

## Chapter 43

It was a little after midnight before I finally got the courage to unlock the door leading into the hall. Surprisingly, they had once again left it unlocked. The key was still in it, but it hadn't been turned, trapping me inside. The majority of the night I spent listening to Kalen argue and fight with them over me.

I tried my best to ignore it and not eavesdrop but hearing the hatred spewing from my lips and listening to them warn me away from Kalen bothered me. Though I was a little shocked overhearing Kalen defend Kalen and me because he was furious finding Kalen in the shower with me. <sup>6</sup>

Something went down in there, and I hoped Kalen was alright, and if any of them did get hurt, I prayed it was Darius. The asshole needed to know what pain felt like. I would love to be the one to deliver every blow he has shown to me. He sure knows how to ruin someone, that is for sure.

Slipping into the hall, I made my way down to the cells, careful as I opened the door so it didn't creak before making my way down the steps. Ryze peeked his little head up excitedly before tilting it from side to side as he looked at me. Ryze, I swear, could see into my soul. As soon as I sat down, he bumped his head against my cheek, making a low cawing sound, and I got the feeling he could sense I was upset.

"I can't stay for long, but I saved you some sandwich," I whispered to him before kissing the top of his beak. I held the

sandwich out to him, but he nudged my hand toward me, pushing it away. I tried again, but he did the same thing.

"You don't want it?" I asked him. He must be missing eating meat. I needed to see if I could catch some field mice. I sighed a breath of relief when he plucked the sandwich triangle from my hand, but instead of eating it, he stood pressing the old stale sandwich and his beak to my mouth. I laughed, watching as he tried to stuff the stale sandwich in my mouth and feed me. I shook my head, and he puffed out his feathers before plopping down in his make-shift nest. His snake-like tongue licked the back of my hand, and I picked up the dropped sandwich and placed it beside him.

"I have to get back in case they notice," I tell Ryze patting his back. Feathers were starting to sprout along his back, and his broken wing still looked terrible. I chewed my lip, thinking of the wards on the doors upstairs.

If I could just siphon a little bit of power, I could at least heal his broken wing. Then we could get out of here sooner, or at the very least he could. That thought saddened me, he was all I had here, but it would be selfish of me to keep him down here, and I was already a prisoner. I wouldn't do that to Ryze.

Reluctantly I got and left, sneaking back into the castle foyer. I started climbing the steps when I paused mid-way, looking back at the door leading to the cells. My eyes moved to the wards, and I quickly glanced up to the other levels to see if anyone was around. When I saw no one, I moved toward the doors. Darius's energy oozed off them, powerful and

dangerous. Placing my hand on the doorknob, I didn't get blown backward or incinerated so I gripped it. Just enough to heal Ryze, that was it. Maybe Darius wouldn't notice if I was careful not to take too much. Like who in their right mind would attack a castle belonging to Darius Wraith and contained over 600 demons, you would have to be suicidal to try that.

I felt my hand heat up as I felt for his energy, and I was about to absorb it when a hand went across my mouth and nose, stifling the scream of fright that tried to leave me.

I was ripped backward and away from the door by someone. I tried to breathe but the hand prevented it as I struggled. And it only took a few seconds to recognize it was Darius.

"You see, the wards, when touched, alert me of intruders but also those who try to escape Aleera. You wouldn't be stupid enough to try, would you?" I swallowed and shook my head.

"But then again if you weren't trying to escape, why were you at the door?" he growled, shoving me away. I stagger and barely correct my footing before hitting the floor. My heart was racing so fast I could hear it, feel my own pulse in my neck.

"You want to have a good reason to be done here, and what you were doing trying to leave," I went to tell him I wasn't trying to leave, but if I said I was siphoning magic, he would probably kill me and if I told why he would kill Ryze.

"So let's hear it," Darius snapped at me. I chewed my lip. No matter what I say, it would get me or Ryze killed.

"Answer or am I right? You were trying to leave?" Darius asked. I say nothing. Sometimes silence is better than words. I was doomed either way, so I was surprised at his following words.

"Get back upstairs," he snarled, motioning with his hand toward them. I hesitated before running up them like my ass was on fire to get away from him. With a glance over my shoulder, I noticed Darius walking up behind me, so I moved faster, hoping to get to my room so I could lock him out.

Walking down the dimly lit corridor to my room, I gripped the door handle to open my door when Darius's voice stopped me.

"Next door," he said and my brows furrowed. I stepped back, ensuring it was the right door, and it was definitely my room. Twisting the handle, I pushed the door open only to walk directly into Darius. My heart nearly leaped out of my chest as he appeared out of thin air. Darius had portalled into my room. My feet automatically take a step back from him and the glare he gave me.

"I said the next door," he snarled, stepping out of my room toward me. I glanced back down the corridor where he was before he materialized in my room. I swallowed my head looking at the door beside mine. It was their bedroom door.

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"You can lock me in," I blurted, not wanting to be stuck in a room with them. His hand gripped my throat, and he walked me backward until I hit the wall. My hands wrapped around his wrist, yet he didn't put any pressure on my throat just simply held me, his way of telling me he could me easily.

Darius pressed his entire body against mine, and his stubble brushed my cheek as he leaned in.

"I am being very lenient right now by not breaking your neck. You will be in our room from now on because you can't be trusted." I shook my head, not wanting to sleep in there with them or be anywhere near Darius or Tobias, Lycus. I didn't want to be near either, but if I had to pick a lesser evil, it was him, kind of.

"Maybe Kalen can stay in my room," I asked, and he growled, pressing so close I could feel the heat of his anger seep into me. His aura pressed down on me suffocatingly.

"And tomorrow when our mates wake up, you can explain to them why you are in our room and what you attempted to do," Darius murmured. I gasped, thinking of Kalen, how much that would hurt him if I said I was trying to escape him.

"But Kalen would hate me," I whispered.

"Exactly," Darius snarled before shoving off me. He took a step back and smiled. So that was his punishment, why he

didn't just kill me. He wanted me to make Kalen hate me, and I gritted my teeth before glaring at him. But two could play at this game. 1

"Fine, I will tell them then, I will tell them that you came into my room and tried to hurt me, so I ran, we will see who Kalen believes, me or his fucking sadistic mate," I smiled and shrugged. Darius tilted his head to the side, examining me, and I turned toward his bedroom door.

"Tobias would be able to tell your lying; it wouldn't work,"

"But Kalen also knows that Tobias would lie for you," I retorted, he snarled, and I found myself slammed against the wall, the air expelled from my lungs with one harsh puff. 1

"Either I sleep in your room with you, or you sleep in ours, Aleera, so fucking pick, and you pull that shit again, and I may just kill you. I will not allow you to get between my mates and me."

"Let me sleep in my room,"

"So you would rather be locked in a room with me than in a room with all of us?"

"I would rather you six foot down and buried, but I don't seem to get what I want," I snapped at him. He laughed before pressing closer, so close I could feel his lips move against mine.

"The only reason you are alive is because of Kalen; the rest of us wanted to kill you. Just remember that next time because if it

was up to me, I would have let them wolves rip you apart," Darius sneered.

"And if I could go back to that night, I would have let them. At least I wouldn't have to put up with you daily," I spat back at him.

"So what is it, Aleera? Am I sleeping in your room, or would you rather be in mine where Kalen is," Darius asked.

"For someone who finds me repulsive, you are pretty insistent on spending the night with me," I said, glaring at him. He went to say something when I spoke, cutting him off.

"Or was Kalen right about you sneaking into my room at night? You claim to hate me so much, and if that was true, why the fuck can't you stay out of my room?" Darius says nothing, just glares at me. His burning anger made the temperature rise, and I knew what Kalen said was true.

"He was telling the truth, wasn't he? You hate me yet can't stay away,"

"Don't flatter yourself, Aleera. I do hate you, but you are our rightful keeper; I don't get to control the bond, no matter how stupid it feels about you," Darius sneered.

"No, but you control your actions, so why come in? Or do you have a thing for unsuspecting sleeping girls, some fucked up kink?"

Darius pounced on me, and I crashed to the ground with him

landing on top of me. I tried to kick him off, but he pressed all of his weight down on me. His hand moved, covering my mouth before he shoved his hand in my pants.

I thrashed and hit at him when he uncovered my mouth before pinning my hands above my head, holding them in one of his. I glared at him when his hand slid beneath my panties. I hated him, fucking hated him, yet my body reacted to his touch as he cupped my pussy which suddenly had its own heartbeat.

Despite my hatred, his touch made me moan as his fingers caressed my slit, his touch was rough and forceful when his fingers moved between my folds, and he shoved one inside me.

A scream bubbled up my throat as I went to call out for Kalen when his lips crashed down on mine, almost hungrily. I pressed my lips together and Darius bit my lips making me hiss only for his tongue to plunge into my mouth.

The bond reacted automatically with no say from me and I moaned into his mouth as his tongue played with mine. Darius slid his finger out before forcing another inside me. The stretching feeling made me jerk when he curled his fingers inside, and I thrashed as he rubbed his thumb across my clit. Tears of embarrassment brimmed as I felt my body start climbing higher despite my protests of not wanting his touch, yet the bond craved it.

My walls clenched around his fingers as he built up friction, and he groaned into my mouth as his tongue assaulted mine, my body reacting, and I tried to think of anything other than his vile touch. However, the bond had other ideas, wanting and



craving for him to keep going though my mind screamed for me not to come.

My stomach clenched and I struggled harder as heat ran through me, making me gasp when he moved his thumb quicker, his fingers soaked with the arousal the bond caused, and the friction became too much. My walls clenched and throbbed, and Darius kissed me harder, covering my mouth with his and stifling my moans as my orgasm ripped through me.

My surroundings muted as pleasure rippled through me, and my hips moved involuntarily against his hand. When the high subsided, his fingers slipped out of me, and I was left humiliated and breathless.

Darius pulled away from me, and his hand slipped out of my pants. "Now I am guessing you didn't want to come, but it sucks when you have no control over your bond, just like I have no control of being in your room when my bond is fucking calling for you," He sneered. I looked away from him, ashamed when he shoved between my legs, his erection pressed against me, and I turned back to glare at him.

"As you can feel, I definitely feel the fucking bond, I just choose to deny it control, so don't get it twisted, Aleera; the bond may want you, just like yours wants mine, but I will never be yours, nor will I allow you to be mine," he says before shoving off me.

I scrambled to my feet and away from him while he waited for

me to pick which door when his bedroom door opened. Tobias groggily stepped out, glancing at us in the hall.

"What's going on?" he yawned, and my cheeks heated, and I rubbed my arms, suddenly feeling cold.

"What will it be Aleera?" I gritted my teeth, no way did I want to be locked in a room alone with him, so I shoved past Tobias and walked over to the couch.

"Ah, what's going on?" Tobias asked as I dropped onto the couch.

"Nothing she sleeps in here from now on," Darius answered while I said nothing.

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Tobias growled, and I turned my head to look over the back of the couch. "What the fuck did you do to her?" Tobias whispered yelled; before marching over to Darius. He sniffs him before grabbing his hand, and my face flamed red when I saw him sniff Darius's fingers. Tobias growled and shoved him away before turning to look at me.

"What the fuck? Did he force you?" Tobias asked me, and I saw Lycus and Kalen stir on the bed as he raised his voice higher.

"Shut up before you wake them; I never hurt her. Quite the opposite, actually," Darius snarled back at him.

"That's not what I asked," Tobias growled at him.

"She is fine, are you hurt, Aleera, in pain?" Darius asked, and I glared at him before turning away as embarrassment coursed through me. <sup>2</sup>

"That's fucked up even for you. You can't force her to do shit like that."

"Says who?" Darius asked. <sup>2</sup>

"You're unbelievable," Tobias spat, turning toward me. He walked over and reached out to me when Darius spoke.

"Don't feel sorry for her, Tobias. She is the one who tried to break my wards and leave; I was just proving to her about who

had control," Darius said, and Tobias's hand that was reaching toward me to do god knows what stopped.

"You tried to leave?" Tobias asked. I pressed my lips in a line, and tears blurred my vision, so I laid down and rolled on my side. I could tell him the truth, but he or Darius would kill Ryze that much was certain.

"This will kill Kalen," Tobias hissed angrily.

"He doesn't have to know," Darius says.

"Then how do you plan on explaining her being in our damn room," Tobias asks, and I sit up and see Darius shrug.

"He asked to sleep in her room, this is giving him what he wants under supervision," Darius said, and I glared at him. I thought the whole point was to make Kalen hate me.

"You keep your hands to yourself. Kalen sees you forcing yourself on her, he will fucking lose it, and I want no part of this," Tobias says.

"Fine, as long as Aleera keeps her mouth shut, everything will be fine, isn't that right, Aleera?" Darius asks.

"If you keep the fuck away from me, peachy," I snap at him. "See, everything is fine," Darius says, looking between Tobias and me. I curl back up on the couch while Darius wanders off into the bathroom. Tobias comes over and drapes a blanket over me, and hands me a pillow. I take it when suddenly he cups my cheek with his hand.

"Why would you do that? Don't do it again, I am not saying what he did was right. It wasn't, but you running?" he shakes his head. I just stare at him. Was he seriously defending him? I slapped his hand away.

"You're just as bad as him. Get away from me," I told him, rolling to face the back of the small two-seater.

"We told you if you behaved, you could earn more freedom, Aleera. We only just stopped locking your damn door, and you ran the first chance you got. How are we supposed to trust you," he asked.

"I wasn't running," I whispered.

"What," Tobias asked, and I shook my head when he gripped my chin and turned my face toward him.

"What did you say?"

"I wasn't," The bathroom door opens, and Tobias glances over at Darius, and I pull my face out of his grip.

"Aleera?"

"Doesn't matter," I tell him.

"Come to bed, Tobias," Darius says as I snuggle under my blanket, pulling it over my head. Tobias sighed before I heard him walk off and climb into bed with Darius.

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The following day I woke to fangs in my wrist as Tobias fed off me.

"Tobias, she isn't even awake," Lycus growled at him, and I yawned, sitting upright while Tobias was still feeding off me. I rub my eyes to see Kalen, stretching and waking up, and Tobias drops my wrist, and I rub it.

"Aleera?" Kalen asks before rubbing his eyes. He looks around at the others, and I see Darius walk out of the closet half undressed. He was only wearing pants.

"Surprise, she is staying in here from now on," Darius says, and I glare at him.

"Darius said you can't be alone with her, but if you want her close, she stays with us in here," Lycus said, leaning down and kissing Kalen. I could feel Tobias staring at me, but I didn't bother correcting Darius. I knew it would end badly if I did.

"Hurry up and get dressed, Aleera. You have to be down at the mess hall," Darius says before chucking some clothes at me. It was a new pair of jeans and a black button-up top. I looked at him. What were these hush clothes? I shake my head but get up and head for the bathroom.

"I will take her to breakfast," Lycus says as I reach the door and I stop. How was I supposed to feed Ryze if he was with me?

"She can go by herself," Darius said, and I let out breath about to go get changed.

"No, I have something to do anyway,"

"Like what?" Darius demands.

"None of your business," Lycus snaps at him.

"We always have breakfast together," Tobias says, sounding needy, which surprised me.

"I will grab something down there," Lycus shrugs, and I huff, shoving the door open, I went to get changed. When I came back out, Lycus was waiting for me. Tobias and Darius didn't look happy about him coming to breakfast with me. While Kalen pouted.

"Why can't she eat with us?" Kalen asked. Probably because they hate me, I thought but didn't say that, not that I wanted to stay in here any longer than needed. I wanted out of this room and away from Darius, not to be forced to spend more time than necessary with him.