckle awkwardly, rubbing the back of my neck.

“Where the hell is that idiot mate of yours anyway? You two should be glued together by now.” Still no answer. Another small sound escapes her throat-almost like a sob-and she curls in tighter, burying her face into her hands, her shoulders trembling.

“Hey... are you crying?” I ask softly. “Is this... tears of joy or...?”

Again, no answer.

I take a slow step forward, heart clenching at the sight of her. Maybe it’s just overwhelming. Beautiful, even. I make a mental note not to leave Kali’s side once I mark her—if this is how it hits women, I’ll stay with her. Always.

I’m about to crouch beside Jasmine to offer her comfort when the front door slams open behind me.

“Kali?” I ask, standing straight and spinning around with a grin that drops the moment I realize it’s not her.

It’s Fury.

And he looks like he’s seen a ghost—or worse, like death breathing down his neck. His eyes wild. Chest heaving like he ran the whole way here. His face is pale-pale—which makes no damn sense for someone who didn’t even flinch when I once threatened to snap his neck.

“Alpha...” he breathes, stumbling in.

A chill crawls down my spine. “Where’s Kali?” I demand.

“About that, Alpha...” he starts, but his voice cracks.

My blood begins to boil.

He gulps hard. “The Luna-she arrived before us. When I reached the house, I couldn’t find her.”

I take a slow step toward him, frowning deeply, staring at him like he’s grown two heads. “What the fuck are you saying right now? That doesn’t even make sense. How the hell did she arrive before you? You were supposed to escort her and her mother back safely. That was a direct order.”

“Her mother stayed behind at Red Night. Said she had unfinished business. But Kali... we left together. All of us shifted into wolf form.

But...”

“But what, Fury?” I snarl. “Start making sense.”

He swallows. "She... outran us."

I freeze.

"You're telling me an untrained female outran my warriors in wolf form?"

He hesitates, glancing toward Jasmine before looking back at me." Alpha... she's not ordinary." He shakes his head slowly. "Her wolf-fuck, I've never seen anything like it. Massive. Like something out of a legend. Before we could even process what we were seeing, she vanished. Just disappeared into the trees. Like... like she stepped through space. I swear to the Moon Goddess, Alpha, she was faster than anything we could track."

Silence.

Then I let out a laugh. Loud. Harsh. Disbelieving. It echoes off the walls, bordering on hysterical, as if something inside me has finally snapped.

"Do you hear yourself?" I growl between bitter laughter, bending slightly with one hand on my knee, my eyes burning with fury.

"You actually expect me to believe that a weak, untrained she-wolf outran an elite team of warriors? What are you high on-wolfsbane?"

I straighten up, my voice turning low and dangerously cold. "You-the same wolf who once ran fifty miles through enemy territory without so much as breaking a sweat—you're telling me she outran you? Did you hit your head on a fucking tree?"

His face flushes red as he bows his head, the scent of shame and fear rolling off him in waves.

I take a long, slow breath-just enough to stop myself from punching him square in the jaw.

"So where's my mate now, Fury?"

He swallows hard, his Adam's apple bobbing. "I don't know. I've searched everywhere-the borders, the woods, the training fields, even the riverbank. There's no sign of her."

The silence that follows is colder than death. A vicious, gut-twisting dread starts to take over me.

Then my sister's voice breaks through the tension-soft, shaky. "Jack..."

I think you should believe him—"

I whip around, fury flaring in my chest as she stands from the floor." Not now," I snap, glaring at her sharply. "We'll talk later. Go find Khoas and tell him to get his ass to me immediately. He's got some explaining to do, because I swear to the Moon Goddess, if he doesn't—"

Jasmine flinches but nods quickly, wiping her cheeks before hurrying out the door. 1

I turn back to Fury, eyes cold and hard. "You. With me. Now."

He follows silently, his gaze fixed on the floor.

“Where are we going, Alpha?” he asks quietly.

“To the pack doctor,” I growl. “Because clearly, your damn head needs to be checked.” And with that, we storm out of the house—me, furious and confused, and Fury, walking beside me like a man on death row.

Submission is Not My Style – Chapter 66

We’re barely a few feet from the hospital when a warrior I recognise from the border patrol comes barreling toward me like the whole damn pack is on fire.

“Alpha!” he pants, skidding to a stop. “There was—there was a giant wolf—no, a beast—roaming the pack. It caused a panic. It’s like nothing we’ve ever seen before. Maybe a hybrid? We should hunt it down and kill it, Alpha.”

squint at him, trying to place his name through the haze of my growing migraine. His breath reeks of something fermented.

Of course.

I sigh, pinching the bridge of my nose. “John,” I say slowly, “you didn’t quit drinking on duty, did you? Even after I warned you that if I caught you again, you were done?”

His eyes drop to the dirt, shoulders folding in like a guilty pup. I don’t need his answer. My nose does the work.

“Out of my fucking way,” I growl, shoving past him. “You’re fired.

Demoted to omega. Maybe scrubbing piss off floors will finally sober your ass up.”

I mutter under my breath, more to myself than anyone. “Everyone’s losing their dama minds today...”

And speaking of losing minds—mine is already hanging by a thread with every second Kali isn’t by my side. This entire day feels like a nightmare I can’t wake up from.

I finally do the one thing I’ve avoided since stepping foot back in this place—I unlock the mindlink.

Big mistake. The flood hits like a wave.

“Alpha, we saw a beast shift into a woman!”

“She didn’t lose her clothes—it was magical!”

“It went into the Alpha’s house-Is that your Luna?”

I clutch my temples, breathing hard as the voices overlap in a chorus of hysteria. They all say the same thing. Over and over. And that alone tells me – it must be true. They can’t all be lying... right?

But it’s driving me insane.

Kali? A beast? The way they’re describing her—it’s like she’s something extraordinary. Something out of myth. A creature on par with the Alpha King himself in wolf form. Powerful. Untouchable.

Fury, still behind me, says cautiously, “Alpha... I know it sounds insane.

But I swear on the Goddess, I saw it with my own two eyes. So did the others.....

I whirl on him.

“Fine,” I snap. “Let’s say for a damn second all of this is true. Let’s say she’s some kind of beast or legendary wolf or whatever the hell that was. Then where is she now? If Kali came back, why the hell isn’t she waiting for me at our home?”

Because until I see it with my own eyes, I don’t believe it.

Fury shrugs helplessly. “Her scent was in your house... but when I got there, your sister was the only one inside. Maybe she saw Kali.”

I curse under my breath, scrubbing a hand down my face. Guilt knots in my gut as I remember Jasmine’s face—pale, trembling, trying to speak to me. And I-fuck-I brushed her off like she was just background noise.”Let’s go to Jasmine’s,” I say, already following her scent trail. It leads deeper into the woods than I expect. We pass the tree line, thorns snagging at my pants, until we reach a small, isolated, weathered house that looks like one strong wind could bring down.

“This is where she lives? mutter, a sour taste in my mouth. I’ve never been here before. Never thought I had to. She was mated to my Beta-she was supposed to be taken care of.

1 knock, but the door creaks open on its own-hanging crookedly from broken hinges.

exchange a look with Fury, who’s suddenly gone stiff. No words. Just a silent agreement-we go in.

The place is a wreck. Walls cracked, floorboards creaking like they’re whispering secrets. My nose twitches at the heavy mix of jasmine’s scent and—

Khaos....

But what catches me off guard is the faint trace of Kali. She’d been here-hours ago, maybe. Why? What was she doing here?

A small whimper pulls me from my thoughts. Soft. Fragile. Jasmine.

I take a step forward-then freeze when a cold voice slices through the silence, coming from one of the back rooms.

“You think you can run forever?” Khaos. Low, venomous. “You bear my mark now. There’s no fucking place in this world you can hide from me again.” My blood chills.

What the hell is he saying to my sister? Like she’s some animal?

I know I should turn away. I made that law myself-never interfere in mated bonds. But his next words claw straight into my spine, lighting up every protective instinct I’ve buried deep.

“I own you,” he says darkly. “I can do whatever the fuck I want with you.

That mark means you’re mine. Forever. And no one can save you-not that beast of a Luna, not your Alpha brother. Just like he never has.”

My vision goes red.

Every breath tastes like blood and rage. And then, in that moment, Kali’s voice echoes in my head-low, broken, full of hurt:

“And all I can say is that you’ve not only failed as a mate... but also as a brother.”

I stumble back, like her words physically struck me.

She was right.

She was fucking right.

Kali had seen something I didn’t... something I refused to see. Despite knowing Jasmine for a shorter time, she looked-she cared. She felt what I didn’t bother to notice.

“Check on your sister,” she had said.

And what did I do?

I dismissed her. Shut her down with that same cold excuse I’ve used for years: I don’t get between mates. I’m such a goddamn fool.

And now... now I see it.

I remember warning Khaos long ago-take care of my sister. I remember the way he stiffened, like I’d caught him doing something.

And still-I ignored it.

A sick, cold fear twists in my chest.

No more.

I storm down the hallway, following the stench of rage, sweat, and Jasmine's fear like a bloodhound. The door is cracked open.

I push it wide-and freeze.

Jasmine's back is against the wall, her arms pinned, her bare body exposed, bruised, trembling-vulnerable in the worst way. Her whimpers slice through me like razors.

And Khaos?

That piece of shit is looming over her, tearing what's left of her clothes, about to-

My body moves before my mind can catch up. I forget every law I ever wrote.

I snarl-so deep and raw it tears at my throat-and launch forward, grabbing him by the neck and lifting him clean off the ground like he weighs nothing-nothing, despite being built like a boulder.

“JACK-!”

He barely gets my name out before I throw him across the room. He crashes into the wall with a sickening thud, dust falling from the ceiling as the plaster cracks behind him. I don't stop.

I charge him.

My fists connect with his face-again. Again. Again.

Crunch. Crack. Splatter.

His blood sprays with every punch, coating my knuckles, the walls, and the floor. I don't stop. I won't stop. Not after what he's done. Not after what/saw.

“You. Fucking. Monster!” I roar with each blow. “You hurt her? You hurt my sister!”

He grunts beneath me, laughing even through the broken teeth and blood.

“Jack-stop-please!” Jasmine's voice.

I don't listen.

Why the hell is she begging for him?

“Alpha!” Fury's voice now, hard and panicked. “She's passed out!”

My head snaps up.

Fury is cradling Jasmine in his arms, her body now wrapped in his jacket. She's limp. Pale. Bloodless.

She fainted.

My heart seizes.

I stumble back from Khaos, panting hard. My fists are shaking, stained with his blood. I glance at her again, her head lolling against Fury's chest like a broken doll. And then I remember—the mate bond. She can feel his pain.

I look down at Khaos.

That bastard is still smiling through the blood, one eye already swollen shut. His grin stretches, teeth stained red.

"Go on," he rasps. "Keep hitting me, Alpha. If you want your sister to die too."

Everything stops, and for the first time in my life, I feel helpless. Truly, sickeningly helpless.

I finally understand. Those weren't tears of joy Jasmine shed when she got that mark on her neck.

No

They were tears of pain. Pure, soul-crushing pain.

Because she hadn't been claimed by her mate... She'd been enslaved by a monster.

And the bitter truth?

I was the worst monster—for never seeing it.

Submission is Not My Style – Chapter 67

"Give her to me," I say, my voice barely human as I move.

Fury gently transfers her into my arms, and I hold her like she's made of glass. She's so small, see-through if I squeeze too hard, she'll disappear.

I turn to leave:

"What about him, Alpha?" Fury growls behind me.

I don't even glance at the bastard on the floor.

"Drag him along too," I hiss through clenched teeth. "But don't be gentle."

Fury nods once, and hear the satisfying thud of Khaos being grabbed.

I don't waste another second. I head straight for the hidden corridor-narrow, overgrown with vines, known only to those of Alpha blood. It leads directly to the private pack clinic, tucked deep into the forest like a secret we try to forget. No gossip. No eyes. No fucking questions.

I mindlink the doctor as I move, "Get to the private clinic. Now.

Discreetly."

He doesn't ask why. He just replies, "Already there."

By the time I burst through the doors, the doctor's standing ready.

"Put her down," he says quickly, moving to guide me to the bed.

I hesitate-just for a breath-before I set her down as gently as possible. Jasmine's skin is ghostly pale, her breathing shallow. Her body-still wrapped in Fury's jacket—is trembling, even unconscious.

I can't do this. I can't look at her like this. I storm out the door, and the second I'm in the hall, I slam my fist into the wall.

CRACK.

Pain flares through my hand. I don't stop. I do it again.

And again.

Until the drywall is smeared with blood and my knuckles split wide open. I deserve every blow, every drop of pain, every scream I failed to hear-every warning ignored.

I should've known.

I rest my forehead against the cracked wall, breathing hard, jaw clenched so tight it aches.

The door creaks open behind me. The doctor steps into the hallway, wiping his hands with a bloodied towel. His face is pale and grim.

"Alpha," he says carefully. "Physically, she'll recover. Her wolf is already healing the bruises and cuts. But..."

I lift my head slowly. "But what?"

He exhales. "It's the mark. That's what's draining her-emotionally, mentally. She was... forcefully marked. That kind of violation-it's not something a wolf just walks away from."

I feel the blood drain from my face.

"She didn't want him," I whisper, more to myself. "She never wanted to be his mate. That's why she stayed unmarked for so long."

The doctor nods once. "And now that the bond is formed against her will, it's poisoning her from the inside."

I'm still trying to process those words when Fury walks into the hallway, dragging Khaos by the arm like a broken rag doll. The bastard's nose is broken, jaw swollen, one eye purple and sealed shut.

And yet, somehow-he's fucking smiling.

I march up to him, grab his collar, and slam him against the wall hard enough to shake the clinic.

"You forcefully marked her?!" I snarl, my voice so low it vibrates through my chest.

He laughs, wheezing. "You should've heard her scream, Alpha..."

Begging me not to... crying that she was rejecting me." He grins, teeth bloodstained. "I had to punish her. Had to show her who she belongs to."

I snap.

I throw him to the ground, every bone in my body screaming for + vengeance.

"And you know the best part?" he groans, coughing. "I'll never accept her rejection. She'll always be mine. She'll carry my mark forever, and there's nothing you can do about it, Jack."

I rake a hand down my face, fingers trembling.

This bastard planned everything. He knew the bond would keep him alive. He knew I wouldn't kill him if it meant hurting her. He's hiding behind that bond like a coward. And Jasmine... she's the one paying for it.

The doctor speaks again, hesitant. "Alpha... if I start treatment on him, it may ease her condition. It'll help her recover faster."

My teeth clench so hard I taste blood.

I should let him rot in a cell. But Jasmine needs him alive.

"Do it," I bark. "Start the damn treatment."

The doctor nods and moves toward Khaos, who laughs again, like he's won.

"Fury," I grit out.

"Alpha?"

"Get five of our strongest warriors. I want them guarding him around the clock. No one lets him out of their sight. Lock him in a secured room. If he breathes too hard, I want to know."

“Yes, Alpha.”

I turn and head back into Jasmine’s room. Her breathing is steadier now, her frame curled under warm blankets. But she still looks fragile.

I sink down beside her bed.

My hand finds hers, trembling and cold.

She used to be the one who always smiled. Climbing trees, making up wild stories, dragging me to the treehouse even when I was too exhausted from training to move.

But I left her behind when I took the Alpha title. And now... this is what she’s become. What he turned her into.

My thoughts drift to Kali—and her faint scent that clung to Khaos’ house. I hadn’t paid much attention to it at first, not with Jasmine lying broken, but now...

Now it hits me like a slap of cold air.

Kali was there. She must’ve come back home to unexpectedly find Jasmine and see what that monster did. Maybe she confronted him. Maybe she didn’t wait for me because she couldn’t. Because she cared enough to act.

But if that’s true—if she did face him—where is she now?

My chest tightens. The Kali I knew, the one I.. miss—she wouldn’t just vanish. Not unless something went horribly wrong.

And now I can’t even beat the truth out of Khaos—not without putting

Jasmine through more hell.

A soft creak pulls me from my thoughts.

The door opens, and Fury steps in, wiping sweat from his brow. “Alpha, I’ve made sure ten of our strongest warriors are guarding him. He so much as blinks wrong, they’ll put him down.”

I nod faintly, giving him a tight, weary smile. Then I look back down at Jasmine. She’s still, too still. Her lashes are dark against her skin. She—sleeps like the dead. And it terrifies me.

Fury steps closer. “Alpha... what if we perform Drennoth-Sytha?”

The name hits like ice in my veins.

My body jerks as I turn to face him. “Are you insane?” I hiss, grabbing his arm and dragging him to the corner of the room like Jasmine might hear. “That’s black magic, Fury. That spell rips out her wolf. You’re asking me to destroy her.”

“It’s a suggestion, Alpha.” Fury’s jaw is tight. “It kills me too, knowing that bastard gets to keep breathing while she’s stuck suffering. But what other way is there?”

“I’ll isolate him. Lock him away forever. He won’t ever get to see her again.”

Fury shakes his head slowly. “You know that won’t work. You know what the mate bond does. What the mark does. She’ll want him. Her body will need him. She won’t be able to fight it.”

“I won’t let her go back to him,” I snap, more to myself than to Fury.” There has to be another way-”

“I’ll do the spell.”

Her voice is soft, raspy but it cuts through the air like a dagger.

I spin back to the bed, my heart catching in my throat. Jasmine’s eyes are open. Barely. But they’re open.

“Jas?” I rush to her, kneeling, grabbing her hand again. “Are you-are you in pain? I can call the doctor-”

“I’ve had worse, Jack.” Her lips twitch, not into a smile, but something bitter. “Pain is normal now.”

I flinch.

I’ve failed her.

” want to do the spell,” she repeats, firmer now.

“No.” I shake my head. “You don’t know what you’re asking. Jas, if you go through with this —your wolf-she’ll be gone. Forever.”

Jasmine’s eyes meet mine. There’s something hollow in them. Cold. “I’d rather lose my wolf than live one more second with his mark on me.

I’m already dead, Jack. I just haven’t stopped breathing yet.”

I shut my eyes, clenching my jaw, willing the tears not to fall. I want to scream. Want to rip Khoas apart. But this isn’t about me.

Fury clears his throat. “Alpha, you’ve forgotten the clause... if she ever falls in love again-and the man returns her feelings fully-if he marks her, she gets her wolf back.”

Jasmine snorts. “Yeah, well, that’ll never happen. I don’t want anyone.

Ever again.”

I nod slowly. "Fine," I whisper. "If this is what you want... it's the least I can do for you. As a brother who failed you."

Jasmine's gaze softens, just for a moment. "I'm doing this for Kali too," she murmurs. "She went to him to protect me. And now she's missing."

He hurt her—I know it."

My chest tightens again, but this time with fire.

I stand, straightening my shoulders. "Let's begin."

The room goes cold as I draw the ancient sigil across the wooden floor with ash and wolf's blood. The scent alone is enough to make me gag, but I push through. Jasmine stands in the center of the circle, wrapped in a blanket, face pale but set with grim determination.

"Once we start, there's no turning back," I tell her.

"I know," she says. "Do it."

I bite my tongue and kneel. Then I begin the chant.

"Xothi'en drah vel'sair... brekken mor'ta luh'ash..."

The words crawl like insects down my spine, thick and heavy, tasting like ash on my tongue. The air shifts—dark and oppressive—as shadows flicker around the room.

Jasmine grits her teeth, clutching her chest. Her knees buckle but she stays up.

"I reject you, Khoas Rydell," she gasps, voice raw and breaking. "As my mate. As my bond. I sever you from my soul, from my body, from my spirit. You are nothing to me." The lights flicker.

Then I see it—her wolf.

A glowing, silver form flickering behind her, whimpering, trying to hold on. But the pull is too strong. The spirit begins to drift from her, howling in agony as the final part of the spell echoes through the room.

"She'ron na'vela... Xotha'lyn drakkor..."

Jasmine screams. Her back arches as her body seizes. It's like her soul is being ripped apart. Fury looks away, unable to bear it, but I watch. I owe her that much.

Her wolf... disappears.

Just like that she collapses.

I'm on my knees beside her in a flash, catching her before she hits the floor. "Jasmine," I whisper. "Stay with me."

But she's out cold. Her breaths shallow.

I take out my blade and slice my palm. Blood wells up fast and hot. I press it to her lips to heal.

"Drink," I whisper. "It'll help. You're not alone."

Submission is Not My Style – Chapter 68

I pull the blanket up to Jasmine's chin and gently tuck a loose strand of hair behind her ear. Her face is pale, her breathing shallow, but there's a strange calmness to her now—a kind of silence that terrifies me more than her screams ever did.

She chose this. She chose to tear away a part of her soul just to be free of him.

I brush my thumb across her cheek, then turn to Fury, who stands in the corner like a silent sentinel.

"Watch her," I murmur. "Don't leave her side—not even for a second."

He nods. "With my life, Alpha."

Turning away, I clench my jaw, a storm rising in my veins as I walk down the corridor. Every step feels too slow.

Every wall too narrow to contain the fury burning inside me.

I can't wait to see his face—that bastard, Khoas.

When I reach the door, I hum in dark satisfaction when I see it's exactly how I wanted—ten guards, alert, hands on their blades. "Good," I mutter to myself, nodding in approval.

I push the door open without knocking.

The bastard's lying down like he's in a fucking spa, Lounging on the makeshift cot, arms behind his head.

When he hears the door creak, he doesn't even bother to sit up. No. He grins lazily and says, "Finally. Thought maybe you'd forgotten your favourite guest. Any chance I can get some coffee in here? Little sugar, little cream?"

I stare at him.

My sister is lying there, looking half-dead, and this prick is here, relaxed and smug?

He stretches and looks over at me with a smug tilt of his head. "Let me guess... you're here because you've realised how strong the mate bond is. Poor Jasmine must be writhing in pain right now. And

you need me to make her feel better, right?" He laughs, then adds, "Maybe just a little touch from me would calm her down. Or maybe what she really needs is for me to fuck her properly this time-until the pain turns to pleasure. That should wake her up, don't you think?"

I smile.

Not because I'm amused, but because it's the only thing stopping me from ripping his spine out of his body.

"I was wrong," I say calmly, stepping forward. "About everything. Hitting you, locking you up, losing my temper ... I wasn't in my right mind. You did nothing wrong, just... fulfilled your duty as a mate."

His eyes narrow, but then he chuckles. "Damn right I did.

Took you long enough to see it. You're a male like me. You know how these bitches can be-need to be tamed.

Broken in."

My knuckles crack from how tightly I'm clenching my fists, but I keep smiling. I want to throw up. Or kill him. Or both.

"Is there anything else you need?" I ask, stepping closer. "I remember you mentioned coffee."

"Oh, yeah," he says with a shrug. "Hot coffee. I'm freezing all of a sudden. Must be the room."

There it is.

The cold-that first unmistakable sign the bond's been broken. But the sick bastard doesn't realise it yet.

I poke my head out the door and tell the nearest guard, " Bring coffee. Make it very, very hot. Our Beta has exquisite taste."

Khoas leans back, still smirking. "Alpha, I gotta say... this sudden change of heart is surprising. I wasn't expecting you to come around so soon."

I don't reply.

He chuckles again. "I could teach you, you know-how to tame a disrespectful little bitch of a mate. Hell, I've already done the job for you."

He mutters the last part under his breath. But I hear every word.

So he hurt Kali, too.

The guard returns with the coffee. I take the cup from him with a nod of thanks. Steam curls into the air, the sharp scent burning my nose.

Perfect.

- I turn back to Khoas, my smile widening. I extend the cup toward him as if I'm about to hand it over.

Then I throw it-right into his face.

He screams instantly, clutching his face, cursing and flailing/"YOU FUCKING BASTARD! IT'S HOT! FUCK-IT'S BURNING!"

"You don't even deserve death," I say coldly, and then signal the guards to restrain him.

Khoas staggers back, still clutching his face, snarling through the pain. "If you touch me-if you kill me-your sister will die too!" he spits. "She'll feel ten times the pain!"

You hear me? TEN TIMES! You'll only be hurting her!"

I raise a hand, and the guards freeze.

Then I crouch down to Khoas's level, grabbing his chin and forcing his face up to mine. He's shaking, sweat dripping off his brow, but I keep my eyes locked on his, bringing my face inches from his."You fool," I whisper. "You really think I'd lay a finger on you if it meant she would suffer?"

His pupils flicker. A tremor runs through his jaw.

"Do you even realize why you're cold? Why your strength is failing you?" I say slowly enjoying the fear slowly forming in his eyes. "The bond is broken," I murmur. "From her end."

The colour drains from his face.

"Liar," he breathes.

"Really?" I grin darkly. "Then tell me-why can't you feel her anymore?"

He shakes his head. "No... no. That's not possible. I never accepted her rejection. I didn't accept it!"

"You forget so easily," I sneer. "Drennoth-Sytha."

Khoas flinches. "That's dark magic... I know what that is.

You're bluffing! She wouldn't—she couldn't—give up her wolf just to get away from me!"

I grab his throat and slam him into the wall. His eyes bulge as he gasps, feet scrambling for footing.

"She did," I hiss. "You must have been worse than a monster to drive her to that point of desperation. She gave up everything—her wolf, her soul—just to be free of you."He chokes, trying to speak.

“No-no no—Jasmine... she wouldn’t-she couldn’t-” he mutters, more to himself now, horror setting in.

“She did,” I say again, icily. “Because to her, you were worse than death.”

He looks at me like the floor beneath him has vanished.

” could kill you right now. Rip your heart out and walk away smiling.” I whisper. “But I won’t. That would be too merciful.”

I pause, leaning in closer, letting the weight of the words sink in.

“I’m going to make you suffer, Khoas. You’ll beg for death long before I grant it. And you’ll give me every damn piece of information I want. Especially about Kali.”

I release him.

He collapses, coughing and shaking, panic etched across every inch of his face.

“Throw him in the wild cell,” I order.”Let the darkness have him.”

They drag him away, still screaming, still cursing, still pleading.

“You can’t do this! I’m her mate! SHE STILL NEEDS ME!”

Submission is Not My Style – Chapter 69

The door to the deepest cell creaks open, and I step inside.

The air here is damp and chokes like smoke, thick with the stench of rot and old blood. Torches flicker on the jagged stone walls, casting dancing shadows that twist like demons. Iron chains hang from the ceiling, some stained with dried blood, others still slick from recent use.

Screams have been swallowed here, too many to count.

No one comes out the same from this place—not even me.

The coldness in my bones grows sharper as I walk toward the center of the cell. There he is-Khoas-tied to a rusted metal chair bolted into the ground. He’s no longer smirking. His head hangs low, his skin pale, sweat clinging to him like dew. He’s shaking. The effects of the broken mate bond are finally catching up with him, gnawing into his mind like worms in a carcass. Good.

I stop in front of him and tilt my head, a slow smile crawling onto my face.

“Welcome to hell, Khoas.”

His head jerks up. His eyes are bloodshot, filled with rage and something else. Blame?

“This is all your fault,” he spits, his voice hoarse but venomous. “You gave men power over their mates. You made the law. You built this system. Don’t act like you’re innocent, Alpha. You made me-us—monsters.”

My jaw clenches. He keeps going, trembling, but reckless. “You think if you get rid of me, this is over? There are worse men in the pack doing the same-worse-to their mates, and you turned a blind eye. You only cared when it happened to your sister. It took her pain for you to finally see the truth.”

I stare at him.

His words hit deeper than I want to admit. The truth, as bitter and sharp as any blade. If I hadn’t created that damn law... if I hadn’t granted that power... Jasmine wouldn’t have suffered. Wouldn’t have chosen death over being his mate. It was me. I handed the knife that slit her soul.

Rage burns behind my eyes.

I grab the metal bucket of acid from the metal table nearby. His eyes widen with recognition, and before he can speak, splash—the acid hits his face.

His scream tears through the stone walls. It’s raw.

Animalistic. His skin blisters and peels as he thrashes, trying to wrench free from the chair, but there’s no escaping.

“WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME, ALPHA?!” he shrieks, sobbing uncontrollably. “WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?!”

“PLEASE, SPARE ME! I SWEAR I’LL DISAPPEAR—I’LL GO FAR AWAY—YOU’LL NEVER SEE ME AGAIN!”

I chuckle. But there’s no humor in it—just pure, unfiltered rage. “I’m your Alpha, Khoas. And you, as my Beta, should have known how much I loved my sister. That alone should have made you too afraid to ever lay a hand on her.”

I crouch in front of him, close enough to watch his flesh bubble.

“Even if I gave males power over their mates, Jasmine should have been the exception. But you beat her.

Humiliated her. Tormented her. And now you think disappearing will make up for that?”

My voice lowers to a menacing snarl as I rise to my feet. “But that’s not why I’m here, Khoas. Your punishment for her will come later. Like they say... save the best for last.”

He whimpers, his breathing uneven and desperate.

“For now, you better talk. Where is my mate? I know you were the last one seen with her. Her scent was in your house earlier.”

Khoas’s swollen lips tremble. “I... I haven’t seen her-I swear-Idon’t-”

Wrong answer.

I pick up a serrated blade from the rack and let the metal gleam under the firelight. It’s sharp enough to tear flesh from bone. Khoas sees it, and his terror spikes, eyes bulging.

“WAIT! OKAY-OKAY!” he cries. “She was in my house-but she left! She couldn’t hurt me because of the mate bond with Jasmine, I swear!”

Liar.

Before I respond, Fury’s voice cuts through the mind, mind

-Linking me with grim urgency.

“Alpha, I sent two of our best trackers to trace Khoas’s movements in the last eight hours. Just got the report. He was last seen leaving the territory in a carriage. But here’s the thing-the carriage only had his scent. No trace of the Luna.”

“What...?”

“Which means one of two things: either she wasn’t with him, or he masked her scent. He’s a trained beta-he knows how to cover his tracks.”

I grind my jaw, gripping the blade tighter. Fury... “Thank you. Stay with Jasmine. Don’t leave her side. You’re the only one I trust right now.”

“Of course, Alpha.”

The link cuts.

I stare at Khoas, confused but growing more furious by the second. Something’s not adding up. If he’s lying, I can’t afford to waste another moment. Kali might be in danger right now-every second matters.

Then, for the first time in what feels like forever, my wolf stirs. His voice is weak, broken, but clear.”Khoas is lying,” he growls, voice frayed with pain. “I can sniff his nervousness... Cut his limb and get the truth out of him... before it’s too late... mate... she’s..”

The last word is a whisper. A plea. My heart clenches.

I raise the blade, breathing sharp. “How dare you lie to me, Khoas? You were seen leaving pack territory in a carriage.

Don't even think about denying it because—" I stam my boot into the leg of the chair, making him flinch violently, "

—my mate's body was in there, wasn't it?"

Khoas stammers, mouth agape. "No, I-okay, I'll talk-ll confess-JUST DON'T—!"

"Talk." My voice is hollow. The blade kisses his shoulder.

"It's true. I carried her out of the territory. In a carriage."

"Then how the hell did you mask her scent?"

Khoas swallows. "I... I injected her. She didn't see it coming."

"What did you use?" I hiss, already fearing the answer.

"Neruthium Veil," he says quietly.

My blood turns to fire.

That sick bastard.

Neruthium Veil—one of the most dangerous poisons ever created. It erases scent completely. Even a mother wouldn't recognise her child if they'd never seen them before. Worse, in large doses, it can sever the bond between soul and wolf. It's only ever used during execution rituals.

"You injected that into her?!" I roar, slamming the blade through the armrest just inches from his ribs. "You bastard!"

"It was the only way to get her past the borders unnoticed! I had to get her to my master—I didn't think—"

"Where is she?! And who the hell is your master?!"

Khoas shakes his head frantically, "I swear—I don't know!"

I've never seen him. I only got instructions through letters. I don't know his name-his face-nothing! But..."

I grab his collar, yanking him forward. "Then who the hell did you hand her over to?!"

"I don't know! There was a man... wearing a mask. I couldn't see his face either. But I heard something-just before I gave him the carriage."

"What did you hear?"

"A voice. Deep. Calm. It said... she was being taken to the Alpha King's palace. To receive her judgement."

My body stills. My ears ring.

“She’s probably already dead, Jack,” Khoas whispers. “By the time you get there... it’ll be too late.”

My hands shake.

No.

Submission is Not My Style – Chapter 70

Everything hurts.

My head feels like it’s been cracked open. I groan, low and hoarse, the sound scraping up my throat like it’s crawling through broken glass.

For a second, I wonder if I’m dead. Maybe this is it. Maybe I didn’t survive after all the shit Jack’s uncle pumped into me-needle after needle, poison after poison. Maybe I finally crossed the line between life and whatever the hell comes after.

But then the pain slams harder, and I realise-no, I’m still here. Still breathing.

Barely.

I try to move, but my body doesn’t respond. I can’t feel anything. Not my limbs or my wolf.

And that... that’s the worst part.

“Where are you?” I whisper in my head, clawing at the space where she’s always been warm, fierce, strong. “Please... say something.”

Nothing.

Just... silence. Terrifying. Like screaming into a void and hearing it eat your voice.

Panic wraps cold fingers around my ribs. I try again, harder, calling out with everything I have.

Still nothing.

My eyes snap open, bracing for the blinding light like before—that horrible brightness that burns even with closed eyelids.

But this time, there’s none of that. Just soft torchlight, flickering and warm, casting golden shadows. I blink slowly, relief washing over me like a breath I didn’t know I was holding.

Thank the goddess...

Kift my gaze, trying to piece together where the hell I am.

My vision is blurry at first, but as it clears, my heart nearly stops.

I'm in some kind of massive hall-easily the biggest room I've ever seen in my life. The floors are polished marble, the ceilings stretch so high it feels like they touch the stars, and thick red banners hang down the walls, each bearing a golden royal crest. Everything glints-gold trim, and the arms of the sconces carved with wolves mid-howl. It's beautiful.

Terrifyingly beautiful.

And somehow... familiar?

I frown as a chill slips down my spine.

Why does this place feel like I've been here before? Like a dream I half-remember but can't let go of.

I try to chase the thought-

But my head suddenly pounds so hard. I hiss and wince, biting down on a groan. The pain is sharp-like claws raking the inside of my skull. Images flash behind my eyes. Nothing clear. Just fragments. The feeling of something heavy on my chest-like a memory trying to force itself to the surface.

But it slips away, leaving nothing but a crushing headache and the metallic taste of frustration on my tongue.

I glance down.

I'm chained. Not to a chair this time, but my wrists are bound with silver chains-tight, burning, cruel. My ankles too, though more loosely. They probably assumed I'm too weak to fight.

They were right.

I feel... almost human.

My wolf is gone. Or silenced. And without her, I'm little more than a breathing shell.

I tug at the chains anyway, teeth gritted. "Damn it," | whisper. "Come on... move, do something..."

The silver sears into my skin. I cry out, breath hitching, then slump back against the stone column behind me, chest rising and falling in shallow gasps. No one's coming. Jack... isn't coming.

I hate that thought more than anything.

My eyes lift again, dragging across the room... and then they land on something that knocks the air right out of my lungs.

At the far end of the hall, raised high above the floor, sits a massive platform-and on it, three thrones.

My mouth goes dry.

The middle throne is unlike anything I've ever seen. Made of black iron, towering, cold, powerful. Etched with moons, wolves, and ancient symbols I can't even read.

Even empty, it radiates authority. Darkness. Strength.

That throne belongs to someone who doesn't ask for power-they are power.