267 NO ANNA

She picked up a goblet of wine and sipped. 1

Then she caught her breath again and resumed speaking.

"He sent a desert assassin after me."

"The one who attacked Xaden?" Erik asked.

"No. That was someone else. I have no idea who sent that woman. But my father sent the male desert assassin. The assassin came straight to demand why I had not been sending word to my father through our lines. But I am unshifted and hence I can not send word to him. So he came back a day later and gave me a message owl. The one you saw. He instructed that I send feedback on what was going on in the pack or I will be killed." 7

"He would have not done anything." Erik said.

"But did I know?" She asked honestly. "I had such low self esteem and I did not belive in myself. And I was badly craving my father's love. He said he was going to finally take me as his daughter and I will no longer be a bastard if I did as he asked. I was torn between being afraid of him and needing to 1

Please him."

She sighed and adjusted her seat. "So I did it. I told him about the halo festival and how I had been made the maiden. Eventually he would have replied but I never got it. Things happened and when I saw my father for who he truly was, I decided that I was not going to obey him anymore. I was no longer scared of him. So I sent for the owl to tell him that I was done."

"But you never got around to doing that did you?" Erik asked.

She shook her head. "I was going to tell Xaden the entire truth the day I was attacked by Aurora. I was heading to him when it all happened. Fiona was there. She knew it."

"Xaden is very angry with Fiona." Erik said. "I doubt that she will be able to convince him or that he will listen to what she has to say to him."

She cleared her throat. "I do not blame him. And I only feel horrible that i out Fiona in trouble. It is my fault." 1

Erik shrugged and rose up to his feet.

He began pacing the room.

"So your father has his legitimate spoiled

daughter somewhere in the pack." Erik said.

"Yes."

"And he used you as a sacrificial lamb." He asked.

She gritted her teeth in shame at his words.

"Yes."

"There is no need to be ashamed. You loved your family. People do stupid things in love." He assured her. "The only difference is that they did not move you back." 1

"I know that now." She admitted.

"And what about Anna?" He asked.

"Who is Anna?" She asked lost.

"That is the name of Xaden's sister." Erik said. "What do you know about Anna?"

She shook her head. "The story does not add up. There is no such person as Anna in the pack. If there was then Bale will not hide it. He would have openly abused her."

"Are you sure?" Erik asked him. "Because there was some magic used to subdue her scent. That was what we smelled in her hair."

"But that makes no sense." Jasmine said after so

much thought. "If she was truly in the pack and maltreating her, then why while he bother to subdue her scent." 5

Erik had thought about it too and it had made no sense to him.

Xaden had been overcome with that fact that his sister had been maltreated all her life but it made no sense why Bale would still hide her.

"You are sure that there is no such person in the pack?" He asked. "You are certain. Not even in the dungeons."

She shook her head vehemently . "No. I am certain. I frequently cleaned the dungeons. There was no such girl. Not even through the hidden catacombs. Look my lord. No one in the pack has been treated in the pack as badly as I have been. No one. If you ask the workers they will tell you. No one. And why would he hide her?"

Erik sighed deeply. "Maybe to hide it from the royal family? Bale had committed a very serious offense. If they knew that he had still carried some people from the crescent pack massacre then he would have been punished. Even the accord has limitations you know."

"Perhaps." She sighed. "But I tell you that there

is no such person in the pack. If it were even true, I would have heard rumors about it. That was how I had learned that I was a bastard. People talk." 3

Erik sighed. "When we get to the moonlight pack we will find out if it was true or not."

She nodded.

"And back to the topic of bastard. Did you know anything about your mother? Who she was?" He asked.

She shook her head. "No I do not." 1

Then she pulled out the broken emeral necklace. "This is the only thing that I have that belonged to my mother. Urma gave it to me." 1

"Can I see?" Erik asked.

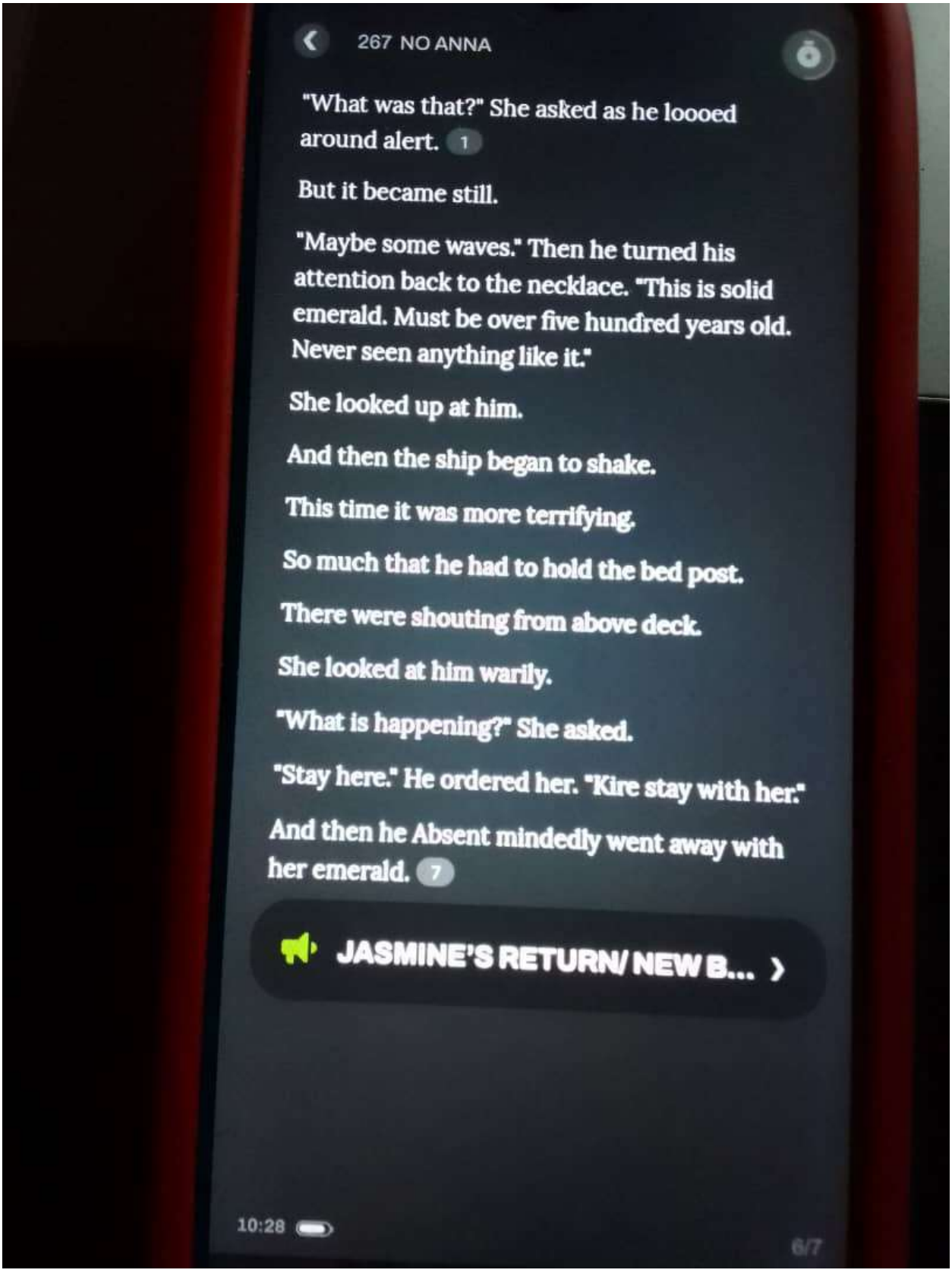
She nodded and then she slowly took it off. "I have never taken it off before."

"It will be just a second." He said.

He walked up to her and opened his palm out to her .

She gently dropped it.

And just at the moment it switched hands, the ship began to shake. 1


267 NO ANNA
"What was that?" She asked as he loooed around alert. 1
But it became still.
"Maybe some waves." Then he turned his attention back to the necklace. "This is solid emerald. Must be over five hundred years old. Never seen anything like it."
She looked up at him.
And then the ship began to shake.
This time it was more terrifying.
So much that he had to hold the bed post.
There were shouting from above deck.
She looked at him warily.
"What is happening?" She asked.
"Stay here." He ordered her. "Kire stay with her."
And then he Absent mindedly went away with her emerald. 7
JASMINE'S RETURN/ NEW B...
10:28
6/7