

The Alpha King's Claim chapter 71

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The Alpha King's Claim chapter 71

(Earlier this morning...)

Aero

Elijah continued to walk beside me when I entered the throne room. Two guards immediately lowered their heads. With a flick of Elijah's hand, they left. I found this unusual. He usually wasn't sensitive to extra eyes on us.

"I'm happy to see you finally found your true mate, brother," he stated, stopping at the base of the stairs while I continued to climb up.

"Same goes to you," I stated over my shoulder, hinting his relationship with Serena's friend.

"Well, ye...ah, about that," he replied hesitantly. I picked up an uneasiness from him that instant.

"You have a request," I said, more of a statement than a question when I sat down my throne.

Elijah wasn't the type to ask a request from me. He only does it when needed, and I sensed this was exactly that time.

"I'm planning to propose to Rhea, brother, and I need your cooperation to make this moment special," he answered, looking determined all of a sudden.

I arched up a brow.

"Just propose to her straightaway, you don't need any fancy set-up," was my quick reply. To be frank, I didn't want to be bothered by this kind of drama. It's unnecessary and the preparations were a pain in the ass. Well, this was how I felt for other couples. With Serena, I'd gladly undergo such a nuisance just to make her happy.

Elijah cringed and shook his head.

"No, I can't do that. You know I had been with many women. I want to let Rhea know that she's special to me. That she's the only woman that really made me feel loved."

Hell, if this was the past me listening to his declaration, I'd be pissed, but now, I definitely could understand his situation. 'A special moment for a special

woman' ...I mused. Serena never experienced such from me and I wanted to correct that in the near future.

"Alright, what is your plan?" I asked, curious about Elijah's idea.

He beamed a smile on my way, scanned the whole room first for any souls, and then neared me.

"Well, to start off, I need you to keep this secret from Serena. She's very close to Rhea so I can't have her learning about my proposal."

My brows knotted in reaction.

"You're asking too much. How can I face Serena and act like I don't know anything? I don't even know how to do that in the first place."

"Just act like you always do, brother. It's that simple. Just don't overdo it or else she'll suspect something is happening," he advised.

After taking considerable thought, I nodded.

"Fine, what else do you want?"

"Instruct Rhea to go on a pretend errand. She'll want to be with Serena in the south wing, but I want to pamper her. Have some maids bring her to the west of the kingdom where she can really rest and relax. I have arranged people there to take care of her."

'Rest and relaxation, yes, that's not a bad idea,' my mind voiced out.

"I'm planning to propose on Lake Eliwiss tonight, brother. The one near your manor. You well know that place is special to me. I'll be preparing everything with Alpha Aaron, so I'm going to send someone to give you the details later. The plan is, I'm going to let a messenger give her a note and in that note, it would instruct her to go to you. Tell her specifically the details. After you do that, I'll take care of the rest. Again, Serena mustn't know about this or all my plans will be for nothing."

"You mistake my wife for a gossip, Elijah. Serena is unlike any woman. She doesn't blabber."

"I know that, brother. I just want to keep my secret to a minimum of people if possible," he answered, his eyes pleading me like a puppy.

I released a deep breath.

"Fuck, I hate this kind of secret. It's like I'm betraying her," I voiced out, frowning.

"May I suggest to avoid her for the time being until tonight? That's the safest way," he stated.

Grinding my teeth, I considered his words again. Yes, this might be a possible answer to my predicament, but still, I know I won't be able to act normally in front of her at dinner tonight.

"I have no other choice but to do that," I answered, consequently signing myself to his plans.

"Thank you, brother," he flashed a bright smile again.

I flipped a hand in the air. "Now go before I summon Rhea here."

"Right," he tipped his chin down and left my side. "I'll see you tomorrow, brother. Wish me luck!"

I groaned. "You don't need it. You have all the luck in the world."

So just as planned, I ordered Rhea on a pretend errand that included picking up bath essentials for Serena in the west of the kingdom. The rest of the problem was theirs to do. I had my own problem to work out and it was to avoid my wife as fast as I could. With a snap of my fingers, I was in my manor, waiting for the damn day to end.

By evening, I entered the dining area feeling anxious. Because of this, I needed some piece of meat to chew on, literally. I ate first despite my conscience telling me not to. Damn Elijah for putting me on this spot. Damn him for bringing me into his problems. Damn me for being such a caring brother.

After a few minutes, a servant from Aaron's pack came to deliver Elijah's message. Heck, he really had to send a woman to relay it. I wanted to shoe her out, but because I needed to get his instructions, I allowed her to approach me. I fucking didn't count on Serena walking in while she was whispering the instructions.

With this, my instinct kicked in, acting cool and composed. The female servant left in a hurry. I was left wishing Serena didn't notice anything. I wanted to try and direct her attention elsewhere, but then Rhea came at the right moment.

Fuck, finally I'd be free from this headache.

I asked Serena to continue eating while I led Rhea into another room. In there, I explained everything, but since she didn't know where Lake Eliwiss was located, I had to bring her there by coach. I knew I would have to explain everything to my wife once I return. Knowing Serena, she'd understand and be happy with this news.

However, when I arrived in the castle, the first thing I sensed from Serena was pure agony. She was in deep sorrow and I didn't know why or what caused it.

In a flash, I transported to the receiving room of Serena's chamber. She wasn't there anymore when I arrived, but I heard her voice in my bedroom explaining to someone—Farryl so it seems—about her feelings for me...about her love for me and silently, I continued to listen, keeping her words close to my heart.

She finally admitted she loves me and that meant I was free to express my love for her too. Fuck it if this meant I'd be all mushy and cheesy...

(Present)

Serena

Aero joined me in bed again, going straight to kissing me. We were at this for a few minutes, French-kissing and feeling every inch of our body, until his super erect cock poked my belly.

He pulled back a little, made eye contact with me with his desire-filled eyes, and then pushed his length inside.

I grabbed the sheets to stabilize myself and moaned. Goodness, his girth and length were totally out-of-this-world. He stretched me so much yet luckily, I couldn't feel any pain. All I felt was all of him: his lust, his love, his care, and his throbbing cock.

I couldn't ask for more.

He pulled my legs up and draped them over his shoulders. This position, he was able to ram into my ass better. Again and again. Harder and deeper.

I arched my back and shouted on top of my lungs.

"Oh god! Oh yes! Yes!"

I watched his face contort with equal pleasure. The deep lines of his forehead, the tension of his facial muscles, and his lips pressed up into a thin line—all of these were indicative of how much he was feeling it too.

Then, suddenly, he placed my legs back on the mattress. He retreated, stopping his thrusting, then sat down in between my legs.

I watched him with confusion. I was about to ask why he stopped, but then he ran his hands along my legs and stooped low.

His mouth descended on my waist. He stuck his tongue out and licked my bellybutton first before moving to the underside of my breast.

He lapped me there, probably created a number of small hickeys, until he climbed lower into my pussy.

"Oh Aero..." I whimpered when his tongue contacted my folds. With both hands securing my legs, he nibbled and sucked on my clit.

I was delirious instantly with the wave upon wave of sensations he had elicited.

"Ahh...ahhhh!"

A lot of erotic sounds had escaped my mouth many times since we started making love, but this here, it was a whole new level. Maybe because our desires were heightened after our love confession? Or maybe because this was preparation for the marking?

But whatever the reason, I sure as hell loved every bit of this change.

I heard Aero hum a pleased tune before fully pressing his face against my sex. He didn't even care how much I was dripping wet with my juices. He drank it all, drop by drop licking it clean before it could touch the sheets.

Then, finally, I felt it.

"Aero!" I cried out, elbowed myself up, and watched him with heavy lids.

On cue, he tightened his grip around my thigh before he attacked my clit with his mouth and inserted two fingers inside my sex.

"Fuck. Fuck! Ahhhh!" I shouted just as my eyes rolled back. "Aero!"

My orgasm hit me like a landslide and what was best about this was that he prolonged it, nonstop giving my quivering pussy the queen treatment.

"Oh god, Aero..." I panted when my head spun back to reality.

"It's not yet the end, love," he stated, awarding me a grin.

I looked down and gaped. His cock remained as erect as earlier, but even more swollen.

"Mark me now, please," I begged him.

He stood up again in front of me and poised in his full glory.

"Before I do that I want to show you what I truly am: a beast."

"I already accepted you as you are, Aero. I already saw your handsome werewolf counterpart."

“Yes, I know, love, but I want you to see this side of me too.”

He then slowly morphed into something different. His body was the same: sporting perfect cuts and ridges, toned abdominal and well-sculpted shoulders and waist, but his once smooth tanned skin had grown a bit of fur. It was of metallic white color; almost a silver.

Golden eyes replaced his hazel-greens. They were the same color as his werewolf form.

His face changed into a wolf's. His canines and incisors had elongated. His hands protruded into claws, each nail as deadly as the other. Despite this, fear didn't grip me. Admiration filled me instead.

And I was horny watching him like this.

“Your lycan form is beyond beautiful, Aero,” I muttered, crawling closer to the edge of the bed. “It's magical. You're a beast of beauty.”

He puffed his chest up and gave me what looked like a proud grin.

“Let me pleasure you as a reward,” I stated once I got a hold of his massive cock.

Sitting at the edge of the bed, I neared my face and smelt its scent. A spark of desire filled my head then. He had an aromatic scent: earthy, spicy, lavender-like, with a tease of his pre-cum smell.

My tongue immediately stuck out and licked his blunt tip. Aero let out a soft groan.

I giggled, finding this an encouragement for more and so I mouth-fucked him all the way.

I teased his balls. I inserted as much of his length inside my mouth as I could. I ran my tongue along his shaft, up and down, until I felt his body stiffen.

He growled again but this time louder.

Happy with his reaction, I continued my task, giving him a mouth-tongue-hand combo until his cum shot out.

He howled loudly without care that his castle servants or even the whole of the kingdom would hear.

I didn't care a damn thing too. I was preoccupied pleasuring him, occupied drinking his semen that tasted like berries, chocolates, and coconut milk.

‘My kind of breakfast snack, or in this case, evening snack.’

Just as I finished emptying his cock, he transformed back into his human form and stared at me with anger and love combined.

"Now, my beasts and I will mark you, Serena."

"Please do," I whimpered.

Effortlessly, he lifted me up from the bed, then brought me outside his balcony all the while we kissed. He arranged me safely on the chaise lounge available outside.

I sat there thinking I'd probably feel the cold air soon, but no, Aero's warm body pressed up to me heated me nonstop.

Under the last phase of the snow moon, we made love again. His cock entered my pussy, savoring every inch of our contact as it advanced deeper inside me.

"Yes...oh yes..." I moaned.

He returned to titillating my breasts and sucking my nipples; doing this amazing combo until he started pumping harder.

"Serena, fuck!" he shouted, his face a picture of pleasure.

I grabbed the back of his head and kissed him again. Our tongues twisted. Our breaths mixed.

He sharply pulled back only to relocate his mouth on my neck.

"Let us be one, Serena," he whispered in a hushed tone before I felt his teeth sunk into my skin, seemingly biting me.

I gasped at this action. Goosebumps quickly erupted on my arms.

White-hot pain of a different kind flooded inside me. I was momentarily detached with the world, but Aero's continued fucking soon brought me back to reality.

"Ahhhh!"

Flashing bright lights and pulsating colors filled my vision. Then, it was replaced with the heightening of my senses.

First was my sense of touch.

Aero was right. With this sense augmented, I was indeed in complete euphoria. I could feel Aero's cock at a microscopic level. Every millimeter...every cell rubbing against my walls. The moistness inside me and his cum mixing. Everything was incredible.

'Indescribable.'

Second was my sense of smell. Being outside the castle, I was immediately exposed to a number of smells from different werewolves nearby. With Aero close to me, I now appreciated how much aromatic his scent was as compared to the others. I could smell his lust towards me too and the sweet scent of our juices mixed together.

Third was my sense of taste. My taste buds developed even more, relishing the after-taste of Aero's cum in my mouth. He was delicious in a figurative and literal sense.

Next was my eyesight. The world around me had sharpened. I could see the craters of the snow moon above me. I could see the fine cottony-material of the clouds passing by. I could see Aero's dark hair in particular. I used to call them just black, but now I appreciated the little strands of brown that got mixed all around his head.

Last was my sense of hearing. I could hear Aero's heartbeat and it was beating in rhythm with mine. It was a beautiful sound I had begun to love. Other than that, I could hear the slapping sounds of our sexes. It was super erotic.

"My mate," he whispered when he finished the marking.

We locked eyes.

"I love you, Aero," I told him, pressing the bottom of his lip with my thumb.

"I love you too, Serena," he answered, then showed me a pleased smile. "Don't hide this mark tomorrow. Let our people see that we are one."

"Yes, of course," I nodded and grinned, but it was weak though for suddenly I felt very sleepy.

I noticed Aero pull back, stood up, and picked me up from the chaise lounge.

"Sleep, love. Let your body recover from the marking."

"Stay...with...me," I groggily replied.

He chuckled, then kissed my forehead.

"Of course."

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Serena

I found myself standing beside a boulder, silently staring at the golden lake inside the Baltic Forest. It looked the same as the last time I saw it, but the sky was dark. The lake and the surrounding diamond-looking flowers now seemed to glow even brighter. They seemed to call to me...seemed to draw out a feeling of nostalgia inside me.

I was at peace, completely relaxed until a movement opposite where I was disturbed my solace.

From across the lake, a young man emerged from the darkness. He was wearing a black royal suit. From the crest embroidered on his right upper chest, I realized he was someone of status in the Kingdom of Phanteon.

I was far away from him, but when I really scrutinized his features, I could see, as clear as day, exactly who he was.

King Aero...

Or in this case, a younger version of him.

And I could see just how melancholic his face looked. He was just standing, his blank eyes directed on the lake like he was trying to speak to it telepathically or looking for a miracle there.

Then, I noticed another movement not far away from him. A white figure of a woman hid behind a large tree. Her hands were dainty and her hair was up to her waist. She seemed to be spying on him...seemed to be very engrossed just looking at my husband.

There was no indication that Aero noticed her presence. There was no indication that she meant to approach him too. There was also no indication that they both noticed me and I was left watching them as half an hour ticked by.

At one point, this woman stepped forward a little, allowing me to get a good look at her features, and at that exact moment, I gasped.

"Oh, God."

I placed a hand over my mouth when I realized, albeit too late, that the woman was me...

'Oh, just a dream...' I thought to myself the moment my eyes fluttered open.

The soft rays of the sun immediately greeted me as well as Aero's gentle smile. He was sitting on the bed, facing me, half covered by the bedsheet we shared

with one knee bent up and one arm resting on it. It was a cool posture, pretty much fitting for a suave man like him.

I figured he had been awake for quite some time now and had been unashamedly staring at my sleeping form. 'Very sly of him', I thought.

'Yes, I am sly. I just love watching you sleep. Good morning, love,' he stated or what the...

"Was that you?" I asked, giving him a surprised, questioning look. Using my elbow, I slightly raised myself up, all memory of my recent dream gone that instant.

'Yes,' he answered, giving me a smirk.

I could loudly hear him inside my head and that both frightened and amazed me.

"Ho—how is this possible?" Audibly, I asked.

'Because we are already mated, Serena,' he explained, again using telepathy. 'You can do it too. Try it.'

My eyes bulged. 'Really?!' I answered him through my mind.

His smile widened. 'Yes. We are one in every way possible, Serena. You could feel my emotions, hear what I think unless I intentionally block you. You could also sense me, locate me anywhere in both Phanteon and Earth, and in other realms. You'd know if I have mood changes. You could feel my heartbeat and breathing. That's how powerful a mate bond is. There's no backing out now. Are you afraid?'

I didn't need to think about an answer.

'No, not if it's with you, Aero,' I told him whilst straightening myself up and cupping his face. 'This is just unnatural for me, totally a quick change, but I'll get the hang of it.' I awarded him a coy smile and bit my lower lip seductively. 'Good morning too, my mate,' I said, leaning over towards him.

His eyes turned hooded then.

With that, we shared a morning kiss. It was sweet and soft at first, but it soon turned heady and rough.

I returned to lying in bed. He followed me without breaking our kiss. With our new position, I consequently felt his erection poke my belly.

I groaned at this and quickly pulled the bed cover off of our bodies.

'Have you already recuperated from last night? Has your energy returned?' he asked, worry roped his voice a bit.

'Yes,' I cried out in my mind. 'I want you, Aero. Make love to me.' I was begging, my skin thrumming with lust. With my augmented sense of smell, I smelt his horny state too. It was in sync with mine. I had never been this so in tune with someone before and it felt, for lack of a better word, marvelous.

In a way, I felt like I was born into a new body. Everything was different. Everything felt right. Loving Aero, mating with him, being bonded to him—I could never be happier.

'I feel the same way too, Serena,' he voiced out in my head just as he titillated my breasts. Clearly, he sensed my intense joy deep down. 'You don't know how much I was elated hearing you love me. I waited for you to say it. I kept myself patient. I didn't want to stress you. I didn't want to force you. I didn't mind waiting. Hell, I was willing to wait a hundred years more just to hear you say you love me.'

My heart swelled with his words.

'Thank you, Aero, for giving me time,' I answered, arching my back when he started planting chaste kisses on my tummy down to my apex, 'but what if I didn't love you?'

He pressed the tip of his tongue against my swollen clit. This consequently earned a short gasp from me.

'I was ready to make you fall in love with me,' he answered. 'But honestly, I didn't need to worry. I was confident you felt the same way.'

'Hmm, cheeky bastard,' I voiced out in my thoughts.

Continuing, he slid his tongue all the way to my entrance and then went back to my clit wherein he sucked it in full force.

"Ahhh!" I cried out loudly as a result.

'You're so wet,' he mind-linked.

Despite my worked up brain, I could hear the proud joy in his voice.

'And you're very hard,' I rebutted.

'Only for you, Serena,' was his quick answer.

Suddenly, a wild thought crossed my mind of a time last night when I saw Farryl posing as Aero fucking another woman. This didn't elicit a feeling of jealousy, sadness, or even heartbreak from me. I just thought it funny now.

'Yes, I know what you're thinking,' he then announced. I looked down at him and saw him already staring at me in satisfaction.

'Your wholehearted trust for me amazes me, Serena. I feel humbled. But yes—'

He raised his head up, moved back closer to me in order to lock eyes, and then continued in his full voice, "Let it be known here and now that I would never love and touch another woman, Serena. Only you, now and forever."

'Oh Aero,' I cried out, my heart almost bursting out in happiness.

"Yes, forever," I stated loudly, reaching out to touch his face.

He grabbed my hand, kissed the knuckles first, then returned his attention on my body—inside me to be exact where his cock claimed complete and sole ownership...

"I'm curious though of what secret you and Rhea were hiding from me," I asked an hour later. Both butt naked inside his pool, I ran a hand along his chest and gave him a scrutinizing eye.

His brows furrowed first seemingly unable to understand my question, but then a flicker of recognition eventually hit him.

"Ah, yes, that," he said, smirking. "It's not my secret, love. It's Elijah's. He wants to propose marriage to your friend."

"What?!" My mouth dropped. From a lazy position straddling him, I straightened up and squared my shoulders. "That's great news!" I cried.

"Yes, it is. Thinking that my brother will finally settle down, it's like a thorn in my ass being taken out."

I jabbed his rib in response.

"You're too harsh. Elijah is trying his best, you know."

A deep, sultry chuckle filled the bathroom thereafter.

"He has found his true mate and I'm happy for him," my husband declared.

Excited with this development, I couldn't hold off with seeing my dear friend.

"May I meet her now?" I asked, thinking that he'd willingly agree but he grabbed my wrist and kissed my mark.

"I was planning on spending the whole day with my mate," he stated and through his hard features, I saw a small pout, like a puppy trying to win me over.

"Just an hour, please," I negotiated. "I only wanted to congratulate her."

He sighed.

"Alright, you may go but strictly for just an hour."

I flashed him a wide grin, then planted a kiss on his forehead.

"You're so possessive, Aero," I stated.

"And I'm proud of it." He grinned.

I stood up first and left the pool without covering my nakedness. I could sense his eyes on me, clearly leering at my ass that had received a good slapping.

Yes, I also love to spend the whole day with him, but I also wanted to see Rhea and give her a congratulatory hug and kiss. I knew right from the start they were compatible with each other. She just had to see past through his old womanizing ways. And Elijah, well, he just needs to prove how much she meant to him. I guess, that worked out fine now.

I changed into a simple gown, tied my hair up hurriedly into a bun, and rode my horse to the south wing. I didn't think I'd find her there, but it was worth the shot. Luckily though, Rhea was inside the mess hall, busily taking care of some food packs with the other volunteers.

"I didn't think Elijah would let you go this morning after his marriage proposal last night but here you are," I stated, catching her attention with my loud voice.

She looked up and immediately flashed her teeth at me. "Serena!"

She breezed through the table filled with packs while I met her halfway with wide arms.

"I'm so happy for you!" I cried out whilst hugging her.

"Thank you," she answered and then withdrew. "He had to release me since we had so many things to do today with the opening of the new market and the transfer of the fire victims into their new houses."

With her words, my mouth dropped. "Oh my goodness! I can't believe I actually forgot about that!"

She stared at me dumbfounded. "It's unlike you to forget an important event."

I felt a little embarrassed. "Yeah, a lot happened yesterday that I lost focus."

"Elijah said you'll be giving the opening speech," she reminded.

"Yes, I am," I nodded. "Great thing I had prepared a speech yesterday morning. I actually wanted you to read it first."

"Why? It's just a simple speech, right?" Her brows knotted.

"Er, not quite," I replied, shifting my eyes towards the volunteers. "Uhm, you'll know why when you read it."

Her eyelids narrowed towards me and she crossed her arms over her chest. "Okay, you got my attention. Let me read your speech then."

"Yes, of course," I nodded. "Stay here while I get it in my room."

I stepped backward and left the mess hall like a messenger in a hurry. My protective bugs who had been keeping a safe distance fluttered behind me, trying to catch up with my pace.

After mounting my horse, I stretched its reins and clucked my tongue. "Hijah!" I cried and the horse consequently galloped forward.

'You're returning to the castle? I thought you wanted to spend an hour with her?' Aero mind-linked me, obviously sensing my presence nearing the north wing.

'I forgot to bring something,' I answered as the warm wind of the morning hit my face. 'I'm going to get it inside my room. Are you still in your chamber?'

'No, I'm in the study, making progress with my mounting paper works while you're away.'

'Hmm, quite diligent of you,' I chuckled. 'It seems we can't spend the whole day together. Had you forgotten today is the opening of the new market?'

'No, I didn't,' he replied quickly. 'I already tasked Chris to set-up everything for this afternoon's occasion. You just need to give a speech, Serena, five minutes tops, and then we can go to my manor.'

'Hmm, always one step ahead huh? But you forget, we need to socialize with the people too, or is it not in your list of to-dos anymore?'

'I prefer to socialize with you,' he bluntly stated.

I chuckled again. Somehow, talking to him through telepathy made for a convenient and quick teasing.

'Oh, Aero, you really are insufferable,' I stated.

He grumbled but it wasn't of anger or disappointment or anything. It was just his reaction at the spur of the moment.

'I'll see you later, my queen, forty-one minutes and 22 seconds later to be exact,' he reminded.

I rolled my eyes heavenward and grinned. 'Yes, Your Highness. I won't be late.'

Once inside my room, I directly went to find my speech which I remembered I had secured inside a cabinet of my vanity mirror. After finding it, I immediately took off and exited my room.

I planned to race down the hallways, jump two to three stair steps if possible in order to save time and leave the north wing stat; however, just as I was closing my chamber door, I saw three of the bugs flying towards Aero's bedroom door.

"What's up? You want to go inside?" I asked nonchalantly. These bugs had been making themselves comfortable inside his room since I frequented it that it didn't cross my mind to suspect anything unusual.

I neared the door, opened it, and just as soon as I did that, their shimmering wings quickly fluttered inside.

"You like my husband's room that much?" I asked, giggling. "I'll leave you here then?"

That was my idea, but then I noticed Aero's collections secured in the glass cabinet, my eyes focusing on one object to be exact.

It was perpetually glowing green since I first saw it. It was still glowing now, but like yesterday night, the center was giving off a soft purple light.

I stared at it again, somehow my attention got riveted on its calming glow. Then, like last night, I felt a pulling sensation. A desire. An urge to touch it. It was so strong that I couldn't possibly ignore it anymore.

Opening the glass cabinet, I slid my hands inside; my fingers slightly trembling as it reached for the geode-looking stone.

But once I picked it up, my world around me spun. Heat from the stone traveled throughout my body. It was growing inside me, enveloping all nerves, all fibers, all muscles and bones I had. Feeling suddenly dizzy, I staggered backward and hit the back of the sofa.

In haste, my hands grabbed the furniture, hoping it would stabilize my unsteady gait; however, my grip weakened and I came crashing down the floor.

Darkness enveloped me then, but this was after I saw my whole body got bathed in the greenish-purple light.

Seconds later, I felt strong arms surround me, picking me up and pressing me against a hard chest.

"William! Get a healer. NOW!" I managed to hear Aero bark out an order just as my consciousness faded away.

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Aero

When I woke up earlier this morning, I found Serena surrounded by the bugs. Two were hovering above her, another two were perched on her shoulders while three more rested on her feet.

This scene here wasn't new to me anymore. I had been so accustomed to the bugs that their presence felt like a routine already in our lives. They didn't stress me out like before nor did it evoke jealousy within me.

Serena was sleeping so calmly that I didn't want to bother her. I just continued on staring at her whilst welcoming the blissful feeling growing inside me. This woman will be my life forever. No one will replace her and no one will take her away from me. She'd be the mother to my sons and daughters. She'd be this kingdom's best queen.

However, I couldn't keep myself from thinking about her real identity. This one problem had turned out to be the biggest hurdle we had to face.

I thought of the bracelet Nevannir gave me and the explanation he had with it.

"Let your queen wear this," he said, using his powers to float the object onto my hand. "We use this in Ehnrelil to assess faes. The blue gems will glow brightly when the bearer lies. Once this is around her wrist, you can ask her questions. You'll know if she lies with her identity or not."

I did what he said and found, with utmost pleasure, that Serena was as clueless as I was with her identity. She never lied. The blue gems never brightened.

Finally being mated to her now, I didn't think it was necessary for her to use that item anymore. Keeping secrets from each other was close to impossible unless of course, some freak tweaks of the Universe would allow that to happen.

However, my mind was already made up. Whatever future was in store for her as a human or not, I'd be there to support and protect her.

But damn, I didn't think my words would be tested sooner than later.

While engrossed with my paper works in my study half an hour later, I sensed Serena's shift of mood. From being calm to confused, then to a full-blown surprise. I didn't think it warranted any suspicion from me until I felt a sudden explosion of energy coming from her.

I stood up from my seat and in a snap, transported myself to my chamber. Once there, I found Serena already unconscious on the ground, near my sectional sofa, her face pressed up against the cold floor and her body in a side-lying position. A few feet away from her was the stone I had treasured for hundreds of years.

Remembering the past, at first, I thought it was just a normal stone when I received it. Fast forward a few decades later, it started to glow green and I immediately sensed its power inside, just swirling and waiting to be released.

I checked the glass cabinet and the sliding door was left open wide. This set-up alone told me enough. Serena must have opened the cabinet to get the stone, but why?

Another thing that confused me was the massive energy I felt earlier. It had dissipated now. I was so sure it came from Serena, but with the stone lying next to her, I couldn't be certain anymore.

Where did that swell of energy come from?

Was it from the stone? Or was it from Serena? Did the one trigger the other's untapped powers? Or was it the other way around? Or was there another reason behind all this confusion?

Hell, I wanted so much to know, but of course, this was set aside. Serena's health was my top priority.

When the healer, Margaret, arrived, I had already arranged Serena in my bed. She was still in her simple gown, but I took the liberty of taking the piece of paper hidden in her dress pocket. I hadn't read its contents yet, but I was sure as hell whatever she wrote in the paper meant something to her.

Margaret used her ability to scan for any unusualities inside Serena's body. I stood near the window with my arms crossed over my chest and waited for her to finish. It was a frustrating wait, especially when I was already itching for answers.

"I'm truly sorry, Your Majesty," she looked at me after a deep sigh. "I can't determine the cause of her state."

I straightened from leaning and furrowed my brows. "What do you mean?" I asked.

"There's nothing wrong with her organs or nerves, Your Majesty. I couldn't find any instability within her system too. As to her life energy, it seems to be normal. I don't know what caused her to lose consciousness earlier and I couldn't retrace that surge of energy you mentioned she could have emitted earlier."

I tried to keep my face devoid of any emotion, but my control just cracked. I frowned and clenched my teeth and hands.

Margaret must have seen this as I immediately sensed her uneasiness.

"Well, uhm, had you noticed her getting tired and sleepy?" she asked whilst standing up.

"No," I answered.

She glanced down at Serena; her eyes specifically falling to the beautiful mark I had created spanning across her neck and shoulder.

"I see that you already consummated your marriage," she pointed out. "Maybe she is carrying your child?"

I grumbled. Of all the things for her to bring up, it had to be that.

"I'll be able to sense it then, but I haven't," I told her.

"Pregnancy for a luna is a mysterious process, Your Majesty," she explained in a calm voice. "Each has her own uniqueness and sensitivity. I am a healer and a midwife yet I hadn't sensed a growing life within her too," she chuckled weakly, "well, at least not yet and I attribute it to her place of origin."

I cast her a look. The look that showed a sudden recognition.

She smiled and tipped her chin down. "I know she's human, Your Majesty, but don't worry, your secret is safe with me."

'How did you know?' I wanted to ask but refrained. Of course, she'd know. She had healed her a number of times already. Her finding out the truth on her own was not impossible.

"I don't care if you keep it or not," I lashed.

Nearing Serena's side, I took her hand and brought it to press against my cheek. Serena possibly pregnant was an idea I hadn't entertained yet, but this sure wasn't an unwelcomed thought. I of course wanted to have children especially with her and with us making love almost every waking hour, without protection, and under the snow moon phase no less, this was bound to happen.

I wanted her pregnant, yes, but not now. Not now when we were yet to learn of her true identity.

"When she wakes up, have her drink this concoction. If she's truly pregnant, it will give her body energy to assist with the early pregnancy process," Margaret stated as she took a small bottle out of her valise and placed it on the nightstand.

"Thank you, Margaret," I stated, saying the two words for the first time to another woman.

She seemed caught off guard for a moment because of this but recollected herself quickly. "You're welcome, Your Majesty," she said as a gentle smile broke out from her lips.

"Keep this a secret for the meantime. We will announce when we're truly expecting an heir," I informed her.

"Of course, Your Majesty," she bent her head and thereafter left the room.

Still maintaining my eyes on Serena, I refocused my attention and mind-linked my brother.

'Elijah,' I called, sensing that he wasn't fornicating with his fiancée at the moment.

'Brother?' he immediately replied.

'Take care of the opening ceremony for me. Inform our people that the queen and I couldn't attend. No need to tell them why. They'll understand.'

'Don't worry, I'll take care of it. Is my sister-in-law okay?'

I released a long exhale.

'I'm not sure, Elijah.'

'You take care of her brother,' he said with a hint of concern. 'Don't worry about your duties. William and I will take care of them.'

I smiled a little, pleased with his words. It pays to have a brother and a right-hand that could be trusted.

'Thank you,' I answered, then squeezed Serena's hand.

We were just mated. We had just confessed our feelings for each other. This was supposed to be a joyous occasion for us.

If indeed her mysterious state was because of a possible pregnancy, then I could overlook this situation and an even grander celebration could be done, but if it was because of another reason?

Hell...

My patience and temper would surely be tested.

By nine in the evening, under the dim light of the chandelier, I noticed a first sign of my wife waking up. Her eyelids moved slightly and her fingers, especially the pinky one, jerked upward.

I left my seat and went to her side immediately, sitting at the edge of the bed while waiting for her to fully wake.

I sandwiched her hand in mine; felt her warmth better than earlier, but hell, her skin, it was suddenly lustrous, like she had just spread some lotion filled with glitter on it. This should have sickened me, but instead, it mesmerized me, wondering why this happened.

When she did wake, she took her time staring at the ceiling looking as if she was fine-tuning her senses.

Her lips parted, exhaling her breath in a slow fashion. I wanted to kiss her at that moment, but I held myself.

“Serena, love,” I called, catching her attention.

Her sight moved to my direction. We locked gazes then and in that instant, I held my breath.

The very first thing I noticed was the change in her eye color. It was still the same hazel ones that I love except now it had streaks of green and purple, exactly as those ones I saw in the past.

Fuck.

That instant, memories of my childhood both the good and bad I tried to suppress flooded through me, and my entire world fell in a standstill.

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The Alpha King's Claim chapter 74

Aero

“We agreed there would be no girls here,” my twelve-year-old self cried out in disappointment when I saw my long-time friends Adamar and Adaen approach me with a tiny creature in tow. A pipsqueak. So easy to crush, so frail-looking. Wearing a white ankle-length dress and sporting a short hair, she hid behind the twins who obviously towered her.

My fae friends and I decided we wouldn't admit a girl into our circle, much less into our hangout spot, but look at them now. They had broken their promise and I was left complaining about it.

Adamar, the older twin, tossed an arm over my shoulder and flashed his pearly whites at me.

“Let Ysanna be an exemption, Prince Aero.”

“Yeah, she's our future boss,” added Adaen.

I lifted a brow at them, disgusted at the sudden idea in my head and disgusted at the tiny creature with saucer-like hazel eyes with bits of green and purple still looking at me.

"Why? Are you two going to marry her?"

"What?" the two chorused.

"No! Yuck," cried Adaen.

Adamar on the other hand laughed, releasing me and doubling over. They sure know the idea of marriage despite their young age and well, I was the same too and this was one of the reasons why we clicked, turning to friends immediately despite us as different species.

"She's too fragile to become our wife," Adaen explained. "Plus, she can't marry. She's to become the High Priestess of our realm."

"A priestess eh? That's weird," I remarked, then left it at that, transferring my attention to the box I brought with me still lying on the grass.

"What do you want to do now?" Adamar asked, following me.

"Father brought this game from Earth. You want to try it?" I told him, raising a board game called 'Snakes and Ladders' high up in the air.

"Sure! Let's play!" Adaen butted in, leaving the pipsqueak behind a tree trunk, alone and staring at us. It was freaky, but I just ignored her...

The images blurred gradually and I was brought to another memory of my childhood. This time, I was two years older, growing taller than my fae friends. My mother still continued her illicit affairs with the male servants in the castle and father was either trying to keep a blind eye to it or he just wasn't aware of her immorality. I frequented Salviste Lake to escape my mother and her crazy group of handmaidens. I considered myself lucky to be able to escape them even. This place was my only solace. I could play around the golden lake and be myself. Be at peace.

"Why are you here? Where's Adamar and Adaen?" I asked, looking down at a crouching form behind a cotton shrub next to the biggest tree in the lake. Ysanna glanced up but didn't answer me. I could see her sobbing though, nonstop tears streamed down her flushed cheeks.

"I hate girls. I hate crybabies. I hate crybaby girls," I announced, sneering at her.

I left her alone, but since she was hiding in a spot where I loved to take a nap, I wasn't able to truly leave her.

Two hours later, she was still sobbing. It somehow hit my conscience.

"Are you hungry?" I asked, peeking through the leaves and stems.

She wiped her eyes dry and nodded slowly.

"Here, eat it all," I handed her half a loaf of bread that I pulled out from my satchel. "Don't waste it."

She grabbed the bread, sniffed it before taking a bite. I felt good as I watched her do it. With a small smile leaking from the corner of my lips, I turned around and left her spot. For two years since I met this freaky girl, never had I heard her voice.

Not until now.

"Th—ank you," I heard a soft voice say.

Looking back, my eyes rounded and my mouth gaped.

"So you really can speak," I exclaimed.

Crouching down to her level again, I stared at her and asked, "Are you afraid of me? Is that why you didn't want to talk?"

She didn't answer. Instead, she continued munching.

"You didn't need to be afraid of me. Yes, I hate girls but I guess, you're an exemption."

She looked up and inside those big hazel eyes, I saw a flicker of gratitude.

"You don't seem to be the same as those handmaidens who maltreat me," I sat down near her and gazed at the calmness of the lake. "You're harmless so you're good. In fact, you look so weak that I want to protect you."

"Pro...tect me?" she asked softly, still chewing her food.

"Yes, protect you," I nodded and smiled towards her way. This was ever the first time I showed kindness to the opposite sex ever since I promised to hate them.

Ysanna didn't reply. Silence reigned around us until I decided to change the subject.

"Do you have parents?"

"N...o," she muttered whilst shaking her head.

"What no?" I asked. "You mean you don't have a father and mother because they're dead?"

"Mother is dead," she explained, her eyes starting to show sadness.

It was too late for me to backpedal now.

"And your father?" I continued.

I waited for her to share anything, but she didn't anymore. Again, silence was her constant answer. This should have irritated me, but it didn't. I pitied her instead.

I didn't ask any more questions to her that day. I just continued to sit next to her as she observed the golden lake and the bugs playing around it.

This had been our routine for the next week until the twins finally showed up.

"Her father is rumored to be a knight but nobody knows who he is," Adamar explained as I asked him about Ysanna's parents. "She's an orphan but she's a special orphan because of her mother. She's the queen's older sister. That's why she is groomed to become the High Priestess."

"Is she even allowed to go outside?" I asked again.

Adaen and Adamar exchanged glances and sighed. "Actually, no," confessed Adamar. "She is supposed to stay strictly inside the Rexhus Tower. We just took the liberty of giving her a chance to see the outside world by bringing her here. One of the elders guarding her is our mother. She gives us freedom although she knows its forbidden."

"And those times that you two weren't here?" I fitted the pieces of the puzzle.

"I think she escapes, Prince Aero," Adaen replied. "We don't know how she does it, but she escapes." He scratched his head and glanced at Ysanna who was happily playing with some rainbow-colored species of bug I had never seen before in the lake. She was with a feline-looking creature too, with midnight blue fur and coiled tail. The twins, as its owner, called it Sprint, and Ysanna had grown fond of it.

"Then, how about when she gets caught?" A sudden worry filled me for her. This was ever the first time I was concerned for the welfare of a girl, or the opposite sex for that matter.

Again, the twins exchanged glances. "We don't know, actually," they answered, lowering their heads, "but what we do know is that they punish her."

"But I don't see any bruises on her face, arms, or legs," I knotted my brows.

"Fae punishment varies, Prince Aero. Who knows what the elders do to her in that tower," Adamar announced. I sensed worry in the twins too and a certain degree of acceptance. Acceptance that they couldn't do anything for this girl except to give her some few glimpses of freedom...

Again, this memory blurred slowly and what replaced it was another which really hit me hard. It was the last day I saw her.

"Adamar and Adaen?" I asked, sitting next to her on our now-favorite spot under the gigantic tree.

Ysanna was still the same. She wore the same-colored dress. Still weak and thin. Still with short hair. Still a pipsqueak. But like me, she was also growing, but I just couldn't imagine what she'd look like when a fully grown woman. Probably, she'd turn out to be the most beautiful fae I'd ever meet.

"They are in training again, sorry," she answered, now using short but full sentences.

"Don't be," I showed her a smile. "I like it when it's just the two of us here. Those twins always cause a ruckus."

She giggled and for a moment, I found that it was the best damn sound I had ever heard in my young life.

"You never told me why you keep on coming here," I stated, still watching Sprint doing its usual playful activities with the bugs along the shore.

"I like it here. I get to relax," she answered. Drawing her knees together, she rested her head on it and stared at her pet. Since she liked Sprint so much, Adamar and Adaen gave it to her. I was there when they did it and I got to see a big smile on her face, something that was rare.

"That's all?" I asked over my shoulder with some kind of hope bubbling inside me. Hope for what? I wasn't sure what.

"Yeah, I guess that's all," she muttered softly with a faraway look on her face.

I remained silent and she did too until an hour after when I heard her sob.

"Why are you crying?" I asked, suddenly feeling alarmed.

"The elders...they force me in many tasks I don't want to do. It's overwhelming," she cried out.

I frowned and stood up in front of her.

"You should fight back then! Don't allow yourself to be bullied. Stand up if you think it's the right thing to do!"

I was speaking by experience. I fought back. I tossed my weak self and found ways to escape from my mother's twisted games.

A sense of realization shown brightly in her eyes as I said it.

“Thank you, Prince Aero. I’ll keep your words to heart.”

After wiping her tears dry, she bent down and picked up a stone near her feet. It was that kind of stone affected by the elements of both realms: the roughness of Phanteon and the luminous quality of Ehnrelil. She handed it to me and said, “A gift, as a sign of our friendship.”

‘Friendship,’ the word rang in my head. Then and there, I realized, it wasn’t the kind of relationship I wanted to have with her. My mature state of mind wanted more. I wanted to possess her. I wanted to own all of her.

But, I saw it a damned idea in the end. She was to become a priestess and such position entailed her being free from any forms of relationship.

“Yes, friends. We will be friends forever,” I told her with a pained smile. I accepted the stone and placed it in my coat pocket, treasuring it that very moment.

“I’m going to give you a gift too. Will you come back here tomorrow?” I asked.

She quickly nodded. “Yes, I will. It’s a promise.”

‘A promise...’ I thought with utter disappointment. Ysanna never came back after that or on any other days thereafter. Adamar and Adaen were the same, but their absence didn’t impact me as much as hers did.

Days after, I found out from my father that the realm of the faes had closed their world for good. This would have been an understandable reason why she didn’t show up anymore, but still, I couldn’t accept the fact that she broke her promise that easily.

She could have used whatever power she had, that same one when she escapes her tower, but she didn’t. Instead, she left me with a false hope and that broke my young heart so much that it added to my already growing hatred of women. I felt deceived. I felt betrayed.

I had shut myself after that. Deciding to never again be fooled by a female.

Returning to the present, I cringed. How ironic it was to be slapped in those same words again right on the face.

Serena stared at me filled with love in her eyes. Awarding me a gentle smile, she slowly sat up and reached to touch my face.

“Aero...” she stated.

Now that I was wiser, I realized her voice was of the same quality as before, only now it dripped with confidence.

Her hand moved to trace my jaw just like she usually would after a good sleep, until...her eyes slowly rounded with recognition.

“Aero!” she cried out, her mouth opening wide in surprise.

I grinned at her, my eyes turning dark with quiet rage and delicious mischief.

“You’ve grown, pipsqueak.”

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The Alpha King’s Claim chapter 75

Serena

‘You’re special.’

‘You’re unwanted.’

‘You’re ugly.’

‘You’re weak.’

‘You need to be strong.’

‘You’re not allowed to go outside.’

‘You need to practice more.’

‘Your mother was better.’

‘You could be better.’

‘You have an amazing power inside you.’

‘You’re unique.’

‘You’re a freak of nature.’

‘You’ll be alone forever.’

‘You don’t own your freedom.’

‘You’re not allowed to love...’

As my sense of sight returned, slowly, so did my other senses. They all clashed inside me, filling me with a whole new perspective of my life.

My reality.

It had been years, hundreds maybe since I last felt this way. It was both overwhelming and terrifying.

I gazed at the ceiling, recounting the series of sentences both good and bad that had spiraled inside my head. They played again and again with flashing pictures of faces and locations I had been before, reminding me, albeit painfully, of the life I escaped.

Since the moment my tiny brain could grasp the concept of communication and understand the language of the beings around me, until the time where I could fully stand for myself, hearing them from different faces—with a sneer, with a smile, with a disappointed look, with anger, with sincerity—I could never really understand why...why I was bombarded with such confusing treatment.

I knew I was different from all the faes around me, but to what extent? I didn't know. I wished I knew.

'You should fight back then! Don't allow yourself to be bullied. Stand up if you think it's the right thing to do!'

That last set of sentences also swirled inside my head.

They were the ones that I treasured so much. They reminded me of that time long ago when I saw hope and love...most especially love. That boy's words were the exact reason why I am what I am currently. It molded me into a better person. It gave me strength.

Remembering them all again now as I felt the return of my powers and consciousness, the first thought in my head was:

Damn it, I'm back.

And the second thought was:

Oh holy cow, I'm back with quite a colorful life.

Married and mated to the Alpha King of Phanteon wasn't exactly what I had expected to happen.

I was highly aware there were certain repercussions for my return. It was only a matter of time before I'd encounter them, but for now, at this moment, the person right in front of me was the very first hurdle I had to face.

"Is that how you address your wife and mate?" I asked, giving Aero a slightly offended look. I never liked him calling me that, but he still kept on using that pet name for his own pleasure and only stopped when I hit my teens.

"Oh, you still remember we're bonded huh?" he replied, still sporting a hard frown. He was angry, yes, but us being mates, I could also sense a deeper emotion inside of him, some form of...twisted happiness. I wasn't sure how to make of it as somehow he was privy with these specific thoughts.

"Of course, I do," I answered with conviction. "I may have become whole again, but I'm still the same, Aero. And I still share the same feelings for you."

I placed a hand over my chest and stared at him without so much as blinking, then I felt my face fully heat up as if it was my first time confessing my feelings for him.

"Only now it's more clearer why I had easily fallen for you."

I heard a low growl from him and thereafter, he pinned me down the mattress and grabbed my right wrist. His other hand flew to my jaw and angled my face up enough to meet his warm breath.

"Oh really?" he drawled, his lips curling up into a mirthless smile. "Your words are so sweet and sly, just like you, my wife."

I held his gaze, choosing not to be affected by his icy words. He had subjected me to this kind of treatment before. It was nothing new. In fact, this even turned me on. I felt the heat in my belly and the desire inside me growing.

His nostrils flared, probably sensing my reaction to him, but of course, as stubborn as he was, he ignored it.

"Do you think I share the same way knowing your real identity is uncovered?" he asked, his eyes turned even darker, like a storm brewing in the surface.

I didn't waver. I had the upper hand. I was holding the ace.

"Yes," I answered with confidence, "I can feel it, Aero, your love for me, here..." I touched the corner of his eye with my free hand, telling him his pool of amber-greens never lie, "then here," I pointed to his heart, sensing the beautiful muscle still beating for me, "and mostly, here..." I palmed his bulge, his cock jerking upward with the sudden contact.

He growled and clenched his jaw. His hand that had immobilized my face traveled down to my chest, paused for a second there, then suddenly captured one full breast.

I released a soft mewl and dared him to continue using my eyes.

He was fired up. He released my wrist so that his other hand could join in with the fun. His thumb pressed hard against my lips. I sucked on the tip all the while never breaking our eye contact.

Lowering his head, I thought he was going to give me a wild kiss but then he abruptly stopped millimeters away. My mouth felt empty that instant.

"As much as I enjoy this surprising revelation," he sneered at me again and pulled back, "I want to know the story behind this deception Serena, or shall I call you by your true name?"

"You may call me whichever you like," I quickly answered. "Serena or Ysanna, they are both the same. They are just in different languages. And no, this is not a deception, Aero. I never had the intention to fool you. I didn't even plan to meet you. Ever."

His sight flitted to the mark on my wrist and then replied, "So, you're telling me our meeting is just the work of destiny?"

"Yes, I have always believed in destiny even before receiving my memories back and I know you believe in it too," I stressed out. "Marrying you and mating with you was close to impossible in my mind. It was the last thing I could ever hope for. Believe me, Aero, I never planned all of this to happen, but somehow...I ended up in your realm, in your bed, here with you."

Somehow, this softened his piercing glare. He got my point. Thank heavens, he did.

"I see that you're a chatterbox now unlike in the past," he remarked. "If that's the case, I want you to spill everything to me before I lose my patience and temper, starting from the very day you broke your promise."

"And if I refuse?" was my reply, raising my chin up, testing him. I wanted to tell him the truth as much as I could. Everything. My mate bond has compelled me to do so, but I personally wanted to be truthful to him too.

He saw through my game and grinned at me with that same confident grin he used to show when I challenge him.

"Well, let's say you're going to be punished for being a troublesome queen," he answered.

His hand wandered down my butt, firing me up, making me ache for him even more. His head lowered and stopped just an inch away from mine. His mouth hovered above my parted lips, mocking me, picking on my desire to kiss him.

The tip of my tongue ran along my bottom lip, wetting what had already become a neglected part of my face. This cat and mouse teasing had become a potent fuel for both of us. I wanted more and I felt he was the same.

"Then, it's a shame. I'm not feeling a confession coming," I said, returning his grin. I was sure as hell the punishment he had in mind involved intense kissing and his cock embedded inside me. I could even see those delicious pictures already forming inside his head.

"A punishment it is then," he replied. "I'm going to make you squeak, my brazen wife."

His gaze turned hooded, the craving inside it intensifying mirroring with mine. In the next second, his mouth claimed my lips, his weight buried me more onto the mattress, his cock pressed harder against my belly, and his hands, just as I thought, tore my gown in half.

I moaned, feeling thrilled with this development. I had yearned for this man all my life; daydreamed of touching him, kissing him, marrying him in almost every waking hour while I was in Rexhus Tower. The Elders told me again and again I was bound to be alone forever, that I was never to receive love or give love for as long as I lived, that I would offer myself and my whole life to the fae realm and its cause. My daydreams had become my comfort...my precious treasure. Never in my life did I expect I'd become his queen, his wife, and his lover...

I kissed him back with equal abandon, looped my arms around his torso, and traced his tensed back muscles. Like its countless predecessors, I was going to enjoy making love to him...

Aero

I felt deceived, betrayed, taken for a fool as the truth stared back at me in the form of my beautiful wife. The disappointment and heartache I felt back when this woman broke her promise was still fresh in my mind, roasting my insides in every way possible. To me, faes were cunning, sly creatures. I knew they couldn't be trusted and my experience with her gave me a stronger reason to distrust them more.

But hearing Serena say those words—sincere as they were—made me realize that these negative feelings were unwarranted. There must be a reason why she failed to show up that day and all the days thereafter. There must be a reason why she appeared to me without a memory of her and our past together.

She was right. I believed in destiny, but I also believed in this thing called scientific explanation. Well, in her case, a simple explanation would suffice.

This development though somehow excited me. I have always loved this woman. I always wanted to possess her. Knowing now I did just that and turning into my mate no less, completed my life.

'Damn, what a way to reunite indeed,' I told myself. Destiny must really be shipping us.

Filled with a burning desire for my wife, I kissed her and impatiently ripped her dress. She didn't mind it. In fact, she helped me by pulling the confining material away. Her breasts spilled free thereafter. I gazed at them with fervor, planning to renew my ownership on these two gorgeous globes.

I lowered my head, thrust my tongue out planning to suck one taut nipple, but then, my annoying brother mind-linked me.

'Brother.'

I grimaced.

'Not now,' I said, continuing with my foreplay.

'Brother!' But he called again.

I growled in anger. 'I said not now Elijah!'

'I need your attention, brother!' he exclaimed, his voice filled with alarm. 'Farryl reported that King Geraden just crossed our realm, and with a certain amount of fae knights with him.'

I froze on the spot.

'Fuck,' my mind cried out.

What a way to cock-block me.

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Aero

"What's the matter?" Serena noticed my sudden tensed form and asked.

With a gruff, I raised my head up and looked at her. "Trouble knocking at our door, my queen, and I reckon their visit has something to do with you."

She knotted her brows at first, fell silent for a moment, then I saw a flicker of awareness in her eyes.

"Yes, they are here for me," she muttered softly, a sudden tinge of worry painting her face.

Hell, she was yet to tell me everything. She was yet to give me a thorough explanation. For these damn faes to boldly enter my realm meant that Serena was too important for them to just simply ignore.

Unlucky for them, she meant the same to my kingdom and to me. More even.

“Don’t worry, I won’t let them take you,” I said whilst standing up. “Stay here.”

With the fae king’s visit, my wolf started baring its teeth. This was ever the first time a king of any realm visited another in surprise. This could be a cause for this man’s downfall or he just might have a very good reason why he had to knock my door with threat looming in the air.

I may not know yet the whole story, but what information I have currently, I placed two and two together. What could Serena being a High Priestess in the fae realm mean?

Fuck, I wished I had asked Adamar and Adaen further about this.

Transporting to my throne room in a second, the first thing I noticed was Elijah already standing a couple of feet away from me, shoulders stiff and eyes at attention. Beside him was Farryl. She immediately knelt on one knee in deference to me, the kind that showed complete submission to a higher command.

I tipped my head at both of them.

‘Be on guard,’ I mind-linked to them.

They nodded.

Just as I sat on my throne, the double doors opened. William waltzed in and introduced my guest with as much caution as possible.

“King Geraden of the Kingdom of Ehrelil, Your Majesty.”

He opened the path for the one mentioned to enter.

A metallic blue robe appeared from the hallway, its vomit-inducing sheen contrasted greatly with my marbled floor. This covered his whole body except his head, but it was also so grotesquely adorned with beads and whatnot that I initially had trouble locating his face.

Fucking fae.

Behind him was about fifty plus fae knights in full red and gold armor, their long swords dangling at the ready beside their waist. I reckon he had another hundred more waiting outside my castle’s front entrance. I thought a bodyguard of this size was a bit excessive, not unless he planned on something...but then again, he had good reason to do so when he was in my territory.

When our eyes locked, instantly, I recalled how he and the queen threw contemptuous glares at me in the meeting. Was Serena the reason why they did it? It was a high possibility, but I couldn't stick to this just yet. For all I know, there could be more.

Once King Geraden was a few feet away from me, my lycan side sensed danger. His animosity towards me was nothing new, but danger? How and why? Or was it my lycan's way of giving me a warning of the future?

"You do not just bring an army of fae knights in my kingdom unless you are picking a fight, King Geraden, or are they just for show? For you to personally visit me, I'm wondering what for?" I asked, leaning forward in my seat, looking down at him as if he was a pest.

Through the waterfall of beads from his headdress, I saw another contemptuous glare, but this was masked really well behind a practiced poker face.

"A recent explosion of an ancient fae power caught our attention and it led us here," he started. "This causes us to believe you are harboring a very important person in our realm."

Ancient? My mind quickly caught the word. Serena had that kind of power stored within her or was it from the stone? Fuck. I wanted to know more.

"Cut to the chase. Who are you talking about?" I asked him, showing a poker face of my own.

"I order you to hand over the High Priestess," his overconfident voice tear through the throne room. There was definitely some degree of threat behind it, but hell, this didn't worry me at all.

"High Priestess?" I asked, arching up a brow. "There is no such thing as a High Priestess here."

I knew though who he meant, but like I was going to give Serena to him.

"High Priestess Ysanna had been missing for close to a century," he reasoned. "Without clues or leads as to her existence, we are made to believe she is being held against her will. Your realm which breeds monsters fitted the bill; monsters that would love to get a hold of such a jewel as her. Don't deny it, King Aero. I was told you had past interactions with the High Priestess. That and the energy burst that came here are evidence enough."

Never mind the fact that he just insulted my kind. Heck, I would say we were indeed monsters. The best monsters there were in all the realms.

Never mind also the fact that he just subtly told me our kind kidnapped her. I knew for certain that was a lie. Serena didn't have any meaning for my kingdom until recently.

Never mind also the fact that he just insinuated I could have kept her for my own pleasure. I admit I had contemplated doing that once. I was weak at that time, too consumed by sadness and her betrayal, and my infatuation with her.

What I wanted to focus on was the fact that they were as blind as me with regard to the truth. Only Serena knew. Only she could enlighten our clouded heads.

"I demand you to release her!" he cried out, the beads on his head shook in the process.

I jumped up from my seat and gave him an icy glare, my poker business face gone.

"You demand?" my mockingly echoed. "May I remind you, King Geraden, you are in my kingdom."

Then, in response to my mind call, all the nearby wolves outside the throne room appeared before us, surrounding the stupid fae entourage, snarling and retracting their claws.

"No amount of fae knights would frighten me or my werewolves."

Clearly, King Geraden was a foolhardy king. With a newly installed crown on his head, I wouldn't be surprised if he made moronic moves in his realm and beyond. What he did here could already be deemed as a cause for war between Phanteon and Ehnrelil. Unlucky for him, I was willing to start it if it meant protecting Serena.

"Your mutts don't frighten me, King Aero. I came prepared. Do you want your castle burned down to ashes? Release High Priestess Ysanna now or else flames will engulf you and your precious freaks."

He grinned, showing the arrogance of a blue-blooded fae royalty.

His threat didn't frighten me. I was confident my people could hold a measly fire. Sure it would damage a certain part of my castle and kill off some of my weres but this was all collateral damage. A necessary sacrifice they were willing to take.

I was fuming with rage, ready to go all out with this pest of a king when suddenly, my queen emerged from the back door, dressed in her Earth clothes of faded jeans, a white collared shirt, and boots as if she was just out for a stroll in a ranch.

"That's Queen Serena to you, Uncle Geraden," she stated, her sharp eyes resting on my guest.

I thought she'd approach me, claim her place beside me, but she didn't. Instead, she strolled past my confused ass.

The fuck.

'Don't worry, I will tell you everything when I get back,' she mind-linked me as my world turned into slow motion realizing what she planned to do.

'You're not leaving, Serena! That's an order!' I barked in her thoughts, stepping forward to get her but Elijah suddenly caught my arm, consequently stopping me.

'Brother, what's going on?' he cried in my mind.

I ignored him and directed my attention back to her.

"I'm sorry Aero, but this is between me and my kind," she explained. "I have to sort it out. I can't involve your kingdom in my problems. I don't want to risk your people's lives for me."

"You will not go, you hear me," I warned her. I clenched my jaw and gave her a warning glare.

She stood next to the fae king with her wet eyes on me. "Please Aero, trust me."

King Geraden flashed me the widest, proudest grin he could make as if he had just won this round, but I wasn't going to let him leave with my mate.

No, I was going to tear his throat apart first.

'Brother, control yourself! We can't risk war now!' Elijah, always the voice of reason, cried out in my head.

'To hell with it!' I answered and summoned my lycan side to shift.

In the middle of my transformation though, another entity appeared, stopping time enough to cause a disturbance, and just like that, I was caught off-guard. The last thing my mind registered was Hale's fucking face as he disappeared with Serena, King Geraden, and the rest of the entourage.

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Serena

I was nine when I first stepped out of the fae realm. My friends Ada and Ade, sons of my caretaker, High Elder Hanhena, helped me. They were called Adamar and Adaen, the twin swords of the Silken Family, but I preferred to use short names for them. I wasn't adept much with speaking as I was a late learner...or so the Elders kept on telling me like a broken record.

To be honest, I chose not to speak. I chose to stay silent. My mother before she died told me the fewer words I release, the safer I was. Safe from what? I didn't know, but I had stayed true to her dying words ever since then even if it got me in trouble many times.

Ada, Ade, and their mother were the only people who showed me care. The rest of the Elders were quite strict with me, and it even got to the point where I felt they hated my existence.

Again, I didn't know why, but I was told I was a freak of nature many times.

Being in a different place other than the fae realm was refreshing. Even if it was the border between the werewolf territory and Ehnrelil, at least I got a taste of freedom. Seeing a werewolf too up close and personal, and even a royalty at that widened my limited horizon.

At first, I thought, werewolves were what the Elders said—a wild wolf with bad smell and an even nastier personality. I was wrong... with Prince Aero that is. Though he always sent me glares, always told me he hated girls, he never bullied me. Plus, he smelled really great. He'd just live in his own little world while I observed him, getting fascinated with him every second that ticked by.

I would escape on my own when Ada and Ade weren't there to bring me to Salviste Lake. I could do it even without using what limited ancient magic I learned at that time. My mother always said that I had a unique power within me. I figured this was the reason why I was able to fool the other caretakers.

In my many visits to the lake, I soon realized I wanted to be better friends with this boy wolf just like the bond he shared with the twins, but over the course of years, this craving for friendship grew into something deeper... Love.

I knew though this feeling of mine only headed towards the path to doom. Friendship between a werewolf and a fae was unheard of, how much more when it came to love? What was even worse was my calling being a High Priestess. I wasn't allowed to be loved and to love. I wasn't even allowed to go out of the tower in the first place.

Whenever I return from the lake, the Elders always reprimanded me, explode a string of nasty sermons that aimed to demean me. They never failed to mention how unfit I was with my life and my calling.

But of course, since I was my mother's daughter, a royal blood, a niece to the queen, the heir to my mother's seat as the High Priestess of the fae realm, they didn't have a choice but to train me and train me they did.

However, I always wondered if these trainings were a sort of punishment too. They taught me to fight, but they also paired me with some of the skilled fighters in the fae army. I got many bruises and lacerations, broken ribs and tendons, and even a fractured skull but luckily, I was a fast healer. Fae people didn't have that ability, hence one of the reasons why they called me a freak.

They taught me to be strong, but they also ordered me to lift objects twenty times my juvenile weight. They gave me shelter and food, but I felt like a prisoner inside the Rexhus Tower with no one but my rainbow bugs to live with.

They taught me the ancient magic of the faes where only priestesses had the ability to wield, but they also forced me to do things I didn't want, grilling my conscience whenever I had no choice but to fulfill it. They would let me kill off helpless fae creatures using this power. They would get another animal from another realm and order me to do the same. They would make me summon cyclones and earthquakes just to see if this ancient power crossed our border to Earth. Using a rune, they even made me summon fire to burn down half of the Rexhus Forest. This negligent order caused great fires on Earth as a result.

My mother was the first to use this ancient power, supporting my uncle, King Alduin, in his shared job as pillar of the realms. She was good at being a priestess. She was idolized by many. She always told me the power of a priestess was meant to be used for the good of all. To protect and give life. Not to take it away.

As Queen of Phanteon, it was my duty to also do just that; to keep the peace and ensure my people's safety.

I was hiding in another room, just watching King Geraden and my husband exchange words when I felt Aero's anger and read the intention in his mind. He was willing to sacrifice himself, his castle, and his people for me. It was a commendable trait, and it warmed my heart, but I couldn't allow such a thing to happen. Not when I could do something to stop it.

I had expected already there would be repercussions for my return and this was it. I was ready to face the ire of Queen Adna, the Elders, and the rest of the faes so decided to show myself to King Geraden.

Now there was no question whether Aero would wage war on Ehnrelil or not. After seeing me disappear with the king and the fae knights, and with Hale at that, it was a given. The last thing I saw was his enraged expression, mid-shift, ready to rain hell on my reckless kind.

The trip to the fae realm was a quick one. Nevannir was always known for that ability. I sensed his power the moment we started to disappear, but I never expected he'd actually help King Geraden. He hated the man. Maybe he was forced to do so or maybe he had a change of heart. It had been almost a hundred years in fae time since I disappeared after all. Anyway, whatever the reason, Nevannir was someone whose intentions were unreadable. Labile at most.

I didn't expect a grand welcome when I appeared in my realm. In fact, I had already seen this coming: King Geraden throwing me stat inside my room in Rexhus Tower, my prison of a house.

"Welcome back, Priestess," were his mocking words, sending me a look that was nowhere near friendly or comforting for a king... or even a family relative by law.

"I want to speak with Queen Adna, now," I demanded, lifting my chin up. He may have become the King of Ehnrelil now, but in my eyes, he still remained the High Elder who groveled for attention under the shadows of his brother.

"Oh, you'll get your wish soon," he sneered, moving towards the door.

I watched as he and Hale exchanged words. It was almost inaudible, but I managed to pick up two words: invitation and wine. Maybe they want to celebrate the success of a smooth escape from Phanteon.

Idiots.

Then, King Geraden left, throwing another scornful look at me.

"I need some minute with your precious priestess, boys," Hale stated while he stood on the threshold, flashing a winsome smile on the four knights that were probably assigned to guard me.

As if they were beguiled by his powers, they left without a word.

"Are you friends with the faes now?" I asked when we were alone, feeling pissed with his presence. As far as I remember, vampires preferred to mind their own business. They steer clear of the drama of other realms. This vampire master was either stupid or he had a pretty good reason to get involved.

"Only when necessary, Serena," he answered calmly.

"Right," I placed my arms akimbo. "Damn it, Hale. I'm going straight with you. What do you get by doing this? You're a vampire. Vampires don't just work for anyone except if it also benefits them."

"Hmf," he laughed weakly, "I'm merely doing my job as a helper, Serena. Nothing more," he added with still the same calm and collected attitude. I couldn't tell if he was toying with me or this was just his insensitive side talking.

"A helper? With King Geraden? Really?" I asked in a mocking tone.

"Not quite," was his scarce reply, then ghosted a grin. It almost looked like he was keeping something from me.

"Don't lie," I told him instead, choosing not to be fooled by his mind games. "Is this your way of getting back on the werewolves? Your kind hated them for centuries. Are you teaming up with King Geraden now to start a pointless war with Phanteon?"

He chuckled audibly in response and shook his head. "You sure have a wild imagination, Serena, but no. I aim nothing of the sort...well, except for Geraden. He seems to harbor quite a strong hatred for werewolves."

'Yes, Geraden did and so did Queen Adna,' I thought to myself backing up Hale's claim. I remembered a time when their hatred almost caused the fae army to attack Phanteon, but

I stepped up and stopped it. It was the very reason why I left Ehnrelil.

"Still, what could you gain in helping the faes? Surely not me. I already told you I hate vampires. I won't give you my blood either!"

"Oh, no," he shook his head, "I'm not blind, Serena. Your bond with Aero is so strong anyone could sense it even without seeing that mark on your neck."

With his words, I slightly became conscious of the mark, traced its raised edges just to be sure it was still there. It was and this comforted me; knowing that I was still connected with my beloved Alpha King.

"Also, your blood is as good as the mystery behind it. I was drawn to your blood and am still drawn to it now, Serena. Make no mistake, I still want a taste of it; however, now that I know you're fae, it's safe to assume my curiosity is already sated."

Good. Somehow that was reassuring for me to hear.

"So what do you—" I asked, but then he cut me off.

"I gain information," he simply stated, his expression blank of any clues.

I cringed, disliking how vague his words were.

"Care to expound?" I said.

He grinned at me again. "I prefer not to, my Queen."

"I could help you if you tell me." I must admit, this time I was the one who was curious. Here comes a vampire master mixing himself with the problems of others and for what? Some simple information? My instinct told me it wasn't the case though. He was hiding something deep...something personal.

"How sweet of you," he chuckled. "I'm jealous of Aero now."

I huffed. "I'm serious, Hale."

"Hmm, yes I know, but unfortunately, you can't give me the information I need. But enough about me, Serena. What you should be worried about is yourself."

He strolled inside the room and stopped near my desk where scrolls upon scrolls lay, evidence of my nocturnal studies of the ancient fae magic.

"You amaze me. I never expected you'd be this realm's long lost rogue priestess."

I gave him a smug smile. To be unrecognized by all, that was my main objective when I placed a spell on myself that day when I decided to leave Ehnrelil.

“So you know what I did here?” I asked him.

“It pays to have connections in this realm,” was his reply. He raised a palm up and gestured to all of me. “You’re wearing Earth clothes now. Do you mean to prove something by wearing that?”

“Yes. Identity,” I answered. “I didn’t want to associate the Kingdom of Phanteon when I face the fae court. I want them to see me as me, the High Priestess of Ehnrelil and not the werewolf queen.”

“Your queen status would have helped though,” he pointed out, but I only grimaced at his remark.

“On the contrary, it wouldn’t. It would only anger them. Give them the exact reason why they should attack the werewolf realm.”

He tipped his lips upward as if he just realized something.

“Are you talking about the death of King Alduin? My spy told me he was killed by a werewolf.”

I clenched my hands.

“That was what the rumors said but I didn’t believe it. I’m still not believing it now. Something just doesn’t add up.”

“Hmf,” he scoffed. “If Queen Adna and the Elders hear about this, they’d likely think you’re only protecting the werewolves.”

“I am protecting them!” I lashed. “They are innocent and I’m going to prove it!”

He strolled back to the door and paused on the threshold again with his profile to me.

“That would be interesting to watch, Serena. I’ll see you later.”

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Aero

King Geraden was begging for trouble and so he was going to get it.

Right after they disappeared, I continued to change into my lycan form and thereafter howled loudly, informing my people of their king's anger and sadness. The ones that were inside the throne room: Elijah, William, and Farryl transformed into their were form and howled in response, in unison with the rest of the kingdom.

'Prepare for a bloodbath!' I mind-linked at all of them, gnashing my teeth and clawing out the marbled floor. 'The King of Ehnrelil had robbed us of our queen and therefore his kingdom deserved our wrath! Are you with me, my people?!

A louder howl reverberated all over the kingdom, and possibly, it had crossed borders to other realms, informing the rest of the leaders that Phanteon was in turmoil.

I was itching to run my claws on specifically two worthless people: Geraden and Hale, in no particular order of their deaths. I wanted them torn to pieces, rib by rib, limb by limb, gouge out their eyes and sever their heads. I took delight in the grotesque plans I had for them. I just had to get across the fae border and reach them...

Only when I tried to realm hop into their territory, I was the one surprised. It seemed they had prepared for my coming too and had blocked the portals again. Not only that, but I also couldn't hear Serena's thoughts and I couldn't mind-link her, and again, I associate this to the spells of the faes.

Fuck.

But, this was only a minor setback, I thought to myself. My army and I were going to break their stronghold for good and I was going to take back my queen, save her whether she needed it or not...

'What do you want in return, Nevannir?' I looked back on the time when Ehnrelil's guardian and I conversed.

Give and take, that was his motto so it seems. Since he provided me information about the bugs and gave me a bracelet to test Serena's honesty, I was bound to give him something in return.

He curled up a smile in response and tipped his head down. 'I only want to see a glorious fae realm, Your Majesty. Make that happen for me. I believe the new king is unfit to rule, and Queen Adna, she is too grief-stricken still to function properly.'

Wrinkles on my forehead formed.

'All these centuries, she still mourns of Alduin's death?' I asked.

'A fae bond is like a counterpart of a werewolf mate, Your Majesty. Complete emptiness reigns over the one left behind and could never be healed,' he explained and I understood quickly. Although I didn't think my mother was my father's true mate, he was still left utterly depressed with her betrayal and

eventual death. He never functioned well as the king thereafter, the same as Queen Adna's case.

Fucking love. Such emotion was deadly.

Unfortunately for me, it had already made its tight dead grip around my heart. But was I worried? Hell fucking no. I was willing to be under Love's control if it meant Serena as my true mate. She was worthy of my sacrifice.

'Why ask me such a request when you know I care less of what the fae kingdom turns into?' I questioned Nevannir again, returning to the original topic.

'What if my hunch is right, Your Majesty?' There was suddenly determination in his eyes. 'What if your beloved queen turns out to be someone of importance in Ehnrelil? I told you already, these spirit creatures know their master more than a hundred percent. I myself felt some connection to her, but something hinders me from ever finding that out.'

I hastened to understand his words and hell, he had a point. He fucking had a point.

'She could be what the fae kingdom needs: a better, more powerful ruler no fae has ever seen,' he continued, his eyes flashing bright with excitement.

I growled low at this. 'She's my queen you're talking about, Nevannir. I don't share what belongs to me.'

The brightness in his eyes dimmed quickly and he returned to his calm and composed state. 'Of course, Your Majesty. Your words are loud and clear. I was merely expressing what could happen in the future.'

'You're too idealistic. Maybe even delusional,' I pointed out without hesitation. He knew me to be blunt with my words. He knew how I didn't give a shit with anything that wasn't mine.

He grinned at me again though and replied with a proud face, 'I prefer to call myself a visionary, Your Majesty.'

Still sitting on my throne, I released another long exhale again. 'I would only care to remember your request when the need arises. Until then, leave this hanging in the air.'

'Of course, Your Majesty, I understand,' he voiced out and made a final bow before leaving the throne hall...

As I recollected our conversation in the present, I grimaced and clenched my jaw. With all that's happening now, it goes to show Nevannir was right, and this meant I was bound to fulfill his request.

But he didn't mean war, did he? Because that's exactly what I was going to do to give him a glorious fae realm.

Serena

"Ysanna, my dear, I had always waited for this day to come," my aunt, Queen Adna, voiced out the moment I stepped inside the court circle. Around me, there were High Elders present. All of them I knew by face and name. All of them gave me a hard time when I was still in training, except for one, High Elder Hanhenna.

She looked at me with worry mixed with pride in her eyes. She was the only person I told of my plans and the only person who knew I loved the crown prince of Phanteon, now my husband. She understood the sacrifices I had to make and was even willing to help, but I didn't let her. I didn't want Ada and Ade get punished in the process.

The fae court was an oval-shaped room with a grand dome covered by vines. Rays of sunlight usually would pass through and hit the elegant flooring, but since it was evening, the quadruplet blue moons of the fae realm lighted the court instead.

Rows upon rows of gilded chairs surrounded the court. I was in the center platform, too vulnerable to their stares, but that didn't mind me. It was better this way.

"Looks like you didn't age, Auntie," I told her, drawing courage from the very same blood running through her veins. She looked exactly as breathtaking as I remembered her to be, wearing a regal crown of sticks, flowers, and gemstones and dressed in a flowing gown that shimmered against the moonlight. Only now, her eyes had grown dull and lifeless. She looked less spectacular than the last time I saw her and it was pitiful.

"Same goes to you," she threw a weak grin at me. "Still as beautiful as ever, but you've changed. You're bolder now. I can see fire in your eyes."

"The very fire that had left our realm vulnerable, my Queen," King Geraden butted in, touching her hand as if to comfort her.

Queen Adna's brows furrowed. "Yes, how could I forget your betrayal to the throne," she stated, directing those words to me.

I wanted to speak up, but then the king stood up from his throne and addressed the souls inside the fae court.

"I speak for everyone in this hall and in the whole fae realm," he started, giving off an air of certainty. "High Priestess Ysanna had caused us great trouble. She had left her post, disappeared without a trace and worse, placed the fae royal army into eternal sleep. We could however deem her innocent; that she was only forced in hiding by the very monsters that killed my brother, but the fact that she

stands before us now as Queen of Phanteon shows that they are in cohorts with each other all along.”

I winced at his words. This man sure had this speech planned all along.

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“Leave Phanteon out of this!” I cried out. “The werewolf people have always lived a peaceful life. Yes, they may be at times savage and uncontrollable, but they respect territory. Unless provoked, they keep to themselves. They don't interfere or pry on the matters of the other realms.”

“You sure speak exactly like their Luna, Ysanna, and this is unforgivable,” he told me, sneering.

He then turned his attention to the panel around us and pointed a hand towards me.

“Don't you see Elders of the High Fae Court? She has done and told enough to show that she is indeed one of them! She could never be our High Priestess. She must be stripped of her powers and be sentenced to death!”

That was quick, but I had an ace up my sleeve.

“No, I demand you to listen!” I shouted, spreading a palm against my chest. “I am fae. I have the right to be heard!”

“You stop being a fae when you became the Alpha King's whore,” he spat with glares on my way. “That mate mark on your neck speaks for itself.”

Hell, this was exactly what I didn't want to happen. Geraden was cunning enough to use my mated status as an advantage.

I watched as the Elders exchanged glances, then they all nodded.

King Geraden was swift to turn to me with a sly grin. “You will be stripped with your right as fae and as the High Priestess, Ysanna. Your powers too.”

“How dense of you to condemn me with that basis alone. My being a queen and the king's mate doesn't mean that the werewolves are guilty. I am what I am. I am destined for the Alpha King. I am his true mate. You can't go against destiny!”

“Oh I can,” he flashed me a wicked smile. “Just like how I dealt with your mother.”

My eyes turned to slits. "What do you mean?"

"Like mother like daughter huh?" he chuckled.

"Your mother had an indecent relationship with a werewolf, my dear," Queen Adna filled in. "She was willing to sacrifice her status as the High Priestess just for the sake of that man. It was painful to watch her slowly fall out of grace, succumbed to the sins of the flesh, and ruin herself."

"I had to stop it," Geraden continued. "Sever their bond so that she'd return to her senses and stay in Ehnrelil."

I gave him a glare, my memory returning to the time when I saw my mother cry in secret. I never understood why she did that. Now, I could perfectly guess it was for her beloved...my father.

"My deepest regret was finding out about you too late. You are the fruit of their forbidden union. You are never a true fae. You are part wolf."

My eyes immediately widened. Hearing him said that, my reality around me spun. I was here to speak my case. I was here to defend the werewolves. Never had I expected I'd be facing a truth beyond my current existence could hold.

Shit. No wonder they treated me badly.

From my periphery, on the highest area of the courtroom where the darkness mostly covered, I caught Hale's figure. I glanced there and saw his expression. He was as surprised as me. Clearly he didn't get that tidbit when he stole a taste of my blood.

For a moment, my strength left me. My shoulders hunched. My knees shook. My eyes flew to the floor and stared at it for quite some time, remembering my childhood and my precious life in Phanteon. No wonder I felt a sense of connection with the were people. No wonder I could never feel at home in Ehnrelil.

"Everything makes sense now?" Geraden muttered, his voice still dripping smugness.

I glanced at him, ready to throw in a string of questions, but as I did, my attention fell on a new person who walked inside the courtroom. I had seen this woman before, back when I was in Hale's mansion.

The bitch Sofia.

What a fucking revelation, but this really wasn't the information that blew my mind. It was the deadly weapon, the long sword with red stones, that was secured in a belt chain around her hip, the same one that that murderer-turned-arsonist used to kill those witches. This was clear proof they were one and the same person.

But how could she appear and disappear as she wishes when she was just a human? Unless... Rhea and I were wrong and we just assumed she was like us.

"Yes, everything makes sense now," I answered, puffing out my chest with confidence.

Everything fell into place.

"I see that this was never about King Alduin's death. This was all because of your hatred for the werewolves, Un—cle," I addressed Geraden in a mocking way. "Jealousy is a deadly emotion, right? You desired my mother, she rejected you and chose a werewolf...my father. Now you want to avenge your sorry ass. Since I thwarted your plans to attack Phanteon using the fae army, you look for other outlets."

I recollected all the info I got from Aero so far and slapped Geraden with this.

"A dead vampire in the outskirts of Phanteon...dead witches in the Baltic Forest—all made to believe a werewolf killed them, and of course, let's not forget, the fire in Cirelles, the set-up of which made the Alphas think a witch caused it. You tried to cause conflict between Phanteon and the other realms in the hopes that war will break out, but unfortunately, it didn't and your sorry ass still remains...well, pitiful."

I turned to Queen Adna and also eyed the other Elders one by one. "And you allowed someone like him to do this?"

"It was a necessary endeavor, Ysanna. Our kingdom needed to avenge King Alduin's death too," she answered, almost teary-eyed. "You don't know how much his death caused me great pain! Phanteon needs to fall. The werewolves need to pay!"

"I know how much his death affected you, Auntie. My mother was the same. She suffered so much staying here where in fact she could have been spending time with me and my father!"

I may not know yet the identity of my father, but I felt a bond with him already. We share the same blood so I could still feel him alive; still waiting for me and my mother. Though we couldn't have a happy reunion now, I would like to cherish her precious memory with him.

I refocused my attention on Queen Adna and voiced out, "But war isn't the answer, Auntie. I said it before and I'll say it again, the werewolves are innocent."

"Guards!" Geraden suddenly interrupted. My enraged eyes flew to him and saw him gesturing to the fae knights inside the courtroom.

"Restrain her!" he added and on cue, the soldiers did, holding both of my hands. I let them do this. I didn't need to worry. I would be out of here in a second anyway.

"Judgment has been made, Ysanna. You will be stripped of your powers and you will be sentenced to die," he stated again. Just as he hated my father, he hated my existence, but I took delight with this. There was no better way to torment him than to show how much he failed in wooing my mother.

"The fall of Phanteon...of the werewolf race will start with you." He took Sofia's sword, neared me, and poised the tip of the blade directly at my chest.

I scowled at him.

"I said what I wanted to say. I'm done here," I stated.

Closing my eyes, I summoned the ancient fae magic within me, planning to disappear in their front and return to the arms of my Alpha King. I felt the power surge inside me, enveloping all my nerves, bones, muscles...all my cells, until...

"You can't just poof your way out of here, Ysanna," I heard Geraden's voice again.

Popping my eyes open, I gave out a quick gasp. Why the hell am I still here?

"We prepared your return, Sweet." Grinning, he pointed towards Sofia who in return gave a haughty smile. "Athyllane has already put a spell on this place, hindering your chance for escape. She's your successor, you know. As a priestess in training, she'll fully turn to a High Priestess once we siphon your powers out of you."

This bitch was really getting on my nerves.

"I won't hand over the fae army to you!" I shouted, gnashing my teeth and hitting the duo with the sharpest glare I could make. Taking my powers meant that they'll get complete rule over the fae army. They will cancel out the eternal sleep spell I made and would likely use them to attack Phanteon again. I couldn't let that happen.

Geraden chuckled dryly. "You have no choice, Priestess."

I wriggled as much as I could. These soldiers were no match for me. Sofia doesn't intimidate me too. I am half-fae, half-wolf. I am the High Priestess of Ehnrelil. I have more than enough power to fuck these people up. I just need a few seconds to distract them.

"May I cut in, Priestess?"

Suddenly, Hale's face popped near mine. He had the smuggest smile I had seen from him.

I watched our surroundings and realized, hell, he just used his vampire power to stop time. Seeing this as an advantage, I immediately teleported us to Viacronis, inside his lair to be exact, in the very balcony where we first met.

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Serena

"Hale, what the hell?! "Your bitch mistress is the one causing problems in Phanteon?!" I grounded and threw him a dirty look just as I stepped out of his reach. It was windy in this area, definitely not a fitting place to stay but I especially chose this location for good reasons:

One, I hated going inside his mansion when it was inundated with the smell of blood, and two, this was the safest spot I could think of when I decided to transport us both in Viacronis.

Now that I have fully regained my powers and I had bonded with Aero, my senses had heightened and god, the smell of blood inside Hale's lair was nauseating. No wonder werewolves hate vampires. I could have chosen Phanteon, reunite with my husband in this very moment, but with Hale tagging along, it wouldn't be a wise decision. I didn't want to anger my husband more.

Hale wasn't offended with how fast I escaped from his hold. He just righted his damn bothersome cape and moved near the balustrade.

"Unfortunately, yes, it's her. She's fae," he verified.

I knotted my brows and placed my arms akimbo. "How did she turn up to be your mistress living in the Slave Wing?"

A visible lopsided grin painted his face.

"She likes to act sometimes, playing bully on my new additions."

I recollected those moments when that woman and I first met and yup, Sofia or Athyll...whatever really was a one of a kind bitch. No wonder she gave me sour looks. She hated werewolves just like her stupid king and since I was the queen of Phanteon, I was the sure end receiver. She even set me up with that vengeful vampire who thought Aero killed his betrothed when in fact, it was her fucking doing.

Damn her...

"She's rather twisted," I expressed; my temper rising, my hands itching to do some damage on her perfectly-constructed face.

I turned my attention on Hale again and narrowed my eyes, "Are you sure you're not involved in the witch murders and the fire in Cirelles?" I couldn't help but accuse.

His beautiful face was marred with a grimace in response.

"You wound me, Serena," he said. "Just because she's my occasional partner in bed, it doesn't mean I'm guilty too. I can't prove my innocence to you, I know, but I can assure you, I was already aware of Geraden's plan. Athyllane or so you know her as Sofia is his lackey. She does his dirty work."

With his words, I glued all the pieces together, and fuck, it gave me a chill in the bones.

"I can't help but wonder if Geraden ordered her to kill Alduin too," I voiced out, my anger resurfacing towards him.

"You would be surprised by the truth, Serena." Hale gave me a neutral expression, but I saw through his eyes. I saw the ugly truth weaved with hatred, envy, and greed.

"Since King Alduin was a cautious fae, Geraden had to enlist Sofia's help and used the same priestess magic against him. She restrained him, but Geraden delivered the blows. She used to tell me how much he enjoyed killing his brother."

Cold dread washed all over me. Somehow, I couldn't help but think if he also violated my mother. God, I hope I am wrong.

"Why haven't you informed Queen Adna? Geraden should be punished!" I cried out, a new sense of anger filling inside me. If he indeed violated my mother then so help me I am going to rain hell on him.

"I mind my own business, Serena," Hale, unsurprisingly, answered. "As you said, vampires only pry on the problems of others only if this benefits us. I don't see any benefit on exposing Geraden, well at least not on my side."

"You're insensitive," I spat out, throwing him a scowl.

He scoffed in response and turned to face the night sky.

"Someone exactly said those words to me in the past," he confessed.

"Yet you didn't learn," was my answer, too angry to delve deeper into his story.

Silence surrounded us for a moment. I sensed he was in a contemplative mood like my words had somehow cut a good part of his cold, lifeless heart. Then, as if nothing happened, he turned back to me and grinned.

"I saved your life. Now, you truly owe me. Doesn't that make you think of something?"

'You owe me a bite,' his past words immediately popped in my head.

I raised my chin up and mock laughed at him.

"What you only did was to stop time thereby nullifying Sofia's spell on me. You didn't save me, Hale. I saved myself."

He raised a brow as if taken aback.

"Oh, so Kerus wasn't the one who transported us here?" he voiced out, clearly having trouble believing.

I shook my head. "No, I was the one who transported us here. A thank you is only needed, so thank you."

He quickly reached out and grabbed my elbow.

"Let me taste your blood, Serena, and I'll call it even."

"I thought your curiosity is sated?" I frowned at him.

"After learning your half-fae and half-wolf, I realized I just had to taste a rare blood like yours," he confessed. I couldn't tell whether he was playing with me again or if he was indeed serious, but I just shrugged my shoulders and pulled my elbow away.

"Keep on dreaming, Hale," I said.

"You're in my lair. What makes you think I wouldn't force myself on you?"

He had a good point, but I was confident with my answer too.

"Because my husband is coming any second now and I know you wish better to avoid any tension with him."

The thrill in his eyes dimmed and then as if we were merely talking about our Sunday breakfast, he stepped away from me.

Then, exactly as I mentioned, a felt a break in space just a few feet away from us. A silhouette of a tall man appeared. Black boots materialized fully first, then slender limbs, then large hands, followed by a naked, delicious chest, and thereafter, Aero's glowering face.

"Aero..." I breathed out, my heart almost jumping out of its rib cage. 'Thank you for coming to get me,' I added, mind-linking him. Since the very moment I stepped inside the realm of the vampires, I felt I could mind-link him again, and I knew he knew I was in Viacronis instead of Ehnrelil. I didn't need to summon him. I was well aware he was coming to get me. I just needed to be patient.

Now that he was here, intense peace washed all over me. We met halfway. I gave him the biggest, warmest hug I could give and he reciprocated it.

The contact of our bodies completed me. It took away all my stress, my pain, and my fears. It took away the throbbing ache on my wrist mark. And his warmth, of course, incited a craving within me...a craving pooling inside my core.

"Did this vampire hurt you?" he whispered in my ear. I could sense his body still tense, still ready to kill, still yearning for Hale's blood splattered on the floor, but I also sensed his great relief that I was finally back in his arms.

"No, I'm unscathed," I told him, soothing his rage by using our bond. "Lord Hale helped me escape."

Technically, he did, and because of that, I figured saving him from Aero's wrath would be a better payment than a bite on my neck.

"Let's go?" I told Aero whilst basking on his wonderful scent. I missed him so much and I missed doing wonderful things on him.

He didn't reply. He just poofed us out of Hale's balcony and back inside his bedroom.

Without words, we knew already what we desired. Disengaging from our embrace, I placed myself on the mattress. He followed me and as quick as a heartbeat claimed my mouth. His hands didn't wait. He tore the white button-up shirt I wore and ignored the tattered pieces strewn across the bed.

My body shook just as he unhooked my bra from behind and kneaded my breasts, specifically stroking my nipples using his thumb until they were rigid.

"Oh Aero..." I groaned, unable to voice out any more words. There was so much I wanted to tell him, and I sensed he was bursting himself with many questions too. We could talk about these things later, but for now, our lust for each other just needed to be sated first.

"Take me now, please..." I begged underneath him.

He moved his mouth down my nipple, sucking one sister thoroughly, eliciting perfect sensations that ignited my heat more, then he switched on the other.

I unbuttoned my jeans whilst he was busy, but because it was hard for me to strip the garment and boots myself, he helped. Now, with only my underwear on, I reached for him and did my own undressing...well, not like there was that many to undress in the first place.

Once this was done, we headed directly to grinding against each other, the desire to feel our skin expanding...multiplying. His fingers crept inside my underwear and tested my wetness. The look in his eyes as he stared at me hungrily was enough to give me a clue. A long foreplay can be done later. Now, we just wanted each other raw and fast.

"With pleasure, my queen," he murmured just as he swept my drenched underwear to the side. His thick erection slid inside me thereafter. I gasped, my eyes rolling at the back of my head with the intense pleasure. "Oh...ohhhh..." I whimpered.

Making love with Aero now knowing that I was half-wolf somehow emboldened me. I could match up with his brute strength. I didn't need to worry about being crushed...not like I didn't want to be crushed.

I summoned my wolf blood inside me, putting it to the forefront for him to sense.

And he did. Oh yes, he did.

"This is a pleasant surprise," a wicked, proud smile appeared under his ragged breathing. He raised one leg up, sniffed and licked my flushed skin sensually just as he pounded me harder than before. "A really. Good. News!"

Each thrust hit my G-spot perfectly. It was so good it made me moan and shout with the intense sensation it was giving me inside.

"Yes, Aero, more!" I begged. "More!"

I was almost there... almost reaching my own version of Mount Olympus. I sensed he was the same and with that, he answered my plea. He moved harder, faster... like a fucking jackhammer.

Giving him better access to my core, I raised my other leg up and arranged both of them over his shoulder. My ass hung in the air, shaking with pleasure in response to his brutal thrusting.

"Sere...na!" he gritted his teeth.

"YES!" I cried out.

Wave upon wave of rapture then hit us. We were momentarily disconnected from the world. We were on our own...in a plane that only we exist.

My wolf form—large, furry and white; transcendently beautiful—howled in tune with Aero's enormous black wolf. We were along the shoreline of what seemed like a mirror image of the golden lake in the Baltic forest. Our heads then pressed up like we were embracing each other; just feeling our presence...our warmth; just feeling for each other's hearts beating in one sync. Since I was now aware of my wolf side, my orgasm took me to this new kind of sight and yes, this made me so happy, so contented, so complete with my life.

"Serena...my luna, don't leave me ever again," Aero breathily implored as he pressed his forehead against mine.

I placed my legs down before I touched his jaw—still tense from the glorious union we just had—and nodded, "Yes, I won't ever leave you again, my king."

My thumb ran along the edge of his bottom lip, my eyes surveyed his handsome features, my free hand touched his pounding chest, and right then and there, I realized, goodness, I really missed this man despite being away from him for less than an hour.

"I missed you, Aero," I expressed, giving him the most contrite face I could make. I knew I had stepped outside of our mate bond by suddenly and spectacularly leaving him earlier and because of that, I was willing to receive his temper.

"I missed you too, Serena," he answered softly, feathering his fingers against my collarbone, "But you're going to have to accept your punishment for doing that stunt on me."

He then grabbed both of my hands, placed them over my head just as he started rocking his hips again; his cock still solid and embedded inside me.

I licked the corner of my lips and awarded him a confident grin.

"I'll take whatever punishment my Alpha King wants to place on me," I said.

"Good," he smirked, the predatory gleam in his eyes suddenly visible. "Because I am going to make love to you until you get pregnant with our child."

I chuckled at his remark. Now that I remember everything about my identity, I could point out an important tidbit about me being half-fae.

"You know faes can only reproduce when their fever hits," I pointed out, smirking again.

His eyes turned to slits, scrutinizing me. "And when is that, may I ask?"

I bit the inside of my cheek, feeling the thrill. "A month from now, once the Star of Judezah appears."

He growled low, not of disappointment but of excitement. "That doesn't stop me from making love with you though."

I lifted my chin up and replied with a hum, "I'm not going to hinder you, my king."

He pressed his lips on mine and gave me the slowest, laziest kiss he had ever bestowed on me.

"Let's take our time then," he stated.

Through his lust-filled eyes, I saw a promise of a mind-blowing foreplay.