

A Gift from the Goddess Chapter 60

“What the fuck are you doing here?” Aleric frantically whispered. “Do you have any idea how much shit you’ll get into for this?”

In an involuntary reaction, I quickly pulled the blanket up over my chest to hide myself even though I wasn’t naked. And yet at the same time, I’d never felt more exposed.

There had been no time to react, no time to hide. I knew what Cai had been desperately looking for now; a nescape. But it would have been futile. There wasn’t enough time to cover my scent and the window had outside privacy panels preventing me from squeezing through. Cai must have realised the same thing. All he could do was apologise for the fact that we were now in this situation.

“We’ve found it!” I heard a voice yell from somewhere in the house.

Aleric’s eyes suddenly showed signs of worry as he looked at me. Already he looked pale, confused, both of which I’d never seen on him before, but it was his worry that unnerved me the most. Aleric was confident in everything he did, never showing weakness, and yet he looked now as if he was about to be sick.

He stuck his head back out the door as he tried to compose himself, replying to what I assumed were warriors inside the house. “Bag it and take it back to evidence,” he ordered. “I’ve got Caius here detained and will handle the bedroom search. Everyone is to await further instructions back at the packhouse. Anthony, stay behind and wait for me in the car.”

“Detained?” I asked, finally finding my voice again. “Aleric, what the hell is going on? Why are you here?”

“Caius is being detained for questioning,” he said quietly. Neither of us were raising our voices too loud for fear we’d be overheard. “I’ve got orders to take him in immediately.”

“On what grounds!?” I hissed back. “What has he done?”

“The warrior in charge of watching the evidence locker was attacked two nights ago and something was stolen,” he answered. “He can’t recall much but remembers being given an Alpha order to stand down. Only neither I nor my father set that command. Since there is currently no record of any other Alpha bloods staying with us right now, naturally Caius is under suspicion.”

“Don’t be ridiculous! That’s not enough evidence to bring him in! How could an allied pack’s Alpha heir possibly overrule an order given to one of our warriors? That’s impossible.”

“Aria,” he said sternly. “We just found the missing item inside this house... a silver dagger by the front door. It doesn’t matter if it doesn’t make sense, we just acquired the proof. He’s technically under arrest now.”

The silver dagger ** stole. The dagger *I* dropped. I’d just left breadcrumbs of clues leading back to here, back to Cai.

“Aleric, please, it’s not him,” I pleaded.

“Come on,” he said to Cai, ignoring my words. “Get up. We’ve got to go before they decide to come back here and check why I’m taking so long. I hope I don’t need to remind you to not make this difficult or cause a scene here, do I? We both know what will happen if anyone finds her here with you.”

Cai had been silently regarding the exchange the entire time, knowing that his hands were tied being in foreign territory, but he nodded his head in compliance. Anything he said, or did, could be used against him in a trial from the moment Aleric had confirmed he was being taken in.

True to Aleric’s words, he didn’t put up a fight or argue. Instead, he just tugged on some clothes over his

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boxers before walking over to Aleric without fuss.

I ran to Cai though as soon as I saw the handcuffs he was restrained in, no longer caring if Aleric was there, and grabbed on to him.

*Please, don’t do this, please...,” I cried.

“Wait here,” Aleric instructed. “I’ll come to get you when the area is clear.”

But I refused to let go of Cai, my grip only tightening. “No...please.”

“Aria!” Aleric hissed. “Seriously, you need to let him go. Do you want others to see you right now? If my father finds out that you were here with him, this whole thing will get so much worse. Are you intentionally being naive right now?”

“Aria...,” Cai said calmly to me, cutting through the panic. “It’s okay. Let me go.”

I could barely see through the tears blurring my vision. “No, I don’t want to...”

“Aria. Let me go,” he repeated.

I knew he was right. There was nothing I could do. Not here and not now anyway.

“I’m going to get your name cleared, I promise,” I said. “You’ll be out in no time.”

He gave me a half-smile in an attempt to reassure me but it only made me feel worse. It should have been me comforting him right now, not the reverse.

Aleric shoved Cai towards the door but abruptly stopped walking, sniffing towards him. And though my senses weren’t strong enough, Aleric must have picked up on my obvious scent all over Cai.

“Do I have time for a shower?” Cai asked, almost amused.

Aleric’s response was to shove him forward again so they resumed towards the exit once more.

“You’ll be lucky if I don’t drown you in a lake on our way to the cells,” Aleric replied, his voice getting further away until I couldn’t hear them anymore. “Fucking idiot....”

I was then left completely alone in the room, shaking and in disbelief this had actually happened. Of all the things that could have occurred, Cai was being pinned for my own crimes and it was Aleric who came to find us in bed together. I wanted to throw up.

I looked down and saw I was only dressed in the baggy t-shirt Cai had given me, my bare legs showing from the mid-thigh down, and my cheeks burned red. The Aleric from the past would have killed me, I had no doubt in my mind. There wouldn’t have been any explanation needed, only my throat ripped out before I’d even had a chance to open my mouth. But he’d done the complete opposite. Not only did he not hurt me, but he also didn’t even hand me over to the warriors for sentencing. It was difficult to wrap my head around, but... Aleric had just saved me.

I stiffly got changed into the dress from the other night before sitting in a daze on the side of the bed... waiting for when Aleric would return. My mind was thinking of everything and nothing all at once, unable to pinpoint just one thing to focus on.

After not too long, I could finally hear footsteps coming back. I poised myself for battle in the event it was anyone other than Aleric, but thankfully it was him.

His green eyes were sharpened like daggers as they met mine, ready for an argument. “Give me one good reason why I shouldn’t—”

I didn’t let him finish though as I launched myself at him, grabbing onto his clothes, my tears resuming.

“Please, Aleric, listen to me,” I cried. “He’s not involved. Please.”

“How could you possibly know that, Aria? We literally found the dagger here,” he argued, backing up against a wall in his attempt to free himself from my grip. “Why are you being so blind to all of this?”

“Because it was me!” I yelled, “I was the one who stole the dagger from the evidence locker and attacked the warrior, not Cai. I—I wanted it to kill Thea. I wanted revenge for what she did to Myra. And you and my father acted like you didn’t even believe me... So I took matters into my *own* hands.”

He was avoiding my gaze as he tried to gently pry *my* hands off without much success. “Stop making shit up just to spare him. And I never said that I didn’t believe you. I stopped you from committing murder without evidence in front of an entire crowd of warriors. You’d be on trial right now if you’d actually gone through with it. You should be thanking me.”

“I’m not making this up!” I insisted, a tone of frustration in my words. “It was me. I attacked Ray and ordered him to stand down so I could steal the dagger. How else would I know who it was when you never said the warrior’s name?”

“You’re not even remotely high enough in rank for that,” he argued, “You’re a Beta heir, a half one at that.”

“I’m a goddamn Saintess first and foremost, Aleric, or have you forgotten?” I spat back, his eyes finally meeting mine. “My authority is whatever the fuck I want it to be, including higher than yours if I was ever so inclined one day.”

We stared at each other in silence for a few seconds before finally, the tension between us started to ease. I could see as Aleric was trying to process everything I was saying.

“So Cai is... —”

“He’s innocent,” I finished. “It’s my fault. All of it.”

I sighed, bowing my head towards him in complete defeat as I clung to him, “Please, you have to help him. I’ll confess to the whole thing if need be Just... don’t let anything happen to him.”

I felt him shift uncomfortably as he thought, rubbing at his face in irritation. “If you confess that it was you, my father will have you stripped of all your titles and you’ll probably be imprisoned, you know that, right? Maybe worse... And then coupled with if he ever found out that you were here in bed with Cai? Fuck, Aria, are you trying to start a war?”

My heart was racing as he pointed out just how messed up things had become due to putting myself above duty. He was right. I’d known he was right and yet I thought I was going to get away with it.

"I know," I said, "I messed up. I messed up bad. But I've just lost Myra, I can't lose Caitoo. Please... help me Aleric."

I looked up at him through my eyes full of tears, begging him for this one thing. Just this one thing that maybe I could make better and fix. Whatever it took, so long as Cai would be okay.

He stared down at me, his face full of conflict and... pain? It was yet more new expressions I'd never seen him ever show before, expressions I was unfamiliar with. It was making it impossible to know what he was actually thinking with this sudden unpredictability

"...Fine, I'll help," he finally said with a long exhale. "But you should know that I'll be trying to get this mess fixed without bringing your name into it first."

"Wait, Aleric—"

"No, I'm serious," he said sternly, cutting me off. "I personally don't care what happens to Cai but I do care is the only living Saintess gets charged with treason. There would be a religious riot on our doorstep protesting whatever punishment my father issued. I don't want to be put in that awkward position if we can help it."

And with that, he quickly released my hands from his chest without waiting for me to reply and started walking back outside.

"Get your shit together, Ana!" he yelled out casually over his shoulder, not even bothering to turn back around to look at me

But as it turned out, that was a lot easier said than done