

Symphony of Death

Chapter 26

I slumped on the settee at last. I had cleaned the apartment, finished the laundry, and washed the dinner plates.

My order was complete and waiting to be dispatched. In short, I had nothing to do.

Nat and Angie had gone back home. They wanted to stay with me for Christmas, but I didn't want them away from their families.

They should cherish these moments, not lose them.

I was alone at the apartment. Alone—and miserable.

Shae made herself comfortable beside me on the settee.

"What are you thinking, Ana?" she asked.

"Nothing." I smiled at her. "Would you like some chocolate milk, Shae? I know you love it."

I laughed when she meowed. "Wait here."

I went to the kitchen to get her milk. I took out the bottle from the refrigerator and poured it into her favorite bowl.

"Should I warm it?"

"Yes, please," Shae replied cheerfully.

I took the bowl to the oven and watched Shae over my shoulder. She didn't seem to be paying attention to me.

"Sorry," I whispered.

I added the sleeping pills to her milk and mixed it properly before placing the bowl in the microwave.

She wouldn't let me step out alone otherwise. Not after what happened last time.

Her surveillance had become strict after my encounter with Xoran.

It wasn't about me anymore. It was a big mistake to return.

The reason I forced Angie and Nat to go home—I couldn't endanger them because of me.

I should have thought rationally. Now my pride was being a pain.

My head would explode if I didn't step out. I needed a clear head before reaching a conclusion.

I returned to the living area and set the bowl on the table.

I smiled when Shae drank her milk merrily. "I'm going to bed early. You sleep, okay? Don't stay up all night for my sake."

I waited for her to finish and took the bowl to the kitchen to wash.

When I came back, Shae was fast asleep. I exhaled in relief. It worked.

"Sorry, Shae." I carried her to my bed and tucked her in. "But I need to be alone."

I felt guilty, but I was left with no choice.

I grabbed the beer bottles from the fridge and left the apartment.

I had no destination in mind when I came out of the building and hailed a cab. I just wanted to go somewhere quiet—away from the crowd.

"Take me to Fairthon," I told the driver.

The night lights blurred as the cab sped to my destination.

Why is life doing this to me?

I was startled out of my thoughts when the driver announced that we had reached.

I paid the fare and got out.

I looked up at the tall building and then at Cain's ring on my index finger. It pinched my heart every time I gazed at it.

I went inside and rode the elevator to the rooftop.

This rundown building had been turned into a conservatory of plants.

There was a green restaurant, a few ecofriendly stores, small offices, and green workshops.

This masterpiece stayed open round the clock to the public.

The view of the rooftop garden took my breath away. The air, crisp and cool, was saturated with the scent of flowers.

I took off my shoes before climbing the mezzanine floor.

I plopped down on the cool grass and opened the first bottle.

I knew I was being irrational. Being here alone could invite trouble for me.

But I needed room to breathe. I needed to take the load off my chest.

I was half wasted by the sixth bottle. The world started spinning around me.

I cursed to my heart's content while pointing to the starless sky.

As if I was not aching enough, he had to associate me with someone like her.

I wanted to scream my pain for the first time. I wanted to tell the Almighty how unfair and cruel he was to me.

I fell on my back. "At least give a solution to the problem your grandiosity created," I slurred.

"Angie and Nat—they are in danger because I exist." I palmed my chest—my aching heart.

"I refuse to believe it!" I screamed. "Do whatever you want, I don't care. I won't take the blame for someone else. I won't let anyone treat me like shit. I won't let Cain—"

The pain in my heart worsened.

"I'm Anastasia, do you hear me? I am Ana, not some sick bitch who kills for power. I am not selfish."

I fished out my phone from my pocket and called Cain.

It rang endlessly. I wasn't going to drop the call. He had to answer. He had to listen to me.

He did what he wanted; he behaved how he pleased. He blamed me for things I didn't do.

Not anymore. I won't let him do this to me anymore.

He wasn't the only one suffering. I was in pain too.

"Hello?"

I rubbed my eyes to clear my vision.

"May I speak to Mr. Cain Black?"

"You can't even recognize my voice?"

I pulled the phone away from my ear and focused on the screen. After much struggle, I finally managed to read his name.

"Hello, Cain," I giggled. "I am Anastasia Grace. Pleased to meet you."

"Are you drunk?"

I couldn't stop laughing.

"It's so dark here, Cain," I drawled. "I won't be eaten by Anima, right? That man won't come for me again, will he? I didn't like what he did. It was so scary."

I fell on my back.

"I can't reach my friends," I mumbled. "I don't know how to get back home. My head is hurting so much."

"Where is Shae?"

He sounded angry. It broke my heart.

Couldn't he just not care about the stupid curse and that woman? Couldn't he just look at me for once?

"Anastasia?"

"Hmm?" I replied meekly.

"You are wearing my ring?"

I looked at my left hand. I hummed softly.

"Nothing will harm you then."

"Cain? Why am I alone?"

He didn't answer.

"Why did I have to go through this?" My voice cracked. "I never hurt anyone in my life. I ate my vegetables too because Laurel cooked them."

"Don't move an inch, do you hear me?"

"You are not coming but sending someone to fetch me, right?" I snickered. "You don't want to deal with me because you hate me, Cain."

The phone fell out of my hand.

I lay still on the cool, damp grass, my eyes fixed on the sky.

I was losing touch with reality. I was impulsive.

But I didn't care.

Am I desperate just because I'm scared? Or...

Because he's the only one with me in this plight?

My throat felt heavy, but tears didn't come.

I wanted to scream, but my lips were locked. This was unfair.

I bore everything after that terrible night, when Cain slapped that ugly truth in my face. I was scared shitless when Xoran attacked me, but I didn't let anyone know.

I suffered alone in silence. But these bottled-up emotions were killing me now.

It was so painful that I wanted to die rather than endure another second of it.

"Why me?" I hiccupped. "Why me?"

I covered my face with my arms. *What was my fault?*