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The Alpha: Claiming His Enemy's Daughter Chapter 131

131 1 OVERSLEPT

Iris was not sure how she managed to stay alive with Cane's body weighing down on her, but she was thankful to wake up and be alive. She looked around her, but she found out that she was alone.

However, not long after that, she saw Cane walk out of the bathroom, his hair was wet with water droplets trickling down his chiseled jaw down to his neck and shoulder. He just fastened a towel around his hips when their eyes met.

For a brief second, they stared at each other, until Cane grumbled. "I overslept!" He glared at her accusingly, which startled her, but he soon averted his gaze and put on his shirt and pants.

Actually, it was not that Cane was angry at her because she put him to sleep, but it was most likely he didn't know what to do about it, it was so bizarre for him to have a good night's sleep, without his nightmares tormenting him.

For the first time he felt... normal, if you could put it that way....

After he put on his shirt and felt there was no movement from Iris, he turned around and looked at her with knitted brows. "What are you doing? Still not moving?"

Iris was afraid when he looked so angry, thus she didn't do anything just in case she triggered him to get angrier at her.

But, with that remark, she remembered Cane had said they would go to see the head of the Rosantine guild today.

Because this organization was from the Karam continent, it would be a good thing if they could use Kars during conversation, just in case.

Last night, Will and Redmond had gone out to find more information about this guild and how to

contact them.

And from what they reported to him this morning, it was not difficult to find where they were, but meeting with the head of the guild was another problem entirely.

"1- I will wash my face," Iris immediately rushed to the bathroom and when she came out, Cane was no longer there, but there was a set of breakfast waiting on the table for her.

"I spotted the Crown Prince earlier. He arrived two hours ago with Sir Maleen, the advisor," Will reported this to Cane, as he waited for Iris to come down.

"Can

you find out what they are looking for in this black market?" Cane looked at the street through the window beside him. It was still weird for him to see how the situation here was no different from aboveground.

He wondered how vast this underground was. Was this as big as the lucent sand desert? Were they under that desert?

"I will try to find out about it," Will said. "But, I am not sure if I can find anything." He was being honest, since it was almost impossible to be so close to them without being noticed. More so, when he didn't have any connections around this place.

"Hm." Cane nodded. He knew that this task would be difficult to accomplish and didn't pressure him further.

What Alan was doing in this place and what he was looking for under the order of the king was not his problem. He didn't need to get involved in that, but there was no harm in gathering information about the royal family, since he needed to take precautions against what they were up to.

There was no way the king would let the fact that he had no control over the mines anymore pass.

Thinking up to here, his father must have sensed something was going on before the attack by the Blue Moon pack, but time was not in his favor, because everything went too fast, out of his calculation.

He learned all of this when he returned to the pack house and read his journal and all the plans that he had prepared for the fallout, but then he was betrayed, rendering his plans useless.

Cane had to learn all of that and gathered all the information and all the men that his father had put in various places.

Thankfully, no one knew about the location of his pack's treasury aside from him, thus the important information could be saved even after the pack house had been turned into a brothel and many people came and went to that place.

Not long after that, Iris came down, she was dressed in a simple blue dress the same color as her eyes, while her auburn hair was braided behind her back. She looked around and found Cane almost immediately, as she walked toward him.

She was not a devastatingly beautiful woman, or someone that would make you fall head over heels at a single glance, but there was something about her that made her look so attractive over time.

The way she carried herself and how she moved so easily made her look very carefree. Or how her eyes lit up when her curiosity was piqued and how she blushed when she felt embarrassed, that was something that you could only know when you got closer to her.

"I am sorry for taking so long," she said when she approached Cane and Will.

Cane immediately stood up once she came down, he talked to Will and let him know what he needed to do and told him to relay the tasks to Ethan and Redmond as well.

After that, he took Iris out of the inn.

Along the way, they said nothing and there was this tacit understanding between the two of them; what transpired between them last night had never happened, just like when Iris went through heat, they had never talked about that.

Finally, after around twenty minutes of walking, they arrived at a house that was as big as the inn that they stayed in, the gate was tall and there were two men guarding at the front.

One look and Cane knew they were shifters, probably rogues, since shifters wouldn't usually work for a merchant.

However, aside from them, there was someone else who arrived at the same time.

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132 SUITS YOU WELL

Alan was shocked to see Cane there, but he didn't recognize Iris immediately, because the last time he met her, he only caught a glimpse of her and she was much younger.

On the other hand, Cane also didn't expect to see him here when he told Will to find out more about his intentions to come to the black market, but as it turned out, he could figure it out himself.

He came looking for the guild master as well, but for what item?

"You? What are you doing here?" Alan glared at Cane, as if he was his enemy. Though they were not on speaking terms, knowing that this alpha was in control of the mines in the south and the royal family wouldn't get any benefits out of it anymore, he was deeply unhappy.

However, after seeing Alan was there. Cane simply ignored him. He didn't offer him any greeting or other respectful gestures. The norms that you should follow whenever you see a member of the royal family.

"How dare you ignore me!" His temper flared up to see himself being disrespected like that.

Yet, Cane simply stared at the guard. "Are you not going to open the gates?" His voice was icy and his tone was impassive, while he kept Iris by his side.

Iris stared at Alan, she was about to pay respects to him. After all, he was from the royal family and it was a custom to do that, but Cane held her hand

tightly, preventing her from doing so. She followed his lead and ignored the crown prince as well, which aggravated him further.

On the other hand, the guard immediately opened the gates and let Cane and Iris enter, but Alan, who couldn't accept the disrespect that the alpha showed him, grabbed his shoulder and forced him to turn around to face him.

Cane turned around and swatted his hand from his shoulder, and it stung. He didn't hold back at all when he hit him.

"What do you want?" Cane asked, he looked annoyed.

"What do I want?" Alan was flabbergasted. "How dare you talk to me like that? Ten years of slavery made you stupid?! I am the Crown Prince!"

Alan was used to people giving him special treatment and being respectful toward him because he was

crown prince, thus seeing Cane's ignorance offended him greatly.

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"Does being the Crown Prince make you stupid?"

Iris was stunned hearing what Cane said, so was Corry, who was standing next to Alan. He was about to open his mouth to rebuke the alpha, but he beat him to it and spoke first.

"Everyone is the same here, titles mean nothing" Cane learned this from Redmond's explanation on the rules to be followed in the black market.

This was the most basic rule in this place and for Alan to demand himself to be treated the same as his status aboveground only made him look silly.

"Cane!" Alan was at a loss for words, he didn't know what to say, he wanted to curse at Cane, but he

already walked through the gates with Iris following behind him. The young woman even giggled when she noticed his face turn ashen.

Once his deadly glare fell on her, Iris immediately turned around and quickened her steps.

“What item do you wish to buy, Sir?” The guard asked when he took him to the waiting room.

Behind them, Alan and Corry followed closely. The crown prince flopped down on one of the sofas, his arms crossed, while he listened to the guard, who asked the same question to him, he glared at Cane loftily, while the latter didn't even pay any attention to him.

It was Iris, who found this situation a little bit awkward, as she quickly grasped the gist of it. What Cane said was right, Alan couldn't demand respect from him based on his status aboveground.

But then, wouldn't this make trouble for Cane once they were no longer here? But, it seemed, Cane didn't care much about it.

“Asturi Stem.” Both Cane and Alan answered at the same time, which finally made Cane take interest in him, as he whipped his head around to look at the crown prince.

“Asturi Stem is a rare item, you should meet with the head of the guild to buy it, the two guards explained to their respective guests.

“I know!” Alan waved his hand impatiently. “Tell Lou to come and meet me.

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From the way Alan spoke, he seemed to be a frequent visitor to this place, for he already knew the name of the owner of this guild merchant.

“I want to see Lou, too,” Cane said swiftly, as if he had met that man before, this time he spoke in Kars. Both of the guards looked at each other when they heard that these people wanted to get the same thing.

“Are you together?” The guard with Cane asked him.

“No” Cane stopped for a while, but then he spoke again in Kars. “Tell him to see me.”

The guard was stunned to hear Cane speak in their master's language, so were Alan and Corry. It was not surprising for someone like Cane to speak multiple languages, after all, highborns like them. tended to master a few languages in this realm.

However, the way Cane phrased it, made it sound like they were close acquaintances or something.

“Wait for a while, I will let master Lou know this.”

Both the guards left the room, leaving the four of them alone in the waiting room, while the silence descended on them made the situation very awkward.

“Iris, it has been a while since the last time I saw you.” Corry broke the silence, as he started conversing with Iris.

However, she was not looking in his direction, thus she missed the question, which made Alan laugh. “Oh, you must have forgotten Sir Corry, she is deaf, you need to make her look in your direction before you speak to her,” he said disdainfully between his laughs. “Getting her as your luna suits you well, Cane,”

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133 HOW DOES IT FEEL?

Alan had been thoroughly ignored by Cane and he wasn't used to that, though this was the first time they met with each other in over ten years, there was only enmity between the two of them.

No, it was most likely Alan who was showing his cranky side because he was not greeted appropriately.

“Getting her as your luna suits you well, Cane. You both are detestable. He tried to provoke him, but Cane didn't even spare him a glance. By now, the crown prince must have known the taste of the alpha's ignorance just like how Redmond felt. “Cane!”

“Alan,” Corry said in a low voice, he put his hand on his shoulder to calm him down. This guy was a handful ever since he was little. “We are not here to argue.”

Corry was more concerned about the fact that Alan wanted the same thing as them. Did he know what the stem was for? He narrowed his eyes to study Cane, but he could only give up. He was

expressionless all the time. He couldn't even tell whether he heard Alan's mocking statement or not. On the other hand, Iris looked at Cane and Alan back and forth, she found the crown prince's attempt to make the alpha angry and talk back to him was ridiculous.

Though Alan was a twenty nine years old grown up man, he acted like a seven year old, a kid, who couldn't get what he wanted and was throwing a temper tantrum, until he pushed someone to their

limits.

"What is it like to fuck your enemy's daughter?" Alan asked in a mocking tone, which made Corry suck in a cold breath, he wanted to slap this man! If he was not a crown prince, he would have done that.

The king didn't give a definite statement, but from his understanding of how things stood right now, was not wise to provoke the alpha.

On the other hand, Iris lowered her head, she was mortified because of how vulgar those words sounded. She was embarrassed, but actually felt more humiliated for Cane.

For him to take her, his enemy's daughter and claim her as his luna, was already a great degradation.

"You must miss your mate dearly," Alan added more salt to the wound, as he didn't hold back with his sinister mockery, while beside him, Corry really wanted to cover his mouth and drag him away from this place, before there was any bloodshed.

Alan was not only degrading his current mate, but also dragging his previous luna into the

conversation as well.

The room became so cold, as if the temperature had dropped when Cane finally graced Alan with his attention that he desperately wanted to get. All of them thought Cane would be enraged by that

statement.

However, he only chuckled lightly, the sound was actually very eerie when the joy didn't even reach his frigid eyes.

"It felt good," he said simply, but then he asked him in return. "What is it like to have your mate fucked by your father? You shouldn't have killed her, you must be missing your mate dearly now."

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Alan's face fell. He opened his mouth, but was unable to speak. His face shifted from shock to anger very fast, but he couldn't find the right words to say.

How did he know?!

Even Corry found this very shocking, because not many knew about that matter, everything had been wrapped up pretty neatly and quickly, so there was no rumor out there of what happened.

When he met his mate, Alan was just sixteen years old and the disaster happened six months after that, thus not many people knew Alan had met with his mate and thought the young girl was just one of his playthings.

On the other hand, Cane observed their reactions closely and was certain by the way they reacted. that what he said was actually the truth.

Cane didn't know about that scandal. He learned that from his father's journal and his father from his informant that he planted in the palace.

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So, it was true. What he read in his father's journal was true thus far. All the information in it... true? Cane needed to meet with those people to confirm something.

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And even though there were a lot of things that he was thinking right now, on the surface, he didn't show much emotion, he looked like he was just talking in leisure.

Meanwhile, Iris didn't know something like that had happened, she stole a peek at Alan, whose face had turned very dark, as if he was going to kill someone at this very moment.

Well, serves him right!

Iris then stole a glance at Cane, who looked like nothing had happened. Did the mention of his mate didn't bother him at all?

Her train of thought was interrupted when someone walked into the room. His presence suddenly brightened the mood, as he smiled joyfully at the four of them.

"My apologies for keeping all of you waiting for so long!" He said cheerfully.

He was wearing a fancy red cloak, while his short, black hair was trimmed neatly and his bright dark eyes looked at them one by one. He was speaking in Kars since he knew who he was expecting waiting for him in this room.

He looked too sophisticated for a man, he was even more beautiful than most women. His bewitching eyes fell on Iris and he looked at her intensely, before he looked at Cane, who was sitting next to her.

"Is she your mate, Alpha Cane?" He asked Cane in Kars.

Though Cane was not fluent, he still managed to hold this simple conversation. "Yes, she is."

The two guards, who followed their master to the room, stood on either side of him.

"Hm..." He touched his chin with his slender fingers. "This is the first time I met Mason's little sister. But, the color of your hair is very interesting" He grinned at Iris. "Tell me, from whom did you get the color? Absolutely not your father, so your mother?"

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134 IRIS'S PECULIAR HAIR

To be born with natural auburn hair was rare in this continent, because this was not their usual hair color, therefore, Lou's attention immediately fell on her once he entered the room.

He knew about Mason, in truth, he had met him twice in the past when he needed something from his guild, he also knew about his little sister being a runt, but then because she was not important and it would only be a waste of time to look for more information on her, he had never paid attention to that runt.

Therefore, this was their first encounter and Lou was very surprised to see her. Blue eyes with auburn hair. He had gone to many places and had met with a lot of supernatural creatures, thus he could tell that her origins were questionable at most.

"Tell me, from whom did you get the color? Absolutely not your father, so your mother?" Lou looked very interested in Iris, he even ignored Alan completely.

Even if Cane could pretend he didn't exist, more so Lou, as the head of a guild. Alan couldn't use his

title here.

"Say, red hair, from whom did you get your hair color?" Lou leaned his body forward, as he was very interested to hear Iris' answer.

On the other hand, Cane was silent, but he was following this conversation. Of course, he was aware of this peculiarity, but he didn't pay deeper attention to this, since her origins didn't have anything to

do with him.

Whether she was a runt or not, it wouldn't affect him or his plans, but Lou's remark made him think. otherwise...

"I got it from my maternal grandmother." Iris remembered she had asked about this to her old

nanny and this was her answer, because neither her father nor her mother had this hair color.

“Hm...” Lou touched his chin. “Did you see it yourself? Or was it someone else who told you that?”

Iris knitted her brows. She felt his question was unnecessary, but she must answer it. “No. My old nanny told me. My maternal grandmother died before I was born.”

“What about your old nanny?”

“She died when I was five.”

“Hm...”

Alan couldn't take it anymore. He was here to buy an important item, not to hear this sob story about

this runt!

“Enough!” Alan was enraged and Corry was hopeless in calming him down. “I am here for the Asturi Stem. Give me a price, I will pay!” He slammed his hand against the armrest, as he spoke.

“Ck, ck, ck.” Lou clicked his tongue in annoyance. “This is why I don't like the royal family. I have told you to make him behave before our next meeting, right?” He shifted his attention toward Corry when he asked this.

“My apologies to Guild Master Lou, but we are in a hurry and the Prince is a little bit anxious Corry's voice was so calm, it seemed, he had gotten used to fixing the problems created by this spoiled crown prince. “Can we move to the part of trading instead? We can't afford to lose more time. For people like us, time is very precious, right?”

The old advisor was very smooth with his words.

“I don't mind. I have a lot of time, Lou said with a chuckle, as he leaned his back against the chair, he put his focus back on Iris. “You have never seen your maternal grandmother? How can you be sure?” Iris found it weird for him to ask her about this matter in detail. “Why should I question it?”

Hearing that answer, Lou laughed and then shifted his attention back to Cane. “You shouldn't have killed her father yet.”

Cane didn't give a reaction to that statement, which made the silence that followed become a little bit awkward.

"Okay, it seems all of you are very impatient to get your hands on the Asturi stem" Lou clapped his hands, as if to indicate that he was done questioning Iris. "So, both of you want the Asturi stem and from what I see, you did not come together for this, right? But, unfortunately, I only have one Asturi stem."

This statement made Alan and Corry's eyes flicker with uneasiness. "Of course, you have to sell it to us. I am an old customer. I am a regular here."

"But, I want to make a new acquaintance with the new alpha of the Howling Wolf pack."

Alan was seething when he heard that and stood up, furious. He had a very short temper, probably as short as the length of a spoon. "Name the price, I will pay!"

Lou clicked his tongue. Just like Cane, he was also pondering how this brat could be a crown prince. The king was not that stupid to see how this son of his could do more damage than good for his kingdom and his reign.

"Instead of money, I want something else." He grinned, but he flashed Iris a look. "I want you to do me this favor. Whoever gets it done first, I will sell the Asturi stem to that person"

Cane didn't like this idea. He came here because he wanted to get those two water magic stones and let those two people pay back the price of the Asturi stem. He didn't come here for a complicated task, nor was he joyous to be ordered around.

"Nonsense!" Alan growled, he was throwing a temper tantrum again.

"Well, if you don't agree, you can go. That's the door." Lou nodded to the door in front of them.

If it was somewhere else, Alan would have this man executed, but his title was powerless in this underground black market.

Lou grinned. "So, since there are no more objections, come with me." He stood up and went to the second door, but before that, he talked to his guard in a low voice.

Alan and Corry followed him, but Cane fell back to ask Iris.

"What was he saying?"

Iris tiptoed to whisper into his ear and Cane had to bend his body to accommodate her.

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135 SOMETHING WAS AMISS

The top of Iris' head barely reached Cane's shoulders, thus one could imagine how difficult it would be for Iris if she wanted to whisper something into Cane's ear.

Iris found his height was so intimidating and wondered how he could grow so tall like this. He was at least half a head taller than the others, probably because he had the alpha blood running through his veins coupled with being part of the royal family.

Iris tiptoed and tugged his sleeve, so he could bend his body slightly and Cane did that to accommodate her height.

Her warm breath tickled his neck when she spoke.

"He said, 'call the sorcerer and open the gate.'" If she was not mistaken, that was what Lou told the guy.

Cane knitted his brows when he heard that. He didn't have any idea what they wanted to do, but he would figure it out later. He was only considering whether this was worth it or not, since the Asturi stem was not something that he needed.

But, if he didn't get it here, then he wouldn't be able to get the two water magic stones either.

Cane glanced at Iris, who pressed her body close to him, as they walked. This place was slightly dim and he knew she was afraid of the darkness.

If what they would face was too dangerous and outrageous, he would immediately back off. It was not worth it, since Iris could try to find the water magic stones once they got back to their pack.

They walked down a corridor where the farther they walked, the lower the passage went, as if they were going deeper into the ground, until it turned into a tunnel, with stone walls on their left and right.

“Where are you taking us!?” Alan started being impatient again when Lou didn’t say anything, as he led them down this steep path.

It was not the first time for Alan to have a transaction with Lou, but he had never known that this place existed.

“Just for a while, just for a while, you need to exercise too, Crown Prince,” Lou said lightly with a chuckle, he glanced over his shoulder and found Iris was having a hard time following their steps. She was not as nimble as the others, while Cane helped her by holding her hand. She was so clumsy.

In the end, they stopped in front of a shabby wooden door, where the man that they saw at the entrance of the black market had been waiting for them.

This was one of the twin old men, from the way he looked at the people there, Iris was sure that this one was the one who examined Cane’s tattoo. The one without a smile, even after receiving a gold

coin.

“Open the door, Sabian,” Lou ordered.

The wooden door was a double door that was as tall as Cane and as wide as this tunnel.

With that order, the man named Sabian pressed his palms on the surface of the door and there was a

gleam of golden light that appeared from his hands, which spread to the entire door.

This was not the first time for Iris to witness magic, but she still felt amazed from what she was seeing. Living inside the pack house for twenty years of her life, really made her ignorant about a lot of things that were happening in this world.

But beside her, Cane didn't show any reaction, he only stared at the door when it was being opened by magic, which meant, only magic users could open the door. Once they got inside, they would be

stuck.

"Now!" Lou clapped his hands, as he stood in front of them with the door wide open behind him, from what they could see from this standpoint, it was only another place with stalactites and stalagmites and also the sound of water current. Was it a river? Underground river? "There is something that I want inside."

"Stop talking nonsense and get straight to the point, what do you want?" Alan huffed, he folded his arms in front of his chest, as if spending another minute here was truly a waste of his precious time.

However, Lou ignored his arrogant ass, as he kept talking, but his eyes would flicker to Iris every now

and then.

Of course, that subtle action didn't go unnoticed by Cane. Something was amiss here.

"I have a pet that ran away inside this place, whoever finds the pet can buy the Asturi stem from me," he said in delight.

"A pet!?" Alan was furious. He was enraged and couldn't help cursing at Lou, while Corry was having a hard time calming him down. "You actually want a Crown Prince to look for your pet!?"

But, facing an enraged Alan, Lou only let out a soft chuckle, his movement was very gentle, even more

than most women.

Yet, Cane watched everything in silence. Pet? What a joke. What kind of pet runs off to a place that was shielded by magic?

On the other hand, Iris could feel the little lizard moving restlessly inside her pouch, as if this little creature wanted to come out. Iris then placed her hand over the pouch to make it stop moving before someone noticed it.

“So, will you take it or not?” Lou looked bored, as he listened to the way Alan cursed at him. He yawned and stretched his body, but his eyes flickered at Iris again, as if he was anticipating something from her.

“No,” Cane said coldly and took Iris hand to walk back in the way they came from. This was not worth it. “We will take our leave.”

“Huh?” Lou’s jaw dropped when he saw Cane and Iris’ retreating backs. They must be kidding him, right? “Hey! Don’t you want the Asturi stem?! Hey!”

However, Cane didn’t heed his shouts, as he kept walking with Iris close to him, he glanced at her, but she seemed clueless about the way Lou looked at her.

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136 ARE YOU GOING TO KILL HIM?!

“Hey! Just negotiate a little, will you? Lou ran behind Cane and Iris, while Alan and Corry followed behind him. Forget about finding his stupid pet, which was a ruse, they had really wasted their time trying to get down to this underground place. “How much will you pay me for the Asturi stem?! Hey! Stop walking away from me!”

This time, Lou was being impatient, he grabbed Iris’ hand, instead of Cane’s, to stop him walking away while dragging her with him.

However, once Cane saw it, his claws elongated and in a blink of an eye, he had swatted Lou’s hand away from hers, leaving four deep ghastly wounds on his hand, as blood dripped from his injuries.

“Don’t touch her Cane said coldly. He didn’t even flinch to see the killing intent in this merchant’s eyes. He was not a shifter, but judging from his looks, he was not as simple as a human. A sorcerer, perhaps? It was hard to tell.

“You don’t need to be so furious, alpha, Lou said, right now, his tone had changed, he didn’t look like a flamboyant man anymore, as he turned very serious when he spoke, even Alan stopped cursing, as he stood behind Lou with Corry by his side. “I only want you to reconsider the price to buy my Asturi

stem”

“How much?” Cane jumped straight to the point.

“I will give you the Asturi stem, but let me have a week with your girl and I will.....”

But, Cane turned around and tugged Iris along with him even before Lou could finish his words, which annoyed the merchant even further.

On the other hand. Iris was startled to read such a bold suggestion, but even more surprised that Cane looked furious hearing what Lou said.

Three days! Three days and you don’t need to pay me anything!” Lou was furious, as he followed Cane all the way back to the door, heading toward the waiting room again. “Fine! One day! Give me one day and I will give you Asturi stem!”

“LOU! YOU SHAMELESS BASTARD!” Alan was shocked to hear that suggestion, in other words, he

wanted to give the Asturi stem for free?

Cane didn’t even budge, while Iris kept looking back to know what Lou was suggesting and her heart lurched to her stomach when she read that.

One day with him for the Asturi stem? Which meant, Cane didn’t need to pay anything and he could get the item if he just gave her up for a day. He could benefit from both sides!

Iris could understand if he gave her up, but Cane was completely ignoring Lou right now. Why did he do that?

Iris was indeed afraid that he would give her to him, but even bewildered that he didn't. After all, he wouldn't gain any benefit from keeping her.

Yet, she didn't say anything, fearing Cane would change his mind and agree with Lou's suggestion.

"Fine!" Lou stopped walking. He watched Cane and Iris walk across his yard to the front gate. This

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Rewards

time, he turned around and looked at Alan with a soft smile on his lips. "Can you see the girl over there? Get her and I will let you buy the Asturi stem."

How cunning he was to use someone else to get what he wanted!

But, despite that, Alan was more than happy to start a fight with Cane after he brought up his mate. Therefore, after he made sure Lou wouldn't go back on his words, he shifted into his beast and pounced on Cane.

"NO! DON'T DO THAT!" Corry dreaded what would happen. "No! Stop him!" He couldn't stop Alan by himself, if the two of them started fighting. And if he jumped between them, it would mean the end of him. "Stop him!" He glared sternly at Lou, but the man just chuckled, as if he was enjoying the sight.

He couldn't care less about the two men, because his eyes were fixed on the auburn haired girl.

Alan's attack was so obvious, especially the murderous intent that emitted from his body, the grey beast's golden eyes, which were the signature eyes of the royal family's beasts, were shining brightly, a predator looking at their prey.

Cane simply pushed Iris aside before he shifted into his black beast, his golden eyes looked even brighter than this crown prince's, they looked like molded gold.

The grey beast raised its front legs, but the black one simply ducked to the side and attacked his stomach instead. His claws made a long gash, just like

the wounds on Lou's hand, but this one was deeper and way more dangerous.

In a second, the grey wolf fell to the ground and started whimpering.

"Enough! Enough!" Corry immediately rushed forward when he saw Alan shift back into his human form, lying in his own pool of blood, the sight made the old advisor feel like he was going to die! "How can you injure him like this!? Are you going to kill him!?"

Cane shifted into his human form and simply threw a cold glare at the old advisor and then grabbed Iris' hand to go away from this place.

He knew Alan wouldn't die, that kind of wound wouldn't take his life, but it would make him bedridden

for one to two days.

But, as he walked out of this place, he looked at Lou, who was staring at Iris, his eyes were indecipherable and this alerted him. There was something about Iris's origin that interested this merchant, but what was that?

Iris tapped Cane's arm when she wanted to talk to him, once they were out of their sight. "Is it okay for you to injure him like that?" She looked nervous.

"Hm." It was not like Alan could do something about whatever happened in this place.

"But, alpha..." Iris looked a little bit cautious when she spoke again. "That place... it is a mine, a magic

stone mine."

Cane stopped walking and looked at her seriously. "Are you sure?"

Iris nodded. She was sure about what she felt back there

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137 HIS STRONG HEART

In this realm, there were only two mines, one of which were no other than the mines in the south kingdom, controlled by Howling Wolf pack and Blue Moon pack. These mines usually produced earth magy stones and in rare instances, they would be able to find water mag stones

The productivity of the mines in the south kingdom could be said to be higher compared to the one in the west kingdom, which was controlled by the Red Claw pack. This mine produced fire magic stones, but even though it was the largest mine, it was hard to mine the magic stones

However, the value of one fire magic stone could be compared to three to five times the price of an earth magic stone it depended on the quality and the one Arthur gave to Cane, which now hatched into a bttle lizard, could be said to have the best quality for a fire magic stone

Cane had asked Arthur more about it and he told him that the fire mag stone was meant to be a memento. It was a keepsake, but his father had told him to take it, thus, since eleven years ago, the stone had been missing and the alpha didn't have any idea where it was

Therefore, to know that there was another mine in this continent was something unthinkable.

“Are you sure?” Cane narrowed his eyes to look at her

“Yes” Ins was sure the place that Lou showed to them behind the door, was a mining site. “There were

a lot of water magic stones there

Water mag stones

“Is that place as bog as the mines in our pack”

“Not not that beg probably one third of it. Ins replied after some calculation. One third could still be considered as a big place. “I didn't tell you because there were a lot of people there and I am not

sure if I should let them know about it.” Inis hastily added when Cane didn't say anythin

Cane resumed walking toward their inn, while Ins followed one step behind him.

Earth magic stones mine was in the south kingdom, fire magic stones mine was in the west kingdom and if the water magic stones mine could be found in this east kingdom, could it be the air magic

stones mine was in the north?

But, the only air magic stones mine existed in this realm was in the Holy Kingdom, the one under the possession of the Serafim

Cane was puzzled over this fact. Was it only a coincidence and he was just overthinking things?

Once they got to the inn. Cane stayed inside the same room as Iris and asked her to teach him more

Kars.

“I thought you knew how to speak Kars.”

“I can just manage basic conversation and reading a few words. If he had to deal with people from Karam in the future, he needed to learn every thing that he could about that continent and it would start from their language

“Oh, okay....” Ins was a little bit flustered when Cane asked her this favor, but she was more than happy

to do it

He looked so diligent when he learned a new word and made a sentence from it. His dark eyes were hooded and he looked very focused on what he read, as he listened to her attentively

Iris had never thought that she would see this side of Cane. She really wanted to know how Cane was before her father attacked his pack, or how he would have been if he didn't need to endure those ten years of slavery.

Would he smile often? Would he be this cold?

“What are you staring at?” Cane asked, as he scribbled something on the paper. He talked in Kars to

her.

“Oh, nothing...” Iris immediately lowered her head, embarrassed that she was caught red handed. ogling at him. “What about the water magic stones? If we can’t get the Asturi stem, we can’t get the water magic stones from them either.

“They are not the only ones who have water magic stones.” That was a fact. It would be difficult, but it was not impossible.

If Arthur and the others could get a high quality fire magic stone, they could find a water magic stone as well. It was not necessary for Cane to get the water magic stones from the couple.

“Iris.” Cane suddenly put down his quill.

“Yes?” Iris was on high alert, especially after seeing those dark eyes, they looked very stern.

“You have never met any of your family from your maternal side?” He asked all of sudden. Lou’s remark bugged him, though he knew there was no need for him to find out about her origins, since it didn’t concern him at all and didn’t have anything to do with him, but he simply couldn’t get rid of his

curiosity.

“No.” Iris shook her head.

And with that, Cane didn’t ask more about her and Iris kept teaching him until dinner time, after which he went out to see Will, while Iris’ dinner was sent to the room.

They stayed in the same room, it was a luxurious place with its own bathroom which had a hot tub. Also, the bed was spacious enough for both of them to sleep on their sides without bumping into each

other.

Therefore, when Cane didn’t return, Iris laid down on her side and dozed off, but it didn’t take long before she was woken up when someone suddenly touched her.

Their strong arms sneaked around her waist and her neck, holding her close to his sturdy chest.

Iris gave a start and opened her eyes in shock, she was about to scream, but then she saw it was actually Cane, who was holding her. He was hugging her from behind, burying his nose in the crook of her shoulder, as her hair tickled his face.

“Al- alpha...?” Iris was not sure why he was being like this. Was he sleeping? Did he realize what he was doing? She was too stunned to think, as she could feel his strong heart beating against her back

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138 THEIR HEARTS WERE SO FAR APART

Iris was sleeping when she felt someone hug her from behind, which shocked her, since their strong arms wrapped around her waist tightly and drew her closer to them.

It was a man's arms!

Startled, Iris was about to scream when she turned her head and caught sight of Cane's sleeping face. He had his face buried in her nape and breathed evenly.

“Al- alpha...?” Iris' eyes widened, as her face wore an anxious expression. Was he sleeping? Why was he hugging her tightly like this?

All of a sudden, Iris felt her face become so hot as her throat dried. She wetted her lips and waited for Cane to move away from her, but he didn't.

“A- are you really sleeping?” Iris' voice was so low, it sounded like a whisper and her skin became very sensitive when his warm breath caressed her neck. His strong heart was thumping against her back, because of how close they were.

Iris could even feel her own heart beating so fast, but in the end, it fell into the same rhythm as his. and it helped her to fall asleep again.

The next day when she woke up, Cane was no longer there and there was a set of breakfast waiting on the table beside her bed.

Iris pushed herself up and rubbed her sleeping face. She looked around her groggily and decided to wash her face first before she ate her breakfast.

“There is not much information about the efficacy of the Asturi stem I can find, but from what I gathered, the stem of the Asturi plant is used to lure poisonous beasts,” Ethan reported to Cane after he was done trying to gather information on that item.

Especially after he learned that the crown prince, Alan, also wanted the same thing and it was the order from the king. That old and lecherous sovereign must be up to something.

“Poisonous beasts? What kind of poison beast?” Cane narrowed his eyes. He was in a good mood this morning because he had a good sleep last night, thanks to Iris. Somehow, holding her helped him to ward off his nightmares.

Cane didn’t want to think about it too deeply and reasoned that it was the mate bond between them that helped him to calm down whenever he was with her.

“Serpent and the like,” Ethan said, he couldn’t say for sure because not many people sought out the Asturi stem.

While the stem could be used to lure poisonous beasts, the flower itself was very poisonous, therefore, it was hard to get the stem. If you were not familiar with poison, it would be the end of you.

“Serpent...” Cane rapped his fingers against the table, his eyes became slightly darker. “Poisonous, beasts like serpents are mostly found in the North kingdom, Celestial Moon pack.”

The Celestial Moon pack was the only pack in the north, they lived surrounded by a fortress, where they had to ward off wave after wave of the monster attacks, most of which were caused by serpents and dragon subspecies.

What did the king want the Asturi stem for?

“You go out first and tell Nexus to investigate what happened in the Celestial Moon pack.” Nexus was one of the six men that he met in the Bloody Wolf pack. His father’s spies.

“Right away, Alpha,” Ethan said. “Are there any more orders for the other men?”

Cane thought about it for a while. “Is there any news from Aderan?”

Aderan went to the Celestial Moon pack a few months ago in order to find a sorcerer, but the last piece of news that Cane received was on the day before they departed to the black market.

The last message was him finding a sorcerer in the Celestial Moon pack and trying to poach him to our side, but after that, there was no news from him.”

“Tell Nexus to find Aderan there and both of them can exchange the information,” Cane said.

That night, Ethan left the black market alone to meet with Nexus in the Arleen city and relayed the command from Cane.

On the other hand, after they had gotten the rations and dried meat they needed, it was time for them. to leave, but there was something that Cane wanted to check first and he needed Iris to come with

him.

“Where are we going?” Iris asked, as she followed Cane, walking a step behind.

She would feel this strange feeling of being watched whenever she was in the public, but she couldn’t find out who that was. This made her restless.

Cane said nothing, but he grabbed her hand all of a sudden to enter a shop, where he bought a huge hooded cloak to cover her auburn hair, which was very noticeable and also two masks for both of

them.

Before they walked out of the shop again, Cane stopped to make sure there was no strand of her hair coming out of her hoodie and her face was indeed concealed behind the mask, with this, it was hard to tell that it was her.

“Did you bring that creature?” Cane asked.

“Yes, here.” Iris showed her pouch to him and he nodded. This time, he took her hand to walk in the crowded street.

Iris looked at his side profile and couldn't help but remember what happened that night when he held her in his arms to sleep.

But then, the moment they woke up, everything seemed like a dream. Cane didn't say anything, it was not like there was something that needed to be said, but there was this tacit understanding between them that they wouldn't discuss what happened at night in the morning.

Cane was so different those two times. At night, he would hold her as if he didn't want to let her go, but then when day came, he would put his guard so high and maintain some distance between them. He didn't let anyone get close to him.

Even though he was holding her hand right now, actually, their hearts were actually miles apart.

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139 SERAFIM'S MYTICAL CREATURES

Cane knew this place from Redmond, the place where you could buy all the information or at the very least, get someone to get the information for you.

This place was owned by an old sorcerer and because of the exorbitant price, not anyone could afford

his services.

However, before they could meet with the sorcerer, there was a pageboy, who would ask what their business was. He would relay it to the sorcerer, but if that person didn't deem the business was to his liking or worth his time, he would turn them down.

“What do you want to know. Sir? the pageboy asked, he looked so young, probably only eleven or twelve years old. He was standing behind the trellis, wearing shabby clothes that looked bigger for his thin body. Needless to say, he must have been a slave before he was bought and made to work here, even so he was still a slave.

He looked so timid as he fidgeted nonstop, he was intimidated by the alpha’s towering figure.

Cane tapped Iris’ shoulder and opened his palm. She understood and took out the little lizard from her pouch and dropped it on his palm.

“Tell him. I want to ask about this. Cane said. He pinched the little creature by its tail and hung it in the air, as the little lizard breathed fire, but it was not enough to burn anything.

The pageboy stepped closer to Cane and narrowed his eyes. He was not sure what to call this little creature, but he could describe it to the sorcerer.

“Wait for a minute,” the boy said, as he rushed into the house, leaving Cane and Iris alone in this secluded street. Not many people were passing by this side.

Not only aboveground, even underground, the more secluded a place was, the more dangerous it could be.

Iris tugged at his sleeve to get his attention, just like him tapping her shoulder whenever he wanted to speak to her. “Is it okay to let him know about this?”

“It’s okay.” Cane said, as he handed back the lizard to her, which she put inside her pouch. The color of the little lizard was no longer translucent red. It was simply red, but not as dark as her hair.

“Oh...” Iris didn’t say anything again.

Not long after that, the pageboy returned and opened the door for them to enter. He looked at Iris. briefly, but then he led them to the innermost part of the house and knocked on a door.

“Enter.”

An eerie sound reverberated from behind it and the door swung open, as if someone had pushed it open for them.

“You can go inside,” the pageboy said, as he stood at the side. He didn’t go in with them.

Iris glanced at him, but he kept his head hung low and clasped his hands in front of his body, as if

afraid to make a mistake.

That was your fate when you became a slave, you would be punished even if you breathed in the wrong direction.

Inside the room, there was this man, around the age of forty, who had been waiting for them. He was dressed in a simple white shirt and a pair of black pants, while his shoulder length hair was tied

behind his nape.

The room smelled of medicine and a few other acrid scents that made Cane knit his brows slightly because of his keen sense of smell.

Iris followed behind him and looked around, until her eyes fell on a certain spot. There was a small box on the left shelf, which she was sure contained magic stones. Water magic stones to be precise.

“I have never seen you here before...” The man said, as he walked back and forth between the bookshelves, putting back all the books that lay scattered around the room. He didn’t even offer Cane and Iris seats to sit down.

Cane opened his palm again like before and Iris gave the little lizard to him. “I want to know what this is.” He raised the little creature by its tail and tossed it to the man when he turned around to look.

The little lizard flew in the air, breathing fire, as its tiny black eyes stared at Cane, surprised, for being tossed like a piece of trash.

The sorcerer didn’t catch it, but he raised his hand and the lizard froze in the air, even the fire from its mouth froze as well, as if time stopped for this little creature.

“Hm... interesting...” He looked at the creature a little bit closer. “I have never seen anything like this before...” he tapped his chin. “It should be a salamander, but this creature should have become extinct fifty years ago when the Serafim used all the salamanders to defend against the attack from the monsters in the Holy Kingdom.”

The sorcerer flicked his fingers in the direction of the lizard’s small body and it wriggled in the air, as if there was an invisible rope that was holding it.

“Moreover, this creature is not originally from this continent.” He made a waving motion and the lizard flew toward Cane, which he caught and gave back to Iris. “Where did you find it?”

“Somewhere in the forest.”

The sorcerer furrowed his brows. “Weird.”

“Why is it weird?”

“That thing is Serafim’s pet.” He shrugged his shoulders and leaned his back against the bookshelf behind him. Actually, calling the salamander a ‘pet’ was a degrading statement, he just simply didn’t like the holy priestess. “Her power is connected to creatures like that.”

Cane waited for the sorcerer to continue his explanation, but there was nothing more, thus he proceeded to ask. “What do you mean by creatures like that?”

“Gnomes represent the earth, Undines represent the water, Salamanders represent the fire and Sylphs represent the air.” He pointed his finger at the little lizard that Iris had just put back into her small pouch. “That is Salamander. Where did you find it? There is no way you found such a mythical creature in the forest when the current Serafim only has the Sylphs with her.

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140 SOMETHING WAS BROKEN AND COULDN’T BE FIXED

Gnomes represent the earth, Undines represent the water, Salamanders represent the fire and Sylphs represent the air.

Cane had heard that before, though his knowledge about Serafim from the Holy Kingdom was limited. If it was not for the magic stone trading, they wouldn't be in a peace treaty with each other.

While the magic users came from different continents, the only place that they could find the magic stones in this entire realm was in this Ogregon continent.

It was ironic since they despised each other. The people from the Holy Kingdom thought of the shifters as no less than animals and barbaric brutes, since they could shift into their spirit animal, while the shifters didn't like their high and pretentious attitude.

They were nothing without their magic, which relied heavily on the magic stones.

This was how the relationship of the Ogregon continent with the other four continents in this realm was, yet despite the disputes, they still coexisted together.

"That is a Salamander. Where did you find it? There is no way you found such a mythical creature in the forest when the current Serafim only has the Sylphs with her." The sorcerer walked closer to Iris and was about to take off her hoodie and her mask when Cane grabbed his hand to stop him.

"I don't think I gave you permission to touch her. Cane looked at him deeply, a hint of warning spilling in the way he spoke. "Tell me more about Serafim and what happened fifty years ago."

The sorcerer glared back at Cane, but he backed off immediately, since what he said was right. He was still bound to his code of ethics and would not jeopardize his business.

More so, he didn't have any desire to get to know more about something that had anything to do with Serafim. What he did was only out of pure curiosity and impulsiveness on his part.

"There was a monster migration fifty years ago during which the Holy Kingdom was attacked and in order to protect the continent, the Serafim used all of her power, which resulted in the extinction of the fire Salamanders, since

fire was an offensive attack, that poor creature took the brunt of what happened.”

“In other words, the Serafim can control mythical creatures?”

The sorcerer turned around and continued to put away his books. “Not all. I don’t know the details, but from what I know, she definitely knows how to control her pet.”

Iris couldn’t read the rest of the conversation, because the sorcerer turned his body around and she couldn’t ask him to turn back, thus she glanced at Cane beside her, but his expression didn’t really give away what they were actually talking about.

And what about this lizard?

They stayed for another hour, but during that time, the sorcerer was busy moving around, which made it hard for Iris to follow their conversation. Her curiosity left her fidgeting in frustration.

Not to mention her mask and hoodie that obstructed her vision. A few times she wanted to pull down her hoodie, but Cane would put his hand on top of her head to stop her, which made her lower her

head even more.

Cane tapped her shoulder and she looked at him. “We are leaving”

And that was it. Iris had never been so frustrated to know something in her life. When they went out of the room, they met with the pageboy again, who escorted them out of the house.

Once they were outside and the boy was about to close the door, Cane gave him a silver coin, which brightened his face. He grinned from ear to ear and thanked him profusely.

However, Cane didn’t bother with him and walked away from there with Iris by his side.

The walk was quiet as usual, Cane didn’t speak anything and Iris didn’t know how to ask him questions to curb her curiosity.

In the end, they went back to their room and while Cane went out to see Redmond and Will, Iris went to take a bath, she dipped in warm water and stared blankly at the ceiling and then she shifted her

attention to the lizard that perched on the bucket.

“What did they talk about?” She pursed her lips.

Only when the water had become cold did she emerge from the tub, dry herself and put on a dress. She felt energized, but also sleepy. She didn't know whether this was night or day, because this place was akin to a massive cave with thousands of luminous pearls brightening it up round the clock.

In the end, without anything to do, Iris took the book that Ethan had bought for her and read it until she fell asleep, but she woke up in the same state; Cane was hugging her from behind, while burying his face in her nape.

He was sleeping, his breathing evened out and felt so warm against her skin.

However, Iris was wide awake and wriggled her body, so she could face him. Even so, Cane didn't stir awake, he looked so tired. Heavens knew what he had been doing in the past few days when he only returned to pass out like this.

Iris took the liberty to stare at him, her eyes fell on the ghastly scar on his face, his knitted brows and how he pursed his lips.

Seeing him so vulnerable like this felt so strange, because it was so different from the man that

tortured her and had deflowered her the second time they met, or the man who had taken her roughly in the library.

Iris still dreaded the memories, but then she remembered what he said the previous night when he started this habit of his to hug her while sleeping.

I don't want to do this...

He didn't want to do it. He was not that beast of a man that was driven by his lust. Amee had told her about his condition and his sex drive, which would spiral out of his control sometimes, therefore, he needed Aria to be by his side.

Something in him was broken and couldn't be fixed...