

Submission is Not My Style – Chapter 81

The room is quiet, unnaturally so.

Not even the wind dares to whisper through the windows.

The only sound that breaks the silence is the steady beep of the heart monitor beside Kali's bed—a stubborn reminder that she's still holding on.

Jack hasn't moved in hours.

He sits like stone, slumped forward in the chair by her bedside, one hand wrapped tightly around hers, the other resting against his lips. His eyes-bloodshot, heavy-lidded, hollow-never leave her face. His beard has grown in rough patches, his clothes unchanged for days. He hasn't slept. He hasn't eaten. He won't.

Because what if she wakes up and he's not here?

What if she slips away again and he misses it?

No. He won't risk it. He'd rather starve. Rather die right here with her than leave and come back to an empty bed.

"Please," he whispers against her knuckles, voice cracked and raw. "Please come back to me, Kali. Just open your eyes."

But she doesn't-not even a twitch.

And it's driving him mad.

Outside, beyond the glass window that framed the room, the Alpha King stood silently like a ghost-watching.

He should be in there, by her side.

But how could he? How could he face her?

If she wakes, he knows she'll seek the familiar warmth of her mate-of Jack-rather than the father who once ordered her death... as a birthday gift.

He presses a fist to the windowsill, his jaw clenched with regret. Stupid. Foolish.

The signs had been there. The moment he laid eyes on her, his wolf had howled, pup! That broken, desperate cry still echoes in his mind.

But he hadn't listened because there had been so many reasons to doubt. Kali bore no scent-nothing to identify her. And in their world, scent is everything. It's how they recognize blood, bond, and truth. Her absence of scent had been unnatural, as if something had masked or poisoned it.

So he ignored the pull in his chest. Ignored the echo in his soul. Ignored what he felt, because the evidence wasn't there.

But now... her scent is returning.

Faint, but unmistakable.

Pine and fresh rain-soft, earthy. The smell of home after a long storm. He doesn't need the doctor's confirmation anymore.

She's his.

His daughter.

His Maya. That's the name she was born with, even if Kali suits the woman she's become.

She doesn't look like the little girl he used to cradle in his arms or spin through the garden until she squealed with laughter. No, this woman is grown. Fierce. Wounded by the world. But beneath the bruises and strength, the delicate shape of her lips... the gentle arch of her brow... those haven't changed.

And he almost destroyed her.

His fingers tremble as he remembers that night-the night everything shattered.

He had just returned from the meeting with the Elders, his temper boiling beneath the surface. The stench of incense still clung to his clothes. Elder Varkos, the high priest with skin like cracked bark and eyes like cold stone, had stood before the royal court and declared Maya-his only daughter—a curse.

"A blood-born omen," Varkos had said. "If not sacrificed before the next red moon, the kingdom will fall into decay. Plagues will claim our people. The skies will refuse to rain. Your Majesty, she must die to save us all."

The King had barely restrained himself. He had stood up slowly, voice cold as ice. "If any man speaks of harming my daughter again, I will see their heads in the dirt before sundown."

That was the day he made the decision— not as a king, but as a father.

He would protect her.

Always.

But when he returned to her chambers to read her favorite story-the one about the wolf who loved the moon-her bed was empty.

But she had vanished without a trace.

Even Tom-the loyal boy who guarded her like a shadow-was missing. Tom, son of the Queen's personal guard. Her childhood companion. Her protector. He would never leave her side unless... something terrible had happened.

The Elders claimed it was the Moon Goddess who had taken her as a sacrifice, that the curse had lifted the moment she disappeared.

And the King, broken and desperate, had believed them.

For years, he mourned. Felt the ache of severed connection, the unbearable silence where their bond had been.

Then Celestia came. A child found alone in the woods, bruised and bloodied, with no memory of who she was. The kingdom needed a princess. The people needed hope. They wanted to believe the curse was lifted —that this girl was the Goddess's gift.

A gift from the heavens.

He was too broken to argue.

He took her in.

But his Queen-his mate-never accepted her.

And slowly, grief ate away at her mind. She began to wither. She would wander the palace halls at night, searching for Maya, whispering her name in the dark. She never touched Celestia. Never smiled again.

And he?

He buried the guilt. Crowned Celestia as heir. Told himself he'd done what he had to do and.

But now...

Now Maya lies just beyond the glass.

Alive.

Barely.

And the girl he raised as daughter-the one he once protected with his sword—had tried to kilt the true heir.

Had manipulated him into nearly doing it himself. The Alpha King turned from the window, his face shadowed in grief and fury.

Celestia would pay for this.

But it won't be his hands that bring justice.

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I sit beside her, unmoving, barely breathing, as if the smallest shift might break her entirely. Kali lies on the bed like a thread stretched thin between life and death, and damn it, it kills me to see her like this.

She's always been this unshakable force of nature-sharp tongue, unbreakable will. A woman who didn't just walk into my life but tore through it like a hurricane never saw coming. I hated her once. Or maybe I pretended to, just to protect whatever piece of pride I had left.

But now? I love her. I fucking love her. And seeing her like this makes something deep in my chest ache and burn all at once.

Her skin is pale, her breathing shallow. Bandages are wrapped around her chest, stained with blue that keeps bleeding through no matter how many times the doctor tries to change them. She was stabbed in the heart-with the Alpha King's blade, no less. That sword's supposed to be fatal, no exceptions. Nobody survives it.

But she did.

Somehow, she did.

Not that I'm complaining-but fuck, how?

I haven't even had time to ask her what happened. The second I found her barely clinging to life, everything else ceased to matter. I didn't care about the how or why-just the now. Just saving her. But a voice in the back of my head keeps whispering, over and over again, he knew. The Alpha King isn't careless. If he tried to kill Kali, then he knew she was mine. He had to.

And if he knew, then it wasn't just a mistake. It was a fucking declaration of war.

My fists clench at the thought. My entire body itches to move, to rip someone apart, to make them bleed for what they did to her. Celestia-his daughter-is the first name that flashes through my mind. That delusional bitch has always had it out for Kali. I'd bet every drop of blood in my body that she had something to do with this.

But she wasn't there when I found Kali in her father's arms

-though her sickening scent still lingered in the air.

Still, it doesn't matter.

King or not. Daughter or not. Whoever did this -I'll bury them. I swore it already, and I'll make good on that promise.

A knock disrupts the stillness in the room, low and urgent.

Even before the sound fades, I catch the scent-sweat, leather, and Blood Fang's signature pine musk. One of mine.

I curse under my breath, my jaw tightening. The last damn thing I want right now is to move. My body protests as I rise, knees cracking from how long I've been kneeling by her bed. My wolf howls in protest too, wild and restless not wanting me to leave her side. I hesitate, my hand brushing Kali's fingers.

"Don't go anywhere, baby. I'll be right back," I whisper harshly.

Gritting my teeth, I head to the door.

The second it swings open, a warrior stumbles forward, panting like he's been running for hours-which, knowing the distance from the pack to the King's palace, he probably has. His eyes are wide, drenched in panic, and he barely takes a second to bow before blurting out-

"Alpha Fury sent me. He couldn't leave Jasmine's side, as you instructed. The pack... it's in chaos. They've been without an alpha or a beta for days. They're demanding your presence immediately. They found out what you did to Beta Khaos-and why you locked him up."

My eyes narrow. "Go on."

"They're saying you broke your own law-about not interfering with mates. That no matter what happened between Khaos and Jasmine, you should've stayed out of it. They're threatening to riot if you don't release him."

I let out a sharp breath, dragging a hand down my face.

Perfect fucking timing.

The one time I break my own rule-for a damn good reason

—and suddenly everyone wants to cry injustice.

I turn to glance back at Kali. Her still form, her shallow breaths. My stomach twists because I can't leave her again especially now. What if she stops breathing the second I'm gone?

But my pack... if I leave them leaderless any longer, they'll crumble. My enemies will take it as a sign of weakness and move in like vultures circling a dying beast.

I growl low in my throat, my voice thick with frustration. "Maybe it's time I put an end to that stupid fucking law once and for all."

The warrior blinks in surprise. "Alpha?"

I don't answer him, my eyes flick once more to Kali. She looks so small now. So breakable. And my heart cracks open just a little more.

"I can't leave her unguarded," I mutter. "Not when the person who did this might still be lurking-waiting to finish the job."

But who the hell can trust with her life?

Who can I trust... more than myself?

clench my fists, torn in two. One path leads to protecting my kingdom. The other-protecting my mate.

And right now, I'm not sure I can do both.

Then, a pulse of power rolls through the hall—thick and heavy, making the air hard to breathe and the hairs on my arms stand on end.

The warrior drops to his knees, trembling, head bowed as if before a god. Submitting.

I stiffen already knowing who it is.

The Alpha King. He's been watching. I've felt him. For days, I could sense his presence lingering outside the warded windows. That cold hum in the air-too powerful to be just another wolf. He's been hovering like a damn ghost.

Why? Why the hell was he watching Kali like a creep?

Why was the Alpha King acting like such a weirdo?

don't move or bow but I plant myself in front of the door like a wall of stone, spine straight, fists clenched. When I finally face him, he's standing a few feet away, his eyes dark and unreadable as ever.

"Don't worry, Jack," he says suddenly, and the sincerity in his voice makes my jaw tighten. "I'll watch her. Go attend to your pack. I will stay by her side."

I blink. Then laugh. A dry, humorless sound from deep in my chest.

"You serious?" I say, tilting my head with disbelief. "You actually think I'm going to leave her with you?"

"You must be out of your goddamn mind," I snap. "She was stabbed in the heart-with your blade. She nearly died.

Right there in front of you. That makes you the enemy. Or maybe not you directly-maybe it was your little psycho of a daughter, Celestia. Same difference." A shadow flickers across his face.

"I know," he says quietly. "I know that no matter what I say, nothing right now will make you trust me. But hear me—I didn't stab Kali. Still, that doesn't make me innocent either. Because whether I like it or not..." His jaw tightens. "I indirectly participated in her death. And like I said before — you will get your revenge."

His words hang in the air, heavy and sharp.

I don't respond. I can't.

He sighs-and this time, it's not the sigh of a guilty man.

It's deeper than that. Regret? Weariness? I can't quite tell.

"But can't you see?" he says again, more urgently. "Can't you see the reason she didn't die? The reason she survived being stabbed through the heart? Her blood, Jack. Haven't you wondered why it was blue instead of red?"

I stiffen.

For the first time, I let myself truly think about it. Her blood was blue. The stain still on my hands. At the time, I was too consumed by panic to process it.

But now?

Why was her blood blue?

"I was too scared to think," I admit. "Too afraid of losing her."

He nods slowly. "Kali survived being stabbed by my sword because... it can't kill her. My blade is forged with poison, deadly to anyone who doesn't share my blood. That's how it was made. But Kali... her blood reacted. It turned blue because the blade couldn't kill her."

My breath hitches as the truth lands in my chest

"You're saying..." I whisper, barely able to form the words."

She's... your daughter?"

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His face twists into something between a grimace and a sad smile.

"The Moon Goddess always finds a way to reveal the truth—just when it's too damn late."

Then, to my surprise, he chuckles.

"If I'd known you'd end up mated to my only true-blooded daughter," he says with a short laugh, "I wouldn't have wasted so much time trying to throw Celestia at you. I thought I could control the future-choose the next king.

Manipulate fate."

He shakes his head, smirking now.

“But it seems the goddess had other plans. And now? Well ... it looks like you’re destined for the crown, whether you want it or not.”

Before I can say anything, he steps forward and—lightly, almost affectionately—places a hand on my shoulder, nudging me aside.

I let him.

Because somehow... deep down, I know.

He walks past me and sits in the chair I’d been in only moments before. He reaches for Kali’s hand like it’s something sacred. And strangely enough, she doesn’t react in fear. Her body doesn’t tense. There’s only stillness. Peace.

I don’t want to admit it, but I know she’s safe with him.

At least for now:

“Alpha,” a warrior calls from the doorway, breaking through my thoughts. “Apologies for the interruption, but ... we need to hurry. Before things get worse back at the pack.”

I glance back at the bed. At her. At the man now sitting beside her.

Then I nod, stiffly, and turn to follow the warrior down the hall.

“She’s his daughter... probably the one who went missing,” I whisper, the words slipping out before. I can stop them.

And if that’s true—if Kali really is the Alpha King’s daughter—then what everyone said about her wolf being massive, monstrous, more beast than wolf... they’re not just rumors.

They’re true.

Which means from the very first moment I met her, I wasn’t the one in control. I wasn’t the one in power.

I was the one destined to kneel.

Not just kneel—submit.

Fuck

The second I step onto the Blood Fang pack grounds, chaos slaps me in the face like a damn insult—loud, jarring, and completely out of control. It’s deafening.

Voices scream and chant, fists raised in the air. The entire pack has turned upside down. There's no order, no structure-just complete madness.

And through the noise, one name keeps echoing, again and again, making my blood boil:

Khoas..

They're actually protesting for that bastard. I can hardly believe it.

My jaw clenches so tightly I feel my teeth grind. Do these people truly not understand what Khoas did to Jasmine?

Even if she weren't my sister, I could never forgive him.

Beating her until she was unrecognizable, branding her with his mark against her will... He didn't just hurt her. He broke her. She had to lose herself-her wolf, her very soul -just to get away from him.

That isn't just cruelty.

It's inhuman.

She had to destroy who she was to escape him.

And yet, these people are demanding his freedom?I'd rather die than let that monster walk free.

I march forward, the crowd parting slowly as they catch sight of me. Their chants grow louder, more aggressive.

What's worse-some of the women, these she-wolves, are chanting his name too. But I can see the truth in their eyes. The subtle tilt of their bodies away from their mates.

The bruises barely hidden beneath their sleeves. The tightness in their jaws. This isn't their protest. They're here because their mates forced them to be. Out of fear.

"Release Beta Khoas!" a man shouts from the front of the crowd. "He's done nothing wrong except follow the law you created! He's innocent!"

"Innocent?" I snort.

"You go against your own laws and expect us to obey you?" another man yells. "That makes you weak!"

"Weak!" The word catches like wildfire.

"The Alpha backtracks on his word!"

"Alpha Jack is no longer worthy-!"

“ENOUGH!”

My voice crashes into them like a wave, booming and sharp. The crowd falls silent in an instant. Some flinch.

Some bow their heads but what’s important is that single one of them shuts the hell up. Even the men who had been puffing out their chests now drop their eyes. A few of the women recoil. I see it all.

I step forward, my boots slamming into the dirt as I stand tall before them.

“I am not going to repeat myself,” I say through clenched teeth. “Khoas will never be released. Not just because he hurt my sister—no. This isn’t personal.”

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I let my gaze sweep over them, slow and heavy with disappointment.”He committed a crime against the Moon Goddess herself. He violated the sacredness of the mate bond. He marked her without her consent.”

Gasps ripple through the crowd.

“And because of him,” I continue, my voice cracking despite my efforts to stay calm, “Jasmine had to do the unthinkable. She had to kill a part of herself. Her wolf is gone. Her soul was shattered. She lost everything—her identity, her strength—just to escape him.”

Silence. Thick, suffocating silence.

I take a deep breath, trying to steady my voice, blinking back the sting in my eyes. I refuse to let tears fall—not here. “You still want me to release him? After that?”

No one answers.

“I made a mistake,” I admit, raising my voice. “A terrible one. I thought the law I created would protect us. That giving the male authority over his mate would make him more protective. More responsible. I believed that as the head of the bond, a man would cherish his mate, guide her, protect her like his own heartbeat while she submit to him as her duty.”

My gaze catches a man lowering his head in shame.

Another steps slightly away from his trembling mate.” never meant for it to be twisted into this. I never expected you to beat them, to control them, to treat them like fucking possessions. You took something sacred and turned it into a weapon. You made yourselves kings in your homes and turned the very women the Moon Goddess gifted you—your mates—into prisoners. You shamed the mate bond.”

Some women wince. One clutches her arm. Another shields her child behind her. I see one edge away from her mate, fear written across her face. His fists tighten, like he wants to strike her even now-but he knows better than to try it in front of me. He'll be made an example.

"I was blind," I murmur, disgusted with myself. "And now I will correct my mistake and end this stupid law."

A warrior steps forward, handing me a scroll. The law. The one I wrote with my own fucking hands.

I hold it high, for all of them to see-then tear it apart, slowly, piece by piece, letting the shreds fall to the ground like snow.

"All laws that favour men over women are hereby abolished. As of this moment, males and females are equals. That is the new law. Women will no longer submit to men simply because they're men. To the women who have carried this pain alone... who have endured heartbreak, abuse, and silence while being told to be 'strong'-I am sorry. I am sorry it's taken me this long to open my eyes."The crowd stares in stunned silence.

"If you're a man—if you've raised your hand against the woman the Moon Goddess chose for you—this is your chance to make it right. Drop your pride. Get on your knees if you have to. And beg for her forgiveness. Beg like your soul depends on it. Because it does. Do it in private if you're too much of a coward to do it here."

I turn to the women now, softening my tone.

"And if you're in a toxic bond... if the man promises and swears to change but your soul tells you otherwise... you don't have to stay. You can reject him. Right now. And swear to you—no harm will come to you. Not while I'm still breathing."

Some women begin to cry quietly. Others turn to their mates, their eyes lit with something I haven't seen in a long time-strength.

Then a gruff voice breaks through the crowd, sharp with disbelief. "How can you say all this, Alpha? How can you go against the natural law of things? You expect us to accept this? Are you going to take responsibility for breaking your own law?"

I square my shoulders. My heart is heavy but steady. I know what I have to do.

"You're right. I broke my word. I went against the law I created."

The crowd holds its breath.

"So," I say, lifting my chin, voice unwavering, "to prove I'm not doing this out of pride..."

I exhale slowly, then finish the sentence:

"Twill step down as Alpha of the Blood Fang Pack."

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A collective gasp rises.

Faces pale. Some stare in horror. Others look stunned-like the ground has just crumbled beneath their feet. A few even look ready to drop to their knees.

“You... you can’t,” someone whispers.

“I can,” I say coldly. “And I just did.”

They’re panicking. I see it clearly on their faces-the dawning realisation that without me, their precious image as the strongest, most feared pack is collapsing. Their security, their dominance, their strength... gone.

But I don’t care. Let them squirm.

Then someone shouts,

“Then who becomes our Alpha?”

Who will lead us now?”

“If you’re afraid of what comes next, you should be,” reply, my voice calm but razor-sharp.

“Because I won’t choose the next Alpha based on brute strength. This time, it won’t be about muscles or how loud you can roar.”

“It will be a competition-open to all. And it’ll test not just your strength but your heart. Your mind. Your ability to Lead with compassion, not just with dominance. A true Alpha isn’t one who rules with fear-but one who earns Loyalty. Protects the weak. Knows when to fight-and when to stand down.” I pause, letting the silence grow thick and suffocating, as if a funeral veil has fallen over the entire pack. Then; without another word, I turn and walk away.

I’m already moving -no, marching-toward the northern border of our territory. My muscles are tense, my skin crawling with the desperate need to shift, to feel my wolf beneath me again. I need to run. I need to get back to her-back to Kali.

Just as I reach the edge of the territory where I can safely shift and head to the King’s palace, my head snaps to the side as Fury’s voice cuts through the mindlink.

“Alpha:. it’s Jasmine. She’s awake.”

I freeze mid-step.

Claws slide from the tips of my fingers. My heart stumbles, skips a beat, then slams into overdrive. I pivot without a second thought, breaking into a sprint, legs eating the ground with every furious step.

My sister... she's awake.

I burst through the clinic doors, lungs burning, hope exploding in my chest. I rush straight to her room and push the door open.

She's there.

Propped up against pillows, pale but alive. Fury stands beside her like a silent guardian, his massive frame unmoving, his eyes scanning every corner of the room as if he's expecting the devil himself to crawl through the walls.

Jasmine blinks slowly, groggy like she's just surfaced from a nightmare. Her hands tremble slightly, but there's something different in her eyes.

She's fragile but not broken.

The vile, suffocating mark that bastard burned into her neck... it's gone forever.

She looks... alive. Even without her wolf, she looks free.

There's no forced bond clouding her eyes anymore. No pain carved into her skin.

I stumble to her side and drop to my knees, grabbing her hand in both of mine. "You're okay," I murmur, my voice cracking against the emotion lodged in my throat. "You're really okay..."

She nods slowly, and even though her voice is still weak, she manages, "Is he... gone?"

My jaw clenches. "You'll never see Khoas again, Jasmine. I swear it on my life."

She doesn't ask if I killed him—she doesn't need to. She simply reaches out and gently squeezes my fingers with hers.

But then, her lips tremble.

"Kali?" she whispers. "Is she... is she alright? This is all my fault, Jack. She went to him for me..."

Goddamn it.

Tears sting the backs of my eyes, but I fight them, gripping her hand tighter. "No. No, this is not your fault, Jasmine. He did this. He. Not you. Kali... she's strong. She's holding on. And she won't die. I know she won't." I swallow the fear thick in my throat. "She's too damn stubborn."

Her lips curve slightly, but the shadows don't leave her eyes.

I rise and glance at Fury, still standing there like a stone wall. “Stay with her. Protect her like she’s your Luna.”

“I always will,” he says simply, nodding once.

“Maybe you should run for Alpha,” I mutter, half-teasing, half-serious.

But he shakes his head. “No interest. I’m not meant to lead, Jack. I’m meant to protect someone... important.”

That makes me pause. “What do you mean-”

He cuts me off, locking eyes with mine. “Don’t worry. The Luna won’t die.”

I should be jealous— should feel that familiar spike of possessiveness-but I’m not.

Not this time. I nod to him, grateful beyond words, and then turn back toward the border. I shift the second I cross it, my wolf tearing out with a guttural growl, paws pounding the earth beneath me as I race back to the Alpha King’s palace, wind slicing through my fur, heart beating like a war drum.

I don’t stop not once. When I reach the palace gates, I shift back and sprint inside, shoving open the doors to the room where Kali is being kept—

And freeze.

The Alpha King is still there, just as he promised. He remains seated beside her bed, his head resting on the mattress, one hand still gently holding hers. He truly wasn’t joking about being her father—and I won’t lie, a part of me had hoped it was.

His eyes lift slowly when he senses me. They’re red-rimmed and sunken, his face lined with exhaustion that mirrors my own.

Neither of us says a word.

He simply rises, gives me a small nod... and walks out.

I move closer.

She’s still.

Too still.

There are no bruises, no bandages. The doctor must’ve done something-her skin glows faintly with that same ethereal softness that always left me breathless, but her eyes remain shut.

Why isn’t she waking up?

The door creaks behind me. The doctor walks in, reeking of nerves.

I snap around, teeth clenched. “Why isn’t she waking up yet?”

The man jumps back, paling. “Alpha-I-I’ve done all I can.

Her body’s healed. Even the King gave her his blood. She should ve woken up already. I-I don’t understand why she hasn’t-”

I rake a hand through my hair, pacing like a caged beast. ” Then do something else! Try harder!”

“There... there is one thing, Alpha... he murmurs, hesitating.

I stop. Turn.

“What?”

He gulps. “Maybe... maybe you should mark her.”

The fury in me spikes like a blade.

I stalk up to him, grabbing the front of his coat. “How dare you tell me to mark her against her will.”Chapter 133

+30 Bonus

“I didn’t mean —Alpha, I swear-it’s just... maybe the bond might help. If she accepts it, maybe it’ll bring her back.”

A laugh, bitter and sharp, cuts from my throat.

“You think I’m gonna force that on her after what she’s been through? You think I’d ever do to her what he did to my sister?”

“No! No, Alpha! I’m not saying that, I just-”

“Mark me...”

The voice is so soft, I almost miss it.

treeze.

My grip slackens.

turn, my breath lodged in my chest.

Kali.

Still motionless... still unconscious... yet her lips move.

‘...Please, Jack,” she whispers again. “I want to... bear your mark...”

And in that instant, everything inside me shatters.

Because even half-conscious, lost in the darkness, somewhere deep within her subconscious-she still wants me. She still chooses me!

I drop to my knees beside her, my hand trembling as I reach for hers."Your wish is my command," I whisper.

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It's dark.

Not the kind of darkness that frightens-it's more like a heavy, endless fog. I float in it, weightless, numb.

Somewhere deep in my chest, there's a dull ache-a reminder of the blade that tore through my heart. I should be dead. I felt myself slipping away.

But... I'm still here.

And I don't understand why.

My body won't move. My lips won't part. Every time try to scream, to beg, to speak-nothing comes out. It's as if

– something invisible is wrapped around my throat, holding me in place. I'm a prisoner inside my own body.

But I can hear.

That's how I know I'm not dead.

Voices-soft at first, then growing louder. Familiar.

Jack.

He's been here the whole time. I'd know his voice anywhere, even when it cracks with exhaustion or shakes with rage. His warmth lingers near me like a second skin-wrapping me in something stronger than any pain.

Keeping me tethered.

He's protecting me. Still.

Then... there's another presence. One that stirs something ancient in my blood. It's calmer, heavier-familiar in a way can't quite explain. Like spring rain falling on pine trees.

Like a forgotten lullaby: He doesn't speak often, but when he does, my soul listens.

Then Jack's voice cuts through everything-angry, raw, frantic.

"Why isn't she waking up yet?!"

I want to reach out, tell him I'm trying. That I want to open my eyes. That I'm fighting.

"She should've woken up already," the other man says-probably the doctor. "Even the King gave her his blood. I-I don't understand-"

Jack growls, and I can feel the frustration pouring off him in waves.

"There is one thing, Alpha..."

A pause.

"Maybe you should mark her."

My body tenses—or maybe I imagine it tensing. Rage flares through Jack's voice.

"How dare you tell me to mark her against her will?"

Gods. My heart clenches. Even when I'm half-dead, he's still defending me.

"I'm only saying it because the mate bond might help-if she accepts it-"

"You think-'d ever do to her what he did to my sister?!"

No. He wouldn't. I know that. Jack would never hurt me like that.

And now I know what I have to do.

I force the air into my lungs, feeling my throat strain-raw, broken.

"Mark me..." I whisper. It's a rasp, barely a sound, like wind through leaves.

The silence afterwards makes me fear he didn't hear me.

But then I hear him move.

He turns.

"...Please, Jack..." | whisper again, begging. "I want to... bear your mark..."

Seconds pass.

Then his voice comes lpw, trembling and full of emotion.

Your wish is my command.”

A second later, something sharp-hot-sinks into the side of my neck.

I hiss, pain exploding through every nerve like fire. For one wild heartbeat, it feels as though I’m being stabbed all over again-but then-

Then the pain melts and becomes something else entirely.

Pleasure.

A fierce warmth erupts within me, radiating from the bite mark across my chest, down my spine, and lower-between my legs. Liquid fire courses through my veins, igniting every inch of me. My skin tingles, each nerve alive and pulsing, like I’m glowing from the inside out. My legs twitch. My lips part. My chest rises sharply, as if I’ve just resurfaced after drowning and taken my first true breath.

I feel everything.

I feel Jack-his presence pressing against me, curling over my skin and sinking deeper, like a thread sewn straight into my bones. His scent surrounds me-dark, smoky, maddeningly addictive.

In my mind, I see his hands-rough and calloused-gliding up my waist, across my stomach, and cupping my breasts with a mix of reverence and hunger. A helpless whimper slips from my lips, lost in the overwhelming sensation. I feel his mouth on my throat, his tongue teasing the mark he just made. My body writhes against the sheets, seeking him, aching for more, as heat builds low in my belly.

Instinct takes over. I arch toward him, craving more of his touch. His breath is hot and ragged against my skin, his grip possessive-holding me as if I’m the most fragile, precious thing in his world.

Then a low growl cuts through the haze.

“If you keep touching yourself like that..”

A pause-heavy, filled with warning.

...I won’t be able to stop myself. I’ll take you-right here.

Right now.”

My eyes snap open.

Everything rushes back in vivid color.

Jack stands over me, eyes dark with hunger, jaw clenched.

He looks like a man barely hanging on to his control. His chest rises and falls with deep, heavy breaths. Desire blazes in every sharp line of his face, his lips parted as if he's holding himself back with the last thread of restraint.

I gasp, eyes wide, and feel my face flush deep crimson when I realise my hand has slipped beneath the blanket-gripping my thigh, dangerously close to-

Oh. Shit.

I jerk my hand away like I've been burnt.

He smirks-damn him. That wicked, beautiful smirk that always gets me into trouble.

I touch my neck, heart thudding. My fingers brush over the new mark-his mark. It throbs faintly, but not in pain.No... in connection. A warmth pulses from it, like it's breathing with me.

Real.

It happened.

He marked me.

I don't even have time to process it before his lips crash against mine.

The kiss is deep, desperate, everything. I feel him pouring every ounce of fear, anger, love-all of it-into the way his mouth moves against mine. My fingers find the front of his shirt, clutching it as he kisses me until my head spins.

He pulls back just enough to press his forehead to mine, his eyes scanning my face like he can't believe I'm really here.

"I've missed you so much," he whispers. "You don't know how scared I was... how close I came to losing my fucking mind."

A small smile tugs at my lips as I realise something-I don't feel dizzy or weak like I used to whenever he kissed or touched me before, when it would knock me out completely. His mark it was exactly what I needed to complete me.

"Well.." I rasp, my cheeks still burning, "I'm awake now."

His eyes brighten, and a soft chuckle escapes him-like a break in the storm he's been weathering alone.

I gently brush my fingers over the mark again, whispering,

"Your mark. it brought me back. Thank you."

"No," Jack murmurs, eyes burning into mine. "You're the one who kept fighting, Kali. My mark just reminded you who you belong to."

And I do.

With every breath I take, I belong to him.

“How do you feel?” Jack asks gently, though I hear the tension under his words. “No pain anywhere?”

I blink slowly, taking in the room, the golden sunlight slanting through the curtains... and him. His brow furrows with concern, exhaustion etched deep into his features.

He looks like he hasn’t slept in days. His beard is fuller, his eyes rimmed with red. There’s a raw desperation in the way he stares at me-like if he blinks, I might disappear.

His thumb brushes gently across my cheek, as though he’s trying to convince himself I’m truly here.

My chest tightens.

How long has he been holding this fear alone?

“I feel... strong,” I say softly. “Stronger than ever.”

And I mean it. My body feels different now-like every part of me has been reforged in fire and cooled in the arms of someone who refused to let me go. I feel... whole.

He exhales like he’s been holding that breath for years.

“How long was tout?” I wonder silently.

“Six days,” he answers without hesitation, like he’s been counting every single second-beating me to the question, as if he plucked it straight from my thoughts.

My eyes widen. “You can read my thoughts now?”

His smirk is immediate-cocky and amused. “You’re mine now, fully marked, sweetheart. You really need to work on those mental walls.” His voice dips to a teasing whisper as he leans in. “No more secret fantasies about me.”

Heat rushes to my cheeks. I’m blushing so hard I feel like I’ve caught fire. “Jack!”~

He chuckles softly, brushing a loose strand of hair behind my ear. “God, I’ve missed that look on your face,” he murmurs, but his gaze turns serious, voice low. “Do you remember anything? Everything?”

Submission is Not My Style – Chapter 87

His words strike something deep inside me-sharp and a pounding ache erupts in my skull. Then-images.

Fragmented and flashing like lightning.

A little girl in a white dress, a glittering necklace resting against her chest. Tom's laughter my best friend—as we build a sandcastle and chase waves along the shore. The sweet scent of roses. A wooden swing beneath the old oak tree in the garden. My mother's gentle fingers braiding my hair. My father lifting me into his arms, reading bedtime stories in a voice full of warmth and love. Early morning pancakes. Fireflies dancing in glass jars. Kisses on scraped knees.

My name was Maya... and it fits. It always did but tom used to call me M.

A soft smile tugs at my lips, comforted by the warmth of those memories. But then-like a curtain violently torn away-the light disappears. Because I remember everything now.

I was playing with Tom, building a sandcastle in the playground, when my mother suddenly appeared-panicked and frantic. A terrifying man was with her, and without warning, he stomped on my sandcastle, crushing it beneath his boot.

My mother dropped to her knees, cupping my face, her eyes wild with fear."Run to your room," she whispered urgently. "Hide under the bed. Don't come out until I come for you."

So I did.

I lay there, trembling in silence, waiting for her to come.

Waiting for her to say it was safe.

But she never came.

My stomach growled in hunger. The house had fallen silent-eerily so. Too quiet.

Eventually, I crawled out from under the bed, afraid but determined. I searched for food... for my mother... for Tom.

And then I passed the throne room.

The door was cracked open.

I paused. Listened.

Inside, men with deep, cruel voices spoke to the Alpha King-my father. They said I needed to be taken away.

Sacrificed. Offered to complete some twisted ritual.

I froze.

Then hand clamped over my mouth from behind.

The world spun.

Next thing I knew, I was in a hut that stank of blood and dark magic. I never saw the face of the man who took me, only the way he moved. He walked with a limp-his steps uneven. He was old. Cold. Evil.

I was going to die.

They were going to sacrifice me.

But then... something inside me shifted.

Power?

I didn't understand it then, but I called out with it. Not with words-but with something deeper.

And she came.

A woman walked into the witch's hut unnoticed, like she wasn't supposed to be there. But my magic-whatever it was—had drawn her to me. She had the same face as the woman I would later call Mother.

She didn't hesitate.

She took me away.

She saved me.

And now... I remember all of it.

But the worst memory is still waiting.

It hits me without warning.

A blade piercing my chest.

Pain so raw, so deep, I feel it again now. The throne room.

Those green eyes-haunting and familiar-staring down at me. Eyes like mine. •

The Alpha King.

I gasp, my hand flying to my chest. It's healed now... but it aches as if it's been torn open all over again.

And that's when it crashes into me-the truth. That's why his presence burned against my skin. Why I couldn't stop looking at him.

Why something primal stirred in me every time he spoke.

Because I know him.

Because I remember.

Everything.

Who I am.

Who he is.

My hands tremble violently as I remember whispering ”

Father...” through bloodied lips... as I bled out on the floor.

Maybe he didn’t plunge the blade into my chest himself-but Celestia is his daughter too. That makes him responsible. He allowed it. The only reason he didn’t kill me himself... is because some part of him must have known. Must have felt the same strange, painful connection I did.

But what if I weren’t his daughter?

Would I already be dead?

The thought slices through me like a fresh blade.

My heart aches. My wolf... she’s still silent but the emptiness that once haunted me is gone. I can feel her presence now-quiet but healing in her own way, just like

I am.

Then another realization strikes, and it sends my mind spiraling.

If the Alpha King is truly my father.... that would make Celestia-my sister?

Panic surges in my chest. The Moon Goddess must be cruel to bind me to such a fate. But something doesn’t feel right. Something feels... off.

Celestia is about my age-maybe a year older-but I don’t remember ever having a sister or sibling. I remember being an only child. Cherished. Protected. A mother and father who loved me completely.

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A life that never included her.

No bond. No warmth. No shared memories. No shared blood.

Because there isn't any.

There never was.

Just as that truth settles deep into my bones, the door creaks open behind me.

I don't need to look to know who it is.

His aura hits first-ancient, powerful, oppressive.

The Alpha King.

I raise my eyes, and they meet his. For one long, heavy moment, we just stare at each other. His emerald eyes mirror mine, filled with a sorrow and pain I don't want to understand.

I drop my gaze—not out of fear, but because looking at him feels like tearing open old wounds that barely started to heal.

"I didn't know you were awake," he says softly, his voice tight. "I would've come sooner. How are you feeling? Do you... remember anything?"

I steel myself. "No," I lie, flatly. "And I don't want to." Jack shifts beside me, about to say something, I see the hesitation in his eyes—he wants to give us space. He thinks maybe this is something I need.

It's not.

I grab his wrist before he can move. "Don't leave," I whisper. "Take me home. I want to go. I don't want to be here any longer."

"Kali..." Jack murmurs, his voice gentle, trying to reason with me. "He's been sitting by your side for days. He hasn't

"I said I don't want to be here," I cut in, sharper than I mean to. "I want to go home. Our home. Let's complete the bond, Jack. Please."

"Okay."

He lifts me gently, cradling me in his arms. I can feel the Alpha King's sorrow pressing against my spine-thick, suffocating-but I force myself not to turn around. I won't look at him. I won't let myself care.

Jack carries me past him, out of that room, out of that palace. He doesn't say a word-just holds me tighter.

Outside, a sleek black carriage is waiting-not what I expected.

I glance up at him, confused. “We can shift. Why are we-?”

He doesn’t answer right away, but I see the truth flicker in his eyes. He must know about the poison. About the risk.

That maybe... my wolf didn’t survive. He doesn’t say It— probably thinks I’m too scared to face it. He’s considerate like that.

And somehow... that warms my heart.

There’s so much I want to say-about Celestia, about his uncle, the one behind all of this. But the words stay trapped. I’m just too tired.

He helps me into the carriage, tucking a blanket around me with care. His hands linger on my shoulders, like he’s reluctant to let go.

“Sleep, my beautiful angel,” he whispers, pressing a soft kiss to my forehead. “I’ll wake you when we get home.”

And for the first time in days...

I finally feel safe enough to let go.-

I wake with a soft yawn, stretching slightly as my eyes flutter open-and blink in surprise when I see our home just outside the carriage window.

Turning to Jack, I narrow my eyes playfully. “You said you’d wake me.”

He grins, completely unbothered. “I was enjoying watching you sleep too much.”

I laugh, shaking my head as he opens the door with one arm and lifts me effortlessly, carrying me straight into our bedroom.

He sets me down gently on the bed, his face close to mine, eyes scanning me carefully. I see his throat bob as he swallows hard.

“I meant what I said earlier,” I murmur, brushing my fingers across his cheek. “I want us to complete the bond.”

He opens his mouth, his voice low and cautious. “Kali... we don’t need to rush. We have all the time in the world. You need rest-”

“I’ve slept enough for six days,” I cut in, my tone firmer now. “And yes, there is a need. Not having your mark nearly cost me everything. I don’t want to waste any more time, Jack.”

My voice wavers at the end. “Let’s finish this. Let’s complete the bond. Let’s mate.

He stares at me, eyes dark and intense, filled with emotion. “I’m so sorry for-”

I place a finger gently against his lips, stopping him.

“No apologies,” I whisper. “Just take me.”

Submission is Not My Style – Chapter 89

His lips curl into a slow grin against my fingertips, his eyes darkening into molten pools of heat and hunger.

Before I can brace for it, he scoops me off the bed and into his arms. A soft gasp escapes me as I cling to his strong shoulders, my heart fluttering.

“Why don’t we take a shower first?” He drawls, his voice thick and low, teasing. “You’ve been unconscious for days ...and I’ve been glued to your side. Pretty sure we both need one.”

I laugh, leaning my head against his chest. “So I stink?”

“No,” he murmurs, pressing a kiss to the top of my head, “but you smell too damn good for someone who hasn’t showered in six days. It’s distracting.”

He carries me straight into the bathroom and kicks the door shut behind him before finally setting me down on my feet. The tiles are cool beneath my toes, but Jack’s steady warmth behind me keeps the chill at bay.

“Here,” he says softly, his fingers brushing my arm. “Let me help you.”

I give a quiet nod, lowering my arms to my sides.

His fingers find the hem of my shirt, and he lifts it slowly, reverently, tugging it over my head and leaving me bare before him. His gaze roams over me, a raw hunger flickering in his eyes-but he holds himself back, jaw tight with restraint.

Without a word, he sinks to his knees. He eases my pants with restraint.

Without a word, he sinks to his knees. He eases my pants down, inch by inch, his fingers grazing my skin in featherlight strokes that leave a trail of fire. Then he slides my panties down with the same careful, deliberate touch, as if memorizing the feel of every inch of me.

When he rises again, towering over me, his breathing is uneven, chest rising and falling a little faster. His hands twitch at his sides, fighting the urge to touch.

I want him to touch me.

“Jack..” I whisper, my voice barely audible above the pounding of my heart. His eyes lock on mine, and the fire there steals my breath.

And then he strips. His shirt comes off, his pants next, and before I can catch my breath, he lifts me again and steps into the shower, the warmth of him pressed against me.

The water flows gently from above, steaming around us, fogging up the glass.

Jack stands behind me and starts to lather shampoo into my hair, his fingers threading through my strands, massaging my scalp with slow, delicious pressure. A moan slips from my lips, and he chuckles softly, nuzzling his face into the crook of my neck.

“God, I missed that sound,” he murmurs.

The suds run down my back as he rinses, his hands trailing gently down my shoulders, then my spine, then lower. He picks up the lavender-scented soap and rubs it between his palms before smoothing it over my skin. Over my arms. My stomach. My hips.

His fingers linger longer when they slide over my breasts, and I lean back into him, breath hitching.

“Still sure you’re feeling okay?” he murmurs into my ear.

“Getting better by the second,” I reply, breathless.

When he finishes, I slowly turn to face him, my hands finding the bottle of shampoo. “My turn.”

/ather it into his dark hair, my fingers massaging gently,

– and he lets out a groan-low, deep-that makes my toes curl.

“You’re going to kill me,” he mutters under his breath.

“Not yet,” I tease, rinsing his hair. “We haven’t even finished bonding.”

His eyes lock with mine, full of unspoken promises and burning intensity. I pick up the same lavender-scented soap and begin to glide it over his chest, down the hard planes of his torso, over his arms, around his back.

And then... I pause, biting back a laugh.

Because there he is.

Long, awake, and definitely paying attention.”I see someone’s wide awake,” I say innocently.

He smirks. “He missed you too.”

The heat between us thickens, swirling with the steam around us. But we don’t speak-not really. We don’t need to. Not with the way our bodies speak for us.

His hand finds my cheek, cupping it gently. His thumb brushes soft, soothing circles over my skin as he leans closer, his breath warm against my lips.

“I’ve never been more afraid in my life than when I saw you lying there... unconscious for so long,” he breathes against my lips, resting his forehead against mine.

“I’m here now, Jack... with you. And I’m never leaving.”

As soon as those words leave my mouth, his lips crash down on mine in a bruising kiss that steals the breath from my lungs.

His mouth moves against mine-hot, fast, and desperate-Like he’s been starving for me, like waiting even another second would kill him. I melt into him, kissing him back with everything I have, loving the feeling of him consuming me.

I’m delirious with pleasure as his hands roam my slick, wet skin. He cups my ass, squeezing gently, and I gasp softly into his mouth-he swallows the sound hungrily, his tongue dominating mine with urgency. Goddess, I want this man.

Submission is Not My Style – Chapter 90

His fingers skim slowly along the side of my waist, teasingly, ghosting just beneath the swell of my breast before cupping it in his large palm, pulling another moan from deep in my throat.

His lips leave mine just long enough to turn off the water.

Then he scoops me into his arms again, and I cling to his shoulders as he carries me out of the shower.

He sets me down gently on the counter by the sink.! barely have time to catch my breath before he’s wrapping a soft, white towel around my shoulders. Then he grabs another, smaller one, and begins patting my wet hair dry-but all I can focus on are his lips, so close to mine, so full and kissable.

I move before I can think, pressing my lips to his in a soft, hungry kiss.

He growls low in approval and grips my thighs, pulling them apart as he steps between my legs. His hands slide to my hips, kneading the soft skin before slipping down between my thighs.

I gasp when his fingers brush my sensitive center. His smirk presses against my lips as he teases slow, torturous circles over my clit. My toes curl, my head falls back, and a sound between a gasp and moan slips from my lips.

His mouth trails to my neck, lips grazing my mark as he sucks gently, his strokes on my clit growing faster, more desperate. I cry out as my hips buck, coating his fingers with my arousal.

He hums against my throat, tongue dragging languidly over my mark, sending waves of pleasure through my entire body.

I'm so lost in the haze of lust I barely notice when he lifts me again, carrying me out of the bathroom. A small sigh of satisfaction leaves me as his weight settles over mine on the couch. He grips my thighs and spreads them wide open.

I feel the hard length of him slide against my dripping entrance, teasing me, coaxing soft, needy moans from deep in my chest. His lips trail down the valley between my breasts, his thumb flicking over one already-hardened peak.

I shiver when his warm mouth wraps around my nipple, sucking gently, while his other hand massages the other breast. I writhe under him, desperate for more.

Then he slides a finger inside me-slowly.

I cry out, gripping his shoulders, the sound of my pleasure bouncing off the walls as he adds another finger and thrusts deeper.

He releases my nipple with a soft pop, his eyes locking onto mine. Slowly, he withdraws his fingers, glistening with my arousal, and brings them to his lips-licking them clean without breaking eye contact. I feel him shift above me, the thick, hard length of him nudging at my entrance. My legs wrap around his waist on instinct, my body craving him.

"I've waited so long for this, Kali... I'm done waiting," he growls, low and guttural.

Then he thrusts into me in one smooth, hard motion.

I gasp, my eyes flying open to meet his. He stills, jaw tight, waiting as I adjust around him. I grip his shoulders, urging him silently with my body to move.

He begins to thrust, slow and hard. Every stroke steals the breath from my lungs. He grips my thighs, kissing me with the same intensity, swallowing every sound I make.

His pace quickens. The obscene, wet sounds of us fill the room.

"Open your eyes," he growls against my lips. "I want to see you when you come undone."

My eyes snap open, locking onto his just as the orgasm slams into me. I cry out, trembling, convulsing around him as wave after wave rolls through me.

He doesn't slow down. He drives into me through the pleasure, chasing his own release. His thrusts become rougher, more erratic, his breath ragged and uneven. Then with a deep, guttural groan, his body jerks, and I feel him spill inside me-hot, deep, and full-filling me completely.

He collapses over me, bracing himself with one arm beside my head. His other hand rises to my cheek, fingers brushing with a tenderness that makes my chest ache.

Our eyes meet.

He kisses me again-slow, reverent. A kiss that says everything he doesn't have the words for. A kiss that marks me all over again,

And then I feel him-already hardening against my thigh.

A helpless moan escapes my lips, swallowed by his mouth.

He pulls back, eyes dark and full of sin, that familiar wicked smirk curving his lips. But this time, there's something deeper in his gaze-something carnal.

Claiming.

Without a word, he scoops me into his arms again and strides toward the bed with confidence. He doesn't set me down gently this time.

He throws me.

Onto soft sheets that barely catch me before he's climbing over me like a predator that hasn't had his fill.

"Round one was for you," he growls, voice rough and dripping with dominance. "Now..." His fingers curl around my thighs, dragging me down the bed toward him. "Now, it's my turn."

And I already know-I won't be walking tomorrow.