



141 AN AGREEMENT

They stood waiting for the Queen to command them to attack Xaden, but she waved her hands down, indicating that they should drop their weapons. **1**

They did so reluctantly.

"And I have said that I am certain that she had no hand in what happened." She said. "She was aware, yes, but she didn't try to kill you. Xaden, you are much wiser than this. Why didn't she deny it all from the beginning? Why accept one and then deny another?"

"Because she wants you to believe her. She wants her sympathizer to think like you're thinking, Your Majesty." He said. "Your majesty, when my entire family was being massacred, you did not say a word. You had the power to stop it, and yet you did not."

The Queen went quiet.

"I remember you visiting us when I was only a child." He said. "You were my mother's friend, and then, yet you let her be murdered, let my entire family be killed senselessly without a fair trial."

She hated being reminded of the past.



"Xaden, the past is the past." She said.

He would never understand the truth if she had explained it to him. 1

"Your mother was my friend, and I wish I could stop what had happened to her and your entire family." She said. "I swear it. But we can not look back."

Xaden held the sheets in anger.

"The only thing I will do is look back, Your Majesty." He said. "This is my pack, and you do not have a say here. You will not

Interfere. I am ready to go to war with you."

She saw how hard he was, and she did not blame him.

Her guard stood ready to attack, and she had to wave her hands down again for them to relax.

She sighed.

"What will you want?" She asked him. "I will owe you a royal favor. Whatever you want shall be given."

She took off her ring and showed it to him.

"You know what this is?" She asked him.

It was made of wolf bones and, if handed to a nonmember of the royal family, meant one favor: a debt to be repaid.



"Take it." She said. "You will let Jasmine live and free her from sleeping in the dungeon."

He looked at it.

"She will wear the chains wherever she goes." He said after a while. "And she will be subjected to merciless hard labor."

"She will be given some hours to paint." She said to him.

He looked at her in surprise.

"Paint?"

Rose smiled. "She has a rare talent that needs channeling. You will give her this opportunity. That is my agreement."

He was quiet for snails, but then he finally accepted it.

"I agree." He said.

And then he received the ring.

"I also have another proposition for you." She said.

He frowned.

"I wish that you marry my granddaughter." She said.

"I have no intentions of being tied to any woman." He said.



"But you're bonded to one." She said matter of fact.

"It is not the same thing." He said. "I had my reasons, and I am sure you know them."

"I want you to marry Belle because no one else is good for her." She advised. "She will ascend the throne when she clocks twenty-one, and I might not always be there. Even with me, Belle still runs wild. She needs someone firm. Someone who would make the right decisions for her."

He scoffed. "Belle doesn't listen to anyone."

"Oh but she will listen to you." She said. "You wish to tell me that you are not aware that Belle is in love with you?"

He said nothing to that.

"You are the best candidate I have." She said

"Why me?" He asked. "I don't care about the crown or any of that fancy stuff."

"And that is why I want you." She said. "You are not hungry for the crown. You are not interested in it. And yet, I have seen you with the people you care for. You will destroy a mountain for one lost sheep in your pack, Xaden. That is hard to come by, and that is why it is you I want."

She cleared her throat. "Moreover we are only honoring the agreement between our families.



You might have found your mate when you were a child, but Belle was always betrothed to you. You were always going to be King."

"That was a long time ago." He said "times have changed."

"Think about it." She said.

She rose up from her seat.

"Thank you for your time, Xaden." She said, indicating that they had finished this conversation. Then, her guards stood at attention, clearing the way for her out.

"Your majesty." He said. "You said there were two reasons why I wouldn't never kill Jasmine."

She stopped and turned. "Yes?"

"You only gave one." He said.

She took in a deep breath. "Xaden, you never give a way of expression for anything. But whenever Jasmine is brought up, you give away. You feel."

He looked at her blankly

"I've never seen you feel." She said. "But you do feel. Goodbye Xaden.

Without much explaining, she left the room.

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Then, the Queen resumed speaking to Jasmine.

"I had a chat with Xaden." She said. "And he promised me. You will be allowed to paint, but he insisted that you carry on your duties as an enslaved person. He also insists that you never take off those chains."

Jasmine nodded and went to her feet. "I am more than grateful for what you are doing for me, Your Majesty."

The Queen forced her to sit back.

"It's the least I could do." She said. "Especially since you saved my life."

Jasmine shook her head as she leaned to pick up her tea and take a sip.

"It was nothing, your majesty." She said.

The Queen frowned when she saw something on Jasmine's neck glimmer. 1

"What is that?"