266 THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

"Why did you do it?" He asked her. 1

She froze and then swallowed hard.

She stopped eating.

"Do not stop eating." He urged her.

She sighed softly.

"I want you to tell me everything. And no lies." He said. "You have lied enough."

She flinched as it hurt by his words but nodded.

The wolf at her feet yawned and she was drawn to it.

"Where are you from?" She asked sweetly.

She gently reached out her hand to its ears.

He put his head against her hand and began to act sweet. 1

She smiled as she gently petted him□"He usually does not get comfortable with people. Not even those that I have asked him to watch over." Erik said.

"Oh but he looks like a sweet pie. Such a sweet boy." She said as she gently nuzzled him.

He turned on his back and let her rub his stomach.

"What is his name?" She asked.

"Kire." He said as he watched in fascination and disbelief as she very gently petted the wolf like it was a simple pup and not a very dangerous creature. "He is my other half so his name is backwards of mine. Erik and then Kire."

She looked at him. "Your other half? He is yours?"

"He is my wolf." Erik said. "I separated him from my soul."

She gasped at him letting her hand drop.

Kire rubbed around her trying to reach lord for her sweet petting. 1

"You separated him. I thought that that was just a myth." She said.

"It does in fact happen." He said. "I do it. But occasionally. Only when it is necessary."

She looked back down at Kire who was still reaching out for her.

"He is well...." She said.

"Small?" He asked raising a brow 1

"Yes. I have seen you when you turned to your wolf. It is almost about seven feet tall." She said. "I expected the same."

"Oh he will get there." Erik said leaning back in his chair. "By tomorrow morning he should be his full height. The process of separating him from my body has to be subdued. After some hours he will go to his true size. And then at the same time he can drop down. It's all up to him. He should have changed by now."

Kire played around and the sniffed at her plate. 1

She picked up the piece of steak that has been prepared for her to hand to him. 1

"Bad boy." Erik reprimanded him. "You don't go around taking things." 1

Kire whimpered but she laughed and handed him the steak. "Oh let him. He probably hasn't eaten in forever. He must be very hungry."

And then she gave him and he ate it.

Then he lay at her feet and proceeded to sleep.

She had been dreading the moment when Kire would rest and then the attention will turn back on her.

"You brought him out for me. Why?" She asked.

"I do not trust the other men on the ship." He said with all earnest. "They want you dead. But with Kire around you for a while. They will do nothing."

She shook her long red hair. "That is not what I mean. I know the men all want me dead. I ask why you do not want me dead. You should."

"Well I wonder too. I want to know why I should not want you dead like the other men." He said. "So tell me. Start from the beginning."

She at the last but of bread in her hand and then she started. 1

"I was born a bastard." She said. "I grew up without my mother and my father was the Alpha of the pack. I should have never survived. I was so sickly and premature. They had all belived that I would die the same way the angel of darkness took my mother. But I lived. My father never acknowledged me. He was so indifferent. Like I did not exist. But you see his wife Luna Maria? She hated me from the moment she set eyes on me. I was a reminder of her husband's infidelity. I was a reminder that she had not borne him the first child but my mother who was a slave had. And so she used every chance she had to have me beat up. Punished. I had only rags as clothes and no one

cared for me in the pack. Except for Urma the healer and she had her limits. Her daughter Jessica hated me as much and I was always taunted."

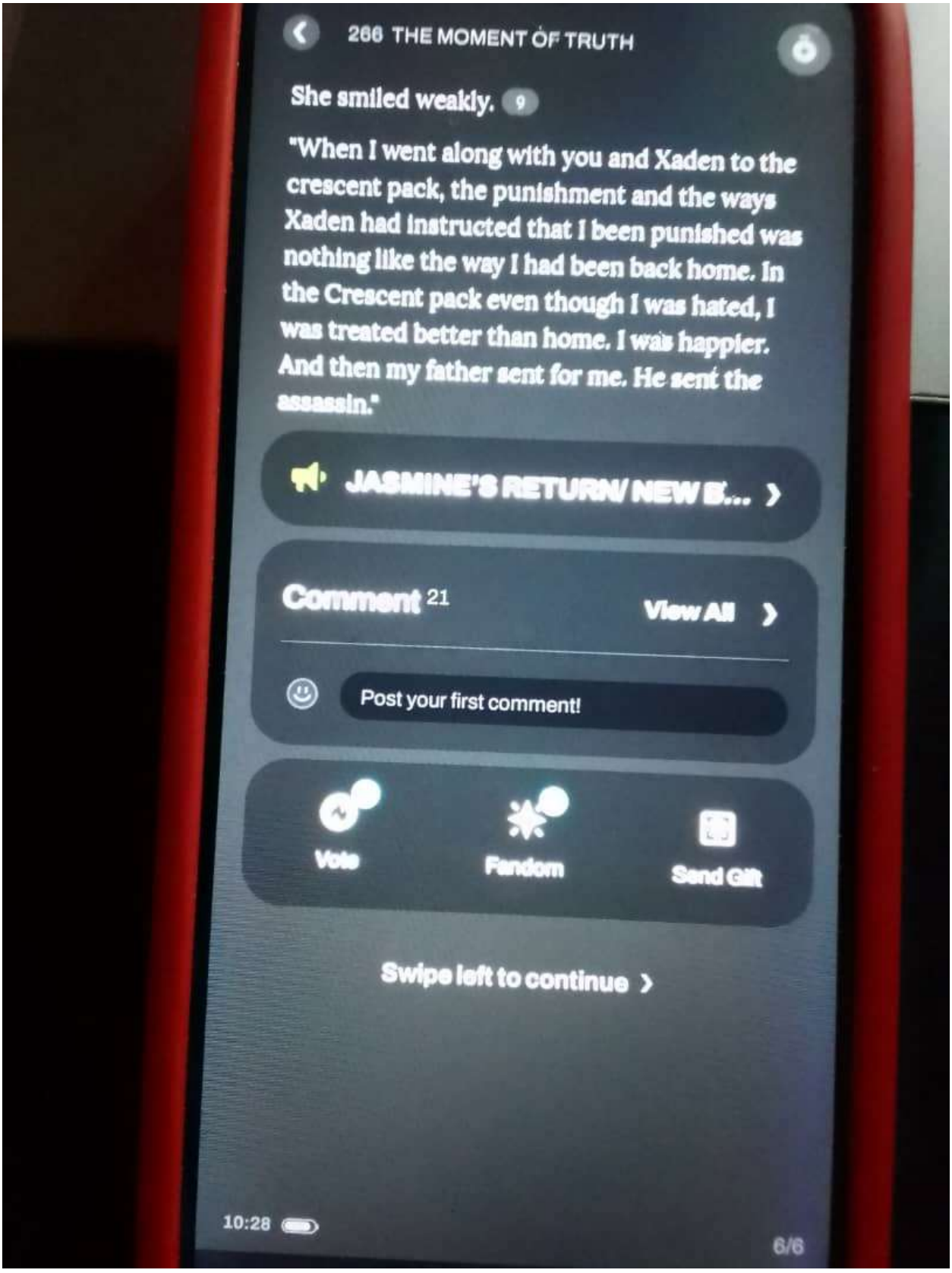
"The marks that I have on my body and all the signs of beatings were from them. All their orders. I was under them and I had to do as they told."

"Why didn't you run?" Erik asked.

"To where?" She said her voice breaking with a very bitter laugh. "Where was I running to? Who did I know? Who will take me in. They hated me but it was the only family I had ever known."

She swallowed hard and looked down at her hands as she continued. "And then Xaden came and everything changed. It was chaos. My father came and met me and told me that I was to present myself as his legitimate daughter."

"I still did not understand what was happening. I only had one instruction. Not to disgrace tjem and act like Fiona. So I did. I walked down the aisle and met Alpha Xaden. Even when he took my virginity, I had to take it down and pretend to be their daughter. They knew what was going to happen and I was still cast to the slaughter table." 2


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She smiled weakly. 9
"When I went along with you and Xaden to the crescent pack, the punishment and the ways Xaden had instructed that I been punished was nothing like the way I had been back home. In the Crescent pack even though I was hated, I was treated better than home. I was happier. And then my father sent for me. He sent the assassin."
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