8. The Blazing Heat

XENDAYA.

The heatwaves are visible around me, rippling tauntingly in the surrounding air...

The burning heat is unbearable, almost as if it's incinerating my organs within my body...

My entire body is screaming in agony. It's too hot, my head feels like it's going to burst.

Night has fallen, yet I still stand.

I'm parched, my feet have long since numbed from the intense agony. The throbbing pain from the burns is something I have become accustomed to, but it's so intense that I can no longer feel where it starts and ends.

My head is ringing from the pain, but it's too overwhelming for me to process. I was moving around before trying to keep the heat off as much as possible, but I'm no longer able to move.

But I refuse to show any kind of weakness, refuse to show that I am in agony...

I am more wolf than vampire, but from my mother, I did inherit some of her strength, and I know right now it is that which is keeping me conscious.

Shayara has disappeared into the far corner of my mind to rest, her strength is still flowing through me, but the heat is too much for her

Listen

She's trying to help me in the best way possible and I need her at full strength, but right now, this is not something she can handle.

We had tried to look for a way out, but there was none.

He had thought this out perfectly. The small section that I am standing on is not enough for me to gain speed and momentum to leap over the rivers of lava.

And they are far too wide to even risk from such a small space. If I fall into them, I will die within seconds, even I know that.

Agnarr has the perfect prison for a non-dragon shifter...

I hate him.

Anger ripples through me as I hear the faint beat of a wing far above me.

He has someone watching me... I know it's not himself, of that I am sure. I don't know how, but I can feel his presence in a different way.

I focus on remaining standing, thinking I'm anywhere but here.

I'm not burning, I am not burning, I am not burning....

It doesn't hurt, it doesn't hurt, it doesn't hurt...

I chant in my head, trying to trick my brain into thinking that.

I'm in so much pain... How long will I be able to withstand it?

My wrist which broke when he had thrown me to the ground is still hurting. I obviously didn't manage to put it back into place correctly...

I'd rather die than show him that he has won, but at the same time, I

don't want my stubbornness to rob Shayara of a life she hasn't even gotten to live.

'Rob us.' She corrects me quietly.

'I'm sorry for bringing you into this.' I reply quietly.

'Don't be... it isn't your fault.'

We fall silent and I stare up at the red skies, lit ablaze with the glow of the burning rivers of this hell.

'Call out for help... we cannot stay here longer, Xenie... It hurts...'

'I know, but we will not bow to him.' I say, my eyes filled with anger. 'I will not bow to him...'

I know there's a chance he might not come, but I won't cry for help.

Ever.

AGNARR.

I swing my sword at Hazran and he blocks, grunting as I force him back. Another swing of my sword shatters his blade and I throw mine aside, throwing a punch at him instead.

"You need to bring her back," Hazran says, only making my anger bubble even more.

"I do not need to do anything! It's a punishment she deserves." I growl. My fist connects with his jaw and he is thrown to the ground, blood coating my fist.

I brush back the few strands of messy hair that had escaped and glare out at the blood-red setting sun. Through this smoky air, only at sunrise and sunset is the sun able to penetrate it.

The second day has gone by, yet not one sound has left her.

Not one plea for help. She's still standing, refusing to even bow to the pain I know she is in.

Her arrogance is worse than any dragon I have come across.

"She is powerful, Agnarr. I'm sure she can give you many powerful sons," Hazran grunts as he gets to his feet.

The doors are thrown open and Kaizoran walks inside, taking in the scene before him.

"If she is in good health, only then can she give birth to hatchlings," he says firmly, a frown on his face.

"That, and if she allows him to her bed... I heard that she refused you," Hazran says with a grimace, as he sits there panting in pain.

I cock a brow, giving him a deadly glare.

"If I wanted her, I can have her." I snarl.

"Yet if you controlled your anger, you could have more than that," Kaizoran says, folding his arms.

The fool is the voice of reason that I do not want to hear, nor do I need.

I wouldn't force a woman... because I've seen that happen...

I push the dark memory away, trying to control my rage and slam my

hands into the wall behind me with enough force that could bring it down.

The entire building trembles, but it withstands my rage.

These walls are enforced with ancient magic, and they will withhold any attack. I smirk as I touch the dark stone.

A place Nefzaan would kill to have...

"Very well then, it's been one and a half days, you can bring her back," I say. Neither moves and I turn to them. "Am I speaking a language you do not speak?" I growl.

"She is your bride. You should bring her back. Although she is very beautiful." Hazran says.

I smirk. "I know she is, but I will not go to get her. You want to bring her back, so bring her."

"Do you entrust the pretty thing to us?' Kaizoran smirks.

"I share everything with you." I retort, glaring at him before I wipe my face with a towel and walk out of the room, hearing them chuckle.

They can advise me, but ultimately I am the King.

I don't have the time to go get her, or is it that I do not want to see the state she is in?

No, it's not that.

I make my way down the halls. I had made an attack of my own on one of Nefzaan's smaller tribes... but killing a few meaningless warriors was not

enough.

I need to do something more...

I pull off my clothes as I enter my quarters and get into the bath, letting the blood wash off me.

I'm out in minutes and I pull on some clean pants and boots before I drop onto the armchair beside the window and put my legs up on the table before me.

Time is running out and Nefzaan's reign is growing. We have attacked one another for years... Neither making any more of a headway on finding what we both need to win the true throne.

Do I honour my grandfather's wishes?

Do I focus on what he wanted or take what I want? 1

We dragons live for thousands of years... things that have once been said and done have been forgotten by many, but our memories do not fail us.

I lift up the small scale on the rope around my neck and stare at it.

I had a name picked out for you. I wanted to teach you how to be an excellent warrior, how to use the sword and fly through the skies. I was certain you would be an Obsidian Dragon... but you didn't even make it out of the womb before your life was robbed from you... 1

I lean back in my seat and stare at the ceiling.

Friya...

She was one of the slave women I had taken after an attack on one of the

Silver Dragon's lands... a beauty who caught my attention and I had made it clear to the men she'll be mine alone.

I don't mind sharing, but I had a strong feeling she could give me a hatchling. I was right.

It had barely been half a year when she told me she was with child, and I had never been prouder.

I was to become a father...

"Agnarr! You need to come now!" I am brought from my thoughts when Dagnoth appears at the door, pushing open the doors.

I frown slightly as I stand up.

"What is it?"

"The Wolf Princess, come quick!" Concern is etched on his face.

"What about her?" I ask as I stride past him and down the hall.

I can't smell her... where is she?

"She's in terrible condition. She's with the healers in the infirmary." He says, worry clear on his face. "Agnarr, you went too far. She is not a Fire Dragon."

How bad can it be?

I push open the door to the infirmary to see her lying on the bed. I can only recognise her from the top of her curly hair. The top layer of her skin has burnt off and where it was once a beautiful brown, it is now a raw red. Her hair is half the length it was, charred and burned away...

A thin cotton sheet covers her midriff, but her legs...

They are barely recognisable.

She's suffered from extreme burns... she should be dead...

What have I done?

"You took it too far," Kaizoran says, his piercing eyes fixed on me.

I remain emotionless as I stare down at her burnt, swollen legs.

A surge of emotions that I don't want to acknowledge surges up inside of me, but I simply turn away from the woman on the bed.

"Did you not say she was standing?" I ask emotionlessly.

She couldn't have been in this state.

I told him to let me know the moment she fell.

"She was, only when the wind from beneath my wings pushed her, did she fall and end up losing consciousness. It was her sheer will that kept her standing." Dagnoth replies, guilt in his voice.

"Make sure she doesn't die, or I will sacrifice you all," I warn the healers and my friends alike before I turn my back on them all and leave the room without another glance.

I do not understand this woman, but her strength intrigues me.

I walk slowly, hearing the panicked pleas of the healers, the fear that they were not going to be able to save her.

Her heartbeat is weak, and I hesitate before I swallow and look towards

one of the open archways at the dark sky.

Have I killed her?

I take flight through them, revelling in the wind that passes beneath my wings.

I will not think of her.

She will make it.

I know she will.

Moonlight Muse Author

Thank you for reading, I have another chapter partially written. The aim is to write Luna first tomorrow and then if I have time complete the next chapter for this book. ♡♡♡

175

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