



## 144 MARIE MEETS JASMINE

Once the royal family had gone and the other Alphas followed behind with their carriages and entourage, the crowd began to disperse. 1

Jasmine turned around to face Loren.

"What do you know?" he asked.

She sighed and swallowed. "When we get to your quarters, I'll tell you. I can't trust anyone overhearing us."

"Did you eat anything from the dungeon?" he asked her suspiciously.

Jasmine shook her head. "No, I didn't."

She had already learned her lesson ever since she had almost been killed from eating the dried bread on her first day there. She knew better than to accept anything from them.

He nodded, and just as they were about to leave, the guards stopped them.

They stood right in front of Jasmine, blocking her way.

"What is the meaning of this?" Loren asked, extremely annoyed. "She has been ordered to return to my quarters, and she has also been made to—under no circumstances, by order of



the Queen—return to the dungeon.”

The guard raised his hand. “But it was agreed that the slave is to wear her heavy chains no matter where she goes.”

Jasmine looked down at their hands and saw that they were holding the heavy, rusty chains.

She swallowed heavily.

“It’s the Alpha’s order that she wears these,” he said.

Loren started to complain. “This is absurd. She can’t possibly be going anywhere, look at where —”

“Loren, you don’t need to worry,” she assured him. “It’s just the chains. Don’t get into any trouble over me.”

She turned back to the guards. “I will wear the chains willingly. No one has to get hurt.”

The head guard smirked, and she saw a streak of hatred in his eyes.

“You were always going to wear the chains whether you liked it or not,” he said.

He snapped his fingers, and the other guards proceeded to roughly fasten the chains, binding her ankles together.

She tried to move her feet and realized they



were even heavier than the last ones.

How was she ever going to swim in her lake again with this much weight dragging her down?

She would drown.

She sighed, and just as she was about to turn and leave with Loren, the guards blocked her way again.

"She is already wearing the chains. What else do you want?" an angry Loren asked.

The guard turned to face Loren. "Mind your business, old man. This has nothing to do with you."

Loren gasped. "Old man? Oh, once I turn you into an ugly little toad, you will no longer have the mouth to call me an old man."

"Loren, please," Jasmine begged him.

But he ignored her and resumed his heated argument with the guard.

They began to attract attention as people whispered all around, watching the altercation.

She blushed in embarrassment, unable to stop it.

She wasn't worried about Loren—she was worried for the guard, who had no idea what he was dealing with.



As she stood there, she suddenly felt whispers behind her.

As if someone was right behind her, breathing on her back, watching her.

She made a sharp turn and saw a woman with long black locs and beautiful brown skin. 2

Where had she seen this woman before?

She was certain she had seen her somewhere before but where she could not place a finger on.

Why did she look so familiar?

The woman smiled, revealing her teeth.

"Ahh, I see you can sense me," the woman said. "I have been doing this for a long time, but no one could ever sense my presence. You are quite special girl."

Jasmine frowned. "Who are you?"

"Oh, my apologies. I am Marie—an acquaintance of the Alpha," the woman said.

Then Jasmine remembered her.

It was the same woman Xaden had brought into the hall that afternoon—the one who had accused the spy her father sent of killing Alexander.

Jasmine's guard went up in reflex.



Everything within her told her not to trust this woman.

It was the same inner warning she had felt when she first met Princess Cherry.

"You," Jasmine said in acknowledgment. "You accused him of killing that man. It is not true."

The woman smiled. "Really? How would you know that? I am the seer, not you."

The woman circled her, and Jasmine turned to keep her in view.

"Because I know he didn't kill him," she said. "You lied. Why?"

"What makes you think so? The only way that would be possible is if you were the one who killed him yourself," the woman responded.

"I had no hand in it," Jasmine said. "If you were a true seer and not a false one, then you would know this. I knew he was here, but I had no hand in anyone's murder."

"Fierce," the woman said. "It's unbelievable."

Then the woman grasped Jasmine's jaw.

Jasmine tried to pull free. "Don't touch me."

But the woman smacked her hand away and held on to her even more fiercely.

She gasped. "So much power. You have no idea."



Jasmine looked at the woman in disgust. "I said don't touch me! Don't touch me you dirty whore!"

And then, surprisingly, the woman drew her hand away as if she had been burned.

She gasped and held her hands together.

Jasmine looked on in surprise as the woman breathed heavily.

She wondered why the woman had pulled away so suddenly, as if she had been scalded.

"Jasmine!"

She turned around to see Loren walking up to her.

She looked at him.

The guards were huddled in a circle, looking at something on the ground.

"What happened?" she asked him.

He waved a hand dismissively. "Nothing. Let's go."

She turned back to see the woman, but she was gone—vanished into thin air.

"What is the matter?" Loren asked curiously

She shook her head. "Nothing. What happened to the guard?"



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"He learned his lesson," Loren said as he pulled her away.

Meanwhile, the guards were left staring at their head guard—who had been turned into a brown toad, croaking.

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